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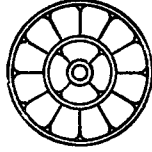
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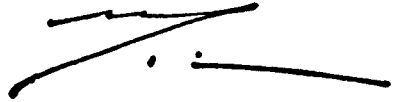


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON JULY 6, 1955

Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*,
"Planes and Parts of the Being."

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "Finally the soul or psychic being retires into the psychic world to rest there till a new birth is close." Then, Mother, what happens to the central being afterwards?

THIS depends absolutely on the different instances. We said that the central being and the psychic being are the same thing but the part which stays and is in the Divine stays and is in the Divine. The psychic is the delegate of this Divine in the earth life, for the growth on earth. But the part of the central being which is identified with the Divine remains identified with the Divine and does not change. Even during life it is identified with the Divine, and after death it remains what it was in life, for it this makes no difference. It is the psychic being which has alternations of experience and assimilation, experience and assimilation. But the Jivatman is in the Divine and remains in the Divine, and doesn't move from there; and it is not progressive. It is in the Divine, it is identified with the Divine, it remains identified with the Divine, not separated. It makes no difference to it, whether there is an earthly body or not.

Then, Sweet Mother, is everyone's central being the same?

No, for we are told that it is identified in multiplicity. It is the eternal truth of each being. From one point of view they are identical, from another they are multiple; because the truth of each being is an individual truth but it is identified with the Divine. It is outside the manifestation but it is the origin of the manifestation. It is a unity which is not a uniformity.

It is indeed the same thing that I was explaining last time; each one is different and yet each one is identical. If you approach the Divine from various angles, He seems to you different, because of the angle from which you approach Him. It is the same thing for the Manifested. But in this angle it is all the same, if I may say so, the complete unity of the Divine which one attains. It is the meeting point which is different but beyond the meeting point it is a single totality.

It is very difficult to put it in words. But it is an experience which one can have: it is as though there were innumerable doors or paths by which one could reach the Divine. So when one approaches he does so from a certain angle, he enters by a certain door, but as soon as he has gone right in, he realises that it is a single oneness, it is only the path leading to it or the particular approach which is different.

Sweet Mother, "the Jivatman...the moment it presides over the dynamics of the manifestation, knows itself as one centre of the multiple Divine, not as the Parameshwara."

That's exactly what I have just said. I am not going to begin all over again.

What?

Sweet Mother, when Sri Aurobindo was in Alipore,¹ Vivekananda came for fifteen days and explained something special to him. What part of Vivekananda was it, the psychic being or the atman?

It could very well be his mind. It could very well be the mind because he had unified his mind around his psychic being. Therefore his mind could continue to exist indefinitely. It partakes of the immortality of the psychic being. It could very well be his mind.

Mother, can one enter into communion with one's Jivatman without the ego being dissolved?

That's what Sri Aurobindo says. He says that the ego survives the physical life, the bodily life; this is perfectly correct. There is a vital ego and a mental ego which can continue to exist for quite a long time. But one can have experiences without the ego being dissolved. Otherwise who would have experiences? How many people are there who have dissolved their ego? There can't be very many, I think.

When one has an experience it is as though one went through his ego to have his experience, and one can, if he continues, end up by diminishing the hardness—the obscurity and hardness—of the ego, making it more and more plastic and permeable by multiplying the experiences. That's something one feels very clearly, that one passes through something like a hard shell which prevents him from having the experience; one passes through, has the experience, and when he comes back, he again has the impression of going through a shell which shuts him in; imprisons him for a long time. That's how it is. But those who have succeeded in entering consciously into contact with their psychic being can keep this contact...

To pass completely to the other side of the ego so that it no longer intervenes, a fairly long time is needed, it doesn't happen at all immediately. And then you feel that thing which, seen from within, suffocates you; and seen from outside it has an insignificant consistency, but it prevents the being from feeling integrally the intensity of the experience; it is like a layer which diminishes the intensity of the vibrations and the intensity of the consciousness, and you feel that. You feel it as

¹ Sri Aurobindo was arrested for sedition on the 1st of May, 1908 and detained in Alipore jail for a year. The British Government, taking its stand on his articles and the reports of his speeches, held him in fact responsible for the entire revolutionary movement.

something very fixed and very opaque. Many people certainly have experiences but they don't remember them; that's because when they pass through this layer of the ego, they forget everything, they lose everything, lose the memory of their experience. But when one has formed the habit, perhaps the memory is a little dimmed, hasn't the intensity and exactness, but it remains.

Is that all? Nothing else?

Mother, the other day you said that when one thinks of someone or something, one part of this thought goes there at once.

Yes.

For example, I think of someone who is in Calcutta, then if my thought goes there, I ought to have the knowledge of...

Thought is only conscious of thought in the mental world. So you can become very conscious of the mental atmosphere of Calcutta, of the thought of the person to whom you go, but of nothing else, absolutely nothing that has to do with the vital and physical.

To be conscious of the vital you must go there in the vital, and this is already an exteriorisation which leaves the body at least more than three-fourths in trance. And if you want to see things physically, you must go out in your most material subtle physical and then here you leave your body in a cataleptic state; and these things are not to be done without someone being with you who understands them and can guard you.

But the mental exteriorisation occurs constantly. It puts you in contact only with the mental world. Perhaps if you are very conscious and the person you go to see is very conscious, and if at that moment he has formed opinions or ideas about something happening in Calcutta, then you can become conscious of the ideas of this person on what is happening—indirectly—but you are not directly conscious of the thing.

Mother, when one imagines something, does it not exist?

When you imagine something, it means that you make a mental formation which may be close to the truth or far from the truth—it also depends upon the quality of your formation. You make a mental formation and there are people who have such a power of formation that they succeed in making what they imagine real. There are not many of these but there are some. They imagine something and their formation is so well made and so powerful that it succeeds in being realised. These are creators; there are not many of them but there are some.

If one thinks of someone who doesn't exist or who is dead?

Ah! what do you mean? What have you just said? Someone who doesn't exist or someone who is dead? These are two absolutely different things?

I mean someone who is dead.

Someone who is dead!

If this person has remained in the mental domain, you can find him immediately. Naturally if he is no longer in the mental domain, if he is in the psychic domain, to think of him is not enough. You must know how to go into the psychic domain to find him. But if he has remained in the mental domain and you think of him, you can find him immediately, and not only that, but you can have a mental contact with him and a kind of mental vision of his existence.

The mind has a capacity of vision of its own and it is not the same vision as with these eyes, but it is a vision, it is a perception in forms. But this is not imagination. It has nothing to do with imagination.

Imagination, for instance, is when you begin to picture to yourself an ideal being to whom you apply all your conceptions, and when you tell yourself "why, it should be like this, like that, its form should be like this, its thought like that, its character like that," when you see all the details and build up the being. Now, writers do this all the time because when they write a novel, they imagine. There are those who take things from life but there are those who are imaginative, creators; they create a character, a personage and then put him in their book later. This is to imagine. To imagine, for example, a whole concurrence of circumstances, a set of events, this is what I call telling a story to oneself. But it can be put down on paper, and then one becomes a novelist. There are very different kinds of writers. Some imagine everything, some gather all sorts of observations from life and construct their book with them. There are a hundred ways of writing a book. But indeed some writers imagine everything from the beginning to the end. It all comes out of their head and they construct even their whole story without any support in things physically observed. This truly is imagination. But as I say, if they are very powerful and have a considerable capacity for creation, it is possible that one day or another there will be a physical human being who realises their creation. This too is true.

What do you suppose imagination is, eh? Have you never imagined anything, you?

And what happens?

All that one imagines.

You mean that you imagine something and it happens like that, eh? Or it is in a dream...

What is the function, the use of the imagination?

If one knows how to use it, as I said, one can create for oneself his own inner and outer life; one can build his own existence with his imagination, if one knows how to use it and has a power. In fact it is an elementary way of creating, of forming things in the world. I have always felt that if one didn't have the capacity of imagination he would not make any progress. Your imagination always goes ahead of your life. When you think of yourself, usually you imagine what you want to be, don't you, and this goes ahead, then you follow, then it continues to go ahead and you follow. Imagination opens for you the path of realisation. People who are not imaginative—it is very difficult to make them move; they see just what is there before their nose, they feel just what they are moment by moment and they cannot go forward because they are clamped by the immediate thing. It depends a good deal on what one calls imagination. However...

Men of science must be having imagination!

A lot. Otherwise they would never discover anything. In fact, what is called imagination is a capacity to project oneself outside realised things and towards things realisable, and then to draw them by the projection. One can obviously have progressive and regressive imaginations. There are people who always imagine all the catastrophes possible, and unfortunately they also have the power of making them come. It's like the antennae going into a world that's not yet realised, catching something there and drawing it here. Then naturally it is an addition to the earth atmosphere and these things tend towards manifestation. It is an instrument which can be disciplined, can be used at will; one can discipline it, direct it, orientate it. It is one of the faculties one can develop in himself and render serviceable, that is, use it for definite purposes.

Sweet Mother, can one imagine the Divine and have the contact?

Certainly if you succeed in imagining the Divine you have the contact, and you can have the contact with what you imagine, in any case. In fact it is absolutely impossible to imagine something which doesn't exist somewhere. You cannot imagine anything at all which doesn't exist somewhere. It is possible that it doesn't exist on the earth, it is possible that it's elsewhere, but it is impossible for you to imagine something which is not already contained in principle in the universe; otherwise it could not occur.

Then, Sweet Mother, this means that in the created universe nothing new is added?

In the created universe? Yes. The universe is progressive; we said that con-

stantly things manifest, more and more. But for your imagination to be able to go and seek beyond the manifestation something which will be manifested, well, it may happen, in fact it does—I was going to tell you that it is in this way that some beings can cause considerable progress to be made in the world, because they have the capacity of imagining something that's not yet manifested. But there are not many. One must first be capable of going beyond the manifested universe to be able to imagine something which is not there. There are already many things which can be imagined.

What is our terrestrial world in the universe? A very small thing. Simply to have the capacity of imagining something which does not exist in the terrestrial manifestation is already very difficult, very difficult. For how many billions of years hasn't it existed, this little earth? And there have been no two identical things. That's much. It is very difficult to go out from the earth atmosphere with one's mind; one can, but it is very difficult. And then if one wants to go out, not only from the earth atmosphere but from the universal life!

To be able simply to enter into contact with the life of the earth in its totality from the formation of the earth until now, what can this mean? And then to go beyond this and enter into contact with universal life from its beginnings up to now...and then again to be able to bring something new into the universe, one must go still farther beyond.

Not easy!

That's all?

(To the child) Convinced?

(Questions and Answers 1955, pp. 227-235)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of June 1986)

(These talks are from the notebooks of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others, after the accident to his right leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becharlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshankar. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)

December 18, 1940

(The previous evening the following talk had taken place).

SRI AUROBINDO: In the last issue of *Sunday Times* there are some stories related by Europeans about the incidents of their previous births. They have given all corroborative proofs by which the stories have been verified. *(Sri Aurobindo cited an example.)*

M: I also heard of a story, Sir. In our part a Deputy Magistrate's grandson, who is now a student, related that he had been a parrot in a previous birth, residing in a particular banyan tree and bowing before the image of Vishnu, etc. The wife of this magistrate, while passing beneath that tree, had seen a parrot and hearing about its religious character prayed that it might be born as her grandson. The grandson related that story when he was only 4 years of age.

(This evening Sri Aurobindo broached the subject by addressing M.)

SRI AUROBINDO: Your story about the parrot being born as the magistrate may not be true.

M: Not magistrate but his grandson. *(Laughter)*

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, I see, but that doesn't matter. In one case the parrot will read law, in the other it will read ordinary books.

M: Why not true, Sir? You mean that a parrot can't be born as human?

SRI AUROBINDO: Because there is no evidence by which to verify its correctness. It may be the simple imagination of a boy, whereas in other cases there is ample proof given.

M: Can't a parrot or animal be born as human? You don't believe in the evolution of life, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, I do.

M: In a Jaina story it is said that the mother of our first *tirthankara*¹ was born as a banana tree. By the side of that tree there was another tree full of thorns. Those thorns used to prick the banana tree so much—

N: Good Lord! Do you believe in these stories?

M: —but in spite of the pain and suffering it used to remain calm.

P: As a reward it was born as a *tirthankara's* mother.

SRI AUROBINDO: You are asked whether you believe in these stories.

M (*looking at N*): Why not? When there is no proof to the contrary.

N: But there is no proof in their favour either.

M: Why? This one has been told by the *tirthankara* himself who is a *sarvajna*, i.e. one who knows all past, present and future.

SRI AUROBINDO: How do you know it was told by a *tirthankara*?

M: Why? It is in the Shastra. (*Laughter*)

P: Everything given in the Shastra is true?

M: Otherwise why should it be stated?

SRI AUROBINDO: For the sake of pleasure. Besides, what proof is there that it was told by a *sarvajna* or that what the *sarvajna* said was true?

M: Why not? A *sarvajna* is supposed to know everything. You don't think *sarvajnas* exist?

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know, have never met one.

M: If these stories can't be believed then Buddha's recounting of all his past lives is also not true, not correct.

SRI AUROBINDO: How to know they were correct or not?

P: Besides, who reports those stories? Is it Buddha himself?

M: Then all that is said about Krishna and Arjuna and the Gita can't be believed.

P: It is not necessary to believe everything. The point is whether the principle laid down there is true or not.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. The important question is whether the truth or principle laid down in the Gita is valid, can be verified. The rest is unessential, legendary, unimportant.

M: Buddha says—

N: Where?

M: In the book. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: You remind me of a British worker who said, "It must be true because I saw it in print." (*Laughter*)

M: In that case all Buddhism and Jainism are false.

N: Not Buddhism!

P: Why false? There are records by which it could be proved that Buddha did exist whereas about his previous births, about the existence of other Bodhisattvas there is no proof. After Gautama Buddha appeared we came to know that he was the

¹ A holy sage

32nd Bodhisattwa while Dipankar was the first. But all that depends on who has said it and whether there is any proof for it.

M (to Sri Aurobindo): Do you disbelieve it?

SRI AUROBINDO: Disbelief is easy. Belief is difficult. But it does not matter whether Buddha and other Bodhisattwas did exist at all. The thing is whether what has been said as regards Buddhism can be verified by experience. That is the important thing.

P: They usually regard four things as possible proof of a fact—*śruti*, *anumāna* *anubhāva*, *āptavākya*.

M: *Āptavākya* alone is enough. What do you say, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO (beginning to shake his head): What is meant by *āptavākya*?

M: Words of a realised soul.

SRI AUROBINDO: How to know if one is realised and from whom the words come—from him or from somebody who reports them? Annie Besant, for instance, calls herself a Saviour and knows all about her past, present and future—

M: I think even the theosophists don't believe in that.

N: Why? Some may and some may not, just as some Jains may not believe in the *tīrthaṅkara* stories. (Laughter)

M: Oh no, every Jain believes in them.

SRI AUROBINDO: It was said that Mahomed was born some 3000-4000 years previous to what is presumed to be his present date. After sorting out all the documents and spurious evidences, it has been cut down to so many years now! So which is the *āptavākya* and how to believe unless there is some proof to substantiate it?

M: But if Purani reports something you have said, can't it be taken as true?

