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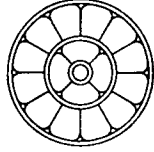
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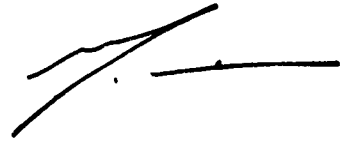
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled



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# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. L

No. 1

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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## THE DIVINE SAVITRI ON THE VERGE OF BIRTH

### Her Advice:

I AM the Mystery beyond reach of mind,  
I am the goal of the travail of the suns,  
My fire and sweetness are the cause of life.  
But too immense my danger and my joy.  
Awake not the immeasurable descent,  
Speak not my secret name to hostile Time;  
Man is too weak to bear the Infinite's weight.  
Truth born too soon might break the imperfect earth.  
Leave the all-seeing Power to hew its way:  
In thy single vast achievement reign apart  
Helping the world with thy great lonely days ..  
Tread still the difficult and dateless path  
Joining the cycles with its austere curve  
Measured for man by the initiate Gods.  
My light shall be in thee, my strength thy force.  
Let not the impatient Titan drive thy heart,  
Ask not the imperfect fruit, the partial prize  
Only one boon, to greaten thy spirit, demand;  
Only one joy, to raise thy kind, desire.  
Above blind fate and the antagonist powers  
Moveless there stands a high unchanging Will;  
To its omnipotence leave thy work's result.  
All things shall change in God's transfiguring hour.

### The Prayer:

O Truth defended in thy secret sun,  
Voice of her mighty musings in shut heavens  
On things withdrawn within her luminous depths,  
O Wisdom-Splendour, Mother of the universe,  
Creatrix, the Eternal's artist Bride,  
Linger not long with thy transmuting hand  
Pressed vainly on one golden bar of Time,  
As if Time dare not open its heart to God.  
O radiant fountain of the world's delight  
World-free and unattainable above,  
O Bliss who ever dwellest deep hid within  
While men seek thee outside and never find,  
Mystery and Muse with hieratic tongue,  
Incarnate the white passion of thy force,

Mission to earth some living form of thee.  
 One moment fill with thy eternity,  
 Let thy infinity in one body live,  
 All-Knowledge wrap one mind in seas of light,  
 All-Love throb single in one human heart.  
 Immortal, treading the earth with mortal feet  
 All heaven's beauty crowd in earthly limbs!  
 Omnipotence, girdle with the power of God  
 Movements and moments of a mortal will,  
 Pack with the eternal might one human hour  
 And with one gesture change all future time.  
 Let a great word be spoken from the heights  
 And one great act unlock the doors of Fate.

**The Boon:**

O strong forerunner, I have heard thy cry.  
 One shall descend and break the iron Law,  
 Change Nature's doom by the lone Spirit's power.  
 A limitless Mind that can contain the world,  
 A sweet and violent heart of ardent calms  
 Moved by the passions of the gods shall come.  
 All mights and greatnesses shall join in her;  
 Beauty shall walk celestial on the earth,  
 Delight shall sleep in the cloud-net of her hair  
 And in her body as on his homing tree  
 Immortal Love shall beat his glorious wings.  
 A music of griefless things shall weave her charm;  
 The harps of the Perfect shall attune her voice,  
 The streams of Heaven shall murmur in her laugh,  
 Her lips shall be the honeycombs of God,  
 Her limbs his golden jars of ecstasy,  
 Her breasts the rapture-flowers of Paradise.  
 She shall bear Wisdom in her voiceless bosom,  
 Strength shall be with her like a conqueror's sword  
 And from her eyes the Eternal's bliss shall gaze.  
 A seed shall be sown in Death's tremendous hour,  
 A branch of heaven transplant to human soil;  
 Nature shall overleap her mortal step;  
 Fate shall be changed by an unchanging will.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL, Vol 28, pp 335-346)

## THE MOTHER IS THE CONSCIOUSNESS-FORCE OF THE SUPREME

.. THE MOTHER is the consciousness and force of the Supreme and far above all she creates..

