

# MOTHER INDIA

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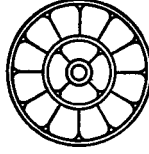
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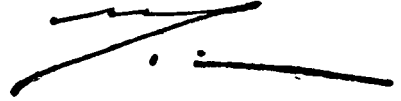


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

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

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*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail.”*

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## A TALK OF THE MOTHER TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN

### IF ALL CAME OUT OF THE DIVINE, WHY ARE SOME BEINGS EVIL?

EVIL? That I think I have explained to you once: it is enough just not to remain under the direct influence of the Divine and not to follow the movement of creation or expansion as willed by the Divine; this rupture of contact is enough to produce the greatest of disorders, that of division. Well, even the most luminous, the most powerful beings may choose to follow their own movement instead of obeying the divine movement. And though in themselves they may be quite wonderful and if human beings saw them they would take them for the very Godhead, they can, because they follow their own will instead of working in harmony with the universe, be the source of very great evils, very great disorders, very great massive obstructions...

You may ask why it happened. Well, certainly it is not the mind, you know, which can say why it happened. It happened, that is all. In reality the only thing that concerns us is that it has happened. It is perhaps an accident to begin with... If you look at the thing from a philosophical point of view, it is evident that the universe in which we live is a movement among many others and this movement follows a law which is its own (and which is perhaps not the same in the others), and if the Will was for the world to be built on the principle of choice, of the freedom of choice, then one cannot prevent disorderly movements from taking place until knowledge comes and the choice is enlightened. If one is free to choose, one can also choose bad things, not necessarily the good, for if it were a thing decided beforehand, it would no longer be a free choice. You see, when such questions are put, the mind only answers and it reduces the problem, it reduces it to a more or less elementary mental formula; but that corresponds only very vaguely and superficially and incompletely with the reality of things.

To be able to understand, one must become. If you want to understand the why and how of the universe, you must identify yourself with the universe. It is not impossible but it is not easy either, particularly for children.

This was one of the most childish questions... : "If He is just, why is there injustice? If He is good, why is there wickedness? If He is love, why is there hatred?" —But He is all! So He is not merely this or that, or only, exclusively this—He is all. That is, to be more correct, it should be said that all is He. There are notions about creation, very widespread upon earth, which have been accepted more or less for a long time in human thought, that are quite simplistic! There is "something" (truly speaking, one does not know what), and then there is a God who puts this something into form and creates the world out of it. So if you have such notions, you have a justifiable right to say to this God: "Well, you have indeed created a world, it's a pretty one, that world of yours!" Although, according to the story, after

seven days of labour, he declared that it was very good—but it was good for him. Perhaps it may have amused him immensely, but as for us who are in the world, we do not find it good at all! Don't you see, the conception and the way of putting it are altogether childish. It is just like the story of the potter who puts his pot in shape—this God is a human being, formidable in proportions and power, but looking strangely like a man. It is man who makes God in his image, not God who makes man in his image! So each time a question is put in an incomplete or childish way, it is impossible to give an answer to it truly, for the question is badly put. You say something, you affirm it. But what right have you to assert it? Because you affirm that, you conclude: "Since that is this, how does it happen that it is so?" But "that is this" is your statement. It does not mean that it is so!

There is only one single solution to the problem—not to make any distinction between God and the universe at the origin. The universe *is* the Divine projected in space, and God *is* the universe at its origin. It is the same thing under one aspect or another. And you cannot divide them. It is the opposite conception to that of the "creator" and his "work". Only, it is very convenient to speak of the creator and his work, it makes explanations very easy and the teaching quite elementary. But it is not the truth. And then you say: "How is it that God who is all-powerful has allowed the world to be like this?" But it is your own conception! It is because you yourself happen to be in the midst of a set of circumstances that seems to you unpleasant, so you project that upon the Divine and you tell him: "Why have you made such a world?"—"I did not make it. It is you yourself. And if you become Myself once again, you will no longer feel as you do. What makes you feel as you do is that you are no longer Myself." This is what He could tell you in answer. And the fact is that when you succeed in unifying your consciousness with the divine consciousness, there is no problem left. Everything appears quite natural and simple and all right and exactly what it had to be. But when you cut yourself off from the origin and stand over against Him, then truly everything goes wrong, nothing can go right!

But if you ask for a logic that pushes things to the extreme end, you question how it is that the Divine has tolerated parts of his own self to be separated from him and all this disorder to be created. You may say that. And I then will reply: "If you want to know, it is better to unite yourself with the Divine, for that is the only way of knowing why He has done these things." It is not by questioning Him mentally, for your mind cannot understand. And I repeat it, when you reach such an identification, all problems are solved. And this feeling that things are not all right and that they should be otherwise, comes just because there is a divine will for a constant unfolding in perpetual progress and things that were must give place to things that shall be and shall be better than what the others were. And the world that was good yesterday is no longer good tomorrow. The whole world that could appear absolutely harmonious and perfect at one time, well, today it is discordant, no longer harmonious, because now we conceive and see the possibility of a better

world. And if we were to find it all right we would not do what we ought to do, that is, make the effort needed for it to become better.

There comes a time when all these notions appear so childish! And this happens solely because one is shut up within oneself. With this consciousness which is your own, which is like a grain of sand in the infinite vastness, you want to know and judge the infinite? It is impossible. You must first of all come out of yourself, and then unite with the infinite and only afterwards can you begin to understand what it is, not before. You project your consciousness—what you are, the thoughts you have, the capacity of understanding you have—you project this upon the Divine and say: “That is all wrong.” I quite understand! But there is no possibility of knowing unless you identify yourself. I do not see how, for example, a drop of water could tell you what the ocean is like. That’s how it is.

14 October 1953

(*The Mother’s Collected Works: Questions and Answers 1953, pp. 309-13*)

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## SRI AUROBINDO AND THE TRANSLATION OF THE GITA

### Anilbaran Roy’s Letter to the Mother

My brother is now thinking of starting a book-selling and publishing business and has asked for one or two books of Sri Aurobindo for publication. May I prepare for him an edition of the Gita with only the text and Sri Aurobindo’s translation compiled from the *Essays on the Gita*?

20.I.1932

### Sri Aurobindo’s Reply

The casual renderings in the Essays cannot be published as my translation, they were not intended for the purpose.

20.I.1932

## OUR SPIRITUAL HERITAGE—2

### SOME EXTRACTS FROM SRI AUROBINDO'S WRITINGS

*(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1983)*

#### **Rational Culture and the Role of Religion\***

SINCE the infinite, the absolute and transcendent, the universal, the One is the secret summit of existence and to reach the spiritual consciousness and the Divine the ultimate goal and aim of our being and therefore of the whole development of the individual and the collectivity in all its parts and all its activities, reason cannot be the last and highest guide; culture, as it is understood ordinarily, cannot be the directing light or find out the regulating and harmonising principle of all our life and action. For reason stops short of the Divine and only compromises with the problems of life, and culture in order to attain the Transcendent and Infinite must become spiritual culture, something much more than an intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and practical training. Where then are we to find the directing light and the regulating and harmonising principle? The first answer which will suggest itself, the answer constantly given by the Asiatic mind, is that we shall find it directly and immediately in religion. And this seems a reasonable and at first sight a satisfying solution; for religion is that instinct, idea, activity, discipline in man which aims directly at the Divine, while all the rest seem to aim at it only indirectly and reach it with difficulty after much wandering and stumbling in the pursuit of the outward and imperfect appearances of things....

A certain pre-eminence of religion...is, we may note, not peculiar to Asiatic civilisations, but has always been more or less the normal state of the human mind and of human societies, or if not quite that, yet a prominent part of their complex tendencies... We must suppose then that in this leading, this predominant part assigned to religion by the normal human collectivity there is some great need and truth of our natural being... On the other hand, we must recognise the fact that in a time of great activity, of high aspiration, of deep sowing, of rich fruit-bearing, such as the modern age with all its faults and errors has been, a time especially when humanity got rid of much that was cruel, evil, ignorant, dark, odious, not by the power of religion, but by the power of the awakened intelligence and of human idealism and sympathy, this predominance of religion has been violently attacked and rejected by that portion of humanity which was for that time the standard-bearer of thought and progress, Europe after the Renaissance, modern Europe.

This revolt in its extreme form tried to destroy religion altogether... In its more moderate movements the revolt put religion aside into a corner of the soul by itself and banished its intermixture in the intellectual, aesthetic, practical life and even

\* Subtitles by the Editor.

in the ethical; and it did this on the ground that the intermixture of religion in science, thought, politics, society, life in general had been and must be a force for retardation, superstition, oppressive ignorance. The religionist may say that this accusation was an error and an atheistic perversity, or he may say that religious retardation, a pious ignorance, a contented static condition or even an orderly stagnation full of holy thoughts of the Beyond is much better than a continuous endeavour after greater knowledge, greater mastery, more happiness, more joy, light upon this transient earth. But the catholic thinker cannot accept such a plea; he is obliged to see that so long as man has not realised the divine and the ideal in his life,—and it may well be even when he has realised it, since the divine is the infinite,—progress and not unmoving status is the necessary and desirable law of his life... And he is obliged too to see that the indictment against religion, not in its conclusion, but in its premiss had something, had even much to justify it,—not that religion in itself must be, but that historically and as a matter of fact the accredited religions and their hierarchs and exponents have too often been a force for retardation, have too often thrown their weight on the side of darkness, oppression and ignorance, and that it has needed a denial, a revolt of the oppressed human mind and heart to correct these errors and set religion right....

### Two Aspects of Religion

It is true in a sense that religion should be the dominant thing in life, its light and law, but religion as it should be and is in its inner nature, its fundamental law of being, a seeking after God, the cult of spirituality, the opening of the deepest life of the soul to the indwelling Godhead, the eternal Omnipresence. On the other hand, it is true that religion when it identifies itself only with a creed, a cult, a Church, a system of ceremonial forms, may well become a retarding force and there may therefore arise a necessity for the human spirit to reject its control over the varied activities of life. There are two aspects of religion, true religion and religionism. True religion is spiritual religion, that which seeks to live in the spirit, in what is beyond the intellect, beyond the aesthetic and ethical and practical being of man, and to inform and govern these members of our being by the higher light and law of the spirit. Religionism, on the contrary, entrenches itself in some narrow pietistic exaltation of the lower members or lays exclusive stress on intellectual dogmas, forms and ceremonies, on some fixed and rigid moral code, on some religio-political or religio-social system. Not that these things are altogether negligible or that they must be unworthy or unnecessary or that a spiritual religion need disdain the aid of forms, ceremonies, creeds or systems. On the contrary, they are needed by man because the lower members have to be exalted and raised before they can be fully spiritualised, before they can directly feel the spirit and obey its law. An intellectual formula is often needed by the thinking and reasoning mind, a form or ceremony by the aesthetic temperament or other parts of the infrarational being, a set moral code by man's



vital nature in their turn towards the inner life. But these things are aides and supports, not the essence; precisely because they belong to the rational and infrarational parts, they can be nothing more and, if too blindly insisted on, may even hamper the suprarational light. Such as they are, they have to be offered to man and used by him, but not to be imposed on him as his sole law by a forced and inflexible domination. In the use of them toleration and free permission of variation is the first rule which should be observed. The spiritual essence of religion is alone the one thing supremely needful, the thing to which we have always to hold and subordinate to it every other element or motive.

But here comes in an ambiguity which brings in a deeper source of divergence. For by spirituality religion seems often to mean something remote from earthly life, different from it, hostile to it. It seems to condemn the pursuit of earthly aims as a trend opposed to the turn to a spiritual life and the hopes of man on earth as an illusion or a vanity incompatible with the hope of man in heaven... If that be the true sense of religion, then obviously religion has no positive message for human society in the proper field of social effort, hope and aspiration or for the individual in any of the lower members of his being. For each principle of our nature seeks naturally for perfection in its own sphere and, if it is to obey a higher power, it must be because that power gives it a greater perfection and a fuller satisfaction even in its own field. But if perfectibility is denied to it and therefore the aspiration to perfection taken away by the spiritual urge, then it must either lose faith in itself and the power to pursue the natural expansion of its energies and activities or it must reject the call of the spirit in order to follow its own bent and law, *dharma*....

The Western recoil from religion, that minimising of its claim and insistence by which Europe progressed from the mediaeval religious attitude through the Renaissance and the Reformation to the modern rationalistic attitude, that making of the ordinary earthly life our one preoccupation, that labour to fulfil ourselves by the law of the lower members, divorced from all spiritual seeking, was an opposite error, the contrary ignorant extreme, the blind swing of the pendulum from a wrong affirmation to a wrong negation. It is an error because perfection cannot be found in such a limitation and restriction; for it denies the complete law of human existence, its deepest urge, its most secret impulse. Only by the light of the highest can the lower be perfectly guided, uplifted and accomplished. The lower life of man is in form undivine, though in it there is the secret of the divine, and it can only be divinised by finding the higher law and the spiritual illumination. On the other hand, the impatience which condemns or despairs of life or discourages its growth because it is at present undivine and is not in harmony with the spiritual life, is an equal ignorance, *andham tamah*. The world-shunning monk, the mere ascetic may indeed well find by this turn his own individual and peculiar salvation, the spiritual recompense of his renunciation and Tapasya, as the materialist may find by his own exclusive method the appropriate rewards of his energy and concentrated seeking; but neither can be the true guide of mankind and its law-giver...

### The Spiritual Man

The spiritual man who can guide human life towards its perfection is typified in the ancient Indian idea of the Rishi, one who has lived fully the life of man and found the word of the supra-intellectual, supramental, spiritual truth. He has risen above these lower limitations and can view all things from above, but also he is in sympathy with their effort and can view them from within; he has the complete inner knowledge and the higher surpassing knowledge. Therefore he can guide the world humanly as God guides it divinely because like the Divine he is in the life of the world and yet above it.

