MOTHER INDIA

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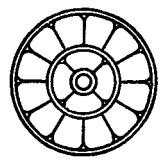
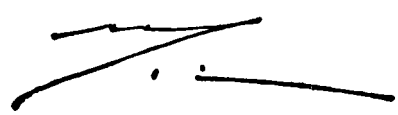


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXVIII **No. 4**

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

THE Light of Truth broods over the world to permeate and mould the future.

(Message given to Heinz Karpes for the magazine *Integral Yoga*)

THE MOTHER'S SYMBOL AND ITS COLOUR SCHEME

A LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

CENTRE and 4 powers white. The 12, all of different colours, in three groups, (1) top group red passing through orange towards yellow, (2) next group yellow passing through green towards blue, (3) blue passing through violet towards red.

If white is not convenient, the centre may be gold (powder).

THE MEANINGS OF THE TWELVE COLOURS AS GIVEN BY THE MOTHER

SINCERITY (blue), Humility (blue-green), Gratitude (green), Perseverance (greenish yellow), Aspiration (yellow), Receptivity (light orange), Progress (darker orange), Courage (red), Health (majenta), Generosity (light mauve), Equality (violet), Peace (dark blue).

"IMMORTALITY DAY"

TWO QUESTIONS AND SRI AUROBINDO'S ANSWER

(Apropos of the article of the same name which appeared in the Special Number of Mother India *of February 21 we are publishing Sri Aurobindo's answer to two questions put to him by a sadhak in the early days of the Ashram when "Immortality Day" was still remembered. We are giving the answer in its original form in relation to the questions and not as revised by Sri Aurobindo when published without them.)*

Two Questions

(1) IF the Supramental has not come down into your physical, how is immortality of the body possible?
(2) In what sense did we use to observe Immortality Day on 26 November?

Sri Aurobindo's Answer

It is not immortality of the body, but the consciousness of immortality in the body that can come with the descent of Overmind into Matter or even into the physical mind or with the touch of the modified supramental Light on the physical mind-consciousness. These are preliminary openings, but they are not the supramental fulfilment in Matter.

(4.3.1932)

TWO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

WHEN you began to meditate, you saw the Mother's face, that is very good, it means that there is an inner connection established. The absence of the smile does not mean that she is displeased or that you have done anything against her will. At the same time the Mother's force descended on you, it was the pressure of her Force that you felt on the head and breast—everybody feels in the beginning this pressure—and what you felt in the breast was the working of the Force. In the Yoga these are signs of the action of the Yoga and you must observe quietly what happens without getting disturbed, remembering the Mother always and trusting in her action upon you.

25.6.1932

The dream you had was not a mere dream, but a true experience—down to the gift of a new birth within you. At pranam this morning the Mother noted the change in you of which you saw the symbol in your dream-experience.

29.8.1932

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of March 1976)

(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.)*

March 8, 1957

The following story was told by Mother at one of the "Friday Classes", generally reserved for readings to the children.

A Buddhist Story

As I am still unable to read to you this evening, I am going to tell you a story. It is a Buddhist story which perhaps you know, it is modern but has the credit of being authentic. I heard it from Madame Z who, as you know perhaps, is a well-known Buddhist, specially as she was the first European woman to enter Lhasa. Her journey to Tibet was very perilous and thrilling and she herself narrated to me one of the incidents of this journey, which I am going to tell you this evening.

She was journeying with a certain number of fellow-travellers forming a sort of caravan and, the approach to Tibet being relatively easier through Indo-China, they were going from that side. Indo-China is covered with large forests, and these forests are infested with tigers, some of which become man-eaters...and when that happens they are called: "Mr. Tiger."

Late one evening, when they were in the thick of the forest—a forest they had to cross in order to be able to camp safely—Madame Z realised that it was her meditation hour. Now, she used to meditate at fixed times, very regularly, without ever missing, and as it was time for her meditation she told her companions: "Continue the journey, I shall sit here and do my meditation, and when I have finished I shall join you; meanwhile, get to the next stage and prepare the camp." One of the coolies told her: "Oh! no, Madam, this is impossible, altogether impossible"—he spoke in his own language, naturally, but I must tell you Madame Z knew Tibetan like a Tibetan—"it is quite impossible, there is 'Mr. Tiger' in the forest and it is just time for him to come out seeking his dinner. We cannot leave you and you can't stop here!" She answered that it did not matter to her at all, that the meditation was much more

important than safety, that they could all withdraw and that she would remain alone.

Very much against their wish they started off, for it was impossible to reason with her—when she had decided to do something, nothing could prevent her from doing it. They went away and she sat down comfortably at the foot of a tree and entered into meditation. After a while she felt a somewhat unpleasant presence. She opened her eyes to see what it was...and about three or four steps away, right in front of her was Mr. Tiger!—with eyes full of covetous desires. So, like a good Buddhist, she said: "Good, if this is the way by which I shall attain Nirvana, it is well. I must only prepare to leave my body as is befitting, in the proper spirit." And without moving, without even in the least trembling, she closed her eyes again and entered once more into meditation; a little deeper, more intense meditation, detaching herself completely from the illusion of the world, ready to pass into Nirvana....Five minutes went by, ten minutes, half an hour—nothing happened. Then as it was time for the meditation to be over, she opened her eyes ..and there was no tiger there. Undoubtedly, seeing so immobile a body it must have thought it was not fit for eating. For tigers, like all wild animals, except the hyena, do not attack and eat a dead body. Impressed probably by this immobility—I dare not say by the intensity of the meditation, for I don't think tigers are very sensitive to meditation!—it had withdrawn and she found herself quite alone and out of danger. She went her way calmly and on reaching camp said: "Here I am."

That's the story. Now we are going to meditate like her, not to prepare ourselves for Nirvana (*laughter*), but to heighten our consciousness.

PRAYER

LET each of my passing thoughts be a bead of prayer,
Each breath in me the sound of Your name,
Each living pore in my skin Your sweet remembrance,
Each gaze of mine a leap to Your glorious flame.

May my bread and water be touched by You,
My footsteps ever turn towards your realm—
May each day reveal You more and more to me,
A voyage guided by Your Light at the helm.

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

THE MOTHER'S EXPERIENCE ON APRIL 24, 1920 AND SOME OTHER EVENTS AND TOPICS APROPOS OF IT

EXTRACTS FROM HER TALKS OF MARCH 16, 19 AND 22, 1951

I WAS on the boat, at sea, not expecting anything (I was of course busy with the inner life, but I was living physically on the boat), when all of a sudden, abruptly, about two nautical miles from Pondicherry, the quality, I may even say the physical quality of the atmosphere, of the air, changed so much that I knew we were entering the aura of Sri Aurobindo. It was a *physical* experience and I guarantee that whoever has a sufficiently awakened consciousness can feel the same thing.

I had the contrary experience also, the first time that I went out in a car after many many years here. When I reached a little beyond the lake, I felt all of a sudden that the atmosphere was changing; where there had been plenitude, energy, light and force, all that diminished, diminished ..and then...nothing. I was not in a mental or vital consciousness, I was in an absolutely physical consciousness. Well, those who are sensitive in their physical consciousness ought to feel that quite concretely. And I can assure you that the area we call "the Ashram" has a condensation of force which is not at all the same as that of the town, and still less that of the countryside....

There are people who live constantly in a higher consciousness, while others have to make an effort to enter there. But here it is an altogether different thing : in the experience I was speaking about, what gave it all its value was that I was not expecting it at all, not at all. I knew very well, I had been for a very long time and continuously in "spiritual" contact, if I may say so, with the atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo, but I had never thought of the possibility of a modification in the physical air and I was not expecting it in the least, and it was this that gave the whole value to the experience, which came like that, quite suddenly, just as when one enters a place with another temperature or another altitude.... I do not know if you have noticed that the air you breathe is not always the same, that there are different vibrations in the air of one country and in the air of another, in the air of one place and in the air of another. If indeed you are accustomed to have this perception of the subtle physical, you can say immediately, "Ah! this air is as in France" or "This is the air of Japan." It is something indefinable like taste or smell. But in this instance it is not that, it is a perception of another sense. It is a physical sense, it is not a vital or mental sense; it is a sense of the physical world, but there are other senses than the five that we usually have at our disposal—there are many others.

In fact, for the physical being—note that I say the physical being—to be fully developed, it must have twelve senses. It is one of these senses which gives you the kind of perception I was speaking of. You cannot say that it is taste, smell, hearing, etc., but it is something which gives you a very precise impression of the difference

of quality. And it is very precise, as distinct as seeing black and white, it is truly a sense perception....

What are the twelve senses?

We are granted five, aren't we? In any case, there is one other which, precisely, has a relation with consciousness. I don't know if you have ever been told this, but a person who is blind, for instance, who does not see, can become aware of an object at some distance through a kind of perception which is not touch for he does not feel it, which is not vision for he does not see, but which is a contact—something that enables him to make a contact without hearing, seeing or touching. This is one of the most developed senses apart from those we habitually use. There is another sense, a sort of sense of proximity: when one comes close to a thing, one feels it as if one had contacted it. Another sense, which is also physical, puts you in touch with events at a great distance; it is a physical sense for it belongs to the physical world, it is not purely mental: there is a sensation. Some people have a sort of sensation of contact with what is happening at a very great distance. You must not forget that in the physical consciousness there are several levels: there is a physical vital and a physical mind which are not solely corporeal. Foresight on the material plane is also one of the physical senses.... We have, then, something that sees at a short distance, something that sees at a long distance and something that sees ahead; this already makes three. These are a sort of improvement of the senses we have; as for instance, hearing at a great distance—there are people who can hear noises at a great distance, who can smell at a great distance. It is a kind of perfecting of these senses.

Which sense is used in water-divining?

The perception is different with each individual. For some, it is as though they saw the water; for others, as though they got the smell of water; and, for others yet, it is a kind of intuition from the mental field; but then it is not a physical perception, it is a sort of direct knowledge. There was a man here who used to say he smelt water; he had an instrument, but it was only a pretext. .. It is like a rod which bends, you know; try as you may to be as passive as possible, you will always make a slight movement when you have the feeling that something is there. I have tried this experiment many times: you give the rod to someone, you ask him to walk; you are silent, quite concentrated; then, suddenly, you think powerfully: "Here there is water" and hop! the rod makes a little movement—it is quite evident that it is your suggestion. I had thought thus, without having the least idea that there was water there, simply to make an experiment; and in the hand of the dowser the rod came down; he had received the suggestion in his subconscient.

If one is sufficiently quiet, the nerves can receive the vibrations of water ?

But there was no water. It was I who had *thought* there was water (there may have been water there, I don't know, I did not tell them to dig and see). But the experiment proves that it was simply my thought which had worked on the fingers holding the rod, and the rod had come down.... You could also tell me that I had thought of water because it was there!

There are animals with very developed senses, aren't there ?

Ah! yes, there are animals which are much more advanced than we.

I knew an elephant which led us straight to the water when we were tiger-shooting.

Animals have much more perfect senses than those of men. I challenge you to track a man as a dog does, for instance!

This means that in the curve or rather the spiral of evolution, animals (and more those we call "higher" animals, because they resemble us more closely) are governed by the spirit of the species which is a highly conscious consciousness. Bees, ants, obey this spirit of the species which is of quite a special quality. And what is called "instinct" in animals is simply obedience to the spirit of the species which always knows what ought and ought not to be done. There are so many examples, you know. You put a cow in a meadow; it roams around, sniffs, and suddenly puts out its tongue and snatches a blade of grass. Then it wanders about again, sniffs and gets another tuft of grass, and so it goes on. Has anyone ever known a cow under these conditions eating poisonous grass? But shut this poor animal up in a cow-shed, gather and put some grass before it, and the poor creature which has lost its instinct because it now obeys man (excuse me), eats the poisonous grass. And these unfortunate animals, like all animals, have a kind of respect (which I could call unjustifiable) for the superiority of man—if he puts poisonous grass before the cow and tells it to eat, it eats it! But left to itself, that is, without anything interfering between it and the spirit of the species, it would never do so. All animals which live close to man lose their instinct because they have a kind of admiration full of devotion for this being who can give them shelter and food without the least difficulty—and a little fear too, for they know that if they don't do what man wants them to do they will be beaten!

It is quite strange, they lose their ability. Dogs, for instance the sheep-dog which lives far away from men with the flocks and has a very independent nature (it comes home from time to time and knows its master well, but often does not see him), if it is bitten by a snake, it will remain in a corner, lick itself and do all that is necessary till it gets cured. The same dog, if it stays with you and is bitten by a snake, dies quietly like man.

I had a very sweet little cat, absolutely civilised, a marvellous cat. It was born in

the house and it had the habit all cats have, that is to say, if something moved, it played with that. Just then there was in the house a huge scorpion; as was its habit, the cat started playing with the scorpion. And the scorpion stung it. But it was an exceptional cat; it came to me, it was almost dying, but it showed me its paw where it was bitten—it was already swollen and in a terrible state. I took my little cat—it was really sweet—and put it on a table and called Sri Aurobindo. I told him, "Kiki has been stung by a scorpion, it must be cured." The cat stretched its neck and looked at Sri Aurobindo, its eyes already a little glassy Sri Aurobindo sat before it and looked at it also. Then we saw this little cat gradually beginning to recover, to come round, and an hour later it jumped to its feet and went away completely healed.... In those days I had the habit of holding a meditation in the room where Sri Aurobindo slept (the room A uses now) and it was regularly the same people who came; everything was arranged. But there was an arm-chair in which this very cat always settled beforehand—it did not wait for anyone to get into the chair, it got in first itself! And regularly it went into a trance! It was not sleeping, it was not in the pose cats take when sleeping: it was in a trance, it used to start up, it certainly had visions. And it let out little sounds. It was in a profound trance. It remained thus for hours together. And when it came out from that state, it refused to eat. It was awakened and given food, but it refused: it went back to its chair and fell again into a trance! This was becoming very dangerous for a little cat.... But this was not an ordinary cat.

To finish my story, if you leave an animal in its normal state, far from man, it obeys the spirit of the species, it has a very sure instinct and it will never commit any stupidities. But if you take it and keep it with you, it loses its instinct, and it is then you must look after it, for it no longer knows what should or should not be done. I was interested in cats to make an experiment, a sort of inverse metempsychosis, if one can call it that, that is, to see if this could be their last incarnation as animals, if they were ready to enter a human body in the next life. The experiment succeeded fully, I had three absolutely flagrant instances; they left with a psychic being sufficiently conscious to enter a human body. But this is not what men ordinarily do; what they usually do is to spoil the consciousness or rather the instinct of animals.

THE ASHRAM OF PONDICHERRY

A FRENCH SAVANT'S IMPRESSIONS IN 1936

(This is a translation of the chapter "L'Ashram de Pondichérry" in Maurice Magre's book À la Poursuite de la Sagesse *published by Fasquelle Éditeurs, Paris, 1936. The translation first appeared, with the permission of the Publishers,* in Sri Aurobindo Circle, *Thirteenth Number, 1957, without the present subtitle. Our acknowledgments are due to* Sri Aurobindo Circle. *The Mother is reported to have remarked that Magre's impressions were shot with a psychic vision. Thus they have an inner value in addition to the purely historical.)*

IN the Ashram of Pondicherry are gathered together the wisest men of the earth. They dwell in white houses that look as if they were painted with some liquid moon. There is no sign on the door that here the souls have found peace. No star of the Shepherds gleams on their terraces and the Magi-Kings do not know the way to them.

The men of the Ashram are clothed in white cotton in the manner of the Hindus and their hair is twined in a sheaf upon their backs. They carry themselves straight like the spurt of a fountain, like a flame where there is no wind and like a thought when it is true. They move between low walls, in the gardens tended with care, they converse of things of beauty and they aspire towards the Spirit. These are the Perfect Ones amongst men.

The gardens of the Ashram have not the grandeur of those of Seville or the Alhambra. But it has seemed to me that there was a supernatural element which coloured the stems and the leaves. Does a Deva of the night come perchance to paint them before each dawn? On looking up, one sees the mango and the coconut. Hibiscus-flowers, at the tips of high branches, delicate and tossing like vivid thoughts, bend down over the walls and seem to look into the street, with a touch of pride.

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Here is a community perfect in the measure in which perfection can be of this world. Each is devoted to his favourite task, according to his knowledge and his ability. There is a workshop for the carpenter, and a room where flour is kneaded. The bindings of books shine out like swords from the shelves of the book-cases. Through the open bays one sees like great marble pieces the brows of the readers. But most do manual labour, for in the handling of matter and in the attention that one gives to it there is a method that helps the soul. No bell is there for rest, and no rigorous discipline. Each finds his liberty in the harmony of love.

