

# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

JANUARY 1981

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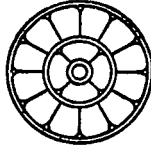
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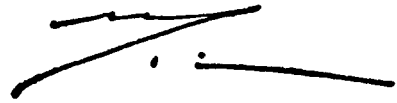


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXIII

No. 1

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."*

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 We pay a very large commission on several of them, and after deducting press-charges  
 our profit is small on the whole.

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# THE NEW CONSCIOUSNESS OF 1 JANUARY 1969

## A GUIDELINE FROM THE MOTHER

*The new consciousness which manifested upon earth on 1 January 1969 has its characteristics described in several talks of January that year, where the Mother called it the superman consciousness (la conscience du surhomme).*

To be able to receive the new consciousness without deforming it:

One must be able to stand in the light of the Supreme Consciousness without casting a shadow.

## PAST ACTION AND SADHANA

### TWO ANSWERS BY THE MOTHER

*Will not past action come in the way of sadhana ?*

COMPLETE consecration to the Divine wipes out what one has been in the past.

\*

My dear child,

Your prayer has been heard. Your past has disappeared. Prepare to grow in consecration, in light, in peace.

Our blessings are always with you.

# OCCULT PHENOMENA

## A TALK OF THE MOTHER IN JANUARY 1960

*Q. I have read that the bodies of some saints, after their death, have disappeared and become flowers or just vanished into the sky. Can such a thing happen?*

EVERYTHING is possible, it could have happened, but I do not believe it did. We cannot always believe what is said in books. Nor is there a necessary connection between such phenomena and sainthood. Some "mediums", as they are called, have an unusual capacity. They are put in a chair, tied to it, guarded by people, and the room is locked securely from outside. Then darkness is created in the room. After some time—longer or shorter according to the medium's power—the knots are found untied, the chair is seen empty: the occupant has disappeared. Then, in an adjoining room, the person is found lying down in a deep trance. Through closed doors and thick walls the medium has passed. It is by a power of deconcentration and reconcentration of the physical substance.

Phenomena like these have taken place under the strictest scientific control. So they do genuinely occur in rare instances, but they are no sign of sanctity. There is nothing spiritual about them. What is at work is purely a capacity of the vital being. And often the mediums are people of very low character, with not a trace of anything saintly.

But to come back to the point. In connection with great or holy men all sorts of stories get started. When Sri Aurobindo had not left his body, there was circulated a story that he used to go out through the roof of his room—yes, physically—and move about in all kinds of places. It is even written down in a book. He told me about it himself.

*Some books say that Mirabai disappeared physically into the idol of Krishna and was never seen again.*

Don't other books tell other stories?

*It is also reported that you never write with a pen. The pen just writes for you.*

There you are!

## THE WORLD OF INSECTS

### AN OCCULT VIEW BY THE MOTHER

*Mother, sometimes I see a queer thing. I see a region where dead flies go. Their condition seems to be a very miserable one. They complain that I kill so many flies.*

THESE visions are imaginations which probably come from old thought-forms. There is no reason to sentimentalise about flies. They are beings created by the adverse forces and they must disappear from the earth.

\*

In the terrestrial organisation, the world of insects is, so to say, the direct work of hostile creators in the vital world; they are the result of adverse and often diabolical thoughts and imaginations, directed not towards man but towards the divine work. Often an insect that looks quite harmless is the messenger of a bad and malevolent will; in that case one must deal severely with it.

Love can tolerate anything—but in action, the Divine chooses and decides. Yet even in his act of destruction, there shines out pure Love, sublime Love.

14 October 1955

## THE GREEKS AND THEIR RELIGIOUS VISION

### AN INSIGHT OF THE MOTHER

THE Greeks had a keen and exceptional sense of beauty, of eurhythm, of harmony in forms and things. But at the same time they had an equally keen sense of men's impotence in face of an implacable Fate which none could escape. They were haunted by the inflexibility of this Fate, and even their gods seem to have been subject to it. In their mythology and in their legends, one finds little trace of the divine compassion and grace.

This notion of compassion and grace made its appearance in Europe later with the Christian religion—whereas in Asia and especially in India it had long before been the very essence of Buddha's teaching.

So in all the Greek stories, legends and tragedies we find the inexorable cruelty of the decrees of Fate that nothing can deflect.

# THE PROBLEM OF OUR UNIVERSE

## A LIGHT FROM THE MOTHER

It seems beyond question to me that the universe in which we live is not one of the most successful, particularly in its outermost expression; but it is also beyond question that we are part of it and that consequently, the only logical and wise thing for us to do is to set to work to perfect it, to extract the best from the worst and to make it into the most marvellous possible universe. For, I would add, not only is this transfiguration possible, but it is certain. May the peace and joy of Knowledge be with you

14 June, 1933

\*

Change yourself if you wish to change the world. Prove by your inner transformation that a truth-consciousness can take possession of the material world and that the Divine Unity can be manifested upon earth.

Organisations, however vast and complete they may be, can achieve nothing permanent unless a new force, more divine and all-powerful, expresses itself through a perfected human instrument.

23 August 1952

\*

The world will be made better only in proportion as we make ourselves better. The Vedantic truth that the world is only a projection—a function—of our consciousness is as pragmatically true as it is spiritually true. The ills that humanity suffers from—collectively and individually—stem from the errors that lie at the roots of our ignorant nature. We must be cleaned of these evils—individually first of all—if we ever hope to see a clean world outside. A yoga of self-purification is the condition precedent to a yoga of perfection.

But, in the end, a Higher Destiny leans over earth's children and its ways are beyond calculation.

16 August 1967



## **“PRIEST OF OUR SACRIFICE”**

**A NOTE BY SRI AUROBINDO**

IN REALITY thought is only a scout and pioneer; it can guide but not command or effectuate. The leader of the journey, the Captain of the march, the first and most ancient priest of our sacrifice is the Will. This will is not the wish of the heart or the demand or preference of the mind to which we often give the name. It is that inmost, dominant and often veiled conscious force of our being and of all being, Tapas, Shakti, Shraddha, that sovereignly determines our orientation and of which the intellect and the heart are more or less blind and automatic servants and instruments.

## **CROWN AND FOUNDATION OF OUR YOGA**

**A CLARIFICATION BY SRI AUROBINDO**

To bring the Divine Love and Beauty and Ananda into the world is, indeed, the whole crown and essence of our Yoga. But it has always seemed to me impossible unless there comes as its support and foundation and guard the Divine Truth—what I call the Supramental—and its Divine Power. Otherwise Love itself blinded by the confusions of this present consciousness may stumble in its human receptacles and, even otherwise, may find itself unrecognised, rejected or rapidly degenerating and lost in the frailty of man's inferior nature. But when it comes in the divine truth and power, Divine Love descends first as something transcendent and universal and out of that transcendence and universality it applies itself to persons according to the Divine Truth and Will creating a vaster, greater, purer personal love than any the human mind or heart can now imagine. It is when one has felt this descent that one can be really an instrument for the birth and action of the Divine Love in the world.

## CARE OF PHYSICAL THINGS

A LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO IN JANUARY 1932 IN TYPESCRIPT  
CORRECTED BY HIM

I may say, generally, that in the present condition of things it is becoming increasingly necessary to do the best we can with what we have and make things last as long as possible. There are many kinds of things hitherto provided, for instance, which it will be impossible to renew once the present stock is over. The difficulty is that most people in the Asram have no training in handling physical things (except the simplest, hardest and roughest), no propensity to take care of them, to give them their full use and time of survival. This is partly due to ignorance, <sup>and inexperience</sup> but partly also to carelessness, rough, violent and unseeing handling, indifference; there is also in many a feeling that it does not matter if things are quickly spoilt, they will be replaced; one worker was even heard to say to another, "why do you care? it is not your money!" To take one instance only. \*Japs in Europe will last for many years - here in a few months, sometimes in a few weeks they are spoilt and call for repairs or replacement. People ask for new provisions before the old are exhausted or even near exhaustion, not because they need them, but because they have a right (?) to a new supply; some have even been known to throw away what remains with them in order to have a new stock. And so on, ad infinitum. All this is tamas and the end of tamas is disintegration, dispersal of forces, failure of material. And in the end, as this is a collective affair, the consequences come upon everybody, the careful and the careless together. Our ideal was a large, not a restricted life, but well-organised, free from waste and tamas and disorder. Now there has to be a tightness, a period of retrenchment till people learn and things get better.

17.1.32

10

*Sri Aurobindo*

# THE REVISED EDITION OF *THE FUTURE POETRY*

## NEWLY-WRITTEN OR CORRECTED MATTER

(Continued from the issue of December 1980)

*(This chapter, like most of the others so far presented, was revised during both the earlier and the later periods. The later revision consists of a few verbal changes, especially in the first paragraph. The earlier revision is fairly heavy up to the middle of the third paragraph, where it abruptly ends. The last sentence to be revised—in the middle of the third paragraph—was rewritten, with a fullstop after “in its achievement”, as follows: “When a greater force came streaming in, it was through the opening floodgates of revolutionary idealism and German transcendentalism and romanticism”. Here Sri Aurobindo broke off, probably owing to his being interrupted. The comma at the end indicates that he intended to add something more, something which would have included, either verbatim or reworded, the phrase “the influences that were abroad”, which he had deleted from the original sentence. The lack of this phrase leaves the pronouns “their”, “they” and “themselves” in the next sentence without any antecedent. Because of the unintended solecism that would result from the rewritten sentence being used, and because it is impossible to patch the sentence up without too much rewriting, the editors have reverted to the sentence as first written: “. . . in its achievement; when the great force . . .” etc.)*

## CHAPTER XIII

### The Course of English Poetry—5

WHEN a power of poetry in a highly evolved language describes so low a downward curve as to reach this dry and brazen intellectualism, it is in danger of losing much of its vitality and flexibilities of expression and it may even, if it has lived too long, enter into a stage of decadence and perish by a dull slow decay of its creative force. That has happened more than once in literary history, but there can always be a saving revulsion, a return of life by a shock from without or a liberating impulse from within. And this saving revulsion, when it comes, is likely, if bold enough, to compensate for the past prone descent by an equally steep ascension to an undreamed-of novelty of revealing vision and illumined motive. This is the economy of Nature's lapses in the things of the mind no less than in the movements of life. For when the needed energy is within, these falls are an obscure condition for an unprecedented elevation, these emptyings a preface to large inrushes of plenty. In the recoil, in the rush or upwinging to the opposite extreme, some discovery is made which would otherwise have been long postponed or not have arrived at all; doors are burst open which might have been passed by unseen or would have resisted any less vehement or rapidly illu-

mined effort to unlock them. On the other hand it is a frequent disadvantage of these revolutions or these forced rapidities of evolution, that they carry in them a premature light and an element of quick unripeness and a subsequent reaction and return to lower levels becomes inevitable. For the contemporary mind is not really ready for the complete implanting of this new seed or stock; and what is accomplished is itself rather an intuitive anticipation than a firmly based knowledge or an execution of the thing seen equal to its true significance. All these familiar phenomena are visible in the new, swift and far-reaching upward curve, which carries English poetry from the hard, glittering, well-turned and well-rhymed intellectual superficialities of a thin pseudo-classicism to its second luminous outbreak of sight and beauty and an inspired creative impulse.

Intellect, reason, a firm clarity of the understanding and arranging intelligence are not the highest powers of our nature. If this were our summit, many things which have now a great or a supreme importance for human culture, religion, art, poetry, would either be no more than a lure or a graceful play of the imagination and emotions, or, though admissible and useful for certain human ends, would still be deprived of the truth of their own highest indications. Poetry, even when it is dominated by intellectual tendency and motive, cannot really live and work by intellect alone. Its impetus is not created and its functioning and results are not shaped either wholly or predominantly by reason and judgment; an intuitive seeing and an inspired hearing are its natural means or its native sources. But intuition and inspiration are not only spiritual in their essence, they are the characteristic means of all spiritual vision and utterance; they are rays from a greater and intenser Light than the tempered clarity of our intellectual understanding. Ordinarily these powers are turned in human action and creation to a use which is not spiritual and not perhaps their last or most intrinsic purpose. Their common use in poetry is to give a deeper and more luminous force and a heightened beauty to the perceptions of outward life or to sublimate the more inward but still untransformed and comparatively surface movements of human emotion and passion or to empower thought to perceive and utter certain individual and universal truths which enlighten or which raise to a greater meaning the sensible appearances of the inner and outer life of Nature and man. But every power in the end finds itself drawn towards its own proper home and own highest capacity and field of expression and one day or another the spiritual faculties of intuitive hearing and seeing must climb at last to the expression of things spiritual and eternal and their power and working in temporal things. Poetry will yet find in that supreme interpretation its own richest account, its largest and most satisfied possible action, its purest zenith of native force. An ideal and spiritual poetry revealing the spirit in itself and in things, showing to us the unseen present in the seen, unveiling ranges of existence which the physical mind ignores, pointing man himself to undreamed capacities of godhead, future heights of being, truth, beauty, power, joy which are beyond the highest of his common or his now realised values of existence,—this will surely appear as the last potentiality of this high and beautiful creative power. When the eye of the poet has seen the life of man and the world externally or penetrated into its more vital

inwardness or has risen to the clarities and widenesses of a thought which observantly perceives or intimately understands it, and when his word has caught some revealing speech and rhythm of what he has seen, much has been done, but not all that is possible to poetic vision and utterance. This other and greater realm still remains open for a last transcendence.

