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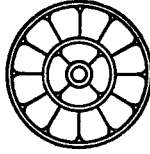
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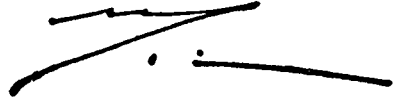


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXVI

No. 3

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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SRI AUROBINDO : ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH

Sri Aurobindo : Archives and Research was started in 1977 to provide half-yearly supplements to the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. All new material found among Sri Aurobindo's papers is published in this journal for the first time. Students of Sri Aurobindo who wish to have his complete writings must possess the full file of *Archives and Research*. The first number of the eighth volume (1984) is in preparation. Back numbers are also available.

In addition to unpublished writings of Sri Aurobindo, *Archives and Research* contains newly discovered documentary material dealing with his life and works. We intend to widen the scope of the journal and include material gathered from other sources. Because of the evident importance of the journal and our desire to see it reach a large number of readers, we offer it to the public at about half the publication cost.

The annual subscription for *Sri Aurobindo : Archives and Research* remains unchanged from 1977, Rs. 25.00 inland and U.S. \$5.00 overseas by seamaile and U.S. \$10.00 by airmail. Remittances may be sent to "Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Publication Department" or to SABDA, Pondicherry 605002, India.



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NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

WITH the passing away of Nolini Kanta Gupta at 4.42 p.m. on February 7 something precious in our world of time ceased to pass away: a life of profound spiritual moments reached at the age of ninety-five its grand total and, becoming a rounded whole, grew a permanent part of history.

Regarded by all who knew him as the disciple whom Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had considered the closest to themselves in many respects and had appointed their Ashram's Secretary from almost the very beginning, Nolini lived lately with a quiet inwardness making no display of the richness of its contents yet effortlessly pervading the Ashram's atmosphere. After Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had departed, his personality helped much to sustain the manifold activities which the two great Initiators had set in motion to realise more and more their vision of a new creation on earth rather than a gradual preparation for freeing the soul into some beatific Beyond.

Not that this Beyond was ever out of cognisance in the Aurobindonian Yoga that Nolini followed. Indeed the uttermost of it was the goal, what the Master called Supermind, the ultimate Divine Dynamism that not only has manifested the world but also holds the secret of the world's divinisation through an evolutionary process. To attain the Supermind yet not merely to rest in its luminosities was the spiritual path originated by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother: the aim always was to bring that supreme perfection down into the terms of mind, life-force and even body.

Faithful to his Guru's demand, Nolini worked indefatigably towards the spiritual heights and sought to express them here below. It is notable that during the last months of his life he who was never given to much self-disclosure let escape a few words which afforded a sign that he was working from a level which Sri Aurobindo had described as nearer to the Supermind than any other. On one of his daily visits to Nolini's room, Nirodbaran ventured the question among the attendants present there: "Where is Nolini-da's consciousness these days?" Unexpectedly Nolini himself looked up and said: "Why, with the Mother." Nirodbaran pushed the inquiry further: "But where exactly?" Nolini answered: "In the Overmind." Although startling in its precision, this was not quite a surprise in its general drift, for all around him had been feeling that throughout the preceding months some unusual inner power had been accompanying the vicissitudes of his illness: a glow seemed to emanate from his face and there was a calm confidence in his dealings with troubled souls as though he had been graced with a new right of guidance.

Whoever was sensitive to spiritual influence could feel the presence of this power and this grace all about Nolini as his body lay in the immobility of death but diffused a most living and energising peace. A steady pressure from above one's head brought the experience of a creative immensity urging us with its blessing towards a greater life and towards the fulfilment of Sri Aurobindo's dream of the Ashram as a collective passage to a golden future.

Nolini's true being is still with us and secretly continues here to serve the Divine who had a double incarnation amongst us, mastering our unregenerate human nature

and mothering the evolving godhead in each sincere aspirant. Many memories surge up in me as I look back over the years since I first met Nolini in December 1927. His high forehead, his serious eyes which yet knew how to twinkle, his frequently raised eyebrows not indicating any disapproval but silently signalling his attempt to keep his mind uplifted, his full hanging moustache reminiscent of the Nietzsche who had first invoked, however faultily, the unborn Superman—none of these features changed through the decades. Although occasionally brusque in manner and speech, he had often a tender understanding of people, especially young ones. And I remember the Mother saying that she had never heard him speak ill of anybody to her. Another trait I observed was one to which Champaklal once drew attention. The Mother would at times ask Nolini what he had to say on this or that problem which had arisen or to make a pronouncement on some point needing elucidation. He would maintain a grave face as if giving thought to her question, but not a syllable escaped his lips. It was a scene of respectful silence appealing to her to frame the decisive word. Anything he spoke might come in the way of the plenary light she could shed. Anybody else would have been flattered into speech by the Mother's gesture as of consultation. Not so Nolini in the least. The result was the Mother's own deliverance of all-clarifying judgment. When, however, the matter was of a technical literary import, as happened now and then in the Mother's French-translation class, he would respond with alacrity on hearing, after she had stated the uncertainty, the sweet trustful call: "Nolini?" Time and again, the Mother would send us to his room to get advice on a practical point concerning the aptness of one course of action or another in relation to Sri Aurobindo's writings.

There is no doubt that though she was aware of human shortcomings even in the best of us, the Mother, in tune with Sri Aurobindo, had a very high opinion of Nolini as a practitioner of their Yoga as well as in his role of an evolved mental being. Still, this did not imply that she meant him to be her successor in any radical sense. Nobody could be an authentic successor to the Avatars of the hitherto-unrevealed Supermind. As things have stood, none can serve as a third Guru in the domain of so rare a reach of Divine Consciousness. Neither did Nolini ever claim to be such. But nobody deserved as richly as he to be a potent helper on the way, the exemplar of a lofty spiritual detachment which could yet be the door-opener of a treasure-house of inner knowledge and prove a warm-hearted brother at once unobtrusive, sympathetic, elevating. He has also figured admirably as a guardian of the Ashram by his wide reputation for deep mystical experience and a many-sided wisdom, a guardian alive to the need of this seat of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's unique experiment in the reshaping of man to be left free to proceed on its own inspiration with the light caught from the founders of its Yoga of Supramental Descent and Transformation.

Well may we set up for ourselves, as those founders' co-disciples with the illumined soul that has left its body, the ideal of being as Nolini-like as possible.

K. D. SETHNA

NOLINI-DA

FEBRUARY 7, 1984

A CALM infinity covered his face
As if a golden rod had cloven the clouds:
His flame dissolved in the vast of the Mother-Flame.
A brow of Indra glowing with mid-day blaze,
A subtle sense that seized rhythms of the farthest Word,
His life, a Virgilian song to the august sun,
A canticle and a prayer that enriched
The meaning of the birth of the Supreme.
Now as though some inner door opened to Fate
Burns the occult fire withdrawn into trance.
Grief crying in darkness for light lifted its eyes,
But the quivering of a million sounds
Disappears into a luminous sea.
Between the silence and the Unknowable
He rests, a faint glimmering ridge of Thought
Where Eternity stepped towards human Time.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

THE QUARTET OF PEACE

SOME MANTRAS RECEIVED BY SRI AUROBINDO IN ALIPORE JAIL IN 1908-09

Altogether there are seven quartets (sapta-chatushtaya). The first of them Shanti-chatushtaya we are publishing below. Sri Aurobindo wrote down the whole Sanskrit series, along with his elucidating notes, between his release from jail in May 1909 and his departure from Chandernagore on 31 May 1910.

SHANTI-CHATUSHTAYA

समता शान्तिः सुखं हास्यमिति शान्तिचतुष्टयम् ।

Samatā śāntiḥ sukham hāsyam iti śāntichatuṣṭayam

Samata

THE basis of internal peace is *samatā*, the capacity of receiving with a calm and equal mind all the attacks and appearances of outward things, whether pleasant or unpleasant, ill-fortune and good-fortune, pleasure and pain, honour and ill-repute, praise and blame, friendship and enmity, sinner and saint, or, physically, heat and cold etc. There are two forms of *samatā*, passive and active, *samatā* in reception of the things of the outward world and *samatā* in reaction to them.

I PASSIVE

Passive *samatā* consists of three things:

तितिक्षोदासीनता नतिरिति समता

Titīkṣā, udāsīnatā, natiḥ iti samatā.

Titīkṣā

Titīkṣā is the bearing firmly of all contacts pleasant or unpleasant, not being over-powered by that which is painful, not being carried away by that which is pleasant. Calmly and firmly to receive both and hold and bear them as one who is stronger, greater, vaster than any attack of the world, is the attitude of *titīkṣā*.

Udāsīnatā

Udāsīnatā is indifference to the *dvandvas* or dualities; it means literally being seated above, superior to all physical and mental touches. The *udāsīna*, free from desire, either does not feel the touch of joy and grief, pleasure and pain, liking and disliking, or he feels them as touching his mind and body, but not himself, he being different from mind and body and seated above them.

Nati

Nati is the submission of the soul to the will of God; its acceptance of all touches as His touches, of all experience as His play with the soul of man. *Nati* may be with *titikṣā*, feeling the sorrow but accepting it as God's will, or with *udāsīnatā*, rising superior to it and regarding joy and sorrow equally as God's working in the lower instruments, or with *ānanda*, receiving everything as the play of Krishna, and therefore in itself delightful. The last is the state of the complete Yogin, for by this continual joyous or *ānandamaya namaskāra* to God constantly practised, we arrive eventually at the entire elimination of grief, pain etc., the entire freedom from the *dvandvas*, and find the Brahmananda in every smallest, most trivial, most apparently discordant detail of life and experience in this human body. We get rid entirely of fear and suffering; *ānandam brahmaṇo vidvān na bibhēti kutaśchana*. We may have to begin with *titikṣā* and *udāsīnatā*, but it is in this Ananda that we must consummate the *siddhi* of *samatā*. The Yogin receives victory and defeat, success and ill-success, pleasure and pain, honour and disgrace with an equal, a *sama ānanda*—first by *buddhi-yoga*, separating himself from his habitual mental and nervous reactions and insisting by *vichāra* on the true nature of the experience itself and of his own soul, which is secretly *ānandamaya*,—full of *sama ānanda* in all things. He comes to change all the ordinary values of experience; *amaṅgala* reveals itself to him as *maṅgala*, defeat and ill-success as the fulfilment of God's immediate purpose and a step towards ultimate victory, grief and pain as concealed and perverse forms of pleasure. A stage arrives even, when physical pain itself, the hardest thing for material man to bear, changes its nature in experience and becomes physical Ananda; but this is only at the end, when this human being, imprisoned in matter, subjected to mind, emerges from his subjection, conquers his mind and delivers himself utterly in his body, realising his true *ānandamaya* self in every part of the *ādhāra*.

II ACTIVE

It is this universal or *sama ānanda* in all experiences which constitutes active *samatā*, and it has three parts or stages,—

रसः प्रीतिरानन्द इति सर्वानन्दः

Rasaḥ, pritiḥ, ānandaḥ...

Rasa is the appreciative perception of that Guna, that *āsvāda*, taste and quality, which the Ishwara of the Lila perceives in each different object of experience (*viśaya*) and for the enjoyment of which He creates it in the Lila. *Pritiḥ* is the pleasure of the mind in all *Rasa*, pleasant or unpleasant, sweet or bitter. *Ananda* is the divine *bhoga* superior to all mental pleasure, with which God enjoys the *rasa*; in *Ananda* the opposition of the dualities entirely ceases.

Shanti

Only when *samatā* is accomplished, can *śānti* be perfect in the system. If there is the least disturbance or trouble in the mentality, we may be perfectly sure that there is a disturbance, or defect in the *samatā*. For the mind of man is complex and even when in the *buddhi* we have fixed ourselves entirely in *udāsīnatā* or *nati*, there may be revolts, uneasinesses, repinings in other parts. The *buddhi*, the *manas*, the heart, the nerves (*prāṇa*), the very bodily case must be subjected to the law of *samatā*.

Śānti may be either a vast passive calm based on *udāsīnatā* or a vast joyous calm based on *nati*. The former is apt to associate itself with a tendency to inaction and it is therefore in the latter that our Yoga must culminate.

Sukha

Sukham is the complete relief and release from *duḥkha*, from *viśāda*, which comes by the fulfilment of *samatā* and *śānti*. The perfected Yogin has never in himself any touch of sorrow, any tendency of depression, cloud or internal repining and weariness, but is always full of a sattvic light and ease.

Hasya

Hāsyam is the active side of *sukham*; it consists in an active internal state of gladness and cheerfulness which no adverse experience mental or physical can trouble. Its perfection is God's stamp and seal on the Siddhi of the *samatā*. It is in our internal being the image of Sri Krishna playing, *bālavat*, as the eternal *bālaka* and *kumāra* in the garden of the world.

REAL VICTORY—THE CHANGE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

FROM A TALK BY THE MOTHER

“We have only accomplished weakness and effort and a defeated victory”.¹

UNTIL now all the victories which have been won have reactions that are finally defeats. There is never anything definite and complete. Every time one has the feeling of having gained a victory, one finds out that this victory was incomplete, partial, fugitive. This is a fact one can always observe if one looks carefully at oneself. Not that things are necessarily what they were before, no, something has changed, but everything has not changed and not changed completely.

This is very apparent, very noticeable in physical conquests over the body. Through a very assiduous labour one succeeds in overcoming a weakness, limitation, a bad habit, and one believes this is a definite victory; but after some time or at times immediately one realises that nothing is completely done, nothing is definite, that what one thought to have accomplished has to be done again. For only a total change of consciousness can make the victory complete.

In the old Chaldean tradition, very often the young novices were given an image when they were invested with the white robe; they were told: “Do not try to remove the stains one by one, the whole robe must be purified.” Do not try to correct your faults one by one, to overcome your weaknesses one by one, it does not take you very far. The entire consciousness must be changed, a reversal of consciousness must be achieved, a springing up out of the state in which one is towards a higher state from which one dominates all the weaknesses one wants to heal, and from which one has a full vision of the work to be accomplished.

I believe Sri Aurobindo has said this: things are such that it may be said that nothing is done until everything is done. One step ahead is not enough, a total conversion is necessary.

How many times have I heard people who were making an effort say, “I try, but what’s the use of my trying? Every time I think I have gained something, I find that I must begin all over again.” This happens because they are trying to go forward while standing still, they are trying to progress without changing their consciousness. It is the entire point of view which must be shifted, the whole consciousness must get out of the rut in which it lies so as to rise up and see things from above. It is only thus that victories will not be changed into defeats.

Anything else? No, nothing more?

Mother, how to change one’s consciousness?

¹ *Thoughts and Glimpes*, Cent Vol. 16, p. 79.