SRI AUROBINDO: It depends. It may or may not be true. Depends on the reporter. It is not only Purani, but from Purani to somebody else, and then from somebody to somebody again and so on! For instance, in that case the miracles that have been added to my life by Motilal Mehta may be considered true.

M: Yes, Sir, as he was your disciple and came in direct contact with you. But miracles are associated with the life of realised souls. Alice told me once of a miracle in Hyderabad. She said that for a long time there was no rain in Hyderabad. Then she said to people, "You will see in 24 hours there will be rain." (As he was narrating the story Sri Aurobindo was saying all the time "Yes, yes.") Then she began to pray to the Mother, pray and pray very intensely and then came a heavy down-pour. Was it not a miracle by the Mother?

SRI AUROBINDO: Well! it was a response to Alice's prayer, but any and every prayer doesn't have a response—it must be an intense prayer. One may go on praying and praying without any result. But it was not a miracle.

M: It was not done by the intervention of the Mother?

SRI AUROBINDO: Maybe, but it was not a miracle, it was the result of a contact

with some forces that brought down the rain. It was a play of forces. Any number of people have done that sort of thing. There is the story of some European who prayed to save the ship on which he was, in the midst of a heavy storm, and it was saved. Then the well-known story of a Christian Minister who began to pray for rain. There was such a downpour that it wouldn't stop for days. Then the Minister cried out, "Oh, God, it is just ridiculous." (*Sri Aurobindo said this with great amusement.*)

N: What happened as a result of his outcry?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is not reported. The healing by Christ is not a miracle for that matter. Many people have done that.

C: What is a miracle then?

SRI AUROBINDO: If what happens is something contrary to any laws of nature.

M: If on the new moon day, the moon can be shown?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is not miraculous—may be hypnotic! (*Laughter*)

M: If not hypnotic?

SRI AUROBINDO: Then it can be a miracle.

M: The raising of the table cloth from the table and suspending it in the air as narrated in the Mother's conversation?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is not a miracle either. It is simply done by putting out some force. Where there is a method, a process, it can't be a miracle. Otherwise levitation is also a miracle.

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

TWO UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES

Shri Gopal Bhattacharjee, the author of this article, is the Joint Secretary of the Sri Aurobindo Society and Incharge of its International Section. He has toured many countries in all parts of the world carrying the message of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and has been instrumental in opening several Centres of the Society in these countries. He was also closely associated with the Celebrations of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's Birth Centenary. He calls himself the Mother's soldier.

In Bangladesh

SRI AUROBINDO Society organised the Birth Centenary Celebrations of Sri Aurobindo in all the States in India. Shri Navajata (Bhaiji) took me to the Mother in January and told her that he wanted to send me to different States to organise the celebrations. "Will the Mother approve of it?" The Mother said yes and gave me a special Blessing Packet with a big photograph of Sri Aurobindo.

After the Centenary Celebrations had been organised in India, they were organised in the neighbouring States of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim (then a separate State) and Sri Lanka and Centres were opened there. Bangladesh however posed a problem. This is an account of how the Mother's Grace and Force work when someone sincerely wants to serve the Divine.

After its liberation in 1971, things were in a chaotic condition in Bangladesh. Making my pranams to the Mother, in June 1972, I left for Bangladesh. At the Calcutta airport the customs officer informed me that a new rule had come by which Indian citizens could not carry more than Rs. 500/- with them. All my explanations were of no avail. I finally sent a telegram to the Mother and boarded the plane with Rs. 500/- in my pocket.

On landing, the customs officer at Dacca in Bangladesh pointed to the golden symbol of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother pinned to my shirt. Very enthusiastically I explained to him the purpose of my visit. He reacted and said, "Oh!... So you have come here to preach Sri Aurobindo's ideals. But I warn you nobody will listen to you because nobody is interested in Indian sages. I also advise you to remove your symbol and keep it somewhere where it is not seen, otherwise you might even be in danger." I controlled my anger and told him that I was the Mother's soldier and a soldier does not put down his arms and quit the battlefield but is always ready to lay down his life.

I went out. As I did not know anyone in Dacca I asked the taxi-driver to take me to a good hotel. He took me to Dacca Intercontinental Hotel. While I waited for the lift to take me to the room, I wondered how I could stay for a week in such an expensive hotel and complete my work with Rs. 500/- in my pocket. I began to pray to the Mother with a heavy heart.

Just then the lift came down and who should walk out but Mr. X, an internationally successful businessman, a devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, whom I had met in Pondicherry through Bhajji. He was most surprised to see me. But hearing about my work he said that clearly this was not a coincidence but the Mother's wish that we should meet here in Bangladesh. He then told me that I was not to worry at all about the money. He called his manager and gave instructions that all my hotel bills would be paid by him and that a car with a driver should be immediately put at my disposal. He also told me that he would fix up my meetings with some of the Ministers in Bangladesh. I was overwhelmed by his generosity and tears gathered in my eyes when I thought of the Mother's Grace and how she had sorted things out for me in a strange land, where every step was into the unknown.

I then met the Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh. He told me that it was impossible to do anything in the present state of Bangladesh. Others also had tried and they had failed. Not only could he not help me in any way but he would strongly advise me to return after doing only some sight-seeing.

When I met an industrialist through Mr. X's manager they all agreed that the climate was not at all favourable for such an effort. In fact there had been some serious trouble recently. The next day I met some ministers of the Bangladesh Government. They all said that they knew about Sri Aurobindo and that he was a great sage. But if anything was done by the Government there could be an adverse effect. My disappointment was acute.

In the afternoon I visited the famous Romana Kali Temple. When I began to feel thirsty I was directed by the driver to the Dacca Press Club which happened to be just in front. While standing there I suddenly got the inspiration that something might still be done if I could hold a press conference. I contacted the secretary of the club and the conference was fixed for 9 a.m. the next day, but he said I should not speak on anything connected with religion or spirituality. I could not sleep the whole night. I read the book *The Mother* and prayed to the Mother.

At 9 o'clock six reporters turned up. I spoke only about the international city of Auroville. But I was flooded with questions and in answering them naturally I began to speak about Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, their teachings and the Ashram. I came back wondering where I stood and what should be my next step.

The next morning while glancing casually at the newspaper I could not believe my eyes. There was a beautiful picture of Sri Aurobindo and a full report of my press conference on the front page of the leading daily *Dainik*. I went down and bought another paper, *Itefak*. Here were two pictures of Sri Aurobindo and Auroville and a detailed report on the front page. I was bursting with joy that I had been able to bring the name of Sri Aurobindo to millions in Bangladesh during his Birth Centenary. I was informed that it was after 25 years that a Bangladesh newspaper had printed the picture of an Indian sage.

Soon I began receiving telephone calls from all over asking for more information,

including the Vice Chancellor of the University. The Indian High Commissioner rang me up and invited me to lunch. He told me that he was unable to understand how such an article could have been printed when there was so much hostility to India in certain powerful quarters. But I knew that the Mother's Grace had descended on Bangladesh during Sri Aurobindo's Birth Centenary.

Within one day a Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Committee was formed with the Education Minister of Bangladesh as a member and it even held its first meeting within two days. It was decided that the Birth Centenary would be celebrated on 15th August 1972. A Sri Aurobindo Society Centre with many distinguished persons was opened. I was invited to speak at Dacca University and can never forget the enthusiasm and openness of the girls and boys there. As soon as I returned, a complete set of Sri Aurobindo's Collected Works was sent to Dacca as a gift from Sri Aurobindo Society. The Centenary Celebrations were performed with a lot of pomp and splendour. Here is an excerpt from a report in a Dacca English Daily, dated 16th August 1972:

"A seminar on the life and philosophy of Sri Aurobindo was held in observance of the Saint's birth centenary at Curzon Hall on Tuesday, reports E.N.A., presided over by Begum Sofia Kamal. The seminar was participated in among others by notable scientists, Dr. Qudrant J-Kuda, the Charge d'Affairs of the Indian High Commission in Bangladesh, Mr. D.N. Dikshit, Poet Jashim Uddin, Mr. Justice Devesh Chandra Bhattacharya of Dacca High Court and Dr. Nilima Ibrahim, Head of Bangla Department, Dacca University. Speaking on the occasion the Chief Guest Dr. Khuda said Sri Aurobindo was not only well known as a spiritual leader of the subcontinent but was also a foremost political and social thinker. His thoughts enkindled the sense of nationalism and unity of the ideals among the racially cultural and ethnically divided of the subcontinent. This sense had ultimately led to the liberation of the Indian subcontinent from the British rule."

In Venezuela

In 1975 I was touring the U.S., Canada, the West Indies, Jamaica, and other countries of South America, to open Centres there. Shri Navajata asked me to visit Venezuela where he knew a person whom he had met in Pondicherry in 1973. It was very difficult to get a visa for Venezuela. Port of Spain was the last stop before Venezuela and with the help of the Indian High Commission there, I finally got my visa. After I boarded the plane for Caracas, I suddenly discovered that I had left my passpost and other documents inadvertently behind in the Security Enclosure at the Port of Spain airport. I was greatly worried and did not know what to do because to land in a foreign country without a passport and other travel documents means that you are straight away arrested.

I ardently prayed to the Mother for protection saying, "Mother, I am travelling on your behalf and my passport and other documents show that I am the Joint

Secretary of Sri Aurobindo Society. If I am now subjected to any ignominious act, it will reflect badly on the Society which you have created for your work. It was you who gave me permission to travel to spread Sri Aurobindo's Message in the world." While I was thus meditating, the Captain announced in Spanish that because of some technical problem, he was taking the plane back to Port of Spain. As soon as I landed I rushed back to the counter in the Security Enclosure and found there my passport and all my documents intact. Soon after I returned, it was announced that the problem had been solved and the plane was taking off. I realised that this is how the Mother protects us, her children, in spite of all our defects, imperfections and shortcomings. Tears rolled down my face but within me I was full of joy and gratitude.

I had no contacts in Caracas, capital of Venezuela, except one name, Mrs. Olga Mago, given to me by Bhaji before I left. I did not know her telephone number and was wondering how I would reach her residence in a strange town all by myself. Also there was the language problem as Venezuela is a Spanish-speaking country. When I came out of the customs at the airport, I was looking for a taxi and suddenly a lady approached me on her own who spoke English and asked about the emblem (symbols of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother) that I was wearing. She told me she knew a person who had visited Pondicherry and recognising the symbol she enquired if I was in Caracas in connection with their work. When I asked who that person was, she told me that it was Mrs. Mago her friend, the same lady whose address was with me. She arranged everything for me and even personally took me to the hotel from the airport. She rang up her friend Mrs. Mago and they jointly organised to open a Centre in Venezuela. She offered her apartment 12 miles away from the main city on the seaside, as a Centre for Sri Aurobindo Society. So, a beautiful place was available for a Centre. Within a few days, I met some people who joined the Society as members and we opened a Centre with a collective meditation. Mrs. Mago arranged for me to visit many institutions, schools and meet the press. These were very helpful in the work. When I reached Pondicherry, Shri Navajata gave me a letter dated July 28, from Mrs. Mago which he had received and in which she described the great interest generated in her city in the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and how several persons had come forward to participate as a result of my visit.

I am reminded of the famous Sanskrit Shloka which says that the Divine Grace can make the dumb to speak and the lame to cross the mountains.

(With acknowledgements to the Silver Jubilee Seminar (1960-1965) at the Sri Aurobindo Society, pp. 37-40)

POETIC EXPRESSIONS AND RHYTHMS— GREEK AND ENGLISH

SOME COMMENTS FROM TWO LETTERS

I. 4. 1986

The Penguin Book of Greek Verse, your gift, arrived yesterday. I am delighted as well as elated with it. It covers nearly 3000 years and gets every name of note in—except Kazantzakis. He is mentioned in the Introduction along with Karyotakis and Seferis as one of the “remarkable poets who have written since the end of the First World War”, but no example is given of his “long passages of vigour and beauty”, and of his “remarkable wealth in the use of language”, as the introducer Trypanis himself puts it. I thank you for the treasure-trove.

I have dipped into it already, looked at the beauties here and there, revived my memory of why Alcaeus (if I remember aright) spoke of Sappho’s poems as “few but roses”. Reading “To a Young Girl”, I recalled John Addington Symonds’s striking translation—in Sappho’s own metre—of this praise of Anactoria. In its two most famous stanzas, Sappho hears Anactoria “silverly” laughing and her heart quivers and her voice is hushed:

Yea, my tongue is broken and through me and through me
'Neath the flesh palpable fire runs tingling;
Nothing see my eyes, and a noise of roaring
Waves in my ear sounds;

Sweat runs down in rivers, a tremor seizes
All my limbs, and paler than grass in autumn
Caught by pains of menacing death I falter,
Lost in the love-trance.

So far I have gone thoroughly only through the Homeric selections. The translations convey something of the essential quality of the *Iliad*—the fire breaking out everywhere and still the godlike control, the steady hand holding the tremendous torch. At one place, however, I find the rendering slightly inadequate. There is the Greek about the priest of Apollo going home after the rebuff by Agamemnon:

Be d'akeon para thina poluphlois boio thalasses.

Trypanis’s prose runs: “he walked silently along the shore of the loud-roaring sea.” This is any day superior to Alexander Pope’s attempt at an accumulating nasal alliteration to suggest melancholy by a sea’s droning no less than by a man’s brooding:

Silent he wander'd by the sounding main.

Homer's profundity of sense and style is lost here almost completely and an ingenious art-effect is substituted in the eighteenth-century manner. The point where Trypanis goes wrong is the compound epithet "loud-roaring". The meaning of "polu" is totally absent and with its absence something of the Homeric sea vanishes, something that is indirectly caught in Shakespeare's expression: "the multitudinous seas", as well as in Aeschylus's phrase in *Prometheus Bound* which Trypanis renders: "numberless laughing flashes of the sea's waves"—and which Elizabeth Browning has Englished:

The innumerable laughter of the waves.

To catch the full Homeric effect one has to read Sri Aurobindo's hexametrical version:

Silent he walked by the shore of the many-rumoured ocean.

Homer's "rosy-fingered dawn" (rododactulos eos) was an old acquaintance very happily met again, but what pleased me much is that the Homeric dawn does not have only this beautiful stock adjective: I discovered another felicitous description: "saffron-mantled dawn." A third alternative which occurs in the *Odyssey*—"lovely-tressed dawn"—failed to stir me. However, the *Odyssey*'s "fish-rich" as well as the *Iliad*-echoing "wine-dark" for the sea made me glad. The story of Priam going at night to the tents of Achilles to beg for the body of Hector and the story of Odysseus returning home like a beggar and ultimately proving himself lord of the house are among the great moments of world-literature. In the latter story a short prelude to the morning scene should have been there. Odysseus, seeing the revelry and arrogance of the suitors, lies down on the hard floor while they repose on couches, and he says to himself: "Heart, endure." A little previous to this we have his old nurse recognising him by a birthmark on one of his feet: she washes his feet as of a guest and it is then that she identifies her lord. Only she and the old dog Argos know him for what he is. The Argos-incident is fully given in the anthology. As a dog-lover it has always appealed to me. Reading it now I remembered a critic noting that phrase about the dog: "Argos enipleios kunaraisteon." Trypanis translates the last two words "full of vermin." Better still and truer to Homer's directness would be: "full of lice." But mark how the polysyllabic Greek combines straightforwardness with euphony. In English it would be impossible to bring in polysyllables here without importing artificiality and pompousness. There is nothing Homeric in writing: "swarming with parasites". The Greek language here has a distinct advantage over the English. The worst possible Englishing—a veritable absurdity—is Pope's supposedly "poetic diction": "obscene with reptile"!

