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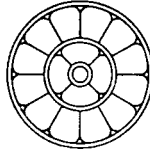
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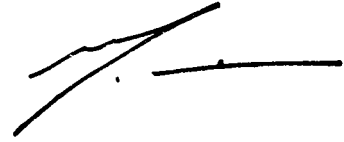
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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THE NEW CREATION AND HER COMING

THEN suddenly there came a downward look
As if a sea exploring its own depths;
A living Oneness widened at its core
And joined him to unnumbered multitudes.
A Bliss, a Light, a Power, a flame-white Love
Caught all into a sole immense embrace;
Existence found its truth on Oneness' breast
And each became the self and space of all.
The great world-rhythms were heart-beats of one Soul,
To feel was a flame-discovery of God ...
Then from the trance of that tremendous clasp
And from the throbbings of that single Heart
And from the naked Spirit's victory
A new and marvellous creation rose.
Incalculable outflowing infinitudes
Laughing out an unmeasured happiness
Lived their innumerable unity;
Worlds where the being is unbound and wide
Bodied unthinkably the egoless Self,
Rapture of beatific energies
Joined Time to the Timeless, poles of a single joy;
White vasts were seen where all is wrapped in all ...
A splendid centre of infinity's whirl
Pushed to its zenith's height, its last expanse,
Felt the divinity of its own self-bliss
Repeated in its numberless other selves ...
All Nature was a conscious front of God:
A wisdom worked in all, self-moved, self-sure,
A plenitude of illimitable Light,
An authenticity of intuitive Truth,
A glory and passion of creative Force.
Infallible, leaping from eternity,
The moment's thought inspired the passing act,
A word, a laughter sprang from Silence' breast,
A rhythm of Beauty in the calm of Space,
A Knowledge in the fathomless heart of Time.
All turned to all without reserve's recoil:
A single ecstasy without a break,
Love was a close and thrilled identity
In the throbbing heart of all that luminous life ...

In the centre of its vast and fateful trance
 In the passion of its solitary dream
 It lay like a closed soundless oratory
 Where sleeps a consecrated argente floor
 Lit by a single and untrembling ray
 And an invisible Presence kneels in prayer .
 This was the fiery point that called her now
 Extinction could not quench that lonely fire,
 Its seeing filled the blank of mind and will;
 Thought dead, its changeless force abode and grew.
 Armed with the intuition of a bliss
 To which some moved tranquility was the key,
 It persevered through life's huge emptiness
 Amid the blank denials of the world.
 It sent its voiceless prayer to the Unknown;
 It listened for the footsteps of its hopes
 Returning through the void immensities,
 It waited for the fiat of the Word
 That comes through the still self from the Supreme.¹

A NEW RACE ON THE VERGE OF MANIFESTATION

The Mother comes in order to bring down the Supramental and it is the descent which makes her full manifestation here possible.²

23 September 1935

Her embodiment is a chance for earth-consciousness to receive the Supramental into it and to undergo the first transformation necessary for that to be possible. Afterwards there will be a further transformation by the Supramental, but the whole earth-consciousness will not be supramentalised—there will be first a new race representing the Supermind, as man represents the mind.³

13 August 1933

SRI AUROBINDO

¹ *Savitri*, SABCL, Vol 28, pp 322-333

² ³ *The Mother*, SABCL, Vol 25, pp 48-49

THE GREATER TERM OF THE MANIFESTING SPIRIT

If a spiritual unfolding on earth is the hidden truth of our birth into Matter, if it is fundamentally an evolution of consciousness that has been taking place in Nature, then man as he is cannot be the last term of that evolution: he is too imperfect an expression of the Spirit, Mind itself a too limited form and instrumentation; Mind is only a middle term of consciousness, the mental being can only be a transitional being. If, then, man is incapable of exceeding mentality, he must be surpassed and Supermind and superman must manifest and take the lead of the creation. But if his mind is capable of opening to what exceeds it, then there is no reason why man himself should not arrive at Supermind and supermanhood or at least lend his mentality, life and body to an evolution of that greater term of the Spirit manifesting in Nature.¹

*

If there is an evolution in material Nature and if it is an evolution of being with consciousness and life as its two key-terms and powers, this fullness of being, fullness of consciousness, fullness of life must be the goal of development towards which we are tending and which will manifest at an early or later stage of our destiny. The Self, the Spirit, the Reality that is disclosing itself out of the first inconscience of life and matter, would evolve its complete truth of being and consciousness in that life and matter. It would return to itself, – or, if its end as an individual is to return into its Absolute, it could make that return also, – not through a frustration of life but through a spiritual completeness of itself in life. Our evolution in the Ignorance with its chequered joy and pain of self-discovery and world-discovery, its half-fulfilments, its constant finding and missing, is only our first state. It must lead inevitably towards an evolution in the Knowledge, self-finding and self-unfolding of the Spirit, a self-revelation of the Divinity in things in that true power of itself in Nature which is to us still a Supernature.²

SRI AUROBINDO

¹ *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol 19, pp 846-847

² *Ibid*, pp 1069-1070

SATYA MANTRA

THE TRUE THOUGHT EXPRESSED IN THE RHYTHM OF THE TRUTH

... it is especially the Word that the Angirasas possess; their seerhood is their most distinguishing characteristic. They are *brāhmaṇāsāḥ pitarah somyāsaḥ ...rtāvṛdhah* (VI.75.10), the fathers who are full of the Soma and have the word and are therefore increasers of the Truth. Indra in order to impel them on the path joins himself to the chanted expressions of their thought and gives fullness and force to the words of their soul, *angirasām ucathā juṣṣvān brahma tūtod gātam iṣnan* (II.20.5). It is when enriched in light and force of thought by the Angirasas that Indra completes his victorious journey and reaches the goal on the mountain, “In him our primal fathers, the seven seers, the Navagwas, increase their plenty, him victorious on his march and breaking through (to the goal), standing on the mountain, inviolate in speech, most luminous-forceful by his thinkings”, *naksaddābhaṁ taturim parvateṣṭhām, adroghavācam matibhiḥ śavistham* (VI.22.2). It is by singing the Rik, the hymn of illumination, that they find the solar illuminations in the cave of our being, *arcanto¹ gā avindan* (I.62.2). It is by the *stubbh*, the all-supporting rhythm of the hymn of the seven seers, by the vibrating voice of the Navagwas that Indra becomes full of the power of Swar, *svareṇa svaryah* and by the cry of the Dashagwas that he rends Vala in pieces (I.62.4). For this cry is the voice of the higher heaven, the thunder that cries in the lightning-flash of Indra, and the advance of the Angirasas on their path is the forward movement of this cry of the heavens, *pra brahmāṇo aṅgirasō naksanta, pra krandanur nabhanyasya vetu* (VII.42.1); for we are told that the voice of Brihaspati the Angirasa discovering the Sun and the Dawn and Cow and the light of the Word is the thunder of Heaven, *brhaspatir usasam sūryam gām arkam viveda stanayan iva dyauh* (X.67.5). It is by *satya* mantra, the true thought expressed in the rhythm of the truth, that the hidden light is found and the Dawn brought to birth, *gūlham jyotih pitaro anvavindan, satyamantrā ajanayan uṣāsam* (VII.76.4). For these are the Angirasas who speak aright, *utthā vadadbhiḥ aṅgirobhiḥ* (VI.18.5), masters of the Rik who place perfectly their thought, *svādhibhir ṛkvabhiḥ* (VI.32.2); they are the sons of heaven, heroes of the Mighty Lord who speak the truth and think the straightness and therefore they are able to hold the seat of illumined knowledge, to mentalise the supreme abode of the sacrifice, *ṛtam śamsanta ṛju dīdhyānā divasputrāso asurasya vīrāḥ; vipram padam angiraso dadhānā yajñasya dhāma prathamam mananta* (X.67.2).²

*

¹ *rc* (*arcantah*) in the Veda means to shine and to sing the Rik, *arka* means sun, light and the Vedic hymn

² *The Secret of the Veda*, SABCL, Vol 10, pp 177-78

Surya Savitri, who is Bhaga, stands between the Infinite and the created worlds within us and without. All things that have to be born in the creative consciousness he receives into the Vijnana; there he puts it into its right place in the divine rhythm by the knowledge that listens and receives the Word as it descends and so he looses it forth into the movement of things, *āśrāvayati ślokena pra ca suvāti*. When in us each creation of the active Ananda, the *prajāvat saubhagam*, comes thus out of the unmanifest, received and heard rightly of the knowledge in the faultless rhythm of things, then is our creation that of Bhaga Savitri, and all the births of that creation, our children, our offspring, *prajā, apatyam*, are things of the delight, *viśvā vāmāni*. This is the accomplishment of Bhaga in man, his full portion of the world-sacrifice.¹

*

...as we see that the finding and recovery of the Cows is usually described as the work of Indra, often with the aid of the Angirasa Rishis and by the instrumentality of the *mantra* and the sacrifice, of Agni and Soma, so also the finding and recovery of the sun is attributed to the same agencies. ...Surya is found by the Angiras as through the power of their hymns or true *mantras*.. The birth of the Sun and the Dawn must therefore be regarded as the... birth of the light out of the darkness by the true hymn, the *satya mantra*.²

*

As powers of Agni these [Angiras] Rishis are like him *kavikratu*; they possess the divine Light, they act by the divine force... they have the divine word and the inspired knowledge it carries with it. This divine word is the *satya mantra*, it is the thought by whose truth the Angirasas bring the Dawn to birth and make the lost Sun to rise in the heavens³

SRI AUROBINDO

¹ *Ibid* , p 293

² *Ibid* , pp 142, 143, 145

³ *Ibid* , pp 159-160

HE POSSESSES MORE POWER FOR ACTION*

THERE is a difference in the *power* for action. He himself possesses more action, more power for action, now than when in his body. Besides, it is for that that he left, because it was necessary to act in that way.

20 December, 1972

THE MOTHER

(CWM, Vol 11, p 329)

* The Mother apropos of Sri Aurobindo's leaving his body

DYUMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of November 1996)

Mother,

I do not understand this Yoga I know only this: To be one with the Mother and to live and work for her, this is all

Why are the Ashram inmates hankering after food? Why this big fuss over eating? Why are we breaking our heads due to vital desire, ego, pride, self-will, mental ideas and preferences? I do not follow all this and am unable to understand.

Mother, my heart was filled with such feelings; it was restless and unquiet again But now I am quiet and happy All these feelings have passed away.

THIS is very good. Indeed, if you want to do your work with a clear mind and discrimination, you must never get upset—whatever happens. This is a very important point.

26 January 1934

Mother,

Seeing the work of the Building Department at Aroumé, I found so many faulty repairs. [The disciple noted several defects in the carpentry, painting and masonry work] Mother, we spend plenty of money, but get a very bad result. We do some work, we find faults in it, we break it, we redo it and it comes out as something else. Labour, time, money and energy are wasted, yet we do not get what we require.

For all that, the change can come only from within, when the consciousness of each and everyone will be changed.

28 January 1934

Mother,

X, the new visitor, came for work today. She cut the vegetables, then did not even wait to clean the knife she used. At noon she is expected to stay up to the finishing of the cutting, that is, to put aside the peelings for the bullocks, to put away the knives, etc. in the cupboard and do other such works.

I think we cannot ask that from her in the beginning, at least. If she truly wants to do work she will ask you what to do and how to do it, and then things can be explained to her, leaving her the choice to do or not to do She is only a visitor and cannot be treated as the permanent members are

4 February 1934

Mother,

Newcomers staying in the Ashram houses come to the Dining Room for food. But what about people staying outside the Ashram, in hotels and private houses?

Is it not easier to let them eat in the Dining Room as food cannot be sent to the hotel? That is why I said that they could come to the Dining Room. But it may be better to give them food in the late-comers' room to prevent their mixing too much with the inmates and . . . their bad habits!

7 February 1934

Mother,

Often I get colds and fevers and am obliged to remain in bed for some time. During and after each illness my body becomes weak and faints.

How is it that I often have illnesses and my body becomes so weak? I feel that it is not as strong as it ought to be for your work. I had high hopes and expected much from the body, but it has failed.

Your body is all right, but you are not giving it enough rest and food. I will have to ask you to be more careful on these two points because I want to make it strong and healthy, but regular rest and nourishing food are indispensable for that. I would like to give you one orange for orange juice every day. The best time would be when you rise. For that, if you give me a flask, I could fill it in the evening and send it to you before you go to bed and you would take it in the morning when you wake up.

9 February 1934

Mother,

The cartman could not get a coolie to help him transport the kerosene. Not minding the load, he dragged the cart in Aroumé. While going up the slope at the gate, he was thrown back with the cart. I was there just in time to help. He gave me back the two annas I had given him for a coolie. Seeing the work he did, I gave one anna to him, as he deserved it. I would have paid two annas to a coolie

You could have given him the two annas.

10 February 1934

(To be continued)

THE CONQUEST OF DEATH

NIRODBARAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

Now that the whole show is over with the death of S, I don't know if any purpose will be served in discussing the matter further. Still I cannot but ask some questions. The haemorrhage caused by the fall must have been on the surface.

How is that? One of the tests indicated that the injury was deep down, we were told.

I am upset but perhaps you are slightly upset too and it would be unwise to upset you further by my questions.

No, I am not in the least "upset". I did not expect S to be immortal nor did he expect it himself. In fact the Mother expected him to die before this and it was only his return to the Asram that gave him enough vitality to last longer.

I firmly believed that death was impossible here. Since it has been possible, it means that hostile forces have become victorious.

There have been three deaths since the Asram began—one of a child in a house that was not then part of the Asram and the other of a visitor. This is the first death of an Asramite in the Asram itself.

You said, I hear, that you have conquered Death, not only personally, but for others as well.

I am unaware of having made any such statement. To whom did I make it? I have not said even that personally I have conquered it. All these are the usual Asram legends.

The conquest of Death would mean the conquest of illness and of the psychological and functional necessity of death of the body—that is one of the ideals of the Yoga, but it can be accomplished only if and when the supramental has driven its roots into Matter. All that has been acting here up to now is an Overmind force which is getting gradually supramentalised in parts—the utmost that it can do in this respect is to keep death at a distance and that is what has been done. The absence of death in the Asram for so many years has been due to that. But it is not impossible—especially when death is accepted. In S's case there was a 5 percent chance of his survival on certain conditions, but he himself knew the difficulty in his case and had prepared himself for his departure from the body.

March 25, 1935

It was Y who said to K the other day that Mother told them in an interview that you and Mother have conquered Death, that S needn't die and that even if such a possibility came, if they called you fervently Death would recede.

What the Mother said was that there was no *necessity* that S should die—of the possibility both S and Y knew—and if death came, yet if they could call in the force it would have to recede. This was a statement of the principle and it is a thing that has happened to many. It was not an affirmation that S would certainly live. The sadhaks have a habit of turning spiritual truths into crude downright statements of a miraculous kind which lead to many misunderstandings.

About yourself there is already a strong conviction “based on fact” that you have made yourself immortal.

On what fact?

In one of your talks in the early days you seem to have acclaimed yourself as immortal except under 3 conditions—accident, poison and Ichchha Mrityu¹

It must have been a joke taken as a self-acclamation. Or perhaps what I said was that I have the power to overcome illness, but accident and poison and the I.M. still remain as possible means of death. Of course, the Mother and myself have hundreds of times thrown back the forces of illness and death by a slight concentration of force or even a use of will merely.