All the disciples have a beauty that cannot be defined, that is not contained in a system of proportions, that sports with the science of form. From where do they receive this beauty? Was it already enclosed in the germ-cells of their parents and has

it merely blossomed through the mystery of life? Or did they receive it when they brushed past the grassless ground of the seven times purified courtyards, is it only the inferior manifestation of the grace of the spirit which alighted on them when they stepped through the gate of the Ashram? Who shall ever say from what hidden spring flows the beauty of the man of goodness, detached from the world? The most crystalline waters never reveal the subterranean soil that has filtered them and none has been able to see in the midst of the rock-masses, where all is frozen and granite, the precise point where takes birth the stream chosen from the hierarchy of streams to become the Ganges.

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Behind one of the Ashram houses there is a silent courtyard where the gardener is king. Here are the cuttings of all the plants that, in the season of their growth, have to take their place in the gardens of other houses. And there are even some choice cuttings, grace-touched, that will be on the window of the Master and give a perfect flower in which he will contemplate at sunrise the manifold beauty of the earth.

The gardener knows this and he watches with a greater love over his delicate little people. He has pots of all shapes that are the homes of his sensitive children. According to their age and their capacity of changing the wet soil into the substance of their being, he transfers them from one pot to another, offers them a ray of the sun or a jet of his watering can. Here is the supple convolvulus, the brilliant hollyhock and the gladiolus with its perpetual offering. This court yard is like a kingdom of delicate births, tiny weanings, slow outbreaks.

By his science of the virtues that reside in the seeds, of the humid forces that flow in the stems, of the distribution of the sap and its affinity with sun and moon, the gardener is the undisputed sovereign of the little inhabitants of the earthen pots, the radiant flowers of the future, all the beauty of tomorrow.

But he does not know his royalty. His face is so pure that one sees his soul through it, and in his soul are shining all the cuttings he has brought to flower. Is it perhaps because the gardener is in contact, within his narrow courtyard, with a wisdom of plant life which manifests through the aura of each leaf? Is it perhaps because he has silently communed with the soul of infant cuttings?

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He is the most modest of disciples and yet his modesty is combined with an aristocratic pride. He explains by turns and he keeps silent and his speech and his silence have an equal timeliness. He makes one think of a very wise mandarin of North China born of a family as ancient as that of Confucius. I see him as governor of an immense province where the people bless him because under his administration finance has prospered, the harvests have been abundant and happiness has dwelt in

every home. In a palace of porcelain, he handles justice as if it were a fan and he metes out with a grand severity punishments that are absolutely trifling.

When he welcomed me on his threshold, I recognised him all at once. I would have recognised him out of all the inhabitants of India. I would have wished to tell him: "You are my brother." I believe I merely said: "Good morning, sir!" There was a touch of raillery in the depths of his eyes, the raillery one has towards those for whom one has to show some indulgence.

He dresses at times like a Hindu and at other times like a European. His true country is the world of wisdom. But it is not there that I came to know him. I came to know him in some other age and I was then younger than he. He pulled me out of trouble again and again. Out of what trouble? I cannot say. He had often to forgive me and he did it with a smile. For what fault? Who will ever tell me? But is it all a memory or a trick of the imagination?

What force enables you to know a large-hearted man? I had no idea that such a man existed. Surely I shall not find his like. But it is enough that there should be one of his kind in all this space stretched between the North Pole and the South.

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The town stands on the sea-board within a circle of lakes and palms. A fiery sun scorches it perpetually and makes the tiles of its terraces glow. One who would contemplate it from an aeroplane would see only the flat and scalded stones around the statue of Dupleix and the flag of the governor. The crows are heard calling to one another and sometimes there are silences that we find in no town. The bazaar lies stretched out in the dust. At the doors of the shops corpulent Mussalmans with thick lips offer their multicoloured stuffs. A canal divides the town in two, attesting by the filth which it drags with difficulty on its dead waters the eternal division of races. All along this canal, children play during the hours of the day, and at night the phantom of cholera glides silently over the slime.

Afar, the great steamers sail at times on the roadsteads, deliver their merchandise, whistle lugubriously and depart. In the little cafés, Hindu women dance to the sound of zithers, their hands behind their heads and the body held almost motionless. And always on the roofs the crows keep talking some incomprehensible language. It is in this town that, from all the quarters of India, wise men have come to live within the shadow of the Master, a shadow that projects a spot of light.

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If the Master's shadow illumines the very moment it spreads out, of what matter then is moulded his body of flesh? A body resembling that of all other men. A body that is born of woman, has drunk its mother's milk, taken food, known the intervals of sleep and on whose head has grown hair and whose fingers have nails, in remem-

brance of far ancestors who have scraped the soil and torn from it their life's nourishment. The Master has lived among men of the earth, he has been to the West, he has studied the languages and the philosophies, crossed oceans, seen various peoples, taken measure of ignorance and injustice. He has suffered the oppression of his brothers and fought for their freedom. The human wisdom that he possesses he has wrested from day-to-day life just as one wrests one's daily bread. It is by touching the roots of sorrow, the hidden and hurting sorrow behind the figure of all manifestation, like the soul behind the body, that his eyes have grown so deep and his face hollow, like a field when it is turned by a plough. But the divine wisdom, that is above all pain and cannot take part in it, he has come face to face with in the solitude of a prison. The four walls of his cell, like shining mirrors, have allowed him to see what is given to no man to contemplate, the mystery of causes, the path that leads to the perfect union. Still as a cypress on a day without wind, as a stone fixed to the mountain by bonds of clay, he has pursued his infinite way which knows neither a milestone nor an inn, and he has reached the goal which makes man divine. It is since then that he has lived in two different worlds, perhaps uncertain of the one in which he finds himself, perhaps surprised to be always inhabiting a physical body. It is since then that those who had a presentiment of this realisation have come to live around him like bees around a wonderful queen who bestows a honey diviner than lies within the calyxes of the most beautiful flowers.

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I have come from the barbarous West where the machine of the metal face is king and where men sell their souls in exchange for a little pleasure. I had embarked on a great liner with bridge over bridge and with smoke-trailing funnels and with sirens that tear the heart.

I had counted the days, I had counted the hours. At Port-Saïd I saw the pirogues of the Thousand and One Nights and at a little distance I passed the battleships where the guns glittered on their platforms and the flags sent signals. On the Red Sea I crossed above the carcase of dead ships and at night I saw their ghosts floating with their extinguished fires and the faces of their dead ones, eyes open, within the port-holes. I saw the beacons turning and the birds in flight. I have come like a pilgrim a trifle ridiculous with his colonial helmet for a too burning sun and with provision of quinine against fever. There were in my bags a coverlet and a fan and books for the heavy hours.

O pilgrim with greying hair, what you lack is not faith. When I was walking up and down the bridge, I found the Indian Ocean limited in comparison to my hopes. The reefs of Minicoë were mere grains of dust in a desert of darkness before the mountains of diamond which appear to my gaze in the inner sea of my soul.

O pilgrim who have fixed your moment of departure in life's twilight, did you

not know that all beauty that manifests, from the top to the bottom of this earth's scale, in a plant or in a man, needs the leaven called youth?

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What would Edgar Allan Poe say in the nights of Pondicherry, streaming with sweat, under the square transparent shroud of the mosquito-net?

Ten thousand crows are perched on the trees and on the roofs surrounding my house and ten thousand times they repeat, "Never more!" with that pitiless regularity which only the hands of the clocks and the stars of the sky have. Never more, never more, why? What is the sense so mortally desparate of these syllables? What is it that never more will come? Is it the gaiety of youth, the possibilities of manly force? But it has been long since I gave up this morning-heat of the blood which awakening brings you and which is sweeter than any intoxication. I have accustomed myself to hear my heart beat, measure my strength, consider my organs like the pieces of a clock-work ill-adjusted by an artisan miserly of nerves and tissues, one who has scamped his job of human construction. Is it lost pleasure, the pleasure of the body needing to exalt itself in order to escape from the void? Is it the waiting at the door which opens with a crumpling of robes, with the melancholy odour of hair? But, like the man in charge of the accessories in a theatre, I have scraped together, once the show was over, the paper bouquet, the rouge-stick and the false letter and I have consigned them to a cardboard box for the next show which will not take place.

Why do the crows repeat "Never more" in the endless night? Never more the peace of the room with books lined up, books where beauty lies hidden and can leap forth, where wisdom is at rest and does not display itself. Never more the hills bathed in sunshine, the vines which bend over on themselves, the parasol pines like offertories, the paths which slope down like old happinesses? Never more the welcoming little hotels, the friends whom one meets, the tables on the terraces when night falls? Never more the things I have loved? But no, it is not that.

What is engraved in memory comes alive the most forcefully when thought re-creates it and I can, like a magician, resuscitate at my wish the miserable enchantments that have adorned my ordinary-man's life. It is over something else that the night-crows are moaning. It is perhaps not concerned with happiness. There is a Never More which keeps resounding in the abyss of the soul where the consciousness has never descended. It is a lament over forgotten secrets, over beings one has known in dreams, over the beauty of landscapes in other worlds.

Oh the Never More of burning nights, how it tears, how it goes far into the possibilities of anguish, when the day is first breaking, when there are at a distance the indifferent breakers of the sea and the siren of a steamer that calls one knows not what, one knows not whom, undoubtedly death.

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Between the Master and the disciples there is the Mother. The Mother is at the same time a woman, made of flesh and bone, with face and hair, and the metaphysical symbol of the world-soul. One invokes her as the essence of life, the animating power of things and one takes refuge in her feminine arms if a wound of the body needs tending. One sees the Mother glide over the terraces of the Ashram as fleeting as an ideal thought in a daily dream. She has established an unformulated language based on the correspondence that exists between flowers and human wishes. The giving of a flower by a disciple is enough for her to know that some disquiet has to be soothed, some prayer to be granted. The Mother is close to the Master as the shadow is behind a man and as a ray is before the mirror when it is turned towards the sun.

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When I stood before her, it was as if an inner storm were let loose all of a sudden. It came from the depth of the soul's horizon, with clouds of sombre thoughts and with breaths of revolt.

The Mother wears a sari of grey silk with an embroidered border and round her head a band with the same embroidery as that of the voile. Her white buskins make her feet snowy. She seems to me so small in her form and so great as a symbol! Her hands are so delicate and well-tended that one would say they were made of jewels from another planet. When she pushed the door a breath of adoration penetrated after her like a fume of sacred gold. I felt gliding up to me a dancing light which passed through my heart. But one never gets what one expects. Just as at the age of ten I started weeping after having received the wafer of holy communion, so also, hoping for serenity, I saw disorder arrive. The Spirit touched me and I knew not that it had touched.

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Between the Master's house and the street where men pass, there are trees. And on these each evening, with a great rustling of wings and cries of all kinds, thousands of birds alight. Never in any garden of the earth have there been so many gathered together. On all places where rise the prayers of man, there are birds that descend. For there is a secret rapport between birds and the spirit. As if the trees of the garden were blossoming in the spiritual world, all the birds of the region come to perch on their branches. But it is not for going to sleep, according to the law of creatures, when night falls. They exchange a thousand words in a language that has no contact with human speech. What they say remains ever incomprehensible to us, for they do not feel emotion either in time or space, and the quality of the things they communicate is of another nature than our thoughts. When everything has been said, everything that the birds have to say after a day of flight over the grain-bearing earth, they lower their wings little by little, they slowly grow still. The garden of the Ashram, when the

moon makes its appearance, is covered with thousands of tiny statues—beaks bent, feathers marbled.

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What difference is there between a cricket of Toulouse and an Indian cricket?

The voice of the Indian cricket is perhaps more ringing but the spirit of their song is the same. The one that is singing in the little garden under my window is as much at ease in the shadow of a banana tree as its brother of the banks of the Garonne between the vine and the cypress. Both of them have learnt the same things while touching with their antennae different earths in which they dig similar tunnels.

To the man who hears them they speak of the happy chances of life, they promise good fortune and the evening-contentment which a calm conscience brings. All the crickets of our planet sing the same little benevolent hymn and if a cricket of genius adds somewhere a new note it is soon transmitted mysteriously to all the crickets of the earth.

I come to bear witness to one of these innovations. The cricket I am hearing this evening has struck upon an unpublished theme It is almost a trifle, just two or three notes. I am indeed at a loss to translate them. A cricket's song is so mysterious!

I thank the cricket of Pondicherry for the way it played on its tiny instrument. When I shall walk along the Garonne at the hour when the small farms light their lamps and the poplars rustle, all the crickets of Languedoc will add for my sake to their song what the Indian innovator of genius has found, something indefinably deep, a mere nothing, the shadow of a palm, the vanished traits of an unknown brother.

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I have crossed a part of the earth in order to draw nearer to the Divine. A child of five could have told me that this was unnecessary and that God is for ever by the side of each one. But all the children of five are wrong. Thanks to the faculty that is natural to him and thanks to the impetus of his soul, a man in his life-time can communicate with the worlds of the spirit. He makes his miraculous power radiate on those whom he loves. But he gives only infinitesimal drops, imperceptible luminous atoms. It is not because he is miserly. But the spirit, in order to be received, needs a prepared soul. Mine has gone through no preparation. Wrapped in my proud grossness I remain in the garden of the birds, I who have neither their wings nor their gift of song, I who would pose questions instead of staying on a branch and sleeping till the dawn.

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O Master, we do not see your shadow at the window nor do we hear the noise of your steps making the ceiling resound. You sit in perfect solitude: the divine serenity,

the realised ecstasy. My admiration lifts towards you in the silence of the night, towards you who have crossed the gate of perfection.

But there is a contradiction that makes me suffer and whose obsession I cannot chase away, for each of us carries his thought like a sharp sword turned towards himself and every movement of the soul causes a rending. You teach the beauty of living forms, the task of perfecting man and nature and making the world flower according to the divine law. But the divine law is not observed, men even misconstrue it, injustice reigns and evil is lord. And then, O Master, I tell myself that if you pass over the dust of the roads, if you go into the cities, placing the palm of your hand on the heart of the untouchables, surely the deaf will hear and the lepers get healed and the world realise salvation.

Ah! the evening when I have walked through the empty street by the side of the house where you live, I have passionately heard—even if I did not listen from the other side of the wall—the sob that the misery of mankind drew from you.

It was childish, I know it well. And that evening it seemed to me that I saw your tears pass through the stone like diamonds of fire and that the breath of your pity came up to me and burned my heart.

*
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The ship that brought me, with its tiers of bridges and its underground machinery, is like a reduction, a microcosm of this planet.

Guided by the compass and the sextant, it goes over the sea like the earth in space, held in equilibrium by the law of attraction. And it transports many different worlds. There is the paradise of the first class where live the chosen, enjoying the presence of God, their God who is the appeaser of the hungers of their bodies.

With the smoke of cigarettes and the whiff of whisky rise the mediocre dreams of these fortunate ones. Like grotesque angels the barmen and the cabinboys run to satisfy their least desire and the orchestra sets women in evening-gowns dancing, while Mount Sinai and the dunes of Arabia are outlined on the horizon. Just as God the Father admits into a particular seventh heaven certain saints or certain meritorious lucky ones, so also the captain of the ship makes certain choice passengers climb a little iron staircase to offer them a superior whisky on the bridge that is nearer the stars.

Immediately below is the intermediate world, with the angels less diligent, an orchestra more ordinary, cabins narrower. It is the purgatory of the proud. Hardly one light chain divides them from the creatures who are the elect and who live in paradise. They could make it give way by their little finger. But this chain is strong like the prejudices of money whose symbol it is, like the power of society. Its mediocrity must be paid for in pain. The tormented ones of this purgatory do not know that their lungs suck the same air, their eyes look at the same light, they are condemned to the rack of envy.

And lower, much lower there is hell. Hell is hidden in the depths of the ship. It is invisible but everyone knows of its existence and refuses to think of it. Here there is

another humanity whose face one does not imagine, whose torture one does not wish to know. They are Arabs, it is said, or perhaps the Chinese. As in the descriptions of the catechisms, hell is a-fire. The sinner is tormented by the flames. The ladder by which one descends is so hot that the hand of flesh can scarcely be put on it. Here there is the mystery of electricity with its levers, its wires and its tubes There is an alley of metal where the air crackles and which is lined with the cylindrical masses of the boilers where the blue and red oil-fuel dances. And there live, in the darkness and the fire, anonymous beings whose eyes are hollow, whose chests are desiccated. But what fault could they have committed to be condemned to icy jets from plug-holes of air and steam from orifices of red-hot steel, condemned to hear, like the knife of a guillotine, the panel of automatic doors fall behind them?