In spirituality, then, understood in this sense, we must seek for the directing light and the harmonising law, and in religion only in proportion as it identifies itself with this spirituality. So long as it falls short of this, it is one human activity and power among others, and, even if it be considered the most powerful, it cannot wholly guide the others. If it seeks always to fix them into the limits of a creed, an unchanging law, a particular system, it must be prepared to see them revolting from its control; for although they may accept this impress for a time and greatly profit by it, in the end they must move by the law of their being towards a freer activity and an untrammelled movement. Spirituality respects the freedom of the human soul, because it is itself fulfilled by freedom; and the deepest meaning of freedom is the power to expand and grow towards perfection by the law of one's own nature, *dharma*. This liberty it will give to all the fundamental parts of our being. It will give that freedom to philosophy and science which ancient Indian religion gave,—freedom even to deny the spirit, if they will,—as a result of which philosophy and science never felt in ancient India any necessity of divorcing themselves from religion, but grew rather into it and under its light. It will give the same freedom to man's seeking for political and social perfection and to all his other powers and aspirations. Only it will be vigilant to illuminate them so that they may grow into the light and law of the spirit, not by suppression and restriction, but by a self-searching, self-controlled expansion and a many-sided finding of their greatest, highest and deepest potentialities. For all these are potentialities of the spirit.

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, 15: 162-170)

(To be continued)

# AT THE FEET OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

RECOLLECTIONS BY SAHANA

*(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1983)*

MYSELF: Mother, see what has happened! So long I was going on well, but today the memory of the past was coming and going like pictures before my mind. I was almost pressed down by them. I got up to meditate, but failed; then I tried to reject—no success. I couldn't separate myself at all. These things stop the progress and I feel heavy and exhausted.

SRI AUROBINDO: So long as you have not learned the lesson the past had to give you, it comes back on you. Notice carefully what kind of remembrances come, you will see that they are connected with some psychological movements in you that have to be got rid of. So you must be prepared to recognise all that was not right in you and is still not corrected, not allow any vanity or self-righteousness to cloud your vision.

24.10.32

MYSELF: When I perceive that I should tell you something but there is an unwillingness on my part, I force myself to let you know so that your light and force can descend on that part. Is this forcing a mental action? Even though there was a desire to hide before telling, yet after telling, satisfaction and relief are the result in spite of the action having been forced.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is quite all right. It is not a mental rule, but comes from the psychic being.

MYSELF: Mother Divine, there was another discussion about mind somewhere else, especially about your asking us to reject mental movement. I won't write to you all that I felt and said. Here I am putting only a little bit of it.

I can feel what is the real function of the mind. And I feel that what generally people call mind or intellect is only the movement of the physical mind (because only the physical mind creates doubts—is it not so, Mother?) not the clear passive and silent mind or the higher or intuitive mind which can be the true expression of the higher things and the seat of knowledge. When you discourage mental movement it is, I feel, this limited physical mind's obscure and doubt-creating movement. Am I right?

SRI AUROBINDO: You answered extremely well.

MYSELF: I am writing to Sri Aurobindo on control of speech: "I can't make any progress in this respect. At every step I feel its necessity, but I can't carry it out

rightly. As a result, many unpleasant and undesirable things happen causing mental friction and one has to pay a heavy price for it, especially during a discussion. Yet, how to save myself and others? Will you show me the way which I can follow to learn the true method of control? Please grant me this prayer.”

SRI AUROBINDO: It is quite certain that these discussions are often a source of friction and misunderstanding.

Perhaps what might be the best from the point of view of sadhana is to use these occasions as occasions of psychic self-training and the overcoming of things that in the matter of speech stand in the way of a complete harmony between the inner consciousness and the movement of the outer being. Apart from that, the self-control that is desirable in these surroundings and in the midst of discussion would mean among other things:

(1) Not to allow the impulse of speech to assert itself too much or say anything without reflection, but to speak always with a conscious control and only what is necessary and helpful.

(2) To avoid all debate, dispute or too animated discussion and simply say what has to be said and leave it there. There should also be no insistence that you are right and others wrong, but what is said should only be thrown in as a contribution to the consideration of the truth of the matter.

(3) To keep the line of speech and wording very quiet and calm and uninsistent.

(4) Not to mind at all if the others are heated and dispute, but remain quiet and undisturbed and yourself speak only what can help things to be smooth again.

(5) If there is gossip about others and harsh criticism (especially about sadhaks), not to join — for these things are helpful in no way and only lower the consciousness from its higher level.

(6) To avoid all that would hurt or wound others.

Perhaps you have tried to do these things already; if so, then see how far you have been successful and perfect the self-control.

In spite of it if anyone misunderstands or feels offended, then there is no help for it.

14.6.36

MYSELF: Mother, if I could have followed the line Sri Aurobindo has indicated, then by now I would have succeeded a lot, but in fact nothing has been done in that respect. Nevertheless, I have gone on trying according to my way of understanding. But you know what our efforts come to. Hence so much suffering for not being able to do as well as I should. I shall, however, try anew to follow on Sri Aurobindo's directions, but again how difficult!...

Dear Mother, my condition is still not settling down. Rise and fall, well and not well, urge and again no urge for sadhana or change—this is the state. At times the prayer is moved by emotion, at others it is only a string of words. Can't get hold of the right thing through all these fluctuations. Will these ups and downs go on for ever?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is an oscillation due to something in the resistant part (not the whole of it) being still dissatisfied at the call to change. When any vital element is disappointed, dissatisfied, called or compelled to change but yet not willing, it has the tendency to create non-response or non-cooperation of the vital, leaving the physical dull or insensible without the vital push. With the psychic pressure the remnant of resistance will pass. 29.8.36

*(To be continued)*

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## THE VOICE OF GOD

THE silence is the voice divine;  
 It wafts through light and air.  
 And none its cadence can define,  
 Or its dulcet murmur hear.  
 From depths of silence thunders roar  
 And sink in the silent deep.  
 All clamours fade in the soundless core  
 Of world's primeval sleep.  
 Unspoken words of God are sure  
 To guide us on the way.  
 In peace and silence crystal-pure  
 Resounds His mystic lay.  
 A thousand times we have to die  
 In a single life's expanse.  
 Our final death will clarify  
 Our bungling ignorance.  
 God speaks in silence audibly,  
 We need our Ego's death  
 To hear the call of eternity,  
 And breathe the Immortals' breath.

SAILEN ROY

# THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

*(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1983)*

## The Mother's Message

This is the  
interesting story of  
how a being discovers  
the Divine Life



22

It was the fine morning of 13th November 1956. I received a card illustrating the flowers Carnations—underneath which the Mother had written: “Collaboration”, together with the following lines:

“Bonjour to my dear little child, to my sweet Huta. Jayanti told me this morning that everything will be ready for the ‘temple’ before the 20th of this month.

265

“This is a good collaboration.

My love and blessings along with the constant Presence of the divine Grace are always with you.”

I was pleased to learn the news about the temple where all the Gods and Goddesses would be assembled when the exhibition would take place in the Exhibition Hall of the Ashram, Cours Chabrol No. 6 (at the corner of Rangapillai Street).

I was ready to arrange the images in the temple—I was very much at ease.

When I saw the Mother in the evening at the Playground, she mentioned once again about the temple and was happy.

Since it was a Tuesday, we had a long meditation which was relaxing. On the morning that followed, a card came from the Mother. It depicted lovely flowers. Below there were the words: “Esthetic taste in work and cheerfulness in work.”

On the same card she continued:

“Here are flowers that suit you very well.

I am sending back part of the letters. I had no time to go through the whole of them and shall correct the rest tomorrow.”

I was at that time typing all her letters to me with my new typewriter. It was a joy to do so but I thought outward work and skill would not lead me anywhere. I wanted to realise the Divine, and precious time slipped by—I was not getting any younger—yet I had not achieved anything permanent in my life. This anxiety made me restless. I implored the Mother to shed some light on the spiritual truths which I must realise....

She answered on a card showing the flowers Zinnias above the meaning she had written of them: “Detailed endurance”. And these words followed:

“Bonjour to my dear little child, to my sweet and *young, very young* Huta.

“I have read your letter and will surely give you, little by little, all explanations.

“My love and blessings and the Divine Grace are always with you.”

The Mother’s passage on ‘Youth’ in the *Bulletin*, 1949, p. 9, is quite apt:

“Youth does not depend on the fewness of years one has lived, but on the capacity to grow and to progress. To grow—that is to increase one’s potentialities, one’s capacities; to progress—that is to perfect, without halting, the capacities that one already possesses. Old age does not come with a great number of years, but with the incapacity or the refusal to continue to grow and to progress. I have known old people of 20 years of age and young ones of 70. As soon as one wishes to settle down in life and to rest on the benefits of past

efforts, as soon as one thinks that one has done what one had to do, and has accomplished what one had to accomplish—in short—as soon as one ceases to progress, to advance along the road to perfection, one is sure to fall back—to grow old....”

In the evening the Mother told me:

“There is a Chinese who is more than 200 years old. Somebody asked him, ‘What is the secret of your age? How could you manage to live so long?’ He answered: ‘I do not worry about anything. Whenever I feel hungry I eat. Whenever I feel sleepy I sleep and when I awake I just fly like a bird.’”

She laughed and said:

“You see, he kept his body, vital, mind, and soul so carefree and in such co-ordination that he always felt young.”

Sri Aurobindo has spoken in one of his talks:

“In India they consider one old after 50 and fit to die at 60. In England and China, one is ripe between 60 and 70, and only after 80 is one considered old. Thus things depend upon the atmosphere of the place—I do not mean the external atmosphere.”

This reminds me of what Rabbi Abraham R. Besdin stated about cosmetics:

“A dear old Quaker lady was asked to explain her obvious youthful appearance, her appealing vivacity, and her winning charm. She replied sweetly: ‘I use for the lips truth, for the voice prayer, for the eyes pity, for the hands charity, for the figure uprightness, for the heart love.’

“How’s that for a makeup kit?”

In *Seed Magazine* I read this encouraging account of youthfulness:

“Youth is not a time of life. It is a state of mind. It is not a matter of ripe cheeks, red lips and supple knees, but a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigour of the emotions. It is a freshness of the deep springs of life. Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease. This often exists in a man of fifty more than a boy of twenty.

“Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. People grow old



only by deserting their ideals. Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear and despair, these are the long, long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust.

“Whether seventy or seventeen, there is in every being’s heart the love of wonder, the sweet amazement of the stars, and starlike things and thoughts; the undaunted challenge of events, the unfailing and childlike appetite for ‘what’s next?’ and the joy and game of life.

“You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair.

“While the central place of your heart receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, courage, grandeur and power from the earth, from men, from the Infinite—so long you are young.

“When the central place of your heart is covered with the sorrow of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then you are grown old indeed, and may God have mercy on your soul.”

\*

In fact, ever since I came to the Ashram, the Mother never stopped indicating the path which led to the Truth. Now it was apparent that gradually she had started giving explanations directly and indirectly—by various and numberless ways and means—both sweet and severe. But very frequently I could not bring myself to believe and trust the Divine, because, in spite of having some experiences now and again, it was too hard to grasp and live the highest truths. Within me I was aware of my soul’s challenge, in the Mother’s Light, to the dark forces, and that challenge was uncompromising. But I had to endure.

The Mother says in the book, *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*, Part Eight, p. 67:

“Endurance in its physical expression is perseverance. That is to say, you must be prepared to do a thousand times, if necessary, the same thing over and over again. You take a step forward, you think you are firmly placed; but there will always crop up something or other which brings back the old difficulty. You think you have solved the problem, you will have to solve it again; it will come in a slightly different form, but it is the same problem. You must be ready to face the problem, go through the same difficulties a million times. That is how you are sure to arrive at the goal....”

The Mother sent me a card of snowy mountains—together with these words:

“I have a few nice pictures of mountains—you will have them for your collection. They symbolise so well the ascent towards the purity of Truth.

“My love and blessings along with the Presence of the Divine Grace are for ever with you.”

That night as I lay in the dark I allowed myself the release of admitting countless vagrant thoughts as to how I should reach my destination. There were, no doubt, millions and millions of opposing forces, in which I was entangled. Then a faint smile suddenly broke on my lips as I recalled the promises of Realisation, which the Mother had given me. Soon afterwards the smile faded—my lips quivered and, turning my face into the pillow, I broke into sobs because I knew quite well that I had a very long—almost endless—way to go before I could ever realise my soul.

The next morning on 18th November the Mother came downstairs to distribute saris and other clothes to Ashramites. Her pretty sari suited her admirably. I was happy to see her wearing the tiny Rolex watch I had offered her the previous year. I never wore that watch which I had bought so enthusiastically for myself before I met the Mother. I thought the watch looked elegant on her wrist.

I was wearing a small Swiss watch—*Tisot*.

Previously I had requested Dyuman to put into the Mother's hands only a white sari for me without any border on it. For I did not fancy having a coloured bordered sari. When I approached the Mother, Dyuman who stood near her handed her a white sari to give to me. But, to my surprise, she asked Dyuman to give a red-bordered sari which I received from her with a shy smile.

Later I asked Dyuman about the matter. He said that the white saris were reserved only for widows and very old women. I had to swallow this fact.

As usual, in the evening, we had a meditation together. On the succeeding day I received a card of a striking panorama of snow-capped mountains, and these sentences followed:

“Here is the second mountain picture—the white summits of the ascension towards the Divine.

“My love and blessings along with the Presence of the Divine Grace are constantly with you.”

The more I entered into the spiritual domain, the more I felt nervous and lost. All around me was a shuddering chill of heavy darkness. Surely, for the ascension to the luminous Truth, one has to walk on a razor's edge.

And I felt a sudden cold fear clutch my heart as I thought that it would be very hard to practise the spiritual truths.

One more card showing daisies. Beneath the picture the Mother had written: “Frankness.” Also these lines:

“I am with you in *your work* which is sure to be quite successful.

“I am with you in *your life* which is sure to lead you to your goal.

“I am with you in *your heart* which will surely emerge happy and purified out of all sorrows.

“My love and blessings and the Presence of the Divine Grace never leave you even for a moment.”

\*

Now the Temple in the “Dolls’ Exhibition” was installed. I arranged the idols in it. I went to the Mother every evening and she asked me how everything was going on in the Exhibition Hall. Then she gave me sweets—neatly tied in a big handkerchief. I myself saw her fasten the bundle. Her skill was shown even in executing a small thing. During that time the Mother gave me a lovely blue-gold scarf and asked me to use it. I thought that it was too beautiful for me. So I cherished it, and much later I wrapped a copy of *Savitri* in it.