For the first time in occidental literature, we get in this fourth turn of the evolution of English poetry some faint initial falling of this higher light upon the poetic intelligence. Some ancient poets may have received something of it through myth and symbol; a religious mystic here and there may have attempted to give his experience rhythmic and imaginative form. But here is the first poetic attempt of the intellectual faculty striving at a high height of its own development to look beyond its own level directly into the unseen and the unknown and to unveil some ideal truth of its own highest universal conceptions hidden behind the veil of the ordinary mind and supporting them in their return to their eternal source. This high departure was not an inevitable outcome of the age that preceded Wordsworth, Blake and Shelley. The intellectual endeavour had been in Milton inadequate in range, subtlety and depth, in those who followed paltry, narrow and elegantly null, in both supported by an insufficient knowledge. A new and larger endeavour in the same field might rather have been expected which would have set before it the aim of a richer, deeper, wider, more curious intellectual humanism, poetic, artistic, many-sided, sounding by the poetic reason the ascertainable truth of God and man and Nature. That was the line followed by the main stream of European thought and culture, and to that too English poetry had eventually to turn in the intellectual fullness of the nineteenth century. It was already the indistinct and half-conscious drift of the slow transitional movement which intervenes between Pope and Wordsworth; but as yet this movement was obscure, faltering and poor in its achievement; when the great force came in, the influences found expression in the revolutionary idealism of the French Revolution and in German transcendentalism and romanticism. Intellectual in their idea and substance, they were in the mind of five or six English poets, each of them a remarkable individuality, carried beyond themselves by the sudden emergence of some half-mystical Celtic turn of the national mind into supra-intellectual sources of inspiration. Insufficiently supported by any adequate spiritual knowledge, unable to find except rarely the right and native word of their own meaning, these greater tendencies faded away or were lost by the premature end of the poets who might, had they lived, have given them a supreme utterance. But still theirs was the dawn of whose light we shall find the noon in the age now opening before us if it fulfils all its intimations. Blake, Shelley, Wordsworth were first explorers of a new world of poetry other than that of the ancients or of the intermediate poets, which may be the familiar realm of the aesthetic faculty in the future, must be in fact if we are not continually to describe the circle of efflorescence, culmination and decay within the old hardly changing circle.

Certain motives which led up to this new poetry are already visible in the work of

the middle eighteenth century. There is, first, a visible attempt to break quite away from the prison of the formal metrical mould, rhetorical style, limited subject-matter, absence of imagination and vision imposed by the high pontiffs of the pseudo-classical cult. Poets like Gray, Collins, Thomson, Chatterton, Cowper seek liberation by a return to Miltonic blank verse and manner, to the Spenserian form,—an influence which prolonged itself in Byron, Keats and Shelley,—to lyrical movements, but more prominently the classical ode form, or to freer and richer moulds of verse. Some pale effort is made to recover something of the Shakespearian wealth of language or of the softer, more pregnant colour of the pre-Restoration diction and to modify it to suit the intellectualised treatment of thought and life which was now an indispensable element; for the old rich vital utterance was no longer possible, an intellectualised speech had become a fixed and a well-acquired need of a more developed mentality. Romanticism of the modern type now makes its first appearance in the choice of the subjects of poetic interest and here and there in the treatment, though not yet quite in the grain and the spirit. Especially, there is the beginning of a direct gaze of the poetic intelligence and imagination upon life and Nature and of another and a new power in English speech, the poetry of sentiment as distinguished from the inspired voice of sheer feeling or passion. But all these newer motives are only incipient and unable to get free expression because there is still a heavy weight of the past intellectual tradition. Rhetoric yet loads the style or, when it is avoided, still the purer intensity of poetic emotion is not altogether found. Verse form tends to be still rather hard and external or else ineffective in its movement; the native lyric note has not yet returned, but only the rhetorical stateliness of the ode, not lyricised as in Keats and Shelley, or else lyrical forms managed with only an outward technique but without any cry in them. Romanticism is still rather of the intellect than in the temperament, sentiment runs thinly and feebly and is weighted with heavy intellectual turns. Nature and life and things are seen accurately as objects and forms, but not with any vision, emotion or penetration into the spirit behind them. Many of the currents which go to make up the great stream of modern poetry are beginning to run in thin tricklings, but still in a hard and narrow bed. There is no sign of the swift uplifting that was to come as if upon the sudden wings of a splendid moment.

In Burns these new-born imprisoned spirits break out from their bounds and get into a free air of natural, direct and living reality, find a straightforward speech and a varied running or bounding movement of freedom. This is the importance of this solitary voice from the north in the evolution, apart from the intrinsic merits of his poetry. His work has its limitations; the language is often too intellectualised to give the lyrical emotion, though it comes from the frank, unartificial and sturdy intellect of a son of the soil; the view on life is close, almost too close to give the deeper poetic or artistic effect, but it deals much with outsides and surfaces and the commonnesses and realisms of action, sometimes only does it suggest to us the subtler something which gives lyrical poetry not only its form and lilt and its power to stir,—all these he has,—but its more moving inmost appeal. Nevertheless, Burns has in him the things

which are most native to the poetry of our modern times; he brings in the new naturalness, the nearness of the fuller poetic mind, intellectualised, informed with the power of clear reflective thought awake to life and nature, the closely observing eye, the stirring force of great general ideas, the spirit of revolt and self-assertion, the power of personality and the free play of individuality, the poignant sentiment, sometimes even a touch of psychological subtlety. These things are in him fresh, strong, initial as in a forerunner impelled by the first breath of the coming air, but not in that finished possession of the new motives which is to be the greatness of the future master-singers. That we begin to get first in Wordsworth. His was the privilege of the earliest initiation.

This new poetry has six great voices who fall naturally in spite of their pronounced differences into pairs, Wordsworth and Byron, Blake and Coleridge, Shelley and Keats. Byron sets out with a strangely transformed echo of the past intellectualism, is carried beyond it by the elemental force of his personality, has even one foot across the borders of the spiritual, but never quite enters into that kingdom. Wordsworth breaks away with deliberate purpose from the past, forces his way into this new realm, but finally sinks under the weight of the narrower intellectual tendencies which he carries with him into its amplitudes. Blake and Coleridge open magical gates, pass by flowering sidelanes with hedges laden with supernatural blooms into a middle world whence their voices come to us ringing with an unearthly melody. In Shelley the idealism and spiritual impulse rise to almost giddy heights in a luminous ether and are lost there, unintelligible to contemporary humanity, only now beginning to return to us with their message. Keats, the youngest and in many directions the most gifted of these initiators, enters the secret temple of ideal Beauty but has not time to find his way into the deepest mystic sanctuary. In him the spiritual seeking stops abruptly short and prepares to fall away down a rich sensuous incline to a subsequent poetry which turns from it to seek poetic Truth or pleasure through the senses and an artistic or curiously observing or finely psychologizing intellectualism. This dawn has no noon, hardly even a morning.

SRI AURBINDO

*(To be continued)*

# NIRODBARAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

## THE COMPLETE SET

(Continued from the issue of December 1980)

August 22, 1935

*The other night after closing my eyes for a few minutes, when I opened them and looked at the moon, I saw around it a rainbow-coloured circle which again was surrounded by a clouded darkness. Any meaning?*

It is a certain kind of subtle physical vision which sees these things. It is not quite easy to say when they have a significance or are only things seen. If it had any, it could mean spiritual light with a circle of manifold powers around it apparently in the darkness of the ordinary consciousness.

August 23, 1935

*C has sent Rs. 2/- on the occasion of his birthday which is on the 27th. He wants me to do pranam to Mother for him.*

You can do a second pranam (altruistic, for C) on the 27th and Mother will give you a flower for him.

*The Darshan atmosphere and its influence seem to be waning away so soon! Old friends or foes are stepping in.*

There is always an adverse movement after the darshan, the *revanche* of the lower forces. I had a stoppage myself but I am off again riding on the back of my Einsteinian formula.

*All poetry gone! Stuck in the sestet of a sonnet. I wonder really when this force will tumble down or will it ever!*

You have formed like many poets a bad habit of sticking in the mud between inspired jolts. You have to dissolve the habit—as a doctor you must find out a solvent which will do it.

August 24, 1935

*You surprise me by your phrase, 'between inspired jolts', for most of the poems have*



*been written by halves, quarters with some intervals and many attempts in between. That is why I can't look upon a poem as having any worth.*

Well, if that is not writing by "inspired jolts", what is? The worth of a poem depends on what has come out, not on the way in which it has come out.

*But since a bad habit has been formed, it has to be dissolved. But how? Doctors, you know, are often failures specially in treating themselves. Please, then, prescribe a remedy. It is queer that you write a few lines in no time and the rest perhaps in no time!*

This is too cryptic for me. I may say however that inspiration for poetry is always an uncertain thing (except for a phenomenon like H). Sometimes it comes in a rush, sometimes one has to labour for days to get a poem right, sometimes it does not come at all. Besides, each poet is treated by the Muse in a different way.

*It is proposed to include me in an Ashram Anthology of Bengali poets. But won't my work look pale and anaemic beside something like Nishikanta's, all splendour and glow?*

No. Besides, there must always be varieties in an anthology which is like a museum or a botanical collection. So a *modestum Nirodicum* inside will do no harm even beside *flaminga Nishikantica*.

August 26, 1935

*X is thinking if she could get her book published without any recommendation from others.*

I suppose she still needs a sponsor. To take good things on their own merit happens sometimes with magazine editors, but sometimes is not always or often.

*See the ways of the world! An honest and good work depends on so many factors even for publication. I suppose it is inevitable in the scheme.*

It is the pattern of the scheme. It can only be changed if you change human nature or substitute for it a higher nature.

*Here is a poem after all completed. Nishikanta says that the lines I have marked are too sentimental, not fitted for the canvas of a sonnet.*

I don't know anything about the canvas of a sonnet or its conventions in Bengali. I would not myself call these lines sentimental.

*May I have your frank opinion?*

I find it like the others very good poetry.

*Any chance of coming out of the mud or the same caravan speed?*

What? For whom? Which way?

*August 27, 1935*

*About yesterday's poem, Nishikanto says: "Couldn't your experience—if it is an experience—be expressed in a more subdued way? Have you really heard the 'apsara sangeet', in the lyre of the wind?"*

It does not seem to me that so much matter of factness can be demanded in poetry. I was not aware of any excessive *uchchwas* when I read it.

*G has a disease of which the exact diagnosis can be made only by a microscopic examination. He gives a different story altogether, what shall we do?*

Can you not say something like this, that you have to make the analysis (or whatever it is called) in order to be sure of your treatment?

*August 28, 1935*

*What do you say to showing G's condition to Dr. M?*

You may.

*With regard to the publication of X's book, she put my name in the letter she was writing to you. I asked her to strike it out as the reference to me was too short and did not convey my exact idea. She struck it out but said that I was afraid of my name being included. This is what I got after having done so much!*

These are the pin-pricks of life. You must walk warily if you want to avoid them. Beware of dropping pins about—they may prick the dropper. X's resentment at being plagiarised is a pin of importance.

*August 29, 1935*

*Today I shall request you to "stand and deliver" on a different subject. What is exactly the significance of the day of your Siddhi? Different people have different*

*ideas about it. Some say that the Avatar of the Supermind descended in you!*

Rubbish! Whose imagination was that?

*Others say that you were through and through overmentalised.*

Well, it is not quite the truth but nearer to the mark.

*I myself understood that on that day you achieved the Supermind.*

There was never any mention of that from our side.