And the ship goes on, driven by the inner power which it draws from the force of mute suffering; it transports within the circle of its armature the iron of the worlds in which no Virgil will explain to any Dante the secret causes of injustice and sorrow.

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If I, the most egoistic of men, am touched by another's suffering down to the roots of my being, I ask myself what it must be in your being and how the fires of sorrow have not completely burnt you up in the room where you sit. If I look at your face I see as far as one can go into the depth of pity. To have those eyes of sorrow and that tearing sadness on the features, you could not but have absorbed the misery of illness and the still greater misery of the spirit. Your body must have oozed with the ulcers of the wretched, swollen with the bloat of the leprous. Your soul has felt the dissoluteness of the unbeliever, the despair of those who know not how to love, the abysm of the suicides.

And yet you sit in your white house at Pondicherry, hear the come-and-go of the disciples, see through the window the flowers burgeoning. Are you protected by a formula that the sages have handed down since the Vedic age? Do you conceal yourself in a veil of virgin gold that the Seven Aryan Rishis wove with their hands ten thousand years ago?

Does there exist for man a protection against the sorrow of his brother? Or does one escape this sorrow by following the path of silver that leads direct to God?

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But perhaps pity is not a high virtue. It touches on our physical senses, it moves us to our entrails, it comes almost always with an egoistic emotion. The misfortunes that strike home to us the most are those that we dread for ourselves or that we have known in the past. Our wounds, our revolts, from which we secretly draw pride as from an inner nobility, are only the passionate signs of our frenzy for life. One pities those who lack in happiness. But happiness is not life's goal.

Fortunate is he who has been able to put himself in the region where good and evil appear like the two sides of one and the same medal, he who sees the divine presence moving in the sorrow as in the joy. Pity is for him only the memory of a time when his vision was limited and his comprehension less wide.

O divine joy of the perfection in which one touches the prime substance of creatures, is pierced by vibrations of the radiant intelligence, is merged in the ineffable love which sustains the world!

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She[1] looked so intensely at the horizon, the horizon of the Eastern sea on which the windows of the Ashram open! When she kept herself seated in the prow of the ship, I believe I saw her prayer materialised above her like an aura of sapphire mist.

All that she told me about the life of the soul had a profound resonance. Like a magician who with a want makes flowers break open in the barren earth, she gave birth in me to beautifully coloured thoughts.

It is always doubt that one utters with the greatest of ardours, for doubt is more living than faith and more avid of utterance. But her faith was so intense that as soon as I expressed a doubt before her, she dispelled it, without vain words, with nothing save that inexpressible warmth which comes from the hearth of the soul.

But a fire of such a nature, does it not get burnt up just because one warms oneself with the flame? According as my faith increased, it seemed to me that there was something in her which grew faint. And when my aspiration towards the spirit reached its highest point, a breath of dryness passed over her and brought her a mysterious despair.

Doubt is a sickness of the soul which periodically returns like certain fevers. O Master, cast a look on her who has generously poured the invisible riches. Penetrate her with your creative thought so that from now on she may carry certitude just as a warrior carries an enchanted sword by which he is saved from evil. Grant her the talisman which gives the unchangeable virtue of belief. It is she who deserves the gift of the Master, if it is true that faithful hearts should be the first and that sincere enthusiasm is superior to all knowledge.

(To be continued)

MAURICE MAGRE

(Translated by K. D. Sethna from the original French)

[1] Editor's Note: Here the author seems to refer to one who accompanied him to Pondicherry as secretary and nurse.

FROM AUROVILLE TO ANY INDIAN

A LETTER

Dear Brother,

I want to write to you from Auroville—the unborn city which 'belongs to no-one in particular', which 'belongs to humanity as a whole' which yet is rooted in India, not only physically (for it stands in the State of Tamil Nadu, about 7 km north of Pondicherry) but, with greater importance, spiritually,for it owes its conception to the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and was founded by the Mother of his Ashram in 1968. But what to convey to you?

First of all, gratitude; warm, deep-felt gratitude. What other country in the world, in this age of tension and suspicion between nations, could have the sincere, trusting, open-hearted generosity to give hospitality to an experimental project whose declared aim is to become an international township, beyond all national claims and rights—belonging to humanity as a whole? Coming from the West, I know well how impossible it would have been for this experiment to have been started in the U.S. or in any of the European countries, even the most well-intentioned—and we can all imagine its fate had it been attempted in any of the Communist countries. Yet here it is possible. Mother India, who has so often received with her characteristic warmth and tolerance the outcasts and homeless, the wanderers and seekers of different kinds, from all over our planet, opened her arms again.

Perhaps it is unwise, the prudent may object, to be so welcoming. Perhaps India should scrutinise her guests more carefully before giving them the freedom of her house. Maybe—but in the past she has shown herself resilient enough, secure enough in her own unique identity to seize the best that all her guests could give her, whether they came as refugees or conquerors. Always in the end it has been she who has conquered, enriching her own many-sided culture with the new stimuli they brought. For me, this ability to receive and synthesise, to harmonise and re-form, is the genius of India—and it is the product of her innate spiritual strength.

For a European like myself it is saddening to meet highly educated cultured Indians who have mentally turned their backs on their spiritual heritage because they see it as merely ritualistic religion, a meaningless relic of an obsolete past. They have turned to more materialistic Western idols, unaware that the greatest figure of this century is an Indian, who after receiving a thoroughly Western education, turned back to the ancient well-springs of his native culture to find the basis for the inspiring synthesis of oriental and occidental, spiritual and material insights which will guide the evolution of world culture into the coming era of human unity. Sri Aurobindo is known in India as a freedom-fighter and revered as a spiritual figure in the vast Pantheon of the nation's sages and seers, but the astonishing newness of his vision, the message that gives a clue to the Future, is apparently attracting more attention among the youth of the West than in this country.

And yet this vision is so sorely needed here. The country is full of energetic,

idealistic young people, who are wasting their energies in futile rebellion, or in more futile pleasure-seeking, for lack of the ideal which can inspire them to lay down their lives in the service of the Motherland and the race. It must be discouraging for elders who had the burning ideal of national liberation as a battle-cry to see their children leading such aimless lives. And for a westerner who has rejected the materialistic preoccupations of her own culture, it is disappointing to see that the major dynamism in India to day is directed to the commercial sphere. This is more than a national concern. As an Indian, you may be troubled at the disunity and other obstacles to progress which retard the nation's growth, but for us the whole future of the human race depends on the health of India.

'Whatsoever the Best doeth, that the rest of the folk put into practice; the standard He creates the people follow,' says Sri Krishna. India is destined to be the Guru of the world, and the world is beginning to recognise that ancient truth. If India cannot give the example, from where will it come? Speaking more practically we can say that since many of the world's problems are seen in their most acute forms in India, if once they can be demonstrably solved here, this decisive step will represent a tremendous progress for the whole world. And since the rational and scientific mind is beginning to recognise its limitations, its inability to solve the pressing practical problems that face humanity today, perhaps it would be worthwhile examining more carefully an approach which brings a higher level of consciousness, another type of power, to bear on our material world.

Indians have spoken to me about the 'spiritual' and the 'secular' aspects of the life of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, and they see Auroville perhaps as a development of the 'secular' side. This is a fundamental misconception. The Mother has said, 'The opposition between spirituality and material life, the division between the two, has no sense for me, as in truth life and the spirit are one and it is in and by the physical work that the highest spirit must be manifested.' It is the will to express the highest spiritual consciousness in the most external dealings with matter, which has led the Sri Aurobindo Ashram to develop industries, shops and farms, as well as an education system which places great emphasis on physical development. It is the same will which has led to the attempt to build a city, which not only in the minds and bodies of its inhabitants, but in its very buildings, gardens and open spaces will be 'the embodiment of an actual human unity'. The only way in which true human unity can be known and expressed in matter will be by the realisation in a community of people of the Divine Unity which is vast enough to encompass and enjoy all our diversities.

A high aim, you may say—an ideal beyond our reach. But it is ideals that are most needed in the world today—ideals so high, so out of reach that the attempt to reach them lifts us right out of our present limitations into the future realisations. How else are we to make true progress, a true betterment of the life of the race—not merely an increased affluence which satisfies no-one?

Anyway, attracted by these ideals, and above all by the opportunity to work towards their realisation, 400 people, roughly half and half Indians and Westerners,

have come together on this scrap of earth which 'belongs to no-one in particular' to make the attempt. We have left our homes, our families, our security, our comfortable cultural formations, and find ourselves in a larger home, a wider family, another culture, dictated by our ideal. But though we have left all those things, not without a wrench of the heart perhaps, but easily enough, simply by taking a train or a plane, it has not been so easy to leave behind the human limitations, the egoism, the little mental habits we must painfully outgrow, together...for we must beome the living cells of one organism, motivated by one all-encompassng aspiration. This process, the individual and communal sadhana, takes time. And we are not allowed the luxury of a hermitage, a secluded retreat, for we have a city to build, with hard physical labour and conscious effort. So the process is slow, slower than we thought; and we have no choice but to go on, for there is nothing left to us in the world but this—to work for the realisation of the dream.

And whatever progress is made here, is first of all for India. How? On the most material plane it's obvious—if a successful industry or farm, a new technique or approach in education is developed here, the whole region benefits. Economically speaking, there have already been some benefits to the surrounding local population. But that would be meaningless if at the same time a stable social structure were being broken down and nothing put in its place. But just as we, the residents of Auroville, stimulate one another to overpass our limitations, whether by encouragement or by friction, similarly new horizons of possible effort and achievement have been opened up to young villagers simply by the existence of an international community on their doorstep, and a new spirit of endeavour has entered the static rural situation. Such a spirit can spread like a forest fire from one village to another throughout the country.

India, with the longest unbroken line of culture of all nations, mighty and rich in her past achievements, has still a master role to play in the development of humanity. It is the sense of this greatness that has given force to India's prestigious role in international statesmanship. But her situation at home still draws perplexed compassion from the rest of the world. Who can solve India's problems? It will be by the liberation of her own inner resources, at present locked up in stereotyped social moulds and in individuals who are prevented from realising their full potential by faulty education and lack of incentive or opportunity to develop and express themselves, that India's problems will be solved. That liberation can begin wherever Indians feel and affirm the value of their unique heritage; it can only be completed by the fusion of values at present dichotomised into Eastern and Western, spiritual and material, intuitive and rational—the synthesis which, Sri Aurobindo tells us, was the foundation of India's ancient greatness, and which must become the guiding light of the future world.

What young India needs is the ideal which can draw all her manifold richness into one upward-pointing effort. What the world needs is India united in the expression of her highest ideal. The ideal has been stated. Auroville is to provide a field where it can be worked out in the most mundane, practical details of

everyday existence, in a way which has meaning for every human being. Auroville's realisations will be communicated to the world by their expression in the life of the Indian nation.

So far the effort here has been in-turned, concentrated; we have been so occupied with the engrossing task of physically establishing a base, that we have been mostly oblivious to the world around us. But it is time for things to change, and they are changing. We in Auroville are feeling strongly the impulsion to turn around, to express our gratitude for the unique opportunity we have been given and to express something of what we have been doing, something of what we feel has been achieved. In the spring of 1975 the first groups of students from Indian universities came for visits of 'Auroville Discovery', of work and exploration with Aurovillians. Now the programme continues in each vacation. It is a small beginning, but the experience confirms our conviction that more interchange with young India will be valuable on both sides, at every level.

Dear Brother, I have spoken with you very intimately, but I think you will understand. I have had a love affair with India since my first hour here, more than ten years ago. Now I understand that, like many love affairs, this one is based on an affinity of souls. It is the soul of India which must nourish Auroville, and mine is privileged to be a part of Auroville's growth—so you, whoever you are, are truly my brother, for we are both nourished by the same Mother. And we can only truly fulfil ourselves in Her service—*Vande Mataram*!

SHRADDHAVAN

A BIRTHDAY PROPHECY

(*Written to accompany a Kangra Ragmala painting*)

Beauty shall bear with love in her delicate hands
The dream-enraptured music of your mind,
And you shall fly to laughter-fragrant lands
Where wonder drifts on the dim wild winds of time,
Where through the silver vastness of the sky
Silence shall sing her murmuring swift-winged joy,
And tenderness raise a silken-quiet eye
To the flames that sweep across your heart's white shores.

2.2.1976 JEAN

RAMA, RAVANA, LANKA

LEGITIMATE SPECULATIONS AND DUBIOUS CONJECTURES

(*Continued from the issue of March 1976*)

5

As regards the chronology of the Ramayana, there are two issues involved. The first is the date of the events reported as if historical. The second is the date of the *Ur* version, which for us is Valmiki's epic poem. In Sankalia's view,[1] we have no certainty for the first issue: "if we place any reliance on the dynastic history as reconstructed from the Puranas by Pargiter and Pusalker or from the coordination of the Vedic and Puranic data by Pradhan, Bhargava and others, then the foundation of Ayodhya and other sites in U.P. and Bihar might be placed around *c.* 1700 B.C. and the birth of Rama in the Iksvaku dynasty about 1500 B.C. But this is pure speculation. Unless Ayodhya is excavated and a reliable time-table obtained it is not profitable to say anything about its antiquity."

On the *Ur* Ramayana, which for Sankalia is a group of ballads anterior to Valmiki's time, his upper limit is marked by the reference to "ayasa" in the poem. Sankalia[2] declares: "...ayasa in the Ramayana definitely means iron and not copper. Otherwise we would not have been told in the Ayodhyakanda, after the scene when Kaikeyi insisted on Sita's donning *valkala* and *chira* and removing her silk sari, someone said that the heart of Rama's mother seemed to be made of iron. For iron (*ayasa*) here like stone is hard, and not soft like copper." With "ayasa" understood as iron, Sankalia's chronology is easily fixed: "...in our present knowledge, it is not possible to date the first introduction of iron in Northern India, and particularly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, before 800 B.C. This might be the time when the Ramayana was first composed."

We are afraid the conclusions in both issues intrinsically shaky. If we go by the Puranic chronology we shoot far beyond 1500 B.C. for Rama. For the central date there is of the alleged Kaliyuga: 3102 B.C. This date marks the death of Krishna, the abdication of Yudhishthira and the coronation of his nephew Parikshit. We are at the tail-end of the age of the Bharata War. Rama should be centuries earlier. We may not credit the Puranic computation, but we have to keep a fair distance between the Bharata War and the events of the Ramayana. Pusalkar,[3] trying to co-ordinate Puranic data with modern historical affirmations, dates the Bharata War to *c.* 1400 B.C.

[1] *Ramayana: Myth or Reality?* (People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1973), p. 61.
[2] Pp. 60-61.
[3] *The Vedic Age* edited by R. C Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker (London, 1951), p. 269.

One of the intervals the Puranas put between the birth of Parikshit during the War and the coronation of Mahapadma Nanda is 1015 years. Adjudging it reasonable and working back from F. E. Pargiter's 382 B.C. for Nanda, Pusalker reaches 1397 B.C. for the War. Nanda, in R. K. Mookerji's more modern historical scheme,[1] comes at 364 B.C. So the War would occur in 1379 B.C. There is not much of a difference. And Rama, receding into still remoter antiquity, would have his return to Ayodhya more or less where Pusalkar[2] sets it: 1950 B.C., that is, 571 years earlier. If we favour the longest instead of the shortest interval the Puranas permit, this event would stand at (364+1500+571=) 2435 B.C.

Coming to "ayasa", we may point out that copper is not the sole alternative to iron. The word is as old as the Rigveda and, as we may gather from *The Vedic Index of Names and Subjects* by A. A. Macdonnel and A. B. Keith,[3] the most likely sense there seems to be "bronze". We may note that the Latin counterpart of the word—namely, *aes*—always connotes "bronze" and that the typical quality of bronze comes out in Horace's famous line about his own poetry: "Exegi monumentum aere perennius"—"I have built a monument more durable than bronze." The same sense strikes us in Sri Aurobindo's phrase[4] about King Aswapathy:

> He made great dreams a mould for coming things
> And cast his deeds like bronze to front the years.

