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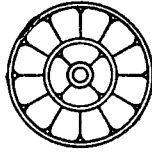
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born
The things that were promised are fulfilled



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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No. 9

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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THE MOTHER ON THE NATURE AND POWER OF FAITH

FAITH is certainly a gift given to us by the Divine Grace. It is like a door suddenly opening upon an eternal truth, through which we can see it, almost touch it.

As in everything else in the ascent of humanity, there is the necessity—especially at the beginning—of personal effort. It is possible that in some exceptional circumstances, for reasons which completely elude our intelligence, faith may come almost accidentally, quite unexpectedly, almost without ever having been solicited, but most frequently it is an answer to a yearning, a need, an aspiration, something in the being that is seeking and longing, even though not in a very conscious and systematic way. But in any case, when faith has been granted, when one has had this sudden inner illumination, in order to preserve it constantly in the active consciousness individual effort is altogether indispensable. One must *hold on* to one's faith, *will* one's faith; one must seek it, cultivate it, protect it.

In the human mind there is a morbid and deplorable habit of doubt, argument, scepticism. *This* is where human effort must be put in: the refusal to admit them, the refusal to listen to them and still more the refusal to follow them. No game is more dangerous than playing mentally with doubt and scepticism. They are not only enemies, they are terrible pitfalls, and once one falls into them, it becomes tremendously difficult to pull oneself out.

Some people think it is a very great mental elegance to play with ideas, to discuss them, to contradict their faith; they think that this gives them a very superior attitude, that in this way they are above “superstitions” and “ignorance”; but if you listen to suggestions of doubt and scepticism, *then* you fall into the grossest ignorance and stray away from the right path. You enter into confusion, error, a maze of contradictions.... You are not always sure you will be able to get out of it. You go so far away from the inner truth that you lose sight of it and sometimes lose too all possible contact with your soul.

Certainly a personal effort is needed to preserve one's faith, to let it grow within. Later—much later—one day, looking back, we may see that everything that happened, even what seemed to us the worst, was a Divine Grace to make us advance on the way; and then we become aware that the personal effort too was a grace. But before reaching that point, one has to advance much, to struggle much, sometimes even to suffer a great deal.

To sit down in inert passivity and say, “If I am to have faith I shall have it, the Divine will give it to me”, is an attitude of laziness, of unconsciousness and almost of bad-will.

For the inner flame to burn, one must feed it; one must watch over the fire, throw into it the fuel of all the errors one wants to get rid of, all that delays the progress, all that darkens the path. If one doesn't feed the fire, it smoulders under the ashes of one's unconsciousness and inertia, and then, not years but

lives, centuries will pass before one reaches the goal

One must watch over one's faith as one watches over the birth of something *infinitely* precious, and protect it very carefully from everything that can impair it.

In the ignorance and darkness of the beginning, faith is the most direct expression of the Divine Power which comes to fight and conquer.

(Collected Works of the Mother, Cent. Ed , Vol. 9, pp 351-352.)

THE NEXT STEP?

SOME PASSAGES FROM SRI AUROBINDO

Compiled by G.P. Gupta

OUR endeavour shall be to prepare the paths and to accomplish the beginning of a great and high change which we believe to be and aim at making the future of the race and the future of India. Our ideal is a new birth of humanity into the spirit; our life must be a spiritually inspired effort to create a body of action for that great new birth and creation.

A spiritual ideal has always been the characteristic idea and aspiration of India. But the progress of Time and the need of humanity demand a new orientation and another form of that ideal. The old forms and methods are no longer sufficient for the purpose of the Time-Spirit. India can no longer fulfil herself on lines that are too narrow for the great steps she has to take in the future. Nor is ours the spirituality of a life that is aged and world-weary and burdened with the sense of the illusion and miserable inutility of all God's mighty creation. Our ideal is not the spirituality that withdraws from life but the conquest of life by the power of the spirit. It is to accept the world as an effort of manifestation of the Divine, but also to transform humanity by a greater effort of manifestation than has yet been accomplished, one in which the veil between man and God shall be removed, and divine manhood of which we are capable shall come to birth and our life shall be remoulded in the truth and light and power of the spirit. It is to make of all our action a sacrifice to the master of our action and an expression of the greater self in man and of all life a Yoga.

The West has made the growth of the intellectual, emotional, vital and material being of man its ideal, but it has left aside the greater possibilities of his spiritual existence. Its highest standards are ideals of progress, of liberty, equality and fraternity, of reason and science, of efficiency of all kinds, of a better political, social and economical state, of the unity and earthly happiness of the race. These are great endeavours, but experiment after experiment has shown that they cannot be realised in their truth by the power of the idea and the sentiment alone: their real truth and practice can only be founded in the spirit. The West has put its faith in its science and machinery and it is being destroyed by its science and crushed under its mechanical burden. It has not understood that a spiritual change is necessary for the accomplishment of its ideals. The East has the secret of that spiritual change, but it has too long turned its eyes away from the earth. The time has now come to heal the division and to unite life and the spirit.

This secret too has been possessed but not sufficiently practised by India. It is summarised in the rule of the Gita, *yogasthah kuru karmāni*. Its principle is to

do all actions in Yoga, in union with God, on the foundation of the highest self and through the rule of all our members by the power of the spirit. And this we believe to be not only possible for man but the true solution of all his problems and difficulties. This then is the message we shall constantly utter and this the ideal that we shall put before the young and rising India, a spiritual life that shall take up all human activities and avail to transfigure the world for the great age that is coming. India, she that has carried in herself from of old the secret, can alone lead the way in this great transformation of which the present *sandhyā* of the old *yuga* is the forerunner. This must be her mission and service to humanity,—as she discovered the inner spiritual life for the individual, so now to discover for the race its integral collective expression and found for mankind its new spiritual and communal order.

Our first object shall be to declare this ideal: insist on the spiritual change as the first necessity and group together all who accept it and are ready to strive sincerely to fulfil it. Our second shall be to build up not only an individual but a communal life on this principle. An outer activity as well as an inner change is needed and it must be at once a spiritual, educational, social and economical action. Its scope, too, will be at once individual and communal, regional and national, and eventually a work not only for the nation but for the whole human people. The immediate aim of this action will be a new creation, a spiritual education and culture, an enlarged social spirit founded not on division but on unity, on the perfect growth and freedom of the individual, but also on his unity with others and his dedication to a larger self in the people and in humanity, and the beginning of an endeavour towards the solution of the economic problem founded not on any western model but on the communal principle native to India.

Our call is to young India. It is the young who must be the builders of the new world,—not those who accept the competitive individualism, the capitalism or the materialistic communism of the West as India's future ideal, nor those who are enslaved to old religious formulas and cannot believe in the acceptance and transformation of life by the spirit, but all who are in mind and heart ready to accept a completer truth and labour for a greater ideal. They must be men who will dedicate themselves not to the past or the present but to the future.... This ideal can be as yet only a little seed and the life that embodies it a small nucleus, but it is our fixed hope that the seed will grow into a great tree and the nucleus be the heart of an ever-extending formation....

(*Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 16, pp 329-31)

LIFE—POETRY—YOGA

SOME PERSONAL LETTERS

WHAT you have written about “International Spiritualism” is correct in essence. By the way I should like you to speak not of Spiritualism but of Spirituality. The former term has now popularly acquired a special meaning, referring to communication with the spirits of the dead through mediums. As for certain experiences being not exclusively Indian, the lines you have quoted from Wordsworth clearly show the truth of your contention. But Wordsworth’s *Prelude* and other mystical poems are not typical of Western spirituality. The West is Christian, and to the bulk of Christians the universe is not something emanated by the Divine and ultimately God-stuff, with a “within” and a “without” to be realised as wonderfully balanced as Wordsworth perceives. The universe in the orthodox Christian view is a creation by a supra-cosmic deity “out of nothing” and substantially different from Himself. Christianity has a horror of pantheism—because it believes that pantheism would exclude Divine Transcendence and annul all moral values. European pantheism does tend to restrict the Divine to the universe. Indian pantheism does not, it is just one aspect of a complex and many-sided spirituality such as the West does not know except in a few scattered individuals. Even Wordsworth who knew it in his early life reacted against it later and became an orthodox Churchman just as in politics the revolutionary of his early days died and stiffened into an ultra-conservative. The Christian milieu was too strong for him and he could not himself bring his mind to be on comfortable terms with the Vedantic mysticism which ran through his best poetry. In one of my articles in *Mother India* (“A Poet’s Sincerity”), I have mentioned that the best known stanza in the great Immortality Ode had no clear roots in Wordsworth’s thought and he expressly denied believing in its contents when he was asked about the matter. How then can you suggest that Indian spirituality is not typically Indian but international?

Of course, we do not wish to say that the West is incapable of such spirituality or that it has absolutely nothing of it. But there is certainly an absence in the West on the whole of what is common air and water to the Indian spiritual aspirant. Further, Indian spirituality is assimilative and progressive—it can take into itself all the finest and deepest of Christianity—but Christianity knows itself only by opposing itself to Indian spirituality, by which it mostly understands a Western-type pantheism or Shankarite Illusionism (without appreciating Shankara’s lifelong devotion to the Divine Mother). Illusionism itself is misunderstood as landing the mystic in material unconsciousness instead of in spiritual superconsciousness. Look at what the most progressive Christian—Teilhard de Chardin—has to say on Indian spirituality in general. He rejects it—for all its fascination through its sense of the cosmic—with horror and

even tries to explain away his own pantheistic inclinations in terms of orthodox Roman Catholic theology!

We are not by any chance fanatics of Indianism but it should be clear that the future spirituality, multi-faceted, all-embracing, even science-coloured, can arise only from an Indian basis and with an Indian background. Has it not struck you that Sri Aurobindo, who calls the whole world to his Integral Yoga and who sets up no barrier to the claims and capacities of the true soul whether in the Occident or the Orient, goes back only to the Vedas and the Upanishads and the Gita and the Tantra for his spiritual antecedents? He was himself more Westernised than any Indian of a comparable calibre—but he came to see, as soon as he plunged into the ocean of spiritual realisation, that nowhere except in India could there be the basis of a world-spirituality. No doubt, he has gone beyond all that traditional India has taught, but the hints and glints of his integral spirituality could be traced by him only in neglected or forgotten parts of old Indian scriptures. We are Aurobindonians and thus belong to the future and are more than Indians, but the time has not come yet to put the world on a par with India in spirituality and we cannot set aside the background of India's illumined past in relation to the Aurobindonian future.

Sri Aurobindo's Ashram stands in India. It is to India that the world has to turn to become Aurobindonian—and this is because India is always more than Indian and holds the best promise of being Aurobindonian. In our modernism and our eclecticism and our universalism let us not underrate the role and the soul of Mother India. We shall be most modern, most eclectic, most universal if we remember what Mother India essentially is. You must have seen that in our monthly review of culture we deal with all sorts of topics and not merely Indian ones but we should not repudiate the vastly nourishing milieu of the Spirit that is our country. (3.10 1970)

*

I am sorry I have delayed replying to your kind and considerate letter of inquiry about certain subjects. As for the question of historicity of Rama and Krishna, Sri Aurobindo is positive about the actual existence of the latter. One of his most interesting statements about Krishna is to the effect that it is a great thing to know that at least once in human history the Divine has definitely touched the earth. In regard to Rama he has said that the *Ramayana* is a mingling of fact and fiction on the one hand and on the other of events of earth with events of other planes of being. Whether there existed a particular person whom we identify as Rama, son of Dasaratha, is not certain but someone who performed an evolutionary function—namely, of establishing in man the dharmic (moral-religious) mind and averting the strong alternative trend towards both the titan and the vital-animal consciousness—was a necessary part of the human past.

Someone Rama-like was assuredly there and Valmiki has so projected him that all his actions bear the stamp of an Avatar's universal consciousness. Sri Aurobindo declared that he could clearly recognise the Avatic afflatus in all the decisions and deeds of Valmiki's Rama. I think that for all practical purposes the basic Rama can be taken to be as historical as the Krishna of the *Māhabharata*

You have mentioned Dr. Kanaiyalal Munshi as "calling the *Ramayana* a great literary work while expressing no opinion about the *Mahabharata*." When the archaeologist B.B. Lal excavated the various sites listed in the *Mahabharata* and, finding there the ceramic known as Painted Grey Ware, dated the sites to about 850 B.C. in accordance with the Indologist Paegiter's chronology, Munshi was exultant over the finds as indicating the life-style of the period depicted in that epic. Picturesquely he exclaimed that now we have in our hands "Duryodhana's feeding-bottle"! The historian and epigraphist, D.C. Sircar, in a letter to me, poohpooed the notion that the actual time and life-style of the Bharata-War period had been discovered: he was even sceptical whether there was ever such an event as the Bharata War. Most Indian historians don't share Sircar's scepticism, but, as you note, the datings differ. My dating of Krishna—either 1482 or 1452 B.C.—which involves that of the Bharata War has the support of S.R. Rao's recent marine excavation at Dwaraka: the drowned Dwaraka of roughly the fifteenth century B.C. which he has found tallies very well with the drowned Dwaraka of the *Mahabharata* story. Other researchers have postulated times different from mine, but I don't believe anybody has really suggested, as you say, 250 B.C. as the date. You draw my attention to the article "The Pandyas and the date of Kalidasa" in the March 1994 *Mother India*, p. 191. But you are mixing up the poem *Mahabharata* and the Bharata War whose story it recounts. The author of this article is talking of the poem and not of the War. Similarly he is talking of the poem *Ramayana* which he dates to the first century B.C. I have found no valid reason so far to doubt my chronology for Krishna.

I was impressed as well as amused by your following line of argument: "The existence of Rama and Krishna temples all over Asia cannot make them historical persons. They are such powerful personalities that people accepted them as true life figures. We have an example of a recent such incident. Some 10-15 years back a Hindi movie 'Jay Santoshima' was produced and it became a great hit. Its impact was so great in the Hindi belt that people, particularly the village folks, started believing that 'Santoshima' was a real-life deity. As a result dozens of temples dedicated to 'Santoshima' cropped up in Bihar and U.P. and many of them even today have a good following and people believe that 'Ma' gives success to real believers. Rama and Krishna can be similar 'Santoshimas' of an earlier period."

You have very pointedly shown the possibility that Rama and Krishna were non-historical. But on behalf of Krishna we can put up a defence. In the second

chapter of *Essays on the Gita* Sri Aurobindo tells us about him: “We meet the name first in the Chhandogya Upanishad where all we can gather about him is that he was well-known in spiritual tradition as a knower of the Brahman, so well known indeed is his personality and the circumstances of his life that it was sufficient to refer to him by the name of his mother as Krishna son of Devaki for all to understand who was meant. In the same Upanishad we find mention of King Dhritarashtra son of Vichitravirya, and since tradition associated the two together so closely that they are both of them leading personages in the action of the *Mahabharata*, we may fairly conclude that they were actually contemporaries and that the epic is to a great extent dealing with historical characters and in the war of Kurukshetra with a historical occurrence imprinted on the memory of the race.”

I appreciate the sympathetic picture you have conjured up of me and the instinctive sense you have of my temperament. “Sir, I know you are 89 and a virtual invalid. I also know that I should not be putting any additional load on your already overburdened life, and yet I have a feeling that you may like to clear the doubts from the minds of persons like me. There may be many.”

This letter in reply to yours has been written very gladly and without any sense of strain. Although I am confined to a wheelchair I am extremely happy at heart and psychologically feel no sign of old age. (17 4 1994)

*

I was glad to read your letter. There is sincerity in your search for the Divine. But I would not advise you to be over-hasty in shunning your family life when your wife is eager to continue it. You may carry on its normal course. Then your wife will not feel that your attempt at spirituality is something against her. Don't let adverse vibrations be created from her side. But you should inwardly offer at the Mother's feet every part of your family life. Let the flame of “remembering and offering” burn steadily within you without its standing in the way of cordial relations with your partner.

Your wife's dream clearly shows she's a genuinely religious person. To be so naturally in touch with Shiva is rather rare. And her attempt to climb a gigantic hill to reach a Shiva-temple or Shiva-symbol at the top proves the strength of her devotion. The actual intercession by Shiva on her behalf by coming and catching her hands when she was at a dangerous height is proved by her getting so soon the boon she had asked of him. To get in a short time what she had failed to get for years—namely, a job—is a rare phenomenon. It is made rarer by the fact that the job was a very good one and that it was got without the usual practice of what you euphemistically call a “donation”.

You may tell your wife that many people who have come in contact with Sri Aurobindo have felt a very strong element of the Shiva-poise and Shiva-peace in

him. If we think of Sri Aurobindo as an Avatar, I would say that in traditional terms he could be considered as much an incarnation of Shiva as of Vishnu.

If you can very quietly open your wife's eyes to this vision, much if not all of the division she feels between her religious life and your Yogic practice will vanish

I would wish your wife and you to live in as much harmony as possible. Neither you nor she should think that the inner paths which both of you are following are far apart. I don't see why essentially they should not be concordant—especially if, as I am inclined to believe, both of you love each other.

(22 4.1994)

*

You have asked me what bearing Yoga could have on Industry. The importance of Yoga for Industry may be realised if we attend to a few facts.

Industry can flourish only when there is industrial peace, which depends largely on good behaviour and healthy relations between management and labour.

To behave rightly, one must have the qualities of tolerance, love, kindness and joyfulness. Good behaviour is only possible when people rise above narrow-mindedness and selfishness.

Of course, an attempt to observe ethical rules by will-power is always to be encouraged; but it cannot be effective at all times. The reason is that one is acting as if one's natural bent were in the opposite direction and as if one had always to control one's nature. The assumption appears to be that one is naturally narrow-minded and selfish.

Now, the ancient philosophy of Yoga tells us that there is a divine centre in each of us—a centre which is a spontaneous source of tolerance, love, kindness and joyfulness, because it holds in each individual a sense of the One Self of all who is also the Supreme Being, the Infinite, the Eternal, the Godhead, the Highest Truth and Goodness and Beauty and Power

The philosophy of Yoga further tells us that if we quiet our minds and concentrate our hearts upon the divine reality within us as well as everywhere we shall become conscious of the centre of our being, which is naturally a representation of this reality. Thus we establish contact with what is intrinsically and effortlessly tolerant, loving, kind and joyful

A little daily exercise in such quieting and concentrating will make us better members of society and help greatly the relationship between management and labour. A fine sense of co-operation and equality will also arise, and the background of inner peace which will be realised will go even to make the mind more imaginative and creative so that better means of promoting industry are likely to be found.