In that period, one morning, I awoke with the unhappy feeling of something unpleasant hanging over my head. I was filled with panic. I sensed that the adverse forces were trying to overthrow the whole arrangement. These forces were like locusts which descend in swarms and destroy everything in a matter of minutes. Nonetheless my own stupid ego flared up in revolt and its suppressed anger knew no bounds—every nerve in my body trembled—the blood ebbing away from my head to leave me faint. In this state I ran to the Mother in the morning and told her what I had gone through. The tears I had been restraining all morning, I could not control any longer. Her fingers tightened on my shoulders as she looked at me intently. She knew very well the trend of my thoughts and feelings. She murmured something about the environment in which I had been brought up. The words chilled my heart. I became super-sensitive. That very instant I thought to myself, “Why should I work? I don’t wish to do anything. I want to go away from the Ashram. Everything gets on my nerves.... I wish I were not born.”

A gentle smile outlined the Mother’s lips when she drew me close to her and then led me into her room and wrote down this, and gave it to me:

“To turn away from the divine and reject the Divine Grace is the most silly thing one can do.”

The ego did not subside so easily. I felt that fear and suspense crept into me—my reactions were irrational, but surely my nerves were on edge, and my emotions were like a fire searing me.

Much later I came across the Mother’s words in the *Bulletin*, November 1972, p. 51:

“Human consciousness is so corrupted that men prefer the miseries of the ego and of its ignorance to the luminous delight that comes from sincere surrender to the Divine. So great is their blindness that they refuse even to try

the experience and would rather be subject to the miseries of their ego than to make the necessary effort to be freed from them.

“So completely blind they are that they would not hesitate to make the Divine a slave of their ego, if the thing were possible, in order to avoid giving themselves to the Divine.”

I resumed my work with a heavy heart.

That evening I saw the Mother and told her:

“Mother, I am truly sorry for my quick-changing moods. The remark you passed this morning was absolutely right. Indeed, some parts of my being are totally opaque and obstinate—they simply refuse to obey all that you are teaching me. Also, the nasty forces so work on me that my lower elements agree to collaborate with them. I really am torn between two forces, and this makes it difficult to surrender totally to the Divine and collaborate with the Supreme. The conflict between the soul and the lower nature makes my life unhappy and terribly disturbed. In this situation I feel like a sandwich....”

A faint smile flickered on her lips when I said “sandwich”.

I continued: “Mother, so my consciousness is not one-pointed—I cannot aspire steadily—very often I hate you and lose faith in you because I doubt whether I would attain my goal. Above all, some people label me as a little fool. Yes, being a fool, I cannot make out what is happening when I find that they often try to perturb me and my work. I wish to God I knew their minds. I agree that I allow my head to rule my heart, and deliberately permit myself to drift into an unnecessary rut of miseries. I do not know how to surmount my ego and physical consciousness and leave everything to the Divine.”

I heaved a deep sigh of despair. She heard me attentively, and then looked into my eyes with a slight smile. Afterwards she closed her eyes for a moment or two and said very forcefully and dictatorially, yet as always with a touch of boundless sympathy and tenderness in her tone:

“Child, so long as certain parts of your being give response to the adverse forces, these forces are bound to come over and over again and drag you away from your goal. Then naturally you find life useless and miserable.

“To find the Divine is the true aim of life. There is no point in sitting like a stone which would take millions of years to become what human beings are now. I do not say that to realise the Divine is an easy task. But remember that the Divine has come upon the earth to liberate and lead human beings to their supreme Goal.”

While going home, a million thoughts raced through my brain and I was set wondering how I should conquer my outer nature and be master of myself. I lay awake a long time that night.

The next day, I received a card, showing a house surrounded by beautiful scenery, and these lines:

“Do not shut your heart to the sweetness of my love—that alone can wipe off all sorrows and replace them by a constant and peaceful felicity.

“My love and blessings are with you, and the Presence of the Divine Grace also, even when you are not aware of them.”

I had almost finished my work with the Temple. Now I was giving the last touches. Often I got fagged out owing to the ceaseless resistance in my being, and I put too much of myself into everything I did and then got exhausted. I had not been eating well nor sleeping sufficiently long hours. I also had some trouble with my liver. I could not do anything except pray to the Mother to free me from my situation.

A card came from her—a fine sight of snow-clad mountains, fir trees sprinkled with snow-flakes. It was accompanied by this promise:

“I have read your beautiful prayer and with all my heart I say, ‘Let it be’ and surely it will be realised: the darkness will vanish and be replaced by the Light, the sorrow will disappear and be replaced by the Bliss, the bad feelings will be shattered and replaced by the Eternal Love. For, all my love and blessings along with the Divine Grace are constantly with you.”

That evening I went to the Mother and told her about my work which was over. She was pleased and patted my hands. I also said: “Mother, I cannot sleep peacefully. I am trying to concentrate on the Divine but numerous thoughts attack me like obstinate flies. Is it not difficult to silence the mind for good?”

She smiled and returned no answer to my last sentence, but said:

“You must form a habit to loosen your body like a piece of cloth and must not think of anything; then you can sleep better. You see, my child, I have asked many people to meditate if they do not get sleep, but they should not think constantly about sleep.”

A quick smile touched my lips as I remembered my previous experience of meditation.

On 24th November, the Mother sent me a card indicating a yellow dahlia, with these words:

“I am sending you the invitation card so that you can see the hours of opening.

“À tout à l’heure—‘darshan’ at 10 o’clock.”

She was so particular and took so much care—even to send me a card so that I would know my duty to spend certain hours at the exhibition every day when it opened in the morning.

I went to her to receive a Message and blessings. While handing me the Message, she leaned forward and whispered:

“Child, don’t forget to take peacock-feathers from the Stores to place them near Krishna in the Exhibition.”

I nodded and with a smile I departed. She obviously wanted me to put more feathers near Krishna, I thought.

These enchanting verses from *Savitri*, Book II, flashed across my mind, the perfect description of Krishna:

Pursuing her in her fall, implacably sweet,  
 A face was over her which seemed a youth’s,  
 Symbol of all the beauty eyes see not,  
 Crowned as with peacock plumes of gorgeous hue  
 Framing a sapphire, whose heart-disturbing smile  
 Insatiably attracted to delight,  
 Voluptuous to the embraces of her soul.

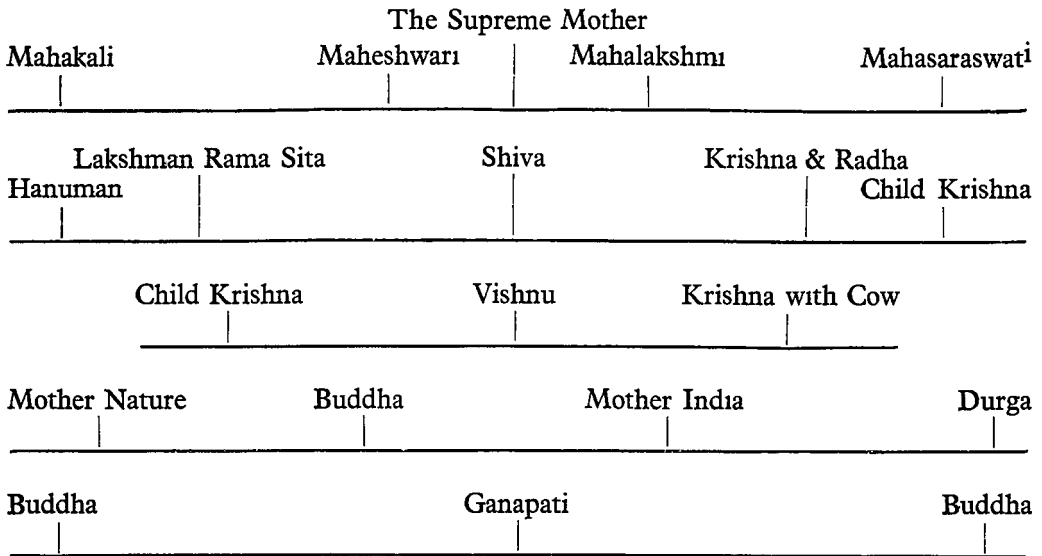
I could not wait to read the Message, which ran:

“Without care of time, without fear for space, surging out purified from the flames of ordeal, we shall fly without stop towards the realisation of our goal, the Supramental Victory.”

The same day in the afternoon—just after 4 o’clock—she arrived at the Exhibition Hall. It was drizzling. First the Mother went around and saw the dolls and other things which were displayed artistically. Then lastly she entered the room where the Temple was. Everything was hushed and indrawn. The Mother stood near the Temple for quite a long time and meditated with her eyes open. I saw concretely how the powerful rays from her brilliant eyes embraced each idol. A heavenly atmosphere was created by her Presence.

Afterwards I saw her face, which shone with happiness. Her eyes smiled with a strange lustre at me and slowly she departed from the room, leaving for me a great wave of love.

### Position of the Gods in the Temple



Sri Aurobindo has written about the Gods in the Cent. Ed. Vol. 22, pp. 383-84:

“These four Powers are the Mother’s cosmic Godheads, permanent in the world-play; they stand among the greater cosmic Godheads to whom allusion is made when it is said that the Mother as the Mahashakti of this triple world ‘stands there (in the overmind plane) above the Gods.’ The Gods, as has already been said, are in origin and essence permanent Emanations of the Divine put forth from the Supreme by the Transcendent Mother, the Adya Shakti; in their cosmic action they are Powers and Personalities of the Divine each with his independent cosmic standing, function and work in the universe. They are not impersonal entities but cosmic Personalities, although they can and do ordinarily veil themselves behind the movement of impersonal forces. But while in the overmind and the triple world they appear as independent beings, they return in the supermind into the One and stand there united in a single harmonious action as multiple personalities of the One Person, the Divine Purushottama.”

There is a beautiful insight in the Cent. Ed., Vol. 11, p. 34:

“The soul of man is a world full of beings, a kingdom in which armies clash to help or hinder a supreme conquest, a house where the gods are our guests and in which demons strive to possess; the fullness of its energies and wideness of

its being make a seat of sacrifice spread, arranged and purified for a celestial session."

Next morning a lovely painted card came from the Mother, together with these lines:

"Bonjour to my very dear little child, to my very sweet and loving Huta.

"I send this handmade picture as a token of my admiration for the truly excellent and remarkable work you have done in the 'Dolls exhibition'. The 'Temple' which is your work is indeed a piece of art and will be long remembered among the Ashram activities. I especially appreciated the quiet and concentrated atmosphere created by the 'Temple' which gave a very fine impression.

"With all my love and blessings I keep you in my arms, and the Divine Grace is always with you."

Instantly I recalled the letter in which she had written:

"I am with you in *your work* which is sure to be quite successful..."

That evening, I saw the Mother. She expressed once again her deep feeling regarding the 'Temple'. While holding my hand and congratulating me, she said: "I am so happy." Then slowly she closed her eyes for a few moments in sheer contentment.

At the same time the Mother was perfectly aware of my struggle—both outward and inward—which was not yet over. My feet still trod the difficult path.

In that period one of my brothers—Paroobhai—arrived with his family. They too saw the Exhibition and were pleased. I could not spend much time with them because of my work. But they did not stay for long anyway.

On the morning of the 26th the Mother sent me a card with these sentences:

"Let the peace of deep love penetrate your whole being and flood you with a quiet joy and strength.

"My love and blessings and the Presence of the Divine Grace are constantly with you."

Later in the evening I saw the Mother. She received me with love and a smile. We interchanged flowers. Then she looked intently into my eyes. I felt a strange warmth in my heart when her shining eyes penetrated it. Then gradually she closed her eyes. I felt as if she had gone into another sphere. When she awoke, she drew a sketch of my heart and said affectionately:

"I saw your heart. The outer parts are golden like a sun and pale pink. In the centre there is a white light with a white flame...."



I was fascinated by this description. I remained silent. Then she gave me her adorable smile and warm embrace. She must have gone into the domain of my soul. I had marked that when I was receptive to her Force, I felt her touch had an electrifying effect on my whole being.

While going home, after the French lesson, I felt for the first time intense, unknown, luminous vibrations of peace in my heart. I was merged in my true self. Then suddenly I found that the divine Peace had descended upon me. I started breathing a cool air which was not earthly. I felt a deep coolness in my eyes, my whole being became marvellously cool. The Peace enveloped me more and more powerfully and pervasively with a cooling wideness and I looked at the world as if from a distance and with a freedom in which all fret had come to an end. I remained in this state for more than an hour. That night I slept restfully.

The next morning the Mother sent me a card showing a snowy mountain and carrying these lines:

“Here is the pure silence of the heights—when the soul comes to the front and the mind becomes quiet and still.

“My love and blessings along with the Divine Grace are constantly with you.”

The same morning I wrote to her about my experience and she answered:

“It is with joy that I read your letter. Indeed this is very good news. Never forget this unforgettable experience. It will help you to make further progress.

“With my love and blessings.”

In the evening I met the Mother. She was all smiles. I told her that the divine Peace had not remained for long and how very much I wanted to dwell in it. She laughed softly and said while caressing my cheeks:

“Yes, I gave you that peace in order to let you have a taste of it. Now, my child, aspire to get it back and you will feel it permanently.”

This passage from *Questions and Answers*, 1950-51, pp. 362-63, is quite apposite:

*When you speak of “giving peace” do you refer to a special gift or to something general?*

“It is special, it is something put upon you, with insistence, and then, for some seconds or some minutes, or even some hours, you feel it. You feel suddenly filled with peace, force, light—sometimes even with yet more precious things:

knowledge, consciousness, love. And then it disappears. Then you say, 'Oh! truly, these divine forces are not generous. They make you taste the thing to see how good it is, then take it away from you so that you may desire it all the more.' This is the usual conclusion."

To regain that divine Peace was no joke. I rose up with a cold shiver running through me. This was the moment of truth, the supreme test to which I was put. I had still to wait for that Peace — perhaps eternally, I thought.