And just lately I came to know that the first two also have been conquered and the last, Ichchha Mrityu, depends on your Ichchha.

Great heavens, when?

Another conviction which all of us shared is that you could never have any illness, but your “eye”, due to whatever cause, has shattered it

It is long since I have had anything but slight fragments of illness (e.g. sneezes, occasional twitches of rheumatism or neuralgia: but the last is mostly now outside the body and does not penetrate)—with the exception of the eye and the throat (only one kind of cough though, the others can't come) which are still vulnerable points. Ah yes, there is also prickly heat, but that has diminished to almost nothing these last years. There is sometimes an attempt at headache, but it remains above the head, tries to get in and then recedes. Giddiness also the

¹ Death by an act of will

same. I don't just now remember anything else. These are the facts about "having no illness". As for the conclusion, well, you can make a medical one or a Yogic one according to your state of knowledge

You have written that with the growth of the inward consciousness, one can feel the forces of illness coming and if one knows how to stop them one can do so. Then surely you can see what is coming, why don't you prevent it? How does this theory coincide with what you have written, namely that illness can be conquered only by the supramental rooting itself firmly?

Always the same rigid mind that turns everything into a statement of miraculous absoluteness! It is my experience and the Mother's that all illnesses pass through the subtle consciousness and subtle body before they enter the physical. If one is conscious, one *can* stop it entering the physical, one can develop the power to do so. We have done that millions of times. But that does not mean that every time we will do so. It may come without one's noticing or when one is asleep or through the subconscious or in a sudden rush when one is off one's guard etc., etc. Let us suppose however that I am always on guard, always conscious, even in sleep—that does not mean that I am immunised in my very nature from all illness. It only means a power of self-defence against it when it tries to come. Self-defence may become so strong that the body becomes practically immune as many Yogis are. Still the "practically" does not mean "absolutely" for all time. The absoluteness can only come with the supramental change. For below the supramental it is an action of a Force among many forces—in the supramental it becomes a law of the nature.

Can the supramental really make immortal a tottering old man, with all his anatomy and physiology pathological?

Well, don't you know that old men sometimes get a new or third set of teeth in their old age? And if monkey glands can renew functionings and forces and even make hair grow on a bald head, as Voronoff has proved by living examples,—well? And mark that Science is only at the beginning of these experiments. If these possibilities are opening before Science, why should one declare their absolute impossibility by other means?

In Yogic Sadhan¹ I find that by Yoga every cell in the body can be changed in structure and function; but to expect that in a grand old man—well, isn't it too much even for the Yogic Force?

¹ A small book written by Sri Aurobindo in an 'automatic manner' in 1911. He did not want it to be included among his works

Now that the omnipotence of this Force is being questioned, will you kindly write that promised letter “by means of examples” on what Yogic Force can do?

There is a difference between Yogic Force on the mental and inferior planes and the Supramental Nature. What is acquired and held by the Yoga-Force in the mind-and-body consciousness is in the supramental inherent and exists not by achievement but by nature—it is self-existent and absolute.¹

Not now. I am too busy trying to get things done to spend time in getting them written.

Excuse my returning to the question of S’s death. I would infer from your letter that sufficient force was not called in, so he died.

How could he himself call in or receive and assimilate the force in his body when that body was in fits or unconscious?

From whatever you have said in joke or in earnest, it logically follows that you are immortal. Because if you say that the Supramental can alone conquer death, one who has become that is evidently and consequently immortal. So if one is immortal or has conquered death, no poison or accident can affect him.

Your syllogism is:

“One who became supramental, can conquer death.

Sri Aurobindo has become supramental.

Sri Aurobindo has conquered death.”

1st premiss right; second premiss premature, conclusion at least premature and in any case excessive, for “can conquer” is turned into “has conquered”—is immortal. It is not easy, my dear doctor, to be a logician; the human reasoning animal is always making slight inaccuracies like that in his syllogisms which vitiate the whole reasoning. This might be correct:

“One who becomes wholly supramental conquers death.

Sri Aurobindo is becoming supramental

Sri Aurobindo is conquering death.”

But between “is conquering” and “has conquered” is a big difference. It is all the difference between present and future, logical possibility and logical certitude

¹ The text of this paragraph is reproduced from the 1st Edition (1969) of *Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo*. The original version of the paragraph is given below. The changes were probably made by Sri Aurobindo, but no written record of his revision remains

There is a difference between Yogic Force and Supramental Nature. What is acquired and held by Force in the one, becomes inherent in the supramental and exists by nature—it becomes self-existent and absolute

I hope I haven't made a rigid mental conclusion.

The premiss is false. I have never said that I am supramental—I have always said that I have achieved the overmind and am bringing down the supramental. That is a process and until the process is complete it cannot be said that “I am supramental”. Of course when I say “I”—I mean the instrument—not the Consciousness above or the Person behind which contain all things in them.

Because you are still subject to eye and throat trouble, would it mean that you haven't yourself conquered death? If that be so am I to accept that the Supramental hasn't driven its roots into you?

See above for the answer

Besides, I said “has driven its roots into Matter”. Am I “Matter”?

Though you say that Death is possible because illness hasn't been conquered, I take it as a principle. Amal and myself firmly believe that those whom you have accepted, are absolutely immune to death.

[*Sri Aurobindo underlined twice “accepted”*] Too comfortable a doctrine. It brings in a very tamasic syllogism. “I am accepted by Sri Aurobindo. I am sure of supramentality and immune from death. Therefore I need not do a damned thing. Supramentality will of itself grow in me and I am already immortal, so I have all time and eternity before me for it to happen—of itself”. Like that, does it sound true?

What does supramentalisation mean exactly? We know by your own statement that you have achieved that. Is it then supramentalisation in parts? You want transformation of everything—mental to physical?

Achieved what? What statement? What are these wild assertions? I spoke of an overmind Force which is getting supramentalised in parts.

Does it mean that some parts of your being are supramental and this physical is not yet supramentalised?

Overmind in process of supramentalisation—not supramental.

How can it be possible—realisation in parts, in your case?

Why not? Always the idea that there must be an instantaneous absolute miracle or else nothing! What about process in things? You are ignorant of all that is

between supreme Spirit and matter, it seems You know nothing of the occult processes of mind, life and all the rest—so you can think only of miraculous divinity or else law of matter as known to Science. But for supramental Spirit to work itself out in matter it must go through a process of transforming the immediate mental, vital and other connections, must it not—so why should not the process be in parts? Immortality also can come by parts. First the mental being becomes immortal (not shed and dissolved after death), then the vital, while the physical comes only last. That is a possible evolution, recognised by occult science.

March 27. 1935

My logic again, Sir Sri Aurobindo is bound to become wholly supramental and is being supramentalised in parts. If that is true—and it is—well, he can't die till he is supramental—and once he is so, he is immortal.

It looks very much like a non-sequitur. The first part and the last are all right—but the link is fragile How do you know I won't take a fancy to die in between as a joke?

Now, if that is accepted, then those whom you know for certain as would-be supramentals and have been accepted as such, are immortal—follows as a corollary.

Again the fallacy comes in in the “would-be” A “supramental” may be immortal, but why should a W S.¹ be immortal?

It may be a “comfortable doctrine” but that's my philosophy of sadhana. What is the good of the Avatar if we do everything by ourselves? We have come to you and taken shelter at your feet so that you may, as the Gita says, deliver us from all sins

But what if the Avatar gets frightened at the prospect of all this hard labour and rushes back scared behind the veil?

After all what's the use of so much austere sadhana? The supramental is bound to come down and we shall lie flat at the gate and he can't pass us by

[*Underlining “he can't pass us by”.*] Why not? Why can't he float easily over you and leave you lying down or send for the supramental police to chivy you out

¹ Would-be supramental

and make you pass through a hard examination in an Epicurean austerity before you are allowed inside?

This is not really a joke. You may beat me for my semi-Epicurean attitude, but I do believe that those who can stick to the last from Anilbaran to N, will have the supramentalisation.

N also!!! Great illogical heavens! Obviously if N becomes a supramental, everybody can! No doubt about that logic.

You may say that it will be delayed in its descent by our passivistic attitude, as some people say that yourself and the Mother would have been supramentalised long ago if only we had not kept you down. Is it really true?

I can't say there is no truth in it, but it is not the passivistic attitude that stood in the way. However, "ifs" come to nothing so far as the past is concerned, since the past having been had to be—"Ifs" are only of value for the future.

By the way, none of those perverse "fancies" please [vide 30.3 35]. If at all you think of going, let us know beforehand so that we may disappear before you!

Where would be the fun if I told you beforehand? However, I have no bad intentions for the moment.

March 31, 1935

(Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo, pp 188-200)

You are the vast cerulean lake
 And I a lily whose happiness
 Is but to blossom, to love awake
 And snuggle in your deep caress

The final choice amid the alternatives I leave to the lover in the poet in you. Whatever rings more true to the ear ever alert to catch the voice of your heart's companion has to be the judge.

Side by side with writing a poem like this, how can you say: "I still do not know what it means to love. Will you tell me?" Then with a sweet naiveté you add: "I only know what not to do when you love—not to expect, not be possessive and not to wish the beloved to behave or do as you want but let him be himself." What you have stated is the true soul-touch in the play of the emotions stirred in one by another human being. Without such a light mingling with the heart's heat there can be no genuine love. Not just to desire the beloved to be merged in one's own heart and be held there, oneself excluding everybody else and the beloved excluding all except oneself, not simply this mutual possessiveness but an unconditional self-giving, at once intense and tender, crying for nothing save the ecstasy of losing one's separate entity in the sense of something vaster and more precious, in the vision of a supernal mystery shining out from the inmost being of a fellow-human. Such is genuine love and it shades off almost into mysticism and may be even compatible with the *via mystica*. The mystical life demands, sooner or later, an exclusive concentration on the Divine. But I have seen the Mother accepting, along with extreme love for her by a person, this person's devotion to a mere man because that devotion partook, in a perceptible measure, of the extremism with which devotion was lavished on the Mother. I have spoken of "measure" because what was gloriously given to the mere man was still a sun with a number of marked spots. The deep peace which goes with the psyche's self-abandon was not fully present. Such peace is bound to be a rarity: some need for special treatment by the loved one can hardly be outgrown. But if a degree of psychic love is achieved, a penetration into the nature of true love is made and a spark of divinity even in mortal relationships is caught—

The worship the heart lifts above
 And the Heavens reject not

I think you are prone to underrate yourself. You say you are not a very nice person and wonder why anybody should ever be fond of you. You surmise that the person who has a great deal of fondness for you doesn't know your selfishness and that when you are better known for the poverty of love in your nature you will cease to be loved by that person. Then suddenly you add. "and that day will be my last here on earth." What a paradox you are! Do you realise

that those concluding words are moving beyond words? One feels dazed by the excess of self-giving emotion you are capable of—the profound passion with which your heart can throw itself out of its own ken and the exceeding value it can set on the object of its adoration. What an outstandingly as well as endearingly queer bird you are!

Now to less grand topics. You need not feel it is a big problem to be unable to enjoy yourself the way your friends do—“get-together parties and things like that”—or slip easily into “small talk”. Obviously you are, as you say, ‘discontented’ and you are right in trying not to be “depressed”. I don’t advise too much seclusion. Books, no doubt, are fine companions, but some touch of common things is healthy and necessary in the conditions under which you live at present. To be cut off from people calls for great inner resources if one is not to become morbid. A bit of frivolity which is not lost in a swarm of triviality can be accepted:

A little nonsense now and then
Is relished by the wisest men.

*

I was glad to see your two snaps. One is a witness to sheer happiness, the other has an attractive touch of snappiness by its sidelong look and its smiling mouth pulled up a little at the left corner as if in slight mockery which is yet good-natured. The picture of sheer joy seems to be the true quintessential YOU—the “blithe spirit” prototyping Shelley’s Skylark whom the poet hails and addresses:

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar and soaring ever singest.

What intrigues me in the photos is the posture of the two hands, with the forefinger slightly curved in either. It is as if you are gently calling somebody. The right palm gives a good opportunity to a palmist to study your life-line. You are in for a century if palmistry holds water. I myself am within sight of that mark but most people collapse in the final decade. But at least up to 1998 I must live. For, the very first long letter Sri Aurobindo wrote to me in February 1928 is distinctly dated 1998 instead of 1928!

You seem to be in a fluctuant state. not knowing exactly what shape your being and your activity will take as the days go by. Even your professional interests appear to be in a transitional condition. From economics to medicine is quite a leap. Do you intend to go in for a doctor’s degree? The one thing which

remains constant is your turn towards Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Here the person you call “Renu aunty”, seems to come prominently into the picture. I know her very well—and by “very well” I mean that I feel in touch with her very soul. There was a phase just before she married, when she might have fitted most appropriately into the life of the Ashram. And even now there is hidden in her a born Ashramite. How such a person could yet linger so long outside is one of the puzzles with which the Divine faces us. I am sure the “puzzle” has a definite point. There must be some deep division between the inner being and the outer. Not a division in the sense of anything being positively low or unspiritual in the outer but a need somewhere to handle the changing stuff of life as commonly lived and see how far it can be infused with the soul’s light. In tackling such a job she can be Sri Aurobindo’s medium for drawing several seeking psyches in the right direction.

You are at a stage when a varied unfolding of your inner self is taking place. The upsurging love of Nature is a breaking forth of the Cosmic Spirit in you and the desire to paint or to create music and to respond to poetry is the sign of a deepening of your personality and a breakthrough beyond the aches and throes and anxieties of the merely human. I am most glad to find that this breakthrough opens you more and more to those most splendid of secrets—the faces of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

(2 12 1994)

*

I have not put any reverential tail to your name. In consonance with our evolution past the ape-stage and our consequent loss of a physical tail we should fight shy of attaching any appendage to our names. Perhaps we should go in for it only if about somebody we can say: “He (or she) has stood out in this or that field. And thereby hangs a tale.”

My memory of our meeting is as pleasant as yours. Your phrase about yourself—“an ordinary soul like me”—is a mistake. No “soul” is ordinary. every soul is charged with a divine destiny special to itself and has something of a fabulous future to manifest. It has only to seek out the right touch of Light in order to develop its beautiful possibilities. I know of no better touch than the eyes of Sri Aurobindo falling on one and the smile of the Mother seeking one out. These two actions spontaneously take place when we approach them with love in our hearts. There need not be any physical enactment of the meeting.

I have before me at the moment your wife’s letter of 28th March along with yours of 10th May. As far as my memory goes, I have replied to her according to my limited capacity in such matters as she had broached. It will be a pleasure to meet her the next time you make your pilgrimage to Pondy. It was very sweet of her to send me that fine bedspread.

Your niece Gitanjali has been a friend of mine ever since she took it into her

dainty head to visit me in the Ashram Nursing Home when I had suffered a fall and broken a bone. The only glory attached to this accident was that I broke the very bone Sri Aurobindo had fractured in 1938: the right femur. The aftermath of the glory has not been very pleasant. I have become a permanent wheelchairian—I who in spite of one game leg used to do furious horse-riding and dynamic cycling cannot now even walk except with a “walker” and that too with the right leg almost dangling.