(1974)

*

You want to know how to study *The Life Divine* first as a sadhak and secondly as one who intends to deliver lectures now and then at Sri Aurobindo Centres.

You have to understand what sort of book *The Life Divine* is. No doubt, it is addressed to the intellect but it is at the same time, as Aldous Huxley wrote to Dilip Kumar Roy, an extraordinarily fine piece of literature and, chiefly, a mass of spiritual knowledge couched in intellectual and literary terms. This spiritual knowledge is from what Sri Aurobindo has called the Overmind. The Overmind has a vast massive universal vision and looks at quite a multitude of things, appreciating the characteristic of each yet holding the multiplicity together. And the entire *ensemble* comes alive because of the literary language which is not a grace superadded but an integral part of the Overmind's natural manifestation in words.

So, if you want to know *The Life Divine* in its true form you have to be receptive to it on a number of levels. And unless you know it in its true form you will not be a true channel of communication between it and your audience.

As you go on reading, mark the passages that appeal to you most as well as those which strike to your mind the greatest note of originality. Also tabulate in numerical order the various steps leading to "the height of the great argument", as Milton would have put it. You have both to enjoy and to absorb the splendid process—or rather the grand procession of Sri Aurobindo's illumined thought. If enjoyment has not been there, you will not be able to set the mind of your audience on fire. Of course, you have to avoid being superficially rhetorical or cutting dramatic capers. Expounding *The Life Divine* is a serious business, but if your experience of it has made you say to yourself in those words from a sonnet of Sri Aurobindo's

I have drunk the Infinite like a giant's wine

something of your profound pleasure will keep your audience relishing all that you set forth. And in setting it forth try to bring out the difference between ordinary philosophical brain-work and "the titan winging of the thought" which is the natural movement of the "overhead" consciousness and especially the Overmind's comprehension of totalities and apprehension of details.

I may draw your attention particularly to one patch of super-excellence in this book, the shortest chapter in it and even more than the rest of the volume a blend of simplicity with grandeur. I mean the very first chapter: "The Human Aspiration". It is most direct in its exposition but backed by a many-sided survey of the whole of the universe. It lays out, step by step, the ground-plan in a sort of self-sufficient design which will later be seen to anticipate all the circlings of the Overmind vision, yet which at first sight looks rounded off in a clean-cut summary. Its thought stands all the time on the ground though always with an *os sublime*, a face turned upwards to

The joy that beckons from the impossible.

This seeming unattainable is shown with a sweet severity, as the only logical goal because

Earth's winged chimeras are Truth's steeds in heaven,
The impossible God's sign of things to be. (6 6 1994)

AMAL KIRAN
(K.D. SETHNA)

DREAD AND DARE

YOU are an Ocean
Whom I dearly dread
To drown myself in ...

Yet I dare
To step upon
Your shore
And ahead also to share
With you the zeal and joy
Of total loss
And the rapture
Of rediscovery.

ASHALATA DASH

SOME EPISODES FROM THE LIFE OF “AN EXTRAORDINARY GIRL”

A REPORT BASED ON ORAL COMMUNICATION TO NIRODBARAN

(Continued from the issue of 15 August 1994)

My Divorce

I WAS not in favour of a divorce. In fact there was no need for it. I had my child who was now my sole preoccupation and my entire life was centred upon him. Though my conjugal life had definitely come to an end, my husband and I had kept a good friendly relationship. His personal life did not matter to me so long as he did not come to interfere with his claim on my child. And since I was not going to marry again nor was he, so I thought there was no point in suing for a divorce. And, besides, a divorce case in high society is delicious food for scandal and the entire city of Calcutta would be buzzing with the exciting news. Already my relatives and friends were pressing upon me to cut off my connection with him, for they did not approve of the way he was leading his life. There were others who were against any break with him. Only one influential lawyer-relative encouraged me to go ahead; otherwise, he said, my life would be at the mercy of my husband. However, circumstances, or the Divine Will I should say, forced upon me the choice. I was particularly afraid of going to court lest he should demand possession of the child nor was I sure that I would win the case against him.

To make myself sure of his attitude towards a divorce, I sent a friend of mine to ascertain his opinion about it. My message said that since both of us had no intention of remarriage there would be no point in creating a scandal for the wide attention of the Calcutta élite society. I received a taunting reply from him. He said, “Oh, she is afraid of me and wants to placate me by this overture? I don’t care a bit for the scandal. Let her do as she likes.” That settled the matter for me. And my friends too now added their weight and pressed for immediate action. Finally I filed a suit against him on the ground of his betrayal of the conjugal bond. Strangely enough, he did not defend himself. And it was not at all difficult for me to prove his infidelity. I won the case in a month’s time. Our relation was now completely broken.

But now also began the work of his vindictive spirit with all the power he could command. He filed a suit against me for possession of the child. The case went on dragging for more than two years. For a woman all alone who had very little experience of the world, least of all law-suits, and who had none to stand by her and many opposed to her because she went against their proposal to give up the child to the real legal claimant—those two years were like the condition of

one who was drowning with hardly a straw to catch at to save herself. But the Divine stood by me and finally I won and my husband was utterly routed. In the next chapter I shall narrate the dramatic and pathetic as well as sensational story.

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

THE DAYS PASS BY

THE days pass by
With the quivering Sun on the leaves
And the tinkling of the spoon in the cups
With many a domestic tale—
Like the last farewell of the spring
The days pass by with soft footfall.

Accepting the warm love heartily
From one who came offering it silently—
With the huff of the lover, who was
Refused many a time earlier
The days pass by like the far-going birds
Leaving me all alone.

Ever moving from moment to moment
From every point, time remains indivisible
Like the unending waves of the sea
With the quivering Sun on the leaves.
With many a domestic tale
The days pass by to come back again
With soft footfall.

The golden dust of the time remains
With the air, in the sky, with the breath,
Whether it's me or whoever else that lives,
It comes back among the golden ripe paddies
And the undulating grass.

AJU MUKHOPADHYAY

ON SRI AUROBINDO AND HOMER

FROM GABRIEL GERMAIN'S BOOK, *HOMER*

SRI AUROBINDO who was not only a celebrated yogi and thinker, but a poet familiar with the Greek classics as well as with nineteenth-century European lyric poetry, had so active an admiration for Homer that upon his death he left considerable fragments of a poem in English called *Ilion*, which he had conceived, in his youth, as a sequel to *The Iliad*. What sustenance could he who sought to provide what we might call a descent of the Spirit among us and thereby a new humanity sanctified in its flesh as well as its soul—what sustenance, then, could he find in Homer, poet of the *vital*? Yet a poetry which realizes its own order of perfection, whatever it may be, reaches beyond mere reality. A poetry of the vital¹ “can perceive the physical form of the gods... and discover a divine quality in even the most earthly, the most material and exterior ways of men; of this sort, we have Homer.” When we read him, he says further, “we feel ourselves raised to a semi-divine stature.” Yes, it is through the flesh, the blood, the moral condition, by extending them to the limits where they overthrow themselves, that Homer achieves the incorruptible and imperishable being of the gods themselves. And man receives from their proximity, from their friendship, that enlargement and that light which the master of Pondicherry unceasingly loved in Homer.

For anyone who has understood, thanks to this same India, how naturally an intelligent and experienced polytheism can find a place in the same mind with a God who is essence and person, and with That which is beyond the person as beyond Being and non-Being, the Homeric gods have a “presence” different from the Ingres-style figures of the old Mythologies. But one can have no interest in the gods (or not realize that one is interested in them) and find delight in living Homer merely for the company of his people.

What a pleasure to leave clustered in their Cimmerian mists all these catalogue tyrants, these paste-pot arbiters, all these chillers of the intellect, these dyspeptics of consciousness, these paralytics of the heart, all these invalids upon whom the Gorgon has turned her eyes, still half-men, already half stones for the steps of Persephone! And suddenly, in the open air, in the sunlight, these real men, these real women, these young girls, passion, purity, rage, laughter, sobs; these people who *are*, who walk the paths of their *being*, until they enter *their* deaths, eyes wide, a divine flame over their heads. Around them a real world, not a spiderweb of relationships or a coloured gossamer, but a breathing, even in the blood, the sea like a heaving breast, the light that is one and the same for gods and men alike. A world one can do battle with but which, after the struggle,

¹ Editor's Note: Sri Aurobindo actually assigns Homer's poetry to the subtle-physical plane and not to the vital.

one can lean upon for support. For it *holds*. I pity the man who cannot live with Homer!

And I pity the poet who cannot live with Homer! If he does not feel in the muscles of his own language the power of the sustained rhythm, against the sides of his mouth the living water of the speech welling up from the depths, then he will never gather within himself the hidden rhyme and rhythm of the universe. If your soul is in a desk drawer, that's where your poetry will be too. Homer recalls the poetic conscience to its duty to the heights. "There is no great poem" when one thinks on a level with the table-top, or under the table. Which is not to suggest rewriting *The Iliad* today (in poetry, the question is to make, not to remake) but to seek the creative energy in the cosmic currents, in the clouds which hide the gods. Lucky Homer, who ran no risk of mistaking cigarette smoke for the Milky Way!

I have not spoken of Homer as a fanatic. To live with Homer does not mean "with Homer alone." To mention only those pre-Christian periods whose dignity and reality are still to be discovered, I have gained much from the *Dhammapada*, from the *Bhagavad Gita*, and from the Taoist fathers. I often ask them what I cannot ask of Homer. But having come to them so late, by the fault of our "provincial" culture, I do not feel toward them, as toward Homer or the Psalmist, a childhood friendship, the beautiful friendship of Patroclus and Achilles, of David and Jonathan. It is the grace of this friendship I want to revive among those who, as children, at the age of generosity and enthusiasm, have already encountered Homer. To the others, particularly those who mistrust the ancients a little, doubtful of what they have to give, I say in confidence: "For over twenty-five years I have not stopped studying Homer. Yet each time I begin reading him again, I realise I do not know him yet. (And it shows, those more erudite than I will say!) Probably because I am slow-witted. And perhaps, too, because he can no more be exhausted than a true man: a man connected with the infinite. How many such men do you know?" (pp. 186-87)

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of 15 August 1994)

THE news of the Muzaffarpur bombing reached Darjeeling and Calcutta. The Bengal Government, Andrew Fraser, his Chief Secretary requested the Government of India for permission to deport five men—Aurobindo Ghose, Barin Ghose, Satyen Bose, Abinash Bhattacharya and Hem Das. These five persons were believed to be the 'Prime movers and principal culprits' of the outrages of Muzaffarpur and other places.

"Meanwhile in Calcutta the police were deciding how to deal with the situation in the City. They had been waiting for the society to commit an overt act. The Muzaffarpur bombing was certainly that. Commissioner Halliday wanted to search the Garden and other centres immediately, CID Deputy Superintendent Plowden was still hesitant. He wanted to wait three more days until searches in Calcutta and Midnapore could be co-ordinated. At this point Halliday was interviewed by a reporter from *The Empire*, a British-run evening newspaper. The *Empire's* Bihar correspondent had wired details of the outrage that morning. The story included a statement by Kingsford that he had been warned by the police that two men had been sent from Calcutta to kill him. This was a grave indiscretion on Kingsford's part and Halliday asked the paper not to publish the statement. But it was obvious now that action had to be taken promptly. Halliday telephoned Mr Thornhill, the officiating chief presidency magistrate, and requested him to remain in court in order to hear an important application. At five o'clock Halliday, Plowden and Purna Chandra Biswas, the CID inspector who had been in charge of the shadowing operation, drove to Thornhill's court to obtain legal sanction to search and make arrests. Complaining against the activities of 'Arabindo's gang of outlaws', Biswas asked for and received warrants to search eight places frequented by members of the society. Two hours later a meeting was held at Halliday's residence at which officers of both town and provincial police were present. Elaborate arrangements were made for the next day's operation. Several European officers, numerous inspectors and sub-inspectors and at least a hundred constables were mustered. Eight posses were formed for searching the Garden and seven sites in Calcutta including 134 Harrison Road, the *Nabashakti* office, and 15 Gopi Mohan Dutt's Lane. The searches and arrests would be carried out simultaneously early the next morning. A cipher telegram was sent to Midnapore asking the Superintendent of Police to search the house of Satyen Bose and other places and to arrest suspicious persons."¹

"'BOMB OUTRAGE IN BEHAR / EUROPEAN LADY KILLED / ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE MR. KINGSFORD,' cried a headline in the issue of *Empire* that hit the street that evening. After giving some details of the event, the paper reported

that Police Commissioner Halliday had 'confirmed the tragic intelligence, but was reticent as to particulars' It added however, 'The perpetrators are believed to be well-known.' When Aurobindo read this article at the *Bande Mataram* office, he took special note of that sentence' "2 He read in the *Empire* that the Police Commissioner had said that they knew who were in the murder plot, and they would all be arrested. It was assumed that Sri Aurobindo might ask Barindra to remove himself and his co-workers and all traces of the explosives from the Maniktola gardens.

Whatever the provocation caused by men like Kingsford and the bureaucracy whom they repressed, the Muzaffarpore bomb-outrage, even had it got at the intended victims, would have proved nothing, and solved nothing. But as it actually turned out, it was a ghastly tragedy. Shyam Sunder Chakravarti wrote editorially in the *Bande Mataram* (weekly Edition) on 10th May, 1908:

"Outrages of this kind have absolutely no sanction in our ancient tradition and culture.. Moderatism is limitation of British Constitutionalism, this term of so-called Extremism, wherever it may be found to exist in this country, is imitation of European Anarchism; and both are equally different from and absolutely foreign to the Spirit of the Nationalism which, though opposed by one and occasionally mistaken for the other, is bound in the long run to carve out the future of India, and realise the eternal destiny of her ancient and composite people."

"At the Garden Barin and the others had been anxiously awaiting news from Muzaffarpore for several days. Around eight 'that evening Abinash rushed over with a copy of the *Empire*. Finding the article on the bombing of more than usual interest Barin marked it in blue pencil' It was now apparent—if it had not been before—that the police were closing in. That very evening the local constable paid one of his friendly visits. This did not bother the boys very much; but later on there were movements and voices in the dark "3 Nolini Kanta reports

"The evening before our arrest, it was already getting dark and we were thinking of retiring for the night, when some voices came to our ears in a rather peculiar way, and lanterns were seen moving about in the dark. 'Who are you? What do you do here?' the voices said. We did our best to give evasive replies 'Very well, then, we come again tomorrow morning and will know more about it' With these words, the strangers seemed to make their exit. Were these warning voices? In spite of our dull wits, we could understand at least this much that things were now getting rather serious and that we must take our precautions The first thing we decided upon was that we should leave the place before daybreak and disperse Upen told us later that he had wanted us to disperse immediately and make no further delay. But that was obviously not to be, for it was destined that we should pass through the experience of jail. Nevertheless, we did start doing something at once, that was to remove all traces, by burning or

hiding away or whatever other means, of anything that might raise a suspicion against us. The very first thing that came to our heads was this. There were two or three rifles in the house where Sri Aurobindo lived. They were in the custody of Abinash (Abinash Bhattacharya) who lived with him and looked after Sri Aurobindo's affairs. Those rifles must be removed at once, they could on no account be left there. Had the police found them on Sri Aurobindo's premises, it might have been more difficult to secure his release. The rifles were brought back, they were packed in two boxes bound with iron hoops, together with the few revolvers we had and all the materials for the making of bombs, and hidden away underground. Next, getting hold of all our papers that might contain names and addresses and plans, we set fire to them. This went on far into the night. We could not however burn up everything. A number of names were still left intact and with the help of these clues, the police subsequently searched a number of other places and made several arrests. Had I been able to make good my escape then, it would not have been difficult for the police to trace me through my address; there was the Imperial Library card issued in my name and it gave the address of my Calcutta Mess, 44/3 Harrison Road."⁴

Nolini Kanta Gupta wrote from memory in his *Reminiscences* about the incidents that had occurred in the evening of the next day: "We went to bed after doing away with all we could, in the hope that we might run away by daybreak. But the running away did not materialise. In the early hours of the morning,—it was not yet light,—we were awakened by an eerie sort of noise. We sat up in bed. But what was all this going on? Shadowy forms were moving about the place, there was a clatter and creaking of boots. Suddenly out of the dark silence, a conversation arose:

'You are under arrest. Your name?'

'Barindra Kumar Ghose.'

'Arabinda Ghose?'

'No. Barindra Kumar Ghose.'

'Well, we'll see.'

"The next thing I knew was a hand clapped on my shoulders.

'Come,' said a voice.