Here and there I see how later poets in the Classical tradition have taken hints

from Homer and made their own memorable lines. For example, Odysseus is shown in a shipwreck: for two days he wandered "in the swelling sea", but on the third the wind fell, a breathless calm spread across, "and with a quick glance ahead as he was lifted on a great wave, he saw land near by". Virgil has seized this sudden spectacular moment for his shipwrecked Aeneas and framed that unforgettable picture:

Prospexi Italiam summa sublimis ab unda.

"Prospexi" is precisely indicative of the Homeric "glance ahead": the Latin "pro" gives the shade required, so that the hexameter would read in free English:

Italy I glimpsed ahead from the crest of a giant billow.

The one omission I find hard to overlook is of lines 297-300 in Book XVI of the Iliad. What I have to say of it is best said in the words of a passage I have traced in an old notebook of mine under the caption "A Simile." Here is what follows: "It is at a culminating point of the action. Patroclus, in the armour of Achilles, has come out to save the day where the battle is fiercest round the ships of Protesilaus. His first spear-cast strikes down a Paeonian captain. A thrill of horror runs through the whole Trojan ranks. For a minute they think that the son of Peleus himself is upon them, and remain, as it were, frozen to the ground where they stand. Then they break in rout, and the roar of battle goes up again. That minute's awful pause is illuminated by an image which is unsurpassed both in its vivid truth and in its imaginative fitness—'As when from the great crest of a high hill Zeus the Lightning-gatherer pierces the dense cloud, and of a sudden all the peaks and jutting spurs and dells shine out, and in heaven the illimitable sky is rent asunder: such was the breathing space.' The picture is given in four lines."

I shall close now, but not before I have made one remark. Ever since my college days I have admired Simonides's two lines on the contingent from Sparta who died at Thermopylae, as translated by F.L. Lucas:

Tell them in Lacedaemon, passerby,
That here obedient to their laws we lie.

Equally moving but in an entirely different vein and key is the epitaph in English for the men of the 2nd Division, who fell in the battle of Kohima and the fighting for the Imphal Road, April 1944-June 1944:

When you go home
Tell them of us and say:
For your tomorrow
We gave our today.

Here, in comparison with Simonides's couplet, we have in brief the whole difference between Romantic and Classical poetry. I am not speaking of superiority or inferiority. I have already put the two quotations on a par. But the spirit and style are at variance in the midst of the equal felicity. A terse quiet power meets us in Simonides. A lot of feeling is packed in the couplet, but there is a reticence, a restraint in the richness—true especially to the tense yet cool "Spartan" temper of Leonidas and his three hundred. The anonymous four lines are economical too but they have a quiver in their expressive gesture. First, the loaded word "home" starts the heart beating faster and in the last two verses the heroism is openly emotional though with an exquisiteness in the pathos. In the Classical example the tragedy is sensed like a sigh from the depths stoically held back. In the Romantic there is a touch of tears and though there is no shedding of them out of any weakness we have the impression of brave eyes glistening.

I.4.1969

You have given me a chance to say a few things on the Homeric hexameter from the technical point of view and with a reference to Sri Aurobindo's hexametrical experiment joining, under English conditions, "quantity" as in Homer and other classical poets to "stress" as is inevitable in all English poetry. After mentioning his "work in this line" to be "far and away superior" to that of other experimenters, you state: "...the Aurobindonean elevation and tireless epic sweep, with its fulness and its profundity, is to me one of the great achievements of the literature of the world. But still the hexameters of Sri Aurobindo do not altogether satisfy me. I think that they do not have enough really effective variation; that they are, in fact, too dactylic. I am not a master of Greek, and cannot speak with such authority as this attainment might give me: but is it not a fact that Homer's hexameter is *not* predominantly, or at least not overwhelmingly, dactylic? Does it not, in fact, get its peculiar and unmatched liquidity and subtlety and flexibility from a ringing of dactylic changes, or making of dactylic variations, on the fundamental spondaic base? Is it not, that is, a spondaic rhythm varied by dactyls, rather than the fundamentally dactylic rhythm that Sri Aurobindo thought it was?"

I believe we can very well take from his *Iliad* the following passage, couching the drawn-out kind of simile we often have in Homer, as typical of Sri Aurobindo's handling of the "quantitative" hexameter in English—I mean those four lines with their metaphysically astronomical simile about Deiphobus:

Even as a star long extinguished whose light still travels the spaces,
 Seen in its form by men, but itself goes phantom-like fleeting
 Void and null and dark through the uncaring infinite vastness,
 So now he seemed to the sight that sees all things from the Real.

Scanned according to Sri Aurobindo's own principles of the true English hexameter, the quartet exhibits these patterns:

- (1) First paeon (— ∪ ∪ ∪) anti-bacchius (— — ∪), cretic (— ∪ —), spondee (— —) dactyl (— ∪ ∪) trochee (— ∪).
- (2) Dactyl (— — ∪), trochee (— ∪), dactyl (— — ∪), spondee (— —), cretic (— ∪ —), trochee (— ∪).
- (3) Trochee(— ∪), trochee(— ∪), ionic a majore(— — ∪ ∪), trochee(— ∪), dactyl(— ∪ ∪), trochee(— ∪).
- (4) Anti-bacchius (— — ∪), dactyl (— ∪ ∪), trochee (— ∪), spondee (— —), dactyl (— ∪ ∪), trochee (— ∪).

Here, out of 24 feet, only 6 are dactyls. At one or two places, a different scansion from mine may be made, but the alternatives will not form dactyls. There are 3 clear spondees and 9 natural English substitutes for the spondaic foot—namely, trochees. The amount of variation is “enough” and “really effective”. But it is a variation in keeping with the genius of the hexameter: it is such that, except rarely, the trisyllabic foot movement with an opening long—whether dactylic or not—is never submerged. This movement has to be predominant in the hexameter though not overwhelmingly so. That is as far as English is concerned. In Greek the degree of variation is pretty small, if not nil. The Greek hexameter admits of a spondaic modulation but hardly of a non-dactylic trisyllable. None of the old inflected languages have or need so much modulation as English does. Therefore, unless we see the hexameter as more spondaic than dactylic in its base, we have to define it as essentially made up of dactyls. I don't see how you can turn Homer into a spondee-wallah. The Greek prosodists who defined the hexameter basically in terms of the dactyl founded themselves principally on an analysis of Homer. And Sri Aurobindo who, unlike most of us, was “a master of Greek”, agrees with them.

Maybe Homer has a fairly large number of lines in which the spondee hammers on our ear, but this should not lead us to deny the recurrent bounding of dactyls in his verse. Your very statement of the opposite position strikes me as rather self-contradictory. When you speak of Homer's “peculiar and unmatched liquidity and subtlety and flexibility”, the metrical means implied for him to achieve them seem to me quite other than what you suppose. Can an abundance of spondees give a liquid run, a subtle pace, a flexible turn? As you know, “dactyl” means “finger” (*cf.* Homer's “rododactulos eos”—“rosy-fingered dawn”), and the finger has three parts, one long and two short, and by this construction of it it resembles the dactylic unit of prosody. What is the cause of the finger's “flexibility”? Its being composed of three parts, with one main base of articulation and two minor ones. If there were only a couple of parts, the flexibility would be less and it could scarcely be describable as “subtle”: it would be rather elementary, rude and simple.

The absence of sufficient movement would also bear against what we may call the liquid run of the finger: there would be some sort of stiffness and slowness. Were the finger spondaic instead of dactylic it would never possess the qualities you mark in Homer as both "peculiar" and "unequaled"—that is, outstandingly and peerlessly characteristic. So Homer is, by and large, liquid and subtle and flexible because he is predominantly dactylic, with enough spondaic play to save him from becoming the slave of his own qualities and from overdoing them to the point of a multi-stepped facility and looseness, an "ondoyant" monotony. You may recollect Arnold's labels for Homer: Homer is plain and rapid and noble. Do you believe he could be "rapid" without being dactylic rather than spondaic? The spondee makes for majesty and weight and balance: it cannot give speed or lightness. Rapidity is what we are undeniably impressed with when we read Homer—rapidity accompanied by a profundity of movement, as if a whole ocean were on a mighty march. Does not Andrew Lang speak of

The surge and thunder of the Odyssey?

Homer could not be oceanic except by an inspired rush of dactyls, as in one of his most famous lines bringing in the sea itself:

Bē d'ākē/on para/thina pō/luphlōis/boiō tha/lasseś,

which Sri Aurobindo has rendered:

Sīl̄nt̄ hē/walked by thē/shore of thē/man̄y/-rumoured/ocean.

Or take that other line which has equal depth-sound and leaping reverberation:

Bē dē kat'/oulum/poiō ka/rēnōn/choōmē/nōs ker,

reading in Sri Aurobindo's translation again:

Down from thē/peaks of O/lympus hē/came, wr̄ath/vexing hīs/hēart-
strings.

What Sri Aurobindo calls "bounding or undulating dactyls" provide the basic rhythm in Homer's Greek, deftly varied with a dense dynamism of spondees.

English has very few genuine spondees and the attempt to manufacture them by an artificial disposition of words—*e.g.* a plethora of disyllabic compounds like

“heart-strings”—would lead to woodenness. The natural replacement of spondees by trochees would bring an undesirable lot of tripping, however vigorously done. A markedly trochaic hexameter would be a monstrosity. Occasionally, of course, spondees and even trochees may set the beat and in rare cases, as Sri Aurobindo has shown in *Iliad*, “even an almost wholly trochaic or a wholly spondaic line can be admitted when it is demanded by the action, *e.g.*,

He from the/c̄arven/c̄ouch ūp/rēared hīs/gīant/st̄ature

or,

F̄ate-wēighed/ūp Tr̄oy’s/sl̄ope str̄ode/musing/strong Ae/neas.”

In my opinion, Sri Aurobindo most empathically took stock of the English genius of expression when he framed his rules of true English quantity and gave both his theory and his practice of the English hexameter. I have a faint suspicion that criticism of his achievement here stems usually from a failure somewhere to understand him properly. The English ear is so accustomed to the accentual rhythm and to the disyllabic foot that a complex phenomenon like the Aurobindonian hexameter is difficult to appreciate unless one deliberately makes one’s mind a *tabula rasa* and lets Sri Aurobindo rewrite prosodic principles and possibilities on it.

No doubt, in art as in science the final maxim about a problem is: *solvitur ambulando*. If a sustained example is given, the solution is automatically provided setting all theorising at rest. So if I could see a number of pages of successful English hexameters with a spondaic base and dactylic or other variations I shall certainly attend to them carefully. But if I were impressed, it would not prove that the Aurobindonian hexameter is unsatisfying in any sense. *Iliad* is too magnificent an achievement to be declared either un-Homeric in essential tone or deficient as an experiment in English quantitative verse. What would be accomplished would be a second string to the hexametrical bow in English—and I for one would be glad to see it set up.

K. D. SETHNA

A LETTER TO THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA

*This letter has remained unpublished by the journal to which it was addressed.
So we are bringing it into the light in Mother India.*

December 26, 1985

SIR,—I would like to draw your attention to the article by Sri Arun Shourie, “Why don’t the good get along?” in the November 24-30, 1985 issue of your esteemed paper.

It is a matter of great regret that in that article he lumps together social, religious and spiritual institutions having different aims and methods and makes the sweeping remark that they are tainted with the same brush, the conclusion being: ‘the good don’t get along.’ I know very little of the Arya Samaj, Sarvodaya and other similar institutions he mentions and I hold no brief for them, but I am surprised to see the Sri Aurobindo Ashram included in the same category. The writer knows, I hope, that here is a spiritual institution like the Sri Ramakrishna Math or the Sri Ramana Ashram and stands apart from the rest in every way. I fear that the writer’s remark is not based upon a good knowledge of Sri Aurobindo’s works and therefore he does not know well what this Ashram stands for and what it is doing.

First of all, we have not set out to do any ‘good work’ as commonly understood. Our main purpose is to realise the Divine in life and Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who have themselves realised the Divine are our Gurus. It is an accepted doctrine in Indian spiritual thought and practice that spiritual masters can guide their disciples to the realisation. Call it a cult, if you like, but in the long arduous spiritual quest, many inner and outer difficulties of the lower nature such as desire, ambition, sex, ego, etc. about which the writer laments, do crop up in order to be conquered before there comes a sea-change of the being and personality. Ego and selfishness, by the way, are not the same thing. Much ‘selfless’ work is also egoistic. Sri Aurobindo in his innumerable letters in answer to questions regarding the inner struggles of the disciples has enjoined upon us to be vigilant, to evoke what the writer terms ‘Buddha’s mindfulness’. More than anything else, he has stressed the part played by the ego. A sadhak has to conquer it—by incessant effort and aspiration and by the help of the Divine Grace from above.

I speak particularly of the part the ego plays, leading to failure in all great endeavours, because that seems to be also the writer’s central theme. The means the writer has suggested in order to get rid of it and other failings are moral and mental and do not touch the root of the matter. They lead to no radical change. Sri Aurobindo says that the true way is spiritual. And that is what is being quietly but effectively practised on the whole in his Ashram behind all the noise and clamour of the world-traffic. There lies the foundation of any lasting good work.

Summarising the defective features of all the above-mentioned organisations, the writer notes ‘three facts that stand out about each of them’. (1) Creativity has

a very short life; (2) relationships within the organisation or group turn out to be far from harmonious, indeed in but a few years the group or movement splits and goes on splitting; (3) the group thinks and often talks ill of other groups, in particular of groups that are engaged in work that is similar to its own mission.

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram, in the main at any rate, has not undergone these degenerative processes. Here, creative activity is in full swing as many visitors have testified. About splitting, well, it is too early to make such hasty apprehensions. On the point of cult, it is true that in spiritual matters we accept the guidance of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo though many of us have put questions to them as regards their directions. Anyone who has read the letters of Sri Aurobindo and *Questions and Answers* of the Mother knows that they did not impose their opinions on the disciples and openly discussed their difficulties.

That our chief aim is realisation of the Divine does not preclude our interest in the welfare of other people. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo have helped countless people from the highest rank to the lowest in their various trials, not only spiritual but mundane as well. Their help to the Allies and to India during the last World War is a part of history. When Sri Aurobindo contributed to the War Fund, he had to face bitter criticism from his countrymen. He saw the ominous rise of Hitler as early as 1935, if not earlier. I quote here a small portion of his letter covering the contribution. He stated: "We feel that not only is this a battle waged in just self-defence and in defence of the nations threatened with the world-domination of Germany and the Nazi system of life, but that it is a defence of civilisation and its highest attained social, cultural and spiritual values and of the whole future of humanity.... Things could not be one-hundredth part as bad as they would be under Hitler." People realised afterwards how true his unerring vision was. I shall not recount how he directly intervened by his spiritual Force, lest I should be dubbed a blind follower.

Besides, we must remember that Sri Aurobindo calls his Yoga a world-changing yoga, not a world-shunning one. The Mother has said that what Sri Aurobindo represents in world-history is not philosophy, but an action directly from the Supreme. I have cited an example above of such an action during the last World War. The vast import of that phrase cannot be dealt with in a newspaper column. The writer can obtain the necessary light by reading Sri Aurobindo's books, if he is interested.