Enough of the story of my negative feats with my feet. I hope you and your wife are doing well—and already planning a joint trip to the Ashram in the near future
(6 6 1995)

AMAL KIRAN
(K D SETHNA)

THE PATH

At last I know, at last I understand
That I know nothing and can do nothing;
My pride has vanished with all visions grand,
My life is but a path that longs to sing
 To music of your journeying steps, O Mother.
 Thou must travel on this path, I cannot tread;
 The path becomes the ground for my mystic war,—
 How can your son bring triumph of the Godhead
On mortal mind, unless you make this happen?
Destroyer of all evil, O Goddess, Thou
This traveller son of Thine hast kindly taken
And set him on Thy path perfect and true.

My heart's blood thrills to your incantation
And Kali's dance brings evil's abolition.

NISHIKANTO

(Translated from the original in Bengali, page 17 of Vaijayanti, by Ratri Ray)

RECOLLECTIONS OF SUDHIR KUMAR SARKAR

HIS EARLY ASSOCIATIONS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of November 1996)

[Sudhir Kumar Sarkar as a young revolutionary had come in close contact with Sri Aurobindo during the Nationalist Movement started by him in 1905. Sudhir lived with Sri Aurobindo almost for a year like a family member and later, in 1908-1909, looked after him when they were in Alipore Jail as undertrial prisoners. These recollections, originally recounted in Bengali by Sudhir, are from A Spirit Indomitable edited by Mona Sarkar.]

Nothing ever Perturbed Him

OUR bomb factory was located in a garden-house belonging to K D Ghose in Manicktala. In those days cheap pistols could be bought from Chandannagore. The armoury of the bomb factory was kept in a small underground room beneath the garden. No one was staying in the garden at that time except Sachin Sen and Bijoy Nag. Our leaders had gone to the Vindhya Hills to arrange for the opening of Bhavani Mandir—a temple to Mother Bhavani—and were busy there. A police inspector frequently visited the garden to cultivate holy men's company—*Sadhusanga*! We regarded him as a spy, but later he was sacked from service because of this very association with us. At last the visits of the alleged spy were reported to Sri Aurobindo, hearing of them, he said, "Tell him, please do not come here. The police cannot enter someone else's garden without a proper warrant." I was taken aback at this instruction. I thought, "Was it for this reply that I approached him?" Anyhow, I acted on my own counsel. I got four or five carts, filled them with all the armoury and transferred the lot to a friend's house. After finishing the whole operation, I came back and reported to Sri Aurobindo what had been done. He listened quietly and at the end said only this, "All right!" I did not find the least trace of anxiety or worry on his face.

His Kindness and Nobility

I got malarial fever from my frequent visits to Chandannagore. Sri Aurobindo took me with him to his maternal grandfather's house in Bairdyanath (Deoghar) along with his wife, sister and a cook. A large thick cotton carpet was spread on the floor and we all slept on it. Sri Aurobindo used to type on long foolscap paper his rendering of the Mahabharata in verse form. Dr. Prankrishna Acharya treated me. One day I had an acute attack of fever. I shivered very much and felt thirsty and nauseous. The typed sheets lay nearby and I vomited on them. Sri Aurobindo's serene face did not betray any sign of dismay at what had

happened, nor did he come hurrying to save his manuscripts. Slowly he rose and was about to clean up the mess. I felt mortified beyond description. My soul melted in gratitude and at the same time I felt terribly embarrassed. Never had I experienced such love and kindness. At least, I expected to hear some kind of exclamation such as "Oh! now he has spoiled everything!" But no, nothing came out of him. Nothing perturbed his serene face, not a line moved on it. Previously I had been roundly rebuked by others on so many occasions for unintended mischief. But all the while I was with Sri Aurobindo, for more than a year, I never heard from him, even on a single occasion, so much as a "Don't!" Not even an order or admonition. If I went beyond the limit, Sri Aurobindo would just keep silent, but it was not that gravity of silent disapproval, he just remained unmindful, as if he had not heard what I was saying, being immersed in some other thought. Even that unmindfulness was not due to any indifference or neglect, he always found out if I persisted in some sort of mischief, but he always remained outwardly the same as ever. Now as I reflect upon it, I seem to see the truth of it. A high and noble mind develops a large outlook and vision, while a small mind, seeing defects everywhere, becomes blinded by them.

His Infinite Compassion

One day I was about to go for target practice, and took a shotgun with me. Nearby in a small hut with mud walls and a thatched roof lived Sri Aurobindo's maternal uncle. He always kept his doors and windows shut and sat on a thick pile of old newspapers. He persisted in this eccentricity and lived in silence and seclusion, never coming out of his room. I resolved to have a look at him. I gathered information about him from Didi, Sri Aurobindo's sister, and learnt that he was very much scared of the sound of a gun. So on this day I crept under his window and fired the gun. A terrible howl came from inside the room as if I had fired right at him. A pitiable groan was heard. I became very perplexed and also anxious. I would have been truly happy to escape, so ashamed did I feel. I saw his mother approach. Then a face pale as a candle with a thin overgrowth of black beard appeared at the window. Before granny could ask anything I blurted out, "I never thought it would turn out like this!" She seemed to grasp the situation and was relieved. She went towards her son with some words of comfort, such as, "Oh, what has happened!" In no time I saw Sri Aurobindo, his wife and sister coming. I grew thoroughly frightened and mortified at this development. I ran away as fast as I could to the farthest corner of a wrestling ground belonging to another uncle. To him I unburdened the gist of the event. But this uncle, being a wrestler and a daredevil, paid little attention to what I said and started on some topic of his own which had nothing to do with it. Gradually it became midday and as I failed to appear for lunch, Didi came out in search of me. Standing in that wrestling ground, I tried to explain what had

happened and exonerate myself of the crime. But the more I persisted, the more Didi turned that talk to other topics and kept on saying, "It's getting late, Sejda (Sri Aurobindo) is waiting for you for lunch." I entered the house feeling like a thief apprehended. I decided I would admit my mischief at the first opportunity. But I failed to detect any sign of disapproval or concern on anyone's face. I felt as if my eyes, my face, my whole body were bending low towards the floor in shame. How a boy like me with such an insubordinate and misbehaving nature could be disciplined was perhaps known only to him. I felt as if I were dead. On my sorry plight Sri Aurobindo threw a single glance and said nothing.

In this way I indulged in one mischief after another and received inner blows. This made me reflect: "Such a man, he is really like a god! I will never, never hide anything from him or tell a lie to him. To disturb such a godlike being is the worst of sins!" His never saying anything, never reproaching me, only looking on as if he neither approved of my wrong-doing nor ignored it, as if he never gave any place to them in his thought, this silence tormented me and filled me with indescribable anguish. I longed above all for him to say something. I even went so far as to speak to him of my weaknesses. He only said: "Human beings are weak. It is not good to make them still more weak by dwelling on their weaknesses. Rather one should think only of that which gives strength to the mind."

His "Anger"?

Now let me narrate Sri Aurobindo's "anger", of which I learnt during my long stay with him.

One day Didi had asked our cook to make some hot water for her. The cook, being disturbed during his cooking, replied with some irritation and annoyance. When we all sat down for lunch, Didi complained against the cook. Sri Aurobindo listened attentively. But when the cook came to serve us two times, three times and Didi saw that her Sejda did not say so much as a word to him, she could not contain herself. She exclaimed "If you don't say anything to the cook, he will become more and more insolent!" Sri Aurobindo looked surprised, as if he had not grasped the thing before and only when Didi alerted him could he understand its seriousness! When the cook appeared again, Sejda said, in an even tone, "You don't listen to Didi? Cook, this is very bad! Do you understand? You must never do it again,—Never!" After he had repeated this verbal disapprobation a few times, the cook started to justify his own case in his native tongue. "Didi had ordered hot water while I was frying fish—how could I manage both? So I had objected to her, but later I made the hot water, etc." . And so the matter ended.

His Tenderness and Consideration

After the Pujas, having spent a month in Baidyanath, we returned to Calcutta

My parents had become anxious, not receiving any news of my whereabouts and had sent my elder brother to enquire at the Yugantar office and take me back home. I mentioned all of this to Sri Aurobindo. He gave me some money and asked me to go home to Khulna. I asked him the reason—for I thought he had had enough of me and wanted to get rid of me. But he gave me those instructions:

“Visit your mother once every week. When you go away, inform her the first time about your departure. The next time you go, tell her two or three days before your departure, then leave without any further message.

“On subsequent visits, go to your house after a fortnight, stay for two or three days, then leave the house, letting someone else inform your mother about your departure. When you go the next time, don't put up at your own house, stay in someone else's house, but visit your family. When you leave, don't inform them at all. In this way, after you have paid visits to your home five or six times, your absence will be taken as natural, and there will be no anxiety.” Such a tender-hearted and considerate person Sri Aurobindo was and at the same time the main figure in a secret revolutionary conspiracy!

(To be continued)

A POEM AND A FLOWER

A POEM is fluttering its wings
 On the colourful petals of a flower,
 Its rustling sound to shower
 On my lonely wonderings.

And a dew-washed bud is a-bloom
 In a poem's smiling stream
 Waiting to pour its fragrant dream
 In my broken heart's small room.

At last the poem and the flower
 Stand in each other's sight
 To set ablaze this earthly lamp
 At the gate of the dark stormy night

SURYAKANTI MOHANTY

ANTI-RELATIONAL ARGUMENT AND MONISM

DURING the first and second decades of the present century there was an interesting debate among Realists and Idealists of the West concerning the status and metaphysical outcome of relations. F H Bradley (1846-1924) in his well-known work, *Appearance and Reality*, argued with vehemence in favour of internal relations, but he held the view that from the ultimate standpoint such relations cannot be attributed to Reality or the Absolute which is perfect, immobile, immutable, transcendent and impersonal. Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) writes in his *Autobiography* that at one stage he was very much influenced by Bradley but he could not reconcile himself to the unreality of relations as he was a mathematician and interested very much in proving the reality of the existing world. He contributed to the development of Symbolic Logic and especially to that of relations which he regarded as real and independent.

In the third chapter of his work, Bradley argues that when two terms or qualities are related by either A or B or R, then relation itself becomes a third term or quality and this kind of relationship creates at this stage a problem of another relation which continues indefinitely. Relation cannot relate relation but qualities and therefore it is itself converted into a new quality. This, Bradley argues, takes us to indefinite regress and therefore the entire process of relating qualities is faulty as well as contradictory. He argues that whenever there are distinctions and differences there are relations to relate them. In the field of consciousness even when we abstract from the relations of identity and difference, they are never independent. One is together with, and related to, another—in fact always to more than one. Relation cannot be made absolute and when it is made so by mistake it is self-discrepant. Consider that the qualities A and B are to be different from each other; and if so, that difference must fall somewhere. If it falls, in any degree or to any extent, outside A or B, we have relation at once. But on the other hand, how can difference and otherness fall inside? If we have in A any such otherness, then inside A we must distinguish its own quality and its otherness. If so then the unsolved problem breaks out inside each quality, and separates each into two qualities in relation. There is no diversity without relation. If there are no differences, there are no qualities. Again if there is any difference, then that implies a relation.

Bradley thinks that external as well as internal relations create a metaphysical problem and they are contradictory and unintelligible. To think is to relate but again to relate is to have more relations and such a network cannot be applied to the Absolute which is pure and immutable. Relations must depend upon terms and, in turn, terms depend upon relations. Either the problem is found outside the terms or it is found inside the terms. Both ways it is insoluble and diversity is fatal to the internal unity of each. It demands a new relation and so on without limit.

G W Leibnitz (1646-1716) took up, in the history of philosophy, the position of denial of relations among qualities and arrived at the view of 'Monads' which are independent and self-subsistent. In the philosophical system of Leibnitz such an independence of monads was ultimately found to be untenable as he could not explain 'activity' in case of soul and God. He had to resort to 'Pre-established harmony' in order to explain relation among monads and their internal activity. On the other hand, Hume (1711-1776) and Russell accepted the reality of relations but in doing so they did not adequately explain the relationship between world and ultimate reality. The purport of this exposition is to show that such an anti-relational argument lands in abstract monism, sacrificing the dynamic, personal and manifesting character of the Absolute.

The relational character of things and the world at large makes 'Appearance' and hence it is less than real. Is relation therefore 'illusory'? Bradley of course considers it as part of the Absolute or Reality. He makes a distinction between appearance and illusion. Relation although a contradiction in itself is an intrinsic portion of the Absolute. He holds that 'somehow' such a contradictory relation is transmuted into the Absolute and becomes its part. I have said that such a view of relation lands in abstract monism because, although abstract monism contends that the Absolute is everywhere, it is devoid of personal relationship and dynamism to manifest in the diversity of phenomena. Śaṅkarāchārya in his *Śārīraka Bhāṣya*, while criticising Vaisheshika Categories, undertakes to reject *samavāya* in Vaisheshika. Vaisheshika thinkers make a distinction between *samyoga* which is external relation and *samavāya* which is internal relation. Śaṅkara, while arguing against *samavāya*-relationship, holds that an internal relation such as that between cotton and cloth, ground-nut and oil creates further relation in order to build up proper relationship between two terms and as a result it ends in an 'Indefinite regress' (*anavasthā*). Therefore the *samavāya* category is illegitimate and invalid. Spinoza, while arguing for one substance against the view of Descartes who held that there are three ultimate substances, said that in order to relate these substances one would require a fourth substance and then it would carry the relationship to further substances. Therefore, there should be one substance alone and that would be really 'Self-existence'.

The Integral Monism of Sri Aurobindo which is propounded in his *magnum opus*, *The Life Divine*, lays down the truth of the double poise of the Absolute as static and dynamic, personal and impersonal, mutable and immutable, transcendent and immanent, and maintains that both the poises are true of Reality simultaneously. He writes, "The pure existent is then a fact and no mere concept; it is the fundamental reality. But, let us hasten to add, the movement, the energy, the becoming are also a fact, also a reality. We have therefore two fundamental facts of pure existence and of world-existence, a fact of Being, a fact of Becoming. To deny one or the other is easy; to recognise the facts of

consciousness and find out their relation is the true and fruitful wisdom. . . The Absolute is beyond stability and movement as it is beyond unity and multiplicity. But it takes its eternal poise in the one and the stable and whirls round itself infinitely, inconceivably, securely in the moving and multitudinous. . . But as we cannot describe or think out the Absolute in itself, beyond stability and movement, beyond unity and multitude,—nor is that at all our business,—we must accept the double fact, admit both Shiva and Kali and seek to know what is this measureless Movement in Time and Space with regard to that timeless and spaceless pure Existence...to which measure and measurelessness are inapplicable.”¹ Since the Absolute is Omnipotent and pure Affirmation, it is capable of holding two poises of staticity and dynamicity, personality and impersonality together. It is also capable of relating itself with the multiple phenomena of the world without leading to an indefinite regress

The facts of love, mutual relation, devotion, dispassionate action, sacrifice, altruistic service and perfect consecration point out the possibility of real relationship among things, phenomena and human beings. Concrete monism takes into account the data of bilateral relationship existing among personalities and souls. Sri Aurobindo’s integral monism reconciles God and the Absolute, human and divine love, finite and infinite, mutable and immutable, cosmic world and supra-cosmic existence. If the Absolute ‘exists’ and the Absolute alone exists then whatever exists must be in the purview of the Absolute. It is the ‘Anti-relational’ argument which distinguishes between God as practical reality, highest appearance, and supra-relational Absolute owing to its logic of understanding and Reason which holds that relationship leads to indefinite regress and hence cannot be applied to the Absolute without ‘supplementation’ Such an abstract monism is required to be replaced by a concrete and integral monism which is comprehensive and takes into its compass different types of relations, real as well as ideal and manifests as divine and veritable.