"Several people have expressed great surprise at this facile surrender on our part, as though we were goody-goody boys, innocent as lambs. Why, it has been asked, did we not give them fight and take a few lives before we surrendered? But our aims were of another kind, our path, our very policy was of another character. Our goal was not to die a martyr's death. We wanted to be soldiers. The martyr is happy if he can give up his life. But the duty of the soldier is not to give his life but to take the lives of others."⁵

"As the search went on Barin was tortured by the thought that he and he alone was responsible for the debacle. It hurt him to see young boys like Sachin bullied by the police. Making up his mind to take the blame on himself, he

declared that the youngsters knew nothing. He alone knew all and was willing to tell. Grabbing a piece of paper he scribbled out a statement. Aware that this would be valueless in court, one of the officers was sent to fetch a magistrate. While he was gone the search was halted. After a couple of hours the officer returned to say that no magistrate was available. The search resumed, this time with Barin's assistance. Going out to the yard he pointed out some patches of fresh soil. A few strokes of a spade uncovered the society's exiguous arsenal: three sporting rifles, two double-barrelled shotguns, nine revolvers, fourteen boxes of cartridges, and three bombs, one ready for use. Also discovered were twenty-five pounds of dynamite, dynamite cartridges, large quantities of picric acid and other chemicals, two bombshells and a forge for casting them. Documents discovered included a copy of the Paris explosives manual, several textbooks on the same subject, books on military training and 'numerous papers and correspondence indicating the existence of a secret society'. These included organisational plans (with the members' initials) and the letter sent by Prafulia from Muzaffarpur in which he spoke of Kingsford as 'the bridegroom'. A coat, claimed by Indu, had a notebook in the pocket with an entry giving the date and time to kill the mayor of Chandernagore. There was also a record of revolver repairs with the name 'Indra'. The collection and burning of the previous night had not been very thorough."⁶

"Once the searches of the 2nd in Calcutta were over, the men arrested were taken to various police stations and then either to the headquarters of the Calcutta police or of the CID, where they were locked up. The police did not go out of their way to treat the captives kindly. Roughly handled, deprived of food, their resolution failed them. Barin was singled out from the others and interrogated closely. The CID officers, particularly Superintendent Ramsaday Mukherjee, were adept at the 'good cop-bad cop' style of questioning and they were able to draw out a good deal of information from the leader. But Barin refused to make a full statement till he had consulted with Upen, Ullaskar, Hem and some others. Upen and Ullaskar were brought to headquarters the next morning. The police used all the persuasion and deceit at their disposal to make them confess. Finally the three decided that those connected with known attempts should take full responsibility. If they did so, they thought, 'the innocent' would be let off. By 'the innocent' they had in mind the younger boys at the Garden, who of course were far from innocent, as well as people with no connection with the society, such as the Narayangarh coolies, the men arrested at Harrison Road, and the bystanders arrested at the Garden. It seems likely that Ramsaday promised the penitents leniency or release in exchange for statements. This induced Barin, Ullaskar, Upen and Indu Bhusan to give him written confessions. Barin provided a detailed account of the derailment attempts at Chandernagore and Narayangarh and the bomb-throwing attempts at Chandernagore and Muzaffarpur. His description of the activities at the Garden was somewhat low-

key, but he did not dissemble in regard to the society's purpose. The people of India wanted 'one successful political murder'. He and his companions, 'though unwilling', 'were compelled to take up the task and work it out to its bitter end.'⁷⁷

"On the 1st May, 1908, while I was sitting in the office of the *Bande Mataram*, S. J. Shyamsundar Chakravarty handed me a wire from Muzaffarpore. I read in it that a bomb had exploded from Muzaffarpore and two European ladies had been killed. On that very day, I read further in the *Empire* that the Police Commissioner had said that we knew who were in this murder plot and that they would soon be arrested. I did not know then that I was the main target of their suspicion, I the arch-murderer, according to the police, and the guide and secret leader of the young revolutionary nationalists. I did not know that that day was the last page of a chapter of my life, that there lay before me the prospect of a year's imprisonment, that for that period all my connection with the world would be cut off, and that I had to live like a caged beast for one whole year outside the pale of human society."⁷⁸

When Sri Aurobindo learnt about the tragedy, he asked Barindra to remove his co-workers and all traces of the explosives from the Maniktola gardens forthwith. In the changed context of the present-day India, reprehensible acts of murder and arson would deserve severest condemnation, but one has only to project oneself into those turbulent days when severe repression ruled Bengal and the spirit of young Nationalists was sought to be destroyed by means reminiscent of the days of mediaeval Barbarism, to understand why the younger generation of those days looked upon this dastardly act as a deed of daring and heroism. Sri Aurobindo had, however, nothing to do with the killings of the Kennedys or the proposed murder of Kingsford. As we have observed already, he was preparing the country for a mass uprising and an armed insurrection and frowned upon individuals going about on a spree of vendetta. But the Government thought otherwise; in their views Sri Aurobindo was the arch-culprit, the silent instigator and secret leader of the youths

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

References

- 1 *The Bomb in Bengal*, by Peter Heehs, pp 156, 157
- 2 *Ibid*, p 157
- 3 *Ibid*, p 157
- 4 *Reminiscences*, by Nolini Kanta Gupta, pp 21, 22
- 5 *Ibid*, p 22
- 6 *The Bomb in Bengal*, by Peter Heehs pp 159, 160
- 7 *Ibid*, pp 162, 163
- 8 *Sri Aurobindo—His Life Unique*, by Rishabhchand, p 277

THE YOGA OF THE OCEAN

AN INFORMAL TALK BY MEDHANANDA

WHY do we like to hear the ocean? It's like a huge animal, breathing. It is breathing, in fact—it's aereating itself. The sound here is different from that in the Mediterranean, or at Biarritz, or in the Tuamotus.

The Pacific is infinite. On a globe you can see that it covers a whole hemisphere. When you live in constant contact with it—it would be better to say 'with her'—you develop a movement towards her that is the same as in yoga. She taught me to breathe. She taught me what total surrender is. She is our mother, and always has been. She gives herself to us in our blood. Without her there would have been no life, life wouldn't have been possible: she protected it and enabled it to develop. She is in everything, she harmonises and balances everything. She contains all rhythms—the rhythm of breathing, the rhythms of night and day, of the moon, of the seasons, the years. All the inhabitants of the sea are her children, from shoals of tiny fish to monsters. All islands belong to her, every one of them remembers her constantly, and in its sleep vibrates to the touch of its mother all around it—it comes from her and will one day return to her.

At her touch, one is forced to learn perfect self-giving, surrender. As long as you feel any fear, she is terrifying; but as soon as you surrender to her, she becomes gentle, like a true mother. No mother can caress her child as she does, pet it and cherish it as she does. No one can play such wonderful games as she does. She reveals treasure after treasure. You grow vast like her, eternal like her. She is sovereign everywhere: where the water is completely clear and luminous, and in the depths where every creature has only his own aura to light his way. As long as you resist her, struggle, make an effort, you cannot know her; but if you let yourself be carried completely, if you totally let yourself go, every wave lifts you with infinite delicacy.

When you are lost in the middle of the ocean, if you struggle, you are finished. If you want to go in any particular direction, you are finished. If there is the slightest claim, the slightest revolt, you are finished. If you want to rest while she wants to play, you are finished. It's the same in yoga: one mustn't want to go in any definite direction, struggle, strive. One must let oneself be carried completely, let oneself go without the slightest resistance, the slightest claim, totally. If you have the slightest separate will, the slightest grievance, you are finished. But if you surrender, the current will carry you where you should go... and that's exactly where you wanted to be.

It's not the inertia of a corpse.. it ought to be a willing, joyful, conscious self-giving. There should be nothing that resists, not a cell of the body, not a single subconscious or unconscious movement: the slightest resistance, even if it's unconscious—and you are finished.

Why cling on to things? In the eternity of becoming, there's nothing to hold on to. If you want to keep something, your separate individuality, it's not possible: you must give up everything. And in any case, one day the wave will sweep everything away.

You should see how the Tahitians swim: completely relaxed. They never make any effort, never struggle, they glide through the water. When they see a European swimming, they roar with laughter at this fellow thrashing about, wriggling like a frog and kicking his mother.

In the islands there are no old ships. The sea always takes them. There's always one that doesn't come back. And amongst the passengers, the Chinese and Europeans rarely return, whereas the natives usually find a current that brings them to an island after a few hours, or a day, or three days. You mustn't feel the slightest apprehension. You have to learn to swim like the natives. Otherwise, you see a wall of water rising up in front of you, something grabs you by the back of the neck and plunges you to the bottom; it brings you back up to the surface for a moment—just long enough to draw one breath—then plunges you back again .. until you have understood.

When you have no fear left, when you surrender completely, then what seemed terrifying and even hostile before grows very gentle and plays with you. The vastness is no longer frightening. A real personal relationship gets established.

I remember when little Christa, six years old, arrived from France. I went to meet her on her big ship. We took a little cutter to reach our island. On that particular day there was a storm. When this happens, the waves are far higher than the ship. In any case the ship is so loaded that the water is level with the deck, and the vessel is more below water than above. The waves break over it continually. But it's made of wood and rides well, and the cabin is water-tight. If you are on deck, you must hold on tight. There's nothing more beautiful than the waves of a stormy sea—the strength of them, and the colours—from jet-black to the white of the spray, with every shade of green and blue in between.

I held Christa against me under my raincoat. I could feel that she was afraid. She felt like crying. She was all tense. But in the end, perhaps out of tiredness, she suddenly relaxed, let go—and instead of feeling afraid, the waves made her laugh... we enjoyed ourselves a lot, the two of us.

The Europeans, wanting to ensure a regular service and a fixed time-table, sent a metal ship with a qualified ocean-going captain. She didn't return from her maiden voyage. She can still be seen: the sea took her and threw her out of the water onto a reef, where she still sits. Another time, a survey ship came to take measurements for more accurate charts of the islands. That one too sank in a lagoon. One can still see it. And in the house of the chief of that island are some fine wicker-work chairs and mahogany furniture from that ship.

It's impossible to imagine how huge the Pacific is, and how tiny the islands

are. You can pass right through an archipelago without ever seeing it. The first European ships crossed the entire ocean without sighting a single island. Others went from island to island, carried by the current. But even from one island to the next, it's a long way. When you're travelling between islands, if you think that the ship might break up and you're in danger of being swept away and eaten... it's entirely acceptable. If you have any fear at all, if you don't give up everything, you will never reach your destination. Then you can live in a sense of total security. Nothing can happen to you, and even if you fall, it can only be into your mother's arms.

(November 3, 1959)

ONLY ONE OPTION

My dusts of doubt thrown at you
 Are transformed by your compassion's magic wand
 Into glorious water-drops of faith
 Sparkling on the beach of your wideness' sea.
 My talks of blighted hopes
 And stark misfortunes many a time
 Are washed away like helpless straw
 In the flood of your never-failing Grace
 To sail safely to your chosen goal
 Let a Rishi's fortitude be mine
 And unmistakable be your Presence and guidance.
 If ever into smithereens I break
 Under the heavy load of repeated reverses,
 I would have but one option left—
 A fervent and ceaseless recitation of your name
 Through every fallen bit of my being

SEIKH ABDUL KASAM

MEMORIES OF DR. INDRA SEN

IN 1930 my mother, the late Subala Debi, had shifted from Jabalpur to Delhi with six of us brothers and sisters. We had nowhere to stay. One blazing afternoon she was house-hunting near Rajabajar Jain Temple. This is when Professor Indra Sen (he had not taken the doctorate yet) noticed her standing all alone in the scorching sun and enquired after her problem. As soon as she told him of her predicament, he immediately offered to give us two of the four rooms he was occupying. The rent was to be only Rs. 20 per month. Thus we became neighbours in the same house! The next year when he shifted to a house on Hanuman Temple Road, he again gave the nine of us two rooms at the same rent. It was in this house that J.K. Krishnamurti came to meet my elder brother Sukumar Chatterjee, who introduced him to the delighted Indra Sen. In 1948, for my first visit to the Ashram, it was to Dr. Indra Sen that I wrote and he made arrangements for our stay. On arriving there I was given a dingy ground floor room without windows or a fan. It was dark, very stuffy and extremely hot. I took the cots out on the footpath and spent the night there with my one-year-old son and my sister. When I mentioned this to Dr. Indra Sen, he replied that such inconveniences were tests that I had to pass and that the room could only be changed if I told the Mother about the problem. She used to give darshan at about 9.30 in the morning. When she was giving us flowers, I told her how I had slept on the footpath with my one-year-old son. The Mother patted my head. We were allotted a nice airy room on the first floor of a house opposite the Balcony from where she gave darshan every morning! I shared a common interest with Dr. Indra Sen in the work of Carl Jung and carried out a study of the similarities between him and Sri Aurobindo (published in *Srinvantu*)

SUPROBHAT BHATTACHARYA

HITLER'S WORST DAY

“YOU are about to embark upon a great crusade,” General Eisenhower told his forces in England, shortly before the great invasion on the French Normandy coast on June 6, 1944, whose fiftieth anniversary was celebrated this year by thousands of veterans at the sites of the military action.

3,000,000 men had been assembled by the Allies supported by 5,000 large ships, 4,000 smaller landing craft and more than 11,000 aircraft. A short period of favourable weather was used for the attack in the coastal region between Cherbourg and Le Havre, whereas the Germans had expected it at Pas-de-Calais, where the passage from England is shortest and where their spies in England (who had actually changed sides after being captured by British Intelligence) had directed them to concentrate defence efforts.

On the day of the invasion, Hitler slept until noon and none of his generals or attendants was permitted to disturb his rest. When finally he was informed about the attack, he said. “The news couldn’t be better. As long as they were in England, we couldn’t get at them. Now at last we face them at a place where we can defeat them.”¹

His enthusiasm did not last long. German forces could not resist the Allies and suffered tremendous losses without having resources to replace them. Most of the divisions were placed on the Eastern front, facing the Russians. On June 27, the Allies captured Cherbourg, which gave them an excellent harbour. In the second half of July their forces succeeded in breaking out of the Normandy peninsula, sweeping across France. On July 20, the dictator survived an attempt on his life, after Colonel von Stauffenberg had placed a time-bomb under his table, which exploded during a staff-meeting. The plot to get rid of Hitler had failed, many highly placed officers were executed. Hitler continued giving erratic and irrelevant orders to his generals, which actually helped the efforts of the Allies

In the first half of August, the situation of the Germans became desperate. On August 8, one thousand British and Canadian tanks advanced into German lines south of Caen. On August 15, the U.S. Seventh Army and the French First Army made an amphibious landing near Cannes in southern France. Reporting on the military situation in the Normandy at this point, *Der Spiegel* writes:

... Four days before the pocket was closed, Generalfeldmarschall von Kluge was wandering about between the fronts. Squatting in a trench, he was facing enemy shelling, without having any contact with his operational centre, because his radio van had a defect. For twelve hours the supreme commander of the Western front was believed to be missing. Hitler was

1 *Der Spiegel*, Nr 21, p 178

already suspecting that the Feldmarschall wanted “to deliberately lead the whole Western army towards capitulation and himself change over to the enemy.” Later on, Hitler commented that August 15—this was also the day of the Allies’ landing at the French Mediterranean coast—“was the worst day in my life”.²

WILFRIED HUCHZERMEYER

² *Der Spiegel*, Nr 23, pp 171-172

DIVINE MUSIC

O UNIVERSAL magic rune!
 My ears are eager for thy mystic tune
 It rings in the bells and the chirps of the cricket,
 It is heard in the whistling winds
 And pervades the breath of all living things,
 And issues from the mysteries of the gods.
 It reverberates from the hurdling avalanche,
 And flows through the swift mountain stream.
 It sings in the murmur of new spring-leaves,
 And whispers from the soft snow-flakes,
 It is heard in a child’s merry laughter,
 Also is heard in a bard’s glorious song,
 And in the ricochet of thunder and storm.
 And in the war-cry of the victors.
 The sages call it ‘Om’ and saints ‘Anahad’,
 The wise call it the inner voice,
 And others the music of spheres.
 Friend! what-so-ever the name, I pine for the magic note

SHYAM KUMARI

OF A POEM

“SHALL I tell you of a poem, dear?”

Why?

“Oh, yes, this is but an airy void of no marketable value

But,

there does exist, dear, a beauty in this sorry world
despite horror and cruelty, deadening inertia and oppressive insensibility.
a beauty of humaneness, of form and substance, a cadence of sobriety,
a lilt or harmony, a feel of goodness, a sense of offering, a fond dream,
a caring not for success, a self-completeness, a simple elegance, a genteel
reserve.

How long shall we wallow in ennui, a ceaseless boredom, a meaningless
strife?

Therefore you should know this poem, dear.

For,

it is a grasp of beauty, a glimpse of the Unknown,
a smile of glory, a dance of the grand, a lullaby of nobility,
a kingdom of the small, the innocent, the unseen and the common.

Therefore is this poem a gossamer of steel and a phantasmagoria of reality.

Was Valmiki great or Rama? But could they be ever separate, dear?

Rama's Code and Valmiki's Poetry? Why choose and not be blessed by
both?

There do exist a moonlight of bliss, a sky of grandeur,
Just near but ever far, till the eagle of your soul flies so high.

Therefore you should fly, fly on the wings of this Poem

shedding all smallness and meanness, crudity and cupidity,
slovenliness and grime, gloom and grovelling, silliness and inanity,
sullenness and sulkiness, fishing and profiteering, and endless doubt.

If you have not tasted the nectar of a poem, dear,
what have you done in life?”

K.H KRISHNAMURTHY

(Translated by the author from his own poem in Kannada)

ESSAYS ON THE MAHĀBHĀRATA (V)

(Continued from the issue of 15 August 1994)

What is the Question?

Vikarna

Now Draupadī would have been all alone again after Bhīma had been restrained. But she suddenly got unexpected support from Vikarna, one of the hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Before his first appearance in the Sabhaparva at this place, we find him mentioned five times in the Ādīparva. In chapter 90, verse 62 it is said: “Four of Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s sons stood out, Duryodhana, Duḥśāsana, Vikarna, and Citrasena.” “Stood out” (*pradhāna*) means eminent in a very general sense. Duryodhana and Duḥśāsana have nothing of Vikarna’s moral virtue, though a superior fighting power

An awkward silence had settled over the assembly with no one willing to speak on behalf of the tormented Draupadī, after Arjuna had rejected Bhīma’s intervention on her behalf. At this moment the heroic Vikarna rose and gave an impressive speech defending her rights:

“Ye kings! Answer the question that Yajñasena’s daughter has asked! We must decide or we shall go to hell! Bhīṣma and Dhṛtarāṣṭra are the eldest of the Kurus; they are here but say nought, nor does the sagacious Vidura. Drona Bharadvāja is here, the teacher of us all, and so is Krpa, yet even they, most eminent of brahmins, do not speak to the question! All the other kings, assembled here from every horizon, should shed all partisan feelings and speak up as they think. Consider the question that the beautiful Draupadī has raised repeatedly, kings, and whatever your side, make your answer!”²⁷

It is to be remembered that Draupadī had asked the assembly whether Yudhisthira had lost himself before he had lost her, this was a rhetorical question, of course, since she herself knew the answer. Her point was that Yudhisthira had gambled away his own freedom and therefore he was now *asvaha*, not in charge of himself any more, and therefore not in charge of Draupadī either. To put it in more legal terms, he had lost all his civil rights, was reduced to the status of a slave, and the marriage contract was no more valid. Under these circumstances Draupadī would be free, provided that as a woman she could have freedom at all.