The one original transcendent Shakti, the Mother stands above all the worlds and bears in her eternal consciousness the Supreme Divine. Alone, she harbours the absolute Power and the ineffable Presence; containing or calling the Truths that have to be manifested, she brings them down from the Mystery in which they were hidden into the light of her infinite consciousness and gives them a form of force in her omnipotent power and her boundless life and a body in the universe... All is she.. Nothing can be here or elsewhere but what she decides and the Supreme sanctions...

The Mahashakti, the universal Mother, works out whatever is transmitted by her transcendent consciousness from the Supreme and enters into the worlds that she has made; her presence fills and supports them with the divine spirit and the divine all-sustaining force and delight without which they could not exist.... Each is something that she has seen in her vision, gathered into her heart of beauty and power and created in her Ananda ...

The Mother as the Mahashakti of this triple world of the Ignorance stands in an intermediate plane between the supramental Light, the Truth life, the Truth creation which has to be brought down here... Determining all that shall be in this universe and in the terrestrial evolution by what she sees and feels and pours from her, she stands there above the Gods and all her Powers and Personalities are put out in front of her for the action...

The Mother not only governs all from above but she descends into this lesser triple universe.... In her deep and great love for her children she has consented to put on herself the cloak of this obscurity, condescended to bear the attacks and torturing influences of the powers of the Darkness and the Falsehood, borne to pass through the portals of the birth that is a death, taken upon herself the pangs and sorrows and sufferings of the creation, since it seemed that thus alone could it be lifted to the Light and Joy and Truth and eternal Life.. .

The supramental change is a thing decreed and inevitable in the evolution of the earth-consciousness... But that the change may arrive, take form and endure, there is needed the call from below... and there is needed the sanction of the Supreme from above. The power that mediates between the sanction and the call is the presence and power of the Divine Mother. The Mother's power... can alone rend the lid and tear the covering and shape the vessel and bring down into this world .. Truth and Light and Life divine and the immortal's Ananda.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*The Mother*, SABCL, Vol 25, pp 19-41)

# A VEDIC HYMN AND THE WORD

## AGNI, THE ILLUMINED WILL

### Rig Veda I.77

कथा दाशेमाग्रये कास्मै देवजुष्टोच्यते भामिने गीः ।  
यो मर्त्येषुमृत ऋतावा होता यजिष्ठ इत् कृणोति देवान् ॥१॥

- 1 How shall we give to Agni? For him what Word accepted by the Gods is spoken, for the lord of the brilliant flame? for him who in mortals, immortal, possessed of the Truth, priest of the oblation strongest for sacrifice, creates the gods?

यो अध्वरेषु शान्तम ऋतावा होता तमू नमोभिरा कृणुध्वम् ।  
अग्निर्यद् वेर्मताय देवान्स चा बोधाति मनसा यजाति ॥२॥

- 2 He who in the sacrifices is the priest of the offering, full of peace, full of the Truth, him verily form in you by your surrenderings, when Agni manifests<sup>1</sup> for the mortals the gods, he also has perception of them and by the mind offers to them the sacrifice

स हि क्रतुः स मर्यः स साधुर्मित्रो न भूदद्भुतस्य रथीः ।  
तं मेधेषु प्रथमं देवयन्तीर्विश उप ब्रुवते दस्ममारीः ॥३॥

- 3 For he is the will, he is the strength, he is the effector of perfection, even as Mitra he becomes the charioteer of the Supreme To him, the first, in the rich-offerings the people seeking the godhead utter the word, the Aryan people to the fulfiller

स नो नृणां नृतमो रिशादा अग्निरिरोऽवसा वेतु धीतिम् ।  
तना च ये मघवानः शविष्ठा वाजप्रसूता इषयन्त मन्म ॥४॥

- 4 May this strongest of the Powers and devourer of the destroyers manifest<sup>2</sup> by his presence the words and their understanding, and may they who in their extension are lords of plenitude, brightest in energy, pour forth their plenty and give their impulsion to the thought.