Bradley at the end of the chapter says: “The conclusion to which I am brought is that a relational way of thought—anyone that moves by the machinery of terms and relations—must give appearance, and not truth.”² An appearance is that which is contradictory and self-discrepant. However, it is to be observed that contradiction is not so flat and evident on the surface. It is the inward discrepancy and contradiction which spoils the external datum of relationship among multiple phenomena. It is the ego which is contradictory and distorts the standpoint and relation of things. Sri Aurobindo observes: “It follows that in this surface or desire-soul there is no true soul-life, but a psychic deformation and wrong reception of the touch of things. The malady of the world is that the individual cannot find his real soul, and the root cause of this malady is again that he cannot meet in his embrace of things outward the real soul of the world in which he lives. He seeks to find there the essence of being, the essence of power, the essence of conscious-existence, the essence of delight, but receives instead a

crowd of contradictory touches and impressions. If he could find that essence, he would find also the one universal being, power, conscious existence and delight even in this throng of touches and impressions, the contradictions of what seems would be reconciled in the unity and harmony of the Truth that reaches out to us in these contacts. At the same time he would find his own true soul and through it his self, because the true soul is his self's delegate and his self and the self of the world are one. But this he cannot do because of the egoistic ignorance in the mind of thought, the heart of emotion, the sense which responds to the touch of things.. ”³ If things are self-explaining to the real self which is indeed the psychic being, dynamic and living within the recesses of our being, then the relation which binds is also self-explaining and does not lead mind and intellect to a network of falsehood

It is owing to our dismal failure to find the true relationship among things and human love that relationship itself is held to be false, illusory and contradictory. As a result the Divine and the Perfect Whole are themselves said to be an impersonal and abstract Absolute. In case of such an abstract Absolute which is supra-relational the facts of ignorance and evil are formidable hurdles. If Perfect and Imperfect, Finite and Infinite, Divine and Undivine are opposites which are irreconcilable, then relationship seems to be unreal and contradictory. However, it is possible to look at the datum of consciousness as pure, silent and yet integral and dynamic for manifesting in body, life and mind in a real psychical way. Sri Aurobindo says: “A Divine Whole that is perfect by reason of the imperfection of its parts, runs the risk of itself being only perfect in imperfection, because it fulfils entirely some stage in an unaccomplished purpose, it is then a present but not an ultimate Totality.. The true Divine would then be secret within us and perhaps supreme above us; to find the Divine within us and above us would be the real solution, to become perfect as That is perfect, to attain liberation by likeness to it or by attaining to the law of nature, *sādrśya*, *sādharmya* ”⁴

HARSIDDH JOSHI

References

- 1 Sri Aurobindo *The Life Divine* (Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, 1955), pp 93-94
- 2 F H Bradley *Appearance and Reality* (Ninth Impression Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1930) p 28
- 3 Sri Aurobindo *op cit* pp 264-265
- 4 *Ibid* p 468

DEATH AND HONOUR IN *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA*

PASSION is a distorted image of love. It is a blind search for man's original emotion. In the opening scene of *Antony and Cleopatra*, one has the impression of this half-revealed search. Shakespeare's subtle use of words and phrases indicates his deliberate arrangement of a dramatic scheme which culminates, in a kind of tragic epic, in the last scene of the play. The image of passion and Demetrius's words at the end of the first scene conceal Shakespeare's subtleties. The eclipse of honour is an eclipse of traditional honour. Yet another kind of honour is going to light up the life of Antony and Cleopatra. This "honour" is synonymous with that "love" which is to be discovered and critics are quite right in calling it a "third world".

Wilson Knight's theory of "expanded metaphor" is perfectly applicable to this play. The metaphor is suggested in the opening scene and the rest of the play shows the expansion. What is the metaphor expanded? It is a pair, nay, a single entity with two faces: love is death in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Plays like *King Lear* and *Antony and Cleopatra* confirm Eliot's theory of one central rhetoric in one drama. The metaphor of passion in the first scene is the metaphor of love and death. Antony does not know much about the rhetoric he is using now:

Here is my space.

When, later in the play, Antony speaks to Eros about the "long day's task" which is to end with Cleopatra's death, our mind springs back to those bare words of the first scene. When Antony utters phrases like "nobleness of life", "mutual pair", "such a twain", etc., he is thinking not of the present but of the future. It is a plain gesture floating towards the edge of eternity. Speech comes before the high action. Although Antony's inward growth is not equal to Cleopatra's, he is speaking on behalf of the pair:

Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth

Antony is thinking of a pilgrimage not knowing much about its nature in Act I, Scene I, but he is certainly more conscious before his death in Act IV, Scene XV:

I am dying, Egypt, dying; only
I here importune death awhile, until
Of many thousand kisses the poor last
I lay upon thy lips.

The whole affair of the "kisses" is so different now. A little later while talking to Cleopatra he repeats the first line "I am dying, Egypt, dying". Kenneth Muir

suspects it to be an editorial fault. But this could be Antony's favourite expression for dramatising his moment of departure. In the first case it becomes great poetry. In the second effort the vibration has left him. There is a sovereign royalty in this poetry, royalty of love which is honour.

Cleopatra has no middle gear. She is either sensual or spiritual; the moral world is almost unknown to her. Kate Flint draws our notice to Cleopatra's silence (*Significant Otherness: Sex, Silence and Cleopatra*) regarding her private thoughts. In fact, she rarely reveals herself. That is why we have to depend so much on Enobarbus to know her motivations. The central rhetoric of the play, which governs her character, is clarified by Enobarbus, first in Act I, Scene II, and then later in Act II, Scene II. In Act I, Scene II, the suggestion is revealing:

I do think there is mettle in death, which commits some loving act upon her,
she hath such a celerity in dying.

Even though the ethical ideal is alien to her temperament, the capacity for death ascertains her capacity for love. The only clear moral utterance is "Husband, I come", which is quickly followed by illumined words. Otherwise, the leap from the sensual to the sublime is direct.

Like Antony she is uttering the speech first, then realising the speech through action. Even in Act I, Scene III, Cleopatra labours to utter an ideal speech while trying to imagine a past glory:

Eternity was in our lips, and eyes,
Bliss in our brows' bent; none our parts so poor,
But was a race of heaven.

Sri Aurobindo calls it "plainly vital in its excited thrill". But then this is the beginning of an "evolution of speech", which will lead to an "evolution of action". Cleopatra's suffering is obvious a little later in the same Scene when she is at a loss for words to reveal her crisis. Let us listen to her confusion:

Courteous lord, one word.
Sir, you and I must part but that's not it;
Sir, you and I have lov'd—but there's not it;
That you know well something it is I would,—
O, my oblivion is a very Antony,
And I am all forgotten.

This is no acting, but an expression of a chaotic mind. There is a strange helplessness in the tough and passionate woman. Far from being the words of an enchantress, these show her desperate search for an expression which will be

powerful enough to influence him at the hour of parting. Cleopatra's transformation is not an abolition of her usual nature and temperament. Sexual imagery mirrors her usual consciousness; the descent of something higher on that consciousness shows her a very unique way of transcendence. She tries to express her new-found light in terms of sexual imagery. In fact, she does it very spontaneously. The change in her is not sudden. There has been a preparation for the fifth Act since Act I, Scene III. The signs of suffering are more clear in Act II, Scene V, where Cleopatra's tone and imagery have changed:

The merchandise which thou hast brought from Rome
Are all too dear for me.
Lie they upon thy hand, and be undone by 'em.

There is gradual preparation for a greater death through many deaths. Enobarbus, the interpreter, tells us her case history. He is fascinated by the poetry in her character and of all the characters in the play he has the most authentic knowledge of her deeper qualities. Critics tend to appreciate his poetic comments and ignore the colourless wonder: "wonderful piece of work." This is not a derogatory remark. Cleopatra is wonderful, there is no better adjective to describe her than what Pater would have called the "unique word".

Cleopatra's identification with the image of Rome confirms her surrender. The fear of exposure in the open streets of Rome, which both Daniel and Shakespeare strongly suggest, is a royal queen's special sensitivity. That is realism, but is not in contradiction with Cleopatra's love. Her last reference to Rome relating to Antony's burial is the acceptance of her dream-image: Rome as expressed by Antony. Only the Roman can attain this royalty of love which is the other name of honour. There is a sovereign royalty in Antony's love and Cleopatra's answering love. But Cleopatra's answering love misses the moral layer. Even in her moments of glory in Act V, she betrays the trace of sexual jealousy, which is still haunting her. She has a hysterical fear that Charmian may reach Antony earlier than she and that Antony will "make demand of her, and spend his kiss." She is still thinking in terms of sex and is still very much in a kind of court culture, which shows kings and queens taking delight in "unregister'd" sex (see Act III, Scene XIII, lines 18-19, where Antony is abusing Cleopatra).

This is thus a unique transcendence where the ethical world is irrelevant. Graham Holderness (in his *'Some Squeaking Cleopatra': Theatricality in Antony and Cleopatra*) draws our attention to Caesar's comments on Cleopatra's corpse in Act V, Scene II, 342-6. The beauty of the corpse had been "calculated" by Cleopatra herself. She would rather accept an aesthetics of death on her way up. But touching the ethical world to reach the sublime is an impossibly difficult task for her.

Enobarbus is an interpreter of life, a mini-Shakespeare. He ironises, either

to appreciate or to depreciate, and his poetry is the poetry of irony. By and large, it is objective poetry, relaxative both for himself and for his listeners. We know him as a fun-lover and a wise soldier, unaffected by the burden of life. His betrayal of Antony is a turning-point; it prepares for the second plane of poetry which is subjective. It is a surprise for us. The man is a Roman, a hundred-percent Roman, a proud fellow whom we never suspect to be an aristocrat till before his death. Shakespeare, the supreme realist, is well aware of his motives, his possible reactions after an un-Roman act. The most cruel melts when honour and justice are offered to him by the sufferer. This is the law of life. Enobarbus, far from being a cruel fellow, is a superior being.

His repentance is quick and death remains the only way out to regain honour. Listen to his words in Act IV, Scene VI:

.. I have done ill,
Of which I do accuse myself so sorely,
That I will joy no more.

This poetry is deeply personal and indicates the death of the fun-lover. The climax of this subjective drive is contained in his last speech (Act IV, Scene IX):

O sovereign mistress of true melancholy,
The poisonous damp of night disponge upon me,
That life, a very rebel to my will,
May hang no longer on me. Throw my heart
Against the flint and hardness of my fault,
Which being dried with grief, will break to powder,
And finish all foul thoughts O Antony,
Nobler than my revolt is infamous,
Forgive me in thine own particular,
But let the world rank me in register
A master-leaver, and a fugitive
O Antony! O Antony!

Enobarbus's subjective poetry is a surprise, because it is basically non-intellectual poetry spoken by an intellectual. The dying speech is emotional, an effort to be as honourable as Antony,—another proud Roman with a very obvious aristocratic mind, a temperament devoid of meanness. Domitius Enobarbus is not prepared to forgive his alien meanness. His last words "O Antony! O Antony!" mean a total surrender to an image of life which he has lost and which he wishes to regain in death. Even for him all length of time is torture, because death alone can pacify him, death can help him hide his face, death can give him back the image of the Roman. Enobarbus is a loner, a tragic character in the

end-part of his life, and his death is virtually unappreciated

Wilson Knight's essays on *Antony and Cleopatra* included in *The Imperial Theme* are remarkable examples of intuitive criticism governed by a powerful intellectual mind. But it is difficult to agree with him when in *The Transcendental Humanism of Antony and Cleopatra* he says: "Here, where our subject is one very largely sensuous, our medium is peculiarly desensitized." The medium follows the motives of Antony and Cleopatra. When Antony abuses Cleopatra in line 118, Act III, Scene XIII, it simply projects his own nature. This is not the picture of a desensitized medium. There are other instances in the play. The point is the major characters in the play are soldiers. Shakespeare as a realist and a revealer of life as a whole cannot afford to maintain a desensitized medium throughout. What he wishes to show is the growth of love in the sensual man. Honour or love shapes itself in a unique way, in the midst of filth and mire. The poetry in later scenes images the effort to be what was a blank foreknowledge in Act I, Scene I.

GOUTAM GHOSAL

ON YOUR BIRTHDAY (25.11.96)

O HOW could I wish
A happy Birthday
To a radiant
And rare bloom
Ever open and fresh
With all its grace?

Live long, in spirit young,
O ever-blossoming bliss,
An ageless tongue
Of ever-renewing peace!

Let the Sun smile,
Let the moon pile
Upon you all its riches
For the unfolding
Of life's intimate
And ultimate secret!

ASHALATA DASH

THE QUESTION OF GOD IN SCIENCE

GOD—A DISCARDED DREAM NEEDED NO MORE?

AN ancient wisdom fades into the past,
The ages' faith becomes an idle tale,
God passes out of the awakened thought,
An old discarded dream needed no more...

Savitri, SABCL, Vol 28, p 253

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LAPLACE—HYPOTHESIS OF GOD NOT NECESSARY

Laplace had presented Napoleon with a copy of his monumental work *Mécanique Céleste*. Thinking of provoking Laplace, Napoleon took him to task for an apparent oversight. 'You have written this huge book on the system of the world without once mentioning the author of the universe.' 'Sire,' Laplace retorted, 'I had no need of that hypothesis' (Sire, je n'avais pas besoin de cette hypothèse)

When Napoleon repeated this to Lagrange, the latter remarked, 'Ah, but that is a fine hypothesis. It explains so many things.'

*

SRI AUROBINDO'S COMMENT

When the scientist says that "scientifically speaking, God is a hypothesis which is no longer necessary" he is talking arrant nonsense—for the existence of God is not and cannot be and never was a scientific hypothesis or problem at all, it is and always has been a spiritual or a metaphysical problem. You cannot speak scientifically about it at all either pro or con. The metaphysician or the spiritual seeker has a right to point out that it is nonsense.. .

SABCL, Vol 22, p 200

Presented by SWADESH

THE ANTHROPIC FERVOUR

It is a strange paradox that excess of science is leading us away from science. The strident materialism of the previous year has now sobered and a new element in the approach entered in. We are talking of mysticism that was till recent times anathema to physics. Not that the philosophy of materialism was founded on the Newtonian-Cartesian principles; for that philosophy is as ancient as the hills and has always gripped the minds of men in an immediate way. In the formulations of Thales of Miletus or Empedocles or Democritus or, in spiritual India, the atomists of the Sankhya school or the Charvaks or the Vaisheshikas, the thrust was speculative, goaded by virtue of sense-perception. Not that there was no Pythagoras or Heraclitus or Plotinus or Parmenides, or an oriental researcher of the nature of Prakriti; but the main line of approach always remained abstract-conceptual. The tools of science were yet to be discovered.