Naturally, there are many ways, but each person must do it by the means accessible to him; and the indication of the way usually comes spontaneously, through something like an unexpected experience. And for each one, it appears a little differently.

For instance, one may have the perception of the ordinary consciousness which is extended on the surface of things and has a contact with the superficial outer side of the things, people, circumstances; and then, suddenly, for some reason or other—as I say for each one it is different—there is a shifting upwards, and instead of seeing things horizontally, of being at the same level as they are; you suddenly dominate them and see them from above, in their totality, instead of seeing a small number of things immediately next to yourself; it is as though something were drawing you above and making you see as from a mountain-top or an aeroplane. And instead of seeing each detail and seeing it on its own level, you see the whole as one unity, and from far above.

There are many ways of having this experience, but it usually comes to you as if by chance, one fine day.

Or else, one may have an experience which is almost its very opposite but which comes to the same thing. Suddenly one plunges into a depth, one moves away from the thing one perceived, it seems distant, superficial, unimportant; one enters an inner silence or an inner calm or an inward vision of things, a profound feeling, a more intimate perception of circumstances and things, in which all values change. And one becomes aware of a sort of unity, a deep identity which is one in spite of the diverse appearances.

Or else, suddenly also, the sense of limitation disappears and one enters the perception of a kind of indefinite duration beginningless and endless, of something which has always been and always will be.

These experiences come to you suddenly in a flash, for a second, a moment in your life, you don't know why or how.... There are other ways, other experiences—they are innumerable, they vary according to people; but with this, with one minute, one second of such an existence, one catches the tail of the thing. So one must remember that, try to relive it, go to the depths of the experience, recall it, aspire, concentrate. This is the starting-point, the end of the guiding thread, the clue. For all those who are destined to find their inner being, the truth of their being, there is always at least one moment in life when they were no longer the same, perhaps just like a lightning-flash—but that is enough. It indicates the road one should take, it is the door that opens on this path. And so you must pass through the door, and with perseverance and an unflinching steadfastness seek to renew the state which will lead you to something more real and more total.

Many ways have always been given, but a way you have been taught, a way you have read about in books or heard from a teacher, does not have the effective value of a spontaneous experience which has come without any apparent reason, and which is simply the blossoming of the soul's awakening, one second of contact with your psychic being which shows you the best way for you, the one most within your reach,

which you will then have to follow with perseverance to reach the goal—one second which shows you how to start, the beginning... Some have this in dreams at night; some have it at any odd time: something one sees which awakens in one this new consciousness, something one hears, a beautiful landscape, beautiful music, or else simply a few words one reads, or else the intensity of concentration in some effort—anything at all, there are a thousand reasons and thousands of ways of having it. But, I repeat, all those who are destined to realise have had this at least once in their life. It may be very fleeting, it may come when they were very young, but always at least once in one's life one has the experience of what true consciousness is. Well, that is the best indication of the path to be followed.

One may seek within oneself, one may remember, may observe; one must notice what is going on, one must pay attention, that's all. Sometimes, when one sees a generous act, hears of something exceptional, when one witnesses heroism or generosity or greatness of soul, meets someone who shows a special talent or acts in an exceptional and beautiful way, there is a kind of enthusiasm or admiration or gratitude which suddenly awakens in the being and opens the door to a state, a new state of consciousness, a light, a warmth, a joy one did not know before. That too is a way of catching the guiding thread. There are a thousand ways, one has only to be awake and to watch.

First of all, you must feel the necessity for this change of consciousness, accept the idea that it is this, the path which must lead to the goal; and once you admit the principle, you must be watchful. And you will find, you do find it. And once you have found it, you must start walking without any hesitation.

Indeed, the starting-point is to observe oneself, not to live in a perpetual non-chalance, a perpetual apathy; one must be attentive.

December 26, 1956

(Questions and Answers, 1956, pp. 401-5)

AT THE FEET OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

RECOLLECTIONS BY SAHANA

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1984)

Sri Aurobindo's Letters

WHAT has to be done is not to struggle with this state, but get a conscious control. That is to say, if it comes at a time when other things have to be done, then instead of fighting it (which gave you the headache) you must concentrate quietly within for a short time, but concentrate with the will to come out of it in a short time. If the thing comes at a time when you can sit for long and are not likely to be disturbed, then you need not resist it even in that way, but still in going in aspire to be conscious and master of the trance movement so that you can go in at will and come out at will. It is probably a rush of the consciousness to go inside deep into the inner being or to go up above the mind; but the more consciously this is done the better.

21.5.1937

Your suggestion that I am telling you things that are untrue in order to encourage you is the usual stupidity of the physical mind—if it were so, it is not you who would be unfit for the Yoga, but myself who would be unfit to be in the search for the Divine Truth anybody's guide. For one can lead through lesser to greater Truth, but not through falsehood to Truth. As for your fitness or unfitness for the Yoga, it is not a question on which your physical mind can be an unerring judge—it judges by the immediate appearance of things and has no knowledge of the laws that govern consciousness or the powers that act in Yoga. In fact the question is not of fitness or unfitness but of the acceptance of Grace. There is no human being whose physical outer consciousness—the part of yourself in which you are now living—is fit for the Yoga. It is by grace and enlightenment from above that it can become capable and for that the necessity is to be persevering and open it to the Light. Everybody when he enters the physical consciousness has the same difficulty and feels as if he were unfit, obscure and nothing done, nothing changed in him since he began the Yoga; he is apt to forget then all that has happened before or to feel as if he had lost it or as if it had all been unreal or untrue.

I suppose that is why you object to my phrase about your having gone so far. I meant that you had had openings in your thinking mind, heart and higher vital and experiences also and had seen very lucidly the condition of your own being and nature and had by that got so far that these parts were ready for the spiritual change—what remains is the physical and outer consciousness which has to be compelled to accept the necessity of change. That is no doubt the most difficult part of the work

to be done, but it is also the part which, if once done, makes possible the total change of the being and nature. I therefore said that having gone so far it would be absurd to turn back now and give up because this resists—it always resists in everybody and very obstinately too. That is no reason for giving up the endeavour.

It is this consciousness that has expressed itself in your letter—or the obscure part of it which clings to its old attitude. It does not want to fulfil the sadhana unless it can get by it the things it wanted. It wants the satisfaction of the ego, self-fulfilment, appreciation, the granting of its desires. It measures the Divine Love by the outward favours showered upon it and looks jealously to see who gets more of these favours than itself, then says that the Divine has no love for it and assigns reasons which are either derogatory to the Divine or, as in your letter, self-depreciatory and a cause for despair. It is not in you alone that this part feels and acts like that, it is in almost everybody. If that were the only thing in you or the others, then indeed there would be no possibility of Yoga. But though it is strong, it is not the whole—there is a psychic being and a mind and heart influenced and enlightened by it which has other feelings and another vision of things and aim in sadhana. These are now covered in you by the upsurge of this part which has to change. It is tamasic and does not want to change, does not want to believe unless it can be done by reassuring the vital ego. But there is nothing new in all that—it is part of human nature and has always been there, hampering and limiting the sadhana. Its existence is no reason for despair—everyone has it and the sadhana has to be done in spite of it, in spite of the mixture it brings till the time comes when it has to be definitely converted or rejected. It is difficult to do it, but perfectly possible. These things I know and realise and it is therefore that I insist on your persevering and encourage you to go on; it is not my statement of the position that is untrue, it is the view of it taken by this obscure part of your being that is unsound and an error.

29.7.1937

I never heard of anyone getting genius by effort. One can increase one's talent by training and labour, but genius is a gift of Nature. By sadhana it is different, one can do it; but that is not the fruit of effort, but either of an inflow or by an opening or liberation of some imprisoned power or manifestation of unmanifested power. No rule can be made in such things; it depends on persons and circumstances how far the manifestation of genius by Yoga will go or what shape it will take or to what degree or height it will rise.

28.7.1938

The Mother certainly would not give you money for going away, for she could not approve of or sanction such a step which has no real ground and for which the only reasons you allege are a quite unreasonable despondency and a pique (abhimān) which is also without true cause. The Mother has not in the least changed towards you—she has neither withdrawn her affection nor felt nor expressed any disappointment about your sadhana; her support has not been withdrawn either from your singing. The only thing we can make out in this connection is that the impression was

created in your vital by her having discouraged a movement of ego in you, pressed on the removal of some defects which you yourself had admitted and wished to overcome, put aside some suggestions with regard to one occasion for your music which did not seem to her suitable. But these things she has done before and you used to be very pleased at her pointing out or letting you understand where you had to change. You yourself wanted to get rid of ego and change the resistant part and also had taken steps towards it; it would not have been helpful for your purpose that the Mother should support or indulge any movements coming from there. I can only gather from your recent letters that the resisting part has revolted against the pressure you yourself had put on it and thrown up the impression that it would not change, that the demand on it was more than it could face and it would rather go and that in your depression you have identified yourself with its feeling and misinterpreted the Mother's motives and her attitude—a thing that in your clearer consciousness you would either not have done or else soon corrected the mistake. I hope that this clearer part of you which is the larger part will quickly reassert itself and give you back your former right vision and attitude. I shall do and do always what I can to help towards that and towards the psychic victory in you and your spiritual progress. Your departure and renunciation of sadhana is a thing which nothing in us accepts for a moment.

I do not see why you make such a big difference between the quarrels and jealousy over other women and quarrels and jealousy over other attractions not of a sexual character. They both spring from the same primary impulse, the possessive instinct which is at the base of ordinary vital love. In the latter case, as often sexual jealousy is not possible, the mind supports itself on other motives which seem to it quite reasonable and justifiable—it may not be conscious that it is being pushed by the vital, but the quarrel and the vivacity of the disagreement are there all the same. Whether you had or had not both forms of it, is not very material and does not make things better or worse. It is the getting rid of the instinct itself that matters, whether from the psychological point of view or from that of a spiritual change.

The one thing that is of any importance is the fact that the old personality which you were throwing out has reasserted itself for the moment, as you yourself see. It has confused your mind, otherwise you would not ask the question whether it is there still and how that agrees with my description of your aspiration and glimpse of turning entirely to the Mother as true and real. Of course, they were true and real and sincere and they are still there even if for a moment clouded over. You know well enough by this time that the whole being is not one block so that if one part changes all changes miraculously at the same time. Something of the old things may be there submerged and rise up again if the pressure and fixed resolution to get rid of them slackens. I do not know to what you refer when you speak of the statement that—“Light and Darkness, Truth and falsehood cannot dwell together,”—but certainly it can only mean that in the spiritual endeavour one cannot allow them to dwell to-

gether,—the Light, the Truth must be kept, the Darkness, the Falsehood or error pushed out altogether. It certainly did not mean that in a human being there can be either only all light or only all darkness and whoever has any weakness in him has no light and no sincere aspiration and no truth in his nature. If that were so, Yoga would be impossible. All the sadhaks in this Ashram would be convicted of insincerity and of having no true sadhana—for who is there in whom there is no obscurity and no movement of ignorance?

If you have fallen down from the consciousness you had, it is because instead of dismissing the dispute with K as a moment's movement, you begin to brood on it and prolong the wrong turn it gave. It is no use persisting in the feelings that it creates in you. You have only to do what I have been trying to tell you: Draw back from them and, having seen what is lingering in the nature, dismiss them quietly and turn back again to the true consciousness opening yourself to receive once more the Truth that is creating you anew and let it come down into all your nature.

(To be continued)

IN view of the importance of February 29 no less than February 21 of this year—February 29 which is the 7th anniversary of the Supramental Manifestation upon Earth—the prices of the following publications of Huta have been reduced.

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THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1984)

The Mother's Message

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



(32)

THE Mother sent me a pink vase with green leaves to paint. In order to keep the leaves immobile, I put a small tin inside the vase to hold them together and finish the painting.

While sending the vase back to the Mother I wanted to take out the small tin.

But it refused to budge! I tried again and again to pull it out till my hand ached. I got annoyed with myself and thought I was a real fool to take up painting.

Instead of sending the vase to the Mother, I went to her in the morning and gave it to her. Then hesitatingly I said: "Mother, please look inside the vase. I wished to keep the leaves steady, so I inserted this tin and now it doesn't come out. I am truly sorry."

She was a good deal amused, but although the ready laughter sprang to her eyes she said with perfect gravity:

"Don't worry, my child, I will get the tin removed."

Then I showed her my painting, which she said was very good.

In the evening once again I met her at the Playground in her room. I told her that I was not happy with my present state of mind. I felt uneasy and a kind of fear gripped me.

She looked at me. Her eyes were enormous shimmering lakes of sympathy and love. She said after closing them for a moment or two:

"You must always create your own environments. No matter what difficulties come from your creations, you should remain detached. You can withdraw yourself and look within and try to remain quiet as much as you can.

"You see, the world will continue to go on as it has been going on for ages. You cannot change the world—before changing the world you must perfect yourself, and then expect the world to be transformed."

How true and practical! I came across a relevant message given by the Mother in *Bulletin*, February 1953 p. 45:

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

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

"A change in human consciousness will make possible the manifestation upon earth of a higher Force, a purer Light, a more total Truth..."

"Nothing but a radical change of consciousness can save humanity from the terrible plight into which it is plunged."

Here I should like to quote Sri Aurobindo:

“No material organisation, whatever its degree of preparation, is capable of bringing a solution to the miseries of man. Man must rise to a higher level of consciousness and get rid of his ignorance, limitation and selfishness in order to get rid also of his sufferings.”

*

Throughout the month of March the Mother sent me a series of most wonderful cards—some with various beautifully coloured flowers, especially lovely roses, others with landscapes. Also there were cards showing animals, birds, fishes as well as bunches of carnations, wild Alpine flowers, painted roses in flaming hues, tulips, irises and a profusion of different enchanting flowers and sceneries. In each card the Mother reassured me of her love, sweetness, blessings and the constant Presence of the Divine's Grace.

On 27th March I received from the Mother a card presenting an ethereal scene of the Golden Temple of Kyoto in Japan, which was surrounded by pine trees covered with snow. The blue lake in front of it like a mirror gave an impression of beauty, harmony and peace. She wrote on the card:

“To my dear little child Huta
With all the sweetness of my love.”

In the book, *Gardening the Japanese Way* (p. 37) Sima Eliovson writes:

“Garden of Kinkaku-ji, the Golden Pavilion, also called Rokuon-ji (Deer Park), was originally built for the shogun Yoshimitsu (1367-95-A.D.) after his retirement. The garden comprises about 4¹/₂ acres, including a pond of 1³/₄ acres, with islands representing the tortoise and crane, symbols of long life. The Pavilion, converted to a Buddhist temple after Yoshimitsu's death, was destroyed by fire in 1950. It was rebuilt according to the original plans in 1955....