Bronze is a strong hard metal and would fit excellently the Ramayana's statement on Kaikeyi's heart. Hence the *Ur* Ramayana could easily be much earlier than 800 B.C. Traditional history[5] makes Valmiki, who was called Prachetasa, a contemporary of Rama and therefore his poem as old as 1950 or 2435 B.C.

There are some other chronological clues, submitted by Sankalia, to several later ages for various parts of the epic. In the passage we have just dealt with, as in a number of places elsewhere, Sita's "silk sari" is mentioned. Sankalia[6] informs us that Chinese silk was introduced into India in the period from the first century B.C. to the first century A.D. If Kautilya's Arthasastra could be dated to *c.* 324-300 B.C. and if the sutra referring to silk (*Chinapatta*) and to China (*Chinabhumi*) is not a later interpolation, Sita's silk sari can be as early as that time. But surely archaeology has something more to say? On May 12, 1966, in answer to a query of mine, Sankalia was good enough to write to me about his finds at Nevasa, District Ahmednagar: "Silk was found in a copper necklace along with one string of cotton. C-14 for this is about 1100 B.C. This has been confirmed by Shri A. Gulati, an expert on the subject. But he thinks that the silk may not be of Chinese origin." Recently, in an article, "The Dawn of Civilisation in Maharashtra", in the *Sunday Standard*, Madras,

[1] *The Age of Imperial Unity*, edited by R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1952), p. 37.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 294.

[3] John Murray and Co , London, 1912, Vol. I. pp. 31-32.

[4] *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1970). p. 45

[5] *The Vedic Age*, p. 293.

[6] Pp 57, 70-71 (Note 31).

(January 4, 1976, p. 7. col. 3), Sankalia refers to the same silk of Nevasa. There it is said to be "as early as 1200 B.C."

Sankalia makes much also of the ring Rama gave to Hanuman for Sita. The ring is said to have been inscribed with Rama's name. Sankalia[1] writes: "...an archaeologist would inquire: how did Hanuman acquire a ring bearing the letters 'Rama'? For as far as we know, all the earlier rings in India, from about 2500 B.C. to the first century B.C., are all simple round wires of copper, bronze or terracotta (those of gold seem to have disappeared). No ring, except the one from Harappa, has a bezel, i.e. a flat broad space on which the name can be inscribed So all these early rings are without any name. Signet rings, i.e. rings bearing the wearer's name, usually of a king, were first introduced by the Indo-Greeks who ruled in North-Western India, at times up to Kausambi, in the latter part of the second century and early part of the first century B.C. This being the origin of the signet finger-ring in India, its use in the Ramayana and even Shakuntala by Valmiki and Kalidasa respectively should be normally a century or two later."

Our immediate retort could be: "Rama's ring, being of a royal personage, was surely of gold. If all gold rings have disappeared, how can we assert that they had no bezels?" Royal signet-rings were common to early civilisations. For instance, signet-rings of Queen Hatshepsut and King Tuthmosis III of Egypt, both of whom flourished in *c.* 1500-1450 B.C., were found in the tombs excavated at Jericho by J. Garstang.[2] The absence of such rings in our discoveries of early Indian remains may not really constitute negative evidence. All we can truly infer is that bezels were not in general vogue in much of early India. However, from Sankalia's own information a retort on a more positive level can arise: "If a bezelled ring, providing space for lettering, is as old in India as *c.* 2500 B.C., why should we wait till the Indo-Greeks of *c.* 150-50 B.C. for a reference to a signet-ring in the Ramayana?" Nor is the suggestion here of the time of the Harappa Culture the only one in the Ramayana. Sankalia,[3] basing himself on the poem's text, tells us about Lanka: "Inside, the city (*puri*) was divided like a chessboard by roads (*suvibhaktam patha*)..." Now, in his recent masterly survey, *The Prehistory and Protohistory of India and Pakistan*,[4] he lists among "the typical Harappan features" "a city...laid like a chessboard, with arterial roads and lanes..." The chessboard pattern of city-planning was neglected in India after the end of the Harappa Culture. It is thought-provoking that Lanka should have been endowed with it by Valmiki. And it is curious that, like this pattern, the pattern of the bezelled ring—so far at least as common usage was concerned—was also neglected in India between *c.* 1500 (the end of the Harappa Culture, by Sankalia's own estimate[5]) and the advent of the Indo-Greeks in the latter part of the second century B.C. Thus

[1] P. 56.
[2] *The Story of Jericho* (London, 1940), pp. 113-25.
[3] P. 5.
[4] Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute, Poona, 1974, p. 347, col. 2.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 280, col. 2.

both Ravana and Rama appear to have, in different ways, a typical touch of the Harappan epoch.

It is tempting to put the *Ur* Ramayana in the period 2500-1500 B.C.—just the period suggested by the Puranic tradition co-ordinated with the modern dating of Mahapadma Nanda. We may also remember Vas's word which we quoted earlier:[1] "Ravana, the epic king of Lanka who is believed to have ruled over the island some four thousand to five thousand years ago..." They carry us to the earlier of the two dates we have reached by counting backwards from Nanda's coronation: 2435 B.C.

At any rate we should be justified in suspending assent to the sundry chronological inferences Sankalia draws from topics in the poem. The problem of chronology, in both its aspects, is a rather complicated one. And, from what we have before us, it is not possible to refuse considerable antiquity to the poem's events as well as to its composition. We should also refrain from doubting, with an eye focused on the idea of a petty fight in a forest near Jabalpur, the general and fundamental historicity at the base of the vast vision Valmiki poetises of a momentous confrontation between great imperial embodiments of the godlike and the demonic, with a *grand finale* of war in ancient Ceylon.

(*Concluded*)

Postscript

According to Sankalia, Rama's status as an avatar is rather late in India. He[2] says that, "though Visnu worship became popular under the Early Guptas (*c.* A.D. 350), as yet Rama was not worshipped as a god or as Visnu." He[3] adds: "The early Cholas, the successors of the Pallavas, do not yet seem to have taken to Rama worship, but it was not far now .. Rama worship is of a considerably late date and in South India not earlier than the 10th century A.D."

Here we may bring to notice a very knowledgeable article by V. R. Mani, "Deification of Rama", in the *Hindu* of March 13, 1966 (p. III of Magazine Section, cols. 1 and 2). After stating the current stand, Mani writes:

"A careful examination of the available evidence, literary and archaeological, would, however, demonstrate that the divinity of Rama was recognised as early as the early centuries of the Christian era and that there was a well developed cult centering round him.

"Kalidasa's mention of Rama as Hari (*Ramabhidano Hari*) in the *Raghuvamsa* and the narration [Canto X] in the same work of the promise of Vishnu to be born as a son of Dasaratha for the destruction of Ravana clearly indicate that during the Gupta period Rama was conceived of as a god. The *Ahananuru* and *Purananuru*, the ancient

[1] *Mother India*, March 1976, p. 196.
[2] P. 53.
[3] P. 54.

Tamil Sangham classics, make reference to Rama but it is in the *Silappadikaram* [before 7th century A.D.] that we come across an explicit mention of his avatarhood; it is said in this work that the feet that measured the universe in the Vamanavatara walked in forests in the Ramavatara indicating the contemporary recognition of Rama as an incarnation and a god. Many an early Alvar and Nayanmar, Vaishnava and Saiva devotional hymnists, refer in their compositions to several incidents in the life of Rama while Kulasekharalvar has rendered the Ramayana in twenty verses.

"An inscription in the Adivaraha cave temple at Mahabalipuram, incised in florid Pallava Grantha characters and hence assignable to the seventh-eighth centuries, enumerates in order all the incarnations including that of Rama...

"The decline of the Pallavas and the rise of the Cholas in the latter half of the ninth century appear to have synchronised with a new impetus given to the worship of Rama in the Tamil country. For it is during this period that we come across numerous epigraphical references testifying to the popularity and extent of the Rama cult. An inscription from Pulalur in the Chingleput District, dated in the thirty-fourth year of Chola Parantaka, refers to a shrine of Sri Raghava in the temple of Tiruvayoddhi at Pulvelur in Eyirkottam.

"An early Rajakesari inscription from Alangudi in the Thanjavur District records the gift of land for offerings to Raghavaperumal at Irumbulai in Simhavishnu Chaturvedemangalam. A Parakesari record from Uttiramerur in the Chingleput District speaks of a gift of land to Tiruvayodhyai Perumandagal, evidently Rama. An inscription of Rajaraja I, from Ammangudi in the Thanjavur District refers to the reconstruction (indicating thereby that the temple was anterior to the period of that king) of a shrine under the name Tiruvayoddhi to Ramadevapperumal and consecration of the image of the deity therein besides an endowment of land for offerings, worship and lamps to the god. A very early epigraph of the Pandya ruler Maranjadaiyan Varaguna II mentions a gift to Raghavapperumanadigal.

"The picture presented by these copious epigraphical references is supplemented and corroborated by the happily extant metal images of Rama assignable to different phases of the early Chola period. The idols under worship in the temples at Paruthiyur and Tirucherai, both in the Thanjavur District, and the image from Vadakkupanaoyur in the same district which is at present on display in the National Art Gallery, Madras, are the most remarkable examples of the deity rendered in metal..."

No doubt, we observe, as Mani is not hesitant to admit, "the absence of any reference to Rama in Patanjali's *Mahabhashya*, in the lexicon of Amarasimha in his scheme of gods and in several early inscriptions which speak of other incarnations". These *lacunae* are strange, but the evidence Mani has marshalled is enough to counteract the hasty inference that there was no Ramaite sect in early times.

The allusion which Mani has cited from Kalidasa has a point beyond the one he has in mind. Kalidasa is mostly taken to have flourished under the third of the Imperial Guptas, Chandragupta II, usually dated to 375-414 A.D. But a persistent tradition places him in the Ist century B.C. in the reign of a king named Vikramaditya,

by whom or in whose honour the Vikrama Era of 57 B.C. was founded. One of our best historians, R. C. Majumdar,[1] withholds final judgment. He says that the only thing certain is that Kalidasa "must have flourished after Agnimitra (c. 150 B.C.), who is the hero of one of his dramas", and most probably before 450 A.D. since "competent scholars" hold that "some verses in the Mandasor inscription of A.D. 475 indicate knowledge of Kalidasa's works". About the usual dating of Kalidasa, namely, "the end of the fourth century A.D.", Majumdar states: "we must admit that the evidence adduced in support of it is neither definite, nor direct and decisive" So the Rama cult could easily be much more ancient than even Manı claims.

To the question why we do not hear of it in contexts like Patanjali and Amarasimha, we may oppose the query: "Although Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the Indian king 'Sandrocottus'who has been taken as Asoka's grandfather Chandragupta Maurya, attests to a wide-spread cult of Vasudeva Krishna, why does Asoka breathe no word about it in his numerous inscriptions where he mentions several religious practices and denominations?" There are always certain anomalies in the mention and non-mention of things. We have to take all relevant items in a totality and then come to a conclusion.

The sanest conclusion here is that the worship of Rama is fairly old, as the idea of Rama's avatarhood is as old as Valmiki's Ramayana. But perhaps the cult was for a long time more private than public. Also we must realise that the common chronological hunt is in regard to Rama as one of Vishnu's incarnations; but D.C. Sircar[2] rightly asks us to remember "in connection with the *Avatāra* theory that the deification and worship of the incarnations are earlier than their identifications with Vishnu".

K. D. SETHNA

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[1] In the section on Kalıdasa ın *The Classıcal Age*, edited by R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalkar (Bharatiya Vıdya Bhavan Bombay, 1954), p. 303.

[2] In the section on Vaishnavism in *Ibıd.*, p. 415.

SHELLEY—THE POET OF AHIMSA

Too much Shelley criticism has been biography in disguise. The contradictions and controversies of his life are apparently inexhaustible; but his poetry is not so closely bound up with circumstance as Wordsworth's or Byron's. Daily experience shaped and altered their thought; to Shelley it meant little. He is the solitary intellectual. His ideas come from his own mental processes, from study, from visions of the future or dreams of the past, not from the world around him; and he pays the penalty by isolation from the world. A sentimentalised picture of him has often obscured his sheer intellectual attainments.

His poetry is interwoven with innumerable threads of earlier literature, of philosophy, of science. Hence all critics and readers approach him with their own points of view. His poetry is encyclopaedic. It contains all kinds of thoughts provided we have a vision to see them. It appears strange to call Shelley a non-violent poet. But the great apostle of non-violence in India often quoted the following lines from Shelley's poem: *The Mask of Anarchy*:

Let them ride among you there,
Slash, and stab, and maim and hew
What they like, that let them do.

With folded arms and steady eyes,
And little fear and less surprise,
Look upon them as they slay
Till their rage has died away."

As a matter of fact, Shelley addressed these lines to the "Men of England" soon after the Peterloo massacre of the year 1819 when a large gathering of men, women, children, assembled peacefully in St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, to demand a reform of Parliament, was ruthlessly charged by the military under the orders of a nervous and foolish magistracy and dispersed, leaving more than 600 persons lying dead and wounded on the ground. The reform of Parliament was overdue and came in 1832. But a helpless crowd had to meet death before the reform could come.

In order to follow the significance of the above lines it is necessary that we should take into account the last lines of the poem:

Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number.
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you—
We are many—they are few.

Obviously it appears as if these last lines were a call for an armed insurrection on the part of the people against the myrmidons of a tyrannical administration. But Shelley was not an advocate of violence. He was addressing a united, brave people with traditions of freedom and democracy, and asking them to realise their strength

and the cruel humiliation inflicted on the nation but to meet the offenders non-violently. Love binds the Universe; and this great romantic poet Shelley asked Englishmen to act with love and forgiveness towards the offenders. It was the non-resistance of the strong that he taught.

It was not a new thing that he practised. The Holy Bible says: "If somebody smites thee on thy right cheek, turn thy left." This teaching has long been known to Indians as the teaching of 'Ahimsa'. Their history stands as testimony that much earlier than Tolstoi or Thoreau or even Jesus Christ, the Jain Tirthankar Lord Mahavira laid great stress on Ahimsa. Jainism begins with "Ahiṁsā paramo dharmaḥ, yato dharmastato jayaḥ." ("अहिंसा परमो धर्म, यतो धर्मस्ततो जय."). Ahimsa teaches not the supine non-resistance of the weak but the non-resistance of the strong due to the outpouring of love. Swami Vivekananda, no disciple of Tolstoi or Thoreau, said of 'Ahimsa', long before Gandhiji:

"Buddha gave up his throne and renounced his position, that was true renunciation: but there cannot be any question of renunciation in the case of a beggar who has nothing to renounce. So, we must always be careful about what we really mean when we speak of this non-resistance and ideal love. We must first take care to understand whether we have the power of resistance or not. Then, having the power, if we renounce it and do not resist, we are doing a great act of love" (*Lectures on Karma Yoga*).

How, it may be asked, did Shelley come to preach this doctrine of 'Ahimsa' of far-off India? It was by the transformation, or rather the sublimation, by him of the theory of Necessity he had imbibed in his youth from Godwin.

It is not necessary to write in detail about Godwin's theory of Necessity. In his *Political Justice*, edition of 1793, Godwin wrote as follows:

"If we form a just and complete view of all the circumstances in which a living or intelligent being is placed, we shall find that he could not, in any moment of his existence, have acted otherwise than he has acted."

From this Godwin drew the inference that we should not "entertain resentment, indignation and anger against those who fall into the commission of vice." Shelley absorbed this teaching and taught it in his earlier poems. In *Queen Mab*, written in his 18th year, he deified Necessity and wrote thus:

> Necessity, thou mother of the world!
> Unlike the God of human error, thou
> Requirest no prayers or praises.

It is important to mention that the doctrine of Necessity should not be confounded with Fatalism. A fatalist believes that certain main points in the chain of events of a man's life are pre-ordained but would concede free will to man with regard to the intermediate points. But the Necessitarian believes that the whole chain of events, as well as every link in the chain, is pre-ordained and follows the universal law of causation. Thus, a fatalist may blame a judge for sentencing him to life imprisonment, because, according to the contention of the fatalist, the murder was done under inner

compulsion and he had no choice of action. But the Necessitarian does not blame the judge, for, if the murder was done as an act of necessity, the judge's order was also passed as an act of necessity. As Leslie Stephen says in his *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, with reference to the doctrine of Necessity:

"Like an atmosphere pressing equally in all directions, it leaves the previous equilibrium unaltered."

The doctrine suggested to Shelley non-resentment of evil done and therefore non-violence against it. But by denying free will to man, it saps the foundations of morality and makes a mechanized automaton of man. So Shelley soon outgrew this uninteresting and soul-less creed.