Parmenides, for instance in his remarkable poem *De Natura*,* is riding a chariot drawn by fiery mares—the passions of the soul—in his journey to a place ‘far from the beaten track of men’ His poem begins with the following description: “The axle glowed in the socket and gave forth a sound as of a pipe as the daughters of the Sun left the abode of Night and hastened on towards the Light. There stands the Gate which divides the ways of Night and Day.” The austere guardian of the Gate refuses to hand over the keys to him, but the shining daughters of the Sun persuade her to allow the seer-poet to pass through. In turn she tells him: “It is meet that thou shouldst travel both roads—the unshaken heart of the well-rounded truth (science) and the opinions of mortals (appearances) in which there is no true belief at all.” Is modern physics standing at the Gate of this Goddess, waiting for the Word? So it seems to some of the modern commentators. Unfortunately, however, this is not so. Parmenides was guided by the pure ray of intuition which took him to the Gate, almost the Vedic Gate, of that Goddess’s abode. But in the hands of these writers it becomes too cerebral, if not popularistic.

In fact the argument runs quite topsyturvy at times. Thus Fritjof Capra, in his bestseller *The Tao of Physics*, makes a very peculiar statement: “The discoveries of modern physics necessitated profound changes of concepts like space, time, matter, object, cause and effect, etc; and since these concepts are so basic to our way of experiencing the world, it is not surprising that the physicists who were forced to change them felt something of a shock. Out of these changes emerged a new and radically different world-view, still in the process of formation by current scientific research. It seems, then, that the Eastern mystics and Western physicists went through similar revolutionary experiences which led

* The original Greek work is entitled *Adversus Mathematicos*, but it is better known through its Latin translation

them to completely new ways of seeing the world... The European physicist Niels Bohr and the Indian mystic Sri Aurobindo both express the depth and the radical character of this experience."

Was Sri Aurobindo led to this discovery by the discoveries of modern physics, "still in the process of formation"? Did his concepts of space, time, matter, object, cause and effect arise out of the findings of the physicist? And we have to remember that he wrote his philosophical magnum opus *The Life Divine* in the second decade of this century when quantum mechanics had not yet taken birth—it happened ten years later and then, still dazzled, it was groping for the clue to interpret its own formulations. It is true that Niels Bohr wanted to somehow save the new, in fact radically new, effort of de Broglie, Heisenberg, Schrodinger, Dirac and Max Born by giving it a sort of philosophical dignity. But, then, in the process he became a Greek philosopher with thought-pre-occupation; finally, he propounded the mystique of a probabilistic interpretation in determining the nature of the physical world. No doubt, quantum mechanics is the most successful theory today to describe the microscopic universe and its merit lies entirely in the fruitfulness of its empiricism. The gains have been enormous, bewildering, far-reaching in their scientific, technological and social consequences. This has given a certain credibility to the theory, but there have been doubts also cast on it. Einstein himself was very reluctant to accept it and always considered it to be a provisional theory, he repeatedly said, though in a rhetorical way, that God does not play dice. Success did not blind him as far as the fundamental issues were concerned and he remained unperturbed by Bohr's retort about God's play. If this is so, can we really go along with Capra who, in haste, says that the Eastern mystic got his knowledge from the findings of the new physics? Besides, it will be a total lack of understanding of the ways of a practitioner of the Yogic-spiritual discipline: it betrays ignorance about the method and meaning of mysticism, about the nature of an altogether different line of pursuit.

The new Avatar of physics speaks probabilistically. But it is not enumerative probability of a system containing countless participants; it is not a Maxwell-Boltzmann type of description where the problem cannot be formulated because of inaccessibility to the parameters of the system. Quantum mechanical probability is intrinsic; it is there in the very nature of things—it is there at the level of the individual events. This has led to a great deal of romanticism, in the process even bringing discredit to the otherwise sound principles of scientific research and investigation. All this mumbo-jumbo—we owe it to the quick philosophers of physics. People even go so far as to say that probability implies for them free-will at the atomic level! And the strange thing about this free-will is that it exists at the microscopic level of an electron or a nucleus or a quark, but at once disappears in a pebble or a mountain! Not that there is no inconscient will of the atom, if we are to recall Haeckel; but in the inconscient domain it remains

ineffective. To awaken it is the great occultist's task and the expectation is that it will be fulfilled.

In quantum mechanics the observer himself becomes a part of observation. In it there is no cold Newtonian objective universe, aloof and standing away from him; the universe is not out there for study in an independent way. In it the result of an experiment depends upon the participation of the observer; it always speaks of superposition of several possibilities, the final outcome being decided by the act of observation. This is a new departure from the classical approach and has far-reaching implications. Thus, as an example, take the tossing of a coin in which the fifty-fifty probability of 'head' *and* 'tail' is mixed up in the description; the final outcome of 'head' *or* 'tail' depends entirely upon the observer's act of seeing it. This has, this entry of the observer in the experiment and its interpretation has, it is said, introduced the element of subjectivity into physics. Of course, it is to be understood that it is not the free-wheeling subjectivity of a creative artist, because it is applicable to any observer and the comparison of results of several experimentalists yet becomes possible. There are still laws of physics, though of a different kind.

Now in this probabilistic world we have a very strange situation. There seems to be a certain operating principle behind it, almost a sort of secret yet directed teleological aim present in it. Things are so, because everything has got to go to make them so. The big bang had to be there and the carbon-based life and the right conditions on the planet earth—for man to appear at an appropriate point of space and at an appropriate moment of time. There is in the material universe what is called "an anthropic selection effect." According to R. Dick, who first made this proposal, "we cannot observe the universe from outside, we can see it from our point of view." Everything then gets adjusted accordingly. Ice *has* to float on water for the fish to propagate and survive in the Antarctic region.

In such a world of multiple possibilities, that one possibility has been selected which has resulted in our being here. Naturally, it means that many universes have remained unmanifest. But if life was the goal then this universe tailored for this purpose alone could flourish. We may then extend the argument a little farther and say that for Plato's mind to appear, this is the only kind of combination that could accomplish it. Granting weight to these arguments, it does not need much more imagination to assert the formation of soul in a material process. That, in effect, would make the final cause the operating principle in the physical world. The Omega Point would be the driving force in this complex operation of the universe. In the Barrow-Tipler rhapsody: "Life would have gained control of *all* matter and forces not only in a single universe, but in all universes whose existence is logically possible; life would have spread into *all* spatial regions in all universes which could logically exist, and will have stored an infinite amount of information including *all* bits of knowledge which it

is logically possible to know. And this is the end.”

Very soothing indeed, but is it plausible? Does it have scientific credibility? Does it, in fact, come at all anywhere near to the tenets of physics? If we are to recognise their rewarding methodology of research and investigation, then we see that we are drifting pretty far away from it; in this type of speculative, if not imaginative, non-empirical non-data-based exercise we may fall back into the mediaeval pit, a matter of serious concern

Parmenides, riding the chariot driven by the fiery mares, the Energies that take us to the path of Knowledge, had arrived at the Gate of the austere Goddess's abode and was advised to follow both roads, the one of truth or science and that of the opinions of mortals. We, travelling along the second, seem to have forgotten the first.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

THE SUN-WHEEL

SUN-WHEEL of God rolls on the path of noon—
 A meteor-trail with far impetuous flight,
 A body of lightning-mass, a stupendous orb
 Burning, wheeling its way towards the unknown
 Its road is the cosmos of sprawling sleep.
 Its tracks are unmapped in the stores of void.
 Its passage is ecstasy creatrix and bare,
 An ocean-sweep, a world-vanquishing chase,
 A lion-rush towards the woods of light.
 The earth below now feels its zoom and roll
 All tremors cease within, a bodiless trance
 Grips now the dust with imperishable hands.
 An opening is made in its cavern-pit and womb.
 An universal storm of blaze comes down
 Into its deeps waiting, sublime and lost.
 A tornado leaps pregnant with solar ray.
 The sun of God becomes the wheel of Grace.

31 3 1959

ROMEN

(From the late poet's unpublished diaries.)

THE INDIAN VISION OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

THE FOURFOLD SOCIAL ORDER

(Continued from the issue of November 1996)

THESE are the psychological principles behind the ancient Indian ideal of Chaturvarna. But Sri Aurobindo brings some new and fresh insights into this ancient Indian concept which reveal some more of the hidden truths behind the ideal.

The first insight is that these four soul-types represent the four soul-powers of Humanity which exist in every individual and collective soul of Man. Thus no human individual or collectivity is exclusively of a particular type. It is the predominant power of the soul which determines its swadharma. As Sri Aurobindo observes.

“There is always in human nature something of all these four personalities developed or undeveloped, wide or narrow, suppressed or rising to the surface, but in most men one or the other tends to predominate and seems to take up sometimes the whole space of action in the nature. . . Each Jiva possesses in his spiritual nature these four sides, is a soul of knowledge, a soul of strength and of power, a soul of mutuality and interchange, a soul of works and service, but one side or other predominates in the action and expressive spirit and tinges the dealings of the soul with its embodied nature ”

If we introspect a little, we can see that there are in each one of us all these four natural urges corresponding to the four powers—the urge to know and understand of the Brahmana, the urge to conquer and master of the Kshatriya, the urge to give and take, adapt, harmonise and organise of the Vaishya, and the urge to work and serve of the Shudra. But one particular tendency, the most conscious and developed, may take the lead and give a unique tinge to the temperament and personality. In fact the entire human life and progress is a combined action of these four powers of the human soul and all of them are needed for successful dealing with life

“Our life itself is at once an inquiry after truth and knowledge, a struggle and battle of our will with ourselves and surrounding forces, a constant production, adaptation, application of skill to the material of life and a sacrifice and service.”²

And each of these four powers needs the help of other powers for its own completeness and for its perfect self-expression in Society. As Sri Aurobindo explains with regard to the Brahmana.

“None of these four types of personality can be complete. . . if it does not bring into it something of the other qualities. The man of knowledge [Brahmana] cannot serve Truth with freedom and perfection, if he has not the intellectual and moral courage, will, audacity, the strength [of the Kshatriya] to open and conquer new kingdoms, otherwise he becomes a slave of the limited intellect or a

servant or at most a ritual priest of only an established knowledge,—cannot use his knowledge to the best advantage unless he has the adaptive skill [of the Vaishya] to work out its truth for the practice of life, otherwise he lives only in the idea,—cannot make the entire consecration of his knowledge unless he has the spirit of service to humanity [of the Shudra], to the Godhead in man and the Master of his being ””

This applies also to the other three soul-types. And whatever is said regarding the individual applies equally to the collectivity. For human society is not only an organised, co-ordinated and collective self-expression of human individuals but a living organic being which is more than the sum of its parts.

But the great sages of India never confined their vision to the limited potentiality of the individual and collective ego-self or even the soul-self of Humanity, but constantly referred every human phenomenon to its cosmic principle or divine archetype. In the vision of Indian seers, the fourfold soul-types of Humanity are themselves the self-expression of the four cosmic powers of the divine Reality. Sri Aurobindo describes these four powers.

“Thus we have first the symbolic idea of the four orders, expressing... the Divine as knowledge in man, the Divine as power, the Divine as production, enjoyment and mutuality, the Divine as service, obedience and work. These divisions answer to four cosmic principles, the Wisdom that conceives the order and principle of things, the Power that sanctions, upholds and enforces it, the Harmony that creates the arrangement of its parts, the Work that carries out what the rest direct.””

These four cosmic powers are called in Indian mythology Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati.

We have already seen the psychological and social principle or necessity of the fourfold social order. The fourfold cosmic principle reveals the universal principle or necessity behind this Indian system.

Thus the Indian conception of the fourfold social order is ultimately derived from the cosmic creative process. In this Indian view human creativity of the individual or collectivity is an integral part of the cosmic creative process. Any individual or collectivity, to maximise its well-being and creative effectiveness, has to organise its life not only according to the individual and social Dharma but also in harmony with the Dharma of the universal creative process.

Hence the creative activity of any organised human endeavour,—whether it is of an organisation, community or a nation,—to be integrally effective must have four functions or stages corresponding to the four cosmic principles. The significance of these stages or functions is described below in the light of modern developments.

1) Conception in Idea, Vijnana, act of knowledge of the Brahmana or Maheshwari. It is the function of the Path-finder, Value-shaper and creative Thinker and Visionary. In modern management thought this corresponds to the

stage or function of planning or policy formulation and shaping culture. Most of the specialist professionals in the advisory cadre belong to the Brahmana sections of the modern society. Here it would be interesting to note the distinction made between what is called "staff" and "line" functions in modern management. Staff function belongs to those personnel who provide expert advice but do not have the power to take decisions. Line function belongs to those who are in the executive ranks and have the power to take decisions. In ancient India the relation between the Kshatriya or the Monarch who was the leader of the political organ of the society and the Brahmana who was the cultural and spiritual leader of the society was somewhat similar to the relation between Line and Staff functions in modern management. The Brahmana was the revealer and interpreter of Dharma and the adviser to the King, the Kshatriya. And the Monarch, the Kshatriya was the upholder and guardian of Dharma.

ii) Energising of the idea by the Will, Tapas, concentrated dwelling of the Will on the idea for the realisation of the idea; the act of strength, will and energy of the Kshatriya and the function of Mahakali. In the field of modern management and administration, it is the mobilisation, concentration and direction of men, energy and resources for implementing the idea. In modern management terminology this function corresponds to the functions of staffing, direction and control and top line-management position.

iii) Co-ordination and organisation of ideas, men, energies and resources into a harmonious, mutually interrelated and rhythmic order, *samyojana*, the act of Mutuality and Harmony of the Vaishya. Most of the general or middle management positions in government, industries and commerce involving primarily the function of co-ordination and organisation belong to this category.

iv) Faithful execution of the Idea and giving material shape to the Idea according to the original conception, plan and harmony; the work of skill, craftsmanship, minute attention to detail and service, *seva*, of the Shudra, the function of the first-line supervisory positions and that of the labour force.

In a nutshell, we may say that every organised human endeavour requires: the creative idea, Vijnana, vision and values of a pathfinder Brahmana; the drive, energy, authority, motivating dynamism, control and directed Tapas of a leader, Kshatriya, the harmonising, co-ordinating and organising skill, *samyojana*, of an organiser Vaishya; and finally the work, skill and service, *seva*, of a Shudra. These four functions together constitute the integral creative Act.

M. S SRINIVASAN

(This Section concluded)

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- 1 *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 13, pp 505-06
- 2 *Ibid* , Vol 21, p 721
- 3 *Ibid* , p 720
- 4 *Ibid* , Vol 15, p 6

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of November 1996)

SRI AUROBINDO does not go to the scriptures to find support for his philosophy nor does he interpret them from his own standpoint. He studies to see if there is corroboration in them of the spiritual realisations that came crowding upon him, and the knowledge emerged as the basis of his experience.

Every chapter of *The Life Divine* is headed by one, sometimes as many as six or more, epigraphs extracted from ancient Indian scriptures or the classics of spiritual philosophy. The main authorities are the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita. In the revised definitive edition of *The Life Divine*, out of a total of about 165 epigraphs distributed among 56 chapters, as many as 85 are from the Upanishads, nearly 60 from the Vedas.

Shankara, Ramanuja and the other numerous commentators on old scriptures had been projecting in a traditional way what was implied in the old scriptures, rather than fabricating something wholly new. Sri Aurobindo found entirely new meanings and truths in the scriptures.

He discovered in them some of his inner experiences at Baroda, at Alipore, at Chandernagore. These experiences led him to further studies—all by himself, without the old commentaries—and he came to definite conclusions which he presented in a series of articles in the *Arya* under the general heading “The Secret of the Veda”.

He published his translations of the *Isha*, *Kena* and other Upanishads in the *Karmayogin*. He wrote on India’s great scriptures in the *Dharma*. The Vedas were seen as “the basis of the Hindu *Dharma* but very few knew the real terms and the fundamental truths of that basis”,¹ although the Upanishads unveiled to us “the Supreme Knowledge, the naked limits of the real man”.