Lastly, at the end of the article the instance that he quotes from the Sufis evidences the fact that nothing short of faith in God and living a life of God will bring about the result the writer longs for. That is what I mean by spirituality. The Sri Aurobindo Ashram is precisely practising this spirituality and goes much further. It is too early to express the fear that this Ashram also will meet with the same fate as the other institutions the writer has singled out in his article.

NIRODBARAN

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF SOCIAL EVOLUTION

TWENTY-TWO years ago, Nov. 24, 1964, a one-act play, *L'Avenir*, written by the Mother, was produced in its Bengali version, *Bhavi Kale* (Shri Nolini Kanta's rendering) by the present writer on the stage of the Government College at Agartala, Tripura. It turned out to be a neat thing. All the elite and dignitaries of the small, capital town attended the celebration which was opened right on time with the electrifying voice of the Mother played on a tape. The theme of the play is rather simple. The heroine, an artist with a strong inner life and deepening consciousness, began to feel a widening distance between herself and her husband. The husband was not insensitive either. He felt the same, though he did not know what to do about it. Incidentally, another character, a female acquaintance who happened to be a singer and to whom the husband felt strongly drawn, came on the scene. The heroine saw the auras of the two people matching perfectly, drew the attention of the man to that, blessed their union and left.

The acting was superb, the audience appreciated the celebration and the staging of the play very much. All the same, some casual remarks from some intelligent people made me feel unhappy. The remarks ran like this: "You and your partner are out of tune, you let him go with somebody else, instead of starting a fight with him: that's all. What's so special about it?" That was obviously not the meaning of the play. Though saddened, I did not try to argue with anybody; perhaps the full implication of the theme was not very clear to me either. More than twenty years have passed since then in study, experience and personal growth, and I am now situated in the most dynamic scenario of interpersonal relationship being unfolded (in North America). I believe the message of that short one-act play comes home to me now with the force of a revelation.

The greatest revolution in modern history is the change in women's lives—her status, occupation, freedom of self-realization and so on. The process, started long ago, is continuing all over the world in varying paces. Ask anybody aged between forty and eighty, from New York City to a distant village in India; he or she will tell you all kinds of funny stories about how women had to behave in those days. This ongoing change does not involve just the one-half of the population; since the other half is intimately linked with the female half, it involves the entire humanity.

Ever since the dawn of civilization, different cultures have come up with different ideas as to how to solve the problem of man-woman relationship. Ideals, laws and customs have undergone changes in all different directions; still we are not anywhere near a solution. Perhaps there is no solution at the level of our consciousness.

Looked at from the evolutionary point of view, we see that the animal kingdom is free from any contrived law of the mind; nature and instinct prevail there and things go rather smoothly. But can man go back to naturalism, however attractive

it may appear? Man, the mental being, cannot give up his privilege of contemplating what is right and wrong, good and bad; this invariably makes him go in for rules and laws. But the same mind, rather intellect, equipped in the present era with the knowledge of world history, comparative culture and religion, sees through all these contrived rules and laws. He can no longer be as zealous about his laws as his forefathers were centuries ago. What is the remedy? Making laws and paying lip-service to them! Or surreptitiously reverting to the vitalism of the animal world? In actuality, this is what is happening in the so-called advanced societies of the world. The consequence is promiscuity, venereal disease, AIDS, retarded children, children with birth defects, children living with a single parent, children growing in foster homes, violence, rape, murder, and so on. The picture is not so bleak yet in eastern countries and rural areas, but fashions and infections do not take long to travel distances.

The freedom to choose a partner, a job, or a profession can no longer be left to the male alone, or to the parents and guardians. Freedom has to be given to all. In any relationship, the bondage of one binds the other too. Freedom of women is indispensable for a fuller freedom of men. But freedom is a spiritual category. That is what we need to realize and help others to appreciate.

Western religious traditions have laid emphasis on a moral code—on doing and not doing, but not on being. This externalistic attitude is reflected in their preoccupation, in a secularized form, with all kinds of systems of organization: democracy, socialism, capitalism, mixed-economy, and so on. The latest manifestation of this tendency is in the science of Behavior. No matter what somebody inwardly is, his behavior can be modified, and if it can be accomplished mainly through the use of the carrot and the stick, i.e. reward and punishment, all the problems of social organization can be solved the same way. It is extremely difficult for the western mind to get out of this fallacious thinking. Its culture does not know of any way out; freedom is understood only in the political sense; the spiritual sense of freedom (*mukti*) is practically unknown in this culture.

The Judeo-Christian tradition does not put up attainment of a unitive higher consciousness as the goal of life. It does not expect man to overcome his inherent limitations of mental consciousness which perceives things by division, by setting one thing against another, and seldom grasps the underlying unity behind all phenomenal division and diversity. The discipline that is needed for the development of a higher consciousness is as follows: a detached view bringing a better perspective of life including one's own, a better awareness and, consequently, a greater control over the play of emotions, feelings and passions, and an equanimity and strength of mind. All these lead us toward spiritual freedom. To the extent somebody is spiritually free, to that extent he is equipped to use his socio-political freedom. This correlation between the two kinds of freedom escapes the modern mind growing up in the positivistic environment of the West.

The perplexingly complex social issues and problems that are coming to focus

as a result of women's, and for that matter, of men's freedom, can only be attacked from the point of view indicated in the Mother's one-act play, *L'Avenir*. Here is a vision of the future. Spiritual evolution is supposed to make us look upon all our problems as the backlash of mentalism and mental culture. Mentalism breaks up things invariably into opposite categories—black and white, good and evil, right and wrong and so on; it does not have the ability to synthesize; synthesis comes spontaneously with a higher unitive perception.

As we cannot go back to vitalism and animalism (sometimes masquerading as spontaneity and as return to nature), we cannot solve our problems unless we bring in light from a higher realm. Only an aspiration for, and growth in, spiritual consciousness can endow us with the perceptiveness that is required to exercise our freedom properly, as in selecting or leaving a partner at a particular stage of our development. Turning our energy towards higher aims is the key to getting out of the problems generated from vitalism—possessiveness, agrandisement, obsession with sex, violence. The heroine in the little play blessed her husband's new union, and we are left with the impression that they would all remain friends and well-wishers of one another. This is not just refraining from a fight, this is much more than that, and at the same time a pointer to a new direction for an upward journey in consciousness.

CHITTA RANJAN GOSWAMI

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

A CHILD'S STORY

(Written for, and Inscribed to, W. M. the Younger)

HAMELIN town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
 The river Weser, deep and wide,
 Washes its wall on the southern side;
 A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
 Almost five hundred years ago,
 To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

Rats!
They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
 And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheese out of the vats,
 And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Spilt open the kegs of slated sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
 By drowning their speaking
 With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

At last the people in a body
 To the Town Hall came flocking:
 'Tis clear,' cried they, 'our Mayor's noddy;
 And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

An hour they sat in council,
 At length the Mayor broke silence:
 'For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
 I wish I were a mile hence!
 It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
 I'm sure my poor head aches again
 I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
 Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!
 Just as he said this, what should hap
 At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
 'Bless us,' cried the Mayor, 'what's that?'
 (With the Corporation as he sat,
 Looking little though wondrous fat;
 Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
 Than a too-long opened oyster,
 Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
 For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)
 'Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
 Anything like the sound of a rat
 Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!'

'Come in!'—the Mayor cried, looking bigger:
 And in did come the strangest figure!
 His queer long coat from heel to head
 Was half of yellow and half of red;
 And he himself was tall and thin,
 With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
 And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
 No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
 But lips where smiles went out and in—
 There was no guessing his kith and kin!
 And nobody could enough admire
 The tall man and his quaint attire:
 Quoth one: 'It's as my great-grandsire,
 Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
 Had walked this way from his painted tomb-stone!'

He advanced to the council-table:
 And, 'Please Your honours!' said he, 'I'm able,
 By means of a secret charm to draw
 All creatures living beneath the sun,
 That creep or swim or fly or run,

After me so as you never saw!
 And I chiefly use my charm
 On creatures that do people harm,
 The mole and toad and newt and viper;
 And people call me the Pied Piper.'
 (And here they noticed round his neck
 A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
 To match with his coat of the self-same cheque;
 And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
 And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
 As if impatient to be playing
 Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
 Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
 'Yet,' said he, 'poor as I am,
 In Tartary I freed the Chàm,
 Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;
 I eased in Asia the Nizam
 Of a monstrous brood of vampyre-bats:
 And as for what your brain bewilders,
 If I can rid your town of rats
 Will you give me a thousand guilders?'
 'One? fifty thousand!'—was the exclamation
 Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

Into the street the Piper stept,
 Smiling first a little smile,
 As if he knew what magic slept
 In his quiet pipe the while;
 Then, like a musical adept,
 To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
 And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled
 Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
 And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
 You heard as if an army muttered;
 And the muttering grew to a mighty rumbling;
 And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
 Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
 Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
 Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
 Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
 Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
 Families by tens and dozens,

Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
 Followed the Piper for their lives.
 From street to street he piped advancing,
 And step for step they followed dancing,
 Until they came to the river Weser
 Wherein all plunged and perished!
 —Save one who, stout as Julius Caesar,
 Swam across and lived to carry
 (As he, the manuscript he cherished)
 To Rat-land home his commentary:
 Which was, 'At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
 I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
 And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
 Into a cider-press's gripe:
 And a moving away of pickle-tubboards,
 And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
 And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
 And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;
 And it seemed as if a voice
 (Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
 Is breathed) called out, Oh rats, rejoice!
 The world is grown to one vast dry-saltery!
 So, munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
 Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!
 And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
 All ready staved, like a great sun shone
 Glorious scarce an inch before me,
 Just as methought it said, Come, bore me!
 —I found the Weser rolling o'er me.'

You should have heard the Hamelin people
 Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
 'Go,' cried the Mayor, 'and get long poles!
 Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
 Consult with carpenters and builders,
 And leave in our town not even a trace
 Of the rats!'—when suddenly, up the face
 Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
 With a, 'First, if you please, my thousand guilders!'

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
 So did the Corporation too.

For council dinners made rare havoc
 With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
 And half the money would replenish
 Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
 To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
 With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
 'Beside,' quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
 'Our business was done at the river's brink;
 We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
 And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
 So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
 From the duty of giving you something for drink,
 And a matter of money to put in your poke;
 But as for the guilders, what we spoke
 Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
 Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
 A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!'

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
 'No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
 I've promised to visit by dinner time
 Bagdad, and accept the prime
 Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
 For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
 Of a nest of scorpions no survivor—
 With him I proved no bargain-driver,
 With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
 And folks who put me in a passion
 May find me pipe to another fashion.'

'How?' cried the Mayor, 'd'ye think I'll brook
 Being worse treated than a Cook?
 Insulted by a lazy ribald
 With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
 You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
 Blow your pipe there till you burst!'

Once more he stept into the street;
 And to his lips again
 Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
 And ere he blew three notes such sweet
 Soft notes as yet musician's cunning

Never gave the enraptured air,
 There was a rustling, that seemed like a bustling
 Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
 Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
 Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
 And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
 Out came the children running.
 All the little boys and girls,
 With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
 And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
 Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
 The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
 As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
 Unable to move a step, or cry
 To the children merrily skipping by—
 And could only follow with the eye
 That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
 But how the Mayor was on the rack,
 And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
 As the Piper turned from the High Street
 To where the Weser rolled its waters
 Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
 However he turned from South to West,
 And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
 And after him the children pressed;
 Great was the joy in every breast.
 'He never can cross that mighty top!
 He's forced to let the piping drop,
 And we shall see our children stop!
 When, lo, as they reached the mountain's side,
 A wondrous portal opened wide,
 As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
 And the Piper advanced and the children followed,
 And when all were in to the very last,
 The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
 Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
 And could not dance the whole of the way;
 And in after years, if you would blame
 His sadness, he was used to say,—
 'It's dull in our town since my playmates left!

I can't forget that I'm bereft
 Of all the pleasant sights they see,
 Which the Piper also promised me.
 For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
 Joining the town and just at hand,
 Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
 And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
 And everything was strange and new;
 The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
 And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
 And honey-bees had lost their stings,
 And horses were born with eagles' wings:
 And just as I became assured
 My lame foot would be speedily cured,
 The music stopped and I stood still,
 And found myself outside the Hill,
 Left alone against my will,
 To go now limping as before,
 And never hear of that country more!'

Alas, alas for Hamelin!

There came into many a burgher's pate
 A text which says, that Heaven's Gate
 Opes to the Rich at as easy rate
 As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
 The Mayor sent East, West, North and South,
 To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
 Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
 Silver and gold to his heart's content,
 If he'd only return the way he went,
 And bring the children behind him.
 But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
 And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
 They made a decree that lawyers never
 Should think their records dated duly
 If, after the day of the month and year,
 These words did not as well appear,
 'And so long after what happened here
 On the Twenty-second of July,
 Thirteen hundred and seventy-six.'
 And the better in memory to fix
 The place of the children's last retreat,

They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—
Where anyone playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
 To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
 They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great Church-Window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away;
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people that ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—specially pipers:
And, whether they pipe us free, from rats or from mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise.

ROBERT BROWNING

TINKORI-DA

WHEN we pass through life, we are hardly conscious of our neighbours. When someone drops out of it suddenly, we pause to think—who was he? We become conscious of him only when he is no more! Especially so, if he was unpompous, silent and lonely. Tinkori-da was such a man—silent but joyous, healthy and vibrant, always moving with zeal while on duty.

Although he was an artist of some distinction he never preferred to beat his own drum nor had he anyone to do it for him. He was alone, silently setting verses to music and singing devotional songs composed by poets and disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. He loved singing the glories of the Lord and the Divine Mother.

Quite a few years back, I questioned him why he didn't sing *Rabindra Sangeet*. He answered, "I sing only these songs." It seemed that he knew only to do that. He invited me on many occasions and sang such songs before me with a good amount of emotion. He was aware that many did not like his compositions and songs but he never cared. He never tried to please others for popularity. Like a true and sincere artist he followed his inner urge and developed himself into a devotional singer. Through his songs he did his *sādhana*, it seems, and remained unmoved in the face of all indifference shown to him.

But it was not that he was versed only in that branch of vocal music. In fact he was an expert in many branches of it. He had learnt classical music at the beginning from such masters as Vishmadev Chattopadhyay and later he took lessons from Himangshu Dutta, *Surasagar*, Dharendra Chandra Mitra, Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury and he learnt *Rabindra Sangeet* also from the *Geeta Vitan* school in Calcutta. He was liked by many and profusely praised by Swami Pragnananda, Birendra Kishore, Nishikanta, the famous poet of the Pondicherry Ashram, and others. After Nishikanta had gladly permitted him to set his poems to music, Tinkori had his compositions published in several Bengali magazines. He gave popularity to lyrics composed by many Ashram poets and by others as well.

Most important was his giving music to the famous poem *Namaskar* composed by Rabindranath Tagore praising and glorifying "Aurobindo Ghosh", the leader and freedom-fighter. The poem was read by the poet before the leader and later it was published in *Bandemataram*, in the issue of 8th September 1907.

Many songs set to music by Tinkori were published in book-form. *Suralipi*, *Suradeepam*, *Prarthana*, *Sangeet Satadal* are some of them. All these publications were blessed and approved by the Mother who loved his songs.

Tinkori, who was born on 11th April 1912, hailed from Bali in Howrah district in West Bengal and lived in the Ashram for 35 years within the protecting arms of the Divine Mother. He was in charge of the vocal music section of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education for a very long period. Tinkori proved his yogic detachment and other qualities during the last trying days on his death bed.