*Dutta, I think, declared at that time that you had conquered sleep, food, disease and death. Was there any truth in that statement?*

I am not aware of this gorgeous proclamation. What was said was that the Divine (Krishna or the Divine Presence or whatever you like) had come down into the material. It was also proclaimed that I was retiring—obviously to work things out. If all that was achieved on November 24, 1926, what on earth remained to work out, and if the Supramental was there, for what blazing purpose did I need to retire? Besides, are these things achieved in a single day? If Dutta said anything like that she must have been in a prophetic mood and seen the future in the present!

*If you did not achieve the Supermind at that time, how was it possible for you to talk about it or know anything about it?*

Well, I am hanged. You can't know anything about anything before you have achieved it? Because I have seen it and am in contact with it, O logical baby that you are! But achieving it is another business.

*Didn't you say that some things were getting supramentalised in parts?*

Getting supramentalised is one thing and the achieved supramental is another.

Good Lord! And what do these people think I meant when I was saying persistently that I was trying to get the Supermind down into the material? If I had achieved it on November 24th, 1926, it would have been there already for the last nine years, isn't it [so]? I have stood, but I have not delivered. I had time for standing a moment, but none for a delivery—however pregnant my mind or my overmind may be. But really what a logic! One must become thoroughly supramental first (achieve supermind) and then only one can begin to know something about supermind? Well! However if I have time one day, I will deliver—for evidently with such ideas about, an *éclaircissement* is highly advisable.

*August 30, 1935*

*You confess that you have not delivered but in what little you have, there are many points that need a few more lines.*

Pinpoints?

*If you have time you can do it to-night.*

None at all.

*But if you have no time I shall have to disturb your Sunday slumber—either by my questionings or by a long poem. You can choose either of the tortures, Sir!*

Excuse me. I don't sleep on Sundays. I climb mountains of outside letters which have accumulated for want of weekday time.

The poem, please!

*The "pin" I dropped has caused a septic sore in the pricked!*

You can advise her to be Yogic and not mind.

*I was wondering if it is possible to get X's book published from the A.P. House with your permission.*

I suppose they are afraid to venture, being a concern with pin-head profits and no capital to speak of.

*August 31, 1935*

*I couldn't finish copying the poem. Since you "sleep" up to midday, I hear, I can send it to you later.*

It depends on the time I go to sleep. If it is at 9 or 10 a.m. I may sleep beyond 12. As for poetry, I see it only at night. There is no time in the afternoon except for the letters.

*Nag, the A.P. House manager, told me that they publish books only on your school of thought. But whatever you say they do and will do.*

That is the principle on which it was started—that it should not be an ordinary publishing concern. How far the principle has been respected I cannot say, since I don't

read all its publications. I don't know whether the Mother will take it up.

*September 1, 1935*

*What is happening really, Sir? Have you stirred sleeping snakes and monsters that are rushing up now?*

Excuse me, they were not sleeping at all; they are simply coming into light.

*I hear Y is leaving.... I tell you, Sir, it will be a pathetic failure on the part of the Divine!*

Rubbish! It will be a failure on the part of Y. I don't profess to transform men against their will.

*Is all this fury not excusable?*

Very ignorant at least. Ignorance may be bliss, but it is not a defence or excuse.

*On the planes that are above the mind (Overmind and those above it), do the forms exist as we have them on the planes relating to the material creation? The forms of gods we have here in icons etc.; do they actually exist on the higher planes?<sup>1</sup>*

There are no planes of manifestation without forms—for without form creation or manifestation cannot be complete. But the supraphysical planes are not bound to the forms like the physical. The forms there are expressive, not determinative. What is important on the vital plane is the force or feeling and the form expresses it. A vital being has a characteristic form but he can vary it or mask his true form under others. What is important on the mental plane is the perception, the idea, the mental significance and the form expresses that and these mental forms too can vary—there can be many forms expressing an idea in different ways or on different sides of the idea. Form exists but it is more plastic and variable than in physical nature.

As to the Gods, men can build forms which they will accept; but these too are inspired into men's mind from the planes to which the God belongs. All creation has the two sides, the formed and the formless—the Gods too are formless and yet have forms, but a Godhead can take many forms, here Maheshwari, there Pallas Athene. Maheshwari herself has many forms in her lesser manifestation, Durga, Uma, Parvati, Chandī etc. The Gods are not limited to human forms—man also has not always seen them in human forms only.

<sup>1</sup> This question was put by a sadhak who left the Ashram long ago.

*September 2, 1935*

If I have knowledge of the play of the forces, why do you want me to ignore the play and work by violence or a miracle beyond the play of the forces? It is precisely the play of forces which brought him where he is.

*The departure of a person with extraordinary powers is serious.*

Pooh! a sincere heart is worth all the extraordinary powers in the world.

*And what a pathetic and tragic end for him? All the world will laugh at him and won't you share in the laughter? What is your attitude from the Supramental? Won't you care?*

And why a tragic or pathetic end! He is as merry as a grig and as sure of himself as a god. He says he has only one step to make and he is going to make it no matter whatever happens or who does what.

Do you think I care? What a very human mind you have! But why want me to share in it? What is in the minds of the sadhaks matters because that is part of my work, but what you call all the world (meaning the small part of it interested in Y outside) can laugh or not—what difference does it make? My bringing down of the Supramental does not depend on the *নিন্দাস্ততি*<sup>1</sup> or *শান অপমান*<sup>2</sup> dealt out from there. And is care for these things part of the ordinary spiritual consciousness even and if I am to be inferior in these matters to a spiritual man, for instance Z, how am I to be not only supramental and superman but supramentalise others? Have you never thought of these things and will you and the others live always in the ordinary mundane social consciousness and feelings and ideas and judge me and my work from that sorry standpoint?

*I hear A.P. House has been taken over by the Mother. There is no chance then for X's book being published there.*

None. I asked the Mother but she is categorical. The A.P.H. will remain the A.P.H. and not become an ordinary publishing house.

*(To be continued)*

<sup>1</sup> Praise and blame    <sup>2</sup> honour and dishonour

## SRI AUROBINDO AND "THE FOUR AUROBINDOS"

A REMINISCENCE BY DILIP KUMAR ROY\*

It was in 1934, a few days before his birthday, the 15th August. I was reading out to Chadwick a letter of his which he had just written to me in answer to my importunities.

"Sonnets?" he wrote. "I have no time for writing sonnets—my energy is too occupied with very urgent and pressing things—quite apart from correspondence—to 'dally with the rhythmic line'."

We were both cursing away in our hearts the utter wryness of this providential dispensation and wondering about the nature of his "pressing" work in hand when Gurudev's secretary brought me a telegram to Gurudev which read: "Wire permission for your Darshan on the fifteenth of August. Dilip, my friend, will recommend me—Aurobindo." On the margin was written in Gurudev's handwriting: "Please recommend and enlighten."

It was just that little query which, happily, made the wicked Goddess—*Dushta Saraswati*—fall plump and perch on my irreverent tongue. I dashed off then and there a Bengali poem which I sent up to Gurudev hoping, against hope, to draw him out. Here is an English translation of my wicked burlesque:

You ask me, Guru, who is this Aurobindo who desires to come  
To have your blessing on your birthday? I would rather now be dumb:  
Because, I find, I know four personalities distinct and great  
Who are your namesakes and so wonder how to place this candidate!  
So I'll recount the deeds of each still graven in my memory,  
For your Supramental may shed light where I grope rayless hopelessly!

The first was an aristocrat whose toilette few will dare eclipse:  
He combed his curls for hours—a dandy, out and out, to his finger-tips,  
Enamoured of pomatum, powder, silks and scents and fineries,  
He blithely hummed to all and sundry India's amorous melodies.  
Work he abhorred, yet such is fate—he was given a mill to supervise,  
But he resigned and married self—not less resourceful than he was wise!  
It is not likely—but who knows—perhaps your mystic call he hears!  
And, sick at last of the world's brief tinkles, aches for the music of the  
spheres!

Then number two: he'd fallen in love with one he called 'his dream of love  
Come true on earth'—but she, alas, proved subtle whom no romance could  
move.

\* From *Sri Aurobindo Came to Me*. First Edition (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1952), pp. 313-20.

She smiled on his as Frau von Stein once smiled on Goethe: did not she  
 Invite the Poet?—but then “Oh no, not too close,” said she warningly!  
 Only, while Goethe had for his flame to pay in poems, not in gold,  
 This modern ‘Pickwick’ gave her with his ‘love-sick’ heart his cash untold.  
 Then, bankrupt, hugging me in London blubbered he between his tears:  
 “O kindred spirit, who but you can ever divine what my heart sears?”  
 You never can tell—perhaps he has since read your message of the One.  
 Who can tell why love is doomed to dark and never a place wins in the sun?

Your namesake number three, a youth who lived in Paris by his wits,  
 Took me in tow and showed me round the Eternal City’s sweet retreats.  
 A specialist in gossip about prophets, poets and actresses,  
 “What is unknown to me,” he bragged, “is not worth while—I know what  
 pays.”

And he made me know it too although I did pay what I could for him,  
 As he would clarify what to my mind had seemed intriguing, dim.  
 Maybe his “knowledge” has let him down and so he longs for a greater  
 light  
 Than his continental firefly twinkles—helpless in his soul’s dark night!

The last though not the least, O Guru, of your namesakes was so brave  
 That we all stood aghast when, after lecturing “each his soul must save”,  
 He wooed a Belgian old maid who though not so wise as Solomon  
 Was even as rich and “game” when he led her to the altar in Boulogne.  
 I had to be his best man though no bridesmaids were available,  
 But the great philosopher announced: “Without love even Heaven were  
 hell!”

So the saviour angel of his soul led him to the turf in a mystic glee  
 And then in the heaven of Monte Carlo gambled and lost exultantly.  
 I wonder: could his Eden elect have failed him in the last resort?  
 Else how could his brave ship want now to come to your Supramental  
 port?

I know not human destiny, nor your celestial mysteries.  
 I only know your regal soul rich with the starry secrecies.  
 So I implore : O make me see the greatness of your namesakes now,  
 Say, how come they to bear your name and yet stay where they are—Oh how?  
 Just one thing more : what shall I answer?—and please tell me his address.  
 I dare not recommend all, Guru, though all *you* can lean to bless.  
 And lastly, O Compassionate, forgive my dread frivolity :  
 To have laughed at those who bear your name? Oh, damn me not ever-  
 lastingly!



Chadwick chuckled when I read this out to him, but shook his head. "It's unlikely to draw him out, Dilip," he sighed. "He's too busy. But I do wish you the best of luck."

Next day, however, I ran to him, for the miracle did happen—Gurudev did reply.

"Dilip," we read together, "Your epic of the four Aurobindos is luminous, informing and hair-raising! But there can be no doubt about who this Aurobindo is—it is, I presume, Aurobindo the fourth, 'a doer of dreadful deeds'. I am referring to the phrase *bhimakarma Brikodara*.<sup>1</sup> However a truce to unseemly jests; let us come to grave practical matters.

"His address? How in the name of the wonderful am I to know? His address in the telegram is 'Aurobindo, Bombay' just as mine might be 'Aurobindo, Pondicherry'. In his previous letter he wrote that he was going to Bombay and would waltz from there straight to Pondicherry. He may have given his Bombay address but I don't think so. Nolini who has his letter can perhaps enlighten you. I do not know whether he expects us to put him up—I suppose not, since although he is Aurobindo, Aurobindo does not know him from Adam. However, what I am doing is to send you his reply-paid telegram form and shove my responsibility on your shoulders. You will decide there according to the ripe wisdom of your many-Aurobindonian experience. Whether you wire 'come and be blessed' or 'stay where you are in your Eden'—is your shout—I back out. To sum the matter up in two far-flowing Alexandrine couplets :

Tell him, by wire: 'Come on' with a benignant nod,  
Or leave him journeying to the devil or to God,  
Decide for the other Aurobindo what you please,  
This namesake-flooded Aurobindo leave at ease.

"In fact my Supermind is almost staggering helpless to make any decision under the weight of all these Aurobindos and others. I am told there will be 400 of them in families and singles apart from the 200 who are here, and so unless the divine mercy descends with a greater force than the 'gentle dew' from Heaven, we may be still there receiving people till past three o'clock in the afternoon. So one Aurobindo more or less can make no difference to me. It is you who will rejoice or suffer—according as he falls on you like a ton of bricks or envelopes you like a soothing zephyr in the spring.