Sometimes I became so overjoyed that I blurted out indiscriminately to people the action of the Grace; I had that habit. Now, from my experience I may say that one should not draw attention to one's good fortune—all the luck of the divine Light and Love—before one is settled and secure in Sadhana. Without the Guru's permission it is always dangerous to tell of the inner working to all and sundry. People, hearing of the golden acts of the Grace, may feel envy and ill-will and, through adverse feeling, become open doors for the subtle enemies called "Pani" in the Rigveda and the "Robbers of the Deep" by Sri Aurobindo in *Savitri*: they steal away all our spiritual wealth and swallow it up in the subconscious abyss.

Two days elapsed—in vain I groped for the divine Peace. At night I walked about my room and, each time the tears dried on my cheeks, more and more flowed to wet them over again, because it was too painful to lose the incredible Peace.

\*

On 28th November the Mother wrote:

"Come this afternoon to the Playground at 5 o'clock because from 5.30 I shall be busy. We shall have another concentration together.

"With my love and blessings and the Presence of the Divine Grace that never leave you even for a moment."

I always looked forward to our meeting and that most joyous thing: meditation. Whenever I could snatch some time, I went to see my brother and his family. They expressed to me their wish to see the Mother before returning to Africa. I informed the Mother. She answered:

"Yes, my dear little child, your sister-in-law and her children can come with you tomorrow at 5 o'clock at the Playground.

With my love and blessings."

P.S. I am enclosing herewith the Rs. 100 for the month and love."

According to arrangement my people used to send money to the Mother as I have stated earlier.

In the evening I told the Mother that my brother too wished to see her. She said that it was all right.

The next morning a fine card revealing snow-capped mountains came from the Mother, on which she had written:

“Bonjour to my dear little child, to my sweet Huta,

“Another picture of the beauty of ice and snow—the picture of the heights.

“My love and blessings and the Presence of the Divine Grace are constantly with you.

“P.S. I shall see you (with the members of your family) this afternoon five o’clock.  
Love.”

She was very pleased to see them. After taking the blessings from the Mother, my people took their leave.

I remained with the Mother for a few moments more. During those moments she told me that if my brother would agree she would like to keep his children—two girls and a boy—in the Ashram and that she would make the best arrangements for them and take great care of them. For they were good souls.

When I conveyed this message to my brother and his wife, they disagreed.  
**FATE!**

My brother and his family left for Africa. Once again I felt lonely and dejected.

*(To be continued)*

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## YOUR RACE IS WON

Lose not faith and don’t despond,  
Look within and look beyond;  
He sits enthroned in the inmost heart,  
In the limitless space, in the tiniest part.  
He rules your Destiny, guides to the Goal,  
The Light, Delight and the Soul of Soul.

Forget yourself in the Self of Self—  
Play your true part, His Grace will help.  
If you open yourself like the flower to the Sun,  
You are fulfilled allwise, your Race is won.

**B. D. BHATT**

# INDIAN HISTORY: ITS TRUE MEANING AND ITS LIGHT ON THE FUTURE

*(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1983)*

## TALK TWO

### Introduction on Seeing Again a Large Audience

IN spite of my grave warning that the second talk would be even more tough going than the first, you have come once more in quite a crowd. I admire your heroism. In appreciation of it, I shall be as optimistic as possible in response.

If I see any of you opening his mouth wide, I will not dare to think you are yawning: I will only think that you are going out of your way to show me symbolically your openness to my thesis. If you happen to shut your eyes, far be it from me to imagine that you are dozing: I will resolutely suppose that you are concentrating, so that you may appreciate my argument more seriously and not be distracted by my funny-looking face. Even if some of you suddenly get up and leave the hall, I will simply imagine you are so convinced already by what I have said that you want to please me by showing that you do not need to hear any more and that I may quite contentedly shut up.

With this optimism rewarding your heroism, I shall start being tough.

\*

Over a hundred years ago European scholars brought forth the vision of a horde of barbaric Aryans bursting upon India in *c.* 1500 B. C. To nineteenth-century scholarship the Harappa Culture, also designated the Indus Valley Civilisation, was unknown. So the conflict between the invaders and the invaded was taken as the encounter of two primitive peoples, the former of which considered themselves to be fair-skinned carriers of a religion of luminous Nature-Gods and their enemies to be dark and devilish deniers of these divinities. With the discovery of the Harappa Culture the conflict changed into a clash of primitives with an advanced civilisation. The invaded in the earlier version were identified as Dravidians of a proto-Australoid stock. In the later one they were said to be a mixture of several stocks with a predominance of the one dubbed by anthropologists Mediterranean, of which those named Dravidians are taken as its representatives in India. In either instance, the so-called Aryans who were believed to have occupied North India in the period of the Rigveda were outsiders imposing themselves on native Dravidians. Even now such a belief persists, but the total evidence cries out for its revision.

The most influential propagandist of the Aryan-invasion theory vis-à-vis the Harappans has been the famous archaeologist, Sir Mortimer Wheeler. So let me

begin by making use of some of his own admissions which render that theory extremely questionable. He is frank enough to say: "It is best to admit that no proto-Aryan material culture has yet been identified in India." About some finds in the Gangetic basin as well as in northern Baluchistan, which have been attributed to invading Aryans, he again honestly concedes that "this association with early bearers of the Aryan tongue is without warrant". We may follow up these negations with Wheeler's summary of the anthropological perspective conjured up by a study of skeletons connected with the Harappa Culture.

Looking at the most recent examinations, he lists two classes of skeletons: Class A and Class A<sub>1</sub>. According to him, Class A is compared with the "Proto-Australoid", "Caucasic" or "Eurafrican" of earlier writers, whilst Class A<sub>1</sub>, which is of a slighter build, recalls the conventional "Mediterranean", "Indo-European" or "Caspian". Reporting on a tightly packed mass of human skulls in Harappa's Area G, Wheeler tells us that they are mostly of the type A<sub>1</sub>. So a fairly major type is such that it can be described even as "Indo-European"—a term which, as everybody knows, is another word for the traditional "Aryan". If the traditional "Dravidian" type is subsumed under the term "Mediterranean", then here we have a mixture of Aryan and Dravidian appreciably before the supposed invasion by the Aryans in c. 1500 B.C. Quite a startling discovery!

Equally startling is the report on the Saurashtrian site Lothal. Three main types of races are found to have lived there in Harappan times. The first type is called Proto-Nordic and Alpine-Armenoid. This type is compared by one of the anthropologists, S. S. Sarkar, to those found at Sialk and Hissar in Iran and described as "Aryan".

Just as astounding is Wheeler's general observation: "Indeed the anthropologists who have recently described the skeletons from Harappa remark that there, as at Lothal, the population would appear, on the available evidence, to have remained more or less stable from Harappan times to the present day." This observation implies that the supposed Aryan invasion of c. 1500 B.C. has brought about no distinct changes in physical characters in the regions involved: Saurashtra and Punjab. The so-called Aryans are no more and no less prominent there now than in the days of the Indus Valley Civilisation. It is as though there were no invasion by the Aryans at all to make any difference.

We have no reason to think of an earlier Dravidian and a later Aryan race. A Dravido-Aryan or Aryo-Dravidian people, with other minor features which we may anthropologically call Munda and Negroid, is the India stretched out before us through the vast expanse of history from at least 2500 B.C. to our own age. But is there any cause even to stop in antiquity with the Harappa Culture? During the last fifteen years an increasing body of evidence has accumulated to point to a wide-spread pre-Harappan civilisation with Baluch and Iranian affinities. According to H. D. Sankalia, it flourished in Sind, Punjab and Rajasthan, particularly in the valley of the ancient rivers Sarasvati and Drishadvati (former Bikaner State). These two rivers

are worth noting, for, as the historian R. K. Mookerji has stated, they marked the regions which a large group of scholars regard as the main seat of the Rigveda's composition. The data before us can well suggest a pre-Harappan civilisation derived from the Rigveda, if not itself Rigvedic.

Why, then, do we have to believe in an Aryan invasion in 1500 B.C.? Not only Wheeler but a fellow-archaeologist, G. R. Dales who directed fieldwork in South Asia, particularly West Pakistan, for a good number of years, has declared that nobody knows when exactly the Aryans could have entered the Indus region and he adds: "the Aryans... have not yet been identified archaeologically."

From the objective scientific point of view there are only two further issues which might be thought to bar our discarding the hypothesis of an Aryan invasion. One is whether the Rigveda knew the use of the metal iron which is entirely absent from the Harappa Culture. The Rigveda has the word *ayas* which in later Sanskrit is said definitely to connote "iron". Personally I am not sure that *ayas* ever connoted "iron": I am convinced of "iron" when I read *loha*. But the assumed meaning is possible since *ayas* is connected with the German *eisen* which signifies "iron". What we must not forget is that it is also related to the Latin *aes* which means "copper" or "bronze". The authors of the famous *Vedic Index*, A. A. Macdonnell and A. B. Keith, considering the red colour associated with *ayas* by the Rigveda, opine that originally it must have been copper or bronze. Wheeler too tells us: "The exact meaning of *ayas* in the Rigveda is uncertain. If it does not merely imply 'metal' generically, it probably refers rather to copper (*aes*) than to iron." Archaeologically, even if the Rigvedic times are dated 1500 B.C., they cannot have known iron, for, as Sankalia assures us, iron is not found in India prior to strata dating back to 800 B.C.

My friend Sanat K. Banerji, to whose friendship and scholarship I owe many pleasant hours, has reminded me: "Sri Aurobindo consistently translates *ayas* as iron, although he must obviously have known the Latin *aes* as meaning copper." My answer is: "Sri Aurobindo wrote 'iron' without any attention to controversy. He did not have in mind the debate whether it could be 'copper' or 'bronze' instead. Taking the meaning which has been given to it at some places in post-Rigvedic literature and without considering what archaeology or the history of iron in general might have to say, he made his rendering. As this rendering is not in the least crucial to his reading of the Vedas in a spiritually symbolic sense, I am sure he would not have stuck to it if good grounds had been shown for substituting 'copper' or 'bronze'. The arguments against 'iron' are very strong—and, if we are to put the Rigveda anterior to the Harappa Culture, 'iron' is absolutely ruled out."

The second issue bears on the presence of the domesticated horse. The Rigveda is chockful of references to this animal. What about the Harappa Culture? Up to 1965 there was a controversy and the balance could not be tilted one way or the other. For, although horselike figurines in terracotta were found at low levels, actual horse-bones occurred only in the topmost level of Mohenjo-daro. They might have been of foreign origin. But the excavations carried out in 1965, 1967 and 1968 under J. P.

Joshi at Harappan Surkotada in Kutch have settled the controversy. At almost all levels the remains of the horse, either domesticated or in the process of domestication, were unearthed.

Thus with regard to both iron and horse we are not barred from putting the Rigveda anterior to the Indus Valley Civilisation.

On the other hand, I should like to stress three points which scientifically and objectively push us towards the Rigveda's anteriority. The Harappa Culture was familiar with rice, even if we may think its cultivation not to be wide-spread. The Rigveda leaves us in the utmost doubt over this article of food: nothing inclines us to accept its presence. Again, the Harappa Culture has yielded silverware. The Rigveda knows of gold but not at all of silver. Lastly, genuine fibres of cotton have been found sticking to a silver vase at Mohenja-daro and an example at Lothal has also been cited, besides evidence of cotton-fibre-marks on a seal from the Harappa Culture discovered in Mesopotamia. The Rigveda mentions wool but gives not the smallest sign of cotton.

Obviously, with the absence of rice, silver and cotton, we have in this scripture an older phase of Indian civilisation. And, what is most noteworthy, if it reports the state of affairs in the Punjab in 1500 B.C. immediately on the heels of the Harappa Culture, we should be utterly at a loss to explain how the Rigvedics could be ignorant of articles prevalent in the same locality for nearly a thousand years before them.

The absence of cotton is indeed a most momentous clue to the Rigveda's enormous antiquity. For, cotton is not mentioned in any part of the huge bulk of post-Rigvedic literature until we reach the late period of the books going by the title of Sutras. Consequently, we must put between the Rigveda and the Harappa Culture a substantial distance of time.

On all-round scientific and objective testimony the Rigveda should recede far beyond 2500 B.C., the beginning of the Harappa Culture, and even precede what archaeology now characterises as the pre-Harappan civilisation. How then can we any longer entertain the hypothesis of an Aryan invasion in 1500 B.C.? It must be thrown overboard and, along with it, the whole picture of so-called Aryan against so-called Dravidian has to be jettisoned. If we have to retain these terms for India, we must henceforth speak only of "Dravidaryans".

On semi-subjective grounds one may seek to rehabilitate the old picture. In the wake of Sir John Marshall who first made the Indus Valley Civilisation famous, scholars have tried to demonstrate it as essentially non-Aryan in religion—that is, different from the religion of the Rigveda. But, if the Rigveda came much before this civilisation, we should expect some differences in the religions of the two without denying all connection between them. Over several centuries there are bound to be changes which can be deemed not radical dissimilarities so much as natural developments of new shades, significant variations on the old themes. Three features of the Harappan religion have been stressed: (1) the worship of the Mother-Goddess, (2) the worship of the Bull, (3) the worship of images. These features are declared non-

Rigvedic. But are they really so?

True, male deities are in the forefront in the Rigveda. But there is the Goddess Prithivi (Earth) almost inseparable from the God Dyau (Sky). Bharati, Ila, Sarasvati, Sarama and Dakshina are other Goddesses. Usha the Dawn-Goddess has hymn after hymn addressed to her. And behind the Goddesses is Aditi who is also the Infinite Mother of all the Gods whom the Rigveda throws into relief and who even in that relief point back to her by being called Adityas. Surely, the prominent worship of the Mother Goddess could naturally grow from the Rigveda.

What about the worship of the Bull? In the Rigveda cows are indeed in the front line. But we should remember Sri Aurobindo's words to the effect that just as Aditi, the supreme Goddess, the ultimate universal Force, is spoken of as the immortal Cow, the supreme Godhead, the ultimate universal Being, is described as the eternal Bull. Further, there is hardly a male deity—whether Agni, Indra, Vishnu, Rudra or Pushan—who is not repeatedly hailed as a mighty Bull. May we not legitimately say that Bull-worship could emanate from the Rigvedic cult?