He suffered from an almost incurable disease. He was quite aware of its nature. Before a very lengthy and big operation, he surrendered himself to the instruments of the surgeon with a smiling face and later confirmed that he had at that moment felt completely secure under the protecting hands of the Mother. During his prolonged suffering for about two years he never expressed any anguish though he had to endure at times tremendous pain in his body. Only the Mother's name could be heard uttered silently by the patient with occasional restless movements. He left us on 19th February 1986, just two days before the birth-anniversary of the Mother.

During a short respite when he was released from the hospital, he joined again the Ashram Reception Service and was seen seated in his usual place in a corner of the broad veranda facing the entrance, on a stool, in his usual dress of ochre-coloured cotton kurta and dhoti. But his movements were slow, restricted and perhaps there was a shadow looming on his face, as a prelude to a more vigorous and renewed attack preparing in the darkness to snatch him finally away from us.

Only recently Pujalal-ji left us. We remember how he always received us with a joyous heart. A friend of children, kind and simple, Pujalal-ji radiated his inner light and the Mother's grace in his whole being. So was Tinkori-da, simple, joyous.

A few days back, as people gathered together to remember him, tape-recorded songs in his sonorous voice were heard with a very distinct enunciation as was usual with him, without the accompaniment of any instrument. As his voice was reverberating in the hall, we remembered how we had been near him for years yet, never had so close and intimate a remembrance of him as we had on that date. Perhaps this is the law of life.

AJU MUKHOPADHYAY

THE SONG OF THE LORD

THE GITA WITHOUT COMMENT

(Continued from the issue of June 1986)

Chapter IX

1. The Lord said:
“And to you who is not captious I shall declare the greatest mystery, the knowlege and highest knowing through which you shall be freed from adversity.
2. The King Knowledge, the Sovereign Mystery, it is pure, supreme, directly approached, of the Law, easy to do and imperishable.
3. O Parantapa, those men of no faith in this Way, not attaining Me, are reborn into the cyclic trail of death.
4. By Me in Unmanifest Form all this world is pervaded. All existences are in Me; I am not placed in them.
5. Yet is Creation not in Me. See My Yoga and Godhead! Sustaining existence, not placed in creation, My Self brings forth all becomings.
6. As the Great Air is always in Ether everywhere moving, so all Existence is placed in Me. Understand this.
7. All existences, Kaunteya, go into My Nature at the end of a cosmic round. As the round re-begins, I loose them forth again.
8. Stressing My Nature I bring forth again and again this multitude of existences, all helpless, subject to Prakriti.
9. Nor do these actions bind Me, O Dhananjaya. As one disinterested I sit uninvolved in these acts.
10. With Me as Lord, Nature creates the Moving and the Unmoving. With this as Cause, O Kaunteya, the Universe revolves.
11. Fools ignore Me housed in a human form, not knowing My higher state—the Lord of Existence.
12. Of useless hopes, useless acts, useless knowledge, they keep to the stupefying nature of the Fiend and Titan.
13. But great souls, O Partha, dwelling in the divine nature, adore Me with undistracted mind, knowing Me as the imperishable Source of Existence.
14. Always praising Me, aspiring, firm in vows, always centred, they worship Me, prostrate in adoration.
15. Others offer through the sacrifice of Knowledge, or they worship Me the all-faceted in many ways: as One or as different.
16. I am the will to Sacrifice, the act of Sacrifice, I am the oblation, I am the fuel, I am the Mantra. Indeed I am the ghee, the Fire, the Offering.

17. I am the Father and the Mother of this world, the Dispenser, the Grandfather, the Known, the Purifier, the sounding of AUM, the Rik, the Sama, the Yajuh,
18. the Goal, the Sustainer, the Master, the Witness, the Home, the Refuge, the Friend, the Source, the Dissolution, the Foundation, the Place of Rest, the Imperishable Seed.
19. I heat, I withhold and give rain. I am death and the deathless, being and non-being, O Arjuna.
20. Knowers of the Vedas, drinkers of Soma purified of evil, worshipping Me through sacrifice, pray to Heaven. Thus pure, having reached Indra's world, they taste in Paradise the divine food of the Gods.
21. Then, after enjoying that wide heaven-world, they re-enter the world of mortals on the exhaustion of merit. Thus the adherents of the Vedic dharma realise the cycle of return, desirous of desire.
22. But to them who serve Me everywhere and, wholly unified, think of nothing else, I bring the beatitude of Yoga.
23. Even devotees who sacrifice to other Gods full of trust sacrifice to Me alone, but without knowledge.
24. I am truly the Enjoyer and the Lord of all Sacrifice. But these men do not know Me fully and thus they fall.
25. One who worships the Gods goes to the Gods. One who worships the Ancestors goes to the Fathers. One who worships the spirits goes to the spirits. So also one who adores Me goes to Me.
26. And if you give to Me with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit, some water, that I enjoy, —the loving gift of a pure soul.
27. What you do, what you eat, what you sacrifice, what you give, your efforts of soul, do that in offering to Me, O Kaunteya.
28. From the pleasant and ugly results, from the bonds of action, you shall thus be freed. One in Self through the Yoga of Offering, released, you shall come to Me.
29. I am the same in all beings. None is detestable, none dear to Me. But those who resort to Me with love, they are in Me and I am in them.
30. Even if a man most evil resorts to Me and nothing else, he should be considered good, for he is rightly resolved.
31. Soon he is on the Way of the Soul and obtains eternal peace. O Kaunteya, know absolutely that those who love Me do not perish.
32. Truly, O Partha, whoever takes refuge in Me, though born from sin—whether a woman, a Vaishya, or a Sudra—they obtain the Supreme Goal.
33. What then of pure Brahmanas, devotees, the sage-kings? Having come into this transient, unhappy world, love and worship Me.
34. Keeping your mind on Me, devoted to Me, offering to Me alone, uniting thus the Self, you shall come to Me only, having Me as the Way Supreme.

OM TAT SAT

Here ends the ninth chapter called 'The Yoga of the Sovereign Science and Mystery' in the dialogue of Sri Krishna and Arjuna, in Brahman Knowledge, in Yoga Discipline, in the Divine Songs of the Upanishads.

Translated by DHRUVA

FURTHER STUDIES IN INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY

(Continued from the issue of June 1986)

CULTURAL SCIENCE PSYCHOLOGY AND INTEGRAL PERSONALITY

“SCIENCE is systematic knowledge” and though the classification of sciences has been variously attempted, we might here distinguish them into natural and social or cultural sciences, corresponding to the German division of *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften* or *Kulturwissenschaften*. The former are best exemplified by Physics and Chemistry and the latter by Economics, Politics, and Ethics. Natural sciences are concerned with the objects of nature. And their procedure is to observe facts, describe them and seek to find out their mechanical causal explanations with the help of the methods of Analysis, Experiment, Induction, Deduction, Hypothesis and Generalisation.

The *Geisteswissenschaften*, on the other hand, are concerned with the facts and the products of the social life of man, like art, religion, science, language, history, law, custom, etc. Now these are all essentially the products of inter-subjective intercourse and possess a trans-subjective validity. But they are un-understandable without the individual subjects, which have developed them and also recognise them. That gives a basic difference between the two groups of sciences. The work of the *Geisteswissenschaften* begins only there, says Windleband, where a willing and a knowing subject is essential to the phenomena. Or, in the words of Dilthey, *Geisteswissenschaften* are the sciences which are concerned with the historic-social reality.

For a reasoned statement of the standpoint of the Natural Science Psychology, we cannot do better than turn to Titchener. He says that “if Psychology is to fill a chapter in the history of science, it must be because the facts and laws of Psychology are strictly co-ordinate, formally interchangeable with the facts and laws of established sciences. (Titchener’s *Systematic Psychology* Prolegomena, p. 27). Further, the data of science ...are, stripped of meaning. They are to be “scoured clear of... evaluative accretion.” (*ib.*, p. 32). This is the existential type of Psychology which, Titchener thinks, “can take its place as a pure science alongside of physics and biology.” (Woodworth, *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*, p. 42). It will interest us much more to read from him that “the subjective factors, the emotive processes are taken in the same existential way; so that psychology is freed from any concern about judgments of value. It is true that these judgments have their growth in psychological soil, and that feeling is the basics of value. Psychology, nevertheless, considers the emotive process precisely as it considers the ideas, it analyses them, makes out their modes of interconnection. And the term ‘subject’ if it is at all used is to be treated as a shorthand name for a group of phenomena, which in point of fact are just as objective as the phenomena of natural science” (p. 107).

We might make a little digression here to consider Gestalt Psychology in relation to the question of the general nature of psychology and the main problem of science we have just been discussing. On the point of the chief problem of science we know that Gestalt Psychologists are most pronounced in their opposition to the method of analysis. Von Ehrenfels had already shown how real in itself a "Gestalt-qualitat" is. It is a quality which is possessed by an object by virtue of its being an organised whole and is not possessed by any of the parts making up the whole. A melody possesses a quality which none of the component notes possesses. That quality belongs only to a certain arrangement, an organization of notes. In fact, by changing over to another key, we get an altogether new set of notes, but the melody-quality may remain the same. The Gestaltists urge that by breaking up a whole into its parts we can never hope to get the essential character of that whole. Therefore the main problem of science is not analysis but the investigation of the properties of the organized wholes. And this is not only true of Psychology; the Gestalt principle is sought to be extended to Physics and Chemistry too.

But while Gestaltism is opposed to Titchenerian Psychology as, in fact, to all science in regard to the main problem and method of analysis that it employs, it is in agreement with the natural science standpoint of Titchener for Psychology. Mental facts are for the Gestalt Psychologist as much as for Titchener exactly like the facts of external nature. The only difference is that whereas the one seeks to break up the complex mental processes into their elements, the other takes them as organised wholes, the properties of which it is the primary object of science to study. The "Ich-bezogenheit", i.e. the subjective reference and implication of the mental processes, is as much of no account to the one as to the other.

Cultural science psychology differs out from the natural science psychology first in the recognition that the facts of mental life are fundamentally of a different order from those of natural science. James Ward has pointed out this difference very clearly. He says: "The language the physicist uses is simply: it is this or that—a,b,c or d. But the psychologist cannot say there are such and such presentations or feelings or movements—as if they were independent entities" (Ward, *Psychological Principles*, p. 23). On the other hand, he has to say that "the individual experience has such and such presentations, feels thus and thus and acts in this wise or that wise" (*ib.*, p. 24). A mental process is always somebody's process and to talk of a 'state of consciousness', divorced from its subjective reference, the "Ich-bezogenheit" character, is to see it in a mutilated form. Thus psychology must be 'the science of individual experience' (*ib.*, p. 28) as Ward said, or 'the science of the individual subject' as Spranger put it.

Now other features of cultural science psychology are more or less derived from it. We investigate the nature of the subject and find that it possesses two things: one, the faculty to attend and act, and two, the capacity to feel. Spranger characterises the subject or self as *Sinnerzeugende* (meaning—creating) and *Sinnerlebende* (meaning—experiencing) and as definitely *Strukturiert*, that is, possessing a definite

'structure,' which constitutes its individuality. Now this subject is in continuous interplay with the environment which is first social or cultural and then physical so far as our subject is concerned. Each subject through its activity with the environment continuously creates values of various kinds, economic, political, moral, religious, scientific, etc., and apprehends those that are already objectively given. Thus the cultural environment of art, literature, science, education, economics and politics, morality and religion, which is the primary environment for the subject, is permeated through and through by valuation and the essential nature of our subject too is value-creating and value-seeking. Now one might ask how could one hope to understand mental processes in their true character, if they were divorced from value. It is, therefore, that the concept of value has been considered to give the difference between the natural and cultural sciences.

The values of our cultural life as exemplified in art, literature, etc. have ultimately been created by the subjects. Thus the study of personalities becomes of fundamental importance for cultural science psychology. Hence we must understand the different types of uniqueness of personality-structures; because they hold the key to the understanding of the different objective manifestations of culture. Thus the cultural science psychology will tend to develop primarily an individualising tendency of the historian to study and classify uniquenesses rather than to discover general laws which the natural sciences do. "Natural sciences are," it is said, "nomothetic, cultural sciences idiographic." That is, the former seek casual connection, the latter uniqueness.

Here one comes very close to one of the important claims and also the tests of cultural science psychology. Dilthey had already affirmed that a cultural science psychology was of fundamental importance to the *Geisteswissenschaften* so that it alone gave the proper foundation for their understanding. Storring rightly points out that the Natural Science Psychology too has rendered much useful service to the understanding of the various cultural provinces. But obviously Cultural Science Psychology will be more competent to do so, since it starts with the concrete given whole of the historico-cultural reality as its primary data, which it then seeks to characterise and analyse. "Natural science psychology starts by rejecting all valuation-implications of experience and it should... then be no wonder that it finds it at last difficult to explain 'meaning' or properly understand the cultural phenomena. If we divorce mental phenomena, to start with, from meaning, which is essential to it, then naturally later on we will feel forced to take recourse to some artificial devices to provide for it. And then how will 'unmeaning' sensations and images account for meaning? *Geisteswissenschaftliche* psychology scores a great point over the other type of psychology in its doctrine of meaning. A proper foundation to meaning is provided only when it is recognised as a fundamental tendency of the human mind to create meaning wholes, in which values find an objective realisation. "To produce an objective world of this kind out of itself is one of the most fundamental laws of mental life, depending upon its essential nature" (Saupe). The mind of

man is, in fact, as we have said before, a meaning-creating (Sinnerzeugende) and meaning-experiencing (Sinnerlebende) principle of existence.

The method of investigation of the cultural sciences, aiming as they do at the apprehension of 'value' and 'meaning' has naturally to be different. Dilthey had declared fairly long ago, "Die Natureklaren wir, das Seelenleben Verstehen wir." We explain nature, but we understand mind. Nature, says Dilthey, presents to us discrete events, which we seek to interrelate by making hypotheses and supplying causes. This is the method of explaining. But in the Geisteswissenschaften the facts are directly given as interconnected wholes, as *zusammenhänge*. These we simply seek to understand, or we determine the meaning or the value-content of those facts. It may be observed that the peculiarity of the method of understanding is a consequence of the special nature of the subject matter of the cultural sciences. With Dilthey 'understanding' was still a vague conception, a kind of an 'artistic intuition' and it is really Spranger's achievement to have developed it into a definite instrument of investigation. It is, says he, "the peculiar cultural science method of investigation by means of which the individual mind obtains connection with the objective mind, in that it apprehends the meaning of a concrete mental objectification." "The result of this understanding activity is then the apprehension of the meaningful." That understanding activity possesses a creative tendency is apparent from the fact that we often give new objective forms to an understood meaning. Further since all objective forms of spirit once proceeded from individual minds, therefore all understanding ultimately is the understanding of personalities, their 'structural' properties and the dominant value-tendencies. To take an example to illustrate 'understanding,' we might contemplate a child at play. Now do we understand his activity when we have described the states of consciousness of the child at that time? In fact, we understand it only when we apprehend the meaning of the activity.

Spranger's characterisation of 'understanding' is not uniform throughout. At first he said "understanding" in the widest sense of the term means "the apprehension of the mental organization in the form of objectively valid knowledge as meaningful" (*ib*). Later he modifies it to say that "understanding" means "apprehending given facts in the relation of a whole as meaningful" (*ib*). The meaning of the parts of a machine are determined by the meaning or purpose of the machine as a whole i.e., the work that it does.