“The gilding is a new innovation and condemned by discerning Japanese. The pointed eaves of the roofs of this three-tiered building form an exciting pattern against the sky, which is reflected in the water of the large lake surrounding it. The pond was once filled with lotus leaves and designed to create an image of paradise (the Seven-treasure pond of the Buddhist paradise), but its present untrammelled surface forms a perfect mirror for the Pavilion. This lake is broken by an island embedded with stones and planted with tall pines, while smaller islands emerge here and there. Some are tortoise-shaped. This garden illustrates the love of islands and lakes in both Japanese and Chinese gardens of old. The clay soil of this area is ideal for formation of a large lake, for it holds the water well.

“One may stroll around the lake which is surrounded by trees, chiefly Red and Black Pines, but also the evergreen *Podocarpus Macrophylla* and *Lithocarpus (Pasama Edulis)*. *Cryptomeria Japonica* and *Chmaecyparis Obtusa* are plenti-

ful in the garden, with their crisp cypress-like foliage in contrast to the other trees. There are palms with tall stems and fans of leaves (*Trachycarpus*) and numerous shrubs like *Camellias*, *Gardenia Jasminoides* and *Pieris*. The deciduous *Oak*, *Quercus Glauca*, is trimmed into a low bush so as to display its tender bronze spring foliage. In a large public place such as the Golden Pavilion grounds, papers flutter from the 'fortune' trees and hedges at the entrance, representing a donation to the temple and the fond hope that one's fortune will improve....

"Tortoise island is in one of the ponds of Sento Gosho, the imperial garden of Omiya Gosho, the palace of abdicated emperors. The garden was laid out by Kobori Enshuyu in 1634. It contains two Chasaki (tea-houses) with a small garden attached to each. About 18 acres in area including ponds of 2¹/₄ acres.

"The stroll Garden, with lake and island is one of the favourite types of garden in Japan, and has been popular since 612 A.D., when a lake and island were made in the garden of the Empress Suiko at Nara."

"This beautiful example illustrates how the tranquil stretch of water mirrors the pine trees on the island, as well as the graceful Pavilion....

I recall what the Mother told me on 1st September 1965 when the Matrimandir in Auroville was under discussion. I showed her some Japanese books. She liked them a great deal. And, pointing to the picture of the Golden Pavilion at Kyoto, she said:

"This is exactly what we shall have except for the shape of the roof—it must be a terrace and a dome, but the surroundings will be the same—lake, flowers, trees, rockeries, small waterfalls and so on.

Ah! you know, I saw this golden temple at Kyoto when I was in Japan. It is beautiful. The Mother's Shrine will be like that.

Gardening is a wonderful thing—specially in Japan."

How much Matrimandir meant to the Mother! If only people could realise this....

*

It was now April 1st 1957. As always the Mother sent me a card along with a bouquet of white roses. Her unfailing love touched the very core of my soul.

In the afternoon she went to the Prosperity Room to distribute flowers to people with her blessings. She invariably looked gorgeous in her new dresses. On the 1st of each month she wore a new dress made in the Embroidery Department by sadhikas. Besides, sadhikas stitched dresses for the Mother on several occasions like Darshan days, their own birthdays and so on. I remembered to have made many dresses for her. Even some men—Chandubhai Patel and Neel Solena—stitched

and embroidered gowns for the Mother. She was delighted to see them. Her sandals were also made by sadhikas. The Mother appreciated their skill and wore the beautiful things with great satisfaction.

Dresses and saris of the Mother remind me of an article written by Amal Kiran—K. D. Sethna, Editor of *Mother India*—in the issue of October 1976, p. 870, in answer to a very offensive article, “Sri Aurobindo: Superman or Supertalk”, by Mr. Claude Alvares in the Bombay bi-monthly *Quest* 93 (January-February 1975, pp. 9-23):

“Another vulgar stroke is his joining hands with Morarji Desai in saying disparagingly that she ‘dressed in costly saris and used all the modern accessories of make-up’. Morarji Desai, a prudish puritanical mind with old-world ideas of spirituality, cannot be expected to understand the Mother or Sri Aurobindo. The Mother was modern and had lived once in the finest art-circles of France. Sri Aurobindo was also modern and fully approved what she did. The ‘costly saris’, however, were never the Mother’s own purchases. They were people’s gifts and the givers expected her to show her appreciation by wearing them. Sometimes, in spite of her exquisite taste, she put on somewhat loud clothing just for the sake of pleasing the devoted but indiscriminate donor. She had no attachment to anything. We can appreciate the non-attachment also when we mark that, contrary to Mr. Alvares’s statement, she completely dropped ‘the modern accessories of make-up’ after ‘the time of Sri Aurobindo’: there was no ‘later’ for them such as Mr. Alvares insinuates. He shows himself irresponsible, carried away by what I have called his ‘blind animus’....”

Sri Aurobindo has asserted in *Cent. Ed.*, Vol. 25, pp. 361-2 about the Mother’s dresses:

“Is it your notion that the Divine should be represented on earth by poverty and ugliness?”

“Beauty is as much an expression of the Divine as Knowledge, Power or Ananda. Does anyone ask why does the Mother want to manifest the divine consciousness by knowledge or by power and not by ignorance and weakness? It would not be a more absurd or meaningless question than the one put by the vital against her wearing artistic and beautiful dress....

“Outer things are the expression of something in the inner reality. A fine sari or a palace are expressions of the principle of beauty in things and that is their main value. The Divine Consciousness is not bound by these things and has no attachment, but it is also not bound to abstain from them if beauty in things is part of its intended action. The Mother, when the Ashram was still unformed, was wearing patched cotton saris; when she took up the work, it was necessary to change her habits, so she did so.”

I myself got from Africa a make-up kit and other elegant things for the Mother, which she admired and enjoyed using. Among these she liked Rose lipsticks by Gala. She loved perfumes by Guérlain—her favourite was Worth-Je reviens-Paris.

She also used kohl for several years, which my mother prepared specially for her. She even remarked that it was good for the eyes—cooling and soothing.

It was a great joy to see the Mother well-dressed. She was not keen on ornaments save for the two rings she wore on her left hand.

The Mother's aesthetic sense, her fervent taste for beautiful things, her love for the splendour of Nature, were remarkable. Not only did she see beauty outside but she also fathomed the luminosity of human souls and brought their light to the surface. All these sovereign qualities in the Mother drew me very close to her.

Mr. Alvares wrote so much nonsense about Sri Aurobindo and his philosophy that I wondered how any human being with a little sense could ever write so shamelessly and blatantly.

Mr. K.D. Sethna was right when he pointed out in his article:

“Intellectual acumen is obviously not Mr. Alvares's *forte* in face of a comprehensive and therefore complex spiritual vision. But a true grasp will not make any difference to his verdict on the Aurobindonian philosophy, for it must still bring in terms like ‘Absolute’ and ‘Eternal’, to which he is actually allergic beyond any restraint by reason. Oblivious of Sri Aurobindo's terrestrial aim, he affirms: ‘I prefer to stick to the fundamental insight of Heidegger's being-in-time, and relegate all nontemporal conceptions to the sphere of non-being, non-existence, non-meaning.’

“He falls foul also of certain linguistic turns in Sri Aurobindo in connection with the Eternal's self-deployment as space and time, and he cannot make head or tail of some subtle distinctions Sri Aurobindo makes when discussing the Eternal's diverse possibilities of poise in regard to past, present and future. He talks of Sri Aurobindo's ‘stylistic gaucheries’ and ‘excruciating gibberish’. Obviously, again, he is ill-acquainted with the occasions for an intricate play of thought and word in the difficult universe of metaphysical discourse.

“But what most strikes us in Mr. Alvares is not only a blind animus and chronic incompetence in his chosen field but also a huge muddle-headedness and a pretentious exploitation of ‘little learning’.

“To expose briefly the inadequacy behind his persistent ‘name-dropping’ would be almost enough to disqualify his approach to Sri Aurobindo. For, it is on the basis of this appeal to modern thinkers that he condemns Sri Aurobindo as irrelevant ‘for our times’. However, we shall take him up in essentials on the other count, too—the hostility that sees no good at all in his subject.”

I would like people to read Amal Kiran's article in order to perceive the reality. Sri Aurobindo has written in Cent. Ed., Vol. 26, pp. 143-146:

“I don’t know that I have called myself a Superman. But certainly I have risen above the ordinary human mind, otherwise I would not think of trying to bring down the Supermind into the physical.”

“The descent of the supramental means only that the Power will be there in the earth-consciousness as a living force just as the thinking mental and higher mental are already there. But an animal cannot take advantage of the presence of the thinking mental Power or an undeveloped man of the presence of the higher mental Power—so too anybody will not be able to take advantage of the presence of the supramental Power. I have also often enough said that it will be at first for the few, not for the whole earth,—only there will be a growing influence of it on the earth-life.”

The Mother explained to me about the influence of this Power. It is becoming more and more concrete, intense and true.

I would like to state that Rajneesh and many others have condemned Sri Aurobindo and his Yoga. It shows how little they know about the Supreme and his Truth. With their petty minds they form all sorts of grotesque pictures and draw random conclusions according to their whims and fancies.

Let me quote the Mother:

“Those who want to follow the true path will naturally be exposed to the attacks of all the forces of ill-will which not only do not understand, but generally hate that which they do not understand.”

I cannot restrain myself from quoting two of Sri Aurobindo’s “Thoughts and Aphorisms”:

“I did my Lover’s command in the world and the will of my Captor; but they cried: ‘Who is this corruptor of youth, this destroyer of morals?’”

“If I cared even for your praise, O Ye saints, if I cherished my reputation, O prophets, my Lover would never have taken me into His bosom and given me the freedom of His secret chambers.”

The Mother has written clearly in her *Collected Works* Vol. 13, p. 19:

“Sri Aurobindo is an emanation of the Supreme who came on earth to announce the manifestation of a new race and a new world: the Supramental.

“Let us prepare for it in all sincerity and eagerness.”

Yes, it was Monday—1st April 1957. After the “Prosperity”-distribution the Mother went to play tennis. It was a pleasure to watch her playing.

In the evening she and I had a meditation—a short one because of her French-Translation class.

I informed her that all my paint-brushes were worn out. I had to wait till I received new ones. The Mother said with a smile:

“Oh! But you must do drawings of various subjects. Do your own portrait.”

I answered: “Ah! Mother, how can I do my portrait? It is not possible.”

I thought and laughed to myself that if I would try to do so, it would turn out to be an image of an ape!

The Mother said:

“Tomorrow I will send an ancient jar, put your left hand on it and do the drawing.”

The morning that followed she sent me a jar with a sketch by her—the drawing showed her own hand on the jar.

I did the sketch as per her instructions. While seeing the drawing in the evening the Mother remarked:

“You could have shown more detail of your hand in this drawing.”

Then on the sketch of her own hand she gave more pencil-strokes to give an effect of light and shadow which brought out with precision the contour of the hand.

*

The inner and outer struggle still persisted. When I was engrossed in my work or when I was with the Mother, all seemed fine. Otherwise the same old pattern of life overtook me. So many times I questioned myself: “How is it possible to reach the Divine by just painting and drawing?” I puzzled fruitlessly over the whole problem.

Countless thoughts crowded thick in my brain. I was restless and wished to get out of the Ashram for a while. I expressed my feeling to the Mother. She said:

“Child, make an inner journey—go deep within yourself—this is better than making an outer journey.”

After that she drifted into a trance. She remained in that state for quite a long time leaving me totally perplexed. I knew I could not meditate—I could not go

within myself—how could I make an inner journey?

I wrote a letter to the Mother in this disturbed frame of mind. She wrote back:

“Ugly thoughts bring ugly feelings—ugly feelings take you away from the Divine and throw you defenceless into the arms of the devil who wants only to swallow you up—and that is the source of endless sorrow and suffering.”

I also received from her a flower-card, saying:

“The Divine Grace and love are with you—do not throw them away.”

She was most generous and forgiving—she made me feel so much at home that I could feel free with her.

In the evening she saw me in her room at the Playground. The Mother liked the new paint-brushes which I had received from London.

She took a piece of paper and said with a smile:

“Now you must learn to do the drawing of a corner of a room.”

With only a few strokes she did a sketch of her room. In this very place she prepared me for the big work in painting. As a matter of fact, during that time I was absolutely ignorant of her future plan. I knew only my self-centredness and egoistic pondering over my miserable state.

Despite all my predicaments I continued my work and secretly thought that the spiritual life was certainly not all roses and ribbons by any means.

(To be continued)

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THE INTEGRAL PERFECTION

Perfection is the aim of life, at any rate it is the aim of awakened life. Now what exactly is the content of this perfection? In the progress of humanity perfection has been attempted in two dimensions. One what we would call a mundane perfection which involves a progressive harmonising of the qualities and functions of Nature, improving the qualities of the mind, raising up the level of motives, desires and activities, ensuring the evolution of the society in which the individual plays his due part and the society contributing to the development of the individual concerned and a culturing, an external culturing of education, art, aesthesis and delight,—all going to build up a giant edifice of external civilisation. Age after age things have improved, human effort is put in to make things more elegant, to make the best of the time and the opportunities offered to man to build up something like a perfect external man. This may be called the objective perfection.

Side by side, there is a religious perfection where stress is laid not so much on the external life, external consciousness, external edifices, but on developing the inner faculties, which are not normally operative in day-to-day life, those faculties which are recognised on all hands as desirable, as contributing to harmony, unity, love, benevolence. These qualities are deliberately nurtured, say with the help of ethics, morality, religion, scriptures, in every possible way to build the highest type of man, the saint, the sage, the mystic. As we observe, a saint is one in whom the heart is highly developed and from whom compassion, kindness, love emanate spontaneously. He embraces larger and larger segments of humanity. A sage is one whose mind is specially cultured, subjected to the working of the higher light of knowledge, he is one who has cultivated and naturalised a wider outlook, whose vision includes the whole cosmos and who can see beyond his immediate individual interests and not only see but shape his conduct in terms of his new perspective. He is the seer, one who sees beyond, beyond the normal range to which the pragmatic man is accustomed. There is the mystic who has, as a result of religious practices or other kinds of discipline, you may call it yoga, the facility to enter into a realm of experience which does not lend itself to be scrutinised by intellectual reason but is nevertheless true. And wherever these mystic experiences have occurred, there is a common underlying basis, there are certain features that are common, they can always be corroborated. Even today the mystic experiences of a thousand years ago can always be evoked and verified in one's consciousness, if one adopts the means thereof. These are some of the representative specimens of the religious type of perfection. But by and large they aim at going beyond this world.

The mundane perfectionist has this earth as his field. But those who perfect themselves in the religious way, the spiritual way, have constantly their eye fixed elsewhere, above this earth, but not here. Either of these modes of perfection is limited. One shuts itself to this narrow fragment of the universe called the earth, the

other shifts its gaze from the field in front and looks elsewhere for perfection to be attained and enjoyed. But the integral perfection of which we speak here is of a different type. We start with the principle, with the truth, that all life is a secret yoga. We are not aware of it, but there is continuous purposeful movement in Nature at every level, each thing leading to something.