He also reacted against the Calvinistic theology which prevailed in his time and which, according to him spoke of a jealous anthropomorphic Deity wielding thunderbolts and lightning and ordaining the 'reprobation' of the greater part of mankind. Shelley thought of a God of love pervading the Universe and said:

> The Spirit of the worm beneath the sod
> In love and worship blends itself with God. (*Epipsychidion*)

Again, addressing the Spirit of Love, he wrote:

> Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all
> We can desire, O Love!.....
> Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls
> Investeth it; and when the heavens are blue
> Thou fillest them. (*Prince Athanase*)

Shelley was deeply affected by the teaching of love and suffering in the New Testament with its narration of the crucified Christ. Consequently, he thought of the highest duty of man as being to forgive his enemies and act through love. It is the main teaching of *Prometheus Unbound*. Prometheus was a Titan and a god. By befriending the human race, he offended Zeus, who had him chained to the rocks of the Indian Caucasus where the Furies sent by the tyrant inflicted cruel tortures on him, including the nailing of him to a cross. But, being a god, Prometheus knew his strength, he could not be killed. At first, unable to bear the tortures, he cursed Zeus, saying there would come an hour when Zeus would fall from his seat in heaven through boundless space and time. But, later, Prometheus felt sorry for the curse, saying:

> It doth repent me: words are quick and vain;
> Grief for a while is blind, and so was mine,
> I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

The curse of a god, however, cannot go in vain. The hour struck and down went Zeus into the abyss, dragged by Demogorgan, the Greek Yama, the embodiment of the principle of Justice.

In regard to this teaching of Shelley, and in respect of the Hindu doctrine of 'Ahimsa', one may ask, "Is not life sacred? Is it not the duty of man to save his own life when attacked by a cruel foe? Is not this duty higher even than the principle of loving

one's enemy?" Shelley replies in the final address of Demogorgan to Prometheus:

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite:
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love and bear....
This, like thy glory, Titan is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.

The upholder of the Ahimsa-doctrine would say: "The purpose of life is to achieve that state of spirituality which would exercise love towards all, even towards enemies. It is just possible that by or during the exercise of our love, the enemy may be converted and may repent; or, it is possible that retributive justice may overtake him in the shape of Demogorgan. But, in our exercise of love, even if our bodies are slain, what does it matter when the goal of earthly life has been achieved and life everlasting has been secured?"

It cannot be denied that the theory of love is too heavenly a regimen for ordinary mortals. It is said about Confucius that, accepting this, when asked by a disciple if it was not his duty to return good for evil, Confucius answered: "If you return good for evil, with what will you recompense good? Recompense good with good, and evil with justice."

So far as Hinduism is concerned, while prescribing 'Ahimsa' as the duty of the spiritually advanced men who have universal love in their hearts, Hinduism recognises the fact of men being in various evolutionary stages and prescribes different duties for different classes of men. Swami Vivekananda briefly puts the teachings of Hinduism in the following words:

"Our duty is to encourage everyone in his struggle to live up to his own highest ideal, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the truth."

This may be called a compromise of the highest truth; but it is indispensable in the present stage of the evolution of the human race. In fact, the greatest advocates of the principles of non-violence and love have been found to commit themselves to action involving a compromise of those high principles. Has it not been said of Gandhiji that he gave up his pacifism to defeat the aggressive ends of Japan? And Shelley, too, was prepared for a similar compromise. H. S. Salt, a biographer, quoting a passage from Shelley, writes about him: "He did not disguise his belief that if the aristocracy and plutocracy set themselves stubbornly against the introduction of reforms, a forcible remedy would be justifiable."

Thus the conditions of human life are not ignored by those who may be classed amongst idealists and visionaries, even when they uphold for a future consummation the principle of an all-encompassing love. Shelley developed from being a dreamer into a mind of wide understanding no less than vast sympathy. He had his eyes open to both the earthly and the heavenly and sought to *evolve* the latter instead of superimposing it on the former

ADARSH BALA

THE TWO OCEANS WERE PERFECTLY DIVIDED

On the left was an ocean, a deep ocean, from which, if I looked, the monsters
immediately responded,
reaching over to nibble for crumbs from my conservative right hand
which, treacherous as knowledge, struck them with sky lightning.
There was no reconciling the two.
Only rumours drifted from one ocean to the other.
Someone was always there on guard, even when I slept.
One day I looked down from a great height.
Perhaps I dreamt it:
I was a door locked twice.
The door had to be removed and so I set to work
rocking the great bronze thing with all my might.
But it was anchored in my breastbone
so that every time I crashed against it
the noise deafened and confused me
with threats of extinction.

Extinction of what ? I asked.
It settled back suddenly on its hinges
trying to be hermetic and dark with threat and innuendo,
an ambiguous door that wanted to sleep and keep its place in life.

I cannot do this by myself, I said.
I summoned up depths and skies,
whipped up a cyclone which uprooted trees and toppled mountains.
Rip up this door, I cried.
On this door I have founded my church, said an evil voice.
It sounded like mine.
I felt like ending the nightmare.
It was becoming so scary I could hardly stand.
I began having visions of bones and deserts
and only the great door standing triumphant,
moving a little on its hinges,
laughing with a rusty sound that tore like a fish hook inside me.
I knew now what to do.

It was a spiteful thing to do to a door that had guarded me all my life.
I would die.
And the thing stuck in my breastbone would rot,
the hinges, corroded, dribble away in tiny metal filings.

The door would stand a while, wedged in the sand,
proud, impenetrable,
a great malevolent guarding giant.
Then a deep current would come and knock it flat.
A door on its face is no door, but a stepping stone.
Someone would step across.

I braced myself.
Now,
in the first moment I tottered.
Anguish rose in me like a monster from the troubled ocean of the west.
In my delirium I remembered. I must die.
I wrenched once, tensed against my agony, then wrenched again.
It was too late now.
A great burning carved my breast.

The door, even as if forever swayed forward, dwindled,
burst into flames
and, grimacing, melted into the sand.
When it had vanished something glittered at my feet.
I picked up the watery white jewel, placed it in my forehead and waited.
There was no horizon.
From all sides the oceans of the universe flowed towards me.
Softly they entered me
and I rode into my harbour
with, sweeter than sirens', two voices singing.
One sang: The earth is one.
The other sang: The earth has won.
The songs welded.

MAGGI

EAST–WEST

(The poet, in a letter, writes about this sonnet-sequence: "Its structure—lest it be not apparent—is as follows:

I: Personal introduction
II: The East's symbol—dancing Nataraja
III: The East—its strength
IV: The East—its weakness
V: The West's symbol—the Cross
VI: The West—its weakness
VII: The West—its strength
VIII: Personal conclusion.

I

THIS spirit's of the East; the body, self-
Indulgent, sybaritic, of the West:
We daily celebrate our marriage rite
Within an artifacted study-den
Where a silver Cross, an Aurobindonian shelf,
A Buddha-head, a line of books addressed
To Indiaphiles bespeak an appetite
For transcendental things; where the paper, pen
And spectacles of him who versifies
Wait cozily by a well-upholstered chair;
Where tea in hand the slippered poet tries
To compass Nataraja's cosmic dance
Upon an Apollonian page, to bear
The bliss of Shiva's Bacchic countenance.

II

The bronze god steps his dance within the gyre
Of flame which haloes him. To a grave spondee
His drum beats forth all worlds; one lifted hand
Of calm "Fear not!" affirms sustaining love,
Another's spark destroys the slave-desire
Of his creatured universe; the raised foot, free
Of earth in that immortal saraband,
Acquaints the soul with its release. Above
The mental dwarf, above the lotus born
From a silted sleep he poises in a trance
Of metahuman ecstasy: a scorn
Of things bemused by maya's name and form
Begets the lordly brow, the yogic stance
Of him who measures his corona's storm.

III

Before the eyes of those who peered to see
His shadow wing across their bookish stall
Or who unleashed the energies of youth
To track Him down unworded avenues,
He steps His radiant epiphany:
A godhead's joy in the timeless play, the all-
Encompassing game, the orgiastic truth,
The finely shuttled threads which interfuse
The opposites; a circling self's delight
In the trinities of Birth-Fruition-Death,
Sat-Chit-Ananda—life's rhapsodic ground,
The one Transcendent-Cosmic-Bodied breath.
Man's dreams of total verity are crowned
In Him, the heavenly hermaphrodite.

IV

But in such deeps we drown: the dewdrop slips
Indeed, as it has dreamed, into the sea.
Thus India: her sannyāsins, her seers,
Her God-intoxicated sons of light
Reserved their immemorial censorships
For the parted individuality,
The slave-samsāric soul that re-appears
On earth, illusioned, not to sweat its fight
Against the faceless ONE, but slowly learn
To quench all separateness. The psychic spark
Withdrew into the heavenly fire—"O burn
My selfhood's dross!"—and left to history
The suffering pragmatists who missed the mark
By loving Man more than the Mystery.

V

The Cross: the ineluctable signature
Of a Western god, some male divinity
In whose beginning was the Act; who raged
Against both circling Three and static One;
Who slashing twice upon the Void, the pure
Unmanifest, a blank Virginity,
In that self-sacrificial sign assuaged
His lust for the truth that nothing has been done
Until the Opposites have brought to birth
From out their marriage-death a holy Third—
Creative synthesis of heaven and earth,
Despair and faith, obedience and will;
A surge, a rest; the strife, the peace; the word
Which Him declares, the deeds which Him fulfill.

VI

The Church's Cross is a world apart—its fate
Has been not only bishops to anoint
But a narrow breed whose faith depends upon
The unconverted horde (if all the world
Were Christians, where were Christians then? If late
Or soon we reach Chardin's Omega Point,
Their point is lost): A creedal Only Son
Is historied beneath a flag unfurled
In a march against the foe. Exclusiveness
Inspired by fear gives *Christian* charity
And *Christian* faith and *Christian* hope. They stress
That they make up a virtuous elite:
A Buddhist's love is not on a parity
With theirs; they claim all rights to the Mercy Seat.

VII

No evangelical Christology,
John 3:16—that view requires some sleight
Of hand: a single Creed, a single Son,
A single Incarnation, cannot give
Man hope; nor is the sociology
Unique elsewhere (though Christians make one's plight
Uniquely theirs). But the Book indeed has won
The race to be mankind's definitive
Portrayal of the existential Way
Which leads each self-evolving son of man
Into his future's flame: from the virgin day
When we are birthed by what the spirit asks
Of us until we die to self we scan
The silences for our only Father's tasks.

VIII

Within the artifacted study-den
A second rite is daily solemnized:
The yoga-postulant (all soul, all She,
All openness, withdrawn to the depths behind
The heart, to the heights above the head) again
As ever calls the Other Light; disguised
As a Taugenichts, a harmless retiree,
Compulsive sonneteer (all male, inclined
To active Yea or Nay—which word, which phrase?),
Her groom, absented from her interim,
With a vigilant mind and a vital seeing weighs
With care these sentiments, those verities:
With her as helpmeet thus belabors him
To verbalize her mute austerities.

WILLIAM JONES

THE TRUTH ABOUT CLEOPATRA

CLEOPATRA is usually thought of as an Egyptian siren, a wanton seductress, who killed herself for love of the Roman general Mark Antony. Little of this is true.

Although Cleopatra was queen of the ancient kingdom of Egypt, not a drop of Egyptian blood flowed in her veins. She was a Macedonian Greek; her Egyptian capital Alexandria was a Greek city, and her court language was Greek. Her dynasty had been founded by Ptolemy, a Macedonian general of Alexander the Great, who, after Alexander's death, had seized Egypt and made himself king.

As for her wantonness, not a shred of evidence connects Cleopatra with any man except Julius Caesar and, three years after his death, Mark Antony. These were not idle liaisons but open unions, approved by her priests and recognized in Egypt as marriages. The idea that she was a voluptuary who employed all her wiles to seduce these men is absurd. Julius Caesar, some 30 years her elder, had had four wives and countless mistresses. His soldiers called him the "bald adulterer" and sang a couplet warning husbands to keep their wives under lock and key when Caesar was in town. Mark Antony, 14 years older than the little queen, was also a noted philanderer. And in the end it was not because of love for him that Cleopatra killed herself, but out of a desire to escape degradation at the hands of another conqueror.

Yet the legend has persisted for 2,000 years, chiefly because poets and playwrights, including Shakespeare, emphasized her physical charms and passion rather than her brains and courage. Her deeds, however, reveal her as a brilliant, resourceful woman who spent her life in a battle to keep her country from being swallowed up by the Romans.

Born in 68 or 69 B.C., Cleopatra grew up amid palace intrigue and violence. Her father, Ptolemy XI, was a drunkard, an orgiast and a flute player. He died when Cleopatra was 18, and she then became queen, ruling jointly with her ten-year-old brother, Ptolemy XII. Two years later the young Ptolemy, dominated by a trio of palace schemers, forced Cleopatra into exile in Syria. Showing the spirit which was to characterize her life, she promptly raised an army and started to march back across the desert to fight for her throne.

This was the Cleopatra whom Caesar met in the autumn of 48 B. C. He had come to Egypt in pursuit of the Roman general Pompey, his adversary in a struggle for political power—the kind of struggle that was to keep Rome in turmoil for almost a century.

What did Cleopatra look like? The only clues are a few coins stamped with her profile, and a bust dug up from Roman ruins some 1,800 years after her death. They show an aquiline nose, a beautifully formed mouth with finely chiselled lips. A number of ancient historians wrote of her "ravishing beauty," but they were not men who had actually seen her. Perhaps the most accurate description is by Plutarch, whose grandfather was told about Cleopatra by a physician acquainted with one of the royal cooks. Plutarch wrote that her actual beauty "was not in itself so remarkable that none could be compared to her."

All early writers are agreed, however, on her "fascinating" conversation, her lovely voice, "her adroitness and subtlety in speech." She spoke six languages,

was well acquainted with Greek history, literature and philosophy, a shrewd negotiator and apparently a first-rate military strategist. She also had an ability to dramatize herself. When summoned by Caesar to leave her troops and come to the palace he had taken over in Alexandria, Cleopatra slipped into the city at dusk, had herself tied up in a roll of bedding and, thus concealed, was carried on an attendant's back through the gates to Caesar's apartment.

Whether her stratagem was to elude assassins in her brother's hire, or to impress Caesar, it was one of the most dramatic entrances of all time.

DON WHARTON

SRI AUROBINDO ON CLEOPATRA'S CHARACTER

APROPOS OF HER DEATH-SCENE IN SHAKESPEARE

An Extract from a Letter

... I COME to Arnold's example of which you question the nobility on the strength of my description of one essential of the poetically noble. Mark that the calm, self-mastery, beautiful control which I have spoken of as essential to nobility is a poetic, not an ethical or Yogic calm and control. It does not exclude the poignant expression of grief or passion, but it expresses it with a certain high restraint so that even when the mood is personal it borders on the widely impersonal. Cleopatra's words[1] are an example of what I mean; the disdainful compassion for the fury of the chosen instrument of self-destruction which vainly thinks it can truly hurt her, the call to death to act swiftly and yet the sense of being high above what death can do, which these few simple words convey has the true essence of nobility. "Impatience" only! You have not caught the significance of the words "poor venomous fool", the tone of the "Be angry, and despatch", the tense and noble grandeur of the suicide scene with the high light it sheds on Cleopatra's character. For she was a remarkable woman, a great queen, a skilful ruler and politician, not merely the erotic intriguer people make of her. Shakespeare is not good at describing greatness, he poetised the *homme moyen*, but he has caught something here. The whole passage stands on a par with the words of Antony "I am dying, Egypt, dying" (down to "A Roman by a Roman valiantly vanquished") which stand among the noblest expressions of high, deep, yet collected and contained emotion in literature—though that is a masculine and this a feminine nobility.[2]

[1] Come, thou mortal wretch,
With thy sharp teeth this knot intrinsicate
Of life at once untie; poor venemous fool,
Be angry, and despatch.

[2] *The Future Poetry and Letters on Poetry Literature and Art* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1972), pp. 315-16.

VERDICT ON ACUPUNCTURE*

ACUPUNCTURE as a medical treatment has been practised for nearly 3,000 years. It is said to have developed after wounded soldiers found that they recovered from serious illnesses after being penetrated by arrows.

There has long been a controversy why acupuncture should work.

The body has 900 acupuncture points, and needles are pushed in to various depths. Last year, a total of about 400,000 people had acupuncture anaesthesia—anaesthetised before an operation by an acupuncturist rather than an anaesthetist.