Since none of the kings or elders present bothered to take note of his appeal, Vikarna himself spoke to the question and declared Draupadī to be free:

“Make your answer, kings, or do not. But I shall tell you, Kaurava, what I think is right in this matter. Ye best of men, they recount four vices that are the curse of the king: hunting, drinking, dicing, and fornicating. A man with those addictions abandons the Law, and the world does not condone his immoderate deeds. The Pāṇḍava was under the sway of his vice when the gamblers challenged him and he staked Draupadī. The innocent woman is held in common by all the Pāṇḍavas, and the Pāṇḍava staked her when he already had gambled away his own freedom. It was Saubala who mentioned Kṛṣṇā when he wanted a stake. Considering all this I do not think she has been won.”²⁸ (2.61 19-24).

The extraordinary character of Vikarṇa’s speech becomes obvious if we list the various offenses against the written and unwritten rules of society which he had to commit for the sake of a noble cause. It would be exaggerated, though, to make him a pioneer of women’s liberation. We would rather say that in the spirit of the Gītā Vikarṇa in a moment of great inspiration leaves behind all dharmas to satisfy the inmost Truth he senses in his heart. The following were his formal transgressions:

- 1) Vikarṇa as a junior member of the Kuru family is not supposed to speak out when all the elders prefer to keep silent. More than that, he is blaming Bhīṣma, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Droṇa, Kṛpa and even Vidura for being silent witnesses to a great injustice.
- 2) By enumerating four common vices of kings, of which three are not relevant at all here, and stating that Yudhiṣṭhira was victim of one such vice when staking Draupadī, he is showing greatest disrespect to the *dharma-rāja*, saying in effect that he was out of his mind when staking Draupadī.²⁹
- 3) By mentioning that Draupadī was the common wife of all the five Pāṇḍavas, he makes an implication that the other brothers should have been allowed to have a say in the matter as well (which was not the case since they surrendered to Yudhiṣṭhira). Thus he is indirectly questioning the rule of the family *dharma* (of complete submission to the elder) which he himself is constantly breaking at this moment.
- 4) By drawing the conclusion that Draupadī has not been won, he is saying in effect that she is free. But there is no such provision for a woman to seek a status independent of her husband.³⁰ She would rather be expected to go to hell with him, if required. In this case she should share the husband’s status as a slave and please him by her unconditional loyalty. Vikarṇa, on the other hand, asserts her own right of freedom. A woman, a wife is not required to go to perdition with her husband if he goes mad: this is Vikarṇa’s challenging position.

Even while Vikarna earned strong applause from the assembly for his pleading (“they praised Vikarna and condemned Saubala”) Karna came to the defense of Dryodhana’s party, launching a counter-attack on Vikarna. His first argument refers to point 1 in our analysis of Vikarna’s offenses: “You are torn to pieces by your own folly, Dhārtarāstra, for still a child, you announce in the assembly what should be said by your elders. A younger brother of Duryodhana’s, you do not know the true facts of the Law.” So far Karna has said no more than that Vikarna is a junior member of the family and therefore not authorized to speak when the elders keep silent. Next Karna tries to shatter points 3 and 4 of Vikarna’s argument: “How can you hold that Kṛṣṇā has not been won when the eldest Pāṇḍava staked all he owned in the assembly hall? Draupadī is part of all he owns, then how can you hold that Kṛṣṇā, won by Law, has not been won? Draupadī was mentioned by name and the Pāṇḍavas allowed her to be staked—then by what reasoning do you hold that she has not been won?”

Karna’s arguments are fairly well chosen. Actually, anyone else could have said what he said, representing the standpoint of traditional *dharma*. Since “Draupadī is part of all he owns” and since “the Pāṇḍavas allowed her to be staked” the legal position is quite clear. Draupadī has been lost. The only point is just this obviously unwritten law whether a woman has a right of freedom of her own, which Vikarna affirms, whereas Karna rejects it, while Bhīṣma was in doubt.

Karna proceeds then with arguments of a more emotional nature; he starts now—in the terminology of boxing—hitting below the belt.

Or if you think that it was against the Law to bring her into the hall clad in one piece of clothing, listen to what I have to say in reply to that. The Gods have laid down that a woman shall have one husband, scion of Kuru. She submits to many men and assuredly is a whore! Thus there is, I think, nothing strange about taking her into the hall, or to have her in one piece of clothing, or for that matter naked! She, the Pāṇḍava’s wealth, and the Pāṇḍavas themselves have all been won by Saubala here according to the Law.

Karna has made a point now which gives him the victory: if even Vyāsa had a problem to convince Drupada that this polyandrous marriage was legitimate, who could venture in this hostile environment to defend the extraordinary marriage? Vikarna had broken a taboo by asserting Draupadī’s freedom. In return Karna broke another taboo by questioning the legitimacy of Draupadī’s status as a wife of five husbands. His interpretation of the marriage is devilish: another darkest hour of Karna’s. He ends the dispute by telling Duhśāsana to undress Draupadī and addressing the Pāṇḍavas: “Duhśāsana, this Vikarna is

only a child. blabbing of wisdom! Strip the clothes from the Pāṇdavas and Draupadī.”

Vikarna has been successfully silenced by Karna. He stands no more chance of upholding the standard of human rights in this vicious atmosphere where everybody seems to succumb to a mysterious spell forbidding a right word, a truthful action. And yet Vikarna emerges as the great hero from this whole disgraceful scene. It adds to the tragedy that later in the Great War he was killed by Bhīma³¹ who himself was a whole-hearted defender of Draupadī's freedom at various instances. Vikarna is still mentioned a number of times before the War, mostly as eminent warrior, one of the real pillars of the Kaurava army. Before the War he tried to persuade Dhṛtarāstra to avoid fighting, as member of the 'peace-party'.

“Then Duḥśāsana forcibly laid hold of Draupadī's robe, O King, and in the midst of the assembly began to undress her. But when her skirt was being stripped off, lord of the people, another similar skirt appeared every time. A terrible roar went up from all the kings, a shout of approval, as they watched that greatest wonder on earth.”³²

(To be continued)

WILFRIED HUCHZERMAYER

Notes

27 Mahabharat 2 61 12-16

28 Mahabharat 2 61 19-24

29 It is interesting to note that Kṛṣṇa later on made the same point in his own commentary on the game of dice (3 14 7-12)

30 The question of the status and position of women in the Mahabharat has been elaborately discussed by V Bhavalkar in *Mahābhārat mē nārī* (Abhinav Sahitya Prakashan)

31 Mahabharat 7 112 30

32 Mahabharat 2 61 40-42

THE BOOK OF JOB

A NEW COMMENTARY

(Continued from the issue of 15 August, 1994)

Verses 14 to 19.

IN the verses we see Job's recognition of the futility of arguing his case against God. Job never doubted his innocence but realised God's superior strength.

Verse 14.

If primeval forces bowed before God, Job felt how much less his own powers were to answer Him or to choose right words to reason with Him.

Verse 15.

The verse continues the sense of the previous verse by beginning with the relative pronoun *Whom* referring to Him (God) of the previous verse. Job declared that in spite of his innocence he would not answer God but would make supplication to his judge.

But was not that the very thing that Bildad asked him to do? Terrien⁷⁹ comments,

Indeed, Job may be answering Bildad's advice to make supplication to the Almighty and to have recourse to God's grace. . (8:5). Job, being falsely accused, concedes that his only chance is to appeal for mercy .. to his accuser..., but apparently, the Arabian nobleman rejects such an attitude of contemptible humiliation and demands instead the vindication of his honour.

But where? *Apparently*, says the Exegete It is not apparent. N.C. Habel⁸⁰ says,

Because EL (God) is so powerful, Job, the innocent defendant, would be compelled to plead for mercy to God.

Hartley⁸¹ goes one better:

The only action he could take would be to plead God for mercy (cf. 8:5: the Commentator implies that Job had to accept Bildad's advice) These lines foreshadow the direction the drama would take. Job would press harder and harder for a legal resolution to his unjust suffering But when God does answer him, he will be silent, except to beseech God for mercy ..

What Hartley and Habel ignore is the psychological state of Job at the moment of talking. Terrien intuits what he cannot intellectually face. It is Anderson⁶² who has Terrien's intuition and who boldly sets out to remove the inconsistency between the speech and what goes immediately before and after. Anderson says,

this seems like a surprising capitulation to Bildad's advice to "appeal for mercy" (8:5).

He tells us:

This inconsistency can be removed if the negative *not* in 15a (the first part of the verse 15) carries on to 15b (the second part of the verse). He (Job) rejects Bildad's proposal. "I won't answer any charges because this would be unwarranted and I won't appeal to a judge for any clemency for it is vindication I am insisting on, not mercy." This is reaffirmed in verses 20ff.

Anderson, in fact, sees a number of difficulties posed by the verse. He says,

it is important they are resolved, if possible, for this seems to be the pivot of his argument.

One is not sure if the verse could be called the *pivot* of his argument. In his answers to his friends we see him insisting on his integrity, his not being responsible for his suffering and the need for his having his answer from God. We shall return to the last detail in the discussion of the next verse.

Among the difficulties of the verse mentioned by Anderson is the use of *if* for *though* in one of the versions of the original text. That would make Job mean,

Even if I were righteous (which I don't pretend to be) I still wouldn't answer (because as the previous argument shows, that would be a waste of effort). (All I can do is) *to appeal for mercy to my accuser*.

We know Job would not feel that way.

The last two words of the AV *my judge* are replaced by *my accuser* or *my adversary at law* etc. by modern translators. The varying translations point to one fact as Job saw at the moment,—the accuser was the judge, adversary at law or whatever else. It was that, among other things, that made Job feel that any litigation with God was futile.

Verse 16

Job felt that if he had called or summoned God and even if He had answered him, he would not believe that God had heard his voice.

Curiously, the very commentator⁸³ who could help us to understand rightly the previous verse comments,

No matter how verse 15 is taken, the statement attributed to Job here is incredible if translations like RSV (KJV too) are correct. For Job to say that, even if God did respond to his summons, he still *would not believe that he had listened to my voice*, would be scepticism that he does not express anywhere else. On the contrary, this is just what he wants and what he will insist on right up to the end, "Let the Almighty answer!" (31:35) When God himself, no-one less, answers Job, then, only then, will he be convinced his prayer has been heard.

Anderson's last sentence answers the objection he raises at the start. Till God actually answered him Job *could not be convinced* that he was listening to him. As Anderson says, to hear God answer him was what he desired increasingly in the course of the work. The Commentator's word *prayer*, though one cannot be sure that Job really prayed at any stage in the work, suggests the sense of aspiration, that is, not a mere egoistic desire but a deeper urge, that he gradually developed.

Verses 17 to 19.

The verses tell us why Job felt God would not have heard his call even if God had responded.

Verse 17.

For: the word leaves us without any doubt that what follows is an explanation for Job's scepticism about God listening to him

God broke him with a tempest and multiplied his wounds without cause. RSV reads *crushes* for *breaks* (KJV). Some versions of the Hebrew text read *with a hair* for *with a tempest*. *With a hair* would mean *for a trifle* and provides an excellent parallel to *without a cause* at the end (as pointed out by Terrien⁸⁴ and others). Hartley, however, prefers *tempest* since a storm played in Job's losses (1:16); it also establishes a link with God's address to Job out of a storm. (38-41)

Habel⁸⁵ sees further link with Eliphaz's vision (4.15) in which a "wind" glided over Eliphaz's face and a "whirlwind made his flesh shiver"

Habel⁸⁶ and Hartley⁸⁷ and others notice that the original in Hebrew for the last two words of the verse *without cause* is the same as the one used by Satan when he asked God if Job feared God *for naught*. In a different context Anderson⁸⁸ makes a very significant statement.

The repeated use of the same key Hebrew words is lost track of when a variety of English equivalents is used

in different contexts

Habel⁸⁹ certainly reveals his literary imagination when he tries to link the words of God to Satan when he saw him for the second time but the comment shows how he misses God's purposes:

God has already admitted to Satan that he had been incited to destroy Job
"all for nothing". (2:3)

Vide comments on the passage.

Verse 18.

Job adds that God would not allow him to breathe. He filled him with bitterness

Verse 19.

The verse brings out what Habel⁹⁰ calls Job's dilemma: If justice amounted to a test of strength, Job knew that he could not match his adversary whose strength was there for anybody to see—Job therefore interjected 'lo'='look!'. (verse 17 above). If Job sought litigation who would fix him the time to plead his case? In simple terms, he could not arraign God.

Verses 20 and 21

Job expressed not only his consciousness of His perfection but of its being of no avail.

Verse 20

Job pointed out that his very justification of himself would be made his condemnation by his own mouth. If he said he was perfect that would only prove him perverse. In the comment on verse 17 above reference has been made to certain key words. *Perfect* or blameless (*tām*) is one of them and we see the word being used at the very start of the book to present the character of Job both in the narrative that commences the book and in the subsequent scene in Heaven where God sought to provoke Job to bring down upon Job all his suffering. The word is repeated in the course of the work in its various forms.

Verse 21

Job felt that in the situation though he were perfect he would come to a state when he would not know himself. According to a version he would not *care* for himself. He added that he would despise his life.

Job's words as we read them in the KJV,

Though I were perfect, yet I would not know my soul

are truer in a deeper sense than he meant them. Outward (moral) perfection is not enough for one to be conscious of his deepest consciousness which alone can know God.

Earlier, the imprecise use of the word *soul* by Westerners has been noted. John L. Mackenzie, in his article "Aspects of the Old Testament Thought" in the New Jerome Biblical Commentary⁹¹ points out that the Hebrew word normally translated as *Soul* meant no more than *self* or *person* and did not indicate the immortal part of a human being. The word could also mean *will* or *appetite*. It is in the writings of St. Paul we meet with a distinction made between the different "parts and planes" of the human personality,—body (*soma*), flesh (*sar*), soul (*psyche*), spirit (*pneuma*), mind (*nous*) and heart (*kardia*) For a full cartography of the inner (and higher) realms one has to turn to India. But it must be noted that in the Book of Job, irrespective of the words used, there is a clear vision of God using Job's suffering to take him to his depths to make him ready to have His *Darshan*. Otherwise the present Commentary would not have been warranted.

(*To be continued*)

K B SITARAMAYYA

Notes

79 Terrien, p 980

80 N C Habel, p 192

81 Hartley, pp 175-76

82 Anderson, pp 146-47

83 *Ibid*

84 Terrien, p 981

85 Habel, p 193

86 *Ibid*

87 Hartley, p 176

88 Anderson, p 147

89 Habel, p 193

90 *Ibid*

91, New Jerome Biblical Commentary Prentice Hall, Englewood, NJ 1989 Indian reprint Theological Publication of India, Bangalore 1992

MY LAST TWO DARSHANS OF SRI AUROBINDO

15 AUGUST, 1950, another red-letter day of my life. In the 1949-Darshan I let Sri Aurobindo see me through and through from the highest to the lowest, from the innermost to the outermost parts of my being in a gesture of complete surrender when I bowed down to him. But this time I looked straight into his eyes, as long as possible, for an inner communication and an interchange between the soul and Soul, between the bhakta and Bhagavan, between the shishya and Guru. And Sri Aurobindo had not yet turned away his eyes from mine when I grew nervous and bowed down with folded hands. My whole concentration was on Sri Aurobindo and not on the Mother although I was aware of her presence. This was my second darshan, exactly after one year.

Long before I saw Sri Aurobindo, even in my childhood, sometimes I would have an impression, a feeling, that somebody had been looking at me—a compassionate, loving and guiding light—showing me my proper path. This inner experience now took a concrete shape in that ineffable look of Sri Aurobindo's. It touched the core of my being regardless of my limitations and weaknesses.

This time I came alone so that I could live here for a few months and have experiences of the Ashram life. But as Golconde was packed to capacity I had to put up with my friend Birsingh for the first few days. He partitioned his own room with a screen and left a portion for my use. In the same house his youngest brother, Abhayasingh and poet Nishikanto also were staying. I had a happy time with all of them.

The house was named by the Mother 'Santal' as it had a small sandalwood tree in the adjoining garden. There was a big Bakula tree (*Mimosops elengi*) showering numerous cream-coloured and deeply fragrant flowers which the Mother has named 'Patience'. One day as I was picking up some flowers from the ground, Nishikanto with slow steps, as was his wont, came there and told me: "Abani, you don't look like a visitor—visitors always run about here and there, they are always in a hurry, they go to the bazaar, visit this person or that person—but you are not like them, you seem to be one of us, another branch of the same Tree." I was delighted, and grateful to him for his sweet words. I developed a very cordial relation with him which lasted till the end. In a separate article on him I would like to speak about his various exploits in Santiniketan and Pondicherry. I knew him from my Santiniketan days. His poetic nature and jocular spirit, his greed for food raised to a degree of bravado, his spiritual insight and adventurous spirit, his fellow-feeling and friendly demeanour made him quite popular everywhere. But of that later on.

I shifted to Golconde when a room was available there. In those days a visitor had to take the Mother's permission for staying in Ashram guesthouses for some time. Professor Sisir Kumar Mitra (an ex-Santiniketanite) and Ashram

Secretary Nolini Kanta Gupta took me to the Mother in the Playground, in the evening. Sisir-da introduced me as an ex-student of Santiniketan and said: "He wishes to stay here for a few months." The Mother asked, "Where will he stay?" Sisir-da replied, "Golconde." But I said, "Anywhere." The Mother smiled and permitted me to stay in Golconde for a few months. With folded palms I did a 'namaskar' in the Santiniketan way. The Mother responded with a nod. Then I noticed that from a little distance both Sisir-da and Nolini-da had been laughing. I went towards them. Sisir-da interjected, "Abani, what a fool you are! you got such an opportunity to offer your pranam to the Mother and you did a mere 'namaskar'!" I started taking new lessons in the Ashram!