"But look at the irony of human decisions and human hopes. My father who wanted all his sons to be great men—and succeeded in a small way with three of them—in a sudden inspiration gave me the name Aurobindo, till then not borne by anyone in India or the wide world, that I might stand out unique among the great by the unique glory of my name. And now look at the swarm of Aurobindos with

<sup>1</sup> From Sanskrit, meaning literally. "wolf-belly of dreadful deeds"

their mighty deeds in England, Germany and elsewhere ! Don't tell me it is my fault because of my indiscretion in becoming famous. When I went to the National College in the Swadeshi days which was my first public step towards the ignominies of fame, there was already an Aurobindo Prakash waiting for me there with the sardonic comment of the gods printed on his learned forehead. Aurobindo Prakash, indeed!

“As for the explanation, your epic of the four Aurobindos has suddenly revealed to me why the name Aurobindo has spread and why its bearers are heading for Pondicherry. I have it—eureka! And I am released from all *kshobha*<sup>1</sup> at the violated uniqueness of my name. Your description shows that each Aurobindo represents a world-type and it is of the conglomeration and sublimation of great world-types that the supramental-terrestrial will be made. You may not have appreciated their greatness, but that is not their fault. Also the formula for the Supramental may sound to you too chemical like the formula for a patent medicine, but there it is. Incidentally, I am more convinced than ever that you lived and wrote and sighed (‘I am between tears and sighs,’ said Maecenas as he sat between the weak and watery-eyed Virgil and the asthmatic Horace) under Augustus Caesar. You have kept the spirit and turn and most even of the manner.

“Your ‘epistolary frivolity’ was all right. There is laughter in the Kingdom of Heaven, though there may be no marriage there.”

<sup>1</sup> chagrin

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## AT THE FOOT OF EVEREST

I HAVE loved thee though thy beauty stands  
 Aloof from me,  
 That dwelling in thy stainless sight  
 From dawn to dawn at last I might  
 Become like thee—

Become like thee and rise above  
 My mortal woe  
 And to the heavens passionless  
 And mute from dawn to dawn address  
 Thoughts white like snow.

K. D. SETHNA

## TO A POET ON POETRY

A LETTER TO DILIP KUMAR ROY IN FEBRUARY 1948

I WAS wondering if my rather frank criticism of a few poems of yours had driven too deep a knife into your artist's sensitiveness. What you write sets me at ease—if I have your permission to pass strictures I can be of some help to you. Besides, there is really nothing discouraging in finding some productions below the mark. A man like you who writes so much is bound to write often below his best; but often too he is bound to write to the full height of his power. That second "oftenness" should steel you to sacrificing all that is not top-notch without batting an eyelid. Were I in your place I would not let any imperfect attempts stay open to the public—I would scrap them. The next best thing to scrapping them is not to mind whatever censure they may come in for from those who want you to be quintessential Dilip.

Several poems in the big bunch you have sent me are fairly fine, some have a very interblended chiaroscuro of quality and defect, others have bright patches and dull spots clearly demarcated, a few are very good indeed—and one is simply marvellous, a masterpiece if ever there was such a thing, a little Himalaya of heavenly height, a little Pacific of divine depth, an outburst that will rank with the greatest treasures of English poetry: I mean your "Art Aspiring".

In connection with the new poems let me drop a few critical hints that apply to all your work in general and not merely to the new poems.

Certain words in English have acquired a cloying taste of sentimental immaturity. I don't say they can't be used in great verse—but to be successful they must have a strong charge of vision and emotion. One of these words is "vernal": it has too obvious and sugary a poetic ring in a context which is not all a-quiver with inspiration. Fine romantic poetry has taken it up in the past and produced delightful effects, but it has been employed a little too frequently and in many instances to create a quick poetic atmosphere without one's troubling to feel and see poetically. I should consider its use at present the sign of a tyro in verse if not a pseudo-poet. Mind you, I do not taboo it—striking effects can be got out of it now and even a hundred years hence, but the probability is that it will give birth more often than not to a cheap beauty. The word is a very beautiful one in itself but overused and so gone stale. Sri Aurobindo is fond of it in his juvenilia; in his mature work he brings it in warily and charily. In his juvenilia I can recollect only one occasion when it attains a truly expressive intensity:

The vernal radiance of my lover's lips  
Was shut like a red rose upon my mouth.

His somewhat later *Love and Death* has a very surprising use of it, yoked as it is in its warmth and richness with an abstract legal-political term. Ruru, searching for the prematurely dead Priyumvada, has brought the Love-God Madan's protective flower to the Underworld and secured entrance there. Yama, the God of Death, protests against Love's intrusion:

All worlds his breath confounds...  
His vernal jurisdiction to bare Hell  
Extends not...

Another word to avoid is "bower". Shelley had a penchant for it—also the young Keats of the *Endymion* days. Shelley succeeds, as Spenser before him, when he lives in a genuine atmosphere of romantic idealism—otherwise the word comes with a sort of anaemic floridity. In your verse, it seems to be weak and false, more a rhyme-necessity than an inevitable expression, and it brings down the general tone. A less strong ban but at times just as genuine must be applied to star-images. I have before now touched upon this point in my letters to you. It is a very delicate point, for some of the most significant effects are created by star-images, and I go even so far as to say that a man's originality may be measured by the novel nuances he is able to get out of so extremely beautiful yet extremely hackneyed a symbol as a star. In "Art Aspiring" you achieve true greatness with your

O deep starry secrecy  
Twinkling in my heart!

The idea is not quite new, but an intense afflatus gives it a revelatory power by a combination of apt and suggestive words wrought into a rhythm-scheme which has profound reverberations. This power grows pallid in many other poems where you drag stars in. "Starry Face" and similar expressions are facile in a lovely fashion—they are easy ways of speaking of "brave translunary things", they circumvent the necessity of gripping the mystery ere it flies and tearing aside its veil of silence. They are almost poetic clichés. To an analogous degree I should like frequently to shoo you off the word "dream". It is difficult and even unadvisable to score it off one's poetic vocabulary, it stands for so much in our in-going consciousness, it summarises so many of our moments of insight, it conjures up so well our absorbed moods of God-delighted vision. What, therefore, we must do is to pack a large amount of significance into it instead of throwing it about loosely. In a poem of yours not in the present fascicle I remember the lines:

The clouds lay siege on high: in days that are no more  
They brought me hints of a mystic Presence dream-inlaid.

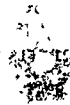
Here "dream" is handled most skilfully—it is made to express a particular shade of meaning, it is crammed with suggestion, it has authentic sight in it—that "inlaid" rendering it aptly significant with a verbal novelty. If you could always have that freshness, there would be nothing for me to say. I find, however, that you bring in "dream" in several poems without the inspiration seizing you by the throat and pressing that word out of the depths of you. Arjava is very much enamoured of it.

He has put it to pregnant use in poem after poem; yet even he, I sometimes feel, falls under its spell and oversteps the limit. One excuse, though, can be found for him: his verse lives in a certain domain of consciousness which is of the inner mind rather than the creative intelligence which is frequently if not mostly your poetic centre in the pieces where you "dream". So the atmosphere is more in harmony with the psychological substance of the term. Even then, I believe that it tends to pall on one when one reads him at a stretch.

Apart from these verbal particulars, the general defect that can be charged to you lies in the ease with which poetry can be written from the centre you function in—the creative intelligence. It is a centre closest to our ordinary thinking mind: although in no way at all inferior as a purely poetic power to other centres, even the highest Overmind ones, it inclines often to shade off into the thought-faculty instead of lighting up that faculty with its own imaginative fire. This leads to metrical cogitation, the mere mind adapting its ordinary steps to some sort of dance-measure without feeling the true Terpsichore in its feet. Your short-line poems, tripping along in tetrameter, do not always have a divine frenzy or a divine delicacy moving to inner or far-off melodies. The rhythm is a little monotonous—and this because the inspiration does not fight sufficiently free of the jog-trot of the thinking mind. Ideas and not visions are the stuff here—surely there is emotion but not intense enough to wing the ideas, or to heat whatever vision there may be to incandescence. Luckily the somewhat dry tracts are interspersed with fine and fluent spaces: the poems are thus saved from being mediocre. But in the passages that are fine and fluent there is still on some occasions what I may call a negative merit characteristic of the creative intelligence. The creative intelligence hasn't only to guard against slipping into metrical cogitation: it has also to be on the alert to keep off authentic yet slightly old effects. It lapses into poetic turns that seem echoes of past manners—this produces results of undistinguished beauty, a negative merit.

The modernist mind, trying to avoid such results, goes to the extreme of achieving distinction by a fantastic and convoluted ingenuity. Hardly a real solution—and you are free of its artificial force. I want you to keep off as well the least suspicion both of unenlivened thinking and of undistinguished beauty. Perhaps you wish me to give illustrations of what I mean. Well, here are some verses from *Grace—a Myth?* Possibly I should not pick out this particular work—it is plainly argumentative. Still, I hold that even an argument can be conducted sensuously and passionately—and with always a fresh sensuousness and passion. Please remember I am not running down the poem as a whole—I am just picking fault with a few spots in it. Take this stanza:

She seldom invites those who tame  
 The meek with their heroic pride,  
 Or who count themselves beyond all blame  
 And tend to her with giant's strides.



Three-fourths here is metrical statement, of little poetic value. Even the metre in the first line is jerky, the changed accent of "invites" (the natural accent is on the second syllable) not carried off successfully by any expressive splendour. The next two lines are not bad but there is no warm living pulsation in them to make the mind get up and dance or run or fly. Only the last line has a leap in it, with a picturing power vivid and suggestive. Let me quote another verse:

How could one doubt who once felt thy  
Clasp of embrace, or glimpsed thy play?  
O miracle of Alchemy  
Touching Night's ash to fire of day.

The first half is dull and commonplace in spite of the attempt to bring in emotion by that "clasp of embrace". The second half is poetic yet without striking distinction. Some distinction, however, there is, owing to one single word: "ash". Without "ash" the poetic effect would be quite stale though genuine. As an instance of almost a whole stanza of stale genuineness you have:

Those who exult have not beheld  
Her starry eyes of beauty—above  
Our sphere of sorrow: she's unveiled  
To those who long for light of love.

I don't feel like "exulting" over anything up to "sorrow"—it is poetry devoid of verbal originality, and a Shelleyan cliché, so to speak, crowns the second-hand inspiration. The rest of the stanza begins to live—it is not particularly rare and novel but has a fresher quality of language as well as of feeling and vision. What I have censured is not dead, it has inspiration but it can be appreciated in this year of grace only if by some catastrophe the memory of six centuries of English poetry were rubbed off the critical mind!

As a contrast to the faults I have pointed out I'll cite four lines from the same poem which are altogether fine. Not that each idea or turn is perfectly new. Such a wholesale novelty is difficult anywhere. What we must ask for is some spark of individual fire, some note of adventurous discovery, enlivening the general atmosphere as happens in:

O marvel mien of tenderness,  
O rapture indefinable  
Of thine one glance's soft caress,  
Like mountain-whiff's in a dungeon cell.

I know I am being hyper-critical. But you have reached a stage which merits hypercriticism. From a budding poet one does not expect very much, one is not rigorous in one's demands. Towards a poet in flower one must show no mercy. The highest

compliment to him is to give him no quarter—to ask him to open to us nothing but perfect petals. And perfection has to satisfy two conditions: it must be inspired and it must be original, it must ring true and it must ring new.

Eleven poems, out of those I have not seen before, I consider very good, fulfilling the two important conditions. Eleven others are good, with passages that rise above the general level. The remainder—twelve, I believe—have good points but scattered too far, though lines here and there are truly memorable. The two new experiments in quantitative metre are, as you yourself know, undeniable successes. The authentic vitality of the movement gives tone even to phrases not entirely remarkable. These phrases, however, are not many. Out of the two pieces—*Soul and Sphinx* and *Soul to Sphinx*—I fancy the latter more, and in it the lines stamping themselves on my mind with great force of suggestion are

Light of a far far wisdom, withdrawn in a trance-coiled power  
Bides still its hour of descent

and

Deep in the sunken past, in the womb of her questful sorrow  
Glimpses she had of a high pinnacled Being of Flame,  
Luminous now like a comet—a legend mere on the morrow,  
Caught for an instant as form—then but a cadence, a name!

and

Even in moments of vision, when Peace is in wedlock with Rapture,  
Often in Night's dark void (a paradox none may define)  
Fathomless vistas are glassed of Beauty (no daytides recapture!)  
Poised in a bournless expanse—unfolding an aeoned Design!