On the level of mind, there is continuous progression of the faculty of thought, each layer of the mind is built up based upon the previous attempts. The mind of the average man of today is quite different from that of the average man, say two hundred years ago. That is because Nature has traversed great areas in the course of her evolution and developed more and more mental ranges of the earth-consciousness. So too the life-region. So also the body. Everywhere whether it is the body or the life or the mind, the fundamental power is trained not only to organise and perfect itself within that formula, but to exceed it. The body really comes into its own vibrant movement only when the life-consciousness is established in it and fused with the body. Similarly, life-energy becomes more meaningful and chooses the right direction when it is informed by the mental consciousness. At each level Nature pushes, takes ages, but still throughout there is a *nisus*, an impulse, a push given to the evolving consciousness to grow from grade to grade, acquire full control over each grade, to transcend that grade. And the ultimate aim obviously, after having arrived at our stage of mind, is to go beyond mind.

And what is beyond mind? It is generally agreed that it is a form of Spirit. We may call it by different names, but it is a power of the Spirit that is seeking expression in higher and higher forms of the mind and the mind also seeks to develop new forms of its activity by invoking, pulling down new faculties of the Spirit. It seeks to grow into the Truth, into the Spirit. And there is a continuous coercion if man is not voluntarily co-operative. There is a coercion of the lower members to lay themselves open and grow into the higher term.

With the arrival of man this movement takes on a new character. Man becomes conscious and takes up the direction of the effort. He wants to telescope the process, to expedite the result. He is impatient and puts in an effort and that effort is twofold. One is the personal endeavour to rise. Sri Aurobindo speaks of the triple labour of aspiration for what one wants, rejection of what is contra, of what is hostile to what one seeks, and surrender. Surrender is the laying open of more and more of the being to the Truth which one wishes to embody, to the Truth that is invoked. But with all that one does there is a limit to personal effort. The most that we have succeeded in reaching so far is a kind of spiritualisation of mind. The mind has agreed to give up its confinement to the intellectual or logical confines. It has put on the character of the higher mind, of the quality of the Spirit which is free. It has accepted the leadership in many cases of the spiritual being. But there it stops.

The next step after one arrives at this limit is to invoke, summon an aid, a help from higher Powers beyond the spiritual range. And these Powers above the mind,

above the spiritual mind come from sources which are much higher, from the sources in the Divine. In a word, our human nature has not only got to be perfect within the human limits, but it has to be liberated into the dimension of a Divine Nature.

M. P. PANDIT

(With acknowledgements to *The Advent*, November 1982, pp. 29-31 from which the article is excerpted with a slight adaptation at the start.)

THE SON OF EARTH

THE Son of earth has circled
 The fantastic moon.
 He has landed on its mystery
 And brought to waiting earth a marvel-boon
 Of unseen unexpected stone,
 Thanks to the high spirit of quenchless curiosity
 From our new science-cultured Eden.
 But the tree is here
 With the same old root,
 Flourishing as ever
 With the forbidden fruit.
 Should some serpent slyly whisper
 The word, dreadful, fatal
 Into the electronic ear of our Eve
 And her cry go out for the Atomic apple
 Like a voice of fate from the hungry Void,
 Then what would happen, O Lord Sigmund Freud!

A. VENKATARANGA

WORLD CHAMPIONS '82

This little piece, although linked in time to 1982, has a wider bearing and therefore is not irrelevant even two years later.

RECENTLY a four-man team of the Indian Army completed the most extraordinary tour of the Himalayas ever undertaken. Starting from the East they traversed the whole range of the mountain chain to the West. All in all, they spent 15 months in this terrain, almost four times more than any other group before.

On their way they encountered numerous and deadly obstacles. While passing through a tropical rain forest at the beginning of their journey, they faced dangerous snakes and were constantly harassed by leeches that sucked their blood. More than a dozen of them kept clinging to one man's body at a time. Nevertheless, they did not give up and continued their expedition, often through entirely unexplored regions and paths which no human being had ever trod. Once an avalanche almost killed all of them. One of the four was already buried under the snow with only his arm visible. Another member risked his life and pulled him out. A dozen times they narrowly escaped death. But they kept marching on and finally reached their goal, after having climbed one or two of the highest mountains in the world, and all that without caravans, porters and sophisticated supply and support systems. It was a unique feat of courage, endurance and skill.

If we read about the many trials they passed through we feel somewhat reminded of the path of Yoga, and Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga in particular. Indeed, there are unbeaten tracks here through which one has to pave one's way. Every seeker has the experience of those 'poisonous snakes' which strike immediately if one is not on one's guard, and the same is true for the 'leeches' that virtually suck our blood if we give them the slightest opening. All this has a highly symbolical value. And the seeker has to march on and on and on. If an avalanche of desires sometimes threatens to kill his soul, he is lucky if he has a good friend by his side to pull him out. Yes, sometimes we need such help very urgently. On the other hand, there are also those bright moments when we stand on the peak of a mountain, basking in the sun, enjoying the infinite blue sky and endless expanses of white snow. But then again we descend into the valley to face storms, avalanches and glaciers of our own making: nothing is so slippery as a vicious desire.

To come back from the symbolic to the real. We may ask ourselves whether these four heroes of the Indian army are not truly yogis. Their will for conquest—physical and psychological—their endurance, their skill as well as team-spirit would make them foremost candidates. And yet something may be missing. What is this missing element? I do not feel competent to answer this question but would like to make a reference to the following incident. Once a group of top Russian gymnasts gave a guest performance at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. The Mother who laid a great stress on physical perfection watched the athletes with great at-

tion and was enthusiastic about their performance, their sheer incredible mastery over the movements of the body. Then she made a remark to the effect that these gymnasts could still go further and come close to the miraculous if they would follow a conscious yogic discipline. Here, too, I cannot claim to fully comprehend what the Mother means. But probably it does not refer to a strict outer regimen which they had already worked out for themselves. Something else is there which would make all this a yoga: I believe that this cannot be explained intellectually, it has to be felt by the body itself as a physical experience. Most of us get such experiences, even though only for short durations. Then the ordinary mind comes back and makes everything appear ordinary, even the panorama of the Himalayas.

As for our four heroes, may we suppose that their expedition was more than a truly sensational trekking event? Perhaps unseen Gods or Yogis have secretly guided them through the forbidden terrain, perhaps an indelible impression of the Divine has been fixed in their minds and hearts. But in any case, we can safely declare them the athletes of the year. India which is otherwise slow in fetching gold medals deserves the crown here where it is very much its highest self: in the Himalayas, the sacred mountain.

WILFRIED

O BEAUTY

(Inspired by a portrayal on film of Vasanti Devi, the wife of C. R. Das)

O BEAUTY lingering in the star-fields of sound
 Thy vast of serenity clear and unbound
 Like a tremolo of well-awakened Fire
 That knows its soul and all things here
 Like a heaven-raptured spire.

Be more thy form of quintessential Grace
 That moves in pathways of love-laden Space
 Where all thy devotion has room enough to be
 A Power of Godhead, unveiling Mystery,
 The hope for earth's New Family.

27.8.83

V. P.

NEW LIGHT ON ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

TWO ARTICLES OF K. D. SETHNA FROM THE *TIMES OF INDIA*

With acknowledgments to the Sunday Editions of this eminent Bombay newspaper we are reproducing these contributions which appeared in the issues respectively of October 11, 1981 and September 14, 1983.

I

Sri Aurobindo and the Rigveda

I CANNOT help being highly gratified to find our most distinguished archaeologist, Dr. H. D. Sankalia, reviewing at good length my book, *The Problem of Aryan Origins*, in the *Sunday Review* (September 13). He has picked out some significant points for comment—and what he has to say is always informative. I should like to stress one of them which is vital to my thesis.

He says that “much harm has been done by the view based on insufficient or no evidence that the Aryans came from outside, or that the Dravidians were once the original inhabitants of India”. A clear statement like that, coming from so knowledgeable a researcher and field-worker, is naturally encouraging to me whose contentions he summarizes as “(i) The Rigveda is pre-Harappan, and (ii) the Harappan civilisation contains several elements derivable from the Rigveda.” If indeed we have hardly any ground to posit the hostile entry of Aryans into a Dravidian India in c. 1500 B.C., the field is thrown wide open for the possibility of making them pre-Harappan and deriving from the Rigveda quite a number of elements of the Harappan civilisation.

Only two major obstacles relevant to archaeology would have to be surmounted. Did the Harappans (2500-1500 B.C.) have the domesticated horse whose presence is undeniably shown in the Rigveda? Did they possess the spoked chariot-wheel of which the Rigveda frequently speaks? On the evidence of Surkotada and Lothal, Sankalia’s own answer to the first question is “Yes”. His answer to the second is not equally assured, but it is far from being any kind of “No”. For he admits that Rupar and Banawali “show the existence of the spoked wheel in 1700 B.C.-1500 B.C.”

No doubt, Sankalia does not seem quite prepared to go the whole length with me everywhere, but I am appreciative of whatever favourable observations he makes. Only when he writes apropos of Sri Aurobindo, I feel obliged to draw attention to some inadequacies or misunderstandings on his part.

For instance he writes: “Sethna supports his conclusions by citing the views of Sri Aurobindo expressed 50 years ago when the Harappan civilisation had not been discovered.” The suggestion appears to be that Sri Aurobindo’s views may be invalidated—at least partly—because of a number of factors brought up by the Harappan

civilisation of which he knew nothing at the time he wrote in his monthly journal the *Arya*, from 1914 to 1921. But he lived long enough—up to the end of 1950—to take stock of this civilisation and yet he did not modify his views. The reason simply is that his views had nothing to do with it. Let me briefly indicate the points at which my thesis touches his views.

Sri Aurobindo holds, first, that the Rigveda provides no assessable sign that an Aryan invasion of India took place anywhere near the period of its composition. Secondly, the Rigveda's distinction between Aryan and non-Aryan is cultural and religious, not racial or anthropological. Thirdly, its narrations have basically a symbolic sense: they have essentially a mystic-spiritual and not a naturalistic or historical bearing, so that the non-Aryan is not a Dravidian of the Punjab but a demon of a supernatural domain. Fourthly, to Sri Aurobindo, the popular separation of so-called Aryans from so-called Dravidians is false: India, in the majority of her population, is a single homogeneous though multi-aspected nation and all alleged anthropological dissimilarities are superficial. Fifthly, even as regards language, Sri Aurobindo's studies convinced him that a South-Indian language like Tamil is much closer than generally believed to not only Sanskrit but also other speeches called Indo-European. The interrelation of all of them is such that Sanskrit and Tamil may very well be derivates from a common lost language. Face to face with this fivefold stand of Sri Aurobindo we may legitimately ask how the appearance of the Harappan civilisation on the archaeological horizon could make any difference to his views.

If these views are well founded—and I have tried in my book to prove them to be so—they can be used to help my thesis in several respects, but I have also other strings to my bow and have attempted at all places to meet my possible critics—historians, archaeologists, linguists—in their own fields.

In a small compass Sankalia has given a fairly good glimpse of Sri Aurobindo's symbolic interpretation of the Rigveda. However, at one point a badly garbled quotation presents him in rather a confused light, leading to a misconstruction. Here is the passage as Sri Aurobindo wrote it and as I reproduced it in my book:

“We may, if we like, suppose that there was a struggle between two different cults in India and that the Rishis took their images from the physical struggle between the human representatives of these cults and applied them to the spiritual conflict, just as they employed the other details of their physical life to symbolise the spiritual sacrifice, the spiritual wealth, the spiritual battle and journey. But it is perfectly certain that in the Rigveda at least it is the spiritual conflict and victory, not the physical battle and plunder of which they are speaking.”

In Sankalia's quotation all the words from “just as they employed” right on to “it is the spiritual conflict”—thirty-nine words—are omitted and Sri Aurobindo's radical position vis-à-vis the nature of the Rigveda completely obscured.

Modern Indian historians are badly infected with the overpragmatic mentality of Western scholars and would be loth to accept Sri Aurobindo's reading. Sankalia, who describes himself as not only “an archaeologist” but also “one of the devotees

of Sri Aurobindo" and, as such, has not lost the Indian mind's natural insight into things of the Spirit, refrains from passing any negative judgment. He even goes out of his way to note that some European scholars themselves—Keith and Macdonell, Roth and Sten Konow—concede the aptness of taking words like *Dasa*, *Dasyu*, *Pani*, *Asura* in the Rigveda to connote non-human opponents from a supraphysical plane. He is correct there, at least as regards many verses of the Hymns. But in his role of archaeologist he feels obliged to ask about Sri Aurobindo's interpretation: "how does it help students like Sethna and myself who look for more objective evidence to solve the Aryan problem?" He is not wrong in coupling me with his own turn of temperament. But, though eager for "objective evidence", I would deny that Sri Aurobindo has proceeded subjectively in the ordinary sense of that term. In my special chapter on his interpretation I have sketched the meticulous, methodical, analytic, whole-seeing, reasoned-out treatment of the Rigveda by Sri Aurobindo. And, without hesitation, I can venture to answer Sankalia's question.

The Rigveda, as ordinarily read, conveys a tale as of physical war by Aryans on irreligious predators and conjures up numerous walled towns (*purah*) which are stormed and destroyed with the help of the thunder-god Indra and the fire-god Agni. The query must arise: "Whom did the Rigvedics fight and which were the walled towns they attacked and laid low?" But, as Sankalia himself admits, the usual theory of an invasion hangs in the air. He has also added in his review: "There was no Aryan problem 200 years ago, for it had never been suggested or pointed at in any Indian literature or tradition that the seers of the Rigveda had come from outside India." Nor is there corroborative evidence for any kind of actual conflict involving the Aryans who composed the Rigveda. At one time the enemies were supposed to be the Harappans with their several fortified cities, but at present neither Sankalia nor any other responsible archaeologist or historian backs Wheeler's supposition. How then are we to identify the foes and the strongholds? Whatever the period to which we may assign the Rigveda we confront a regular riddle.

The riddle can be solved only by means of the Aurobindonian interpretation—that the Rigvedic war was an inner occult spiritual adventure of mystics and initiates and that the walled towns symbolised the dense concentrations of dark, demoniac forces of subtle worlds encompassing and withholding the sought-for spiritual light. The very absence here of what Sankalia terms "objective evidence" in relation to "the Aryan problem" should make us realise the immense "help" Sri Aurobindo can give to puzzled archaeologists and historians.