And, to tell the truth, unlike the divinity of Sri Aurobindo, it took me some time to realise the Mother's full divinity and to establish a personal relation with her. I felt the Mother's divinity during Darshan times but at other times she looked more human than divine. One day as the Mother was waiting with a few others in front of the Playground gate for it to open—she had come after playing tennis in the afternoon—I was observing her from a little distance. Her physical appearance did not seem to me to be extraordinary. I was thinking, "Is this the Divine Mother of whom Sri Aurobindo has written so much?" Suddenly I noticed that the Mother had been looking at me! I felt ashamed. I realised that she could read my mind.

Birsingh's elder brother, Dhirsingh, told me one day, "Abani, as you are staying here for a few months, why not join the evening marching at the Playground? I shall take you to the Mother this evening." In the evening as the Mother was moving about in the Playground before the marching started, Dhirsingh took me to the Mother and said, "He will be staying upto December, he wants to join the marching." In a thoughtful mood the Mother replied, "December?" Then said, "Ask Pranab." We went to Pranab, the director of the Physical Education Department. He on his part said, "We have to ask the Mother." Then all of us went again to the Mother. When Pranab asked the Mother she replied, "Yes." "Which Group?" The Mother looked at me for a moment and replied, "Khaki." I noticed that the Mother had her own way of organising things. She had assigned to each person a special duty and responsibility. One cannot supersede another in his sphere of work. Another instructive lesson for me.

One day as I wanted to put some questions to Nolini-da after the marching, when the Mother used to go to the Guest House to take the children's class, he took me to the central room, below the Projector room, which was used at that time as Mother's classroom. There were a few tables and benches. After we sat down I asked him, "What is the meaning of the concentration that the Mother holds after the marching—concentration on what?" Nolini-da kept silent—thinking. I asked again, "Concentration on the Mother's Force?" He replied, "Yes, concentration on the Mother's Force." Then I told him about the inner feeling

which I had been having since my childhood, ‘Who am I?’—and inquired the reason of my fear. He smiled and said, “What is there to fear?” But later I got the true answer from within myself. I asked a few more questions but Nolini-da replied that he did not like to answer philosophical questions. He advised me to read the books.

As I wanted to do some work for the Mother, I saw Ravindra who was in charge of distributing work. He gave me two options—either to work in the binding section of the Press or in the gardens. I opted for Garden Service which had two heads—Parichand and Jatin. Parichand’s part was to decorate the Ashram with potted flower plants and Jatin’s task was to supply flowers to the Ashram from the gardens maintained by him. Soon I developed an intimacy with both of them which remained till the end of their lives. But my work was at Jatin’s gardens.

Ravindra was the task-master not only of distributing work but also of distributing fruits to the Ashramites. As I was a visitor I got only work but no fruits! It was something like the Gita’s:

“कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।”

I accepted the work with a smile as a preparatory lesson for Karmayoga. At Santiniketan, in our own house, I had done a lot of garden work and enjoyed it. Now I came to know that the Mother had given significances to all the flowers. This made me doubly interested in flower gardens.

Came the 11th September 1950—my birthday. In the meantime I came to know that the Mother attached a great importance to the birthdays of all. At Santiniketan birthdays were observed for children only and, of course, for Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. But here in the Ashram I found that each one’s birthday was a day of festival. That is why it is called “Bonne Fête” in French. Suddenly one becomes a ‘V I.P.’ on that day. Early in the morning, quite unexpectedly, I received a card from poet Nishikanto with a couplet in Bengali written on it:

অবতীর্ণা জননীৰ চৰণেৰ পবন-গৌবৰে
অবনী অমৰ জন্ম লভে।

It means—“At the glorious touch of the feet of the Divine Mother, the earth receives an immortal birth.” Abani, in Sanskrit and Bengali, means ‘The earth’.

In those days birthday-people would receive the Mother’s blessings at about 10 a.m. at the end of the general blessings. Jatin-da arranged for me a tray of flowers. I came to know from him that jasmine was Sri Aurobindo’s favourite flower and at night some trays of jasmine were kept in his room. The jasmine

was my favourite flower too. So I offered some money for jasmine garlands to be bought from the bazaar. Jatin-da arranged a thick jasmine garland in the middle of the tray. The Mother's significance for jasmine flowers is 'Integral Purity'.

When I went to her, she intently looked at the flowers, then with a broad smile gave me some books on Yoga with her signature and blessings. I had some money-offering in my pocket which I forgot to offer in the excitement of my new experiences. This mistake I corrected at night.

18th October, 1950 was doubly significant. It was the second day of Durga Puja (Mahāstamī) when the Mother gave special blessings to everybody in the morning. It was also Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya's birthday whom Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had particularly selected as a representative of mankind so far as physical transformation is concerned.

On that day, in the afternoon, there was a special physical demonstration at the Playground being conducted by Mona Sarkar. Pranab was made to sit on a chair by the side of the Mother. After the function was over, the Mother shouted thrice at the top of her voice—"Bonne Fête à Pranab!" to which all responded. It was a very special day. I have never seen any other sadhak's birthday being observed by the Mother herself with so much pomp and gusto.

20.10.50 was the 'Vijayadashami' day. This day was observed in the Ashram every year as Victory Day, when the Mother blessed everybody with a yellow flower named by her 'Mental Victory' (Allamanda grandiflora). In the evening, at the Playground Pranab announced that the Mother would be reading out a message. Everybody sat down. The Mother stood at her appointed place and read out the following message:

"It is the devil of depression and despondency that we shall slay tonight—so that all those who have the sincere will to get rid of this disease will receive the necessary help to conquer."

Nobody knew at that time, except the Mother, that Sri Aurobindo had decided to leave his body soon in order to take up frontally the challenge of death and other evil forces who stood against his Yoga of transformation. So the message came at the proper time.

One afternoon as I was going to the seaside for a walk, through some whim of the moment I entered the Playground by the hind gate. Perhaps the gate was a little ajar. I found the Mother drawing something on the wall against which she used to stand during the marchpast and concentration. She had been sketching without any help of instruments the map of India. A small group of ashramites stood around the Mother watching. Her hand was moving along the northern border of India—not the political India as it is but the spiritual India—the Eternal India. When her hand came down from Kashmir and was moving along the northern border of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, somebody remarked—"Tibet is left out." That means, not included within India. After looking on for some time I went to the seaside for my daily walk. Later, on that sketch of the Mother

the present map was made.

November Darshan followed, for which I was waiting eagerly. On this occasion my elder brother also came. At that time the Darshan took place in two parts—first the ashramites, then the visitors. But this time it was just the opposite. Whispers floated in the air that Sri Aurobindo was not keeping well. So the visitors who came from distant places were given the first chance. I was included among the ashramites although I was to leave on the 4th December.

My brother, after returning from the Darshan, said that Sri Aurobindo had his eyes closed. When I joined the line, the volunteers conducting the line were telling everybody—“March Past! March Past!” Not a moment was to be wasted before Sri Aurobindo. I had a special prayer to Sri Aurobindo which I had written down on a piece of paper and put inside the envelope containing some money-offering. The queue this time was directed towards the Mother and not towards Sri Aurobindo as usual. So I saw the Mother first. She nodded as if in answer to my prayer but her smile was a bit sad. At that very moment I felt that Sri Aurobindo turned his head and looked towards me. With folded palms I bowed down to both of them. A volunteer conducting the line pushed me away. The whole affair happened within two or three seconds.

Later on, when I brooded over the significance of my three Darshans of Sri Aurobindo, I got a clear message. On my first Darshan the ‘bhakta’ opened himself before the light of truth brought by the Bhagavan (Lord). In the second Darshan there was an inner communication between the ‘bhakta’ and the ‘Bhagavan’. In the first there was the “tryst with destiny” and in the second, there was the “encounter with the Unknown” who is ‘Ever-known’ in the depth of one’s heart. From the beginning I have been calling Sri Aurobindo ‘Bhagavan’ spontaneously from the depth of my heart. In the third Darshan ‘Bhagavan’ silently commanded the bhakta to turn towards ‘Bhagavati’—the Divine Mother. It is extremely significant because the Mother is Sri Aurobindo’s “Force of Transformation”. That is the significance of my three Darshans of Sri Aurobindo, as I have understood it.

Now, the Mother was busy organising the anniversary functions of the Ashram School coming on the 1st and 2nd December. A stage was set up at the Playground itself. The present Theatre Hall and the Sports Ground complex were not there at that time. The Playground was used both for staging a drama and for physical demonstrations of the Groups.

With the Playground gate closed the rehearsals were going on before the Mother. One day when only the group members were present, after the rehearsal, the Mother mounted the stage and from there addressed the group-members, particularly the young people. She complained that the youngsters had been always talking, making noise and running about even inside the Ashram. She impressed upon them the need of silence. Much later I understood the real significance of the Mother’s address that evening. Shortly Sri Aurobindo

was going to leave his body. So silence was to be maintained in the Ashram atmosphere

After the 1st and the 2nd December functions were over, on the 3rd evening a film show depicting Sri Aurobindo's birthday anniversary celebrations in Calcutta was held in the Playground. For the first time the Mother was not present. In the midst of the show somebody announced on the mike that Nolini-da was wanted in the Ashram. A sense of sad foreboding gripped my heart.

On the 4th December morning as I was proceeding towards the railway station with Dhirsingh, he said, "I don't feel nice, Mother is not seeing anybody today." In the Calcutta Mail Dhirsingh had a separate compartment. My compartment was jampacked. In spite of a seat reservation, I was sandwiched between other passengers, throughout the night. I kept awake reading "The Supreme Discovery" by the Mother.

Next day, as our train reached Waltair, Dhirsingh came to me with a telegram in his hand carrying the benumbing news of Sri Aurobindo's passing. After the first shock I felt as if Sri Aurobindo was speaking within my heart, "The Mother is there." After reaching Calcutta, one night I saw Sri Aurobindo in a dream telling me, "The Mother is there."

ABANI SINHA

THE GENESIS OF TRANSFORMATION

THE word “transformation” in its common use means change—a change either in the form of a thing or in its consciousness or in both. The sculptor carves out statues from stones, the potter moulds pots and images from clay; the stone and the clay undergo transformation. Storm, earthquake, flood, war and other catastrophes bring about a change in topography, the surface of the earth is transformed at places. Such changes are mainly in objective form in nature. Social thinkers, scientists, philosophers, prophets and seers contribute new ideas and theories and reform old ones in the world of thought and modify thereby, to a certain extent, human conduct and social habits. Such changes relate more to the mental nature of man and society and can be called subjective. Although they cannot be sharply divided into categories as they are interdependent and very often influence one another, still their causes can be identified and attributed to certain agencies.

But beyond our common understanding and superficial perception, a transformation is always going on which is universal and eternal and includes all the aspects of existence and the process of which is evolutionary in character. That is to say, it takes place by unfolding the latent potentialities and hidden nature of things and beings by means of a working of forces inherent in them. Mother Nature has taken up this work from the very beginning of creation and has been conducting it against heavy odds and immense difficulties. As a result, an onward march of creation from plant to animal and from animal to man has been possible.

From the point of view of this advance, man is infinitely higher than the plant and animal. But from a different angle of vision, he is inferior to them since he has not attained the perfection of his own nature as the plant and animal have done of their own. Man the mental being has to establish the mental principles of truth, beauty and good in his life as well as in the life of the society. Has he been able to do that perfectly? Is the life of the individual or of the society beautiful, harmonious, without corruption and degradation? Is it not, on the contrary, full of discord, ill-will, selfishness and most lamentable pettiness and ugliness?

On the other hand what do we find in the subhuman state up to the animal? Do we not see that it is most natural and direct, full of vigour, free from hypocrisy, corruption and a thousand other ills to which humanity has fallen prey? Sub-conscious and half-conscious instincts and impulses are the directing principles in animals. Innocently they accept their guidance, faithfully they obey their dictates and are ignorant of any ideal or ethical conception of life. So they are normal, natural, harmonious, satisfied, established in their *dharma* and have a poise of their own. Man does not seem to have achieved any poise, spontaneity and naturalness of his being as yet. He is maimed, artificial, devoid of directness and shining simplicity.

Why is it so? What is the root cause of his inability? Is there any way out for him or is this distorted manhood his destiny? An intimate look into man's nature and consciousness as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo may help to throw some light on the subject; and then, with a clear sight, the solution of the problem may be sought for.

It can be appreciated without much difficulty that man's nature is not an undivided composite whole. In other words, it is a combination of different powers, forces and propensities. But principally his conduct is governed by the balance between two powers. Firstly and mainly the will central in his life and inherent in his power of action, secondly the influence he receives from the idea in his mind to give his life-force a conscious method and order. Unfortunately the conscious mind evolved in man cannot wholly change the life-principle according to his own ideal but can only modify it in an incomplete way. This incapacity of the mind is the basis of man's difficulty and the root cause of his abnormality and disharmony. Man has not become what he has to be, has not attained his true character and *dharmā*.

Many thinkers and social reformers have understood this fact and have contemplated various means to solve the knotty problem. They have even suggested a natural living in conformity with the life-principle of subhuman types as a remedy. But it is difficult for man to follow that since it is to go against his own *dharmā*. The German philosopher Nietzsche's ideal was on the other hand to become our true selves by exceeding ourselves, to develop superman out of our imperfect manhood. This, in essence, is of course a sound teaching. But the problem remains unsolved unless we know what is our real self. Surely it is not our mind and intellect nor the magnified vital ego. For none of them can give us the secure poise and spontaneity which we seek.

The double nature in man, one part animal and the other rational, is the cause of his unease. The rational ideas are only a super-imposition on the life-force and body. Mind is incapable of transforming the life-force in its own image. The rare individuals who appear to have effected a kind of transformation and led an entirely artistic and intellectual life have done so at the cost of impoverishing their vital and physical life. In such cases, the vital principles can be kept under check for the time being, but in the long run the essential elements in life must find their way out to re-establish themselves or else they completely die making the life of the individuals and society empty of dynamic force and aspiration and finally bringing about the death of the society. Such results are not uncommon in history. If, instead, the mind is subordinated to physical and vital principles, the danger comes in in a different way. Such a condition we find in our modern civilisation of economic and commercial expansion and physical and vital comfort—which may otherwise be termed commercial barbarism. In this case, the titanic development of the vital living carries within itself the possibility of death and extinction by the powerful nations' conflict for the domination and

enjoyment of the world. But before that actually happens, a nobler ethic and reason may come to the forefront to give a better organisation and order to the individual, national and international life. That also may be doomed to failure unless the secret of the solution which is not in the mental ethic or intellect, however nobler it might be, is found.

The solution lies in the awakening in us of our true self, our psychic, spiritual and supramental self and the pursuit of an ancient ideal, *i.e.*, "the establishment of the kingdom of God". This pursuit must be integral and should not stop short midway by creating a separation between life and spirit. It should neither escape by departure to another world nor make a compromise between life and spirit. The imposition of spiritual ideas or fixed rules on the mind and life of the community should not be the final goal, either. All these have already been followed by the society in the past, and perhaps this is one of the reasons why spirituality has mistakenly served as the cause of weakness and lack of energy and vigour in India and other Asiatic countries.

Herein comes the question of the necessity of spiritual transformation. The process of this transformation will also, no doubt, be evolutionary in character, but with this difference that whereas in its unaided usual course evolution takes an infinitely long time to effect a decisive change, with the conscious co-operation of the awakened souls the change is expected to come about in a more than usual intensity and speed. It demands the transference of the will and power in the vital to a higher consciousness and will and the acceptance by the life of a spiritual will from above which is essentially its own hidden power. Giving up the unregenerated will and instinctive impulses and movements, our life should be obedient to the spontaneous will and inspiration from the spirit above and the central being within.

Up till now there has been an unsuccessful attempt to impose the mental will upon the vital self. But the mind is not our real self nor has it always the capacity to make the life-force obedient to its influence. It can arrange, organise, scrutinise and judge but it cannot transform. It is an agent and instrument of the spirit. Its position is in the intermediate region of our being. On one side of it there are the lower and outward planes; on the other, the inner and higher ones. In order to become concrete and practical facts of life, mental ideas have to gravitate downwards to the vital and physical regions, otherwise they float about unsubstantially. But ideas from the mind level are empty of the transforming power of the spirit and the essential and effective truth of our being. They have at best a borrowed light and a mutilated truth.

So before they gravitate, they must be in contact with the Supramental or the Truth-consciousness. They should first go up, see and touch the truth and convert mental idealism to spiritual realism. Then only can they be richly equipped with the true knowledge of our being and becoming, look deep into the dangerous nether regions and make life obedient to the higher realities and the

will of the spirit In short, this is the way an unprecedented transformation can take place and a key towards a natural, harmonious and spiritual living be made available to humanity Unlike in the case of subhuman type, the new spontaneity will be intuitive and fully conscious, not instinctive or half-conscious.

In conclusion it may be stated that this is only a brief observation on the subject. To have a deep and sound understanding, one should undertake a thorough and systematic study But for its realisation in life, humanity needs a Guru, a teacher who has himself trod the difficult path, has known, realised and lived the truth of the spirit Perhaps it will not be out of place here to quote the following message from the Mother

“The future of India is clear India is the Guru of the world. The future structure of the world depends on India. India is the living soul. India is incarnating the spiritual knowledge in the world The Government of India ought to recognise the significance of India in this sphere and plan their action accordingly ..”¹

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

¹ *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on India*, p 56

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THE FUTURE OF CONSULTING

“What now we see is a shadow of what must come ”

(*Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo)

ONCE one has started a journey across a desert or to the top of a peak, the journey must be completed. For it is only from the peak or from the other side of the desert that new heights, depths, and journeys can be envisioned and given fresh impetus. And it is only at the peak that the whole meaning of the journey becomes apparent and a true and vast view of all that leads up to it becomes clear.

We are in the midst of a journey now. Even if the purpose is unknown or unfathomed, we may take refuge in the fact that on completion clarity will set in, and we shall become aware of why we embarked on the journey.