These passages are magnificent—Aurobindonian, I might say—a true in-visioning mysticism finds in them its native speech and rhythm—the deep is heard in its own large and secretly luminous accent—something of the very presence and substance of the occult Crypt and the spiritual Vault are caught—the grave and majestic possibilities of the classical elegiac are fully evoked for the purposes of an inwardly-lit experience. The sole criticism I can make is, first, that the brackets within which you put the fine phrase “no daytides recapture” are unnecessary, tending a little to artificialise the expression if not actually lessening the significance and, second, that the other bracketed phrase “a paradox none may define” is a drop towards a non-mystical obviously mental turn making a small rift in the august spell. That word “define” is perhaps not unworthy to stand, but can't you weave it into a phrase more in tune with the rest of the lines? What you have written is like an “aside” uttered by somebody who stands outside the experience, a mental watcher's remark and not the illuminating comment of the soul itself. Do I make my meaning clear? Perhaps if you replace “paradox” by a word like “strangeness” the situation may be saved.

AMAL KIRAN

## THE SUPER-BRIDGE

(Record of a Talk given at the Mother's School, New Delhi on 23.8.80)

HERE is an old child of the Mother ('old' in both senses, but 'young' enough in spirit, like you) before children of 'Mother's School' whom he expects to remain ever-young, ever-growing, ever-knowing with 'more of reverence' in their hearts evermore!

With this preamble, let me now dive straight into the theme of my talk. I dare say you have heard or come across *two* poems I'll recite before you now—omitting a few lines that are not relevant at present:

1

My heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky:  
So was it when my life began;  
So is it now I am a man;  
So be it when I shall grow old,  
Or let me die!

2

There are bridges on the rivers,  
As pretty as you please:  
But the bow that bridges heaven  
And overtops the trees,  
And builds a road from earth to sky,  
Is prettier far than these!

So both poems are about the Rainbow—one by William Wordsworth, the other by Christina Rossetti. But is it only for demonstrating divergent approaches to one and the same theme that I select these for relaying?

No, my friends; there is more here than meets the eye (as probably in everything else in the world). Wordsworth prefers to 'die', if his heart cannot 'leap up' at the sight of a rainbow even in old age: why? He feels that only a deadened heart cannot respond exultingly to the perennial charm and freshness of a rainbow—and that is worse than death! Only a sophisticated 'consciousness—deadened by observance of routine and formalities of etiquette and respectability and all such contaminations of the 'world that is too much with us'—fails to be thrilled at such a sight—for that matter, at all such phenomena of Nature, be they 'Daffodils' or the 'Green Linnet' or the 'Glow-worm'! "The letter *killeth*, the spirit giveth life": it is the exaltation of all such aspects of mere 'letter-worship' over the Spirit behind (ever-beckoning



to us, ever-ready to unseal our vision to the true and abiding verities of life) that 'kills': it is the resuscitation of the values of the spirit and restoration of the balance between the two (Spirit and Letter) that makes for real life and real growth.

And how does Christina respond to that sight of the Rainbow? Her heart that is sick of this world and all worldly-wise concerns aspires and yearns for release from such clamping things, sees in it a perfect symbol for her aspiration—apart from the fascination of the spectrum of seven colours (you have learnt by rote what the abbreviation *Vibgyor* means, I am sure?)—an overarching Bridge connecting 'Heaven and Earth', a Bridge across which all the plenitudes of the Spirit could be brought down and concretised *Here* on Earth!

No wonder that she calls that *Bridge* 'prettier far' than all other bridges on rivers (for example, Howrah Bridge or Wordsworth's own 'Westminster Bridge')! That Rainbow Bridge is, however, ephemeral, impalpable, unsubstantial (as that Boy 'who ran after the Rainbow' found it to his cost!); where indeed is the Bridge that verily joins the two ends of existence, Spirit and Matter? Thanks to the collaboration of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, that *Super-Bridge* has now been built (*not* for driving your car on, full-speed, but for your own adventure of consciousness!)—a Bridge that was the dream of the ancient Rishis who sought to affiance Heaven and Earth in that compound-word—द्यावा पृथि वीः (Dyāvā pṛthi dyauh).

CHIMANBHAI PATEL

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## HIM

I HAVE found Him, the star-filled Seer of my soul,  
 The Benefactor from a bright  
 Beyond that looks in light  
 At every need, the fine  
 Love-handed Mentor of my cares.

I have seen Him, this One  
 Who hovers and, consoling,  
 Takes away the present fears,  
 The hidden sighs.  
 O Protector, be here now,  
 The Victor in the morning's call,  
 Supplant the pain and be our puissant All!

PATTI

## THE NEW CREATION

It is the aeon of the Truth's advent.  
By evolution fertilised, Mother Earth,  
Pregnant with the golden consciousness' descent,  
To a divine creation is giving birth.  
With fiercest birth-pangs rocks her the new life:  
Violently shaken in all her roots,  
Burning in aspiration forward to drive,  
While yet a prisoner of ancient moods,  
The Earth is a battlefield of giant might.  
The future has come; it is past's death-hour:  
Love's Light-army assails the Lords of Night  
Wholly to erase perversion's tyrant-power.  
Beholding their term ends, the dark world-lashes  
Enact a last show; demons, desperate, rear—  
The late flickerings of night-fire, soon ashes.  
For now the splendid reign of dawn is here:  
The sky enamoured of lustre is ablaze  
With sun's ascending steps of rose and gold.  
Morn's beauty breaks through her dense veil of haze;  
A glory of sun-rays, spears shooting bold  
Pierce the thick clouds' fortress; the grey walls crumble—  
The Day has entered on its rapturous curve.  
Serene greatness is born, though below mumble  
Breakers that angrily toss foam and surf.  
Exhausted seas soon shattered by the shore,  
Since ages unnumbered they have journeyed from afar,  
Restlessly driven by the titan Thor  
Smiting their waters with his hammer's huge bar.  
His thunder and lightning, once sovereign,  
Decays with the mad groans of those doomed to perish,  
Now spent. Love has arrived to heal all pain;  
And Wisdom has come upon earth to cherish  
His kingdom: as monarch to rule with Love,  
The queen at his side, ministered by Force,  
Enthroned on Truth, Bliss' baldachin above.  
The race has begun of the deathless White Horse.

As yet the Tree of Truth is a young seed.  
Downward grip strong roots of fire, while its birth  
Grows heavenward, its parent Sun to meet.  
It reaches for the skies while deep in earth  
Anchored in our substance' nourishing soil,

Transformed miraculously by the Truth  
Whose alchemy distills from' crude, dark oil  
The crystalline elixir of eternal youth.  
Light-showers sprinkle their brilliant drops,  
A dancing radiance of aureate hue  
Pearling downward from heaven's ultimate tops,  
To boundless growth the boundless seed to woo.  
Herald-birds chant, the golden age has dawned.  
A vivid promise is their vibrant song  
Of life's release from death's iron cage, crooned  
In happy resonance with the psychic gong:  
Seemingly unconnected over the world,  
Everywhere magically forms, grows, is  
A subtle light-net futureward unfurled  
Straining for the new, impatient to dismiss  
The old. For evolution has quantum-leapt.  
Its strides advance at an invincible pace  
Beyond the dwarf-mind in beast-nature wrapt,  
Tearing the veil that hides man's godhead-face.  
A vague silhouette of tomorrow's features,  
Our century is tight-packed with events  
Before undreamable for human creatures,  
Unable into all eras' large fence  
To fit. Visible signs abound world-wide  
Of life's fabulous mutations: man's breakthrough  
To a new consciousness whose emergent tide  
Is Being's fourth dimension, vast, right, true.  
Time-travellers assemble for the march  
Into the future; Tomorrow's Truth-ship  
Lifts off from their soul, an immense fire-torch  
Embarking on a great adventurous trip  
For the unknown noon of everlasting Day.  
Pioneers yearning for a divine mankind  
Sail vastward on the inner serpent-way  
To the golden galaxy of Supermind,  
Guided by beacon-stars through calm sapphire-lands.  
Caught in the sun-mirror of the mund of light  
Are the luminous winds, the lightning-hands  
That drive it upward, height on solar height.  
The gnostonauts hunt for the golden sun,  
Capture it as prey to feed earth's hungry heart,  
Fulfilling the Many with the All and One.

Heaven descends, to make earth its counterpart,  
 Is lured into their limitlessly flung net  
 Woven from flames of aspiration-fire.  
 The world's birthright is this fate-spinning thread,  
 Knotted forever by polar desire  
 Attracting man to God and God to man,  
 With Nature third in the triumvirate  
 That has played the world-game since it began  
 The dance of Oneness in the Many's heart.  
 A beginning—continually reborn new  
 In the cosmic festival—That has ever been,  
 That will ever be, immortal and true  
 Alone in things visible and those unseen.  
 Truth immanent, Truth fourfold, Truth beyond,  
 Truth absolute, supreme Truth new born on earth  
 Who will be released from her leaden bond:  
 From darkness' abysm, hell's subconscious curse,  
 From ignorance mirrored in falsehood's wing,  
 From death, life's ever-haunting killer-ghost,  
 From poisonous sap of suffering's bitter sting,  
 The one and only Guest openly to host.

A cry heaved up deep from the bosom of our globe,  
 A silent burning intensest need's mighty cry.  
 Passionate surged the flame-pinioned comet-star Hope  
 Far-winging into the vastness of night, a sigh  
 Too profoundly, inmosty felt to be in vain,  
 Not to be heard by the mystic biune Supreme  
 Who tills occult fields of which our world is a grain,  
 Spills as seed into soils of sleep the cosmic dream.  
 The time has come: earth's destiny unveils its face,  
 Baring the goal of evolution's boundless toil.  
 The call of life's emerald jungle, mind's blue maze  
 And their fostering yet crumbling red mother-soil  
 Spiralled to the diamond soul of the infinite,  
 Sunk to the all-coring, omnipresent Beyond,  
 Drawn as if a moth to the original Light.  
 Silence' immobile heart to its want awakened,  
 Stirred; resounding, its plumbless deeps set out to sing  
 In crescendo-resonance with our universe.  
 In perfect rhythms the bells of fate began to ring  
 The golden harmonies of the new cosmic birth.

Invoked is immortality's glorious age,  
 Evoked the earth-redeeming epiphany's descent,  
 Evolution's book turned to the next, superhuman page  
 With the sun-runes of apotheosis' epic to be penned,  
 Fierily engraved with the new creation's golden flaming ink.  
 Our deadly tale of pain and pleasure's superficial gaudy gloom  
 Comes to a happy end with Crimson Love's mystic marriage to Psyche's Pink.  
 Their absolute union shatters small ego's Fata Morgana walls of doom,  
 Releasing rapture's ever-widening rainbow, transparency's creative peace—  
 Our life healed from division's agony, liberated from death' illusive farce.  
 These by an all-mighty, all-divinising Love, like shadows at noon, shall be forced to cease.  
 Then will be freed the limitless superman's cosmic being whose embrace contains the stars;  
 Divinity's living icon who thrills with ecstasy's complete prism of sevenfold solar birth;  
 Fire-child, crowned with the golden Lotus, petalled with the myriad lightnings of omniscient wisdom—  
 Tremendous, omnipotent, dynamic Godhead superseding the static gods' rule of the universe.  
 Being's innumerable worlds his single paradise, becoming his sempiternal expanding kingdom.  
 His sole companion the infinite: most intimate friend, sweet, passionate lover, parent and child, playmate supreme.  
 Soaring on measureless diamond wings, he explores eternity's eldorado of growing plenitude: space and time.  
 Beauty sparkles in holographic marvels of bliss' ever-refined hue-cum-form palette—flawless perfection's progress-dream;  
 All earth echoes the Gnostic Consciousness' kaleidoscopic poetry composing the world in ever more dimensioned rhyme,  
 And life ever more delicately divine, and man as ever more opulent image of God—the myriadly mirrored One.

(Written in winter 1975; revised version)

ALEXANDER BRODT

## VIEW FROM THE MATRIMANDIR

Looming large against the waning dark  
And lingering stars, She is a stark  
Presence wrapped in the fresh day,  
A landmark for an inner city.  
She has called me on Her way  
Across the rush of night's wind.  
Here I stand, transfixed by Her soar  
As I stood once in Tanjavor  
Before the gate of a hundred gods  
And Shiva's massive abode within.  
No gaudy countenances glitter here  
Above this barren, red sod.  
Only black pipes, grey cement,  
And soon, human faces  
Intent upon their work.  
From above the country fades  
From raw reds and browns  
Into the blue secrets of hills,  
And morning's imagined villages  
Moored among masts of palms.  
I would like to flow  
Into that mysterious blue,  
To linger under a banyan  
While morning is still new  
And feel the waking earth  
Soft from dreams of temple towers  
That devotion once flung aloft  
For ancient kings to offer flowers.  
In drab villages  
They still rise  
Above rice fields  
With majestic surprise.