Apropos of Sri Aurobindo, perhaps the only point challengeable is the one raised again by Sanat K. Banerji. Iconism or image-worship appears rampant in the Harappa Culture, whereas, according to Sanat, "Sri Aurobindo seems to be quite positive that there was no image-worship in Vedic times." But the issue we are really facing is: "Could iconism very naturally arise in the long course of time from the kind of Yoga pursued by the Rigvedic Rishis?" After explaining the heart of this Yoga—namely, how Agni's luminous work of creating the forms of the Immortals within us is accomplished—Sri Aurobindo gives the footnote: "This is the true sense and theory of Hindu image-worship, which is thus a material rendering of the great Vedic symbols." Perhaps even in the Rigvedic Age, "the material rendering" on a small scale may have come about in the popular and exoteric version of the Rigvedic religion. But my contention against the belief that the Harappan religion was fundamentally non-Rigvedic does not depend upon the prevalence of iconism in the Rigvedic Age. It is only concerned with the possibility of iconism developing in post-Rigvedic and Harappan times from the psychic-spiritual modes of the Vedic mysticism. There can be only one answer on the basis of Sri Aurobindo.

Surely the claims often put forth that the Indus Valley script, which has baffled numerous scholars in the past, has at last been deciphered as a species of Tamil are not worth taking seriously any more than those which see nothing save archaic Sanskrit there. I shall be impressed only by a reading which satisfies that acute analytic researcher, the well-known archaeologist and linguist, B.B. Lal. Lal has made short work of all recent claims for either a wholly Aryan or a totally Dravidian tongue. I do not know whether the very latest one by Walter Fairervis, Junior, who participated in the excavations at Allahdino in Pakistan and has attempted a Dravidian interpretation, has come under Lal's scrutiny. But I have looked carefully at this interpretation and I may touch upon its shortcomings along with those of the other similar decipherments.



In the first place, all of them differ on several occasions in their Tamil readings of the same signs. They may quite justifiably be said to cancel out thereby one another's basic assumptions and principal procedures. Secondly, they have brought in linguistic presuppositions which disqualify them in many respects in the eyes of even an authority on Dravidian such as the famous T. Burrow. We may recall how, some years ago, instead of accepting the results of the Finnish scholars who had depended upon his celebrated *Etymological Dictionary*, he sharply censured them for taking the Dravidian of a much later age as the model for the language they assume for so ancient a civilisation. Thirdly, a number of pro-Dravidian decipherers introduce cultural conceptions from the Aryan-speakers whom they date posterior to the Harappa Culture. Lal has well shown this up in the Russian scholars no less than in the Finnish, apart from a number of crucial linguistic inadequacies. Even Fairservis grants that certain words of the tongue which he reads as Dravidian are undeniably of Aryan speech. Some of them he hopes without any ground to have really derived from Dravidian originals. Others he supposes to have entered the Harappan languages from Aryan tongues assumed to be prevalent outside India—presumably in Central Asia—round about 2500 B.C. This is pure fantasy. Those who pin their faith on an entry by the Aryans into India in post-Harappan times have no right to smuggle in anything of theirs so much earlier. The natural explanation would be the presence of the Aryan tongue and the cultural associations of it in the region concerned. Something of linguistic and cultural Aryanism seems unavoidable in the Indus Valley Civilisation even when we endeavour to Dravidianise it completely. The most sensible thing, in my opinion, is to believe the Harappan speech to be a mixture of old popular Sanskrit known as Prakrit with old Tamil as well as archaic touches from the small Munda group of dialects and possibly infusions of vocabulary from Baluchistan, Iran and Sumer, three countries with which we can archaeologically trace commercial intercourse. A pre-Harappan chronology for the Rigveda is both inevitable and necessary.

Apropos of the sort of language I suggest for the Harappa Culture I may quote some remarks of Sri Aurobindo—a master linguist and philologist, if ever there was one—on the wedge usually driven between the tongues of the north and those of the south. After informing us how his stay in Pondicherry surprised him into the conviction that the very types of faces, features and figures with which he had been familiar in Maharashtra, Gujarat, the Hindi-speaking provinces and partially Bengal were also around him here, though not quite without a subtle shade which might be vaguely described as a southern type—a shade natural in a country as varied on the surface as a continent—after conveying to us his impression of a general north-south homogeneity of peoples, he turns to the notion of different language-groups, which has been employed to uphold the theory of different races. He writes:

“But here also my preconceived ideas were disturbed and confounded. For on examining the vocables of the Tamil language, in appearance so foreign to the Sanskrit form and character, I yet found myself continually guided by words or by

families of words supposed to be pure Tamil in establishing new relations between Sanskrit, and its distant sister Latin, and occasionally between the Greek and the Sanskrit. Sometimes the Tamil vocables not only suggested the connection but proved the missing link in a family of connected words. And it was through the Dravidian language that I came first to perceive what seems to me the true law, origins and, as it were, the embryology of the Aryan tongues. I was unable to pursue my examination far enough to establish any definite conclusion, but it certainly seems to me that the original connection between the Dravidian and the Aryan tongues was far closer and more extensive than is usually supposed and the possibility suggests itself that they may even have been two divergent families derived from one lost primitive tongue.”

In the first chapter of his unfinished project, *The Origin of Aryan Speech*, Sri Aurobindo writes: “I shall be able at a later stage to afford some ground for supposing the Tamil numerals to be early Aryan vocables abandoned by Sanskrit but still traceable in the Veda or scattered and embedded in the various Aryan tongues and the Tamil pronouns similarly the primitive Aryan denominatives of which traces still remain in the ancient tongues. I shall be able to show also that large families of words supposed to be pure Tamil are identical in the mass, though not in their units, with the Aryan family.” Sri Aurobindo looks at what are taken as examples of indubitable dissonance of Tamil with the Aryan languages and points out how even related languages like Sanskrit, Greek and Latin tended to lose “even in the commonest terms their original vocabulary and diverge from each other so that if the process had not been arrested by an early literature all obvious proof of relationship might well have disappeared.” He draws our attention to the accident of an early and continuous Sanskrit literature as enabling us to establish the original unity of the Aryan tongues. “If it were not for the old Sanskrit writings, if only the ordinary Sanskrit colloquial vocables had survived, who could be certain of these connections? Or who could confidently affiliate colloquial Bengali with its ordinary domestic terms to Latin any more certainly than Telugu or Tamil?” Proceeding on the various affinities he has discerned between Tamil and the Aryan languages, he asks whether the accepted dissonances of Tamil with the latter are not due to an early separation and an extensive change of Tamil’s vocabulary during its preliterary age.

Sri Aurobindo finds little ground to credit the sharp distinction between Aryan and Dravidian races created by the philologists. In this bold stand of his a recent publication from the pen of a South Indian has supported him. Although the book is not older than 1975, it is curious to note that the papers collected in it were written nearly fifty years earlier—at just the time when Sri Aurobindo was rejecting the current split of Dravidian from Aryan. I am referring to the volume by R. Swaminatha Aiyar entitled *Dravidian Theories*. Aiyar was an extraordinary scholar of linguistics. In his papers he presses for a revision of several notions about Rigvedic or other borrowing by Sanskrit from Dravidian. He counters most competently

the long-standing pro-Dravidian bias set by Bishop Caldwell in 1856. His book demonstrates how most of the words understood to be non-Aryan in the Dravidian languages turn out to be Aryan behind their Dravidian exterior and it shows this exterior itself to be crypto-Aryan. Aiyar deals extensively with the conjugation of verbs, particularly tense and mood signs, and devotes a special analysis to basic vocabulary and nominal declensions. Over a hundred Dravidian verbal forms occurring in ordinary speech are given Indo-Aryan roots. The majority of grammatical structures in Dravidian are explained as arising from suffixed elements borrowed from Indo-Aryan. But he is careful to send us to Vedic idioms and spoken Prakrits rather than to classical Sanskrit which is a late literary development.

Aiyar is unconsciously a genuine Aurobindonian in philology. But he perhaps overshoots the mark by looking at Dravidian as merely a sort of super-Prakrit rather than, as Sri Aurobindo says, a divergent shoot from the same primitive source which gave birth to Sanskrit.

Perhaps in one respect his Prakritising vision of Dravidian is significant. Sanskrit is an inflected language: that is, words change their forms in it to express grammatical relations. Tamil is agglutinative: that is, simple words are combined into compounds without change of form or meaning. This discrepancy has been made much of by those who shout divisively the labels "northerner" and "southerner". Aiyar stresses for us a commonplace of linguistics—namely, that in the course of time, if a language becomes the dialect of the masses, it tends to give up its difficult inflectional character and grows easy and agglutinative. Take the current vernaculars which are Prakrits derived from Sanskrit. When they emerge into written texts they display a large agglutinative movement. Or take English as we observe it from the time of Chaucer up to now. It differs from its parent Anglo-Saxon in abandoning the latter's complex grammatical adjustments. From an inflectional it has turned into an agglutinative speech—and yet it is acknowledged to be a branch of Indo-European just as Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi and Bengali are. A perfectly natural development has taken place. We may well believe that if Dravidian has persisted from Harappan times to the era when it first emerges into view—the famous "Sangham" period—it was mostly a popular tongue and in this preliterate phase it underwent the agglutinative modification. There is no call to divide it radically from Sanskrit. In fact, even at its emergence into view it carries assimilated Sanskrit terms. The very terms "Sangham" is Sanskrit from "Sangha" meaning "assembly" or "congregation". Everything considered, a much closer link than ordinarily conceived is most probable if not as good as certain and a common ultimate source with Sanskrit is eminently possible, as Sri Aurobindo concludes.

Even if the tongues of the North and the South were really quite different in basis, a difference of race cannot be established any more than a sameness of race can be established by a non-difference of basic tongue. Tocharian was an ancient Central-Asian branch of Indo-European, but it was spoken by Mongolians, a stock dissimilar to the other Indo-European speakers. Yet the fact that people of Mon-

golian stock spoke an Indo-European dialect does not make them a race dissimilar to the Chinese who spoke an entirely different language.

All in all, after what Sri Aurobindo and Aiyar have pronounced, we may agree with Sri Aurobindo that "the sole remaining evidence of an Aryan invasion of a Dravidian India would be the indications to be found in the Vedic hymns".

Yes, the Vedic hymns are left as the last resort for the proponents of the current historical outlook. We may be asked about the literary testimony contained in these hymns. "Does not the Rigveda itself disclose an invasion as well as an Aryan-Dravidian confrontation?" My reply is: "Not at all." And in support I would draw again upon just those who subscribe to the hypothesis we have disputed.

E. J. Rapson, editor of and contributor to the much-lauded *Cambridge History of India*, speaking of the "Aryans" in the period of the Rigveda, confesses: "Their oldest literature supplies no certain indication that they still retained the recollection of their former home; and we may reasonably conclude therefore that the invasion which brought them into India took place at a date considerably earlier." So, on Rapson's authority, we cannot base on the hymns the story of Rigvedic Aryans hailing from another country and invading the Indus region. To speak of an unreclected invasion, in a far-off pre-Rigvedic era, is idle speculation. At any rate, it helps in no manner the current historical outlook.

Then there is A.B. Keith writing in the same book: "It is certain that the Rigveda offers no assistance in determining the mode in which the Vedic Aryans entered India. If, as may be the case, the Aryan invaders of India entered by the Western passes of the Hindu Kush to the east, still that advance is not reflected in the Rigveda, the bulk at least of which seems to have been composed rather in the country round the Sarasvati river, south of the modern Ambala." Thus, according to Keith, there is in the Rigveda not only a total omission of pointers to a movement into India from abroad but also a marked sign that whatever story its composers tell is from a position as of inlanders and not invaders.

If the Rigvedics did arrive from outside India, they completely forgot all about their arrival. And not once in the whole range of ancient Indian literature subsequent to the Rigveda is there the slightest hint by its composers that their ancestors entered India. If sheer forgetfulness is responsible here, we must conclude that the entry was so far back in the past—so much beyond 1500 B.C.—that it was as if for all practical purposes the Rigvedics were people of the Indian soil from the beginning.

I am a Parsi Indian. My forefathers came to India from Persia. That was about 1300 years ago. We yet have a tradition of how we came in open boats to the coast of Gujarat, guarding our sacred fire—and I am sure that even 1300 years hence we shall bear the recollection of the great immigration which gave us the privilege to call ourselves Indians—provided, of course, there will be any Parsis left at that future date out of the one lakh survivors still managing to flourish. Can we say the Parsi power of memory is better than that of other Indians? Everybody is aware

that all ancient Indian literature from the Rigveda downwards was transmitted from age to age by sheer memorising. Not only the poetic writings but also the prose compositions like the prolific and often rather tedious documents labelled as Brahmanas which dwell on sacrificial customs and rules—everything was learnt by heart. Tremendous feats of memorising were committed. There was no lack of remembering power. In fact, there was a massive presence of it. It is not possible to say that the fact of an Aryan immigration slipped from the mind of India in all the ages. Even the Puranas which have a distinct section purporting to be historical and proving actually to be so in several dynastic lists never suggest such an immigration. On the contrary, as the historian R.K. Mookerji notes with surprise, they refer to a movement away from India, the outflow of the Aila peoples, the expansion of the Druhyus, through the northwest into the countries beyond.

As a Parsi Indian, I may adduce another point. In one of the Parsi scriptures there is a mention of the homeland of the people who settled in Persia. We read of a place called *Airyānam-vaejo*, meaning the seed or source of the Aryans. Scholars have not agreed as to where precisely it is to be located. Some put it in Central Asia, in the plains of the rivers Oxus and Jaxartes. Others see it further north near the Arctic Circle. As actually the mention of *Airyānam-vaejo* occurs twice with some modification in its vague pointers, perhaps an earlier and later seed or source are indicated. In any case it is certainly outside the land where that particular scripture was composed. This fact of remembrance is in marked contrast to the utter lack of any recollection on the part of the Rigvedics or the later Indians. What we are obliged to conclude is that the Persian branch of the people who named themselves Aryans were on the move in times not too far from the period of its settlement, whereas a sister branch was established on Indian soil from an antiquity that is immemorial. Neither immigration nor invasion in a historical period is a logical hypothesis for it.