2

The Spoke in the Harappan Wheel

Two excellent reviews by Dr. H. D. Sankalia—of Possehl's anthology *Harappan Civilization* and the revised *Rise of Civilization in India and Pakistan* by Bridget and

Raymond Allchin—in the *Sunday Times* of 6 February and 16 May respectively provide material enough to bring us very close to a final solution to the problem that stands at the very head of Indian history: the chronological relationship between the Rigveda and the Harappa Culture (known also as the Indus Valley Civilization).

The theory universally held in the West and also mostly in India is that there was an Aryan invasion of our country in about 1500 B.C. and that the Harappa Culture preceded this event, having run roughly from 2500 to 1500 B.C. With such a chronology followed the idea that the invading Aryans, authors of the Rigveda after entering the country, must have been responsible for the end of the Harappa Culture and that they had started in the same area—the Indus Valley—a cultural history fundamentally different from that of its predecessors, although the later phase of this history had assimilated several features of what is taken to have been a non-Aryan ethos.

No doubt, it had to be admitted that there was neither archaeological nor documentary evidence for the hypothesized Aryan invasion in the middle of the second millennium B.C. But for many years the absence of the domesticated horse—a typical Aryan animal—in the Harappa Culture was urged in favour of this Culture's precedence of Rigvedic Aryanism in India. Now the situation has changed here, and Sankalia, apropos of the question how "all the visible aspects of the Indus civilization" were lost, has come out boldly with a comprehensive statement which should go a long way towards reshuffling our conventional chronology:

"There was slow disintegration, probably because of the weakness of the central authority, and not the alleged destruction by the Aryans, who are supposed to have entered India from the north-west in chariots with spoked wheels, and on horseback. But little consideration has been given to this hypothesis. First, nowhere have any signs of destruction been found in Sind, Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Punjab or Haryana. Secondly, it is doubtful if it is possible to ride through the Bolan or the Khyber passes in a chariot, even now or then, 3500 years ago. Thirdly, it has now been amply proved that the horse was known to the Indus civilisation, as fine paintings of it can be seen on Rangpur pottery, and the remains of the horse have been found at Surkotada in Kutch. And the best evidence is provided by the Damabad bronzes, where a large war chariot with *solid* wheels is drawn by a pair of horses."

We should imagine the ghost of the Aryan-invasion theory would be laid forever by Sankalia's statement, but obviously the emphasis put by him on the word "solid" is meant to suggest a still existing issue of some sort. The word contrasts with the earlier adjective "spoked" in connection with the supposition about the entry of Aryans into the subcontinent. Sankalia seems to imply that the Harappa Culture does not appear to have known the chariot-wheel with spokes. True, all Harappan cart-models found so far have solid wheels. But, if solid wheels were the order of the day, surely it was not for want of an advanced technology.

In *Indian Archaeology Today* (1962 Ed., p. 61) Sankalia records S. R. Rao's find of a twisted copper or bronze drill at Lothal and comments: "Its occurrence at

so early a date is of great moment in the history of civilization." In his review of Possehl's anthology he has remarked: "The discovery of a rich copper-smelting and copper-manufacturing site at Ganeshpur, and dated to 2700 B.C. is most welcome." More than two decades back, A. L. Basham wrote in *The Wonder that was India* (p. 21): "In one respect the Harappa people were technically in advance of their contemporaries—they had devised a saw with undulating teeth, which allowed the dust to escape freely from the cut, and much simplified the carpenter's task." If at all the Harappa people lacked spoked wheels it was because of a factor on which Stuart Piggott placed his finger long ago in his *Prehistoric India* (p. 200): "Complex technical processes were known, well understood, and admirably organized for production, but the output suffered from standardization and an almost puritanical utilitarianism."

We are assuming that the Harappa Culture did not make spoked wheels. It could very well be that we have just not found models of them yet. For, the depiction of a six-spoked wheel is found on several seals. In Seal No. 3357, which is partly damaged, we see a man's figure in line-drawing with one slanted foot on a spoked wheel and the other presumably on a similar circle. Rao offers the information: "Relevant to the subject of chariots is the graffito on the potsherd from Lothal wherein a figure is seen standing on two wheels resembling the Assyrian chariot-drivers painted on pottery. Attention may be drawn here to the fact that hubbed terracotta wheels painted in red with diagonal lines suggesting spokes are also encountered at Lothal" (*Lothal and the Indus Civilization*, 1973, p. 124).

What caps, crowns and clinches the idea that the Harappa Culture must have known the spoked chariot-wheel is a piece of news from Sankaliā himself. In his review of *Harappan Civilization* he writes: "In the pre-Harappan period Bisht found bone points, chert blades, clay bulls, stone weights, and a canopied cart with spoked wheels. This was followed by a fortified Indus town."

If spoked wheels for a cart were present in India even before the Harappa Culture and if an Indus-Civilization town followed on the same site, can we doubt that spoked-wheel chariotry was known to the Harappans?

With the spoked wheel antedating the Harappa Culture we catch a clue to the probable time of the Rigveda which is chockful of references to spoked-wheel chariotry. If the Aryans who composed this scripture cannot be thought of as invading India in about 1500 B.C., they can now be put prior to the Harappa Culture and this Culture itself may be considered, because of its complex and composite character, as at once a derivative, a development and a deviation from the Rigvedic. How far back in time the latter should go is a problem to be studied. But its pre-Harappan antiquity disposes of the popular picture of Aryan foreigners conquering India. For all practical purposes the pre-Harappan Aryans of the Rigveda, inhabiting the Indus Valley and adjoining areas, emerge as natives. The opposition of Aryan to Dravidian as of outsider to insider becomes a myth and the vision that Sri Aurobindo set forth takes more and more solid shape: the so-called Aryans and the

so-called Dravidians are one homogeneous race with small local variations of type and even their languages are two varying yet interacting sister tongues which may be traced ultimately to a common source in the remote past. This source may, by a happy fusion of current terms, be designated "Dravidaryan".

“THE TRUE GENTLEMAN”

THE true gentleman carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast: all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking, he guards against unseasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favours, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort, he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. From a long-sighted prudence, he observes the maxim of the ancient sage that we should ever conduct ourselves towards our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend.

He has too much good sense to be affronted at insults, he is too well employed to remember injuries, and too indolent to bear malice. He is patient, forbearing and resigned, on philosophical principles; he submits to pain because it is inevitable, to bereavement because it is irreparable, and to death because it is his destiny.

If he engages in controversy of any kind, his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better, though less educated minds.

He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to be unjust; he is as simple as he is forcible, and as brief as he is decisive.

CARDINAL HENRY NEWMAN

SELF-IDENTITY

A PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHT

KANT'S argument about what he calls the transcendental unity of apperception is really unanswerable. There must be one self which is the same self in all its different apprehensions, if there is to be apprehension of any temporal object, and still more if there is to be knowledge of an objective and ordered world. This one self is not, or at the very least is not, *just* a part of the world which it knows. If it makes itself an object, and so sets itself beside its other objects in an objective world, none the less it is still the subject of all objects whatsoever, including that self upon which it seeks to reflect. The subjective self is always the centre of its whole world, however much it may be thought of as passing from one apprehension to another. I say this argument appears to be unanswerable, for the reason that a series of mental events or knowings, however intimately related to one another or to that mass of general bodily feeling which is nowadays called upon to perform so many functions is absolutely useless as a means of knowing a chain of succession in time. If each mental event can, so to speak, stand by itself without support, then it is really a separate momentary or at any rate temporarily limited self. And clearly if the twelve strokes of a clock are heard by twelve different selves, there is no hearing or at any rate no knowing of the twelve strokes. Twelve ideas of one thing are not the idea of a dozen, and a succession of ideas is quite different from an idea of succession.

There can be nothing more misleading than to confuse the question of the necessary identity of the self as knowing with the quite different question of the identity of the self merely as something known. We are interested not in the self-identity of the object self, but in the self-identity of the subject self. My chief criticism of Kant's modern critic on this point is that he appears to be almost entirely concerned with the nature of mind as an apprehended object and hardly at all with the nature of mind as an apprehending subject. That is to say, taking mind as a series of mental events (some of which, namely the cognitive, have an external reference), he asks himself what characteristics these must have if they are to be known as a unity. He can certainly recognise a kind of unity in a series of known mental events by reason of their interrelations, qualitative resemblances and causal connections as well as by means of a common recognisable constituent within them. But he would be throughout considering the self merely as something known, the self as one object among other objects. The real question with which he has to deal is the question of the self as subject and the doctrine he has to refute is that one and the same self must be, not a numerically identical substantial constituent common to all past states, but rather a knower which is never a constituent, and that apart from this we should never know or remember or recognise or think anything at all. It appears to me that he is reducing every mind to a society of momentary minds, and moreover a society of momentary minds in which the parent must die before its child is born.

I fully recognise that such a society might be recognised as a unity by a mind *which was thinking about it*. What I deny is that it itself could either remember or think or have any kind of cognition or indeed be a mind at all. It might have the unity necessary to be an object of thought, but it could not have the unity necessary to be a subject of thinking. And it appears to me—I should be glad to be corrected in this—that this is precisely the condition which the modern doctrines ignore.

H. J. PATON

BARREN

LITERAL TRANSLATION OF A BENGALI SONG BY UMA DEVI

LIFE is barren without Hari's name,
Heart's lamp without Hari's light,
Earth's beauty without Sun's light,
Heart's passion without songs of Hari,—
Barren are one and all without Hari's name.

Moon without night,
Odour without flower,
Flower without bee,
Bee without song,
Song without *rāga*,
Rāga without bhajan,
Bhajan and all these are barren without Hari's name.

Home without lamp,
Lamp without light,
Light without eye,
Eye without emotion,
Emotion without heart,
Heart without love,
Love and all these are barren without Hari's name.

Birth without earth,
Earth without enjoyment,
Enjoyment without body,
Body without beauty,
Beauty without love,
Love without devotion,
Devotion and all these are barren without Hari's name.

ROBI DAS

“WINGS”

WITH her smiling eyes
she reached her hand
to me
“Come down,” she said,
“Come down.”

No, my love,
I can't come down,
No longer can I stand
Against the earth's
warm breast.
Come fly with me,
Come fly with me.

I have no wings,
I have no wings,
Come down to me,
my love,
Come down to me.

Wings you have, my love,
all folded up,
inside

Yearning
to spread their length
against the blue of the sky,
Soaring
through the clouds,
Reaching out
for the sun.
There's Freedom there,
Freedom for you,
Freedom for me,
Freedom for us.

Listen, love! Listen:
Hear the cry above?
It is someone who has flown
on ahead.

Our wings must yet grow
stronger.

Our love will lift us there
to join those others
who dared to spread
their wings
and feel
The soft brush of freedom,
the warmth of the sun,
the coolness of the
towering clouds.

Reach out, my love!
Reach out
To the infinite stretches there
Beyond.

CLIFFORD

A QUERY

IN a sun-kissed corner of the garden
where hummed a bumble-bee,
and flitted a golden butterfly,
where smiled and danced
wind-rocked joyous flowers
and the fragrant heart of a lotus
opened with a fulfilled contented sigh
on the quivering grass,
lay a dreaming child.
Child! where did you go?
"Oh! I went to God to ask Him
why He made the mosquitoes
and how He made the butterflies."

SHYAM KUMARI

BHRIGU'S SEEKINGS

APROPOS OF TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD, III

“ALL is food”—of the food is the Eternal made,
And rises the hymn like a chant of sacrifice.
Matter's secrecies laugh revealed to me,
Hidden there I see the gigantic form;
Matter pervades all, the Divine is Matter.
“All is food”—of the breath is the Eternal made,
And hence is lotus of the navel the eater.
I hear each cell sonant with a far song,
And the sea of life is my rapture's throb;
Rich in progeny, rich in radiance, I grow.
“All is food”—of ether is the Eternal made,
Therefore does food expand into infinity.
I am the thousand-eyed Lord of the skies,
And in me shine the thoughts of the Innumerable;
I have become plenitude of the one vast Self.
“All is food”—of the sun is the Eternal made,
And there unknown thinks the Mind beyond Mind.
I have entered into the two wombs of the Mother,
And the great creative fire is my son;
Everywhere the Truth I gather with my rays.
“All is food”—of the bliss is the Eternal made,
Thence was born the first enjoyer of the food.
Horses and elephants and the mighty gods
Are my food of delight even as I loose forth;
Golden-beaked are the swans that bear the honey-food.
“All is food established in the foundation,
The Eternal is the food of the Eternal.”
Above my head, within my heart, below my feet,
Blue pervading blue, the Divine the Divine;
Only the Self of food in his every Name.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

BHARTRIHARI AND OTHER EPIGRAMMATISTS

A COMPARATIVE STUDY FOR STUDENTS

BHARTRIHARI is a king. As a king he loves the kingly virtues: nobility, courage, perseverance, high dignity which cannot stoop to lowness even in dire adversity, magnanimity, wisdom—wisdom which knows the worth of the talented and the merely clever, the faithful ally and the oily-tongued sycophant. He has to deal with the whole spectrum of humanity and so must be not only noble-minded but also alert, vigilant, not easily deceived. Like the legendary swan he must be able to separate milk from water. Naturally Bhartrihari's bitterest words are reserved for the fool, the insensitive, the dull.

Bhartrihari exalts the high Aryan virtues:

'Wisdom in the mind, love in the heart and strength in the nature.' As also skill in the art of speech, mastery over passions, resilience in adversity and benevolence like that of the moon which sheds its soft radiance over all irrespective of their merit.

And Bhartrihari is a poet—something rare among kings. He advises kings to honour the poets and the artists. A man insensitive to art and beauty, says he, is like a beast without horns.

The epigrams of Bhartrihari (*i.e.*, *The Century of Life*¹) sparkle with delightful imagery and vivid similes. All the flora and fauna of India are pictured here—the alligator's yawning jaws, the dog feasting on a meatless bone, the raging elephant restrained by a lotus thread, the swan gliding on mossy lakes, the kingly maned lion and the skulking jackal, the graceful elephant returning a quiet look in steadfast eyes to countless flatterers, the darting rain-lark singing paeans to the clouds, the noble heart soft as lilies but granite in calamity's shocks, the dew shining like pearls on the lotus leaves, the Moloy hills redolent of the scent of clove and cinnamon, the owl blinded by the sun, the autumnal stream with its long beaches dry, the Ganges tumbling on Shiva's brow, the demon Rahu slaying in his brief and glorious hour the sun—the images are countless.

Bhartrihari's wit is masterly, full of pungent flings at the hypocrite, the mean-hearted, the dull-witted, the man of uncontrolled passions, the indolent, the weak-willed, in short the "tamasic" and the unregenerated "rajasic" nature. He admires passion and force and strength but yoked to a noble mind.