There are two main types of acupuncture: the type used as an anaesthetic, and curative acupuncture.

Writing in the journal *American Surgeon* recently, one specialist wrote:

"In the past year I have personally treated over 300 patients by acupuncture.

"In more than 75 per cent of the cases I found that acupuncture is one of the most effective of therapies for arthritic conditions, skeletomuscular pain, and neuralgia."

And according to two doctors writing in the *Canadian Anaesthetists' Society, Journal* in 1974: "Reports of a large number of surgical cases operated under acupuncture anaesthesia with a success rate up to 90 per cent have now sufficiently substantiated that the effectiveness of acupuncture can no longer be doubted and that it has to be examined seriously."

Even the leading heart surgeon, Michael DeBakey, has suggested that we should study acupuncture more carefully.

Meanwhile, we still do not know just how it works. Dr. John E. Critchley writing in the *Medical Journal of Australia* says that "the unusual and continuous stimulation arising from the needles disrupts or overrides the usual stimuli from the rest of the body."

In other words, he suggests that the needles confuse the nervous system so that it doesn't really know what is going on.

* From "Good Health" by a Medical Correspondent, *The Hindu*, May 18, 1975, p. 13.

DIALOGUES

(Continued from the issue of March, 1976)

Chapter V

Synopsis

The soul that has already taken birth in so many lives now finds herself reborn as the young Queen Hallgerda, wife of a Viking tribal lord. Soon after, when her husband leaves with his warriors on a long seaward expedition, Hallgerda remains to rule her people alone. At the height of the bitter winter that follows she falls desperately ill, and her inner being is driven to appeal to the gods within herself.

HALLGERDA, deep behind her surface unconsciousness lost in coma, retained no awareness of the petty motivations of the ordinary men and women that tended her. She was locked in her argument with the gods, an argument not of mind and reason but of fate and inner will—of the gods' edicts and the soul's need.

"Gods, do you hear me?" she cried out undaunted. "Something has happened to the tight metal bands with which you have held me to this nordic body—those very bands that held your puppet rigid, that forced the face and the look in the eyes to stare expressionlessly in front, and that allowed no tremor to pass through the firmly barricaded heart. They have broken, don't you see? And I must die. Ah, sweet comfort of death—you are there. I have only to stretch out my hand and you will take me, lift me and carry me out of this mask, this meaningless form lying wrapped in furs on its wintry bed."

"Never has a more beautiful mask been created for any woman of your race," came the dogged answer. "Never was there hair or skin more fair, or features carved and polished so perfectly as though in finest ivory. Never for any queen was a body created so lithe and tall... Child, what an excellent mask and form it is. How could you ask for more?"

"I ask only for the barest memory, the barest touch of what I knew before—the warmth, my gods—the merest touch of warmth in the heart."

"You are a queen among savages—the wild men of the north—and you would ask us for warmth. You will die not of cold or starvation, child, but of this madness that clutches at you and seeks to expose your weakness before your people."

"What is the use of life then, if I must remain something unrecognizable to myself, devorced from all reality, all my true being..."

"Silence, child, now you are truly raving."

Yet she moaned on, "I can't be silent. Help me, great Gods, or I will die, not tranquilly, but the death of one doomed—"

When all at once, a new voice, a new deity, a new and vaster presence came to

her and placed a hand full of cool magic on her brow.

"You shall have your boon, little one," it said. "Live and know yourself to be whole. Take on again the splendid mask and armour of your body, for truly it is a triumph in which the earthly gods have taken much delight. Yet keep open a little corridor which connects you to your innermost heart."

"The gods shall not block it?"

"You have my promise, for I shall guard its portals myself."

"Who are you, greatest of goddesses?"

"You have known me since the beginning of time, though I have had many names—"

"Many names? But I can't remember any—"

"No one is meant to remember, child. Names change with every age."

"Dear heaven, now I am at peace."

"Look before you then. Do you see the passage—the narrow corridor that leads up from your heart to deep wells behind your eyes?"

"Oh yes, it is new. I never had that before."

"Travel up it. When you reach your eyes, look through and you will find yourself alive again."

"Alive? But I'm too afraid. It's so far to the end of the passage, and I am happy here with you. Here all is warmth and peace and, there, I shall find nothing but the naked savagery of man and beast and nature. I have no strength left for any of that."

"Borrow mine then. I won't desert you."

"You'll always be here waiting even though I should go to the end of that long passage to life, and have no moment to look back?"

"Always."

"Yet what if I should yearn even in the midst of that life for what we have here now together?"

"I will always be here so that you will have no need to yearn."

"But, beloved goddess, if that is so then I shall feel and want and know so many things—so many remembered wonders which shall go against the ruling of the gods —of Thor and Odin and Freya: to feel nothing, to know nothing, and to be sensible to nothing. For only so can I remain queen of this tribe of half-men."

"They are right and you shall remain as they wish you to be. But they control only your body and outward being. Your innermost heart, your very soul belongs to me, and it is for me that you yearned when you turned from the life they had given you. Well, now I am here, and shall remain to hold you firm in the depths of yourself. Fear nothing then, even to these depths, for here I shall not permit you to tremble or quail, nor to long for that which the outer world cannot now give you. The source of your strength and fearlessness resides here with me and resides in perfect safety."

"You have spoken and I must go. All is resolved in your presence. I no longer want for anything, nor feel fatigue or illness or death upon me. My life is yours, and

I pray that I may visit you here often. But kiss me, my beloved one, before I leave, for I am not sure when I will be back. Pray it may be soon, pray it may be soon..."

"Soon or late, it doesn't matter. Here where I live there is no time, child. Now look before you—the corridor is long and dark and you must hold your courage in your hands like a sword...walk steadily and don't look back. Steadily... steadily..."

Hallgerda was surprised to find herself whole and in full possession of her will and wits when she returned to consciousness. Her desire to turn from existence, her longing for something deep and hidden, yet undefined, had left her, even though a warm and comforting remembrance remained of happenings now lost behind the veil of coma which she had just cast aside at the end of the dark passage.

Her immediate impulse was to rise. There was so much to do for a queen of a tribe threatened with extinction. Had it indeed totally died out in her absence? She couldn't help thinking of her people as wild, brainless wolf-cubs abandoned in the snow when both dam and sire had already been hunted, caught and flayed. She found it impossible to sit up but was able to look around the small, rectangular room. It was utterly dark, for the door was closed and there were no windows. Yet a small taper burnt at the foot of her bed. By its dancing light she was able to make out the form of her old nurse asleep on the floor. She must have uttered the woman's name several times before she responded, and then had, perforce, to endure all her tears and expostulations:

"Ah, my Queen Hallgerda, you are alive, alive! We never thought—but you must not rise! Oh, by the gods—my queen! We have been making sacrifices—I must call everyone! Wait—wait—"

It was as though Hallgerda had not heard a word but the bite in her voice was gone when she spoke. (Previously, her utterances had all had the sting of a deftly wielded whip.) "Unna, I want to see the day. Open the door."

"The door, my queen? But it must be barely dawn—and—"

"The door, Unna."

With a whimper the old crone shuffled to the latch and, still sniffing and wheezing noisily to swallow her sobs, pushed the door open. As she did so the incredible brilliance of a blue-white morning poured in and captured the room. Of tempests, blizzards and squalls nothing now remained but nature's smiles and benedictions, as the melting snow dripped from the roof down translucent icicles, and accumulated masses of it cascaded with heavy sighs from the boughs of the fir forest outside Hallgerda's royal dwelling. Breathing deeply of the rush of fresh air, she raised herself onto an elbow. She could have sworn that if she were to make the effort she could have risen and walked out into the snow. But prudence held her back and she asked:

"Is there anything to eat?"

"Of course, of course, my queen. We have been keeping it for you the last four days—stewed vension and—"

"Bring it to me."

"This very moment, my sovereign...Ah, the blessed day—wait till everyone hears—"

It was not long before the entire household and, beyond them outside the door, all the fit members of the tribe had gathered at the news of their queen's return to life. They peered at her incredulously as she drank and ate. They muttered prayers and slowly dispersed as she lay back and slept again. Then several times during the day they came again to make sure that she had not fallen back among the shadows from which none returned.

They need have had no fear. For Hallgerda, on her part, felt an indomitable strength pour into her from moment to moment. The next day she was on her feet, despite the plaintive whines of the nurse, Unna, and by the same evening she had taken stock of the situation of her people. A few more deaths had occurred since she had last been conscious; a hunting party had not returned since the previous day. Yet the sun was riding higher in the sky each noon, and rivulets of thawed snow were beginning to cut their way down to the river. In the low lands, patches of earth and bedraggled tufts of green were showing already. In all, the news was good and Hallgerda felt full of elation, elation at simply being alive, elation at knowing that whatever happened they would now surely survive, for the year had turned, the thaw had set in, and she sensed within her the force of one magically reborn and re-endowed by nameless gods of an infinite power.

Nor was she mistaken. Despite a quick return to her former meagre diet, she flourished, seemingly taking her strength from the warmth of the sun, and the softness of the spring air. Game fell more and more easily into her people's hands as the deer herds straggled up in search of grass. And finally, finally—news came that the ships had been sighted off the coast between great drifting icebergs that floated majestically southwards yet were not so closely packed as they would have been a month before when the warriors would have been hard put to it to guide their small, valiant craft to shore.

Now suddenly, as the men disembarked, the impoverished, struggling settlement found itself flooded with riches, with coins, trinkets, clothes and jewels incongruous beyond all measure in this scarcely-better-than-Neolithic village awash in the mud of a spring thaw. Nevertheless, the least incongruous element of the riotous homecoming—the one thing harmonious and totally composed—was Hallgerda the queen. As her lord came to her across the great hall of their dwelling she glided forward to meet him, tall, straight, and incredibly beautiful, her heavy flaxen braids hanging to her knees, her face vibrant with a bliss that, like an aura, had no recognizable source. It was almost too much for the warrior who had been living like a wild arctic bear for the last eight months.

Then all of a sudden, the miracle happened. In the course of one suspended stride as he looked into Hallgerda's face, he changed unaccountably from a nomadic barbarian with his sword and battle axe at his belt, to a lord—powerful as a lion, yet controlled, perfectly ordered and restrained, all the best in him gathered into his

sapphire blue eyes: his love, his fidelity, his strength—as an offering to his queen.

How she had changed he could not say. Yet he felt, as much as he saw, that she had changed fundamentally from the steely, unfeeling girl of a year ago to a sorceress imbued with some mystic power not so far encountered by man, so strange and hypnotic a presence did she appear to possess.

She too, for her part, found him changed all but beyond recognition, changed from the young Norse chieftain to whom she had been given in marriage—a mere boy with no firm care in the world save an unappeased craving for adventure typical of his race. He may have been one of hundreds, handsome, powerfully built, of an unbounded vitality, but a chieftain among his equals by accident of birth as much as anything else. But now she saw before her a king. In one season the sight of death, battle, and intense physical hardship, of cruelty side by side with loyalty, hate with love, despair with elation had forced the inner reality of his kingship to the surface, till he stood, with no scope for doubt, a head taller than any other man in the tribe.

Together as they faced each other in the great hall, Oswif and Hallgerda had indeed the appearance of two gods in a gathering of mortals—two gods who would stand as the ideal for which ordinary men would have to strive for many generations to approach or equal, beyond the animality of their present state. But even at that moment Hallgerda herself had no direct recollection of the metamorphosis that had come over her in her coma, or of the infinite divine being who had taken charge of her existence She merely felt an overpowering force and presence emanating from within her, encompassing both herself and her lord and all the air about them in its beatific embrace.

It was only later, when they were alone, that some deeper recollection returned to her. Yet she found it difficult to express it to Oswif. All that she could say was that in the sleep her illness had brought upon her she had felt herself change, how she no longer knew. She had returned stronger and inexplicably deeper, but try as she might she could not speak of the gods she had met, or the greatest and most marvellous of them all whom she had encountered. For even though she glimpsed them again briefly, even though she instantaneously felt again the ineffable magic of their presence, they quickly returned to the uncertain realm of dreams badly remembered—shifting, fading, then sinking away into the depths of unconsciousness. It was easier to speak of physical tribulations, of death, starvation, and triumphant survival over the savage onslaughts of nature. Such were things that all men easily understood.

Nevertheless, for the first time in her existence, even as she spoke, a fine umbilical cord of consciousness continued to connect the two realms of Hallgerda's being. For the great power that had come into her was both conscientious and meticulous in its working, and not for one moment did it cease to emanate its qualities through that delicate link. As a result, Hallgerda's surface being, even in its forgetfulness, never totally lost its sense of a profound inner source of a constantly radiating force. Nor did her innermost being and heart shut itself from physical existence in its with-

drawal. For though it did not often take the trouble to look out upon a life so harsh and demanding, inwardly it lay in the lap of the goddess and basked in the same emanation of her force, the same strength, courage and compassion that flooded forth upon Hallgerda's outer physical vehicle.

Now it was her turn to hear from her lord, he who had so patiently listened to all her long account of the winter's trial—perhaps not so much hearing as being spellbound by the teller of the tale, now it was time for the tables to be turned and for him to become the story-teller instead. At this moment, stealthily, intuiting the right time, her inner being roused itself and crept forward along the long passage to look through her eyes. There, with the awe and wonder of a child, it saw before it a marvellous sight: a Norse warrior, handsome as a god, recounting the tales of his exploits. All about his hardened limbs the firelight played till he glowed in a ruddy golden aura. Long blonde wisps of his hair danced from side to side across his immense shoulders. His voice poured forth with all the charm of an accomplished bard. His smile streamed out to embrace his listener with its sense of delight, its utter captivation with the fact of being in his beloved's presence, its bewitching beauty as the special and most exquisite capacity of *homo sapiens*.

Caught irresistibly in its splendour, Hallgerda's inner being too smiled, first through the windows of her eyes, then through her cheeks, her brows, and finally her mouth, until she found herself smiling no longer but actually laughing (had she ever laughed before? Perhaps not...she coudn't remember), throwing her head back and letting herself be carried away with her enjoyment. But the true enjoyment belonged to the inner being dancing now in her eyes like an ecstatic child—oh, what delight! When had it danced so in its whole life? When had it participated in existence with such abandon? When had it so hugely enjoyed another human being? Then in one instant, the most magical of all, it stood transfixed, for there in the warrior's eyes it suddenly saw what appeared at first to be its own mirror image, but was actually none other than Oswif's own inner being looking out from its own windows. Caught in a profound and marvellous moment of inner recognition the two gazed at each other in a momentary but perfect calm. Thereafter, although external life must have continued for both on its own plane, external awareness faded for the two inner beings into a sea of mutually interpenetrating bliss somewhere at the heart of the world where the great goddess lived. How long they remained together suspended in this sea they could not say.

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

PSYCHE

A PLAY IN VERSE

(*Continued from the issue of March 1976*)

ACT TWO
SCENE ONE
OLYMPUS

Enter left APHRODITE *attended and right* ZEPHYRUS *with* SPIRITS.

APHRODITE: Zephyrus, come here. What news from earth?
ZEPHYRUS: Delightful news, truly delightful news!
APHRODITE: They have met then?
ZEPHYRUS: It was all arranged by me.
APHRODITE: By you, my Zephyrus?
ZEPHYRUS: All by myself.
APHRODITE: And now they are happy.
ZEPHYRUS: Happy? Like two birds
That build their nest in springtime, like sweet bees
When honey begins to flow.
APHRODITE: Then all is well.
ZEPHYRUS: I suppose so.
APHRODITE: All is not well?
ZEPHYRUS: When he's there
Then all is well, but when he goes away
She gets a little love-sick. Hard as we try,
My friends and I, we just can't make her smile.
She walks around all tragic-faced and moans:
"Where has my love gone, when will my love return?"
She knows as well as I that he'll come back
When the sun goes down, but still she weeps and says:
"Where has my love gone, when will my love return?"
These mortals are so silly. You should see
The melodrama when he goes away,
Each morning, such lamenting: "Oh, my love!
My Love, oh, please do not leave me alone,
I cannot live without you. Stay, oh stay."
She must think he has nothing better to do
Than sit around the house all day with her.
APHRODITE: Then Psyche is unhappy?

ZEPHYRUS: Hardly that!
When he comes back and takes her into his arms
She glows like a golden goddess. Then she knows
The waiting was well worth while. I have to go—
So much to do—
APHRODITE: Farewell, sweet Zephyrus.
ZEPHYRUS: Sweet Zephyrus! Did you hear? Sweet Zephyrus!
And she the goddess of sweetness. Away! Away!