Even the word “Aryan” occurring in the Rigveda has been acknowledged by all scholars to be not in the least an ethnic designation. It is purely a cultural title, indicating a certain cult of the Gods of Light and a certain high and heroic, virtuous and refined way of living. In later Sanskrit and Prakrit it is a synonym of “noble”. You have heard of Buddha’s Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Noble Way. Actually the original adjective, which is translated “Noble”, is “Aryan”. The Rigveda has no implication of race. Hence we cannot establish on its basis a racial antithesis between Aryan and Dravidian. In current philological rather than cultural usage, “Aryan” denotes no more than a particular group of languages, just as “Dravidian” denotes another such group.

Doubtless, the beings whom the Rigvedics describe themselves as fighting are popularly understood to be dark-hued and flat-nosed aborigines and to be identifiable with some elements of the Dravidian-speaking population. But it is forgotten that the opposite colour “white” is made applicable by the Rishis to their thoughts and equated to the Aryan colour and so the non-Aryan shade should be psychological also. Again, the beings whom modern commentators take to be flat-nosed are

in fact distinguished in the Rigveda by the epithet *anas* which has to be translated “noseless” when we break it up into *a* and *nas*. Surely there are no noseless Dravidians. I am afraid Dravidians not only have as discernible noses as Aryans but make equally wrong uses of them. Both Dravidians and Aryans often look down their noses at people. They also frequently poke their noses into other people’s affairs. And, worst of all, they sometimes fail miserably to see what is right under their noses—and one such thing is the fact that racially there are no Aryans and Dravidians but simply Indians. I am positive the Rigvedics knew this quite well and never had Dravidians in mind when they employed that extreme adjective. In an adjective of that kind we immediately get a metaphorical suggestion.

In all modern Indian languages a person who is shameless is said to be without a nose. In the Rigveda the epithet is best interpreted in connection with another occurring in the same verse: *mridhra-vak*, to which all translators give one sense or another pointing to offensive or unintelligible speech. Sri Aurobindo, linking it to the similar term *brahma-dois* which means “hater and destroyer of the sacred word”, renders *mridhra-vak* as “spoiler of speech”. *Anas* and *mridhra-vak* together spotlight “those who have no force of the divine breath or no mouth to speak the *mantras*”, the revelatory hymnal of the Rigveda’s high-priests. Whoever they are, they are essentially those who stand on the opposite side to the religious consciousness of the Rigvedics.

To Sri Aurobindo, the beings whom the Rigvedics fight are powers of darkness, evil entities of a superhuman order antagonistic to the divine experience couched in the inspired hymns, the *mantras* created by the Gods, the powers of Light, and bequeathed to their human followers in order that these worshippers of Agni, Indra, Varuna, Surya-Savitri, etc. may grow godlike and defeat in themselves the influences of the demons who are the foes of the Gods.

Sri Aurobindo has offered in great detail a reading of the Rigveda which demonstrates it to be the story of a strenuous adventure of inner life, imaged in terms of outer existence: cows, horses, treasures, precious food and drink, heroes, battles, marches, rivers, mountains, fire-cult, sacrifice. Through the imagery he discerns the pursuit of a divine Reality which would develop in the human mould a luminous superhuman consciousness, subduing and eradicating whatever is ignorant and crooked in that mould.

Interpreted in this fashion, the Rigveda would form an elevated explanatory background to the stupendous efflorescence of spirituality in the Upanishads, just as the Upanishads are the fountain from which diverse streams of spirituality have flowed down the millennia. The Rigveda belonged to what is called the Age of the Mysteries which preceded the intellectual growth everywhere on earth. It was not merely a scripture of complicated ritualism. If it were that, what meaning would there be in the tradition that regards its Hymns as eternal revelations?

However, even eternal revelations have different applications in different ages. To set the Rigveda in an ether of eternity is not to call us back to its ancient ways of

illumination. The Age of the Mysteries is indeed gone and Indian spirituality has passed through many phases and our face has always to turn towards the future. But the basic spirit of the India shaped by the Rigveda has to remain. It is a wide active spirit open to the four quarters of the world and absorbing all the features brought by repeated invasions yet retains its own inmost ethos. This spirit is the immemorial Indianness which we cannot track to anything outside our country. And what precisely is that Indianness we style Rigvedic in its roots? The Rishis of the Rigveda were no dwellers in caves. They were heads of families, guides of king and commoner, no deniers of the earth and its concerns but workers in the outer no less than the inner plane.

The same labour in general but in tune with all that has flourished in the dynamic past since the remote Rigvedic Age is the mission of Sri Aurobindo who holds in himself both the ancient secrets and the multiform cultural quests of over 5000 years. What the future holds for Sri Aurobindo's India is disclosed in his message on the Independence Day in 1947. Five dreams of his life he has listed, the greatest of all being the final one: "a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and begin the solution of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he first began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society." The initiative to this evolution Sri Aurobindo sees as most possible to India. Of course, the scope must be universal but the central movement may be hers.

I may end by saying that if the new and free India directs her steps more and more towards all that Sri Aurobindo has thought and visioned, experienced and realised, along with his co-worker whom we have known as the Divine Mother and who has built up the Ashram at Pondicherry, the greater will be the chance of India's history reaching its crowning moment.

*(End of second talk)*

K. D. SETHNA

# COUNTING CLOUDS\*

IN AUROVILLE—1978

I ALWAYS go out a few minutes early for a first guess at the sky, relying on my bare feet to let me know whether or not I should record the occurrence of morning dew. At this time of year, at this time of day, thousands of small blue moths exercise their wings and investigate the wildflowers in the grass....

I have been on the job a month as weatherman and everything is still fresh to me: worried at ink-blots, everything in its right column, every act I do I do with scrupulous care and every decision I come to I come to after a deliberation which is quite foreign to my nature. Like my ancestors the menhir masons I act as if the sun coming up and the sun going down depends upon the accuracy of my calculations for its successful passage.

In Sir Napier Shaw's 'Manual of Meteorology' appears this sentence: "Every theory of the course of events in nature is necessarily based on some process of simplification of the phenomena and is to some extent therefore a fairy tale." Which suits me down to the ground. The simpler the simplification the more phenomenal the phenomena. Once-upon-a-time seems a good enough way to start the day and so I set off, carrying with me the tools of my trade: observer's notebook, bottle of distilled water, eye-dropper and purple ink, watch-maker's screw-driver. Small boys make way before me as if I were Merlin in a bad mood....

I am not sure why we man a weather station. I agree meteorology has come a long way since "Red sky at night, shepherd's delight; red sky at morning, sailor's warning". (Do I have my shepherds and sailors mixed up?) If I were living in a Japanese fishing village in the path of the typhoon or on the Australian coast when the willy-willies are due I suppose I would have more interest in its development. But for me weather prediction lost its appeal about the time the King's Fool went out of style. Nowadays, propped up by the laws of average and probability it seems to go on the belief that if it has happened before it will happen again. Spells and incantations have given way to compilations of statistics, and statistics I have little faith in. As far as I can see they are merely an elaboration of simple arithmetic which was as far as I went in school. I can count all right and I have confidence in the results; I just do not know what the answers mean. (I do not suppose that I am much different from a computer in that respect.) My difficulty is that I sometimes feel the total to be less than the individual parts. Take, for example, an arithmetical problem for which the answer is said to be 5 apples. I remember vaguely a rule which says that unlike things can never be added, so in order to have an answer come out to 5 apples one must reduce the apples to the same applesness. This is quite impossible. All things are unlike, all, all; all are unique. The answer can never be 5 apples no matter how much you abstract the fruit... Or instead of "apples" take "boys".

\* With acknowledgements to *The Golden Bridge*, Auropublications, 1978, pp. 11-19



Suppose a problem existed for which the answer is given as (Heaven forbid!) 5 boys. 5 boys! what kind of mind would be satisfied with an answer like that? An answer which would mean more to me would be something like: "This boy, cross-eyed and laughs like a drain, plus this boy, bandy as a bear, steals your mangoes faster than you can grow them, plus more boys." Which I agree would be difficult to run through a computer, and as the computer is the Holy Moses of the Met people you can see why sometimes I wonder if I am in the wrong business. I know as much about the computers as I do about divination by the study of entrails.

Still, for me, ignorance has never been a reason for lack of enthusiasm. In fact the less I know about something the more mystery I seem to be able to attribute to it. Perhaps that is why, not knowing much, going by the book, doing what I have been taught to do just as if I were some ape in space, I am able to go out each day with my enthusiasm for the mystery undiminished.

In my observer's notebook I put down the temperatures—dry-bulb thermometer, wet-bulb thermometer (with a strip of muslin wrapped around the end it seems to grow out of the bottle of distilled water like some aqueous-rooted lily), maximum thermometer and, when it is working, the minimum thermometer. Brought up on Fahrenheit and the drama of the 100° heat-wave I cannot get excited about Celsius. The mercury comes to rest on some number between 20° and 30°—and what kind of number is that! Still I record it, my lips working with concentrated effort just like my grandmother with the Sunday newspapers.

After I put down the figures I wind up the clockwork mechanisms which make the drums revolve for the automatic recorders, then I ink the pens and change the charts. Temperature, Relative Humidity, Barometric Pressure. All ticking away, all going round, all throughout the day and night untouched by human hand.

They are clever these instruments and, except for the one which records the changes in humidity, simple. That one, if I were to describe it, no one would believe me: it looks like some corner of an idiot's perpetual-motion experiment. At the back, hidden from view by a perforated shield, are two clamps which hold apart strands of human hair. According to the theory the hair stretches and contracts depending on how much moisture there is in the air: Cardinal de Cusa was the first one to discover the principle and how he escaped excommunication no one will ever know. Each day, because I know that if it breaks down all I will be able to do is admire its dust, I make an inscription in the air with my screw-driver and mutter over it: "Credo quia absurdum"

Then there is the instrument that records precipitation. In this part of the world that means rain, and for seven months of the year it does nothing but draw the straightest line you ever saw... What rain is and where it comes from and what happens to it is understood by just about everyone now except some of the most successful rain dancers. And all they know is that it is wise to pay homage. (If you want to be a rain maker, they say, you have to run the risk of being struck by lightning.)

The rest of the instruments are positioned on the roof of the weather station

and you get there by means of a bamboo ladder. This is where we make the eye observations—so named to distinguish them from the observations made by the machines which are, no doubt, much more reliable.

From here you can see the geography of the place. East is the sea where the afternoon winter winds come from; South is Pondicherry—at night you can see its glow and the beam from the lighthouse; towards the west are the ivory towers of Jipmer Hospital. The dirt roads that come from the old and new Madras highways meet here and go on to the Matrimandir; the fields are patterned with footpaths and scored with the dry beginnings of waddies. The land is drying now though still grey-green, and the cattle and goats have farther to go between nibbles, but it will be a month or more yet before the last crops are taken in and the red of the earth again predominates. New keel roofs are going up all over the place; there are two windmills and a drilling rig up against the sky. With the cashew groves hiding the ravines it looks more fertile, more settled, more prosperous than it is. It is a lovely land but harsh, leached, tired, with water, when it comes at all, running off with what little soil there is...

“The true seeing,” says Shen Hui, “is when there is no seeing,” and I, doing my job, quote him for reassurance as I climb the second ladder to read the wind-speed on the anemometer. This is a gadget that looks like an army version of a children’s toy; it comprises four cups that spin round horizontally, the revolutions being marked on a counter. Spinning round they have a tendency to offer from a distance the illusion of being able to change direction, clockwise to anti-clockwise to clockwise again, over and over, and there is nothing you can do about it except wait until it changes to the direction which reason tells you is true and then quickly look away....

To find the speed of the wind you note the number on the counter, wait 3 minutes, note it again, take away the number first thought of, multiply by two and there you are: kilometres per hour. But you cannot just stand there and wait and watch the numbers turn over or you would quickly drop into deep trance and fall off the ladder, so these 3 minutes are used for judging the visibility, noting the direction of the wind and counting the clouds. Here is where meteorology approaches metaphysics. Recognizing that nothing is perfect the clarity of the air is never considered to be 100%. By day-to-day standards 99 is perfect and 98 is close. Here most days are at least 97. They are metaphysical at the other end also, 90 being pretty hopeless, hand-in-front-of-the-face peasoup. Ignoring the haze, seeing the sun shining on the waves, I put down 98, eager for my summer 99 ... Twenty-five seconds have gone by....

In Wales, where I grew up, I do not suppose they have had a 99 since they stopped painting themselves blue. It rains a lot in Wales—on the average about 366 days in the year. When the occasional cloudless day appeared we used to feel most uneasy. We used to think that God could look right down at us and see all the wicked things we were doing... Fifty-five seconds....

The wind vane seems steady on nor' nor' west but just as I am about to mark it down it slinks across the arrow and sits comfortably on nor' nor' east... "Listen," I murmur, "I can't wait all day for you to make your mind up. I've got clouds to count. Are you coming nor' nor' west or nor' nor' east?"...One minute twenty....

A bird comes down close and perches on a palmyra, a tree pie it is, a member of the crow family, a lower-class bird if ever there was one or so the book says, but looking now as elegant as an eighteenth-century dancing master in his brown and white and black and with a tail he is obviously proud of. He stands looking at me with his mouth open and I understand what troubles him. Are you a high man or a low bird he seems to want to know. (Climbed from apes or fallen from angels?)

I speak to him, quoting as much as I can remember of the Conference of the Birds. "Now then, O Birds, where have you come from and what are you doing here? What is your name? O you who are destitute of everything, where is your home? What do they call you in the world?"

He seems astonished by what he hears, and as he waggles his head in Tamil encouragement I risk another sentence: "What can be done with a feeble handful of dust like you?"

But that was a mistake. With a squawk he is gone....

My God! My three minutes! How long have I been hovering up here conversing with birds? If I put down this figure it would come to... let's see. This, minus that, so much, two times, carry one.... Rather excessive perhaps. If I put that down they would be out looking for cyclones.... I contemplate the whirring cups, calculate, and fake it to come out to 8 kilometres an hour, about usual for this time of year.... The arrow still swings back and forth, from one side to the other, so I put down North...and then climb down to the roof and to my favourite instrument.