Sich hinein versetzen (to put one's self in) is the *conditio sine qua non* of all psychological understanding. To understand a particular social fact, one requires to imagine the type of personality and the mental act that it is a product of and then identify oneself with it. That is how one puts oneself on another personality to understand that social fact.... But perhaps the two kinds of psychologies which we have been discussing are supplementary in character. Not that either this or that must be right and then the other necessarily wrong, but that they represent two different lines of approach to the same subject-matter. And judged by the measure

of success that both of them have had in the application of their doctrines one feels encouraged to affirm that either of them possesses a measure of validity.

Nature can be taken as an impersonal reality, as a thing of structure and parts and qualities and general laws and repetitive occurrences, but the human situation is a thing of inter subjective intercourse, of subjects or selves in interaction, of seeking goals, objectives and values. It is different from the physical, chemical, biological natural phenomenon. In the field of history, economics and culture events have a quality of purposes and uniquenesses and our seeking is to understand the sense and the meaning of these uniquenesses and this is done by *sich hinein versetzen*, by a process of identification with it and not by superficial external observation. Mental processes are no impersonal facts, they are somebody's and his intention imparts meaning to the process. We do not understand it duly if we ignore this fact. The cultural psychology standpoint has, therefore, a truth in it. However, it is possible to ignore this meaning and treat the mental process as a structural fact and seek laws of mental behaviour. These have a serviceability. But the subject's intention, its meaning and value stand ignored.

The approaches, both of natural sciences and of cultural sciences, have validity and they can be applied to psychology, but we cannot afford to be ignorant of their merits and demerits. The natural science method of observation, induction and generalisation has been applied to history, religion and other social phenomenon, but that surely involves an essential defect.

The issue of intention and meaning inspired Spranger to inquire into the ideal forms of personality based upon the essential motivations of life. These he identified as six, scientific, economic, aesthetic and religious and further of sympathy and of mastery. These types are really capital aids for the understanding of the historical cultural reality.

This psychological standpoint is specially useful in certain psychological fields e.g. of folk psychology, religious psychology and the like. And, in psychological systems like Freud's and Jung's where the individual subject is central, this standpoint has its obvious validity. However, the two approaches, of natural science and cultural science psychology, get mixed up.

It would be interesting and useful to see the sympathy of this approach to that of Integral Psychology. In integral personality the 'psychic being' is the central and all-commanding fact. It supports and progressively transforms all mental life. Cultural science psychology too has fastened upon the subject of experience as the essential fact of life. But what is more important is its method of knowing and understanding a fact by *sich hinein setzen* by putting oneself in. Is it not 'knowing by identity,' the favourite principle of Sri Aurobindo's epistemology and metaphysics?

The natural science psychology thinks of self and personality as a summation of mental processes and fails to account for its uniqueness, the essential quality of personality. If we fail to see and recognise an individual subject, how can uniqueness be explained?

The investigation of the nature of the subject too has been attempted and six fundamental interests have been identified. That helps in understanding the historico-cultural phenomena. But in integral psychology we know of the psychic being a great deal. It is an evolving principle, a conscious spiritual reality progressively integrating the disparities of mind and life. Further, the uniqueness in an individual grows, as the psychic being grows up. At the lower levels the individual is a part of the mass and it is the mass life that is the fact, as in crowd life even the present-day individual gets merged in the mass.

It is, indeed, a capital point that cultural psychology makes out in affirming the fact and reality of a subject, but it is important to know about its nature and the conditions of its development. The quality of uniqueness gets its full play only when the psychic being grows up to be the overt governing principle of life. Until then the universal nature of mind in varying degrees determines life.

INDRA SEN

(The main part of the paper was delivered as Presidential Address at the Psychology Section of Indian Philosophical Congress at Allahabad in 1938.)

‘RADHA’S APPEAL’, A POEM BY SRI AUROBINDO AND ‘RADHA’S PRAYER’ BY THE MOTHER

SRI AUROBINDO wrote five poems on his return to India. These along with others written in England were published in the earliest collection of his poems, *Songs to Myrtila*. Amongst them is one named ‘Radha’s Appeal (Imitated from the Bengali of Chandidas)’. Obviously Sri Aurobindo, while writing this poem, followed in the hallowed footsteps of the Vaishnava poet Chandidas but the poem is not a translation, though it has been included amongst his translations.¹

The first ten lines of it are:

O Love, what more shall I, shall Radha speak,
Since mortal words are weak?
In life, in death,
In being and in breath
No other lord but thee can Radha seek.

About thy feet the mighty net is wound
Wherein my soul they bound;
Myself resigned
To servitude my mind;
My heart than thine no sweeter slavery found.²

These simple lines have a haunting tone. They give us a rare glimpse of the purest love possible on the human plane. To a disciple of Sri Aurobindo they will seem very familiar, a beat of his very heart, and he may wonder at this sense of familiarity. Then in a flash he will remember that Supreme Testament of Love by the Mother—‘Radha’s Prayer’ as translated by Sri Aurobindo from the French—

“O Thou whom at first sight I knew for the Lord of my being and my God, receive my offering.

“Thine are all my thoughts, all my emotions, all the sentiments of my heart, all my sensations, all the movements of my life, each cell of my body, each drop of my blood. I am absolutely and altogether Thine, Thine without reserve. What Thou wilt of me, that I shall be. Whether Thou choosest for me life or death, happiness or sorrow, pleasure or suffering, all that comes to me from Thee will be welcome. Each one of Thy gifts will be always for me a gift divine bringing with it the supreme Felicity.”³

¹ *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. 8, p. 302.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Collected Works of the Mother*, Vol. 15 p. 224.

The luminous depths and heights, the sublime intensity, the integral surrender and the total love in their quintessence are the same in both the poem and the Prayer. The only difference is that Sri Aurobindo wrote the above at the time of his first sweet introduction to Indian culture and his first intoxicating dip into the devotional Ganges of Radha-Krishna-Love. So magical was this flow of the pure spirituality that we find young Aurobindo on one side having an experience of the Brahman Consciousness, on another writing fiery articles full of nationalistic fervour and on still another exploring the homied soul depths of Jayadev, Vidyapati and Chandidas and getting immersed in the psychic-spiritual emotionalism of Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna. Such was the power of this current that he imitated in his own inimitable style the poet Chandidas who had sung with an unsurpassed felicity of the love of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna.

There is undoubtedly a striking similarity in both the invocations, though one is in the form of a poem, the other a prayer in prose. In the first we find a rhythmic spell, in the second a massed mantric power, both being masterpieces of loving surrender. In the Mother's 'Radha's Prayer' we feel an intense vibration behind the words, the words which are at once simple and inevitable. Here is a power of purest love laid at the lotus feet of the Lord. The quality of the emotions expressed is sublimely total. The mute God-Force of Supreme Surrender gushes out from the words and from behind the words like a new Ganges of Love descending with an all-sweeping yet controlled force. It is an ocean of All Love of the All for the All, of the Soul for the Oversoul, of Sri Radha for Sri Krishna.

Who is Radha? It is not only a name. It is a sweet and divinely beautiful echo of that mysterious personality of the Supreme Mother which she kept hidden for millenniums even from the effulgent dawns and high-noons of civilization.

In the Vedic and Vedantic times meditation and worship ruled the hearts of sages and devotees. Worship was more a matter of ritual, ceremonies and outer offering than of an inner and integral devotion or loving surrender. The intensities and beauties of devotional love's multicoloured rainbow morns and brilliant dazzling noons and hushed indrawn eves and profound meditating nights were absent. In the great philosophies and scriptures which touched the highest pinnacles of God-Knowledge some secret step, some mystic relationship, the state in which the worshipper and the worshipped become one and, fusing into each other, take on ultimately the same hues was yet missing. Missing also was the link between the shallow joys of humanity and the true felicity of the Gods. Man can rise to a status which will surpass even the Gods only by the Grace of Sri Radha—the ideal of integral Bhakti and total surrender. The Mother as Radha became one with man's aspiring soul and led his faltering steps to ever higher heights. On the other hand She as the power of Supreme Grace leaned from above. In the terrestrial manifestation She is Radha the aspiring and striving soul, above she is Krishna the Divine leaning down towards the striving soul and gathering it to Himself—this soul that is part of Himself projected into the earth for the upliftment and transformation of humanity

into his own Divinity. This is the secret symbolism of the intense and passionate Love and Lila of Radha-Krishna. According to Sri Aurobindo this imagery of Krishna and Radhā is the symbol of—

“...the soul, psychic, hearing the call of the Divine and flowering into the complete love and surrender that brings the Supreme Ananda. That is what Radha and Krishna by their divine union bring about in the human consciousness.”¹

Then what is the soul-quality or fundamental aspect of the Divinity which Sri Radha especially embodies and brings down? Surely it is Divine Love in its purest divinest and most integral form and essence. Again in the words of Sri Aurobindo—“Radha is the personification of absolute love for the Divine, total and integral in all parts of the being from the highest spiritual to the physical, bringing the absolute self-giving and total consecration of all the being and calling down into the body and the most material nature the supreme Ananda.”²

And “Krishna with Radha is the symbol of Divine Love.”³ “The desire of the soul for God is there thrown into a symbolic figure in the lyrical love cycle of Radha and Krishna, the nature soul in man seeking for the Divine soul through Love, seized and mastered by his beauty, attracted by his musical flute, abandoning human cares and duties for this one overpowering passion and in cadence of its phases passing through first desire to the bliss of union, the pangs of separation, the eternal longing and reunion, the *līlā* of the love of the human spirit for God. There is a settled frame and sequence, a subtle simple lyrical rhythm, a traditional diction of appealing directness and often of intense beauty.”⁴

Thus throughout the ages Radha stood and stands even today as a symbol of pure and unbounded love and integral surrender. A love subtle in its manifestation, an intensity which is possible only in the highest mysticism. On one hand an adolescent stance untainted by Kama, on the other its full development unparalleled elsewhere.

Here it will not be out of place to throw a brief backward glance on the ‘Radha’ manifestation. Though Sri Krishna came to us some thousands of years ago in his transcendent, universal and individual glory through Vyasa’s Mahabharata and through the glorious Bhagawat Purana and the supreme scripture Gita, yet most astonishingly Sri Radha is not mentioned there. By herculean efforts and more by wishful thinking the later Vaishnava scholars tried to find some trace of Sri Radha in the Bhagawat. But the plain fact is that overtly there is no mention of her name, it is as if she hid her sweetness and greatness with a Krishna-like dexterity. The devotees worshipped Lord Krishna with his consort Rukmini and at Puri with his sister and brother. And even though the world knew of those great souls called Gopis, souls of Love, playmates and companions of Krishna’s ‘Rasalila’ yet only a hint is found of that moonlit and sunbright glory, that incarnate grace and beauty,

¹ *S.A.B.C.L.*, Vol. 23, p. 796.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* p. 980.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 317.

that Himalayan pinnacle and oceanic depth of Love—Sri Radha. The Bhagawat Purana only mentions Sri Krishna going with a ‘special Gopi’ but that is all. The divine magic of the name Radha is missing. Its revelation was left to the blessed pen of two of India’s great poets, Jayadeva and Vidyapati, followed later by luminaries like Chandidas and Surdas.

For the first time the mellifluous cadence of the name Radha was heard by this marvelling world. And once her name had dawned on the expectant twilight hush of an earth hungry for her, the light of her sun-noons could not remain behind. A great Godhead of Love, in its essence of sweetness and in its vastness, its greatest and deepest surrender, engulfed the world. A vibration, forerunner of a mystic Ananda, permeated the earth atmosphere, due to whose grace the manifestation of Maha Bhava became possible.

It was as if Sri Radhika was too eternal and rarified to come into the ken of erudite scholars. She could or would come only into the vision of a poet. Only a poet with a liquid heart of devotion, lost in the wonderful highways and byways of love, with eyes limpid with adoration could be worthy of beholding and holding her.

Once Jayadeva and Vidyapati saw the Bride of the Lord, the lila-playmate of Krishna, from the Himalayas to the Cape the whole country was flooded by the unheard-of, undreamt-of glorious oceanic sweep of this Anandamayi Radha. Avatars and Vibhutis and divine poets descended singing her praises. The country witnessed a new phenomenon, a divine upsurge, Vaishnavism—a cult of devotional love for the Divine. Sri Chaitanya worshipped her and so did Sri Ramakrishna. And how does the Supramental Avatar describe her?

A disciple put the question—“In the Chandica Tantric scripture forming a part of the Markandeya Purana the names of the four Cosmic Powers of the Mother—Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati—are mentioned along with others, but the name ‘Radha’ is not mentioned. This is a clear proof of the fact that when the ‘Chandi’ was composed the Radha-Power was not manifested to the vision of the saints and that the ‘Chandi’ mentions only the Cosmic Powers of the Mother and not her supramental Powers. In the book *The Mother*, after describing the four Powers of the Mother you have said: ‘There are other great personalities of the Divine Mother, but they were more difficult to bring down and have not stood out in front with so much prominence in the evolution of the earth-spirit. There are among them Presences indispensable for the supramental realisation,—most of all one who is her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasý and Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the Supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful divinest life and even now supports from its secrecies the work of all the Powers of the universe.’ Is not the Personality referred to in this passage the Radha Power which is spoken of as Premamayi Radha, Mahaprana Shakti and Hladini Shakti?”¹

Sri Aurobindo replied—“Yes; but the images of the Radha Krishna *lilā* are

¹ S.A.B.C.L., Vol. 25, p. 73.

taken from the vital world and therefore it is only an inner manifestation of Radha-Shakti that is there depicted. That is why she is called Mahaprana Shakti and Hladini Shakti. What is referred to (in the passage quoted) is not this inner form but the full Power of Love and Ananda above.”¹

In this imagery of the inner world the poets have used the symbolic form and it “...is sustained in its most external figure of human passion and so consistently that it is now supposed by many to mean nothing else, but this is quite negated by the use of the same figures by the devout poets of the religion of Chaitanya. All the spiritual experience that lay behind the symbol was embodied in that inspired prophet and incarnation of the ecstasy of divine love and its spiritual philosophy put into clear form in his teaching. His followers continued the poetic tradition of the earlier singers and though they fall below them in genius, yet left behind a great mass of this kind of poetry always beautiful in form and often deep and moving in substance.”²

These poets fused the inner and outer reality in such a harmonious web like the warp and woof of one entity that in the later ages as in the far earlier symbolism of the Vedas the outer form of Radha-Krishna lila took on its own separate reality and sometimes lived on free of the inner sense. A cleavage was evident. The ordinary masses clung more to the outer aspect though the inner significance was never far from their consciousness. The reason of this dichotomy lay in the consummate artistry of these master poets:

“...an outward figure nearest to the inward experience, its material counterpart, is taken throughout and used with such realism and constancy that while it indicates to those who possess it the spiritual experience, it means only the external thing to others,—just as the Vaishnava poetry of Bengal makes to the devout mind a physical and emotional image or suggestion of love of the human soul for God, but to the profane is nothing but a sensuous and passionate love poetry hung conveniently round the traditional human-divine personalities of Krishna and Radha.”³

Such is the affinity of man to the animal that he brought this highest and purest Divine Personality, this exquisitely powerful symbolism, to the vital level. Needless to say, Radha is the full power of Divine Love and Ananda above. And below? Here in her terrestrial human aspect what does Radha stand for? This has been explained fully by the Mother when in 1931 she was instructing our Sahana-di for a song and dance performance. To bring out fully the force of the Mother’s words it will be best to quote Sahana-di a little at length. The Mother saw the dance.