The journey I am talking about is that of our World in evolution. From separate and continuously forming nations scattered across the globe, barely aware of one another's existence and perceiving all Reality as only what the eye can see, we have reached a stage in evolution where international boundaries are crumbling and the world is fast becoming a truly integrated and global village.

From envisioning the world as flat we have learnt that it is spheroid; from perceiving Earth to be the center of all the universe we have learnt that it is a mere mass amongst billions, each encircling their own suns which in turn encircle some other centers and so on.

Our discoveries have scanned the vastness of the skies above while simultaneously probing the infinitesimality of the ubiquitous atom.

And now, in this day and age, where change is taking place at an accelerated pace, one may ask: Where does it lead to? No matter what line of practicality we pursue, whether scientific, geographic, or economic, the same trend manifests itself. There is a movement to search within, a movement to discover what lies at the core, a movement which culminates in the revelation of the innate interconnectedness and 'oneness' of all things.

Consider physics. In the search for discovering the truth of phenomena, of why an action gives rise to an opposite and equal reaction, or why a flower is yellow, scientists have been led into the world of atoms. From the Newtonian view of an atom being the indestructible and isolated building block of the universe, physicists have arrived at the quantum view of the fundamental wave-particle, which is neither here nor there, and yet everywhere, and which is intricately connected to all wave-particles everywhere else. The search led within, and then to a vast 'oneness' made apparent through the interconnectedness.

Consider geography. The explanation of winds, the finding of fish skeletons in the sky-reaching Himalayas, have led geographers to try to understand core

causal agents such as the sun and tectonic plates. All visible geographic phenomenon is now explained in terms of these few fundamental agents—the 'wave-particles' if you will, of geography. Further, it has been found that an act or phenomenon occurring in one part of the world intimately affects what happens elsewhere. A mere leaf falling off a tree in the Amazon forest can conceivably create a minute stir in the air which can create a larger stir, and so on, which can ultimately manifest as a wind on the Siberian planes. As in physics, geographic phenomenon too has been explained in terms of certain core agents, which it has been found have a universal coverage.

Consider finance. The financial health of an economy until quite recently would be determined through the sole scrutiny of a few fundamental variables such as interest rates, exchange rates, and so on. Today, such fundamental phenomena as the weather, and its effect on doing business, the health of a president, the number of university graduates, and so on, are considered in determining the financial health of an economy. Furthermore, the falling ill of the president in USA, say, can cause the Dow Jones in New York to fluctuate substantially, consequently sending ripples of worry through all the stock-markets of the world. Again, there has been a movement to understand the financial situation in terms of core components, and in terms of the vast interconnectedness of phenomena.

How do these trends, which are taking place universally, show up in consulting? Or is the consulting world an instance where this does not occur? I contend that there are no exceptions, and an understanding of what has been at the forefront of consulting thought and what is today at the forefront of consulting thought will reveal the same universal trend, and thereby reveal the direction and the future of the consulting world. (It is interesting to note that, consulting being at the forefront of business thought, the trends and future of the consulting world may also be an indication as to trends and the future of management practices in the business world.)

For the purpose of discussion, the trend and the future of the consulting world can be considered as two separate issues. Let us first consider the trend, and once that has become clear, then consider the future that this trend leads to.

Organizations function within a certain societal framework. In making decisions on what they will produce, how they will produce it, who they will produce it for, and why they will produce it, they of necessity must consider their competition, their own state, and what the needs of society are. They must consider such high-level variables as interest rates, inflation rates, exchange rates amongst others, and they must consider such market-based variables as market shares, market growth, costs of producing goods, potential sales, etc.

These variables and associated modes of attention fall under the general province of strategy, an area which has received much attention in recent times. Entire companies have arisen to conceive and plan strategies for other compa-

nies, so that they may perform effectively in the increasingly complex world of today.

More recently reengineering has grown in importance, and has become the focal point of attention and the arena for the further creation of several companies. Reengineering deals with ways of better organizing the way a company does business, by focusing directly on the customer value-creating processes companies are involved in. Unlike strategy where the concerns are primarily external, and where a company is trying to arrive at a position which will allow it to masterfully maneuver through a play of external forces, reengineering is more inward-focused and aims at providing an equilibrium between internal and external forces by aligning the internal with the external, consequently allowing a company to sustain a positive position with respect to its environment.

But what when current realities are subject to change? How long will this current reality, which reengineering provides a company ammunition for, hold up? How long will the forces, that rest in this temporary grimace we see and experience now, hold up before swirling into another reality radically different from the one we are in now? Today's world, as is apparent from the vast array of changes constantly occurring, is only a melting pot for influences and tendencies initiated as long as centuries ago.

Black moves toward white, and big toward small, languages coalesce, and thoughts of unity and universal harmony ring through the minds of many. But none of this has yet happened. And that is the whole point. The present externalities are a stance the many forces have assumed in their dynamic dance toward their goal. How long this current equilibrium will be held before those very forces, impelled by their age-old impulses, decide that it is time to move on toward the next stance, is the crucial question.

So, where does this outward-looking strategy that has given way to the more inward-looking reengineering end? What will be the next step in the decision-making which is playing such an important role in the formation of our businesses and consequently in their impact on individuals and the evolution of society?

In that an individual lies at the center of an organization, and in that the trend has been from out to in, by the very momentum built into trends and by the fact that trends have a tendency to complete the intention they were initiated to complete, the next focal point and crux of decision-making will be at the level of the individuals themselves.

And in that Nature insists there be an inward-looking trend, as made apparent by the many contemporary universal trends, those companies that carry that inward motion to its conclusion shall be the ones rewarded, while those that focus solely on the external without regard to the inner realities and necessities, will find it more and more difficult to continue doing profitable

business in that manner, if for no other reason than that the content of their solutions and suggestions will tend to be of a sub-optimal standard because of their lack or scantiness of consideration at the level of the individual.

Strategy can be looked at as the icing on a cake Reengineering as the cake, and the utensils, methodology and ingredients by which the cake and icing have been made, as the focus of the next phase in consulting Let us refer to this phase as "Individualization" It is that realm where all Nature is pointing us towards, and where our future survival and growth as humans, as companies, and as a World, will issue from.

All that is built around us is through the power of the individual. It is only in completely understanding, just as we do the mechanics of increasing market share, or of building viable business processes, and then harnessing that understanding, that we may further build into realms that seem impossible now. It is only in getting at the root of the intelligence and power and harmony and capacity for organization inherent within individuals that we can make that step which Nature is demanding of us. It is only in getting at the root of all that is ill-conceived and poorly planned, which too are the fruits of individuals, that these phenomena may be successfully redesigned

If a process has been poorly planned or a strategy ill-conceived, it is because of shortcomings in individual perception and ability. Amongst some of our weaknesses lies one of never seeing the whole picture We tend to view phenomena from our isolated viewpoints, and then tend to rigorously back them up regardless of their absolute correctness or not.

Amongst the many things that individualization would be involved in, would be the enlarging of one's own perceptive abilities, so that individuals may see a phenomena for what it is, and so that they may be objective about the observed phenomena rather than attaching a judgment to thereby further skew their already incomplete perception The scope and possible methodologies that can be applied through individualization are numerous. It is a whole science in itself, which will demand attention if for no other reason then because, through increasing each individual's productivity and consequently the productivity of a firm, it will provide companies with a definite competitive edge. Just as strategy is the masterful maneuvering of a company through an external play of forces, and reengineering is the balance of internal forces through alignment with external forces, individualization is the dynamic balance of internal forces so that they are always aligned with external forces as and when the external forces change

If we accept this inward-moving trend as true then we can hypothesize that those companies that fulfill the trend will be rewarded. Companies that practise pure strategy will continue to exist; but of necessity strategy as implied today will be only a phase, the icing on a cake, in any company decision-making or business decision implementation process A company requiring traditional strategy

work, must have its individualization and reengineering work complete, in order for the strategy to be effective and far-lived. Otherwise it is never going to attend to the root of its problems, and is going to base its decision-making on an incomplete and sub-optimal internal foundation, which in all probability would require a constant flurry of quick-fix strategy work to give it the illusion of survival.

But why are such trends taking place? Evolution is not a random process. For if it were so, all life would be in the midst of an incomprehensible chaos. However, there is no chaos, and therefore there must be some Principle that is secretly, and even overtly, guiding the steps that humankind takes. In that all progress we have made has emanated from the individual, it is fair to assume that all progress we are to make will emanate from the individual too. So far the progress we have made has been primarily through the Einsteins and the Gandhis and the Bonapartes of the world. The power of these individuals has stirred and provoked and moved to action millions of others. These individuals were more focused and concentrated, and in touch with a vaster picture. Individualization will now provide the chance to develop that same focusing and concentrating ability, and through the transcendence of habitual limits provide a chance to develop a gateway into a vaster picture, which has historically been the province of only a select few, into the reach of millions. The cumulative effect of millions of concentrated, focused, and more perceptive individuals will undoubtedly change the way business, society, and our world currently functions. In letting this revolutionary opportunity become a reality Nature has first had to make sure that there is in fact a settled attention at the level of the individual. Thus, the inward-moving trend whereby the culminating motion is a settling on the individual can be seen as nothing less than a necessity.

The value of this movement of Nature can be further revealed through understanding what an organization is. Apart from being a vehicle for realizing a mental concept at the level of Matter, an organization is a structure of growth which by virtue of occupying a pivotal role in human society is an important means through which humanity can evolve.

Viewed from the bottom up, organizations consist of individuals. Further, organizations provide a certain reality in which these individuals grow and experience certain forces of, and in, the world. Through its infrastructure an organization determines the extent and quality of interactions one individual has with another, and the extent and quality of interactions an individual has with vaster external forces. An organization to a large extent becomes a laboratory or playground or mini-universe where each individual is confronted with fears and anxieties and happinesses and aspirations and can be made to overcome and realize them.

Viewed from the top down, organizations have an influence on the locality or society in which they exist. Once they have achieved a certain critical mass,

the organizations through sheer economic and political and social power can alter or at least influence the workings of their containing locality and society. Further, through their impact on individuals, who are also the components of society, they have another means by which they can intimately influence the workings and growth of society.

Thus, an organization can have an important impact on how the individual and society evolves. When the current attention is more outward-focused and has been at the level of the individual sparse and ill-thought out, the impact at the level of the individual has often been of a negative nature, and consequently an organization's positive impact on society has rarely ever been felt. But if the current inward-moving trend is to be fulfilled, then the sheer position of an organization, coupled with the fact that the organization's primary focus will be the growth of the individual, will of necessity create a cumulative internal and therefore external environment which will be radically different, and hopefully more beneficial than the one today.

The very act of work and the very circumstance of mundane life will be the field by which a rapid and constant human progression will be made possible. In keeping with the findings of other inward-moving universal trends, we may hypothesize that the same sense of oneness and interconnectedness as has emerged about fundamental elements of other trends will emerge regarding human beings. Just as the discovery of quantum particles and their behaviour has radically altered the physicist's view of the world, it may be that the working out in this arena will result in our own view of the world being radically altered.

We will have attained to that peak which today we are in the process of scaling. Only tomorrow will tell what the view from there is like, and what future journeys we may then embark on.

PRAVIR MALIK

A TREASURY OF ANCIENT TAMIL LEGENDS

(Continued from the issue of 15 August 1994)

38. A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME...

KING Adittan paced up and down the corridor of his palace. Every inch of his face betrayed anxiety.

The queen, barren for years together, had at last proved fertile. Half-a-dozen or so midwives, all experts in their chosen field, were attending her. Yet she had been in labour for several hours.

The sharp cry of a newborn child pierced the tightly closed teakwood doors of the queen's chamber.

King Adittan's face lit up. He swung around and rushed to the door, expecting it to open at any moment.

The door opened. Out came a midwife towelling her wet hands with the hem of her sari. "You are blessed with a son, your Majesty!" she said.

The king beamed with joy.

"Quite a normal delivery, your Majesty," the midwife continued. "The child is healthy and looks like a blessed babe from the Heavens."

The king unhooked his chain of pearls and thrust it into her hands. He then clapped his hands and attracted the attention of a guard. "Go and call in the court astrologer. I'll wait for him in the queen's chamber," commanded the king.

The guard bowed and moved away. The king, all smiles, strutted into the queen's chamber. The midwives moved back a little and one after the other trickled out of the chamber.

Tired and exhausted by bringing a new life into this world, the queen was fast asleep. The king looked at the newborn, patted his cheeks and chin, bent down and planted a kiss on his forehead so affectionately and loudly that the queen woke up.

"Thank you for giving this land a prince who will one day step into my shoes," complimented the king.

A coy little smile lingered on the lips of the queen as she looked at the babe, very active in punching and kicking the air.

"God is great. We have a child to call our own," said the queen.

A hot tear drop trickled out of the corner of her left eye.

As the king stretched out his hand to wipe away her tears, the guard announced the arrival of the astrologer.

The astrologer bowed before his Majesty. He spread a mat on the floor and sat down on it. He then took out the chart and *cowrie* shells. After the calculation, he said: "Your Majesty! Astrology is the art of deciphering the writings of God. You should never be overjoyed when I tell you something

pleasing. And if you feel that there is something unpleasant in my words, you should never be disheartened. Never should you forget that life is an amalgam of good and evil.”

“Go ahead,” said the king, leaning against a pillow.

“Yours is a blessed child. He is blessed with immortality. He is destined to be the uncrowned monarch among poets. He will be praised and lauded by crowned monarchs all over the globe. Literateurs will run short of words when they speak of his glory. And he is bound to enjoy all the pleasures of the world.” The astrologer paused.

“Well! well!... It gives me immense joy. Go ahead,” said the king and heaved a sigh, denoting a sense of satisfaction.

“But...” the astrologer drawled.

The king’s eyes ran searchingly all over the astrologer’s face and halted at his red wrinkled lips.

“But, your Majesty!” the astrologer continued, mustering up courage. “This child is not destined to live in this palace. If you ignore my words and allow the child to remain here, you are bound to face havoc. Revolutionaries will usurp your throne. You and your spouse will be put to death. Your people will lead a death-in-life existence.”

The king was visibly upset. Yet he forced a smile, rewarded the astrologer and sent him away.

While the queen wept over the fate that awaited her and her husband, the king spent sleepless nights in trying to take a decision.

A few restless days passed.

Spies began to inform the king of the brewing rebellion in his land. Insomnia, fear, indecision had already started gnawing at his heart. He became lean and haggard-looking.

It was high time to decide.

Much against the will of his wife, King Adittan summoned his trustworthy men and said amidst tears. “Take my only child—the Prince—not destined to rule my land, and leave him in Thiruvazhundur temple.”

The king’s command was obeyed. They carried the child from Moodhur to Thiruvazhundur (now known as Therazhundur, two miles south-west of Kutralam), found the temple, spread a silken scarf under the *kambam* (pillar) and laid him on it, leaving him to the mercy of God.

Meanwhile the revolutionaries exploited the mental condition of the king to seize power. Helpless, King Adittan gave up his life. His queen followed suit.

A conch-blower in the temple, who was also an exorcist, came across the child left under the temple *kambam*, took him in his arms and searched for his parents. Finding none to claim the child, he took him home.

“Here is a present for you,” he told his wife, as he showed the child cuddled in his arms.

The barren wife of the exorcist plucked the child from his hands and huddled the child close to her breasts. She was unable to believe it herself when she began to lactate.

As the babe suckled, she cooed into its wee ears: "Grow strong, my baby. I'll nurture you, protect you. You are the fruit of my body, my flower's sweetest nectar."

A blissful smile spread over the puffy round face of the conch-blower. "Since I found him under the *kambam* in the temple, let us call him KAMBAN."

39. THE BLESSING FROM THE CURSED

It was the time when people attributed their diseases to evil spirits. By exorcising such evil spirits, they believed that they would recoup their lost health. Hence the exorcist was a much-wanted man in every household.

The exorcist-cum-conch-blower, the guardian of Kamban, was the family physician of a very rich patron. Named Sadayappa Mudaliar, the patron was a native of Thiruvennai Nallor. Many a poor person sought his help even at odd hours and received from his ever-giving hands.

On several occasions, the exorcist carried his little boy Kamban to the palatial house of Sadayappa Mudaliar. The cute little boy attracted everyone's attention by his sweet melodious lispsings.

Finding the child a precocious one, Sadayappa Mudaliar decided that the child deserved proper education. One day he told his book-keeper: "Treat that little child as my own. Sanction the pundits more money than they deserve and let them give this little boy a good grounding in Tamil language and literature."

Kamban learnt avidly whatever his masters taught him. He spent much of his time studying the books that came into his hands. And wherever he went he carried a book with him and made use of his leisure hours to dip into it.

It was customary for the exorcist to go once a year with his kith and kin to the temple at Vairapuram and give his offerings to his family deity Goddess Kali. On one such occasion Kamban slipped away from the group of worshippers, and climbed up a pipal tree.

Seated conveniently on a branch, he pulled his favourite book *Thirukkural* from beneath his turban, flipped it open and began to read the couplets under the chapter heading 'Gratitude'.

And as he was reading a particular couplet, a brahmin appeared before him from God knows where.

For a minute Kamban was unable to believe his eyes, for the brahmin sat next to him in the tree.

The brahmin smiled at the boy to drive away his fear.

"Who are you?" asked the boy.

“Till you read the couplet I was a demon But now by your grace I’ve regained my shape. I am grateful to you,” said the brahmin

The boy blinked.

“Well! Listen to me .. I’ve a story to tell,” continued the brahmin. “I was born a brahmin in the Pandya kingdom. Blessed with knowledge greater than any other man on earth, I wished to profit from that I imparted my knowledge only to the moneyed And the poor I showed the door But a poor boy who longed to possess the power of knowledge repeatedly begged me to teach him When I refused him, he took it badly and abstained from food and sleep And just before he breathed his last he cursed me.”