My favourite instrument is a crystal ball; all the better-equipped met stations have one. A beautiful thing it is of clear glass that focuses the rays of the sun and burns a mark on a blue card so that a record is made of the hours of sunshine. So far it has not turned milky on me with intimations of the future but I never give up hope. I smooth my hand over it and wipe away the dew, look deep into the glass: there I am inside again, upside down as usual, the sky inverted and brightened by the small white spark. I look up. White it is, enormous, and suddenly it sends out immense ejaculations of light across the sky, and the whole world is changed with all things sure.

"Though an angel from heaven would say otherwise," said Jacob Boehme, "yet would I not believe it, much less understand it, for I would always doubt. But when the sun goes up in my spirit, then I am certain."

When the sun goes up in the spirit it leaves its mark, burning, as if focused by a crystal, and leaves nothing unchanged, all things being changed instantaneously into the unchangeable. "The spirit who is there in a man," the Rishis say, "and the spirit who is there in the sun, it is the one spirit and there is no other."

There is no other. "All that shines is but the shadow of his shining."

Let me tell you, the spirit rising in me like the sun, how we count the clouds... Imagine the sky divided into eight segments as if it were half a celestial orange. Now pretend that you can move the clouds around so that they all fit together without any untidy blue gaps; if they filled, say, three segments of the sky then the total cloud-cover would be 3. If  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the sky was covered then 6, if  $\frac{1}{4}$  then 2. If all, then 8. (Actually a 9 exists but that is only for mystics: you mark it 9 when the sky is obscured so that the clouds cannot be seen!) Then all are classified into three categories, high, medium and low and their names—which are Latin and lovely enough to be set to music—are converted into symbols... I understand well enough the need for the system—it is the case of the 5 apples or the 5 boys all over again, 8 segments for a full set, high, medium or low—and I go along with it quite willingly, holding up my counting fingers as I scan the sky....

The high clouds turn over pulling up beneath them high-sailing birds, five of them, white vultures, Pharaoh's chickens. Cloud-white, confident in their high manoeuvre. The birds circle, circle, then move on into open sky leaving the clouds to their self-exploration. The clouds sort themselves out, turning over, falling away. Some come lower with their message: if you are very still you can hear it. It is the same message as that which comes at night from distant stars, the same which causes the birds to sing before sun-up; the same that guides the salmon, that nourishes the larva, that beckons the air-borne seed.

The Navahos, rain-dancers all of them, understood it well. They used to sing:

"The voice of the thunder  
Within the dark cloud  
Again and again  
It sounds—  
The voice that beautifies the land...."

O Lord! (I am content here, that is the trouble, smooth and well-fed, and criticism does not come as easily as it used to.) O Lord! Do you want the world so changed that the clouds with their wisdom would feel unwelcome? This three-billion-year-old miracle, these ten thousand flourishing things, this inevitable day-to-day glory, how much does it have to do with my human noise, with these fiery statements of resolution, with our struggle and our dogtail revolution, with our vain endeavour?

This city—it is already there, isn't it? Real, resplendent, illumined like an early morning lotus, the sun rising in its spirit; unimagined must be its wonders, nothing to do with brick and metal and everlasting fabrications. For we cannot build this city: it can only become manifest. And when it comes we shall find that joy is its mortar, glory is its scaffolding, love its only environment. The trouble is that with all the dreams we have it is difficult to accept the fact that we cannot take

credit for it. But the dreams are of something else, reflections in the eye of reason or desire, and whatever it is that they show us it is not joy, it is not glory, it is not love; it is not the spirit rising in the sun, it is not the bright new day with all things possible and with all things sure—immaculate white birds and miraculous white clouds and the immense infinity of a new white sky...

Living at the same time as Jacob Boehme was a remarkable man named John Lightfoot who became famous when, as vice-chancellor of Cambridge University, he made the following announcement: "Heaven and Earth, Centre and Circumference, were made in the same instant of time, and clouds full of water and man was created by the Trinity on the 26th October, 4004 B.C. at 9 o'clock in the morning." In time for church, one supposes. And he still lives, Mr. Lightfoot, he lives, in spite of our laughter, he lives. We act as if we live in a rational world, a world put together by celestial mechanics and engineering angels. We imagine that all that was and all that is and all that will be is perfectly understandable to the human mind. Forced to accept the miraculous we try to force it into the schedule of man-made events with figures and plans and reports on progress. We will build a city like this we say, like that we say, My God, we say, how neat...

It is no different when we study the weather. All we know how to do is count, measure, record. "Wind," says Oxford, "is air in more or less rapid natural motion," which is a lovely sentence though it evades a lot. "Storm," it says again, "is an atmospheric disturbance intermediate between whole gale and hurricane", which covers the ground with force but little grace, and with much assumed. Yet one supremely-realized soul, who seems to know everything imaginable about everything knowable, says that storms are merely beings whose acts are wilful or whimsical, unplanned. To study them as if they could respond to some statistical law is as futile then as it is to ask of the flea why it hops from here to there... and back again....

A beep-beep brings me part-way down; a scooter passes, the rider raising his hand. I wave to the back of his head. There he goes, a friend. I always know his scooter because he is like me with a watch—if it is wound it should go, if it doesn't it deserves a good shake and a sharp word and gets it and that's all. A plume of blue smoke follows him down the road. Where is he off to? Pondy? What has he got to do in Pondy? Everything he needs is here. The sun winks off his machine.

It is almost nine o'clock now and others are coming: fat people in cars travelling too fast, a tourist bus with luggage on the roof, bicycles, motorbikes, bullock vundies with wheels as tall as a man, little carts with ponies as small as a boy, some indescribably scruffy children of indeterminate sex guiding along a procession of vedic cows... Bicycle bells, morning flutes, the mooing of cattle, the quarrelling of crows, the wind in the leaves... Grasses move, dust rises, the sun glitters on the sea, the roadside trees go into their slow-motion dance....

What are you then, some sort of tourist, making tourist lists? Something like that. For I am a stranger here spending a life in India, a stranger here knowing little of the land or its people; what I see is what I know, not what made it so. I am

a stranger here, though long settled, and will be, maybe, all my life, envious of the birthright of those who were born with one foot in heaven. ("Oh you who are destitute of everything, where is your home?") Yet I am also new-found, in the middle of things, waving at people and talking to tree-pies, near the centre of the invisible city. Much is always happening here—events and troubles, attempts and failures, festivities, disturbances—but the significant things are not seen and if I have spoken about them I have got it all wrong. For the significant things are regular, rhythmic, cyclical, having something to do with the manifestation of the earth, with the sun and the moon and the clouds and the windy weather...and with the force that is always present for change...

I climb down the bamboo ladder, step off as if onto the surface of the moon, and am greeted by a new calf still absolutely astounded by the world: he comes up on tip-toes with his transparent ears sticking straight out like avocado leaves, then hey-diddle-diddle, he runs off. The dew has gone from the grass, the moths have closed their wings. I put away my book and my bottle of distilled water, my eye-dropper and coloured ink, my watch-maker's screw-driver. I lock the door, hang up the key, turn once more to the sky, and laugh, for the clouds, as they always do, have changed again, covering up my errors. We didn't do so badly, the clouds and I; between us we got the sun moving through the thick part of the morning.

Heinrich Suso once said: "He who seeks to find the inward in the outward is in better case than he who only finds the inward in the inward." Is he right? I have no idea. There are only two people whose every word I accept as gospel before experience confirms it and Heinrich Suso is not one of them. But although I may discard his words as wayward tomorrow, today they give me joy. I hold them there, in the light of my sun, knowing that all is the one spirit and that there is no other.

There is no other. There is no other....

NAVODITTE

## THE RUBAIYAT OF BABA TAHIR

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL PERSIAN DIALECT

*(Continued from the issue of October 1982)*

(36)

To tens of hundred souls ruin you have brought,  
On hearts in thousands you have murder wrought,  
    I have yet counted more than million wounds,  
Unnumbered wounds exceed the numbered lot.

(37)

Thy lustrous curly locks dishevel not!  
Nor let thy drunk eyes with blood-tears be fraught;  
    If thou art bent to break our ties of love,  
Pray make no haste, the same has Time forethought.

(38)

If burns not ever for me thy stony heart,  
If granite does not burn, why feel a start?  
    To burn thy heart, I'll flare myself in flames,  
For, moistened fire-wood does not burn apart.

(39)

A heart have I, restless with grief and woes,  
I blink my eyes, tears stream of wounded Rose;  
    The lover's heart is as a timber wet,  
On one side burns, from the other water flows.

(40)

Without Thee, Love, my heart is never gay,  
But as I see thy face, grief flits away,  
    If my heart's ache is once distributed,  
No heart in the world will ever griefless stay.

(41)

With eyes collyrium-decked, so sweet and sly,  
 With heart enticing, stature slim and high,  
     On shoulders spreadest thou thy musky locks,  
 Yet askst me why disquietened am I.

(42)

My heart with ache of Love does always pine,  
 My bed is earth, the stones are pillows mine,  
     I keep thee friend, my only sin is this,  
 But not so grieved is every friend of thine.

(43)

Happy are they whose friend is gracious God,  
 Whose hearts in Love and Prayer are sweetly thawed,  
     Who in His Presence and His Praise remain,  
 Eternal Heaven is their blessed abode.

(44)

Thou canst insult, who can thy jibes withhold?  
 O ruin and kill—to check thee none is bold.  
     Fear-free am I with half a heart. Whom fearest  
 Thou keeping two worlds' hearts in thy heart's fold?

(45)

A gardener will rue the aberrancy  
 If overleans the wall his fruit-full tree;  
     Though it may bear pearls, sapphires, diamonds,  
 Pluck out its roots and branches ruthlessly.

*(To be continued)*

HAR KISHAN SINGH



## EUROPE 1974

### A TRAVELOGUE

(45)

LOOKING up at the Pontifical Palace from Piazza di San Pietro one is impressed by the austere white building rising high above the surrounding low houses and barracks, its four turrets making it look somewhat like the Tower of London. Appearing to be immaculate and indestructible it reflects a certain side of the great office of the Pontifex Maximus. Inside the Palace, we had been told by our Ambassador friends who were accredited to the Vatican, everything was gorgeously and tastefully decorated, a harmonious blending of exquisite marble and rich mahogany and real gold, platinum and silver.

We stood on the landing of St. Peter's, listening to the Mass that goes on every day from seven in the morning till noon. Then we entered and walked about among sculptures by the greatest artists of the Renaissance period. In the midst of admiring and praising and criticising, one thought came back again and again: "How do they keep such an enormous place clean?" For one thing the ceiling is very high. Then there are innumerable altars and low walls with lattice work or otherwise beautifully carved. In front of some of the altars are groups of statues. It seemed a whole procession of men were required to do the cleaning. The place over the tomb of St. Peter is hedged in by four columns covered with gold, and a canopy is over the columns. This place needs special care. Dew-eyed angels abound, lissom and fragile, so delicate is the chiselling that one can almost hear the rustling of their wings. Saints, aureoled or under barge-board carving, look serious, each fold of their garments meticulously carved. Cleaning all this meant painstaking work. Then what about the balconies and balustrades, cornices and dentils, frieze and acanthus over columns, niches and cherubs? The cleaners needed must be veritable acrobats and expert in trapeze. We were told that a batch of men known as Sanpietrimi does all the work. The service goes on from father to son so the new generation knows exactly what to do and when to do things. They are no ordinary sweepers but highly trained qualified men with expert knowledge in sculpture and architecture. Twice a year the dome is illumined, they told us, once on Easter and next on the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. Three hundred men go up the dome with tallows and flares with ropes tied to their waists with no net below to catch them if they fall. The recipe for the type of tallow used today is still the recipe used in the days of Bernini. The whole thing costs a thousand pound sterling.

The Vatican city is surrounded by a wall all the length and breadth of the hundred and nine acres of the land. Throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance right up to the very modern times monarchs and rulers had tried to lessen the authority of the Pope over their respective States. So too the States interfered with the policy

of the Pope. Therefore a treaty called the Lateran Treaty was signed by the Pope and the Italian Government by which were recognised the complete independence of the Vatican Estate and its sovereign power within its territory. It must be remembered that the Vatican Hill was not always the residence of the Pope. He lived in the Quirinal Palace on the Quirinal Hill and had vast estates in central Italy and elsewhere. It was only after the Unification of Italy that the Pope came to live on the Vatican Hill.

At the end of one of the colonnades is a great bronze door through which the Pope comes and goes. He appears at the window over the main gate of St. Peter's when he wants to address the people who gather in Piazza de San Pietro on festive days. But when he wants to mix more intimately with the crowd he comes out on a chair called Sediagestatoria and is carried by eight men. When he wants to go far out into the country he drives in a car specially made for him, with a throne-like seat where the back seat usually is. His car bears the number SCVI.

Far away on the opposite side of St. Peter's there is a gate through which visitors are allowed inside the Vatican. Some places are shown, the most important ones are of course the Museum and the Sistine chapel. There are inside the city a wonderful art gallery, an observatory, a radio-station and post-office, telephone exchange, railway, colleges, a mosaic factory that deals with repairs of the art objects. There is a governor who looks after the thousand inhabitants there. In the Vatican archives they say there are such important papers as Henry VIII's appeal for divorce, the report of Galileo's trial, letters of Isabella of Castille and Ferdinand of Aragon, the concordat between Napoleon and Pope Pius VII, the Act of Abdication of Queen Christina of Sweden. The Museum too is one of the best in Europe. If the art gallery is not open to all there are in the Museum prints both small and very large ones of the most famous paintings. They give one a very good idea of the originals. The eyes of Art lovers simply glue themselves on to the huge print of Michelangelo's Transfiguration.

*(To be continued)*

CHAUNDONA & SANAT K. BANERJI

# SHOW ME THE MAN, I WILL SHOW YOU THE RULE

## A FOLKTALE FROM PONDICHERRY

THE natives of a certain village made a wooden statue of their favourite god and placed it on the bank of a stream. The stream was nearly 8 feet wide and 4 to 5 feet deep. It also served as a borderline that separated the village from the adjacent one. A palmyra tree, cut lengthwise at the centre into two halves and placed side by side, connected the two raised banks of the stream to serve as a bridge. And the villagers believed that the god's statue at the border repelled the evil spirits, thieves and poisonous creatures coming from other places.