Comparisons:

Bacon: Bacon is a courtier and highly ambitious man of the world, a scholar and an intellectual. His short and pithy sentences, almost like epigrams, deal with all subjects and aspects of life and were titled, 'Counsels civil and moral'. He analyses and sums up, e.g., 'Studies serve for delight, for ornamentation, for ability.' There

¹ The *Ninshataka* freely rendered into English Verse by Sri Aurobindo.

is no exaltation of courage, love, magnanimity, high dignity which despises lowness even in difficulties, etc. His counsels are mostly practical and for pragmatic purposes—how to raise a garden, how to read books, how to deal with ambitious persons, the benefits of marriage and their price. There is no poetry although apt similes and analogies are given but they are always illustrative and never transport. Bhartrihari enjoys his imagery, brings up delightful pictures and is also charged with emotion. Bacon is objective throughout or tries to be so. There is likewise little venom or satire.

Kahlil Gibran: Kahlil Gibran's highly aphoristic writings, especially *The Prophet*, are entirely different. He is a mystic and in all that he writes there is a soul-touch, the blend of the eternal and the temporal. "Pain is the cup which the Divine Lover offers you as a Physician,"—"Children are arrows shot through you by the Divine Archer. . . ." Gibran is warm with compassion and love and his epigrams touch our soul and give us tranquillity. He is also a poet and the imagery is beautiful, sometimes rising to a sublime level.

There is no scorn or venom in Gibran. His words if followed would fling wide open the door of the heart, the inmost heart which yearns for the Absolute and the Eternal through love and worship. Here, repose and calm find harmony with force and action. Work, friendship, house-making, marriage, children, pain and joy, all has to be infused with the breath of the Spirit.

Omar Khayyam is entirely different. He has nothing to do with worldly wisdom or 'how to make friends and influence people'. Human life is short and its glories are short. Kaikobad, Kaikhusroe, Jamshed with his seven-ringed cup, Behram the great hunter, all lie covered under dust. There is only one thing to do—not to bother about the short-lived acquisitions of life or rack one's head about its why and wherefore but to seek bliss and self-forgetfulness ('musti') in wine. Wine is the panacea, 'the logic absolute', the deliverer. Omar Khayyam, without caring for 'sat' and 'chit' flies straight to 'ananda', albeit a pseudo-'ananda' of intoxication.

He rails at the scholar and the theologian, the philosopher and the know-all. His most acute shafts are hurled at them and their cousins, the rationalists.

Omar Khayyam, like Bhartrihari, is full of wit and mockery without malice. All his barbs are directed at the 'wise', who try to define and measure the Absolute with 'rule and line'. He does not scoff at other species of humanity—the fool, the mean-minded, the undignified, the dull-witted and the boor. In fact he calls men pots ('kuzas'), some gainly, some ungainly, but all brittle. He has his digs at God also who has invented 'this sorry scheme of things' and who let loose the serpent as soon as He created Eden to beguile man and then to punish him.

(N.B. While dealing with Khayyam we are throughout depending on Fitzgerald's rendering of his Rubais.)

Khayyam's imagery is exquisite and exotic—the 'bulbul and the rose, oasis and

caravanserais', 'the daughter of the grape' (wine) whom he has wed after devouring 'old barren reason', the procession of ancient Persian kings, pots and the Potter, etc.

Khayyam is most musical of all the epigrammatists and it is a verbal treat to read his Rubais in the original Persian.

Bible-Proverbs: The proverbs of the Bible are among the most beautiful in the lore of epigrams. Their value lies in their perennial wisdom and universality. The wisdom is for all men in all walks of life, from the humblest to the highest—how a soft answer turneth away wrath, how 'the soul of the diligent shall be made fat', while 'the sluggard desireth but hath nothing'. 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty.' 'Better a dry morsel and quietness than a fatted calf in a house full of strife.'

The language of the Proverbs is simple and dignified. There are fine similes and comparisons and the homely poetry of balanced clauses. And here and there delightful sparks of wit. It is at the opposite pole to Bhartrihari's loud but urbane rhetoric and tortuous, knotty constructions. There is very little satire and invective, no exaltation of art, beauty and poetry or the aristocratic virtues but the semitic fear of God, exhortation of righteousness, earnest labour and good-will for fellow-beings.

Bacon, Bhartrihari, Kahlil Gibran, Omar Khayyam, the Proverbs of the Bible, all give us delight in their own way and enrich our mind. "There are many storeys in my father's mansion and many chambers in each storey," says Christ.

Each great mind or artist presents through these epigrams his own distilled experience of life and thought and we enjoy it, even though they may appear to be conflicting.

"All contraries are aspects of God's face
The many are the innumerable One."

(Sri Aurobindo)

JAGDISH KHANNA

“O ALLAH, YOU MISUNDERSTOOD ME”

A WAYFARER had covered a long distance on foot and had yet a long way to go before he would have the joy and the rest of his home. He became pensive and began to mutter to himself while he yet tardily moved on, “O Allah, you are merciful, you are powerful, give me a horse, a mule, a donkey, anything to ride...which would carry me home, I am too tired, I will be bound to you. O Allah, do grant me this favour.” He was surely hoping for the best even though he saw no sign of help around there. All was so bare and solitary. Suddenly he heard a voice from behind, a good deal behind. Somebody with a horse was calling him. He was happy, a horse and a man calling him, it was a joyous sight for him. He jumped up and ran to him.

A tahsildar of the area was coming that way, doing his lordly duties, and his mare had given birth to a colt. He evidently needed somebody to carry the newborn, which was yet helpless. A tahsildar is a great thing, in his own area he is more than a Deputy Commissioner or a Collector. He can command anybody to do some service for him. And nobody dare refuse.

Our wayfarer was very happy and saw a real prospect of a horse-ride for his tired limbs.

But as he neared the tahsildar, the latter peremptorily asked him to lift the colt and carry it on his shoulders and walk fast enough with the mare as he wanted to reach his next halt soon. Our wayfarer's state of mind can easily be imagined. What a shock! But he had no alternative. A tahsildar is a tahsildar! He picked up the colt, put it on his shoulders and began to walk, as fast as his painful legs allowed, behind the great tahsildar.

However, he cried out within himself. “Oh Allah, you misunderstood me, entirely misunderstood me. I was tired, I relied on your mercy, on your power and asked for kind help, a horse for a ride for the rest of the distance, instead you have asked me to carry a colt, a good weight, and walk fast. How grievously you misunderstood a needy person. I meant one thing and you took it in just the contrary way. But, Allah, man is helpless and you are bountiful all the same.”

The wayfarer walked on mumbling all the while these thoughts.

This incident might appear rather queer but it is quite typical of man in general in his journey of life. Who, when disappointed in a desire, does not blame another person, the circumstances or the Divine Himself? Our wayfarer has a feeling for the Divine, has faith and trust in Him and he confidently asked for help. But he is governed by his personal desires, desires serving him as an individual separate from other similar individuals and other things, i.e., they are egoistic in character. And the same is true of general human nature. In the present situation the wayfarer's desire was to get a horse to carry him because he was too tired. He was disappointed and got into a complaining mood, which possessed him completely. The force of egoity in him, his self-centredness, was such that he could not for a moment contemplate

that his desire, after all, was not the most important thing and that the general circumstances were a complex affair with many forces and factors at work. Or that Allah had to see to lots of other things too, in fact to the world as a whole. If his egoity or self-centredness had been less intense or his appreciation of other factors and forces pretty definite or his faith in the goodness of the Divine really strong, then his disappointment would not have been so keen, his complaint so bitter and the suffering so bad. At his best, the wayfarer, when faced with the situation of carrying on his shoulders a colt instead of getting a horse to carry him, could have exclaimed, “Right, Allah, if this is Thy Will, this too is nice!” But that needs a yogi, for ordinary human nature it is too much, even inconceivable.

However, to be a yogi and see things that way is a distinct achievement, some liberation from the ordinary ignorance of life, a sort of fulfilment in life. And a sadhak takes a fairly long time to arrive at that stage. To start with, he is a separate individual self desiring for himself a higher life of greater knowledge, more peace, his own true soul and the Great Divine. He desires to consecrate himself to this Higher Purpose. But as a desiring individual he is all externalist in his orientation of life, *i.e.*, the external world of the senses is the real thing, its impacts make us happy and unhappy and each satisfaction has to be sought externally. But his yogic discipline begins to make him aware of the consciousness within, of his varie dimpulses and emotions, their conflicts, and the confusions they cause. He thus becomes aware of a large inner world and when this happens the external world begins to appear less important. He yet appreciates external satisfactions, but appreciates more that inner peace really depends upon absence of conflict among different desires, in fact more on the relative non-insistence and quietude of the various desires. He now feels that he depends less on the circumstances, rather they become what he takes them to be. And he begins to feel a wonderful independence and a relative mastery over the external situation. When this happens the spirit of complaint tends to drop off and he begins to enjoy a peace within and the same in his dealings with the world without.

With the growth of quietude and silence and peace comes the awareness of a Higher Governance of life on which he begins to rely more and more. He then begins to feel that the Divine is the real thing. The ego then dwindles into insignificance and relative non-existence.

But the sadhak has a long journey of life to traverse to arrive at that. A sadhak of our Ashram, who was yet at an earlier stage, submitted to the Mother: “After all, my whole life is consecrated to You; I shall remain very calm without bothering about what happens to me.”

The Mother replied: “That’s very good, but if you were to add to this the idea that I know you and love you better than you do yourself and that I know better than you what is good for you—then that would be perfect.”

To become aware of a Higher Governance of life, in an embodied or a disembodied form, is a great thing, when it comes to a person. As this awareness advances, we learn to recognise that this Higher Presence knows us and our situation better than

we do. That is a great step forward. But when our awareness of the Higher and the Greater advances further, we are able to see that the Presence knows our good better than we do and promotes it better than we can. That is perfection in approach and attitude.

But our wayfarer was a simple person, not a conscious aspiring sadhak. However, he was good-hearted and therefore entitled to chide the Divine lovingly. He had love, he had faith, but also the courage and the informality to say "Oh Allah, you misunderstood me."

INDRA SEN

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FAITH SAVES—EGO SUBMERGES

A STORYETTE

THE Mother in Her Conversations has said, "You must be prepared to be suspended in the air, without anything to support you, except your faith." The precept is of A-1 quality, but its truth may not go home unless it is illustrated. The following story illustrates the point.

There was a Guru. He had many disciples, but only one of them had absolute faith in him. Hanumant had become an eyesore to the other disciples. They wanted to test Hanumant's faith and so one day they took him to the top of a mountain and said, "If you have absolute faith, jump down and let us see if your faith saves you." Hanumant took the name of the Guru and jumped down from the top of the mountain. The other disciples were certain they would find Hanumant's dead body at the base. So they went there to find it. When they reached the spot, they could not believe their eyes. Hanumant was sitting in the lotus pose and peace and calm were emanating from his body. The other disciples thought, "It is by chance that he is living, we must test him another time."

Some days passed and one day the disciples came to know that a house was on fire. They asked Hanumant to enter the house and take his seat in the living room. Hanumant took the Guru's name, entered the house and did as he had been asked. When the fire was extinguished, the other disciples entered the room to collect the remains of Hanumant. But what did they see? Hanumant was sitting in the lotus pose, peace and calm emanating from his body.

The other disciples reported the two incidents to the Guru. The Guru was incredulous. So he took all his disciples to a river bank and then said to Hanumant, "Walk over the water as if you were walking on solid ground." Hanumant bowed down to the Guru, took his name and walked over the water safely. The Guru could not believe his eyes. But his ego was inflated and he thought, "Really, there must be some great charm in my name. I must be very great and if Hanumant can walk over the water by simply taking my name, I can also walk over the water." So thinking, the Guru put his feet in the water. But he sank and the disciples with great effort saved him. The Guru was flabbergasted and he asked Hanumant, "How is it that you walked over the water by simply taking my name and I myself could not?" Hanumant replied, "I had full, complete, absolute faith in you while you had no faith in yourself—only pride."

VALLABH SHETH

IGNORANCE: ITS ORIGIN, ITS LOGICAL- PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY AND ITS PURPOSE

A CRITICAL STUDY IN THE LIGHT OF THE NIRVISHESHA ADWAITA OF SHANKARA AND THE INTEGRAL ADWAITA OF SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of January 1984)

WITH the light that Sri Aurobindo has thrown on this problem, we can re-examine the conclusions of traditional Vedanta that have been put down in the preceding chapters. It is not that multiplicity is unreal and the one alone is real, but the knowledge of the multiplicity without a simultaneous knowledge of the One is ignorance and the knowledge of the One is certainly primary knowledge but a partial knowledge without the knowledge of the Many at the same time and hence also a kind of ignorance. We might even say "a more overwhelming ignorance" since the sense of multiplicity may suggest at least a numerical oneness whereas the sheer sense of unity leaves us nothing save itself. That is why the Isha Upanishad states: "they enter as if into a greater darkness who follow after knowledge alone." Hence neither oneness nor multiplicity *per se* is integral knowledge. Each is a partial knowledge and the exclusive knowledge of the Many is termed ignorance because that knowledge is dependent on the knowledge of the One and this dependent knowledge, though a sort of knowledge, is termed ignorance. There are other Mantras in this Upanishad the interpretation of which is difficult if we regard Vidya and Avidya as opposed to each other.

So Shankara's stand on how the knowledge of the multiplicity is ignorance and bondage and how the knowledge of the unity can remove ignorance and give release from bondage can be confidently answered. The Integral Knowledge is a whole made up of both these. If each is considered separately, it is an ignorance and yet also a knowledge. Shankara considered the One and the Many separately, and the primary knowledge is alone accepted as the true knowledge and the dependent knowledge is dubbed Ignorance. The same thing happened with the Chhandogya text considered before. The pot-name and pot-form are considered as figures of speech about clay and therefore unreal, while the substance of clay alone is taken as real, especially on account of the word "eva" meaning "alone" being used in the text. Shankara stresses that word and says the pot-form and pot-name are unreal. But it can be said that pot-form and pot-shape can always be manifested if the clay is there. So the power of manifestation is inherent in Brahman and continues to act either continuously or in Time-eternity: "It is because in time the Many seem not to be eternal but to manifest out of the One and return into it as their essence that their reality is denied; but it might equally be reasoned that the eternal persistence, or, if you will, the eternal recurrence of the manifestation in time is a

proof that the divine multiplicity is an eternal fact of the Supreme beyond time no less than divine unity. Otherwise it could not have this characteristic of inevitable eternal recurrence in time.”¹ There is no need to call the pot-name and pot-shape unreal. They cannot come into actuality of the becoming, unless they have been in the potentiality of the being of clay. By calling pot-form and pot-name unreal, Shankara’s own name and Shankara’s own form become unreal. The very destiny of man is lost sight of. Shankara’s philosophy has no place for Shankara himself!