“Cursed you?” asked the boy curiously

The brahmin nodded his head “He cursed me to be a demon Trembling, I begged his pardon Forgetting his anger, the dying boy told me the cure for his curse ‘You shall live as a demon for years in the pipal tree next to the temple of Goddess Kali, and feel sorry for your action, till a boy climbs up the tree and reads the couplet:

’Tis never good to let the thought of good things done thee pass away
Of things not good, ’tis good to rid thy memory that very day

(*Thirukkural*. Couplet No 108)

“So now the curse is cured?” asked the boy

“Yes! For every curse there is a cure. But I have not finished my story ”

“Then, go ahead ”

“The dying boy’s last words were ‘Show your gratitude to the boy who cures you of this curse, by bestowing upon him all the knowledge you have gathered in all these years ’ ”

Kamban heaved a sigh

Placing his hand on Kamban’s head the brahmin transferred all his knowledge to the boy

Kamban burst into song. The brahmin listened to him with rapt attention, then said:

“You must show me your gratitude ”

“How shall I do it?”

“Write an epic that will stand the test of time and make you immortal. Let the life story of Rama be its theme.”

“I’ll certainly do it. . but only when I grow up,” said Kamban, beaming his gratitude.

40. THE BOON

“Go and guard my millet field. You are above the standard I maintain in my class. See to it that no animal trespasses on my field. Why waste your time here?” said a schoolmaster to Kamban.

Kamban reluctantly got up from his seat. “Perhaps I am being punished for exhibiting my knowledge,” he murmured as he dawdled towards the field, a couple of furlongs away from the school.

He climbed up the thatched watch-tower constructed at the centre of the field and sat down with a thump. Finding no bird or animal anywhere around he stretched himself out comfortably. The cool breeze of the field lulled him and sleep overtook him.

A little later he had a dream.

In his dream he saw a horse come galloping towards the millet field. It slowed down, halted, sniffed around the lush growth of millet plants and finally began to crop the plants.

Startled, Kamban woke up. He looked around. There in one corner, as if his dream has been infused with reality, he saw a horse chomping and tearing away at the plants.

Remembering his duty, Kamban jumped down from the watch-tower and ran towards the horse, all the time yelling at the animal.

The horse ignored the boy and carried on with its work.

Kamban searched for a stick, found one and lashed it in the air. The sharp noise made by the stick when swishing the air perhaps irritated the horse and it gave a loud neigh, raising its forelegs to a great height.

Kamban moved back in panic. He was willing to strike the animal but yet afraid to go near it. And the animal continued eating the millet plants.

Kamban did what any boy of his age in that helpless state would have done. He wept.

“Oh! What can I do now? My master will call me an irresponsible idiot and punish me with his merciless cane. Who will come to my rescue now? I find no one around to call for help,” wailed the boy.

A dark-skinned woman dressed in a red sari appeared from nowhere. She patted the crying boy and consoled him.

Kamban stopped weeping. His sorrow turned into joy, for the black woman had four hands. Kamban was sure that it was Goddess Kali.

Prostrating himself before her, Kamban said: “It is very kind of you to come all the way from your temple to console this poor boy.”

“I’ve come here to make you rich... rich in your thoughts and words which are bound to procure for you many other riches that people crave for. And now put out your tongue.”

Kamban obeyed. Kali blessed his tongue with the touch of Her *trisul* and

smiled a heavenly smile at him before She disappeared.

Kali's blessing helped Kamban muster up enough courage to tackle the unruly horse. He didn't use a stick to do it, but his blessed tongue. He sang:

Heed to me, O Kali of Vairapuram:
For trampling on the ripe millet field
And cropping the plants short,
Kill this horse of Kalingarayan

The horse fell down dead.

Surprised at his own talent, Kamban ran to his master and reported the matter, boasting of the power of his tongue.

Kamban's schoolmaster received the shock of his life. "Oh, what have you done?" he raved "It is Kalingarayan's horse. He is our village chief. If he comes to know about the death of his horse in my field, God knows what he will do to me!"

Seeing his master on the verge of tears Kamban repeated the first three lines of his song and in the fourth line substituted the word "kill" with "resurrect".

The horse came back to life and galloped away.

The schoolmaster heaved a sigh of relief and ever after stood in awe of Kamban

(More legends on the way)

P. RAJA

TO PĀṆINI'S TIME FROM PĀṆINI'S PLACE

HIS GEOGRAPHICAL POINTER AT HIS HISTORICAL PERIOD

(Continued from the issue of July 1994)

2

WE have found that from the beginning of the reign of Darius I (522 B.C.) to the end of the reign of Darius III who was defeated by Alexander in 330 B.C. there was no possibility of Pāṇini's native place Gandhāra corresponding to his categorisation of it as an independent kingdom. Preceding Darius I we have Cambyses and before him his father, the great Cyrus. Ktesias (Fragment 37, ed. Gilmore, 1888) writes of Cyrus the Great having fought a battle with the Indians¹ Xenophon (*Cyropaedia*, I 1.14), a contemporary of both Ktesias and Artaxerxes III, reports that the same Cyrus "brought under his rule Bactrians and Indians"² He tells us also of an embassy sent to Cyrus by an Indian king with a sum of money, and puts the event prior to Cyrus's war against Croesus of Lydia³ The chronology here is patently at fault, for Cyrus turned eastward after and not before subduing Croesus, but there is nothing intrinsically impossible in the event itself Now, as is the case with Arrian writing of Darius III, does Xenophon include the "Gandarians" among the "Indians"? The answer is provided when we take together some statements by Strabo and Arrian himself.

Strabo (*Geography*, XV.1.26),⁴ in the first century B.C., correctly locates Gandhāra as Gandarites lying along the river Kophes, between the Choaspes and the Indus. Arrian (*Indica*, I)⁵ informs us. "The regions beyond the river Indus on the west are inhabited, up to the river Cophen, by two tribes, the Astakenoi [Hāstināyana or Ārshtaka] and the Āssakenoi [Āśvakāyana]... They were in old times subject to the Assyrians, then after a period of Median rule submitted to the Persians, and paid to Cyrus. the tribute from their land which Cyrus had imposed "

Arrian's "two Indian tribes" are certainly "Gandarians" and Strabo even goes on to name—"in the dominions of the Assakenoi"—"their city, Peuce-laitis". So Cyrus's suzerainty over Gandhāra is affirmed. And a reference by Pliny fits in well with the tradition Arrian has handed down. Mentioning Kāpiśā under the Pāṇinian form Kāpiśī (IV.2.99), Agrawala⁶ writes: "According to Pliny Kāpiśī was destroyed by the Achaemenian emperor Cyrus (Kurush) in the sixth century B.C. It is identified with modern Begram, about 50 miles north of Kābul on the ground of a Kharoshthī inscription found there naming the city (Sten Konow, *Ep Ind.*, Vol. XXII [1933], p. 11) " Majumdar⁷ proffers the reservation that some identify Pliny's Kāpiśā with Kāpiśā-kani, the name of a stronghold in Arachosia mentioned in the inscriptions of Darius But, since

Kāpiśā-kanī is never heard of outside Darius's inscriptions, of which no Classical writer was aware, and since Pliny uses a clear-cut form with no ambiguity arising from any variation, we may safely adhere to the majority opinion by which, as Majumdar himself says, "this is usually taken to be the well-known Kāpiśā north of Kābul" Then we are at once led to remember from Olmstead how in Darius's day Gandhāra's north-western frontier marched with Bactria's south-eastern so that Kāpiśā would fall within Gandhāra.

Agrawala too confirms Olmstead when he explains the terms "Gandhāra, Kāpiśā, Bālhika" in dealing with Pānini. He writes. " . Gandhāra extended from Takshailā, its eastern capital to the river Kunar, its western boundary, and from the river Kābul in the south to Swat in the north. Next to it was the kingdom of Kāpiśā, coinciding with modern Kafiristān and occupying the whole area between the river Kunar and the Hindukush. The latter mountain identified as Rohitāgiri separated Kāpiśā from Bālhika. Sometimes Kāpiśā politically formed part of Gandhāra, as in the reign of Darius [I], and then the name Gandhāra was applied to both of them "

What obtained in the time of Darius was most likely to have been the general geographical disposition in the political state of affairs in the sixth century B.C., which included also the time of Cyrus. Cyrus's destruction of Kāpiśā could be considered as pointing to a conquest by him of Gandhāra.

Doubtless, Pliny and Arrian are several centuries removed from the age of Cyrus. Majumdar makes much of this fact and argues "Our oldest authority, Herodotus, merely refers to Cyrus's campaign against the Bactrians and Sacae. His further statement that Cyrus conquered every nation in Upper Asia is too vague and general, and evidently does not refer to India, which he mentions later in connection with Darius. To this may be added the explicit statement of Nearchus that Cyrus planned an expedition against India through Gedrosia (Balūchistān) but lost his entire army, excepting seven men, in that region. Megasthenes also explicitly states that the Persians did not invade India but merely approached it when Cyrus was marching against the Massagetae "

As against all this evidence Majumdar sees nothing except Ktesias and Xenophon and he dismisses them with some critical observations. But it is not so easy to set them aside. First of all, are they in direct contradiction to Herodotus? True, "our oldest authority" refers only to the campaigns against the Bactrians and the Sacae. Still, there is the eye-opening passage (I.179):¹⁰ "While Harpagus was turning upside-down the lower, or western part of Asia, Cyrus was engaged with the north and east, bringing into subjection every nation without exception. Most of his minor conquests I will say nothing about, but mention only those of his campaigns which gave him the greatest trouble and are in themselves the most interesting " Surely, this is different from being just a vague and general statement, which Majumdar tries to make it out to be? It explicitly suggests very wide conquests and it clearly provides us with a reason for whatever things

Herodotus is silent about. He is silent about them not because they never occurred but because he did not regard them as of an importance comparable to that of those which were arduous and whose account would make absorbing literature. What Ktesias and Xenophon have reported is perfectly possible and does not in the least run counter to Herodotus's deliverances.

When we look at the actual words of Ktesias we note still further how Herodotus quite allows our crediting the former. Majumdar¹¹ reports: "Ctesias states that 'Cyrus died in consequence of a wound inflicted in battle by an Indian in an engagement when the Indians were fighting on the side of the Derbikes¹² and supplied them with elephants' " Herodotus,¹³ after describing Cyrus's death at the hands of the Massagetæ, adds: "There are many accounts of Cyrus' death; I have given the one which I think most likely to be true." Thus the account—one of the "many" existing—which Ktesias accepted has a legitimate status and is not excluded by anything transmitted by Herodotus.

Once that status is granted on Herodotus's own pronouncement, Xenophon's declarations that "Cyrus brought under his rule Bactrians and Indians" and that an Indian king sent an embassy with money to him could easily reflect earlier events and make good an omission on Herodotus's part when he spoke of Cyrus's campaigns against the Bactrians and the Sacæ.

Nor must we forget that "our oldest authority" does not much precede in time the two other writers. Ktesias is almost as old as he; even Xenophon was a younger contemporary. And Xenophon as well as Ktesias is an older authority than either Nearchus or Megasthenes, both of whom were contemporaries of Alexander the Great.

Moreover, Herodotus does not stop coming to our aid with the passages we have quoted. In connection with Darius I he has a sequence of events with a very significant implication. After recounting the horse-groom's trick by which Darius "became king of Persia", Herodotus (III.88-90)¹⁴ writes: "Following the conquests of Cyrus and Cambyses, his dominion extended over the whole of Asia, with the exception of Arabia... Now that his power was felt in every corner of his dominions, his first act was to erect a stone monument with a carving of a man on horseback... This was in Persia; he then proceeded to set up twenty provincial governorships, called satrapies. The several governors were appointed and each nation assessed for taxes... During the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses there was no fixed tribute at all, the revenue coming from gifts only; and because of his imposition of regular taxes, and other similar measures, the Persians have a saying that Darius was a tradesman, Cambyses a tyrant, and Cyrus a father..."

To get the implication on the whole more sharply we may substitute for Sélincourt's opening sentence the version by George Rawlinson:¹⁵ "Thus was Darius, son of Hystaspes, appointed king; and, except for Arabians, all they of Asia were subject to him; for Cyrus, and after him Cambyses, had brought them all under."

We may put the total implication in brief: Darius possessed an extensive empire chiefly because he was subsequent to the conquerors Cyrus and Cambyses as their heir, but he also asserted his power in all the parts of this empire and he reorganised on an efficient paying basis the administration of almost the very provinces which Cyrus and Cambyses had administered differently.

We have used the qualifications “chiefly” and “almost” because the “twenty provincial governorships” include, as Herodotus’s list¹⁶ tells us, “the Indians” as the last and twentieth satrapy—the Indians who figure in another passage of Herodotus’s as a people freshly subjugated. The last and twentieth satrapy is the single province added by Darius. Herodotus unmistakably shows it to have been an addition: he has the story¹⁷ of Darius sending an expedition under the Caryandian navigator Skylax to explore the river Indus down to the sea “from Caspatyrus in the district of Pactyica”. This is the sole occasion on which Herodotus says: “... Darius subdued the Indians.”

And we receive a confirmation of it from those of Darius’s inscriptions which are later than the one of Behistun. To quote Majumdar:¹⁸ “Two inscriptions of Darius, one at Persepolis, and another near it at Naksh-i-Rustam, include both Gandhāra and Hi(n)du or Sindhu among the countries subject to the emperor. Another found at Hamadan describes his empire as extending from Sindhu to Sparda. These epigraphic references leave no doubt that some time after the issue of the Behistun inscription, which mentions Gandhāra but not Sindhu, the latter region was conquered by Darius who was already master of Gandhāra ”

If we may judge from the words of Herodotus, Darius’s mastery of Gandhāra may be viewed in a double light: although he inherited the province he had to make his power felt in it once more. To reconquer provinces that Cyrus or Cambyses had owned was nothing unusual. Thus we know from Herodotus¹⁹ that Babylon whose conqueror had been Cyrus “was captured for the second time” by Darius.

Our “double light” on Gandhāra explains a subtle difference in the phraseology at Behistun from the turn of expression at other places. As Majumdar²⁰ points out, the Persepolis Inscription says, “By the will of Ahuramazda these are the countries that I have conquered with (the help of) this Persian army” and the Naksh-i-Rustam Inscription reads, “By the will of Ahuramazda these (are) the countries that I seized afar from Persia”, while the Behistun Inscription runs, “These countries that came to me; by the will of Ahuramazda, I was their king.” Majumdar interprets the last-named according to the import of the other two, but with an eye upon Herodotus (IV 183) we may incline to agree with the passage in the *Cambridge Ancient History* with which Majumdar finds fault: “Among the countries enumerated on the Behistun inscription as having come to him with the crown are Gandhāra and Sattagydia, from which it may be inferred

that Cyrus had already pushed the Persian conquests to the north-western frontier of India and even to the southern slopes of the Hindu Kush."

Olmstead's rendering²¹ of the Behistun Inscription is a little different: "These are the lands which obeyed me..."²² But his interpretation is still that Darius intends here an inheritance. Olmstead,²³ calling the inscription Darius's "autobiography", says: "In his autobiography Darius, immediately after the protocol, states that Ahuramazda handed over to him the lordship... He then lists the twenty-three satrapies. Darius would have us believe that at his accession all these countries were loyal ."

And what Olmstead goes on to observe supports our thesis that Gandhāra was a heritage from Cambyses and Cyrus but had to be somehow reclaimed. Olmstead finishes the sentence "all these countries were loyal and later rebelled." Then we are told: "Further on in the narrative he admits that, when he had killed the Magian, Elam and Babylonia revolted, but he still insists that it was not until after the capture of Babylon that the other revolts occurred: of his own homeland Parsa, of Elam for a second time, of Media, Assyria, Egypt, Parthia, Margiana, Sattagydia, and the Saka." Gandhāra is not mentioned among the rebellious lands recovered. But, from Persepolis and Naksh-e-Rustam, we may gather that it too had to be brought to heel at a later date.

Our reading of Herodotus is borne out. And there is no substantial bar to attributing the possession of Gandhāra to Cyrus. As for Nearchus and Megasthenes they make no odds. Nearchus only means that Cyrus never got beyond the Indus into India proper: his attempt to do it ended in a *débâcle*. The attempt itself—through Balūchistān—was pretty distant from the regions where Gandhāra lay and can have no bearing on our discussion. Megasthenes can also be accepted without any change in our view. In fact, he can be shown to give the negative side of the very picture whose positive side we gather from Arrian. To declare that the Persians did not lead an army into India but only approached its borders when Cyrus marched against the Massagetae is to mean that Cyrus was close to the Indus on the western side on his way northward where the Massagetae lived. And to be thus close is to be just where Arrian locates his Astakenoi and Assakenoi who are said to have been under Cyrus and to have paid him tribute.

Nor is Megasthenes making a mistake here, as Majumdar thinks. Majumdar²⁴ comments, apropos of the Massagetae: "As this people occupied the country between the Oxus and the Jaxartes, obviously the writer must have meant by India not the Punjab but Kafiristān, as the borders of the latter, and not of the former, would have been approached by Cyrus on his way to the Massagetae." We must remember that Herodotus (I 201) affines the Massagetae to the Sacae (Śakas) and that S.N. Majumdar,²⁵ elucidating Ptolemy's *Geography*, has remarked, "The Massagetae were the Maśakas described in Indian Literature as the warrior tribe of the Śakas", and that the Mahābhārata, as

Agrawala²⁶ informs us, speaks of the locality Maśaka in the *Śakadvīpa* (Śakaland) and that in the time of Alexander and Megasthenes there was the city which the Greeks (Arrian, *Anabasis*, IV.26) called Massaga and which they described as the capital of one of the very tribes—the Assakenoi—which Arrian has made tributary to Cyrus. The Massagetæ, who lived between the Oxus and the Jaxartes, appear to have had an outpost, as it were, in “the regions beyond the river Indus on the west up to the river Cophen”

Their name itself seems fully echoed in the Indian appellation “Maśakāvati”, which the grammarian Patañjali (c. 150 B.C. by the usual chronology) mentions in his *Mahābhāṣya* (II.287) and which the *Kāśikā* (IV.2.85) links on to Pāṇini along with other river-names like Puskarāvati. “Maśakāvati,” writes Agrawala,²⁷ “seems to be identical with the name of the river on which Massaga or Maśaka, capital of the warlike people known as the Āśvakāyanas, was situated. It is possible that Pushkalāvati and Maśakāvati were the designations of only those particular portions of the river Swat where it flowed past by these two great towns of Gandhāra in the south and north respectively.” Mookerji²⁸ also identifies the Greeks’ Massaga with the Indian Maśakāvati. Thus the Massaga familiar to Alexander’s historians and to Megasthenes gets connected in very name with the Massagetæ against whom not only Megasthenes but also Herodotus sends Cyrus fighting.