The pious and god-fearing natives whenever they crossed the bridge bent down their heads before the statue in respect and saluted it with both their hands. And those who went to far-off places worshipped it with coconuts and camphor. During festival seasons they placed before the statue a good variety of sweets and other edibles on spread plantain leaves.

The 10-foot tall god was extremely happy. He did his work very well by not allowing the evil spirits, thieves and poisonous creatures of other villages to gain entry into his dominion.

One day it rained heavily. The stream overflowed with flood. A villager who had to reach the adjacent village to carry out urgent business came to the bank of the stream. He was holding an umbrella made of palmyra fronds above his head to protect himself from getting drenched by the rain.

As he was seriously thinking about his business and holding his umbrella very close to his head, he completely forgot about the god and went past him.

The god felt that he was dishonoured. He knew well that the man was a god-fearing man. Yet his strange behaviour wounded the god's feelings. Without second thoughts he cursed the villager.

The bridge cracked and the villager who was half-way over it fell along with the broken bridge into the stream and was washed away by the flood.

"That is what you deserve for your mannerlessness," mocked the god. "According to rule you have to die."

On the next day some villagers noticed the broken remains of the bridge. They postponed the idea of repairing it since they thought that it would take at least three to four days for the flood to subside. But it so happened that in the evening of the same day a ruffian had to go to the adjacent village. He was strongly built and was full of muscles. He could uproot a hill, it was said, and transfer it to another place without any assistance. Everyone in the village trembled at the mention of his very name. The god too was no exception to this, though the ruffian never did any harm to others unless provoked.

This man came to the bank. He wanted to cross the river. But where was the bridge?

At first he thought of swimming across the stream. But he did not want to wet the fine dress he was wearing. He wanted to find some other device.

He lifted his head up and stared at the face of the wooden god. The god shivered at his stare. Then in anger he shouted at the god:

“What is the use of standing here, if you are unable to protect the bridge from the flood? Do you think that these poor villagers give you food and coconuts for nothing? How am I to cross this overflowing stream?”

A new idea came to him in a flash. The ruffian nodded his head in determination and went to the back of the statue. Then with all his might he pushed the huge statue of the god from behind.

The wooden statue fell with a big thud, its face on the other bank of the stream thus making a ‘godly bridge’.

The ruffian then stepped on the new-made bridge and crossed the stream.

The god was very angry. According to rule he opened his mouth to curse the ruffian.

But he had his second thoughts. He arrested the curse in his throat. He then said to himself:

“No! No! My curse might not work with such a ruffian. Let me pardon him for his deed, lest he should cut me into splinters for his oven.”

*Collected and translated by P. RAJA*

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**The Ascent of Self.** Translation and Commentary by *B. N. Parimoo*, M.A., B.T., Publishers: Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1978, Price: Rs.50/-

LALLESHWARI is a mystic who lived about 600 years ago in Kashmir. Apart from a few pieces of information transmitted to us by oral tradition, we hardly know anything about her personal life. Born to a Kashmiri brahmin in the village of Sempur, she was married into a brahmin family of Pampore, a few miles away from Sempur. Though she was said to be an ideal daughter-in-law, she had to pass through all the ordeals imposed by her mother-in-law. As a housewife she was a victim of the violent attitudes and habits of the society. Though her outer life was constantly agitated, her inner life was always turned towards God. Nothing could stand in the way of her will to realise God. Finally she succeeded in coming into direct contact with God. She spoke to the world about her mystical visions and realisations. Her pithy and mystical verses are popular even today among people of all classes—Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs—in Kashmir.

The mystical verses of Lalleshwari have been translated from Kashmiri into English and Urdu. But none of the extant translations seemed to have focused on the sequence of thought in her verses, because the verses were selected at random without making an attempt to see the connection between the different parts of the work. The book under review is an exception in this respect. In his Introduction the author of the book writes: "So far the Vakhs (verses) have been taken at random and translated as such. But a little care makes it evident that there is a palpable growth in the temper of the Vakhs. When arranged in a particular order, they construct themselves into a mystical edifice at the same time awe-inspiring and imposing and fascinating. To help building that mystical mansion is the *raison d'être* of the present volume" (p.xiv). He points out that once the verses are thus re-arranged they unfold the story of her life, more specifically the story of her spiritual life.

The essential part of the book is made up of nine chapters, from 3 to 11. They bring out the various stages of Lalleshwari's spiritual life. The theme of each chapter is illustrated with the help of a number of appropriate verses, the thought-content of which is elaborated by a brilliant commentary. For example, the chapter on Realisation, which is the eleventh, shows how Lalleshwari has reached the summit of her spiritual realisation. One of the verses the author has chosen for this chapter runs: "I, Lalla, willingly (svaman) entered through the garden-gate. There, O Joy! I found Siva united with Shakti." Commenting on the word 'svaman' the author says: it "literally yields to the translation: 'with my own mind'. This may, therefore, be translated as 'willingly'. It may also mean 'with all my consciousness' on the earthly plane, which may be tantamount to saying that she entered the Samadhi, even while she was conscious of her physical surroundings,

internal and external” (p. 103). The interpretation of this word agrees with the basic attitude of Lalleshwari who says elsewhere that it is not necessary to renounce life in order to realise the Self. (p. 159). The other chapters of the book are devoted to explaining some of the important aspects of her work not covered by the ones mentioned above.

This work is a valuable contribution to the subject of mysticism as it gives us an insight into the achievements of Lalleshwari. Written in a simple and charming style, it serves as an authentic exposition on a subject of profound interest.

N. JAYASHANMUKHAM

सरलसंस्कृतसरणिः (Sarala Sanskrit Sarani). Edited and Published by Jagannath Vedalankar, Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, in collaboration with Narendra, Navajyoti Karyalaya, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-605002. Pp. 200+16. Price Rs. 15/-

Before introducing this book we should not forget to mention how Sanskrit obviously operates in our daily life, how it provides the true linguistic substance throughout the country. The Mother fully realised this and said in Her simple words: “It would be ideal if, in a few years, Sanskrit becomes the representative language of India, a Sanskrit made young, that is, a spoken Sanskrit... We find Sanskrit behind all the Indian languages... And it should be that.”

The book affirms the essence of Sanskrit and the advantages of its root-sounds and accepts what the Mother has said: “It is that which ought to be the language of this country which every child born in India must know, just as every child in France must know French.” Accordingly it provides an approach to the roots which help to develop an intimacy with the language. It avoids the load of artificial grammatical rules, exceptions and complications. It is characterised by a novel direct method and is full of instructive illustrations which prevent any straining of oneself by cramming rules of grammar.

Seventeen lessons are given with sufficient exercises, and a long appendix of stories, dialogues and articles in Sanskrit. At the end of each of the first ten lessons the meanings of difficult words have been provided both in English and Hindi. Thus it furnishes the fundamentals of Sanskrit in a short compass. Besides, here is a marvellous approach—providing a vocabulary of a few hundred Sanskrit words which are useful for everyday life.

For the fulfilment of this work credit should go to the experienced teachers of the Ashram School who teach Sanskrit through Sanskrit medium right from the Kindergarten upto the Higher Course.

Undoubtedly it can be said that the book is a serious attempt, deserving our attention, at a direct novel learning of Sanskrit. This is what the Mother always wished: “Simplified Sanskrit to replace Hindi as the language of India.”

NILIMA DAS

## CROSSWORD

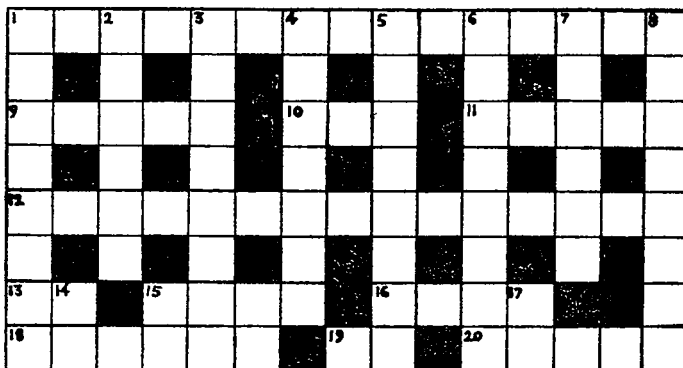
### Clues Across

1. He is the one Existence: he is the original and universal Delight that constitutes all things and exceeds them: he is the one infinite Consciousness that composes all consciousnesses and informs all their movements; he is the one illimitable Being who sustains all action and experience; his will guides the evolution of things towards their yet unrealised but inevitable ... .. (3, 3, 9)
9. This predominance of a greater, diviner leading, not personal to ourselves indicates the nature's increasing ripeness for a . . . . spiritual transformation. It is the unmistakable sign that the self-consecration has not only been accepted in principle but is fulfilled in act and power (5)
10. Not only should we avoid a sectarian religious outlook, but also all one-sided philosophical conceptions which try to shut up the Ineffable in a restricting mental formula. The dynamic conception or impelling sense with which our Yoga can best . . . out would be naturally the idea, the sense of a conscious all-embracing but all-exceeding Infinite (3)
11. Life then we must accept in our Yoga in order utterly to transmute it, we are forbidden to shrink from the difficulties that this acceptance may add to our struggle. Our compensation is that even if the path is more rugged, the effort more complex and bafflingly arduous, yet after a . . . . we gain an immense advantage. For once our minds are reasonably fixed in the central vision and our wills are on the whole converted to the single pursuit, Life becomes our helper. (5)
12. As the supreme Shastra of . . . . . is the eternal Veda secret in the heart of every man, so its supreme Guide and Teacher is the inner Guide, the World-Teacher, *jagad-guru*, secret within us. It is he who destroys our darkness by the resplendent light of his knowledge; that light becomes within us the increasing glory of his own self-revelation. He discloses progressively in us his own nature of freedom, bliss, love, power, immortal being. (3, 8, 4)
13. In the first movement of self-preparation, the period of personal effort, the method we have to use is this concentration of the whole being on the Divine that it seeks and, as its corollary, this constant rejection, throwing out, *katharsis*, of all that is not the true Truth of the Divine. An entire consecration of all that we are, think, feel and . . . will be the result of this persistence (2)
15. Into all our endeavour upward the lower element of desire will at first naturally enter. For what the enlightened will . . . . as the thing to be done and pursues as the crown to be conquered, what the heart embraces as the one thing delightful, that in us which feels itself limited and opposed and, because it is limited, craves and struggles, will seek with the troubled passion of an egoistic desire. (4)
16. The mental energies, the heart's emotions, the vital desires, the very physical being have to be compelled into the right attitude or trained to admit and answer to the right influences. It is only . . . ., only when this has been truly done, that the surrender of the lower to the higher can be effected, because the sacrifice has become acceptable. (4)
18. Man in his . . . . . at self-transcendence has usually to seize on some one spring or some powerful leverage in the complicated machine that his nature is, this spring or lever he touches in preference to others and uses it to set the machine in motion towards the end that he has in view. In his choice it is always Nature itself that should be his guide. (6)
19. Prep. (2)
20. Nor is the seeker of the integral fulfilment permitted to . . . . too arbitrarily even the conflict of his own inner members. He has to harmonise deliberate knowledge with unquestioning faith; he must conciliate the gentle soul of love with the formidable need of power; the passivity of the soul that lives content in transcendent calm has to be fused with the activity of the divine helper and the divine warrior. (5)

### Clues Down

1. The ideal . . . . . of the sadhaka towards Time is to have an endless patience as if he had all eternity for his fulfilment and yet to develop the energy that shall realise now and with an ever-increasing mastery and pressure of rapidity till it reaches the miraculous instantaneousness of the supreme divine Transformation. (8)

2. The animal is a vital and sensational being, man, it is said, is distinguished from the animal by the possession of reason. But that is a very summary, a very imperfect and misleading account of the . . . . . For reason is only a particular and limited utilitarian and instrumental activity that proceeds from something much greater than itself, from a power that dwells in an ether more luminous, wider, illimitable. (6)
3. Man can bring an enlightened will, an enlightened thought and enlightened emotions to the difficult work of his self-development, he can more and more subject to these more conscious and reflecting guides the inferior function of desire. In proportion as he can thus master and enlighten his lower self, he is man and . . . . . an animal. (2, 6)
4. It is not enough to devote ourselves by the reading of Scriptures or by the stress of philosophical reasoning to an intellectual understanding of the Divine, for at the end of our long mental labour we might know all that has been said of the Eternal, . . . . . all that can be thought about the Infinite and yet we might not know him at all (7)
5. But even though the concentration of all the being on the Divine is the character of the Yoga, yet is our being too complex a thing to be taken up easily and at once, as if we were taking up the world in a pair of hands, and set in its . . . . . to a single task. (8)
6. Man demands miracles that he may have faith, he wishes to be dazzled in order that he may see. And this impatience, this ignorance may turn into a great danger and disaster if, in our revolt against the divine leading, we call in another distorting Force more satisfying to our . . . . . and desires and ask it to guide us and give it the Divine Name (8)
7. All that the Light from above asks of us that it may begin its work is a call from the soul and a sufficient point of support in the mind. This support can be reached through an insistent idea of the Divine in the thought, a corresponding will in the dynamic parts, an aspiration, a faith, a need in the heart. Any one of these may lead or predominate, if all cannot move in . . . . . or in an equal rhythm (6)
8. As we gain in clarity and the turmoil of egoistic effort gives place to a calmer self-knowledge, we recognise the source of the growing light within us. We recognise it retrospectively as we realise how all our obscure and conflicting movements have been determined towards an end that we only now begin to perceive, how even before our . . . . . into the path of the Yoga the evolution of our life has been designedly led towards its turning point (8)
14. Prep. (2)
15. Adj. (2)
17. All Yoga is in its nature a new birth, it is a birth out of the ordinary, the mentalised material life of man into a higher spiritual consciousness and a greater and diviner being. . . . . Yoga can be successfully undertaken and followed unless there is a strong awakening to the necessity of that larger spiritual existence (2)



SOLUTION: Refer *The Synthesis of Yoga*—Part I—Chapters 1 & 2