SCENE TWO

A room in Eros' palace. PSYCHE, EURUS, THERME, AUSTRA, *and other* SPIRITS

EURUS: [*Whirling around*] Look, Psyche, look what I can do! Look! Look!
PSYCHE: Yes, lovely.
EURUS: But you didn't look at all.
PSYCHE: Oh yes I did.
EURUS: Well, what was I doing then?
PSYCHE: Why you were-standing on your head, of course.
EURUS: I did that half an hour ago! Oh Psyche,
You don't pay any attention to us.
PSYCHE: I try.
But I feel so languorous when he's away.
THERME: How can you feel so — like that when we're here?
We dance for you, and sing and play the flute
And bring you presents but nothing makes you smile.
You only cry out "When will my love return?"
We might as well be dead for all you care.
PSYCHE: You know that that's not true, I love you all
And love each one of you in some special way.
AUSTRA: But not like you love him.
PSYCHE: No, not like that.
EURUS: Why not?
PSYCHE: Because that's different.
THERME: So, you see
She doesn't love us at all.
PSYCHE: You little scamp!
Wait till I get my hands on you.
AUSTRA: [*To* THERME] Go hide.
[AUSTRA *sneaks up and covers* PSYCHE*'s eyes from behind*]
PSYCHE: What are you doing?
AUSTRA: Hide-and-go-seek! No peeking!
[*She spins* PSYCHE *around*]

Now count to ten.

PSYCHE: [*Counts*] Ready or not here I come.

[*A game of hide-and-seek*]

DAPHNE: [*Outside*] Psyche!

PSYCHE: What was that? who's calling me?

AUSTRA: Nobody called you. [*To the flute player*] Louder.

PSYCHE: No, don't play.
Someone is calling.

DAPHNE: Psyche!

PSYCHE: There. You see.
You must have heard it.

THERME: What?

AUSTRA: It was just the wind.
Or else a wild dog howling.

DAPHNE: Psyche! Psyche!

PSYCHE: It's Daphne's voice. My sister Daphne has come.
One of you quick go and bring her

EURUS: Here?

PSYCHE: Certainly.

EURUS: But you mean here, to the palace?

PSYCHE: Of course. Now go.
We can't play here like children all day long.

[SPIRITS *go out, re-enter with* DAPHNE *and then go out again leaving* PSYCHE *and* DAPHNE *alone*]

DAPHNE: Oh Psyche, I have found you. I have searched
For centuries up and down the mountainside,
Calling your name. I knew you were still alive,
Sweet Psyche, I just knew it. But what is this?
I saw no palace. Such magnificence.
And outside all is barren rock. [*Going to the window*] But see!
It all has changed: green fields and silver streams
And flowering trees. Where have the children gone?
The ones who brought me here. They took my hands
And suddenly I saw the gate and then
I was here inside with you. It's like a dream.
How did it happen? Oh Psyche, you must know.
I'm sure you know. Oh, tell me everything.
But first you have to tell me what happened that day
When we last saw you. I went to rescue you.
I climbed that dreadful hill, but when I reached
The place where they had left you, you were gone.
What happened, Psyche? Tell me, what great king

Came to your rescue then and brought you here—
For only a very great king could have a house
Like this. What is he like? Tell me his name.
Oh, tell me Psyche, tell me everything.

PSYCHE: But I would have to say six things at once
To answer all your questions. No great king
Came to my rescue; a spirit of the air
Descended from the sky and carried me here.

DAPHNE: Oh, Psyche, you don't have to fill your tale
With spirits of the air.

PSYCHE: But Daphne, it's true.
He is a spirit and my friends — the ones
That you call children — they're all spirits too.
It's true.

DAPHNE: All right, a spirit brought you here.
And then?

PSYCHE: And then my husband came.

DAPHNE: Oh who?
Who is he, Psyche? Oh please, tell me his name.

PSYCHE: His name? I don't know.

DAPHNE: You don't know his name?

PSYCHE: He never told it to me.

DAPHNE: Mysterious,
My brother-in-law. He never told you his name?
What has he told you then?

PSYCHE: Wonderful things!
He told me of a love that never turned
To hatred or indifference, but grew
From love, through love, to ever greater love.
He told me of a beauty and delight
So perfect and intense that human eyes
And human hearts could never capture them.
He told me that he loved me and he said
That he would love me even if my love
Could give no answer or grew weak or turned
To something less than love. He said that we
Would be together even if far apart:
Husband and wife forever.

DAPHNE: Well, at least
He told you something! A sweet tongue like that
Makes up for the lack of lots of other things.

PSYCHE: What other things?

DAPHNE: Well, I suppose that he
Is not so handsome.
PSYCHE: Daphne, how could you say
A thing like that?
DAPHNE: You haven't exactly bragged
About his looks.
PSYCHE: But he is the most divine,
The most exquisite, handsome, beautiful man
Of all the men that ever were born on earth.
DAPHNE: Then why don't you tell me what this paragon
Of manly beauty looks like?
PSYCHE: He's — quite tall,
About...so tall. His eyes are — grey. He's not thin,
But slender. He's a young man and his hair
Falls down in lovely ringlets of spun gold.
DAPHNE: His hair is blond?
PSYCHE: It must be blond — or else
Jet black and full of secrets like the night.
DAPHNE: Well, is it black or blond?
PSYCHE: I'm not quite sure.
DAPHNE: You're not quite sure? Psyche, what's got into you?
You surely know the difference between
Jet black and gold and certainly could recall
Which was the colour of your husband's hair.
It seems the joys of wedded life have made
Your brain a little soft.
PSYCHE: Yes. Yes, that's it.
That must be it. What difference does it make—
What someone looks like? Love has other ways
And other signs.
DAPHNE: But why are we standing here
Chattering idly? Why not introduce
Your husband to your sister? Well? Is he
Too proud to meet me? Or are you ashamed
To call me sister?
PSYCHE: Daphne! Daphne, please!
You'll meet him soon enough.
DAPHNE: But why not now?
PSYCHE: Because he's not here.
DAPHNE: When will he come?
PSYCHE: Tonight.
DAPHNE: Well, we can meet tonight then.

PSYCHE: No.—Too late.
DAPHNE: Well then tomorrow. I can spend the night
And I'll meet him in the morning.
PSYCHE: No. You can't—
We have no place to keep you.
DAPHNE: Have no place?
A palace grander than the Cretan king's
With more chambers than the sea has Cyclades
And yet you stand there and tell me you have no place!
Why Psyche, are you going to turn me out?
Have you forgotten the rules of hospitality
That say even a stranger must be fed
And I your sister?
PSYCHE: But you never said
That you were hungry.
DAPHNE: But that's not the point.
PSYCHE: I'll order some refreshments. We can eat
Before you go. The night is coming on.
Keep still and you can feel the silent prayer
That rises from the senseless things of earth
Each evening, when the golden chariot
That carries the sun-god hesitates above
The western ocean, just before it sinks
And twilight's dusky grey deepens to black.
The old day dies and all the universe
Sings out a poignant requiem, and I
Join with them and the sadness in my heart
Is almost happiness because I know
My love will soon return.
DAPHNE: I don't understand.
Your words mean nothing to me.
PSYCHE: Each day he goes,
I don't know where or why and I must wait
Till nightfall to embrace him once again.
[*Clapping her hands*] Come, little ones.
Don't be shy. Come all of you.
My sister Daphne is our guest today.
[*Enter* SPIRITS]
DAPHNE: The children—spirits—appearing from thin air.
PSYCHE: Command them. Ask them anything.
DAPHNE: Bring wine
Bring honey in the honeycomb. Bring cakes

On gold and silver platters. Bring me more.

PSYCHE: Why Daphne, do you not get fed at home?

DAPHNE: At home the servants need more coaxing. Bring
The apples of the sun.

PSYCHE: Enough, enough.
You must not ask for more.

DAPHNE: Who gave you power
To rule these servants?

PSYCHE: The master of this house
Has given them to me to serve my needs
And what I want they bring me.

DAPHNE: Anything?

PSYCHE: All I have ever asked for.

DAPHNE: Then why not ask
For heaps of gold and silver? Why not ask
For armies of handsome strong adoring men,
Men who will do your will and call you queen
And carry your royal standard to the Gates
Of Hercules and into the Unknown?
Or for temples filled with votaries with you
As their high-priestess worshipped as half-divine?
Or are such things beyond your servants' powers?

PSYCHE: I do not know or care. I only ask
For what I need. They bring me food and drink.
And sometimes, when I feel a little sad,
They play sweet music.

DAPHNE: Psyche! But living here,
What could possibly make you ever sad?

PSYCHE: It is a strange thing truly to be sad—
For we who live upon this splendid earth
Have such abundance: sun and moon and stars,
To light the night and day, and trees and flowers
And everything that lives and life itself
And thought and beautiful high philosophies
To please the mind and Mysteries that bring
The gods near to our longing. To be sad
In such a universe is certainly
A strange thing. But when I am here alone,
Waiting for him to come to me I feel
A sweet unhappiness, so sweet, like wine
That makes one thirst the more it satisfies,
Or like a lingering kiss that makes one yearn

To have the whole of which it gives a part.
Like that I feel a little sad sometimes.
But then the thought of his returning brings
Such happiness, I tremble with strange delight;
Rush to the window, at the mirror arrange
My hair, put on a new dress, make myself
As pretty as I can for him and then,
After the light has faded in the west,
He comes. It's almost time. You'll have to go.
[*To spirits*] Take Daphne to her father's house at once
And make all ready.

DAPHNE: But Psyche, this is most...
It is not right...

PSYCHE: Dear Daphne, but I said
That you could not stay long. You must not think
I love you the less for it.

DAPHNE: Oh no, not that.
But let me come again, because you love.
Please, Psyche.

PSYCHE: I don't know. I will have to ask.
If he permits it I will send for you.
But now you must go. Take my love. Good-by.

DAPHNE: Good-by. [*Goes out*]

PSYCHE: Now quickly, open the windows wide
And fill the air with perfume. How I wish
I could light a hundred candles. It would make
The room so beautiful. Indeed, and I
Could see him then. But he forbids it. Why?
How often I have asked him and have begged
To see him just one moment. But he says
It must not be. He is my husband. Why
Does he deny the one thing I desire?
[*Enter* ZEPHYRUS]

ZEPHYRUS: Because he knows you are too immature
To see him as he is; because he knows
You are not truly faithful, since you still
Cannot accept the things he says, but doubt
And question like the others.

PSYCHE: Zephyrus!
Oh does he think that really? Does he think
I do not love him perfectly?

ZEPHYRUS: Does love

Murmur and whimper like a child? Does love
Do anything but love?

PSYCHE: But surely love
Must want to see the one thing it desires.

ZEPHYRUS: Love has no wants; if you can still desire
You are still far from loving perfectly.

PSYCHE: Oh, Zephyrus. But is he going to come tonight
Or stay away forever? Have I made
Myself so hateful to him that he won't come?
I'll die if he stays away! [*Breaks into tears*]

ZEPHYRUS: Poor little child.
Don't worry. Stop your crying. He will come. [*Goes out*]
[*After some time* EROS *enters and stands looking at* PSYCHE *as she lies sobbing on the couch. He then comes forward.*]

EROS: Psyche.

PSYCHE: Oh, you have come! I was afraid
You wouldn't come at all.

EROS: How could you think
A thing like that?

PSYCHE: But Zephyrus said that you
Told him I was unfaithful and he said
You thought I was a little whining child
And that you hated me.

EROS: He told you that?

PSYCHE: He said I did not love you perfectly
And I thought that you would never come again.
And I sat and waited and waited and you were late
And I thought: This time he won't come back at all
And I'll just have to go away and die.
Don't ever be late again.

EROS: I was not late.
I came at the same time I always come
But waited awhile because you seemed upset.

PSYCHE: It was because of you I was upset
I need you so. If you should ever leave
And not come back...

EROS: But now I am here with you.

PSYCHE: Oh yes, and I am filled with joy, my love,
My lovely, naughty love, but do you think
That I am still a child?

EROS: You are my child
And so I love you.

PSYCHE: But just now he said...
EROS: I say you are my own beloved child,
My sweet child.
PSYCHE: But I thought I was your wife.
EROS: You are my lover and my wife and friend,
My mother even; all the ways of love
Are ours, Beloved.
PSYCHE: Do you hate me?
EROS: Come
And tell me if I hate you. [*Kisses her*]
PSYCHE: Do you think
My love is less than perfect?
EROS: When the fire
Of love's transforming alchemy has refined
Your heart of all in it that still remains
Of earthly elements and turned to gold
Each throbbing heartbeat then your love will be
Made perfect and complete.
PSYCHE: But now my love
Is flawed and limited.
EROS: Your love is pure
But not yet perfect.
PSYCHE: I will leave you then
And hide my black heart somewhere far away
Where it will not offend you and not come back
Until I have grown worthy of your love.
EROS: If you should do that you could never become
Perfect in love. Remain, for love alone
Can make love perfect and the joy of love.
PSYCHE: And love's pain?
EROS: Psyche, why do you think of pain
When we are together?
PSYCHE: But soon you will go away
And I will be left alone. Even when you
Embrace me and I feel that we become
One being, even then a shadow falls
Upon the sunlight of my happiness
When I remember that you soon will go
And I will be left alone.
EROS: Poor little child.
Perhaps when you no longer can think such things
I will not have to go.

PSYCHE: But why do you go?
EROS: Because I must.
PSYCHE: But let me go with you then.
EROS: You are not ready yet to come with me.
PSYCHE: Not ready, and imperfect in my love,
Unfaithful, immature and unrefined,
Why do you come to one like me at all?
EROS: Because I love you and because you love.
But why do we waste the night in useless talk?
Come Psyche. Let us use what time we have
For joy in one another's closeness. Come.
[*Enter* ZEPHYRUS *and* SPIRITS]
ZEPHYRUS: Ah love, sweet love, delightful carefree love."
Let them enjoy themselves while they still can.
I think I'll pay a visit on her sisters.
I've got a feeling something's in the air.
I didn't like the way that Daphne said:
"But let me come again, because you love."
A lot she knows of love. But if she's bad
The other one is ten times worse. Come on.
There's work for us to do.
EURUS: What, Zephyrus?
THERME: Where are we going?
EURUS: What are we going to do?
ZEPHYRUS: A little bit of secret espionage.
EURUS: Oh boy!
THERME: Let's go!
AUSTRA: But should we leave them here alone?
ZEPHYRUS: I think they'll get along all right, at least
For an hour or two.
EURUS: Then come on.
ZEPHYRUS: Come all of you.
EURUS: Who do you want me to spy on?
THERME No, let me.
[*They all go out.*]

(*To be continued*)

PETER HEEHS

CONSCIOUSNESS APPROACH TO BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

(Continued from the issue of March 1976)

VII. The Ideals of an Institution

WE have said earlier that the institution is a living organism capable not only of expansive growth but also of rising to higher levels of functioning, a soul evolution. Like the individual, it makes such vertical upward progress when it looks up to a higher ideal and attempts to uplift its level of functioning to be in accordance with that ideal. This is Yoga. The institution has a personality determined by the purpose and circumstances of its founding, the social conditions of the time, the capacities of the founding members and all those who have since participated in its functioning. This personality is capable of a certain expansion; for instance, a business is capable of a certain growth in its volume of business which is limited by the ideal, purpose, social milieu, etc.: in short, by the institution's personality. Beyond that limit if the institution wants to expand further, it has to change its personality, it has to evolve into a higher order of institution.

Most of the principles so far discussed help to bring about a maximum growth on the horizontal level. But for growth beyond this point, the institution must consent to change itself, it must make the necessary effort of will. Horizontal expansion requires dynamic practical skills. For a vertical expansion, vision, creativity and perception are necessary.

Most business organizations are founded on an economic motive. Within this area there is still a hierarchy of levels. The proprietor can be concerned solely with his own economic security and see all his employees merely as a means to that and nothing more. This can be expanded to include concern for the economic security of the employees as well, and even further to help foster the prosperity of an industry or community or larger social group. But most institutions are moved by psychological motives as well. The founders usually have a need for creative expression, channeling of energies, the urge to adventure or new knowledge and new experiences, the learning of new skills. There is also the area of social acceptance, prestige, advancement. In these areas too it is possible for the institution to grow by working for the growth of these dimensions in those who work for the firm. And on a wider level the institution may begin to work towards a growth of the community. It may develop an interest in perfecting its product or service not only to increase its economic position but also for the sake of providing good service, out of a sense of social responsibility, ethics, aesthetic values. Beyond this there are even higher levels, institutions which function solely or partly for social improvement, charity, political ideals, national or international prosperity. Each time an institution gives attention to a

higher level than its present functioning it takes an evolutionary step.