Few were inclined to face the situation: “For a thousand years we have accepted the meaning given by Shankara; the commentary by Shankara has become our Veda, our Upanishad. Why should we take the trouble of studying the Upanishads in the original? Even when we do so, if ever we come across any commentary which contradicts Shankara, we immediately reject it as false.”²

The Rishis of the Upanishads had arrived at Knowledge not by force of logic or unpredictable inspiration, but by a direct Vision that came by their own tapasya—the Yoga that tore the veil of Appearance or Ignorance and revealed the Real, the Vast, the Truth.

If the Upanishads and Veda were ‘Sruti’, the Puranas were the ‘Smriti’ ”:

“The revelations of the Rishis who were accomplished in Yoga and endowed with spiritual insight, and the word which the Master of the Universe spoke to their purified intelligence, constitute the ‘Sruti’. Ancient knowledge and learning preserved through countless generations, is known as ‘Smriti’.”³

Sri Aurobindo, soon after his arrival in Pondicherry, plunged into Vedic exegesis and interpretation to explore the riches of the original Sanskrit. He found hints for the path of his Integral Yoga in the Gita and the Upanishads, after that he intuited that he would find the keys for the Supramental Yoga. Seeking light from the ancient scriptures he found that his intuitions and experiences hadn't misled him. It was not surprising that in the *Arya* Sri Aurobindo launched simultaneously *The Secret of the Veda* and *The Life Divine*—they are the glorious fulfilment of the history of the Aryan culture and the great spiritual tradition of India.

If *The Life Divine* gives the Principle of the spiritual evolution that is to bring about the Divine Life on earth, *The Synthesis of Yoga* lays down truths for practice. Yoga, according to Sri Aurobindo, is practical psychology and he takes a bird's eye view of the main lines of Yoga as they have been developed. His interpretation of *The Synthesis of Yoga* follows:

“Intellectual, volitional, ethical, emotional, aesthetic and physical training and improvement are all so much to the good, but they are only in the end a constant movement in a circle without any last delivering and illumining aim, unless they arrive at a point when they can open themselves to the power and presence of the Spirit and admit its direct working. This direct working effects a conversion of the whole being which is the indispensable condition of our real perfection. To grow into the truth and power of the Spirit and by the direct action of that power to be made a fit channel of its self-expression,—a living of man in the Divine and a divine living of the Spirit in humanity,—will therefore be the principle and the whole object of an integral yoga of Self-perfection.”⁴

After a preliminary survey of the Principles of Yoga in general and an examination of the methods of nature in so far as they provide the prototype for Yoga-processes, “Sri Aurobindo studies the contributions of the major lines of Yoga, *trimarga*, the Yogas of Works, Knowledge and Devotion, *Karma*, *Jnana* and *Bhakti*. He indicates where each of them meets the others in the course of its development. He also expounds, briefly, the principles of *Hatha* and the *Raja Yogas* and underlines their limitations. After this he proceeds to work out his own Yoga of Self-Perfection which assimilates the fundamentals of the past yogic effort and extends their range to reach the whole of the human being. Step by step he takes up each part of the being and draws the lines on which it is to evolve towards perfection in its divine terms. Side by side, he underlines the need for integration of each advance with the development of others. He examines the different aspects of the Divine Reality *viz.* the Personal, the Impersonal, the Static and Dynamic, etc. and shows their relevance to the need of the evolving human spirit. He describes the fourfold personality of the Soul and the answering truths in the manifestation of the Divine Shakti. He relates the Upanishadic *Koshas*, sheaths or ‘bodies’ of the individual, to corresponding planes of consciousness in the cosmos and works out their equation through the

development of his Integral Yoga. He built the ladder of ascent above the highest levels of the thinking mind to still higher levels of the Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, Overmind and Supermind in its various gradations. He was still developing his Yogic insights and finding out the routes on the dizzying heights of the Supramental, through Time and Space, when the *Arya* ceased publication. He had written on this subject from the first to the last issue, yet the work remained incomplete.”

He had hoped to complete it and revise wherever necessary. But that was never done; only the first part, *The Yoga of Divine Works*, was thoroughly revised and published in book-form in 1948. The second part, *The Yoga of Integral Knowledge*, was also revised but in portions. The rest was not touched. This body of Knowledge on the theory and practice of Yoga in its multiple bearings, immense potentialities and graded application is among the most authentic manuals on the subject. If only the author had completed it to his satisfaction, it would have been a veritable Veda of Yoga.

The entire work was published for the first time in book form in 1955—the revised and the unrevised portions together—and it constitutes the most comprehensive work of Sri Aurobindo on Yoga. His *Letters on Yoga* (3 Volumes), compiled from the letters to disciples in reply to their queries relating to the Practice of Yoga, form a happy complement to the *Synthesis*. These three volumes, however, are by no means complete.

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

References

- 1 *Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual*, Vol 26, 1967, p 43
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THE WRITER AND THE WONDERFUL

PRAPANJAN'S SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

[Mother India congratulates Mr. Prapanjan on receiving the Central Sahitya Akademi Award for the year 1995. A well-known Tamil writer, he is a son of this famous soil, Pondicherry, and has published several volumes of fiction. The July, August, October '90 and February '91 issues of Mother India have carried four of his best short stories in P. Raja's translation.]

WONDERFUL! Thy name is Man.

Mahakavi Subramania Bharati expressed wonder at a blade of grass. Textbooks down the ages have glorified the Taj Mahal and the Great Pyramids of Egypt as wonderful pieces of craftsmanship. But to me, Man is more wonderful than all the wonders of the world

Great is he who dedicates himself to the welfare of others. History speaks of many Mahatmas who struggled for the freedom of mankind. Many sacrificed their careers for the upliftment of Man and were rewarded with banishment. Many willingly bore the crown of thorns. Many lost their precious lives to bullets and batons; and many to the hangman's noose. They are really wonderful people

At the same time I can't but wonder how mean human beings can be at times. They shoot others. They drop bombshells on their sleeping brethren. They cheat their fellows of their wealth and sexually molest helpless women.

What is the true colour of Man, if he has one? What is his real form, if he has one? How concrete is he to be touched and felt? When will he develop fangs? When will his finger-nails turn into deadly claws? When will his long list of lethal weapons come to a close?

Is it Man's instinct to err? Is there an urge in him to antagonise or torture or kill his fellow beings? Or is it simply a violation of the law? What then is the real face of Man?

Is it possible to make Man with one face and with one character like so many biscuits in a bakery? If 'yes', who possesses the magic wand?

Man commits crime. Is it a blessing to him or a curse? I feel that it is a blessing. I am of the opinion that it is only the lucky fellow who gets the opportunity and the mental attitude to commit a crime. I believe that only a crime can inspire one to be good and to avoid doing it again. Moreover, this is the most interesting part in the human drama.

It is only the weak-minded who commit crimes. I love the weakling. I have regard for the offenders. The mind of Godse deserves to be researched more than Gandhi's. There can be no two opinions among litterateurs on this point. Ravana, King of Lanka, was very handsome but a weakling. Weakling because

he had committed the crime of abducting Sita. This he did because he found no other way to wreak vengeance on Rama. And he is in no way inferior to Rama, who suspected the chastity of his wife and forced her to have a holy dip in a well of fire.

The depiction of Krishna in literature is superb. He feasted his eyes upon the bathing women by keeping their garments away from their sight. But it is the very same Krishna, who has given us the *Bhagavad Gita*. Of these two which is the real Krishna? Both. Panchali symbolises the Earth and the society. Man is an incomplete being and the Pandavas represent the five types in mankind. This is the message that the *Mahabharata* conveys.

That is the reason why Man is not an insipid creature but a very interesting one. That is the reason why Man is the content of all the works of literature available till today from the dawn of time.

No language in this world can boast of having exhausted writing about Man. That is the reason for my interest in humanity.

I wish to write more and more about mankind

Poetic literature in Tamil is not in any way inferior to its like in other literature of the world. Our poetical works written during the Sangam period are splendid. They truly have probed into the inner and the outer self of Man and speak of the nuances and beauty of it. Prince Ilango's *Silapathikaram* and Kamban's *Ramayanam* are epics complete in all respects. I can give you a long list of short-story writers like Pudhumapithan, Ku. Pa. Rajagopalan, Azhagirisamy, Pitchamurthy, Mowni, Janakiraman, G. Nagarajan, Sundara Ramasamy, Jayakanthan and Ambai who are on a par with the best short-story writers of the world. I can name ten novels in Tamil that can be ranked among the best novels of the world.

Tamil does not lag behind any other Indian language in the field of creativity. It is quite difficult to find a handful of poets in world literature on a par with the genius of our Tamil poetess Andal. This is no exaggeration but a bare fact. Tamil is endowed with the power to grasp and digest the latest thoughts of the world's thinkers. The young Tamil writers of today display their maturity in their very first work itself.

It is our bad luck that the Delhi Government which has under its thumb the departments of culture rarely sees the India that is on the Southern side of the River Narmada

I am an author writing in Tamil. No one with a smattering of knowledge of the Tamil language and a taste for its literature can resist the temptation of writing in Tamil. It is really a wonder if such a one fails to write.

I hail from Pondicherry. You may be aware that Pandit Nehru praised my place as a "window on French culture". Many of my relatives and my father's friends from different states of India used to come to Pondicherry to have a glimpse of this culture.

My father was a patriot and a political prisoner during the French rule in Pondicherry. And so I had the opportunity of acting as a guide to all our friends and relatives. Among the tourist sites in Pondicherry I always included the house of Subramania Bharati and the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo. I had the responsibility of briefing my visitors on the life stories of these eminent men. I wanted to exhibit my knowledge of local history. In order to do it properly and make my visitors speak highly of me to my father, and also in an attempt to gather more information about these eminent men, I began reading more books.

Not in the least interested in sports, I became a voracious reader right from my boyhood days. I used to write essays for my friends studying in the lower classes. My teachers praised me for having a real flair for the language, especially when I penned poems.

I had developed an insatiable love for the poetry of Subramania Bharati. I am quite familiar with all the places that inspired Bharati to write his poems. I know them like the palm of my hand.

This interest in Bharati's poems drove me to read all the biographies available of him. He was a revolutionary poet and freedom fighter. I took interest in the history of the land that was in chains and for whose freedom he struggled. I learnt about V.O.C., Siva, Kattabomman, Maruthu Pandiars, Nawabs, the Royal Nayakars and the Marathas. I took interest in the history of the French and the British in India. As my interest branched out, I began to read historical novels written in other languages. As a day-dreamer I was thrilled by reading these works.

The earlier historical novels I read in Tamil gave the impression that a historical novel should only speak of the splendours of a palace, the charms of a queen, the valour of a king and reverberate with the clip-clop of horses' hooves.

But such an idea got shattered when I read Russian novels like *Peter the Great*, *War and Peace*, the novels of Masti and the Tamil novel *Twenty Years* by M. S. Kalyanasundaram. In fact, these novels were a turning-point in my career as a reader and writer. My ivory tower crumbled.

I began to scowl at the very idea that the abduction of a princess by a prince can pass for a historical novel. I found that the dreams of our ancestors, their unfulfilled desires and their unredressed grievances got suppressed under the elephantine feet of history. I realized the fact that neither the kings nor their governments ever bothered about the prosperity of the common man.

History books merely provided a chronological list of kings and the battles they fought. It took little time for me to realize that history books failed to treat the life of common people.

Karl Marx was of the opinion that the French novelist Balzac's works gave a distinct and vivid picture of the history of France more than her historians and statisticians. This critique haunted my thoughts and I began to ruminate over it. It was during this time that the Diaries of Ananda Ranga Pillai, the Chief

Dubash to the French Governor in Pondicherry, fell into my hands. In his Diaries, Mr Pillai has written mostly about Monsieur Dupleix and his times. As I began to read the Diaries, I was able to identify the man in the Governor of Pondicherry. The people of the 18th century Pondicherry with all their pomp and glory, their foibles and follies emerged in flesh and blood before the mind's eye.

I realized that it is the people, and not the royal personages, who make history.

My novel *Vaanam Vasappadum* which won me the Sahitya Akademi award is based on the lessons taught to us by the people who lived under the French rule in the 18th century Pondicherry.

History is not a sealed grave. The dead have a lot to tell the living. History, to me, is nothing but the story of a contemporary. This is what I believe. It's only the activities, the thoughts and the feelings of the men of the past that have made history. I am trying to resurrect the dead from the grave in my novels. A good historical novel abounds in truth.

Well then, my friends! To end my speech I would say that the very purpose of literature is to blend man with his society. Literature teaches us to understand Man and to love humanity.

Let us move from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, from evil to good, from mortality to immortality.

On behalf of our Tamil language, I thank the Sahitya Akademi for bestowing on me its most prestigious award.

PRAPANJAN

(Translated by P. Raja from the Tamil script of the speech)

NAKED SONGS AND FIRE SONGS

(Continued from the issue of November 1996)

FIRE SONGS

I. CRY IN THE WIND

So your wisdom bans me
From the sweetness of your court.
You bid your veil drop
To hide the comfort of your face.
You aim no council to aid
And teach me to find you again
Whilst without rages a storm

Unleashed, called forth to serve you
You bring on
The thunder of my doubts
And of not knowing
You teach me
In blowing wind
To walk straight, and to make
My way ahead,
In blinding curtain of rain
I am to find you more
There is nothing to show a sign,
A direction of the path,
And the tumult of the elements
Has rendered me deaf-eared.

Such is your love which demands
A test then,
I will stand for your lashing boon,
I love you all the same,
All the more
Let then all your forces come
To try me
And to mould me good
For your smile
If love asks me to be shaken
Even as a mountain once thought high,

And be battered like a strong stone,
 Made into dust unto the winds,
 Then dust will I be
 And a nothing of a thing
 For your love to be won,
 To be raised once more.
 All this I'll take,
 I wish to be renewed.

II. DEDICATION

Let the youthful desires for plenty go,
 Banished with the wish to hold
 And let them become desires for nothing,
 Empty of store,
 Nor keep wishing for anything
 At all
 No demands shall enter this house again,
 No more, no more.
 Let me become a vessel of no content,
 Of no will of its own,
 Other than what
 You wish it to hold.

May I become like the hollow
 Of a tree,
 Empty of sap, vacant
 Of life's shadowy blooms.
 Let the roots of this tree be wrenched
 From its hold, warm
 And sweet, of life.
 Let my arms, once soft, mould into steel
 To draw the roots up, and show them
 Toward heaven's way.
 Then shall I sprout forth
 A tree born anew,
 Glowing with light,
 A dark-banishing force.

This my prayer and my call.
 May I stay steadfast in my will,

And let the lovers of the poor,
 Those who the needy help
 Aid me.
 This my pledge be,
 Thus I stand alone.

III. LOVE OFFERING

Which precious-stoned ornament
 Of my rank
 Shall I cast into the sea first,
 To prove my love for thee?
 Will I throw my ruby brooch with
 Diamonds framed
 So loved and envied by most?
 Or crush my lapis clasp
 Moon-coloured
 Under the hoofs of stallions' feet?
 My deep sea pearls, which vanity match
 Or my jealousy-rousing
 Tiara bright, cast
 Into the ravine for
 The love of thee?
 And the flimsy silks which
 Lust awoke for my beauty sweet
 And pour the rich oils,
 The drowsy scents
 Into the thirsty soil,
 As one would poison cast
 Lest they harm a life?
 All these and what else is left
 Into the oil-burning urn
 Adorning our temple court
 I'll throw,
 For what is the worth of all jewels
 Of earth
 And all my raiments rich
 If I am not clad like a beggar
 To show my humility to thee?