That splendid animal the sun  
Has now broken free  
From embrace of blue sea.  
The land is swathed in heat,  
Hardening, sucked dry  
By that conflagration in the sky.

She will refine this sun,  
 And portion out dominion  
 Of a different radiance.  
 The heart on high will cool,  
 The soil wake from trance  
 And the land She rules  
 Become a deep, green setting  
 For Her shining, marvelous jewel.

GORDON

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## SACRED AND PROFANE

GRAVE solitude, and a quaint ashramic cot:  
 A hermit's wood, deep oaked and pined and elmed;  
 The giants arch a nave's aspiring plot  
 For smaller younger kin not overwhelmed  
 Too easily by senior denizens.  
 Within, without, crepuscular delight—  
 Though muted rooms and cool umbrageous glens  
 Are drowsy to the immemorial right  
 Of flowers to heaven's benedicite.  
 Beyond a pane an azalea's shocking pink  
 Contrives to reach a shell-white cherry spray  
 Endeavoring for his rough part to drink  
 The study's glow. Entranced, their eremitic brother  
 Is sure that those who buss are fond of one another.

WILLIAM JONES

# THE SECRET OF THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

## AN AUROBINDONIAN APPROACH

Aruni-Uddalaka

(Continued from the issue of December 1980)

THE Uttanka story forms the last of the trilogy in the Pauṣya Parva which revolves around the teacher-taught relationship; using it to figure forth the symbol world of a spiritual quest in the inner consciousness for the supernal luminiscence. The first two of these stories have as the preceptor the sage Āyoda-Dhaumyah. Uttanka's guru Veda is the only disciple of this ṛishi who is not put to tasks which strain physical endurance to the breaking point. Like the Uttanka of the Aśvamedhika Parva, Veda is made to stay on at Dhaumyah's ashram long after his compatriots have passed out, and, characteristically, Veda's disciples are never subjected to physical hardship by him.

The first of these two episodes concerns Āruni who is sent by Dhaumyah to repair a dyke in the field, *kedārakhandam badhaneti*. Unable to repair it, Āruni uses his own body to plug the breach—the primeval Hans!—and is named Uddālaka by his Guru for appearing before him by splitting apart the dyke. This renaming itself provides the key to the symbolism:

Because you pulled yourself out and *let the waters escape* you shall be known as Uddālaka... (śloka 33)

It is, indeed, curious that the disciple should be praised and rewarded (“All the Vedas will shine in you, all the Dharma Śāstras also”, śloka 35) for having *failed* in the task of plugging the breach, with acquisition of the secret knowledge. This counter-logical scheme is designed to “hook” the attention of the select among the audience, and indicate to them that there is more here than meets the eye.

Āruni's use of the physical body to contain the waters parallels the function of Ahi-Vṛitra and Vala in the Ṛigveda. Whether he does so to prevent the waters from flowing out of the channel or from flowing into the field and flooding it is immaterial as that is an element of the external story-frame, against the very logic of which the inner purport runs. Ahi-Vṛitra and Vala are the circumscribers, the enclosers, who secrete the divine waters of Bliss and Illumination within the dark caves of the inconscient lying at the base of the hill which is the physical being. The mission of Indra, the Illumined Mind, is to rive asunder Vṛitra-Vala for releasing these waters to stream over the aspirant's consciousness, suffusing it with Knowledge and Beatitude. In this task, He is assisted by Saramā, the hound of heaven, the divinised Intuition which seeks out the secret cave and leads Indra to it:



Thou hast rent open the fountain, thou hast released the doors that were sealed; thou, thou hast set to their play the floods that were in bondage; O God-in-Mind (Indra) When thou openedst the vast hill, thou hast loosed wide the streams, thou hast hurled down the Titan destroyer. The fountains that were kept sealed, the successions of the Truth thou hast made a rushing speed, thou hast milked the teat of the Hill, O hurler of the thunder-flash, O fierce and strong! O Power-in-Mind! thou hast smitten the Python that lay coiled in front against them and established thy strength in us.

(Rigveda V. 32. 1-2)<sup>97</sup>

VIII.6.13 in the R̥gveda provides a further clue to the Āruni symbol when it describes how Indra, having rent Vṛitra to pieces, “sent the waters to the sea”.

Āruni therefore is performing the basic Indra function of bursting the earthen dyke, that is, the unconscious barriers of the physical being, in order to allow a two-way flow of consciousness (“waters”). The “opening” thus created not only allows the divine water of Knowledge and Bliss to flow into the being but also enables the individual self-consciousness to split the limitations of the ego and flow into the “sea” which is the Cosmic Consciousness, the Universal Self:

A Seer was born, a shining Guest of Time...  
 A gap was rent in the all-concealing vault;  
 The conscious ends of being went rolling back:  
 The landmarks of the little person fell,  
 The island ego joined its continent...  
 Abolished were conception's covenants...  
 Annulled the soul's treaty with Nature's nescience...  
 And broken the intellect's hard and lustrous lid;...  
 The finite self mated with Infinity.

(*Savitri* 1.3.p.25)

It is for this momentous act of achieving, literally, a breakthrough that the disciple is renamed Uddālaka, “he who bursts asunder, rives apart”.

This interpretation of the Uddālaka story as a myth of spiritual experiences is further confirmed in the *Yoga-Vasīṣṭha-Rāmāyaṇa*. In its *Upāsana Khandā*, the fifty-fourth chapter of the fifth book is entitled “The Quiescence of Uddālaka” and has as its theme the successive stages of Yoga practice. This is divided into four stages.

The first step is that which occurs with *rechaka*, the exhalation of breath, when the body becomes empty as the sea after Agastya has sucked up the waters. Then the burning fire of the heart burns away all impurities and leaves the body dry as a forest scorched by the hot winds of a conflagration.

In the second stage the fire is put out and the whole frame appears cold and grey like ashes.

With *puraka*, the vital breath, the third stage begins. It is said to rise to the Mind, the lunar sphere, and return as cooling showers of rain brightened by moonbeams to form fine wires of gold. These resurrect the ashes of the body, falling on them as dewdrops, like Gaṅgā on Śiva. The resuscitated body glistens like the Pārijāta churned out of the ocean by the Mandara mountain. Thus the vital breaths fill the body with amrita and restore it to its natural state.

In the fourth and final stage Uddālaka is described as sitting with neck held erect like the peak of mount Meru to receive the light of the soul which irradiates in the form of flowers before his inner vision. Dispersing the gloom of ignorance, the spiritual illumination pervades his whole being and he becomes as a sea of joy, still as a lamp in breathless air. Thus he becomes one with the Universal Self, resplendent like the noonday sun.

These stages in the path of spiritual ascension offer obvious parallels to the Vyāsan myth of the Churning of the Ocean, which we shall come to in due course.

In this episode therefore Vyāsa has presented in embryo the theme of spiritual ascension which takes place, paradoxically, only through a descent. This process is explored at greater length and with progressively more complicated symbol-structure in the Upamanyu and Uttanka myths which follow.

Before proceeding to the Upamanyu story we may glance at the opening of the Pauṣya Parva where an attempt has been made to bring in the Ṛigvedic Saramā in a tangential episode. Here Janamejaya injures the divine hounds, which may represent his failure in the spiritual quest for the Solar herds, the ray-cows of supernal knowledge. However, this has not been integrated with the trilogy of symbolic stories which follow, and is left out on a limb altogether.

### Upamanyu and the Asvins

Upamanyu's apprenticeship with Dhaumya takes the form of a progressive denial of physical nourishment and the discipline of offering everything he obtains to the teacher. He is taught to eschew the basic physical need, food, till hunger leads him into a physical blindness which, paradoxically (as is typical of a symbolic myth-structure), opens up an inner sight as he is precipitated into a *kūpa*, a hollow or cave, like the tunnel into the bowels of the earth into which Uttanka will enter.

It is this cave or well which provides the key to the symbolism. In the Ṛigveda the cave is the secret home of the Paṇis, "the miser traffickers of sense"<sup>98</sup> who rule over the inconscient or subconscious worlds. Yet, the divine light has to be discovered within this dark abyss, for "A cave of darkness guards the eternal Light".<sup>99</sup> It is the same truth which is reiterated by Yama to Nachiketa, that the divine flame which is Infinitude and Eternity is "hidden in the secret cave of our being" (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* I.1.14); that "the Ancient of Days" is hidden away "in our secret being and lodged in the cavern heart of things" (I.2.12 *ibid*).<sup>100</sup>

The word "Upamanyu" itself is significant. It means, "striving after, zealous",

which makes it a synonym of *Ārya*, the aspirant struggling to rise from the darkness of ordinary sense-activities to “the luminous working of mind and life which comes from above through the mental existence”.<sup>101</sup>

Add to this the fact that with the restoration of Upamanyu’s physical sight by the Aśvins there is no mention of his being taken out of the earthly pit. This reinforces the interpretation of the episode as exemplifying the experience that the giving of seer-vision implied the ascension of the aspirant from the depths of the subconscious or inconscient self (which he would have to plumb first) so that the darkness (“blindness”) gave way to supernal light. The symbolism is further strengthened by the apprenticeship of Upamanyu, the striver, being made to consist of tending *cows*, which stand for rays of knowledge (one of the meanings of *go*).

In the *Īśa Upaniṣad* we come across some passages which throw revealing light on the nature of Upamanyu’s experience. Ślokas 17-18 show that the “blindness” he experiences is a symbolic representation of the ignorance into which the separative ego-consciousness leads the aspiring soul:

As soon as egoistic consciousness emerges and interferes, there is a disturbance, a division, a false action. Will becomes an impulsion ignorant of its secret motive and aim, knowledge becomes a dubious and partial ray not in possession of the will, the act and the result, but only striving to possess and inform them. This is because we are not in possession of our self (*ātmavān*), our true being, but only of our ego. What we are, we know not; what we know, we cannot effect.<sup>102</sup>

This darkness is removed by the action of the inner flame

that increasing knowledge and force which carries us finally into the straight or good path out of the crookedness... Knowledge of the Lord as the One in the fully self-conscious being, submission to the Lord as the universal and transcendent in the fully self-conscious action, are the two keys of the divine gates, the gates of Immortality.<sup>103</sup>

What Upamanyu goes through in the well has its Western analogue in “the dark night of the soul” described by St. John of the Cross and in Carlyle’s *Everlasting No*, a condition where

Mind could not think, breath could not breathe, the soul  
 Could not remember or feel itself; it seemed  
 A hollow gulf of sterile emptiness,  
 A zero oblivious of the sum it closed,  
 The immense refusal of the eternal No.<sup>104</sup>

This experience appears to be inevitably the fate of those who would try to know the Unknowable:

An absolute supernatural darkness falls  
 On man sometimes when he draws near to God:  
 An hour comes when fail all Nature's means;  
 Forced out from the protecting Ignorance  
 And flung back on his naked primal need,  
 He at length must cast from him his surface soul  
 And be the ungarbed entity within.<sup>105</sup>

Upamanyu's plight in the pit is Vyāsa's version of numerous references in the Ṛigveda to the Aśvins rescuing sages such as Rebha, Vandana, Antaka and Atri from wells (I.112.5-7; 116.8-9, 11, 24; 117.4-5; 119.6-7). The restoration of Upamanyu's sight is also a duplication of what the Aśvins did for Ṛijrāsva (I. 116.16; 117.17-18) and Kanva (I.118.7). As already explained, this is not simply a recovery of physical eye-sight, but an opening of the inner vision, the mystic seeing.