A proof of the connection is in the manner in which the Assakenoi fought Alexander. According to J H Haskins,²⁹ scholars, while fully accepting the Massagetæ as Scythians, distinguish them in one particular from other Śakas such as the Western tribe whom Herodotus called the Royal Scythians and reported as having proceeded westward after their defeat in Asia by the Massagetæ. This particular is the position of women among them. The women of the Massagetæ stood very high. Haskins³⁰ writes “we are explicitly told [Herodotus, I.214] that they were led in battle by a queen.” Now let us glance at the battle given by the Assakenoi army of Massaga to the Macedonians. Mookerji³¹ relates: “This army was led by the late king’s mother, queen Cleophis [Krpā?] .. The example of the queen-commander leading the struggle for freedom in person brought the entire womanhood of the locality into the fighting. ”

We cannot help harking back to Herodotus’s Massagetæ and their queen Tomyris whose son Cyrus had captured by a ruse: “The queen’s son Spargapises, when he was sober again and able to realize his position, begged Cyrus to have his fetters removed. The request was granted, and, as soon as he had the use of his hands, he killed himself. The queen, on hearing that Cyrus had ignored her terms, engaged him in the field with all the forces she possessed.”³²

Arrian’s association—through his geographical details—of Gandhāra with Cyrus is in tune, though indirectly, with both Herodotus and Megasthenes. It has a foundation going back in one way or another to pretty ancient times. It only

brings into focus an old piece of information that was either negatively present or tacitly couched before him and first found a suggestive shape in general as far back as Xenophon and Ktesias

Nor in the age after these two is Pliny alone in supporting Arrian by his light on Cyrus and Kapiśa. A string of events in the wake of Cyrus's conquest of Gandhāra unrolls in brief in what Strabo (XV.I,6)³³ writes: “.. although the Persians summoned the Hydraces [or Oxydrakai=Kshudrakas] as mercenary troops from India, the latter did not make an expedition to Persia but only came near it when Cyrus was marching against the Massagetæ.” The word “mercenary” forbids us from thinking Cyrus master over the Punjāb region where the Ravi joins the Chenāb, but his connection with India is strongly suggested and there is a complementary relation between the Hydraces coming near Persia and, as in Megasthenes's account, Cyrus coming near India.

Having quoted Strabo, Pliny and Arrian—all late witnesses and therefore unreliable in Majumdar's eyes—we may draw attention to one point overlooked by their critic. It is not as if they were offering evidence in opposition to Nearchus and Megasthenes whom Majumdar favours. What we learn from Nearchus is through Arrian himself and his likes. the earlier writer's report appears only in Arrian's *Anabasis* (VI.24,2-3) and Strabo's *Geography* (XV.I.5) Nor has Megasthenes's original *Indica* come down to us except in the accounts by subsequent authors—Diodorus, Strabo, Pliny, Arrian, Aelian. And, when Arrian tells us of the Aspasioi and the Assakenoi having been subject to Cyrus, he does so at the very start of that part of his own *Indica*, at the end (XVII) of which he says “It is sufficient for me to have set forth these facts regarding the Indians, which, as the best known, both Nearchus and Megasthenes, two men of approved character, have recorded ” And the facts about those two tribes occur in the company of facts about the Nysaioi and Dionysus, which we definitely know to be in the tone of Megasthenes.

Cyrus's suzerainty over Gandhāra may have been rather loose, so that after his son's somewhat disordered reign and the more or less disordered sequel of claim and counter-claim to the throne Darius I had to reassert the royal right with military force. However, for all historical purposes we may push Gandhāra's dependence on the Persians—and therefore Pāṇini's date—a fair number of years beyond Darius I. And Cyrus himself, from Arrian's account, would seem to have merely reasserted a suzerainty exercised before him by the Medes whom he supplanted in Persia and, still earlier, by the Assyrians.

Actually, there are passages in the Avesta seeming to indicate a political hold obtained by old Iran on Northern India before the Achemenids. Although corroboration or details of this connection have hitherto been lacking, some scholars have taken those passages as genuine evidence.³⁴ The earliest reference is the statement in the Avestan *Vendidād* that Hapta-Hindu (Sapta-Sindhu)—land of the seven-rivered Indus-system—was one of the countries Ahura

Mazda created—a statement which points to the prevalence of the religion of Ahura Mazda at least in portions of the north-west along the Indus, including Gandhāra.

Contact between these portions and ancient Assyria before the Medes came into power is also suggested by certain facts R A. Jairazbhoy³⁵ writes: “The cotton tree was introduced from India into Assyria (c. 700 B.C.) by Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.), who is reported to have said that trees that bear fleece were sheared and shredded for garments. . The earliest date [for the Indian peacock’s arrival in Assyria] may be 738 B.C., when there is a possible reference to a peacock among the wonderful birds received as tribute by Tiglath Pīlaser III.” Gandhāra may well have sent this peacock-tribute. Also, we know from Olmstead:³⁶ “In 737 Tiglath-pīleser III... received tribute from Median chiefs as far east as Mount Bīkni...”

Even if we ignore Arrian’s testimony about the Medes and the Assyrians, Pānini can scarcely be later than the part of Cyrus’s reign—c. 546-540 B.C.³⁷—when that king may be thought to have turned his ambition to the East.

(To be continued)

K.D SETHNA

Notes

- 1 Mookerji, *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p 39
- 2 *Ibid*
- 3 Majumdar, *op cit* , p 154
- 4 *The Classical Accounts* , pp 256-7
- 5 *Ibid* , p 214
- 6 Agrawala, *op cit* , p 69
- 7 *The Indian Historical Quarterly* Vol 25, p 156
- 8 Agrawala, *op cit* , p 48
- 9 Majumdar, *op cit* , p 156
- 10 *Herodotus The Histories*, translated by Aubrey de Séincourt (Penguin Classics, Harmondsworth, 1960), p 85
- 11 Majumdar, *op cit* , p 155
- 12 The Derbikes have not yet been satisfactorily located
- 13 Herodotus, *op cit* , p 100
- 14 *Ibid* , pp 217, 218
- 15 *Herodotus History of the Greek and Persian Wars*, translated by George Rawlinson, edited and abridged with an introduction by W G Forrest (New York, 1963), p 151
- 16 Herodotus, *op cit* , pp 214-15
- 17 *Ibid* , p 256
- 18 Majumdar, *op cit* , p 240
- 19 Herodotus, *op cit* , p 240
- 20 Majumdar, *op cit* , p 156
- 21 Olmstead, *op cit* , p 110
- 22 Olmstead renders the Persepolis Inscription also rather differently “By the favour of Ahuramazda, these are the lands which I hold, together with this Persian army which fears me ” (*Ibid* , p 175) However,

the Naksh-i-Rustam Inscription, in Olmstead's version, has the word "seized" (*Ibid* , p 229)

23 *Ibid* , p 110

24 Majumdar, *op cit*

25 McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy*, edited by S N Mazumdar (1927), p 397

26 Agrawala, *op cit* , p 68

27 *Ibid* , p 42

28 *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p 45

29 "The Royal Scythians", *Natural History* (New York), October 1960, p 16

30 *Ibid*

31 Mookerji, *op cit* , p 46

32 Sélincourt, *op cit* , pp 100-1 (I 214)

33 *The Classical Accounts* , p 245

34 Mookerji in *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p 39 See also Chattopadhyaya, "Foreign Notices of Achaemenid India", *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol 26, No 1, pp 18-19

35 *Foreign Influence in Ancient India* (Bombay, 1963), p 30

36 Olmstead, *op cit* , p 22

37 *Ibid* , pp 47-9

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Indian Poetry in English. Edited by Makarand Paranjape. Publishers: Macmillan India, Madras. 1993. Price: Rs. 90/-

THE latest Macmillan anthology, *Indian Poetry in English* edited by Makarand Paranjape, is valuable in a way in which those preceding it are not. It is a conscious effort to be truly and completely representative of the Indo-English Muse in all her manifestations, a deliberate attempt to be totally unbiased. Endowed with a rare sense of discrimination, taste and judgment, Makarand Paranjape does succeed in offering us a selection as well as an evaluation far surpassing all similar works by others.

Paranjape's contrast of the *all-inclusive* type of anthologies like V.K. Gokak's *Golden Treasury of Indo-Anglian Poetry* (Sahitya Academy) and the too exclusive type like R. Parthasarathy's *Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets* (OUP) reveals a mind that knows its business.

The Anthologist is particularly aware of the anathema with which Sri Aurobindo's poetry is treated by Parthasarathy and the rest. He wants to set matters right by showing the place of the Master not only by devoting ten full pages to selections from his work but by paying the highest tribute to him in the following words:

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) probably has the best claim to be regarded as the greatest Indian poet in English.... Lyrics, sonnets, long narrative poems, dramatic poetry, and epics poured out of his prolific pen making him the poet with the most staggering range and ambition in Indian poetry in English. He was well-versed in both European and Indian classics, proving his command over them in his brilliant translations. He was also India's most significant philosopher and critic in recent times.... He also attracted a host of imitators, thus giving birth to an Aurobindonian circle of poets.

The adverb, *probably*, at the start may be taken as an academician's care to be guarded against any possible exaggeration. To speak of Sri Aurobindo as a poet of staggering "ambition" seems strange. But the reference to the Aurobindonian circle of poets, as a host of *imitators* does not appear to be in very good taste.

That he has not included even a single poet of the circle makes the anthology less representative of Indian poetry in English than it would have been. Imitators! Had the anthologist read what Sri Aurobindo himself had to say of Amal Kiran's (K.D. Sethna's) poetry, for example (valuing Sri Aurobindo's estimate) his attitude would have been different.

Reading his remarks about Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* in his introduction one

doubts if Paranjape has fully perceived the nature and worth of Sri Aurobindo's poetry which he seeks to champion.

A mystic and seer, Aurobindo *claimed* (italics reviewer's) to have described his own palpable experiences in writing the poem. In his *Letters on Savitri*, attached to the authoritative edition of the epic, he says that the work was written under the highest possible poetic inspiration which he called "Overmind poetry" in which there was no effort on his part and in which he was merely the scribe of a "vision" which descended, perfect and complete, upon him. Yet he revised and re-revised the poem extensively...

We know what Sri Aurobindo has said about such revisions: they were attempts to rewrite each time he rose to a higher level of consciousness, they were not merely literary corrections. The anthologist's judgment of *Savitri* is implied in another remark he makes about Indian poetry in English in general.

It is no doubt a literature in a minor mode, incapable of producing works of the quality of *Mahabharata* or Shakespeare.

It would be uncharitable to the editor to say that his conscious admiration of Sri Aurobindo is against his own unconscious attraction for the modernist mode.

It must be said to his credit that he is the first anthologist of Indian poetry in English to recognize the place of Rabindranath Tagore in the field:

Though, strictly speaking, Tagore wrote only one poem, *The Child* (1931), in English, his own rendering of his Bengali poem, *Gitanjali* (1912) won him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 and the world-wide renown. After that, Tagore continued to "translate" several of his works into English, deviating considerably from the Bengali in the process.

Paranjape's minute scholarship helps him to reveal a fact little known to us. Quoting from Mary M. Lago's edition of the correspondence between Rothenstein and Tagore he shows how Tagore declined the offer of Robert Bridges to retranslate his poems making alterations in his English. Tagore told Rothenstein,

But since I have got my fame as an English writer I feel an extreme reluctance in accepting alterations in my English poems by any of your writers.

Paranjape underlines the fact that Tagore considered himself as "an English writer".

His selections from and remarks on the other older writers are by and large just and sound. One might perhaps prefer a few poems from Swami Vivekananda in the place of those from a writer like Puran Singh. But one has no right to expect an anthologist to conform to one's own personal tastes.

One does have the impression that Paranjape feels perfectly at home in modernist poetry. His special contribution to the section is his discovery that the true "father" of the modern mode is Shahid Suhrawardy (1890-1965) and *not* Nissim Ezekiel as many suppose. It is handsome of him to acknowledge that Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar was the only earlier critic to have taken notice of him. Dr. Iyengar's remarks about Suhrawardy with which Paranjape does not seem to agree give us the perspective to much of the modernist verse included in the volume:

Suhrawardy stirs the backyard gutter of urban vulgarity and pathos and pathetic futility, and imitates the modernist techniques of allusiveness, clowning and multilinguism and facetiousness to communicate his sense of nausea and disgust.

But one cannot expect a better anthology of Indian poetry in English than Paranjape's for its conscious endeavour at balance, discernment and judgment.

K B. SITARAMAYYA

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

Special Seventy-fifth Seminar

23 November 1993

HOW THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO HAVE HELPED ME IN MY LIFE

Speech by Shyamalee Kapoor

My friends, who have spoken before me and who will speak after, have chosen their subjects which are of an impersonal character, but I wish to speak in a personal vein, and so my subject is: HOW THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO HAVE HELPED ME IN MY LIFE

I thank Kishor Bhai for inviting me to speak on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the International Centre of Education. A Golden opportunity on this Golden Jubilee for us ex-students to express our gratitude today for all that the Centre of Education, the teachers, the system of education and the aim of the education have done for us. Behind all this is the Gracious Mother's guidance, from within as well as without.

I tell everybody in the outside world that I would not have learnt anything if I had not studied in this Centre of Education. Whatever I am today and whatever I become in the future, I owe every bit of my growth, personality, character, achievements to this Centre of Education which gives us the knowledge of the Spirit from where I gather all my strength to overcome all kinds of obstacles in life.

I would like to mention at this point that my education did not stop after leaving the Centre of Education, for it started once again with a new beginning outside my academic life, but very much in the light and guidance of The Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's teachings. The weight of the responsibility is in fact much more now.

I recollect what I felt when I was awarded the 'Best Student Award'. I said to myself, "Ah! I know why I have got this 'Best Student Award'; it is not so much because I have been the 'Best Student' but because I have to become the 'Best Student', for, as The Mother says, education does not stop with the school but has to continue all through life."

For me personally, it was as if the prize was given to me as an incentive to live up to it—to keep growing up as the 'Best Student', and I actually saw what a challenging task was before me because there aren't any short-cuts, no pretences

for becoming the 'Best Student' To be a genuine 'Best Student' it requires sincerity, hard work, patience, a healthy attitude and a readiness to progress from any kind of situation. All these qualities are the major contributions of the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother given to us through this Centre of Education. These teachings are very very precious because they apply to all spheres of life, anywhere, any time, and to effectively achieve our goal we also have the Grace of The Mother. One ardent prayer and She is there by our side helping us in our need.

- Some of us who have chosen a life outside Pondicherry—a life of office and home, household and children etc.—are constantly faced with difficulties big and small. We are under pressure and demand twenty-four hours a day, at home and at office; we need help and we know whom to approach for help. It is The Mother and Sri Aurobindo for us whose children we are. She is our Mother and only a mother keeps good track of her child's fears, difficulties and needs. She is the Helper, the Magnet of our difficult ascent. Yes! ascent! because, although some of us who have chosen a different sort of life—apparently ordinary—do not, however, want to live ordinarily and die ordinarily. Our aim is ever high and sublime. "Make of us the hero-warriors that we aspire to become." We are the hero-warriors, we can't afford to be less than heroes. We have to fight life's battles successfully and this is possible with Her Guidance and Grace. Needless to say, we are lucky that whenever we call Her, She comes to our rescue. Even when we do not call Her, she still gives us the right amount of help at the right time, as I said, She keeps good track of our needs.

Ever since I completed my studies here in 1978, 15 years ago, and gone out to make my life as an independent career woman, there have been several instances when only by remembering The Mother and praying to Her with one-pointed devotion that miracles took place;—difficulties melted away, new vistas opened up and I saw the new dawn after a dark and dangerous night. As if a new birth took place within my very existing being.

And I believe, that all of us here take birth many times in one lifetime Just as cowards die many times before their death, yogis take birth many times in one lifetime!

To keep Her Grace working, we have to work hard and remain sincere in keeping with The Mother's teachings we received here As the saying goes, God helps those who help themselves. Of course, in our case, our Mother's help is a miraculous push upward which is an ascent to yet another peak and thus with every push and help from Her, we ascend from peak to peak, growing in awareness and consciousness—consciousness, a word we so often and so casually pronounced in our student-life when we knew nothing of struggle and toil and the pain of life. It has become very clear to me why pain and difficulties are there in life, what role they have to play in our life. Only to help us to grow into conscious human beings. The entire growth is that—growth in consciousness and

finally from human consciousness into Divine consciousness.

I ask myself at times: why have I chosen a difficult challenging life of daily struggle? Immediately I see what this difficult life has done to me—it has brought me closer to The Mother. I am always facing problems and I am therefore always praying to Her for help, and now She has become indispensable because without Her help I find it impossible to survive.

I feel very very tempted now to narrate a small but significant incident that took place one day in the office where I work as an Executive Secretary to the Managing Director. My boss came to the office and asked me to get Paris on the phone. Now that day not a single phone was in working order. I told that to the Managing Director, but he angrily and sternly said “Je veux Paris”! (I want Paris!)

I immediately knew what I should be doing. I made one direct prayer to The Mother: “Mother, please come down here in this office right now and help me.” Would you believe what happened? I got the phone in working order and I got Paris on the line for my boss, who looked at me impressed! That day I checked from everyone if the phones were working but they all told me that not a single phone worked the whole day!

There is one more fascinating aspect of our education here which helps me to remain healthy and unaffected—it is attitude!

In my office I see my colleagues—good people, sober, educated and well-behaved but suffering from unhealthy attitudes, like, they want more pay, high position and are so obsessed with petty gains and losses that it hampers them from working efficiently in the office. To some of them I try to explain that if they work sincerely the rewards are bound to come, but unfortunately, they haven't got the healthy education I got from Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.