IV. THE COURT

The singer has loved me
 With a tempest and a storm
 His glance set me ablaze
 Oh fire,
 What power
 He holds
 Over me
 How I am shaken,
 How humbled, made poor.

Into my court
 He came
 Unnoticed
 Amidst the flower grove so gently
 Treading
 He called, "Dearest.
 Your hour of love's near,
 Linger not with fear "
 His hands across my burning
 Brow he drew
 When the sun was high
 In the sky
 And I alone
 With my longing walked

My veiled eyes he drew
 To look
 Into his
 Deep like a lake
 Love's secret quivered
 Upon the surface of the lake
 Beams of the sun
 Entered the watery deep,
 Promised embrace shone
 My feet have left the earth—
 He sounded a note
 Upon the flute

Where is now my castle
 Once upon the hill,

My youth's abode of games?
Where the slender turrets of sweet dreams,
The parapets of joy?
Oh, where the great halls of early plays?
Why have I left my chamber
Once so safe, so dear—
For a roving songster
With a flute?

GEORGETTE COTY

LIBERATION

WHEN I wait patiently
At the wayside inns,
Thinking of Thy sweet Presence
Which forgives my sins,
I behold the gorgeous snowy mountain peaks,
The soaring trees through which rapt Nature speaks,
And the hill-stream dancing upon the downward ways
Across my mind and supine self's aspiring gaze.

Can I ever be like Lord Shiva,
The merciful reclining God,
Who offers His redeeming breast
For staging the Cosmic Dance,
To feel the glorious sweet touch
Of Mahashakti's tender Feet,
While the entire Creation
Remains in spiritual trance?

The vast expanse
Of the blue, surging ocean below
Sends ethereal signals
For my prayerful, loving response
To the Divine Event
Of Purusha's silent sacrifice,
For Mahakali's thundering encounter
With ineluctable Chance

I may not be united with
Lord Maheshwara in birth after birth,
As I can't perform any sacrifice,
Worthy of the Gods blessing Mother Earth;
Yet I go on dreaming unceasingly
And offer my little self with my whole heart
To the Lord of the Universe
Who may most kindly descend
Into my prostrate soul,
As its true intimate Friend.

SURESH

HIGHER AND HIGHER, MY SOUL!

HIGHER and higher, my Soul! higher and higher!
At every step the Supramental speaks
In lone symbologies of Light and Fire
Through life's unconsciousness, in twinkling streaks
And sparkling strokes of rapid gleams and glints
As though through misty veils we had beheld
His Glory shattered into glow-worm hints
Upon innumerable mountain-peaks
Of congregated visions, pale re-prints
Of prismatic mirroring that faintly seeks
The Mountain that evades the glittering-blind
Valleyed immensities of Overmind.
Higher, my Silent Soul! higher and higher
Through unapproachèd realms of shivering spheres
Suspended in the travel towards the One
Whose Consciousness receives our human tears
And whirls them to wild wealths of moon and sun
And strange effulgent circles unbegun
Within the blurred grey compass of the years.
What though around your wings wild tempest rages
Black with destruction, red as demons' eyes,
Rimmed with the snakiest lightnings of dark ages
And heaped with winds of death and wandering cries
Calling you back from the immortal rise
At every flap, above the view of Time,
O Soul! your wings that bear the Paradise
Of Golden Touch, have power to cleave and climb
In slow, untroubled rhythm ringing through the black
Bubbling to sounds of heaving crescents crushed
To essences of roses on the perfumed track
On which light after wheeling light is hushed
O Lonely Soul! O ancient heavenward Cry!
Soar through the desolations of the wide
Spaces that lure your flight on every side
With imaged modes of still enchanting sky
Of lesser levels that forever lie
Around you as a limit of the Light
Drowsing the wakened impulse of each flight.
Leap up, and dare each difficult death that strives
To agonise your freedom through an eye

Chilled to a hollow greyness threading lives
 To feeble resurrections, born again
 Out of the fiery womb of cyclic pain
 Linger no more upon the shades of earth
 Upshot to dimmest atmospheres of birth
 Cloven to warm occasional glows that keep
 Their heavy vigils round the being's winged sleep.
 Aspire, O Soul of Mystery, aspire
 Forever and forever to attain
 The Silence columning the lonely Fire
 Scattering radiance like a drizzling rain;—
 Higher and higher, O Soul, higher and higher!

13th Oct, 1933
 8-20 Night

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Golden Guide,

Here is today's Poem What is the quality of it? What is its level?
 How do You like it?

—Harin

Sri Aurobindo's Comment

It is magnificent

A RIDDLE

It was a world strange as ever could be—full of riddles enigmatic as the sphinx. In that world each species followed its own Dharma, except One. And that One is the riddle to be solved.

This species marvels at the sparkling beauty of the Siberian cranes in flight, wonders at the tenacity, prudence and instinct of these birds, which it is incapable of achieving, yet it has mastered the sky with machinery constructed by it. How wonderful!

This creature cannot match the skill and artistry of a weaver-bird to build a neat nest with bits of straw, strings, twigs, etc., yet has built towers, bridges, and sky-high multistoried buildings. How amazing!

It is amazed at the perseverance, industriousness and the disciplined group life of the bees which it is incapable of imitating, yet it can with ease reap the harvest so meticulously gathered by them. How clever indeed!

It uses the superior range of hearing of the dolphins to torpedo its own brethren and, though as intelligent as these, yet would strip the skin of the newborn babes to make fashionable garments. How very loathsome!

This creature is awe-struck by the strength of a lion and the wiliness of a fox, yet is the master of all living species. How strange!

It imprisons the rushing waters of a river into a dam and utilises them for constructive purposes, yet is unable to bridle its own raging anger, it lets it forth like a mountainous river in turmoil to destruction. So foolish!

It dares to explore the outer universe, sends forth missions, conquers the heavens, yet is hesitant to explore its own wide and immense subconscious world and feels helpless in its vastness. How queer!

It sounds the depths of the ocean to uncover its hidden treasures, yet is reluctant to sound the depths of its own being to search for 'the Flame with a hundred Treasures'. How aimless!

It spends all its cunning to fission an atom to kill or subvert its own kind, yet sheds tears of sorrow at the sufferings of other living creatures. How ridiculous!

It builds sanctuaries and preservation parks for other animals, yet develops poisonous gas, it experiments with chemicals and germs on its own species to become the master of the world. How revolting!

What makes it the ruler of the animal kingdom though it is weak, less disciplined, less skilful, less prudent than other animals?

What is it that makes it the ruler of the universe though it is unable to master its own self?

Is it the unscrupulous use of its intelligence?

or

Is it its vision "To see a world in a grain of sand"?

KRISHNA CHAKRAVARTI

THE REVERSAL

A SHORT STORY

DR. PIYUSH was not proud. He was extremely happy. At last he was living in his own house with an open yard all around it. He could cultivate a beautiful garden. He was not unmindful of another garden, the garden within; he was always cultivating it; he would continue to do so. But it was a blessing to have a little cottage all his own where he could pursue whatever he chose in the evening of his life. It was no accident that he christened his home GRACE.

Now that he had built a house in the posh locality of the city—what corresponded to the Malabar Hill of Bombay or the Banjara Hills of Hyderabad—he wanted to live a life in tune with others externally though harmonious with his within.

There was one thing in life he was averse to,—to have a dog at the gate. If a psychiatrist were to test him, perhaps he would explain it by one or two experiences he had had in life. When he was quite young and was once walking through a park, a dog attacked him. Why it did God only knew but he managed to hold the forepaws of the dog in both his hands till someone came and pulled the animal away. A little later, in the early days of his professional life, a dog all but bit the ankle of his left foot. Thank God, he wore what corresponded to the “bell-bottoms” of the later day. Not “fashionable” in any way, he wore whatever the tailor made for him. He was “tailor-made” though in a different sense than Shakespeare’s. The dog tore the left “bottom” to pieces. But consciously he thought a man who depended on God needed no dog to protect him or his property. Yet not to lag behind the practice of every home around he ordered a BEWARE OF DOG board for his gate. He did not even see the board when it was fixed to the gate one evening.

It was the next morning he had an unexpected caller—a Roman Catholic priest! Strangely, he who strongly believed in God did not want to give any indication of what creed he professed. It appeared as though he believed in a “Religio Perennis” which transcended all dogma. Seeing a Catholic priest at the gate the neighbours thought Piyush could be a Catholic.

Piyush received the Father warmly. The priest congratulated him on his boldness in teaching people the “Fear of God” which is “the beginning of wisdom”. Piyush just could not understand what the priest meant. He said,

“I don’t follow you. Who am I to teach anything to anybody?”

The priest smiled and said,

“What, Doctor, why do you pretend you don’t understand? Have you not fixed the board outside, BEWARE OF GOD?”

Piyush was intelligent enough to see what had happened. The painter of the board had unwittingly reversed the usual word and transformed the Cerberus of

the gate into the Most High! With an assumed smile, Piyush said,

“You mean that? Father! You perhaps read too much into my harmless prank ”

The Father laughed aloud and said,

“You are very clever, Dr. Piyush A senior citizen with a long life behind you playing a harmless prank! Don't your eyes reveal a piety? Doesn't your face show a sense of pity for those who make a reversal of values?”

All that Piyush could say was,

“Thank you, Father.”

Taking leave of Dr. Piyush, the priest said,

“When I passed this way I was struck by the rare wisdom revealed in the board and just came to congratulate you. Why don't you meet me sometime when you are free? Here's my address.”

Piyush stood stunned as the priest left him.

K. B. SITARAMAYYA

A TREASURY OF ANCIENT TAMIL LEGENDS

93 THIS IS LOVE INDEED

WHAT IS love?

Definitions galore would vie with one another to answer this poser. But no two definitions would go together and no other definition would excel the following: "If one can deny himself and make a gift to satisfy the need of another, when one is reduced to the greatest penury and extremity himself, then this is love indeed."

Here follows the story of a devotee of Lord Siva's, a very rich man pushed to penury by the Lord Himself in order to give the world the true definition of love.

His name was Maranar. Elayankudi was his place of birth. Born in an affluent family of landlords, he wallowed in wealth and when he grew up he succeeded in multiplying it. He magnanimously fed the Lord's bhaktas by serving them with different kinds of sweet food and satisfied their hunger. As more and more bhaktas blessed him, his wealth began to grow faster than ever. And this enabled him to feed innumerable mouths everyday. In such life and love and worship he continued long and people called him the very Kuberan, the god of wealth himself.

All those who know of Lord Siva know also of the sadistic pleasure He derived by putting His devotees to severe tests before He gave them a place in His abode. And this time the Lord's choice fell on Elayankudi Maranar.

It is said that when misfortunes come, they come not in singles but in battalions. Maranar's affluence began to dwindle day by day. Yet his love for the Lord's bhaktas didn't diminish and he continued to feed them as before either by mortgaging his properties or by selling them.

As Seedeivi, goddess of Wealth, moved out of his house, her place was occupied by Moodevi, the goddess of Misfortune. Now all that Maranar could claim his own were his faithful wife, a hut, a small piece of land in the backyard for his kitchen-garden and above all pinching poverty.

Lord Siva thought that the time was ripe enough to put Maranar to a final test. And so he descended on Elayankudi.

Elayankudi was drowned in darkness and all the stars in the firmament, perhaps nervous of looking down on the Lord, disappeared somewhere. Raindrops began to fall here and there, playing drums on leaves and rooftops. The chill wind had just driven Maranar, who had been so far sitting with an empty stomach on the *pyal* of his hut, indoors. And when on the mat he stretched himself beside his sleeping wife, Lord Siva in the form of an ascetic knocked on the door of the hut.

Maranar got up, took a lantern and opened the door. "Praised be Lord Siva," said the ascetic.

Maranar beamed, welcomed the ascetic with affectionate hands, spoke to him sweet words, lead him into the hut, seated him properly and then moved to wake up his wife

“This ascetic is hungry. We should feed him,” he whispered into her ears.

“Yes. We should... But where is the means? None of our neighbours will give us a small measure of rice, for we have already borrowed enough. Moreover it would be unfair on our part to disturb our neighbours at this late hour of the night.”

Maranar stood helplessly looking at his wife. And they heard the ascetic say: “Give me something to eat. I’m dying of hunger.”

The face of Maranar’s wife brightened as if she had hit on a treasure. “If you could manage to collect the paddy seeds that we sowed today in our land,” she said, “then I can prepare some food.” She sighed and added, “I can’t think of any other way.”

Maranar moved out of the hut to the open field, groping in the darkness and getting drenched with the rain. In the field his feet felt the paddy seeds where they had been driven together by the rains. He gathered them in his basket and returned home.

Maranar’s wife took the basket from his hands, washed the paddy seeds of all dirt and then looking at the oven pouted. “There is not a single twig at home. How to kindle the fire?” she said.

“Don’t worry, dear,” Maranar said, tearing up a portion of the roof and giving her some wood.

The woman kindled the fire, fried the paddy seeds, hulled the husk, separated the rice and cooked it.

“But there is no curry. Yet if you get me some greens from our backyard...”

He rushed to the backyard once again in the heavy downpour. There he cut some of the greens and brought them to his wife.

The latter, an expert in culinary arts, washed the greens and prepared several dishes with them.

“Very well!” she applauded. “We have managed it very well. Wake up the ascetic.”

Maranar rushed out of the kitchen crying to the sleeping ascetic, “Food is ready. Wake up.”

The ascetic did get up but in his place rose a brilliance which dazed and perplexed the devoted couple. Soon there was the Divine Presence of Lord Siva and his Consort seated on a Bull. And the Lord said. “This is love indeed. I am pleased with your philosophy of life: ‘Your need is greater than mine.’ Now is the time for both of you to follow us to our abode and enjoy eternal bliss.”

If this is not true love, where is true love to be found?

94. THE WILY WARRIOR

Einathi Nathar was a much wondered-at man in Eyinanur (now Einanallur), a village on the southern bank of the River Arasal six miles away from Kumbakonam. He was a wonder because he was an expert in lathi and swordplay. He could go from one place to another in the heaviest downpour without getting drenched simply by brandishing his sword. He could avert all arrows rained down on him simply by wielding his lathi in different directions. He could kill dozens of his enemies in no time simply by throwing his shield like a flying saucer. That's why he was a wonder to his friends and a terror to his enemies.

Einathi Nathar's chief occupation was to teach the royalty all that he knew of marksmanship and swordplay. Most respected for his coaching ability and martial skills, he became popular throughout the Chozha empire. The appalling side-effect of popularity is incurring the wrath of jealous men. And these green-eyed monsters sooner or later turn enemies.

The most formidable enemy of Einathi Nathar was Adisuran, another coach who taught the commoners archery and swordplay. He too was an expert in the use of weapons but unlike Einathi Nathar he lacked humility. He boasted to his students that Einathi Nathar was no match for him and it was only by sheer luck that he had become more popular than he really deserved to be.

When the matter was reported to Einathi Nathar, he dismissed Adisuran's remarks as the barkings of a dog. Adisuran always spoke ill of Einathi Nathar, but the latter never uttered a word against his rival.