It is in the later systematised Vedanta that, on account of its insistence on the ultimate unreality of the world as a result of ignorance without beginning, there crept in this idea that ego and Ignorance are not only the cause of the duality but the essential condition for the existence of the universe. This idea became fixed and ossified, with the result that human existence in the Ignorance became illusory to the God-seeker and all effort after perfection a vanity so that the cry went forth that time is fleeting and the sooner one gets out of this morass of evil the better. Such is not the final fact. This creation is real in its running after a perfect creation. In the Vedic and Vedantic times what later passed as Ignorance was considered a sort of knowledge, though a dependent one. We shall now consider how ignorance, as we feel it, manifests itself or comes into being.

Ignorance cannot exist in the truth-creation of the Supermind. In the Divine’s descent to Overmind, we have the clue and key to Ignorance. “The supermind transmits to Overmind all its realities but leaves it to formulate them in a movement and according to an awareness of things which is still a vision of truth and a first parent of Ignorance.”² The question is how this is done. Here is the occult link that at once separates this world from, and connects it with, the supreme Truth. Sri Aurobindo has discovered it by his spiritual adventure as a scientist of consciousness. In all the spiritual history of man, none has been able to locate this origin of Ignorance, much less to think of bringing down that Supermind to transform Mother Earth into the “Alwar’s vision of the descent of Vishnu and the gods upon earth, the reign of saints, *sādhunām rājyam*, the city of God, the millennium, the new heaven and earth of the Apocalypse.”³

In mantra 15 of the Isha Upanishad we read: *Hiraṇmayena pātreṇa satyasyā-pihitaṁ mukhaṁ, tattvam pūṣaṁ apāvṛṇu styadharmāya dr̥ṣṭaye*: The face of truth is covered with a brilliant golden lid: That do thou remove, O Fosterer, for the law of the Truth, for sight” (Sri Aurobindo’s translation). Our ancient Rishis were not able to unblock the way, with the result that India’s spiritual effort landed and ended in Mayavada, as the philosophy *par excellence*. It is by the higher Maya that the static truth of essential being, Nirguna Brahman or pure Self of the Adwaitin, becomes ordered truth of active being. What is all in all becomes all in each and each

¹ *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, p. 180.

² *Ibid.*, p. 335.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 232.

in all for the play of existence, consciousness-force and delight in each with all and in all with each. This is the higher Maya and this cannot be grasped by the mental or lower Maya. That lower Maya has first to be embraced and overcome: then it will be seen that each and all co-exist. It is the lower Maya that conceals this fact at first. The play of all in each is thus concealed by mental Maya, because that is our highest evolved instrument of cognition and, however high it may rise, can never possess the infinite. Shankara has not traversed the intermediate planes from mind to Supermind nor did he care to know what is vijñana which Sri Aurobindo calls Supermind. Perhaps it was not the Divine Will.

In *Champakal's Treasures*, it is recorded on p. 220 in the 1977 edition that Shankara understood vijñana as a superior mental consciousness and, as this was still mental, he rejected vijñana. It is because of mental Maya that Shankara interpreted, as he did, Brahma sutras 2-1-14, the Chhandogya text 6-1-4, and applied the law of contradiction to the Infinite. He did not believe in manifestation, which to him was Maya. That is the reason why he did not take that one step to solve the mystery of manifestation and India had to accept the refusal of the ascetic, more perilous in its effects than the denial of the materialist. We need not recount here how it damped the Indian mind into despair of this material world so that life lost its meaning and vitality. Shankara's *Bhajagovindam* slokas are a standing monument of simple Sanskrit poetic beauty overflowing with the utter hollowness of this world existence.

We have found the parent of Ignorance. So Ignorance is not without a beginning in the cosmic scheme. From the Overmind, manifestation comes down through Intuition, Illumined Mind and Higher Mind and finally to mind proper as we know it. This parent has not yet given birth to the child of ignorance as we know it. The descent into manifestation is inevitable once the descent starts. It is "the *facilis descensus* which, once consciousness admits the separative principle, follows till it enters... the Inconscient Ocean of Rigveda (*apraketam salilam*)".¹ "Overmind in its descent reaches a line that divides the cosmic Truth from the cosmic Ignorance; it is the line at which it becomes possible for Consciousness-Force... to divide Mind by an exclusive concentration from the Overmental source."² It is this exclusive concentration that is the cause of Ignorance, as we know it. The cosmic consciousness no doubt comprehends its unity but is not aware of its source; it is not aware of the parent or grandparent and is an orphan that does not know how it came or wherefrom. This is the child of Ignorance that the Overmind-parent has produced. But there is not yet falsehood and error. Ignorance is limitative, not necessarily falsificative. "Ignorance does not create a new thing, an absolute falsehood but only misrepresents truth."³ "Ignorance is nature's purposeful oblivion of the Self and the All, leaving them aside, putting them behind herself in order to do solely what

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 344.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

she has to do in some outer play of existence.”¹ “This exclusive concentration is not confined to absorption in a particular character or type of working of one’s larger self, but extends to complete self-forgetfulness in the particular action in which we happen at the moment to be engaged.”² The actor, the poet and the soldier forget themselves in their work. A man angry is said to become anger so that he acts as the energy of passion and becomes that energy for the time being.

So Dr. Ramnath Sharma in his thesis, *Sri Aurobindo’s Philosophy*, published by Kedar Nath Ramnath, Meerut, 1977, aptly says on p. 28: “Hence Ignorance is neither original nor primal. Maya, if it be an original power of consciousness of the Eternal, cannot itself be an Ignorance, but must be a transcendent and universal power of self-knowledge and all-knowledge. Ignorance can only intervene as a minor and subsequent movement, partial and relative. Neither is ignorance the nature of multiplicity, since dualism is characteristic of the outer layer of the mental and physical. The Many in the integrity or each self of the Many cannot be really ignorant of the One or of others. This ignorance is neither the nature of the One nor of the Many, since both are equally real. It is a product of the exclusive concentration at the mental level.” Hence the minimisation or disappearance of the individual that becomes one with Brahman on enlightenment makes the existence of the individual meaningless and the victim of a cruel joke. The individual, although he is in essence one with Brahman, must have some meaning. That is why D. K. Roy quotes Sri Aurobindo, on p. 303 of his *Among the Great*: “as for the question whether Heaven wants man, the answer is that if Heaven did not want him, he would not want Heaven.” The root of this tree of Ignorance is thus in Overmind above, especially at the junction of Overmind and Supermind. This tree of Ignorance extends down below. It has its roots up there. This is the Ashwattha-tree spoken of in the Gita, chapter 15-1, having its roots above and branching below. It is called Ashwattha-tree, because it is not stationary, because it is the world, *jagat*, that is always on the move, as its etymological meaning signifies.

It has been said that at the mental level Ignorance appears. Unless consciousness becomes self-conscious, there cannot be awareness of Ignorance. There may be awareness but it cannot know that it knows or does not know. As Dr. Ram Shankar Misra in his thesis, *The Integral Adwaitism of Sri Aurobindo*, published by Benaras Hindu University, 1957, says on p. 244, “without being aware of oneself as the subject, one cannot be aware of the object.” Therefore, it is said that if heaven did not want man, man would not want heaven, because “a mutual debt binds man to the Supreme” as hymns that immortal epic of Sri Aurobindo *Savitri* (Book 1 Canto 4, p. 67). That is why it is said that God made man in his own image. Self-aware ignorance begins with man and that is the reason why among all created beings man is the most dissatisfied and he alone tries to overcome his ignorance. Sri Aurobindo

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 350.

² *Ibid.*, p. 357.

puts it beautifully: "The animal is satisfied with a modicum of necessity; the gods are content with their splendours; but man cannot rest permanently until he reaches some highest good. He is the greatest of living beings, because he is the most discontented, because he feels the pressure of limitation. He alone, perhaps, is capable of being seized by the divine frenzy for a remote ideal."¹ No wonder it is said that the gods envy a human birth and whoever wants to evolve must take a human birth.

(To be continued)

P. KRISHNAMURTY

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

THE TREE OF LOVE

A PARABLE

THE tree stood at the centre of the plain. Majestically alone, it raised the living offering of its boughs to the skies, and to the rhythm of the seasons invested itself with foliage, flower and fruit. And people were drawn to it from all around. And to them it offered all it had: the shade of its leaves when the heat was too great, the delicate redolent beauty of its blossoms in spring—a time when one could see from afar a soft roseate coat of snow enveloping it, actually its flowers that had bloomed in hundreds. It offered the sweet succulence of its fruits to the children who came to pick and eat sitting astride its boughs.

In its soul of a tree it knew that it was born to protect and to give. For, in truth, it was the tree of love. It first loved the sun whose glory shone in it, under its rich bark and in its wild sap. And its sap was so fragrant that there were people who tried to steal it. But the tree let them. With knife-like weapons they came to stab its tender vegetal flesh. And with big bright eyes they watched the sap ooze like perfumed blood. The tree bore the wounds they in their ignorance inflicted on it. And gladly it gave them its blood, its sap whose fragrance was so pure that no one could miss its smell. Then those that had wounded the tree were imbued with its fragrance too: their beings, their skins, even their hearts within them were permeated with this marvellous fragrance of the tree, which was the very essence of its soul, the fragrance of love itself.

And lo! these people who had come with cruelty in their thoughts, cruelty in their actions and in their words, turned suddenly gentle and began to smile and laugh and sing the tuneful refrains they had learnt in their childhood and then went back home, their skin and their heart permeated by the fragrance of the tree. And the jars of the perfumed sap they took back with them was no more a thing they had stolen, it became a gift of the tree because the tree had become their very own friend.

So the days passed, the weeks passed, the months, the years. And the tree, thus loved by all, loved all. It was not only the men who loved it but the children loved it as well. And not only the men and children but the animals and plants too, the grass and the flowers loved it, and in its glory seemed to glow with an inner translucence. And the tree of love was haloed with an immense tranquil joy that was conveyed by the rustling cascade of its leaves. And the cascade was like music in the hearts of men who rested at the foot of the tree and in the hearts of children who played at hiding behind its robust trunk or climbing into the marvellous world of its boughs where squirrels frolicked and birds warbled.

Now it so happened that, among the children, there was one who loved the tree more than the others: a boy with large, dark, gentle eyes and a body that was buoyant and supple. And the children looked upon him as their leader because he was indeed upright, simple and generous. The tree had marked him out from the other

children and little by little had started loving him in a special way. The child was all that the soul of the tree could imagine of the most pure and perfect. And the child did feel this love the tree bore for him.

In the beginning he came with the other children. But then he preferred coming alone, for whenever he was near the tree, he inwardly felt a compelling need to dream, and to dream he had to be alone. So he would come alone to the heart of the plain where the tree stood. And as soon as he would see the tree he would wave his arms and the tree would receive all the love the child directed towards it in this way. Then the child would run laughing towards it and come near. And once near it he would trustingly rest his head on the trunk. He would softly kiss its bark and with his soft little fingers caress the scars that the men with their knives had inflicted upon the flesh of the tree. And instantaneously the tree would robe itself in new flowers and these flowers were not the same as those that usually bloomed in spring and which seemed from afar like a coat of roseate snow.

No, the flowers that bloomed in response to the love of the child were white and their fragrance at the height of day evoked in him nights of crystal mystery when the moon is full and watches over the sleeping world. They were flowers of the tree's gladness, words of the tree with which it responded to the love of the child. And these flowers none else but the child could see. They would fall on and around him and the child understood what they sought to convey and once again he would caress and kiss the tree and in a wink more flowers would blossom and illumine him with a vibrant, vegetal translucence. And the tree and the child were happy.

The child would close his eyes and dream. The tree would gently lean over him and take him into his boughs and raise him to the most secret heart of its fragrant foliage. And the child would dream on, dream for a long, long time, sometimes till soft sundown when the golden orb disappeared behind the horizon and the violet sky was filled with silent birds homing to their nests for the night. Noiselessly the birds came to perch on the branches of the tree and when the child would reopen his eyes, he would find himself surrounded by hundreds of birds that watched him.

Then he would come sliding down, clinging to the trunk and kissing its bark and then, his eyes brimming with the dreams he had dreamt, he would walk away, often turning around to look at the tree and to make gestures of friendship at it. The tree would respond by moving its boughs whose fragrance spread all over in the evening.

And thus, for the tree, the child became the centre and meaning of the universe. The soul of the tree had met the soul of the child. And the tree felt that they were forever joined in an immensity of light. It sought to express this immensity in all the little stirrings of life. It wished to impart to the child the infinity which it perceived in its soul. It felt it was becoming like a poem, like a canticle of leaves and flowers; it found itself richer with love than it had ever been before, so rich that, sometimes, it would feel it was changing into a Tree-god, full of puissance and compassion.

When it was alone, it felt its love live and grow within it like a flame of gold. And when the child would appear in the distance, the flame of gold became a conflagration. And it would lift its boughs as high as it could into the sky so as to greet the child and communicate to him its joy in great waves of light. The child would come running, waving his arms and laughing as he ran. Day after day he would come and the tree, wonder-struck, would day after day love him more and more and would shower upon him the flowers that bloomed only for him and which none else but he could see. The child would gather them in his hands, breathe them deeply and press them close to his heart. And his heart thanked the heart of the tree. The tree understood the child's thanksgiving and it felt as if a bird had started flying beneath its skin. And so touched was it by the fact that the child's happiness arose from it that it felt like offering all the world's beauty to him. And then on its boughs more and more flowers would blossom and it would rain them down over the laughing child.

So the days passed, the weeks passed. The tree and the child together had entered a world where time did not exist any more and everything got transformed into images of the sky. The soul of the tree and the soul of the child moved forward slowly, their eyes fixed on an inner sun which they saw in front of them and, although the sun came ever nearer, it did not cease to recede as it beckoned to them with a silent voice. And this great journey in the sky of eternity was translated in the slightest gestures of the child and of the tree.

Thus, little by little, the tree and the child were becoming one being. And now the child did not even seek to be alone with the tree. He would return with the other children and play with them at hiding amongst the branches of the tree. But, in truth, he played only with the tree, covering him with caresses and embraces as if he had been alone with it. And indeed he was alone with it. For all other presence merged in their luminous solitude. The other children in some way became part of them, in some way became them. And the tree covered itself endlessly with flowers only the child could see for they but existed in the dimension of their love. The tree wished they would exist visibly too and it knew that this was possible. It knew in its depths that it had the power to do it.