Established business houses often take one or more vertical steps unintentionally or unconsciously: when a firm beomes proud of its product or reputation, when it seeks to reward its employees by a fairer allotment of profits, when it takes interest in working conditions and family benefits, etc. Often such steps are taken hesitantly because they appear to be at the expense of the economic motive which has been primary. But in the history of large institutions it can be seen that this vertical growth brings with it not a loss on the economic levels but a manifold increase in profits. This is a fundamental point. When an institution rises to a higher level all the lower levels beneath receive a large expansion far beyond the limits of that lower level but in accordance with the broader potentials of a higher level.

Every institution is constantly faced with opportunities to take steps to a higher level of functioning. We start from where we are and take the next step. The resulting positive expansion then serves as an impetus for further growth so long as one does not remain satisfied with a single advance and level off there. In each part of the institution one can set an ideal a little higher than is now practised. It aids expansion of the whole. As an institution turns to a wider or higher field of life activities, the corresponding energy of that higher level uplifts the institution.

An added dimension of this principle can be seen in the evolving attitudes of the working staff. As an institution rises in ideals, the ideals and attitudes of employees will change to the degree they are identified with the institution. Where management is concerned solely with profit, employees care only for their wage share. When management shows concern for the quality of its product, employees take increased interest in the quality of work. When the firm actively gives attention to the well-being and development of its workers, the workers take a corresponding interest in the growth of the institution. When the role of the institution becomes primarily one genuine social service, the employees give service to further the institution. By so doing not only does the institution evolve but the employees evolve as well and receive all the benefits of a higher level of existence.

VIII. Harmony

Sri Aurobindo has written that all problems of nature are essentially problems of harmony. Every living organism depends on the smooth harmonious interaction and cooperation of its composite parts for growth and survival. Harmony in an institution is not limited to cooperative relations among employees or between employees and management. There is the harmony between the idea, the systems or schemes for execution and the actual outer expression. There is a harmony between principles and practice, and between understanding, acceptance and practice. For there to be a harmony there must be a tuning of the different layers of the institution to the central purpose. The ideal of harmonious relations, between parts of itself, acts as a powerful center for progress and the expansion of the entire institution. It is the uni-

versal harmony which supports all smaller conflicts. Harmony is not, as many think of it, a static or stagnant existence. It is the firm foundation of peace and stability upon which creativity, expansion and growth can flourish. Harmony brings to your service all the possibilities of the past that were missed. A general atmosphere of harmony, sympathy, good-will can be aided by not speaking critically of others, refraining from all unnecessary negative expression, particularly anger, spite, and jealousy. If one forgoes negative expression even when justified, he rises to a higher level. Harmony attempted in a situation yields greater results than authority, strategy, or force.

There is a harmony possible on the level of thoughts and the level of feelings; there is also a greater harmony which lies deeper in each individual, founded on the unity of all souls. If any individual in an institution makes an effort to relate to others from the deepest possible center of his being, to harmonize the many divergent and conflicting elements in his own consciousness, he can release a very powerful movement of harmony in the institution as a whole. Such a movement is the most propitious condition for an expansion of the company.

IX. Honesty

Every reader will surely have anticipated our attitude on movements of falsehood such as lying, deceit, misrepresentation, but the basis for this position may not be equally apparent. It is not necessary to add to the age-old debate on whether crime pays. It is certainly true that many an entrepreneur has grown wealthy by following a policy based on falsehoods of every kind. As Sri Aurobindo points out, the law of action and reaction, karma, is valid for each level of existence within its own domain. Lying and the like are actions on the ethical plane of mind, while business transactions are on the socio-economic plane of life. The two are not directly connected. Acts of falsehood may very well lead to economic prosperity but they also lead to moral degeneration and poverty. And since the ethical plane is a higher level of existence than the economic, the total result is a retrogression in development for the individual or institution involved. The aim of human activity is growth, progressive evolution of all the parts of the individual being and every aspect of collective life. This evolution is a movement from unconsciousness to consciousness, from ignorance and falsehood to knowledge and truth, from suffering to fulfillment. There is no possible way to further this development by a conscious act of falsehood. Moreover, though such an action may yield a material fruit, it inevitably evokes a like response from outer life. Where one has obtained business from others by misrepresentation, others will seek business from you by the same means. Where one has charged another an unreasonably high price for a product, one's own staff or suppliers or someone else will do likewise toward you. As one is to life, so life responds in one form or another.

Secrecy, concealment, hiding are conditions in which falsehood thrives. As man

and his institutions develop he relies less on such means, cultivates an open and illumined climate for conducting affairs and advances more rapidly in this brighter air.

It sometimes happens that an institution is treated falsely by others even when its own attitudes and behaviour have been true. When this happens it is a good indication that the institution is on the verge of a progress to a higher level of functioning and these lower forces come to impede that movement. The only support they can ever have is from the tinge of false methods the institution sometimes permits. The solution is to fight the falsehood only by Truth. Review the past and present behaviour. Examine and correct lapses in attitude and modes of functioning. Falsehood can never be fought by falsehood.

A nationally known firm in the U.S. was awarded a large contract by one of the state governments. The official in charge said the only condition was that the consultant must demand an extra large fee and hand over the excess to him. The consultant refused the illegal proposition and lost the job. Some years later under a new government administration the same consulting firm was awarded the largest consulting contract the state had ever issued. This time it was all legal.

One's own latent capacity for falsehood, slander, ill-will and jealousy, even when unexpressed, leaves one open to overt negativity from others. The best protection is a sincere examination of the roots of such vibrations within oneself.

(To be continued)

GARRY JACOBS

BY THE BANK...

SITTING by the bank of the stream,
Watching my thoughts flow by, touching reality.
Now and then I take a dip,
Forgetting who I am.
At times involved, at times detached,
A sense of completeness, steadiness,
Gradually encompasses my being.
Slowly, slowly, there comes a state,
Where things don't change, time slows.
In it, no boredom, only contentment.

LARRY TEPPER

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

A REVIEW, WITH THE EDITOR'S NOTE

Language: Its Structure and Evolution by Marcel Cohen. Translated by Leonard Muller from the French. 157pp. Condor/Souvenir Press. £ 3 (paperback, £ 1.50).

No one had ventured to describe in any detail the languages of the whole world until the mid-1920's when it so happened that two competent and comprehensive surveys were undertaken simultaneously and independently. In 1924 Antoine Meillet, assisted by Marcel Cohen, published *Les Langues du Monde* in Paris and, only two years later, Wilhelm Schmidt published *Die Sprachfamilien und Sprachenkreise der Erde* at Heidelberg. Meillet was a brilliant teacher and a specialist in Indo-European comparative philology. Schmidt was a Roman Catholic priest and an eminent ethnologist, who founded the journal *Anthropos*. It was most fortunate that these two great pioneering achievements should have been completed within such a short space of time. Different in methods and attitudes, both were authentic and well illustrated, and they supplemented each other admirably.

Meillet died, sadly, in his seventieth year just six months after Hitler had moved troops into the Rhineland, but his pupil and collaborator M. Cohen is still with us. Now in his ninety-second year, he lives in active retirement at Viroflay near Versailles. In 1952 he produced a carefully revised and updated edition of *Les Langues du Monde* and at this moment he is busy preparing a third edition for publication by the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique under the slightly modified title *Les Langues dans le Monde*.

Language: *Its Structure and Evolution* is a parergon to this greater work, and enjoys all the advantages of that happy relationship. It may be compared with such a recognized classic as Henry Bradley's *The Making of English*, which is what it is only because it arose as an inspired parergon to its author's main work as co-editor of the great Oxford Dictionary. M. Cohen's erudite manual was written in 1947 and published in 1950. It has unfortunately been out of print since 1955. Meanwhile, however, it has been translated into Polish, Chinese and Japanese; and now, at long last, into English. Leonard Muller's translation is, alas, not always easy to follow, but it may be said to serve its purpose adequately until this book is once more available in the original French.

M Cohen divides his book into three straightforward sections on language development, language structure and language evolution, of which the last is by far the longest. He discourses pleasantly, in mostly short paragraphs, on selected topics. Illustrations are drawn plentifully from the fully documented historical development from Classical to Vulgar Latin and Gallo-Roman, and from Old to Modern French, with wide-ranging incursions into Hebrew and Arabic and many other languages, living and dead. M Cohen concurs with the now generally accepted view that our

Indo-European ancestors included both herdsmen and farmers inhabiting the Ukraine about 3,000 BC, whence they radiated to other parts of Europe and Asia: "It should be clearly understood that we speak of languages and nations, not of races: people that we know of speaking Indo-European languages are on the whole white, but extremely varied in type, from very light to very dark (in India)."

Ancestral Indo-European was at no time a completely integrated system, but rather a "system of correspondences" that might be more reasonably regarded as a group of dialects which never actually achieved unification. To tell a story, as some have done, in reconstructed "Aryan primal speech" is therefore a harmless exercise of the imagination which has only a tenuous connexion with reality.

About a hundred families of languages have been identified in the world, and some 2,500 separate languages, of which thirty are used by civilizations of varied importance. Today some fifty languages still defy genealogical classification: they can be defined only geographically and ethnographically. This holds true of present-day Basque: no proof is yet forthcoming that Basque is either the sole survivor of Iberian, the postulated prehistoric speech of the Peninsula, or the descendant of that pre-Roman Aquitanian substratum which has affinities with North Caucasian. The facile assumption that Chinese is of primitive structure because it is monosyllabic and uninflected is no longer acceptable. There is evidence to show that Chinese once possessed both inflexions and affixes which have long suffered erosion. As for the nature of the relationship between Chinese and Vietnamese, this is just one of those numerous puzzles which still await expert investigation.

SIMEON POTTER

(*The Times Literary Supplement*, 16 May 1975, No. 3,819), p. 53 (half cols 1-3)

EDITOR'S NOTE

MR. Potter speaks of "the now generally accepted view that our Indo-European ancestors included both herdsmen and farmers inhabiting the Ukraine about 3,000 BC, whence they radiated to other parts of Europe and Asia". Whether generally accepted or not, the view is seriously open to question, and can be held only by overlooking certain glaring facts which make it over-simple so far as the Indo-Iranian branch of the family of peoples who are known, in the cultural and not in any racial sense, as "Aryan" is concerned.

The Iranians have the tradition of an ancient Aryan home, *Airiyānam vaējo*, which, as E. Herzfeld[1] tells us, is distinctly located by the Avesta in "the vast plains of the Oxus and the Jaxartes". That is a far enough cry from the Ukraine. If indeed the Iranians ultimately hailed from South Russia they must have made so prolonged a stay in those "vast plains" that it made them forget completely their alleged origin

[1] *Iran in the Ancient East* (London, 1941), p. 190.

north of the Black Sea. Have we any grounds even to think of such an origin?

Eduard Meyer, opposing Hirt's theory that the Indo-Iranians, already as a specifically characterised tribe, entered Asia from Europe over the Caucasus into what is now Armenia and then marched to occupy Iran *en route* to the Punjab, pointed out grave difficulties in considering Armenia as a first important stage. If this territory was in the historical period the initial theatre of the Indo-Iranians' activities, how is it that not a single trace of them was left behind? Meyer[1] writes: "For among the numerous personal and place names handed down to us from Armenia up to the end of the Assyrian age there is absolutely nothing Indo-European, and even the frontier mountains of Media are inhabited by non-Indo-European tribes: it is quite apparent that the Indo-Iranian Medes have here gradually pushed forward from the east and attained supremacy. On the other hand, although positive proof is wholly lacking, it is quite impossible to assign for the beginning of the Vedic age—and of the specific Indo-Aryan culture beginning there—any date later than 1500 B.C."

B. K. Ghosh,[2] accepting Meyer's conclusion, holds that the tribes subsequently divided into the Iranians and the Indians came in *c.* 2000 B.C. from South Russia to settle first in the Pamir plateau as Meyer opines or else in Russian Turkestan as Herzfeld believes. After a while from this intermediate common home of theirs, they spread eastward in the direction of the Punjab and westward in that of the Mesopotamian world. Thus would be explained the almost simultaneous appearance of Aryan princes in Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine and of the Vedic Culture in India, at about 1500 B.C. when we find the Aryans in the Punjab already Indianised to the full.

Ghosh, who here claims the support broadly of Oldenberg, Keith, Friedrich and Brandenstein no less than Meyer and Herzfeld, is quite right in reading nowhere any pointer to an Aryan movement from the Near East towards India in the second millennium B.C. But the alternative he posits—a migration from an interim home in Russian Turkestan or the Pamir plateau—is inacceptable for the Vedic branch of the Aryan family.

While the Iranians preserved a memory solely of the area about the Oxus and the Jaxartes and therefore cannot be traced to the Ukraine, the Vedic Indians yield no reminiscence either of an Ukrainian original cradle-land or of the Oxus-Jaxartes plains. S. Srikanta Sastri,[3] scrutinising not only India's oldest document, the Rigveda, but also the literary compositions in its wake, puts the truth in very plain words: "There is no evidence that the Vedic Aryans were foreigners or that they migrated into India within traditional memory. Sufficient literary materials are available to indicate with some degree of certainty that the Vedic Aryans themselves regarded Sapta-Sindhu [the region of the seven rivers in the ancient Punjab] as their original

[1] *Geschiste des Altertums*, II, 1, Second Edition, 1928, p. 35. The English translation is from B. K. Ghosh's chapter in *The Vedic Age*, edited by R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker (London, 1951), p. 205.

[2] *The Vedic Age*, pp. 206, 212.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

home (*devakrita-yoni* or *devanirmita-deśa*)."

Even the proponents of the theory that the Vedic Aryans invaded India in *c.*1500 B.C. cannot deny that the Rigveda offers no clue to a migration from abroad. E. J. Rapson,[1] speaking of the Aryans in the period of this scripture, admits: "Their oldest literature supplies no certain indication that they still retained the recollection of their former home; and we may reasonably conclude therefore that the invasion which brought them into India took place at a date considerably earlier." Ghosh[2] himself remarks: "It really cannot be proved that the Vedic Aryans retained any memory of their extra-Indian associations, except perhaps a camouflaged reminiscence of their sojourn in Irān." A hypothesis based on any "camoufleged reminiscence" is certainly very shaky and can only indulge in wishful conjectures. The bedrock situation, as A.L. Basham,[3] who too believes in an Aryan invasion of India, is yet honest enough to confess, is: "Direct testimony to the assumed fact is lacking, and no tradition of an early home beyond the frontier survives in India." Even those portions of Indian literature which purport to transmit either legendary or historical information, are absolutely silent on any invasion. "According to traditional history as recorded in the Purāṇas," says A.D. Pusalker,[4] "India itself is the home of the Aryans, and it was from here that they expanded in different directions to various countries of the world, spreading the Aryan culture."

All available testimony favours Sri Aurobindo's stand[5] that for all practical purposes the Rigvedics were autochthonous in India and that the so-called Aryans and Dravidians of our subcontinent form one single homogeneous though multi-aspected race. If at all the bulk of the people now inhabiting India are descendants of a new race from outside it, the entry of the foreigners must have been in a remote past far beyond any calculable date founded on the supposition that our Indo-European ancestors radiated from the Ukraine where they had their *urheimat* in about 3000 B.C.

It is high time scholars dropped "the now generally accepted view" and paid heed, as regards India, to what George F. Dales,[6] a prominent name in archaeology, unequivocally pronounced as late as 1966: "...no one has any exact knowledge of the date when the Aryans first entered the Indus Valley area; they have not yet been identified archaeologically."

K. D. SETHNA

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[1] *The Cambridge History of India*, edited by E. J. Rapson (1922), I, p. 43.

[2] *The Vedic Age*, p. 204

[3] In the revised part dealing with ancient India in the Third Edition (1970) of *The Oxford History of India* by the late Vincent A. Smith, edited by Percival Spear, p. 53.

[4] *The Cultural Heritage of India* (Calcutta, 1958), I, p. 144.

[5] *The Secret of the Veda* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry, 1971), pp. 23-24.

[6] "Decline of the Harappans", *Scientific American*, May 1966, p 95.