But Adisuran mistook his patience for weakness and one day he gathered many of his students and relatives and reached the house of Einathi Nathar.

"Come out, O Einathi!" shouted Adisuran, "Come out and prove your valour by averting the blows of our swords and the cuts they could easily make on you and your men. If I win, then you should run away once and for all from this village and if you win then I'll be your slave along with my train of servitors."

Einathi Nathar coolly walked towards the threshold of his house and said to Adisuran: "Now that you are challenging me, I can't remain as patient as before. Yet I warn you to go away so that these men who stand behind you may go home alive."

"Fight or die, you. Don't frighten us," yelled Adisuran.

"Well then! Where shall we fight? Here or..?" asked Einathi Nathar.

"At Salaikarai... tomorrow before sunrise."

By dawn the rival factions fought for their rights in an open ground at Salaikarai, half a mile from the temple at Eyinanur.

Arrows whizzed. Swords sang. Lathis clashed with each other. Shields banged against shields. Minutes later heads rolled off their necks. Mutilated arms and legs trembled on the ground. And the brown earth turned into red clay.

Having lost many of his men in the battlefield, Adisuran took to his heels and the fight came to an end.

But that was not the end of Adisuran's wrath. Like a wounded tiger, he awaited the opportunity to avenge the humiliation. He was certain that even a battalion is small fry to Einathi Nathar and that he could be killed only by cunning.

Adisuran thought and thought and thought... His evil brain devised a plan and on the morning of the next day he sent a letter to Einathi Nathar through one of his men.

It read: "Why should innocents lose their lives for our sake? Let us settle the dispute between ourselves. Come fully armed to the ground at Salaikarai today and this time the victory is mine."

Einathi Nathar smiled to himself and went to meet his enemy at the fixed place.

Adisuran had heard of Einathi Nathar's devotion to Lord Siva and the respect he had for all those who smeared holy ash on their brow. He was certain that Einathi Nathar would not dare to raise a finger against any face adorned with holy ash and any mouth that uttered the name of the Lord. Hence he daubed holy ash on his brow and went to the battlefield. He tilted his helmet a little and it hid his brow completely from view.

The fight began. And when Adisuran realized that he was fighting a losing battle, he knocked his helmet off with the back of his hand and exposed his ash-smeared forehead, giving Einathi Nathar quite a turn.

For a minute Einathi Nathar stood like a statue with his sword raised above his head. "Oh, cursed be me! Am I fighting with a devotee of my Lord?" he muttered and his sword slipped from his hand.

The wily opponent pounced at the opportunity and jabbed his pointed sword into Einathi Nathar's abdomen and ripped open his belly.

Adisuran heckled at the sight of the fallen warrior. But he never knew that Lord Siva Himself came to the spot to carry Einathi Nathar to His permanent abode.

95. THE GREAT BURNER

Ten miles north-east of Kumbakonam and five miles north of Aduthurai on the Madras Highway is Thirupananthal, a beautiful village that houses an ancient temple for Lord Siva. In the sanctum sanctorum is seated the Sivalingam, the phallic symbol of the Lord representing creation.

Long long ago in Thirupananthal lived a pious woman named Thatakai. She believed that every human being was brought into the world with a purpose and that hers was to gather sweet-scented flowers, string them together and garland

the Sivalingam everyday. She was always cheerful for she always thought of the Lord and allowed no worldly thought to dominate her mind.

One day it so happened that Thatakai had a very good harvest of flowers and she spent the whole day in stringing them together and making a giant-size garland. When the work was over she wondered at her own creation and with great difficulty lifted it up and moved towards the temple. She climbed up the steps that led to the sanctum sanctorum.

Devotees who stood on either side of the steps worshipping the Lord were filled with awe when they saw Thatakai threading her way with a heavy garland in hand.

As the Sivalingam was a few feet away, the unexpected happened. A mischievous wind played with Thatakai's sari and its loose end slowly began to slip from her shoulders threatening to expose her voluptuous breasts.

Thatakai was in a fix. She could neither hold the slipping sari nor drop the heavy garland on the floor.

To everyone's surprise the Lord Himself came to her rescue. The Sivalingam tilted, leaned forward and received the garland on its neck from Thatakai's hands. And she managed to catch the loose end of her sari before it could fall off her shoulders.

Transfixed by what they saw, the devotees stood rooted to the spot for an interminable second. Then many of them fell at the feet of the blessed being. All of them hailed her as a goddess.

What really shocked the people and their king was that the Sivalingam continued to remain in that leaning position. Since it was popularly believed that idols should not remain in such a position, the king commanded his men to straighten it.

But the idol remained undisturbed. The kingsmen employed powerful horses and even elephants to push the idol to its original position. It didn't budge.

Disappointed, the king fell ill for he feared something unwanted would happen to his country.

A devotee of Lord Siva's at Thirukatavur (Thanjavur District) who happened to hear of the king's sorrow strode towards the temple at Thirupananthal. He made a sturdy rope out of creepers cut from the temple garden. He then tied one end of it to his neck and the other end to the idol. Praying to the Lord he said, "Let my neck break if you don't go back to your place."

He leaned backwards and pulled.

The Sivalingam shook for a second and tilted back to its original position.

The king was pleased with the miracle-worker. And when he expressed his desire to know more about him, Thatakai came forward to tell the story of the devotee. She began:

Popularly known as Kunghilya Kalaya Nayanar, he is a devotee of Lord

Siva who worshipped the Lord by burning *kunghilyam* (one of the many varieties of incense). He would forego even his food to buy *kunghilyam* for the Lord

You'll be surprised to know. your Majesty, that he spent all his wealth in the service of the Lord. And the time came when his wife and children had to go to sleep with empty stomachs.

The cry of the children hungering for food was unbearable to their mother and one day she removed her *thali** and gave it to her husband. "Sell it," she said. "Empty stomachs must be fed. What use is this ornament when our stomachs growl with hunger? Sell it and do it quickly. Come home with rice. We'll have enough for six months."

Kunghilya Kalaya Nayanar wanted to tell his wife that the *thali* must not be removed on any account as long as he was alive. But poverty and hunger drove him to the bazaar.

On his way he encountered a man trudging to the bazaar with a sackload of something on his crooked back.

"What is it?" he asked the man.

"*Kunghilyam*," came the reply.

Kunghilya Kalaya Nayanar jumped for joy and said to himself: "If I could manage to buy this sackload, then I may have enough to last for a little more than six months. The trouble of buying it everyday will be over."

He then bartered the sackload of *kunghilyam* for the *thali*. The *kunghilyam*-seller happily moved away. Happier still was Kunghilya Kalaya Nayanar. He carried the sackload to the temple and kept it in the temple godown.

Kunghilya Kalaya Nayanar's wife and children anxiously waited for his return. As time passed, the children cried for food and wept themselves to sleep. Their mother too rested her head against a wall and dozed off.

In the temple Kunghilya Kalaya Nayanar was happily burning away *kunghilyam* all the time, pleased with his own action and forgetting all the empty stomachs at home.

Lord Siva who was feasting his olfactory sense on the burning *kunghilyam* suddenly realized that He had a duty to perform. He commanded Kuberan, the God of Wealth, to flood Kunghilya Kalaya Nayanar's house with food and wealth.

The Lord then appeared in the wife's dream and told her that they would have enough to last for several generations.

Startled, she woke up. For a minute she was unable to believe her eyes. She thanked the Lord profusely, for wherever she turned her eyes in the house, she saw bags and bags of rice and heaps and heaps of gold.

* The golden ornament which when tied to the neck of a maiden promotes her to wifehood and when removed demotes her to widowhood. No Tamilian Hindu woman would dare to remove it even at the peril of her life.

The Lord appeared before his devotee Kunghiliya Kalaya Nayanar and said: "Now it is time to stop burning incense, go home to eat a sumptuous dinner."

Kunghiliya Kalaya Nayanar hesitated to go home but he didn't want to disobey the Lord.

Back home he saw the mercy of the Lord. He ran short of words to thank the Lord. But he had tears in his eyes

(More legends on the way)

P. RAJA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Savitri: Hindi translation by *Sushama Gupta*. Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry (1996), 740 pages, paperback. Price Rs. 300

Savitri, The Song Divine, is the epic of the Supreme. It is the story of the Divine Mother as Grace incarnate to effect a new birth in humanity and transmute the earthly life into a life divine. Such an intervention recurs eternally in the darkest hours of the earth to usher in a greater dawn. The crisis itself serves to hasten the Divine Advent, the struggle itself serves to call the Victor Strength of Love over all that is dark and fallen and perverse upon earth. In the Indian tradition this advent is well-recognised as the 'Avatar'. *Savitri* is the parable of the life and work of Avatic significance in the obscurity of earth to fill it with the Light of the Spiritual Sun.

Embodying in sound and substance the yogic consciousness of Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri* is not only a poem of extraordinary beauty and profundity but even more importantly the mantric revelation of Sri Aurobindo. In this sense *Savitri* belongs to the line of Vedic poetry revealing the Truth of Life in the body and form of words.

The Mother observed about *Savitri*:

"Each verse of *Savitri* is like a revealed Mantra which surpasses all that man possessed by way of knowledge,... the words are expressed and arranged in such a way that the sonority of the rhythm leads you to the origin of sound, which is OM.

"Everything is there: mysticism, occultism, philosophy, the history of evolution, the history of man, of the gods, of creation, of Nature. How the universe was created, why, for what purpose, what destiny—all is there. You can find all the answers to all your questions there. Everything is explained, even the future of man and of the evolution, all that nobody yet knows.... But this mystery is well hidden behind the words and lines and one must rise to the required level of true consciousness to discover it." (*Sweet Mother*, by Mona Sarkar, pp. 25-26)

In one of the letters on *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo himself writes: "In fact *Savitri* has not been regarded by me as a poem to be written and finished, but as a field of experimentation to see how far poetry could be written from one's own yogic consciousness and how that could be made creative." (*SABCL*, Vol. 29, pp 727-28)

Savitri is a creation of this Tapasya for the earth and for mankind. Intense and living, delightful and mysterious, full of grace and harmony and rhythm of the higher spheres, *Savitri* is the living embodiment of Sri Aurobindo's vision. The Mother has said that "*Savitri* is the supreme revelation of Sri Aurobindo's vision" (*About Savitri*); "the prophetic vision of the world's history, including

the announcement of the earth's future" are described in it. (*Meditations on Savitri*, Part I)

Such being *Savitri*, with this inner significance one can well understand the difficulty of anyone translating it. The very attempt in itself is heroic and a labour of love or, as the translator Sushama Gupta has herself put it, an act of the Mother's Grace

The translation is literal, presented in simple Hindi. It runs in a free style forgoing the rules and limitations of set metres. The vocabulary ranges from literary heights to colloquial usage. Here are a few examples:

Two lines from Book 3, Canto 4: The Vision and The Boon—

His day is a moment in perpetual Time;
He is the prey of the minutes and the hours.

मानव का दिवस इस अचिरत कालगति में मात्र एक क्षण है,
वह इन पलों और इन घड़ियों का मात्र एक शिकार है।

Some other lines from Book 7, Canto 3 The Entry into the Inner Countries—

Then Savitri surged out of her body's wall
And stood a little span outside herself
And looked into her subtle being's depth
And in its heart as in a lotus-bud
Divined her secret and mysterious soul.

यह वाणी सुन सावित्री निज देह की दीवार से उमड़ बाहर आ गयी
और स्वयं से कुछ दूर हटकर खड़ी हो गयी
और अपनी सूक्ष्म-सत्ता की गहनताओं के अंतर में देखा
और अपने हृदय में जैसे एक पद्मकली में हो
उसने अपनी गुह्य रहस्यपूर्ण चैत्यात्मा का अनुमान पाया।

A portion from Book 2, Canto 4 The Dream Twilight of the Earthly Real—

Well is unconscious rule for the animal breeds
Content to live beneath the immutable yoke,
Man turns to a nobler walk, a master path.

तेरा यह अचेत विधान पशु-जाति हित उचित है
जो तेरे अविकारी नियम दड तले सतुष्ट रहते हैं,
मानव तो एक श्रेष्ठतर जीवन और एक गुरुतर मार्ग का पथिक है।

Thus the entire translation runs parallel to the original text line by line, page

by page, and very often punctuation mark to punctuation mark; this makes it easy to go back to the original at any point in the Epic.

Captivating and inviting is the very get-up of the book with a symbolic painting on its cover. The reader is captured there by the beauty of the Golden Purusha mounting the Golden Swan, before he can turn over the page to glance through the inner substance.

The very attempt to translate a work of such magnitude and height is difficult, nay, impossible. For one has to deal with not just a body of words but a consciousness higher than the Himalayan heights. And yet some do attempt to scale the Everest and dive deep into the Pacific. Certainly, to those who do not dare the plunge, these efforts bring some faint glimpse of the Invisible, some measure of the unscalable. Out of the infinite riches of the heights and the depths of our consciousness we are shown a few treasures reflected through the mirror of work. A few are inspired through these glimpses to take the plunge for themselves and feel the delight and wonder of the soul's adventure. This alone, if anything, is the justification of such a labour of love. How far this translation will serve the purpose of inviting seekers of truth to the original grandeur and lustre of *Savitri* will depend upon the design of the Divine Mother. At an individual level certainly, as the translator herself admits, it is an act of the Mother's Grace. And incalculable are the workings of the Grace. This, of all other things, is the real worth and value of the book that it has been inspired by Grace May Her Grace reach everyone!

CHINMAYI

Sea-snails of Pondicherry, by *Fred Pinn* Published in 1990 by Nehru Science Centre, Pondicherry. Price Rs. 250. 116 pages text and 214 colour photos of sea-snails.

From the beginning of time, the shell and its animal builder have played an important role in the life of man. Like a thread of vivid colour woven into the tapestry of man's existence, the shell leads us through its own singular history. Throughout the ages man has experienced an admiring awe at the work of the sea creatures, the master-builders whose architectural miracles embodied the bases of a multitude of mathematically correct vaults, arches, staircases, porticoes and niches. It is a world of beauty that awaits the reader in the colour-plates of Mr Pinn's own photographs. The author is a schoolmaster and has taught in Europe, Africa and Asia. The gift of a shell collection roused in him some curiosity about the subject. During a teaching spell in Kenya (1960) he spent all his holidays on the coast exploring the wonders of the reef. He became fascinated with marine biology in general and shells in particular and pursued this interest whilst running a school in Calcutta (1966-71). Some expeditions took

him to Ramnad, Killakarai, Pamban, Rameshwaram, and the Krusadai Island

The author has also written a children's book on the sea-shore and a history of Darjeeling (*The Road to Destiny*).

He taught in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education for some years. Now back in London, retired, and in his mid-seventies, he is still active researching and writing. Various are his subjects: e.g., the history of the Indian Shankh and of the money Cowry. The research on the history of Darjeeling is still going on and we can expect a second volume on this topic.

Sea-snails of Pondicherry is the first systematic work on the subject. It will inspire the reader to appreciate the beauty of nature's creations and also inform him about the particulars of each species in a short and readable text. The book is the result of a desperate search for material on the sea-shells of Pondicherry for the purpose of identification. It soon became clear that practically no reference book on Indian shells was in existence. This urged the author to create this work, the first Indian shell-book in a modern garb.

SIBYLLE SHARMA-HABLIK