In the Witness's occult rooms with mind-built walls,  
 On hidden interiors, lurking passages  
 Opened the windows of the inner sight...  
 A consciousness of beauty and of bliss,  
 A knowledge which became what it perceived  
 Replaced the separated sense and heart  
 And drew all Nature into its embrace.<sup>106</sup>

The Ṛigveda states that this period of darkness lasts for ten days and nights (I.116.24; 117.12), which is a reference to psychological time, like the Nights and Dawns Uttanka invokes in his hymn in the subterranean realms. Upamanyu himself indicates the symbolic nature of this darkness: it is the suffering which results from being tied to the wheel of Time and being trapped in its delusions (śloka 67). That is why the mantric hymn arises from within invoking the Aśvins to liberate him from the bonds of Ignorance. It is the descent into the pit of Ignorance which brings about the reversal, namely, the opening to the Word, and ultimately the ascension to the higher consciousness

He heard the secret Voice, the Word that knows,  
 And saw the secret face that is our own....  
 Out of a covert tract of slumber self  
 The voice came of a truth submerged, unknown  
 That flows beneath the cosmic surfaces,  
 Only mid an omniscient silence heard,  
 Held by intuitive heart and secret sense.<sup>107</sup>

Upamanyu's invocatory hymn to the Aśvins is the most allusive of all the invocations in the Ādi Parva and keeps close to the Ṛigveda in addressing the twin deities as "golden eagles" instead of the Puranic identification with horses. In the Ṛigveda (I.118.1, IV.45.4 and X.143.5) the golden-winged bird stands for

The soul liberated and upsoaring...energies so liberated and upsoaring, winging upward towards the heights of our being... no longer involved in the ordinary limited movement of labouring gallop of the Life-energy, the Horse, *aśva*. Such are the energies that draw the free car of the Lords of Delight (Aśvins), when there dawns on us the Sun of the Truth...they make no false or hurtful movement (cf. śloka 62). And they are golden-winged, *hiranyaparṇāḥ* (cf. śloka 62). Gold is the symbolic colour of the light of Surya. The wings of these energies are the full, satisfied, attaining movement, *parṇa*, of his luminous knowledge.<sup>108</sup>

These supernal "birds" who are invoked to "free the time-trapped bird of life" (śloka 63) are veritably the same as the twin birds of the Upaniṣads, the *jīvātman* and the *Paramātman*, a concept which originates in the Ṛigveda I.164.20. The remarkable similarity between ṛiks 20-21 of this sukta and śloka 61 of Upamanyu's invocation shows how closely Vyāsa was following the Vedas :

Two Birds with fair wings, knit with bonds of friendship,  
in the same sheltering tree have found a refuge.  
One of the twain eats the sweet Fig-tree's fruitage; the  
other eating not regardeth only.  
Where those fine Birds hymn ceaselessly their portion of  
life eternal, and the sacred synods,  
There is the Universe's mighty Keeper, who, wise, hath  
entered into me the simple.

Birds!  
Birds with beautiful feathers!  
Birds!  
Birds sitting on the body of the tree!  
Birds!  
Birds free from the three gunas!  
Birds beyond compare!  
Birds straddling the universe,  
living in all living things!

Once we keep in mind the fact that in the Vedic symbol-structure the tree, and wood generally, signify the body and the physical consciousness as a whole,<sup>109</sup> the symbolism of the invocation is clear.

The vision of Time's wheel which Upamanyu evokes in ślokas 64-66 is again based upon the same Ṛigvedic sukta, ṛiks 11-14 and 48. It is an image which Vyāsa reiterates in the Uttanka episode, śloka 145, hinting that the mystic experience undergone is similar, for there is the same reference to the alternation of "black-threaded night and white-threaded day" (ślokas 63 and 146). We have already brought out the significance of this while discussing the Uttanka story. The relevant suktas are :<sup>110</sup>

Formed with twelve spokes, by length of time, unweakened,  
rolls round the heaven this wheel of during Order.  
Herein established, joined in pairs together, seven hundred  
Sons and twenty stand, O Agni.  
They call him in the farther half of heaven the Sire  
five-footed, of twelve forms, wealthy in watery store.  
These others say that he, God with far-seeing eyes, is  
mounted on the lower seven-wheeled, six-spoked car.  
Upon this five-spoked wheel revolving ever all living  
creatures rest and are dependent.  
Its axle, heavy-laden, is not heated: the nave from ancient  
time remains unbroken.  
The wheel revolves, unwasting, with its felly: ten draw it,  
yoked to the far-stretching car pole... (ṛiks 11-14)  
Twelve are the fellyes and the wheel is single; three are  
the naves. What man hath understood it?  
Therein are set together spokes three hundred and sixty,  
which in nowise can be loosened. (ṛik 48)

What is the function of the Aśvins in the story of Upamanyu's spiritual quest after enlightenment? The spiritual aspirant's discipleship is essentially a preparation of his lower nature in order to be able to bear the descent of the gods of Light, Force and Bliss. In this *yajña*, inner sacrifice, the Aryan striver needs help to avoid breaking under the impact of the descent, as also a tremendous spiritual effort to continue on his mystic pilgrim's progress. It is here that the Aśvins play a crucial role, for they are the

effective powers of the Ananda which proceeds out of the Truth-Consciousness and which manifesting itself variously in all the three worlds maintains man in his journey.... They are especially riders or drivers of the Horse, Aśvins, as their name indicates,—they use the vitality of the human being as the motive-force of the journey: but also they work in the thought and lead it to the Truth.... Of all the gods they are the most ready to come to man and to create for him ease and joy, *āgamīṣṭhā śubhaspatī*. They are essentially lords of wealth, of bliss, *śubhaspatī*.<sup>111</sup>

Their specific action is “the transformation of the nervous and vital being so that it can be a motive force in the journey”.<sup>112</sup> The consequence is that “the Aryan ‘labour’ is transformed into delight and the path becomes ‘by Ānanda is the progress towards Ānanda’ ”<sup>113</sup>. It is this twin working of Consciousness and Energy, Light and Power, Knowledge and Will which brings about the transformation of the being which is symbolised in Upamanyu’s teeth turning golden. But of that later.

At the end of the invocation, Vyāsa introduces a motif which will recur prominently in the Uttanka myth. This is the command to Upamanyu (and later to Uttanka) that he should eat something (bread, bull’s dung) or perform an act (blow into a horse’s anus) because his preceptor had done so previously. The differences in the responses of the two disciples is that Upamanyu refuses to eat without offering it to his guru, despite the assurance that Dhaumya himself had not offered it to his guru, while Uttanka promptly partakes of it. The incident reveals how perfectly Upamanyu has absorbed the teaching that every action must be an offering, a sacrifice, in the path of the aspirant.

The Aśvins offer Upamanyu a *pūpa* to eat. Ostensibly this means “a cake (of bread)”, but an examination of the roots brings out the underlying import. *Pū* signifies the act of cleansing, clarifying, *illuminating*<sup>114</sup> while *Pa* is the act of drinking or *guarding*<sup>115</sup>. Thus, the esoteric significance of this offering by the Aśvins, the Lords of Bliss, to Upamanyu, the “zealous striver”, is nothing but the gifting of the *madhu*, the divine Ānanda which cleanses, illumines and protects the being by strengthening it, transforming it into a fit vessel for holding the supernal Light and Force. That is why the Vedas described the Aśvins as carrying a skinfull of overflowing honey everywhere. The turning of the teeth—the most inert part of the body, representing the rock-hard substratum of the inconscient physical being—into gold symbolises the descent of the divine Light, Force and Bliss into the very depths of the Ignorance-shrouded being of the aspirant, and transforming it wholly (gold being the colour standing for the Sun’s Truth-Consciousness). Vyāsa seems to have at the back of his mind the pregnant R̥gvedic ṛik (I.164.47):

Dark the descent: the birds are golden-coloured; up to the heaven they fly robed in the waters.

Again descend they from the seat of Order, and all the earth is moistened with their fatness.<sup>116</sup>

The Aśvins descend into the *kūpa*, the bowels of the earth, the physical consciousness, and the descent is dark (Upamanyu is blind) because this level of being is the realm of Ignorance. Thereafter, Upamanyu’s soul-energies ascend upwards (he regains his sight) strengthened by the “waters” of bliss. A process of repeated descent and ascent takes place, the consciousness is literally “churned” (cf. the *amṛita-manthana* myth) with the alternation of Night and Day (Ignorance and Knowledge)

till the entire lower plane of being ("earth") glistens with the luminousness of the higher Truth.

(To be continued)

PRADIP BHATTACHARYA

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<sup>98</sup> *Savitri* I.3. p.42.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, III. I. p. 305

<sup>100</sup> Sri Aurobindo: *The Upanshads*, pp. 240, 246.

<sup>101</sup> *The Secret of the Veda*, op. cit., p. 225.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* p. 132-133.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Savitri*, IX.2. p. 583.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 2. p. 11.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* p 3. p 28

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>108</sup> *The Secret of the Veda* op. cit p. 320.

<sup>109</sup> Kapali Sastry. *Further Lights on the Veda*, p 126

<sup>110</sup> Griffith *Hymns of the Rgveda*, pp. 110, 113.

<sup>111</sup> *The Secret of the Veda* op. cit pp 316-317

<sup>112</sup> K Gilbert *Wisdom of the Veda*, op. cit p. 108.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* *Ibid* I.p.3..28

<sup>114</sup> Monier-Williams *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p 640.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* p. 573

<sup>116</sup> Griffith, op. cit., p. 113.



## SATYAPRIYA \*

### A SHORT STORY

THE bell rang and the college closed for the day. I hurried out of the class-room and rushed towards the tram-stop. Rushed, because to be a little late would cause me a lot of difficulties. I would fail to catch a tram-car. Passengers hanging on the doorway of the tram would hardly allow me to get hold even of the handle. On the other hand, to hire a taxi daily was beyond the means of a poor professor like me.

“Hallo, sir, rushing like a bull, can’t you see?”

I tried to bypass the man, a tram-car was more important to me than petty quarrels. But there was no way out, he pulled me back by the hand. Surprised, I stood still. In fact, it was he who had dashed against me, perhaps intentionally. But instead of apologising he was showing me red eyes. Not only that, he even dared to catch and pull me by the hand.

It was really too much. Yes, I must teach him a good lesson. I raised my face but swallowed back instantly the outcoming stern reply. A red-robed, bald-headed, fine-faced saintly man stared at me with dreamy eyes and the touch of a naughty smile played on his lips.

Strange—such a man and so harsh a voice! I stared at him befooled for a while and then added gently, “Well, you dashed against me intentionally, whereas...”

“No, that is not the question, I mean, can’t you see and move, not even when you are dashed against?” The faint smile from his lips now spread all over his face. My eyes scrutinised him from head to foot and then a lightning flash. Oh, I knew him, yes, this smile was quite familiar to me but where...? “If you don’t mind, aren’t you Satyapriya?” I asked hesitatingly.

“Oh no, I am Mithyapriya, a lover of falsehood,” he smiled on as before.

“You naughty boy, you remain still the same! The coloured robe hasn’t changed you a bit, eh! However, now?”

Let us forget, for the time being, what happened next. Let me first narrate what happened about twenty years before.

After the annual recess, on the opening day I stepped into our village-school to find it buzzing with noise and excitement. The promoted students were happy and exalted. Suddenly as I entered my class my heart also heaved with joy. “Oh! I shall sit for the last examination of the school only after a year...” But what was this? Who was that tall and healthy young boy babbling non-stop before our Kebla, Dalu, Paltu and others? And they in turn were devouring his words spellbound!

I asked Kebla with the gesture of my eyes, “Who is he?” He looked on at me like a Kabuli cat but did not speak. Meanwhile the bell rang and the class was about to start. We hastened to take our respective seats. Sunitibabu, our English teacher,

\* Translated by the author from his Bengali original.

moved into the class gravely. We stood up and then as he took his seat we also sat down again. The teacher cast a passing glance at each one of us but suddenly his eyes got fixed on Satyapriya, "A new face, it seems. What's your name young man?" he wanted to know.

"Satyapriya."

"Bah, a very good name indeed. Which school do you come from?"

"From Kurseong Collegiate School, sir."

"Very good. Perhaps the Headmaster has already tested you before admission. Still let me ask you a question or two. Can you tell me what is the superlative of beautiful?"

Satyapriya stood up but did not reply. Sunitibabu's face brightened at the efficacy of his question and he was about to open his mouth when Satyapriya muttered to himself, "Beautiful means pretty, good-looking, that's all. How comes the question of superlative in it!" All on a sudden he got animated and spoke aloud, "There is no superlative, sir, all are relative. Still if you want me to tell, I should say that the superlative of beautiful is perhaps God or the Divine, the beauty of all beauties."

The whole class burst into loud laughter to hear the collegiate reply of Satyapriya. By chance he had his seat beside me and perhaps my laughter appeared to be most taunting to him. Instantly he cast a sharp, angry look at me....

After some days we, a few classmates, were roaming about in the big garden adjacent to our school. It was a pleasant recreation for us to move about amidst a lot of known and unknown plants and trees. Playfully we took to testing one another as to who could tell the name of this or that tree. Suddenly Satyapriya asked me challengingly, "Look here, can you climb and go up to the top of that tree?"

I simply stared and didn't know what to say. In fact I had hardly climbed a tree and was quite a novice in this respect. Still had it been a tree with bushy branches I could have at least tried. But instead it was a betel-nut tree, thin, tall and slippery.