“After it she drew up a plan for us to compose the songpart of the dance. While my part was to dance, her plan had four parts expressing four moods:

1. A measureless void in Radha’s mind and body. She is groping in the dark.
2. She is seeking all around, but does not find him whom she seeks. Unbearable

¹ *S.A.B.C.L.*, Vol. 25, pp. 73-74.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 318.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

is the anguish. At times, she hears as it were the almost forgotten anklet bells come floating from afar. She becomes impatient—a restless mood. Then all of a sudden she hears the sound of the flute. Depression vanishes. The sound comes nearer and Radha experiences ecstasy.

3. Krishna appears.

4. Radha's surrender at his feet."¹

Sahana-di feared she could not bring perfection in her performance of the 3rd part. But nothing short of perfection would satisfy such a consummate artist. In her boundless compassion the Mother wrote to her to elucidate further:

"Sahana,

To complete what I told you yesterday about Radha's dance I have noted down as an indication of the thought and feeling Radha must have within her when she stands at the end in front of Krishna—"Every thought of my mind, each emotion of my heart, each movement of my being, every sensation, each cell of my body, each drop of my blood, all is yours, yours absolutely, yours without reserve. You can decide my life or my death, my happiness or my sorrow, my pleasure or my pain whatever you do with me, whatever comes to me from you will lead me to Divine Rapture."²

After writing the above on 12 Jan. 1932 to Sahana-di the Mother rewrote the whole thing next day on the 13th Jan. and named it "Radha's Prayer" which has been quoted at the beginning of this article. She made each word inevitable and the whole piece a Supreme Mahamantra for aspiring souls. Surely some occult or spiritual victory was won for the human race on that auspicious day, some great forward step taken and the norms of future realisation fixed. For the Mother has revealed something breath-taking—

"Krishna represents both the universal Godhead and the immanent Godhead, he whom one can meet within one's being and in all that constitutes the manifested world.

"And do you want to know why he is always represented as a child? It is because he is in constant progression. To the extent that the world is perfected, his play is also perfected—what was the play of yesterday will no longer be the play of tomorrow; his play will become more and more harmonious, benign and joyful to the extent that the world becomes capable of responding to it and enjoying it with the Divine."³ Surely some great leap forward has been taken by humanity, the earth consciousness and the universe, because till now what was only an inner manifestation of Radha Shakti has been superseded, or reinforced, by her full Power of Love and

¹ *At the Feet of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo*—Sahana, p. 38.

² *Ibid.*, p.41.

³ *Collected Works of the Mother*, Vol. 15, p. 15.

Ananda from above,¹ which permeates right to the physical and that alone can bridge the gulf between the Supramental Height and the abysses of Matter.

And since by forming into mantric words the Mother took the Soul's aspiration to the highest peaks, the response of the universal and immanent Godhead must be also more perfect and much greater.

This Radha Consciousness according to the Mother "symbolises perfect attachment to the Divine."² And when somebody questioned the authenticity of Radha's existence, the Mother replied—

"Surely she has lived and is still living."³

The Prayer itself because of its note of equality in sorrow or suffering raised some doubts and questions to which Sri Aurobindo replied thus—

"I may say that the idea of a joyless God is an absurdity, which only the ignorance of mind could engender. The Radha love is not based upon any such thing but means simply that whatever comes on the way to the Divine, pain or joy, *milan* or *viraha*, and however long the suffering may last, the Radha love is unshaken and keeps its faith and certitude pointing fixedly like a star to the supreme object of Love."⁴

The Mother was also asked in the context of this Prayer, "Does the Divine give suffering or sorrow?" To which she replied—

"...it is Radha's prayer to Krishna. And so it is such a personification of divine forces that one is obliged to extend human feelings to the Divine in order to be able to express oneself... It is to give the idea that all is in the Divine and all is divine. And necessarily, if one changes the state of consciousness and is identified with the Divine, that changes the very nature of things. For example, what seemed pain or sorrow or misery—one becomes aware quite on the contrary that it is an opportunity for the Divine's growing closer to you, and that from this event perhaps one may draw a still greater joy than that experienced from something satisfying. Only, you must understand it like that, in that spirit and with that consciousness, for otherwise if taken in the ordinary sense it is the very contradiction of the principle that all is divine."⁵

The Mother on another occasion further clarified and crystallised the symbolism—

"This brings us back to the symbol of Krishna and Radha. Krishna is the one of whom Sri Aurobindo speaks here, the divine Flute-player, that is to say, the immanent and universal Divine who is the supreme power of attraction; and the soul, the psychic personality, called here Radha, who responds to the call of the Flute-player. So I have been asked to say something this evening on the Radha-consciousness, that is, in fact, on the way in which the individual soul answers to the call of the Divine.

¹ *S.A.B.C.L.*, Vol. 25, p. 73-74.

² *Collected Works of the Mother*, Vol. 15, p. 16. ³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *S.A.B.C.L.*, Vol. 22, p. 173.

⁵ *Collected Works of the Mother*, Vol. 5, pp. 385-386.

“...this consciousness has the capacity to change everything into a perpetual ecstasy, for instead of seeing things in their discordant appearance, one now sees only the divine Presence, the divine Will and the Grace everywhere; and every event, every element, every circumstance, every form, changes into a way, a detail through which one can draw more intimately and profoundly closer to the Divine. Discordances disappear, ugliness vanishes; there is now only the splendour of the divine Presence in a Love shining in all things”¹.

Thus to the inner heart it is clear that ‘Radha’s Prayer’—a part of whose sublime vibration is also present in Sri Aurobindo’s ‘Radha’s Appeal’—is a supreme shastra, a whole programme for spiritual ascension and a super-guide for the sadhaks of the Integral Yoga.

In his inimitable way Sri Aurobindo has said—

“They say that the gospels are forgeries and Krishna a creation of poets. Thank God then for the forgeries and bow down before the inventors.”

In the same way our pranams to the Divine Revelators of this great personality of the Divine Mother, in its crystalline purity, free of the confusion and dross of the vital worlds, free also of that intense Vaishnava emotionalism which stops midway to God, and to that Ananda-personality which, tearing all the coverings of outer and inner self, takes us to the innermost psychic depths and to the radiant top of Love and Bliss above.

SHYAM KUMARI

¹ *Collected Works of the Mother*, Vol. 8, pp. 223-224.

PONDICHERRY : THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION

“I LIKE coming here because Pondicherry is a pleasant place, and a peaceful place in this turbulent world.” Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said so on a visit to Pondicherry. What he remarked long back still holds true. Peaceful at heart and with harmony prevailing around, the intelligentsia here probe into the burning question of the times ‘Why Violence?’ and plead for a World Union.

Pondicherry is still what Nehru called it and it is so because of its spiritual heritage. Legend has it that the great 'sage Agastya came to Vedapuri by which name the present Pondicherry was once known, only to worship Vedapuriswara, one of the oldest deities worshipped here. The deity, Lord Shiva, the presiding spirit of Vedapuri, was also known as Agatiswara—the Lord of Agastya. Pondicherry was traditionally a seat of learning and Vedic culture. Such a tradition must have developed from the presence of a great sage in a remote past, surrounded by seekers and disciples living in his Ashram.

Pondicherry is just a speck on the map of India. Yet men have been fascinated by this speck from time immemorial. It attracted to its shores the Romans and the Chinese. It saw the advent, rise and fall of Buddhism, the resurgence of Hinduism and the penetration of Christianity and Islam through two millennia.

Known as ‘Poduke’ to the classical geographers of Greece and Rome, the ancient port of Pondicherry flourished from the second century B.C. It has now been established that the place had a Roman settlement about 2,000 years ago. Excavations at Arikamedu, near Ariankuppam, on the outskirts of the present city prove that the Romans settled here and regular commerce was carried on between the port of Pondicherry and the Roman cities. The area later formed part of the kingdom of the Pallavas, the Cholas, the Vijayanagar rulers and the Nayaks. The French came here, following the Portuguese and the Dutch, and took root here. In the 18th century, in the wake of wars between England and France, the city changed hands several times. At last, the French took it over on 26th September 1816 and continued to rule for one hundred and thirty-eight years, till they left the shores on 31st October 1954, following the transfer of power. Thus the region which saw the confluence of different peoples has grown into a repository of a very high standard of art and culture.

162 Kms south of Madras and 22 Kms north of Cuddalore is Pondicherry. The bulk of this region is an irregular stretch of land consisting of eleven enclaves. From north to south these enclaves skirt the main entity of Pondicherry almost in a semi-circle between 11° 46' and 12° 3' northern longitude and between 79° 36' and 79° 53' of eastern longitude. Bounded by the Bay of Bengal on the east and by the South Arcot district on all the other sides, the region as a whole is 290 sq. Kms with a total population of 4,50,000 according to the 1981 census.

Pondicherry is the corruption of Puducherry which means a new hamlet. The fact that people speaking 55 different languages reside here and that Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, French and English are the five official languages certainly raises

eyebrows. In spite of this linguistic plethora, there is no confusion but absolute harmony. Call it Unity in Diversity. There are very few streets in the town not sanctified by the precincts of a temple or a church or a mosque. Many temples here are ten centuries old and a few churches date back to the end of the 17th century. Festivals are recurrent; people from all religions regardless of their caste and creed join the celebrations, and thereby spread a festive mood all around. In fact there is no place in India where religious harmony is so natural.

Pondicherry is oval-shaped with parallel streets cutting each other at right angles. The long canal street, that runs from north to south was constructed on purpose to separate the Blacks from the Whites. As it stands today Pondicherry is a blend of the Occident and the Orient and a model of Medieval European Town-planning. All roads from the Black Town lead to the promenade, *via* the White Town. The promenade, one of the finest in the whole country, is 1500 metres long. It is an irresistible attraction for the young and the aged alike. At the southern tip of the promenade stands the statue of Monsieur Dupleix, the greatest French Governor of Pondicherry whose majestic presence reminds the natives that he was once the king of their land. Further to his back is the port with a new pier, a 284 metre-long structure in concrete. At the northern tip of the promenade is the Distillery. Midway on the promenade stands the 4.25 metre tall statue of Mahatma Gandhi, flanked by eight exquisitely hewn monolithic pillars facing the sprawling Gandhi Maidan, where the statue of Jawaharlal Nehru stands. Facing the waves of the Bay of Bengal is the Town Hall, once known as 'Hotel de Ville' and 'Mairie'. To its left is the War Memorial erected by the French to honour the Pondicherry soldiers who died in the First World War.

The 200 year old 'Raj Niwas', the official residence of the Lieutenant Governor; the 'Cercle de Pondichéry' where the moneyed and the people of alien cultures drink, gamble and dance; the Assembly Hall that remained shut for years together but is now in full swing; the General Hospital and the Maternity Hospital, that are heavily crowded round the clock, and the 'Chamber of Commerce' are so lined up on three sides as to form the Government Square or Park. Some charmingly chiselled pillars brought from Gingee to Pondicherry after the capture of its Fort in 1751 add beauty to the Park. At the centre of the Park, formerly the 'Royal Garden', stands a small surprise. Surprising indeed, for it is a monument built not in honour of a queen or of an empress but of a harlot. The fact that Napoleon III, Emperor of France, who reigned during the later half of the 19th century, was responsible for erecting this building to commemorate a 16th century harlot adds to our curiosity. The harlot belonged to Pondicherry. Her charitable nature had made direct supply of water to the town possible.

The 'Alliance Française', dedicated to the propagation of the French language and culture in Pondicherry and the 'French Institute' founded by Dr J. Fillionat, the Indologist, devoted to research on Indian culture with its scientific and technical section continue to do commendable service in promoting Indo-French cultural

relations. The statue of Joan of Arc, the variety of buildings modelled on French architecture and the streets named after historic personages of Pondicherry bring to mind fading memories of yesteryears. The mansion of Ananda Rangapillai, the Chief Dubash to the French Governor Monsieur Dupleix, built sometime in 1733 is the best specimen of Indo-French architecture. Pondicherry remains unique in numbering the doors of houses in every street. Odd numbers on the one side and even numbers on the opposite side make it easier for any stranger to locate the house he is in search of.

We have spoken of Sage Agastya who established his Ashram here. The French archaeologist Prof. Jouveau-Dubreuil used to say that he had reasons to believe that the Ashram of Agastya was situated on the very spot where stands today the main building of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. To Sri Aurobindo, one-time Nationalist leader, Pondicherry was something more than a political asylum. It was here he did his Integral Yoga and wrote his literary and philosophical works. With the advent of a French lady, Madam Mirra Richard, later known as the Mother, who had followed the same spiritual path on her own, Sri Aurobindo started his Ashram to train others in his comprehensive and world-accepting system of spirituality. The Samadhi that houses the bodies of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, in the main premises of the Ashram, is always decorated with a wide variety of flowers in charming patterns. Hundreds of devotees visit this holy place every day. During the Darshan days of the Ashram, the entire city is packed with pilgrims from all parts of the globe. The Ashram, a mini-township with its sprawling estate of 120 buildings, hums with activities as work is an offering by the Ashramites to the Divine. The 'Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education' imparts knowledge to some 600 students from the kindergarten to the higher levels of learning in a number of Indian and foreign languages. Hand-made paper of high quality, perfumes, incense-sticks, embroidery, batik and marbled cloths are among a variety of things which the different units of the Ashram produce.

Mahakavi Subramania Bharati, who insisted that all citizens without any exception are kings of India and sang—

“The crows and sparrows are our clan—
The seas and hills are our kin.
We behold none but ourselves
Wherever we turn our eyes”—

was another political refugee in Pondicherry. From here through the medium of his glowing and evocative songs on Mother India he inspired the freedom movement in Tamilnadu. The Government of Pondicherry has not only honoured him with a statue but also preserved as a national monument his house at Easwaran Koil Street, where he lived and preached the religion of love. Poet Bharathidasan, known as 'Paventhari' or 'King of Songs', is another eminent son of the soil. Facing the

'Cercle de Pondichéry' is his statue and the house he lived in at 95, Perumal Koil Street has been converted into a memorial. Statues of political leaders and social reformers like C.N. Annadurai, E.V. Ramasamy Naicker and Dr. Ambedkar make their presence felt here.

While the 160-year old Botanical Garden, situated at the junction of West Boulevard and Lal Bahadur St. preserves a large variety of plants collected from all over India and abroad, the Pondicherry museum displays the findings of Arikamedu, priceless Chola Bronzes and sculptures, glimpses of the French heritage, specimens of modern and traditional handicrafts, paintings, armouries, wood carvings and rare books and journals that were once printed in this 'Seat of learning'. The Pondicherry Central University with the appointment of a Vice-chancellor is equipping itself to begin its great function of imparting knowledge and wisdom.