Now, when the child would go away and during the whole time of their separation, the tree would go into a deep concentration, so as to give that wonder which lived within it a visible form. And while the earth slept at night, the tree watched and prayed. Lips took shape on its bark and they uttered the sounds of its ceaseless prayer. It wished, it did not know quite what, something that words cannot define, it dreamt of seizing eternity in a flower which it would offer the child and this time it would be a real flower that everyone would be able to see, touch and smell. And for the entire night it would remain absorbed in its prayer. Above it the moon would shine and over it its leaves spread a silver liquid light. Or, when the moon was not there, then the stars would glow like innumerable seeds of gold in the infinite garden of the night-sky—oh! if only it had been able to express from its being a flower

as pure as moonlight or a flower as living and golden as the eyes of stars at night. The tree prayed on, prayed till the return of the child the following morning.

In this way, one day, it offered into the child's hands a new flower—not roseate like the ones that bloomed in hundreds during spring, nor white which only the child could see, but a sparkling golden-yellow flower and, in reality, this flower was made of the purest of gold. It existed not just in the dimension of love of the tree and the child, it really existed, existed physically. The child understood this at once and for a long time he remained dreamy-eyed and speechless.

He did not move, he did not play, he did not laugh as he always did. And something in the depths of the tree's heart broke. The child sat down on the grass and looked intensely at the gold flower that glimmered in the palm of his hand. And a kind of veil descended over him and enveloped him in darkness.

For a long time he sat still and the veil thickened over his heart. And in the depths of the tree, the hurt became more and more painful. The child raised his forehead and feebly smiled. "Thank you," he said in a voice that could barely be heard. And he got up and disappeared in the distance. Sobs of sap convulsed the tree. "But why," it wondered, "why"? Then it realised that there was no why and that everything carried its meaning within itself. And it felt uplifted by compassion. Everything became transparent in it. It was only outwardly that it resembled a tree. Inwardly it harboured the immensity of the sky. And once again the desire awoke in it to offer to the child all that it could possibly conceive of the most beautiful. And fresh gold flowers appeared on its boughs.

However, in the days that followed, it did not reveal these flowers. It wanted to see how the child reacted. The very next day it perceived that everything seemed to be the same again. The child returned with his friends. And he also came back alone. Once again he played and laughed and dreamed with the tree. And he always wore on his bosom the gold flower which the tree had given him. And when someone would ask him where he had got it from, he would point at the tree. And the tree was happy. But now it did not wish to frighten him. It had understood that it must give only that which the child needed, or that which he would understand and bear. And perhaps the time for the new flowers was not yet at hand.

It was also true that the gold flower on the child's bosom was losing its glow because the child's spirit was tinged with questions and doubts. He did not know how to see the flower with his soul to which, in truth, it had been dedicated. And the flower waned on his bosom. Many of its petals dropped and it wilted. After a while it became an ugly, deformed thing which the child did not want to wear any more.

"I don't want to wear it any more," he said one morning when asked by the tree what he had done with it.

And the tree asked if he wanted another.

The child refused and then left.

The tree spent the whole day in great pain, actually as if a woodcutter had planted his axe into its heart. People came to rest under its cool foliage and it still sur-

rounded them with its protection. Children came to play hide-and-seek within its boughs and it still offered them the enchanted kingdom of its being. And the men and the children all had the impression that the tree had never, never felt more happy.

With the coming of evening came the birds which had returned to their nests in the tree. Then night followed. And another bird started circling over the tree—huge, shapeless, dark and like a tempest. It was the tree's pain that was circling over it and, as the bird circled, it moaned and wailed. It would have liked to be able to walk like the child: it would have walked far, very far away. At the same time, it knew that it must not suffer, that there was something else and that this thing, which it did not know, was yet in him. It prayed, it prayed to know what that mystery was.

At dawn the answer came. The sky was still dark but a light was emerging in the east. The air was fresh like water that quenches a long-wandering traveller. The world was imbued with newness. Yes, everything was new, everything was to be born for the first time. And the tree, in truth, felt that it was coming into being at that very moment. And all the gold flowers fell off from its branches and dropped on the soft, wet earth.

And so peace returned to the tree and time seemed to it to stand still. In that immobile time where it now was stationed, the gold flowers that had dropped on the earth around it started to sprout and delicate little roots of gold started to spread into the darkness of the earth. Tender stems of gold rose in the obscurity seeking the light of the sun without. And the tree lived on in its felicity. Its soul was immense, inaccessible and resplendent. Nothing could touch it any more, neither pain nor even joy, for now it was immersed in silence as in an ocean of light and tranquillity.

When the child came back that day, the tree smiled with all its leaves and he felt that it had never loved him as much. And the child returned its smile and the tree smiled at him even more and spread over him its deep penetrating fragrance. Then the child forgot the vague thoughts that had clouded his heart. He felt as in the first days of their story and started to laugh and to kiss the tree and to caress its bark with his soft, delicate fingers. The tree was happy in a joy quite different from that which it had felt previously. Now the one who was happy was not it: its joy did not belong to it any more and, because of this, was boundless. For the tree had become the sylvan vessel of all the joy of the world.

And so while the child, as in the past, played and dreamed amidst the branches, the tree was propagating itself to the infinite. From the earth, budding sprouts born from the gold flowers that had fallen on the ground around the tree sprung up. With quiet speed they grew, raising towards the sky their branches covered with gold. And the new ones very soon became as tall as the one in whose boughs the child sat and dreamed.

Then the moment came when the child reopened his eyes. Without having seen a thing he knew that something had happened. Cautiously, he let himself glide down the trunk and when he came to the foot of the tree he regarded the huge forest of gold that surrounded him. A tranquil joy flooded his being. And he understood.

It was the love the tree bore for him that had become this forest. The tree had surpassed the love it had for the child, the tree had itself become the love of the universe, a love that asks for nothing, gives nothing even, but simply exists in all that exists, in all the beings and in all things of the universe, as in all the trees of the forest of gold which surrounded the child. And the child did not know that he loved the tree nor that the tree loved him but that the universe itself was Love.

ARCHAKA

(Translated by Maurice from the French)

EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

(50)

As mountains surrounded us naturally our topic of conversation turned again and again to mountains. Why were our Hill-Stations called by that name when any elevation over three thousand feet is called a mountain in Europe? Most of our Hill-Stations are situated between five to eight thousand feet above sea-level. They should be called Mountain-Resorts, Mountain-Perches, Mountain-Abodes or some such poetical name. Someone asked, "Have you read Nicholas Roerich's book *Altai Himalaya*?" Most of us had. "Who was he?" asked one who had not. Nicholas Konstantinovich Roerich was a great Russian painter and he was very much connected with India. "To me," I said, "he was the only European artist in the 19th-20th centuries whose paintings reminded me of our Mother." His inspirations came from higher planes and were transcriptions of the truth of those planes. When I first saw his painting *Man Behold*, if I had not known the name of the painter I would have thought it was the Mother who had painted it.

Roerich was born in St. Petersburg in 1874 just a few years before the Mother was born. From his early youth he became a first-class artist and he was interested in Russian Folklore in all its aspects; also stage-designing and archaeology interested him. His idea was Art for Art's sake, in the sense that Beauty was its object, but it ought to be a means of communicating the Eternal Beauty by expressing mystic experiences; this was a kind of religion to him. He was a *Fm de siècle Idéalist*. The Mother would have said these words. Once when very young he went out on a Russian tour and brought back seventy-five canvases and the Emperor wanted them all. Roerich came in contact with the eminent organiser Diaghilev who wanted to take to Paris a Russian ballet troupe to show the Parisians the excellence of Russian art and, if possible, dazzle Paris, the fashion-setter of Europe for ages. And what a feast the Parisians had! Music by Rimsky Korsakov, Moussorgsky, Glinka, Tchaikovsky and Glazunov. Prima Ballerina the fabulous Anna Pavlova. Décor by Bakst Korovine and Roerich. Paris was taken by storm. It was a great event in the history of European art. There were five hundred performances. Here it may be mentioned that an Indian, Uday Shankar, had the unique honour of getting the opportunity of dancing with Anna Pavlova on the stage of Paris.

Roerich, it seems, had some spiritual experiences and was considered a Guru by many. He was well versed in Buddhist and Hindu spiritual writings and scriptures. He spent the last eighteen years of his life in Kulu, the beautiful Hill-Station near Kashmir. Kulu is a sort of Kulanthapitha or the end of the habitable world. He claimed to have found an ancient Buddhist chronicle stating that India would be the

stage of the Second Coming of Christ. There is a strong tradition that Christ was in Kashmir for some time where a mysterious collection is still preserved of his sayings. One was copied on the Buland Darwaza in Fatepur Sikri by order of Akbar the Great Moghul. This was what was written:

“Said Jesus, on whom be peace: The world is a bridge, pass over it but build no house there. He who hopeth for an hour may hope for eternity. The world is but an hour, spend it in devotion—the rest is worth nothing.”

Here I would like to add a passage written by a famous critic on Roerich:

“In the history of the fine arts certain individuals have appeared from time to time whose work has a unique, a profound and indeed a mystical quality which differentiates them from their contemporaries, making it impossible to classify them in any known category or ally them to any school because they resemble themselves only and one another like some spaceless timeless order of initiates. Such were Leonardo, Rembrandt, Dürer, Blake and in other fields Beethoven and Balzac. Their works show flashes of that daemonic and eerie beauty which is the sign whereby they may be identified as belonging to that mystical brotherhood. Roerich in his life, in his character and in his art reveals himself as a member of this fraternity.”

I would not have taken the trouble to quote all this had I not been impressed that Roerich was very much under the influence of our Mother. Everything reveals the touch of a superior influence. He proclaimed his message of the victory of man's spirit, the unity of the peoples, in the name of beauty and truth. A quotation from his *Altai Himalaya*:

“Over the mountains rings out the forging of the sword and the call of the Valkyrie and the magic fire music and the roar of Fafner. I remember Stravinsky once was ready to annihilate Wagner. No, Igor, this heroic realism, these harmonies of achievements are not to be destroyed. And the music of Wagner is also true and rings remarkable in the mountains.”

There is a thing called the *Roerich pact* where some unique and noble thoughts are recorded, the ideas of the master.

One of Roerich's sons married an Indian girl, Devika Rani. She was our Number One film actress in the early thirties. But she came from a good family and her first husband was the founder of Bombay Talkies. Some years after he died Devika married Svetoslav Roerich who was also an artist. N. Roerich died on December 1, 1947 and was cremated in Indian style. The place shows a slab on which is written:

15 Dec. 1947

Samvat 30 Magh 2004 Vikram Era

The Great Friend of India

Maharshi Nicholas Roerich

The last rites were performed here

OM Ram

Here was an eminent European who liked India and the Indians, had for his daughter-in-law an Indian girl and was well versed in Indian spiritual literature. So the West met the East and was happy with this relationship. His paintings can be seen in all the major exhibitions in the world.

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA BANERJI

KEEP YOUR WORD

A FOLKTALE FROM PONDICHERRY

THE hen and the cock were very much worried over their nest of eggs. However well they cared for them, they were unable to protect them from the greedy fangs of a snake. The very presence of a snake was enough to frighten the fowl couple and made them run for their lives. And the snake without much difficulty broke open the eggshells and happily gulped the contents. When the couple made sure of the snake's departure, they returned to their coop only to find the broken empty shells. That happened every time the hen laid eggs.

All the other creatures multiplied and felt proud of their progeny. But the fowl couple grieved over their fate. They beat their chests with their wings and cried. And whenever they did so, the birds from the trees consoled them but none came forward to help them guard their eggs. Oh! Who is not afraid of the vicious snake?

The cock thought of reporting the matter to the snake's lifetime foe, the mongoose. But he dropped the idea of approaching the mongoose, for he knew pretty well that there was no guarantee that he would come back safe from him. The mongoose who once had a bickering with the cock and got insulted in a public place had vowed to avenge the insult. The cock did not forget that. And he had no courage to approach the animals of better valour and strength.

However, the cock kept watch while the hen sat brooding over her fresh nest of eggs. There was no glow of faith in their eyes. They expected danger at any moment and hence looked depressed.

The eagle, who was taking rest on the branch of a nearby tree, saw the sorrow-stricken couple and casually inquired into the matter. The cock opened his mouth to reply but his overwhelming grief strangled the words in his throat. The hen burst into tears... seconds later she narrated amidst her sobbings the happenings every time she laid eggs.

The eagle sympathised with the hen in her bereavement.

"I didn't narrate the sad happenings just to win your sympathy. Please let us know if you can help us in any way," cackled the hen.

"Why not? My claws and beak are strong enough to tear any snake into shreds. But, you see, I don't believe in any free service. It is very easy for me to save your eggs from the fangs of even the largest snake. But what will you give me in return?" demanded the eagle.

"By helping us save our eggs, you are giving life to the chicks inside the shells. Thereby, you make us feel proud of our brood of chickens. We'll really be indebted to you if you help us... Ask anything," reciprocated the hen.

"Anything?" exclaimed the eagle.

"Sure! If you think we can give it to you," replied the hen.

“Good! If you oblige to hand over one out of every five chickens, I will wipe out the snakes from this earth.” The eagle spoke thus and looked at the face of the hen.

She turned pale. The cock understood that she was in a fix. He went near her and whispered into her ear, “Don’t you think that something is better than nothing? Instead of losing all the chickens, we are blessed with four out of every five... and one, after all one... is a negligible number. Be at ease and agree to the bargain.”

The hen thought for a while. She emboldened herself and spoke, “All right. If fate wills so, so let it be. I agree to give a chicken out of every five. From now onwards, start killing all the snakes that you come across. Keep your word.”

“Keep your word too,” said the eagle. Then he took off and from that day he started making the best use of his claws and beak against the snakes.

Now that the snakes were afraid of the eagle, they didn’t stir out of their pits. The hen and the cock heaved a great sigh of relief.

In their happiness, they went on producing eggs and within a short period quite a good number of chickens were added to their family. The cock with his puffed-up chest strutted up and down while his wife felt extremely proud of her large brood. The joy of seeing a lot of chickens by their side made the couple forget their part of the bargain.

Time passed. Days rolled on.

One day the eagle came to the coop and demanded his share.

The hen refused, saying, “All of them are my children. To the mother all children are equal. How can I discriminate and hand over any, knowing clearly well that you will dine on its flesh? Think about it and be kind enough to ask me something else.”

“Something else!” the eagle let out a shrill cry. “What do you mean? Keep your word! Now it is you who should think about it and not I. But be sure of one thing. If you refuse to give me my share, I’ll not wait for your permission.”

“I will fight tooth and nail to save my children,” retorted the hen.

The eyes of the eagle became red with anger. He warned the hen, “Since you have insulted me by not keeping your word, I’ll hereafter by hook or by crook take away your chicks one after another. Fight and save them if you can!” The moment he finished speaking the last word, the eagle swooped down on the youngest of the chickens and flew away with its booty.

That’s why the eagle even today takes away the chickens one after another and, in order to continue doing it and avenge insult, he sticks to his bargain and continues killing the snakes.

Collected & retold by P. RAJA