"Why don't you speak, eh? Say something."

"Can you yourself climb it?" I asked him in turn.

"Yes, of course."

"Then I also can climb. Hoo, 'yes, of course' only in words." I moved to leave the place.

"Hey, why do you flee? Just wait and see." By the time I stopped and turned my face Satyapriya had already climbed up to the middle of the tree....

Another day we were out in search of Nilkantha Pakhi (a kind of blue-throated bird) and got to the side of the canal not far from the aforesaid garden. Quite a number of small boats floated on the canal-water. They were tied with ropes to the trees standing on the bank and belonged to the students who had come to school from far-off villages. Suddenly I marked that while we enjoyed looking at the quick-flowing water Satyapriya evaded looking at it. But why? Was he afraid of water? Oh yes, perhaps he did not know how to swim...

Now this was a golden chance for me to make good my defeat and insult of the

other day. "Hallo, Satyapriya," I asked, "Can you take a round in the canal with a boat from here?" His eyes riveted and he was stark mute.

"Why don't you speak, eh? Say something."

"Can you do it yourself?"

"Yes, of course."

"Then I also can. Hoo, 'yes, of course' only in words." He turned round and moved to depart.

"Hey, why do you run away? Wait and see."

By the time he looked back to see, I had reached almost the middle of the canal with a boat...

This is how rivalry started between Satyapriya and myself. But none of us could supersede the other totally. He excelled me in football, I ranked over him in volleyball. He beat me in running, I defeated him in boxing. He was better than I in cricket, but then I was better than he in hockey. But as regards study, I mean in respect of class-examination, my rival was a different boy. Of course that does not imply that he was not brainy enough. He was quite observant and intelligent. His only defect was this that he did not pay sufficient attention to what was being taught in the class, nor study his lessons much at home. He said that knowledge was not confined to school-books only...

However, in spite of our rivalry we turned out to be good friends, so much so that we could not do without seeing each other even for a single day.

One day, after the school-hours, as we were out on the road, he proposed to me, "Listen, let's go tonight to steal coconuts from Bamundi's tree." An old widow of the village was our common Bamundi.

"What! have you gone crazy? Who does not know Bamundi's prowess? You are new here and perhaps don't know much about her. Even at this age she can run, if necessary, better than our best runner, I mean you. Nobody has been able to steal a single thing of hers ever since her widowhood. Do you follow? So brush aside the idea of coconuts from your mind and be a good boy."

"None has been able, but we shall set a new record by stealing coconuts from her tree. Do you understand?" Satyapriya asserted with a broad smile.

"A new record! Impossible. They say she has eyes all around her head. And I presume that there is some truth in it. The other day for instance, while passing across her courtyard I see, I saw..., still my mouth waters to think of that, I saw plenty of guavas hanging on one of her trees and what guavas! — a rare quality indeed, so big in size and mostly ripe and ready. To tell you the truth, just as I stood to have a look at them I heard the most abusive and ugly words I had ever heard in my life, 'How dare you stand there, you monkey? Clear out, clear out, I say. Do you hear, you burnt-face rascal? No? Then wait, let me come to dig your grave...' Strange! where was she, from where did the words come? How could she see me and know my desire? However, pressing my ears with both hands I left the place at once.

"Oh no, Bamundi has a single eye," Satyapriya objected.

"Only one eye?"

"No, I mean something else. She has a strange eye on her forehead which can revolve around her head. Have you ever seen a light-house? It is just like that, only with this difference that the light of the light-house revolves at night whereas Bamundi's single eye moves only in daytime. At night it sleeps and cannot see anything. So let's go tonight to pluck her coconuts."

"But why coconuts? Why not guavas? They are easier to procure and are very tasty too."

"Ho, ho, ho,... a little boy will go after guavas. You are quite grown up, aren't you?"

"But to pluck coconuts and that also at night is a regular theft and a very difficult job also."

"So what? There lies the fun. Today is 'Nastachandra', don't you know that? I mean today is the moon of the fourth lunation in the month of Bhadra. To steal on this day brings forth an immense virtue in favour of the stealer, more so when the owner scolds a lot. Now who can scold more profusely in the locality than our famous Bamundi? So make up your mind for the adventure."

It was about midnight. The whole of nature was under the spell of a deep sleep, and silence prevailed around Bamundi's house, the most opportune moment for novice thieves like us.

"I told you, she would be sleeping. Now you stay here, behind the tree and let me climb it." Satyapriya started climbing a coconut tree. I simply stood, waited and watched. He almost reached the top of the tree and perhaps tried to have a firm grip over the branches but then 'kraaang', a cracking sound and the door of Bamundi's house opened. At the same time her shrill voice broke the nocturnal silence, "Who is there? Impudent cur, villain of a ghost!..."

I crept backwards and hid myself behind a few bushy plants. Meanwhile Bamundi's third eye flashed, falsifying Satyapriya's expectation. Flickering hither and thither for a while it looked straight at the top of the coconut tree where Satyapriya was perched like a monkey. 'Shrraaa...dhap', a dragging sound and a thud. Satyapriya slid down and jumped from the tree and then took to his heels. Bamundi chased him forthwith with almost equal speed, holding a lighted torch in her left hand and in the right a sharp chopper ready to charge.

"My God! she is a butcher of a lady!" Frightened beyond words, I headed homewards as fast as my shaking legs permitted me.

Next day Satyapriya was not found in the school. We did not find him in the school the day after, either. I got nervous, "Oh, has he fallen a victim to her attack!" My hair stood on end to think of the eventuality. I could not be at ease and almost got sick. I left for home before the school hours were over. There also I sat on at the verandah with lowered head, apprehending all sorts of adverse possibilities.

A rikshaw stood in front of our house. Alerted I jerked myself up and saw that Satyapriya's aunt alighted from the vehicle. It was she with whom he was putting up.

She asked me in a sad, subdued and trembling voice, "Have you seen Satyapriya? He has not returned home since day before yesterday."

I was very shocked to see and hear her and at the same time a feeling of revenge against Bamundi cropped up in me. I resolved to teach the old villain a good lesson. But presently I consoled the aunt, "Please don't worry, we shall surely find him. Yes, be seated in the rikshaw, we shall set out just now in search of him." We proceeded towards Bamundi's house first.

Upon reaching there we hurried to the closed door but before we could knock we heard whispers coming from within, "Satya, promise you won't leave me."

"Leave you! Oh no, I won't budge an inch from here till you are perfectly cured."

"Satya."

"Yes."

"You know, here nobody loves me. All are after my money and things. They want to rob me of everything. Now tell me how I can do without being angry. It's God's grace and my good luck also that you were returning from your friend's house at an odd hour that night. In the darkness dashing against a tree I got terribly hurt on the hip-bone. What would have happened to me had you not been there at the time? Perhaps I would have died lying over there."

"Oh no, Bamundi, God forbid, please don't say that again."

At this I could not but knock on the door and call out sternly, "Satyapriya, your aunty awaits you here."

"Oh Satya, your aunty has come, how lucky am I! Please fetch her in; now she is my most near and dear one."

That done, I stood in the doorway dumbfounded, not knowing what to do or say. Bamundi turned her eyes to me, observed me for a while and then called me near her by a gesture of her hand. With hesitating steps I approached her. She took one of my hands in hers and observed tenderly, "You are fond of guavas, isn't it so? Please go and take as many of them as you like."

Needless to say thereafter our craving for fruits was satisfied to such an extent that we have done without them ever since.

Stories relating to Satyapriya are manifold and would perhaps have been unending had he not himself ended everything by disappearing one day nobody knew where. It happened thus:

We were enjoying ourselves in Tarunbabu's Bengali class. We all liked this new teacher as he was young and often told us interesting stories. Suddenly we were informed that the inspector had come to pay a surprise visit to our school. We got alerted and excited and Tarunbabu bade us be quiet and behave ourselves. But then he added, "Please don't worry about the inspector. From my past experience I can tell you that as soon as he will know it to be a Bengali class he will make an about-turn and leave you all in peace."

Even before he could finish, the inspector headed by the headmaster and trailed by a few others entered the class. "What's the class for?" he asked.

“Bengali, sir,” Tarunbabu gave a prompt reply hoping to see him make an about-turn. But he did not. Rather he took more than the usual interest and observed, “Bengali! Very good. Well, my young friend,” he addressed Kebla, “please name a few Bengali poets and writers, will you?”

Kebla stood up, moved his lips without any sound, as if he had been chanting within himself some mantras to unknown gods. The inspector frowned and shifted his attention towards Paltu, “And you, can you name them?”

Taken by surprise he stood up and uttered nervously, “Madhusudhan, Nabin Sen and...and...” He was mute. The inspector frowned again and cast a quick glance at Tarunbabu. Taken aback, he called out, “Can any of you in the class tell the names of a few Bengali poets and writers?”

Utter silence ensued and after a while names were hurled at the inspector from different parts of the class by different students, “Ishwar Gupta, Bankimchandra, Nazrul, Saratchandra, Kumudranjan, Sudhin Dutta, Hemchandra, Jivanananda, Rabindranath...”

“And you?” the inspector interrupted and asked Satyapriya who appeared to have drawn the inspector’s attention by absolute indifference to the happenings in the class.

Satyapriya stood up and observed politely, “What more shall I add, sir, they have almost finished the list.”

“Oh no, not names. I would like to know your opinion about Rabindranath both as a man and as a poet.”

Satyapriya remained mute and motionless as a statue, as if meditating. We apprehended that the inspector was going to frown in despair as usual. But no, before he did so Satyapriya opened his mouth, “Needless to say that Rabindranath is famous both at home and abroad not only as a great poet but also as a lover of nature, beauty and humanity. Lover of nature and beauty, yes. But as lover of humanity in the true sense of the term, I consider others greater than he.”

“Who are they, for example?” The inspector was all attention.

“I presume true love for humanity wells up from deep within as a result of union with and realisation of God just as it happened with Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Chaitanya and other spiritual leaders of modern times.”

“Your name, please?” The inspector opened his diary to note down something.

I failed to discern the inspector’s feeling towards Satyapriya but the episode exercised a tremendous influence on me. It made me aware suddenly of the obscure pride I had been holding in me for the fact that I had obtained a few marks more than Satyapriya in school-examinations. I became inwardly ashamed, very much ashamed indeed. I decided to apologise to Satyapriya at the next available opportune moment.

But the precious moment did not come about till today when I stood face to face with him in a broad and busy street of Calcutta. Because after that significant event he left home stealthily without leaving any trail behind.

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**How do I Begin?** By *M. P. Pandit*. Publishers: Dipti Publications, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2. Pp: 52. Price: Rs.10/-.

THE Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo is as popular as Sri Aurobindo himself. Many are the seekers who are lured by this appealing philosophy. Yet most of the aspirants who are busy in this work-a-day world ask, "How do we put it into practice? Where do we start?"

Here is a book written by a disciple of Sri Aurobindo primarily for such seekers of the Integral Yoga. It is in the form of a 'Do It Yourself' or 'Teach Yourself' book—aiming to be a helpful guide to the seemingly too-difficult-to-decipher philosophy of Sri Aurobindo.

The first five chapters speak of the individual Sadhana and the author formulates a broad programme for the daily life of the seeker after integral perfection. And he begins with getting up as early as possible. How to drive away the sleep that might be strong in the early morning? Why should we not sit on bare ground? How to abstain from participating in thoughts that rush in and distract when we are aspiring for the descent of Higher Consciousness? What sort of place would be suitable for meditation? How to observe the lights or figures or images appearing during it. What is the purpose of doing bodily exercises after meditation? To several such questions M. P. Pandit gives valuable answers from his own experience and thereby justifies the title of the book. The essence of Karma Yoga—Yoga of work—and the psychic communications are highlighted. The reader finds advices not only in matters of food and clothing but also in the matter of sleeping postures.

Speaking of collective Sadhana—association with like-minded seekers—Pandit points out that it is a 'must' "to guard against the danger of subjectivism and its attendant possibilities of fantasies and losing yourself in a world of imagination". Stress is put on punctuality, regularity, leadership, place, study period and the common theme for meditation. The author makes the reader understand how one finds real company in the writings or utterances of God-realized persons. Doubts like "How to safeguard yourself from ego? What should one do when one is in a depressed state?" are clarified. Definitions from Sage Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms and the author's lecture on the wonders of love make delightful reading. Definitions compiled from Sri Aurobindo's writings and the suggested reading of spiritual writings appended to the book are of great use to the seekers of the Integral Yoga.

Perhaps no other book at such a cheap price would speak of the perfect way of practising Integral Yoga.

P. RAJA