The three famous cotton mills here provide employment to thousands of labourers and their cotton products are in a great demand in the foreign market. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Pondicherry. The Agricultural Department has an active engineering wing. Equipped with power drills, anti-compressors and welding plants it looks after the irrigation facilities. Attention is paid to promote the production of groundnuts, rice and sugarcane. The Department of Animal Husbandry takes a number of steps to improve the bovine breeds. Fishermen are given loans and subsidy and are encouraged to obtain mechanical boats. The newly set-up sugar mill has started production. Agro-based industries, marine-based industries, mineral-based industries and cotton-waste based industries are in the offing. Owing to the too-difficult-to-solve problem of unemployment, graduates are encouraged to start small-scale industries of their own. The Industrial Estate advances loans for enterprising young men. Streets named after the two most prominent political leaders of India—Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru—are the two fashionable shopping centres of Pondicherry.

Located at Gorimedu, once known as Red Hills and now as Dhanvantari Nagar, 'Jawaharlal Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education and Research' popularly known as Jipmer is 5 kms away from Pondicherry on the road to Tindivanam. It has a high reputation as a teaching Institute and Hospital. The clean and artistically designed building of the Institute, at about 100 feet above sea level, commands a panoramic view of Pondicherry and the coast.

Eight kilometres north of Pondicherry is Auroville. The foundation was laid on 28th February 1968, when a boy and a girl representing each of 124 countries of the world poured a handful of their native soil into a concrete lotus, symbolic of their support for the project. The purpose of Auroville is to realise human unity. The late Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, in her message said: "Pondicherry was Sri Aurobindo's place of political exile and spiritual unfolding. His effulgent message radiated to different parts of the world from Pondicherry. It is appropriate that seekers of enlightenment from various lands should found a new city there bearing Sri Aurobindo's name. It is an exciting project for understanding the environmental

needs for man's spiritual growth. May Auroville truly become a city of light and peace." On completion it is expected to accommodate 50,000 residents, the optimum population for harmonious urban development. These 800 hectares of land that remained barren for ages will be divided into four zones: Union Zone, with international pavilions, Congress Halls, etc., Cultural Zone, with schools, theatres, studios, stadiums, etc., Work Zone, with industries, laboratories, administrative offices, etc.; and Residential Zone with homes, supermarkets, etc. There will also be an International University perhaps the first of its kind in the world. The township has done commendable experiments in living, agriculture, gardening and other useful fields. "Auroville wants to be a universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony": such was the Mother's vision of it.

Let us hope the time is ripening to make the Ashram and Auroville examples to the world of a new life in which men will realise their souls and find no use for their weapons with which they are fighting today.

P. RAJA

STORIES FROM TAMIL LITERATURE

29. OUTWITTED BY A COWHERD

THERE were at least three women poets in the Tamil land bearing the name Avvaiyar. They lived in different periods. The following story is told of an Avvaiyar who lived in the 12th century.

It was a very hot day. Avvaiyar was travelling on foot in the countryside. The midday sun was beating down mercilessly upon her. Sweat ran down her forehead and cheeks. She was overcome by fatigue and felt a need to take shelter from the sun. She looked around for some shade and saw a large tree a little distance away. She hurried towards it. The tree was on the sandy bank of a lake which was dry. A few buffaloes were lying under the tree. As Avvaiyar drew near she noticed that it was a *naaval* tree bearing edible berries. She also noticed a boy on the tree high up among the branches. He was plucking the berries and eating them with relish. Avvaiyar took shelter in the shade and looked up. The boy saw her. He was a bright-looking lad and he had a cowherd's staff in his hand. He greeted Avvaiyar with a smile. Avvaiyar returned his smile and said, "There seem to be a lot of berries on the tree." "Yes, and very nice ones, too. Would you like to have some?" answered the lad. Already Avvaiyar was feeling the need for some refreshment and the sight of the sweet-looking, dark-blue berries increased her hunger. She said, "By all means, yes. Would you kindly get me some of those berries?" "With pleasure," the cowherd boy replied, adding "But I'd like to know first which kind of berries you want—the hot berries or the cold ones?" There was a twinkle in the boy's eyes. Avvaiyar was puzzled. Was the boy trying to play a trick on her? She hesitated. She had never heard of berries being hot or cold. However, she liked to have some of the berries and to be on the safe side she said, "Let me have the cold ones."

"Are you sure you want only the cold berries?" The boy sounded rather mischievous. "Yes, I do," said Avvaiyar, though still uncertain about what he meant. "All right, then," the boy told her. "I will pluck the cold berries and throw them to you and you have to be careful in catching them." "Why don't you just shake the branch? That would be easier for you and it won't be a trouble for me to pick them up from the ground," suggested Avvaiyar. "Oh! then all sorts of berries will fall down. You have to look for the cold ones yourself and pick them up." So saying the boy took hold of one of the branches full of berries and shook it. The berries dropped to the ground in a copious shower. Avvaiyar picked up the fully ripe berries, but she could not eat them straight away for they were covered with sand from the ground. She could not wipe the berries with her fingers since the flesh of the fruit was very tender and would come away in her hand. So she gently held each one of them in her fingers and blew off the sand before putting it in her mouth. The lad watched her for a few seconds and then cried from the tree, "Hey, grandma, you said you wanted only the cold berries, but now you are taking the hot ones! Be careful, lest they scald your tongue."

Now the poet understood. When people had something very hot to eat they blew on it to make it cool. Blowing on the berries made them look hot! The learned poet felt greatly ashamed at having been outwitted by the simple cowherd lad, but since it was a very enjoyable joke she complimented the boy on his cleverness and went her way.

30. THE SINS OF THE FATHERS

Ilinkandeerako was the prince of Mudirai. He was the younger brother of Nalli, who had been a great patron of poets. Ilinkandeerako also loved poets and welcomed them warmly to his court.

One day, Ilavitchiko, the chieftain of the Vitchi Hills, visited him as a guest and both the princes were sitting at court when poet Perunthaliai Sathan was announced. The two princes rose from their seats and greeted the poet warmly. The poet bowed and walked towards them. Looking affectionately at Ilinkandeerako, he stretched out his arms and held him in a warm embrace. Ilavitchiko was standing nearby, but the poet had no warmth for him. He looked at him nonchalantly for a second and then turned away. He took his seat away from Ilavitchiko who was greatly mortified at this. He could not understand why the poet was indifferent to him even though he had done nothing to displease him. Later, he took aside the poet for a few minutes and asked him why he had behaved so coldly towards him while Ilinkandeerako had been embraced warmly.

The poet was frank. He said, "I embraced him because he descends from a very noble dynasty. His forbears were always kind to poets and showered them with rich gifts. He himself has a generous heart. As for you, I have nothing against you personally. Still I could not embrace you because of your background. You are a descendant of Nannan the woman-killer who was shunned by the poets since the day of his mindless cruelty to an innocent girl. Nor did any of his descendants—your forefathers—make amends for that evil deed. They did nothing to win back the poets. They were rather indifferent and their doors remained shut to the poets. That is why we poets cannot feel friendly towards you."

Ilavitchiko could not say anything in answer. Though mortified at heart, he could not blame the poet. He blamed his ancestors.

M. L. THANGAPPA

VYASA AND THE VEDIC SECRET

A COMMENT ON PRADIP BHATTACHARYA'S *THE SECRET OF THE MAHABHARATA*

(Parimal Prakashan, Aurangabad, 1984, pp. 155, Rs. 110)

SRI AUROBINDO pierced the veil of Vedic mysticism in the second decade of this century. His line was followed up by masters like Nolini Kanta Gupta, Kapali Shastri and others. Simultaneously, Swami Pratyagatmananda revealed the Vedic vision of Sound in *Japasūtram* and the deep scientific basis of Veda in *Ved-o-Vijñān*; and Ramendrasundar Trivedi laid bare the symbolism of Vedic ritual in *Yajña-kathā*. Kshitimohan Sen discovered the link between Veda and Baul—the most progressive dharma of the world. Anirvan's *Veda-mimāṃsā* in the sixties established the esoteric interpretation of the Veda on the firm basis of the spiritual-religious-philosophical experiences of Bharatavarsha through centuries and millennia up to the present day. The reviewer's view, presented in *The Linguistic Atom, Ved-o-Sri Aurobindo* and *Veder Kobita*, also fall in the same line. Rabindranath's poetry too—as shown by her—is floodlit with Vedic experience.

All these findings, though independent of one another, yet pointing to the same conclusions, represent a common approach to Vedic interpretation—the inner integral approach, which is very different from the external method generally followed by the academic world. Shri Pradip Bhattacharya's *The Secret of the Mahabharata*—a brilliant analysis of Vyasa's myths in terms of Vedic truths—comes as a fresh corroboration of the validity of the integral approach.

Not only individual slokas scattered here and there, but the whole *Mahabharata* is a *Vyāsakūta*, a unique puzzle—a guide to the secret treasure of Veda, written in a unique ambiguous code—left for the future generations to solve. Vyasa has left numerous clues for the solution of his puzzle in the form of Vedic words, phrases, mantras, imagery, woven into the fabric of the epic, which a casual reader is likely to dismiss as chance occurrences and miss the message thereby. He will so skip over the definite positive statement of Vyasa that he has placed in the epic the mystery of the Veda—*Veda rahasyam*: and his standing guide-line to future researchers in Indology: “Elucidate the Veda with the help of itihāsas and purānas”. The commentator Nilakantha, however, has not failed to note here (I.1.267-68) by way of illustration that the *māyāmṛga* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is nothing but an elaboration of the Vedic concept of Vṛtra the deceitful coverer, who is described as a *māyāmṛga* in the *Rg. Veda* (I. 80-7).

It is delightful to see that the author of *The Secret of the Mahabharata* reads correctly the message of Vyasa and following Sukthankar's penetrating remark that “there is an inner significance behind the events so realistically narrated in the Great Epic of India” and that all great works of Indian art and literature are infused with the idea of achieving *one gigantic all-embracing synthesis*, takes up the key from his observation that “many of the scenes of this drama which at first sight appear to us unintelligible or at least uncouth and grotesque, acquire deep significance when

they are treated symbolically”, and proceeds to decipher the Vyasa ‘hieroglyphic’.

The first chapter being devoted—and rightly so—to explaining the approach, the subsequent seven chapters are minute analyses of six episodes from the *Adi-parva*, namely: Utanka, Aruni-Uddalaka, Upamanyu and the *Aśvins*, the Churning of the Ocean, Garuda and Amrita and finally Kacha and the Sanjivani Mantra—in which with a marvellous sweep from Veda to *Savitri*, the author is able to prove that “Vyasa is writing directly in the mystic tradition of the Rigvedic rishis, couching spiritual messages in an elaborate symbolic structure.”

The intricate scheme of the Utanka story is beautifully unfolded in one of the most well-written chapters of this book and the parallelism worked out to the minutest detail, in which the grotesque and the uncouth perfectly fit in. Utanka qualifies himself for the acquirement of the Kundala by passing the test of temptation in his guru’s household. The Kundala itself signifies inner listening or *śruti* so dearly craved for by *A-halyā*, the barren human field or adhara (this can very well become a symbol for barren scholarship craving for the mystic gift of the Word). Thus, Utanka’s story is shown to be nothing but Vyasa’s re-cast of the Vedic Angirasa myth, namely recovery of the lost sun, that is, the Veda.

The clue to the mystic interpretation of the Aruni episode lies, as the author shows, in the incongruity that the disciple is praised for finally splitting apart the dyke, while he was sent to plug the breach. Here Aruni is playing successively the roles of (1) Ahi-Vritra the serpentine coil covering the divine waters of Bliss and Illumination by covering the waters with his physical body, and (2) Indra, who breaks open the barrier and releases the waters by splitting apart the dyke. On this small canvas of a story Vyasa has condensed the whole Vedic theme of the aspiration, suffering and victory of the soul (compare Rabindranath’s *Muktadhara*), like painting Kanchanjangha in her golden splendour on a post-card.

In the same vein, the Churning of the Ocean is shown to be a word-to-word, phrase-to-phrase, symbol-to-symbol equation of the Soma-ritual which represents the churning of the sap of Delight and other divine treasures out of the turbulent depths of the Inconscient, while the Garuda-Amrita episode represents the soul soaring high to the superconscient “on the mighty wings of Word” as observed by the reviewer in her *Linguistic Atom*.

The Kacha episode depicting the quest for the mantra of immortality provides the finale to this series of symbolic stories, pinpointing the creative Logos—which is the secret of Immortality—as the ultimate dynamic goal of the eternal quest.

Shri Bhattacharya’s scholarship has an eye and ear for the mystic, which is the essential pre-requisite for a researcher in Indology. His book, though full of printing and a few other mistakes, far outshines them, leaving ground, however, for alternative explanations here and there. For example, the name “Kacha”, meaning “hair”, has been explained, with a note of hesitation though, to hint at the “tonsured initiate”. But the meaning which exactly fits in with the esoteric explanation of the story is the “hair-like fibre of the Soma” called *aṃsu* in the *Rg. Veda*. In sacri-

rice, the fibrous Soma represents the sacrificer, and its crushing and filtering into a purified flow of delightful juice represents the crushing of the man and transforming him into a stream of pure bliss, the joy of immortality or Higher Life which is called *amṛta* in Veda. The author has actually noticed the "equation of Kacha with Soma" on p. 141.

Similarly, a roundabout explanation is given to the word "Dhanvantari". A more direct and Vedic explanation is: One who has crossed (*tari*) the desert (*dhanvan*). Desert in the Veda—and in later poetry too—signifies the barren dry soul deprived of the shower of grace. The descent of divine grace is described as flooding the desert in *Rg. Veda* VI. 12.5. So the name "Dhanvan-tari" signifies that through the arduous task of churning the ocean of his lower depths, man at last emerges victorious with the secret of immortality.

In the story of the Churning of the Ocean, Vyasa has inserted many more parallels to attract the seeing eyes, which, if added, would have given the author a stronger support. Of these, the most striking, perhaps, is the description of *mandara*, the churning rod, as *savana* (I.18.8). The apparent meaning here is *sa-vana*, that is, "with forest": The mountain was lifted up with its forest and inhabitants (*sa-vanam sa-vanankasam*), the passage means. But under the cover of a pun, there is a second meaning. *Savana* also means "savana-sadhana", the implement of Soma-crushing. Thus, the Churning of the Ocean becomes with a single stroke equivalent to the crushing of the Soma and all the accompanying symbolism—which the author has established with the help of many other proofs.

To point out a few slips, the name Utanka has always been misspelt as Uttanka. Veda—one of the three disciples of Dhaumya—is said (p.56) to be the only one who is not put to tasks. On the contrary, Veda is the disciple who was put to the severest of tasks, amounting to rigorous imprisonment. The suffering Veda underwent at the house of his guru taught him to treat his own disciples kindly, comments the *Mahābhārata*. Rules of transliteration have not been followed properly by Sri Bhattacharya, which makes the reading of the mantras extremely difficult.

But all this is secondary. After going through the 155 pages of his book, one is convinced that the *Mahābhārata* is a unique time-capsule invented by Vyasa the Genius in which the mystic knowledge of the Veda—the Grand Synthesis—is preserved for posterity, not buried underground but left circulating through a chain of *sūtas* waiting for the initiate to see-listen through the story-coating. We hope the author will carry on his research and explore the continent of Vyasa for the "souler" cows to gaze and graze upon.

This century seems to be set for the re-acting of the Angirasa-myth. Indologists with a different turn of mind will do well to stop and listen, at this hour of crisis, to the message of Veda and Vyasa, and retrace their steps, instead of being lost irrevocably in the maze of erudite hypotheses leading nowhere, lured by the imposing *māyāmr̥ga* of "modern" researchology.