एवाग्निर्योतेभिर्ऋतावा विप्रेभिरस्तोष्ट जातवेदाः ।  
स एषु द्युमं पीपयत् स वाजं स पुष्टिं याति जोषमा चिकित्वान् ॥५॥

<sup>1</sup> Or, "enters into the gods"

<sup>2</sup> Or, "enter into the words and the thinking"



- 5 Thus has Agni, possessed of the Truth, been affirmed by the masters of light,<sup>1</sup> the knower of the worlds by clarified minds. He shall foster in them the force of illumination, he too the plenty; he shall attain to increase and to harmony by his perceptions.

\*

### THE WORD ARRIVES

Gotama Rahugana is the seer of this Hymn, which is a *stoma* in praise of Agni, the divine Will at work in the universe.

Agni is the most important, the most universal of the Vedic gods. In the physical world he is the general devourer and enjoyer. He is also the purifier; when he devours and enjoys, then also he purifies. He is the fire that prepares and perfects; he is also the fire that assimilates and the heat of energy that forms. He is the heat of life and creates the sap, the *rasa* in things, the essence of their substantial being and the essence of their delight.

He is equally the Will in Prana, the dynamic Life-energy, and in that energy performs the same functions. Devouring and enjoying, purifying, preparing, assimilating, forming, he rises upwards always and transfigures his powers into the Maruts, the energies of Mind. Our passions and obscure emotions are the smoke of Agni's burning. All our nervous forces are assured of their action only by his support.

If he is the Will in our nervous being and purifies it by action, he is also the Will in the mind and clarifies it by aspiration. When he enters into the intellect, he is drawing near to his divine birth-place and home. He leads the thoughts towards effective power; he leads the active energies towards light.

His divine birth-place and home,—though he is born everywhere and dwells in all things,—is the Truth, the Infinity, the vast cosmic Intelligence in which Knowledge and Force are unified. For there all Will is in harmony with the truth of things and therefore effective; all thought part of Wisdom, which is the divine Law, and therefore perfectly regulative of a divine action. Agni fulfilled becomes mighty in his own home—in the Truth, the Right, the Vast. It is thither that he is leading upward the aspiration in humanity, the soul of the Aryan, the head of the cosmic sacrifice.

It is at the point where there is the first possibility of the great passage, the transition from mind to supermind, the transfiguration of the intelligence, till now the crowned leader of the mental being, into a divine Light,—it is at this

<sup>1</sup> *Gotamebhuh* In its external sense "by the Gotamas" the family of the Rishi, Gotama Rahugana, the seer of the hymn. But the names of the Rishis are constantly used with a covert reference to their meaning. In this passage there is an unmistakable significance in the grouping of the words, *gotamebhur rtāvā, viprebhur jātavedāh*, as in verse 3 in *dasmam ārih*.

supreme and crucial point in the Vedic Yoga that the Rishi, Gotama Rahugana, seeks in himself for the inspired Word. The Word shall help him to realise for himself and others the Power that must effect the transition and the state of luminous plenitude from which the transfiguration must commence.

The Vedic sacrifice is, psychologically, a symbol of cosmic and individual activity become self-conscious, enlightened and aware of its goal. The whole process of the universe is in its very nature a sacrifice, voluntary or involuntary. Self-fulfilment by self-immolation, to grow by giving is the universal law. That which refuses to give itself, is still the food of the cosmic Powers. "The eater eating is eaten" is the formula, pregnant and terrible, in which the Upanishad sums up this aspect of the universe, and in another passage men are described as the cattle of the gods. It is only when the law is recognised and voluntarily accepted that this kingdom of death can be overpassed and by the works of sacrifice Immortality made possible and attained. All the powers and potentialities of the human life are offered up, in the symbol of a sacrifice, to the divine Life in the Cosmos.

Knowledge, Force and Delight are the three powers of the divine Life; thought and its formations, will and its works, love and its harmonisings are the corresponding human activities which have to be exalted to the divine level. The dualities of truth and falsehood, light and darkness, conceptional right and wrong are the confusions of knowledge born of egoistic division, the dualities of egoistic love and hatred, joy and grief, pleasure and pain are the confusions of Love, perversities of Ananda, the dualities of strength and weakness, sin and virtue, action and inaction are the confusions of will, dissipators of the divine Force. And all these confusions arise and even become necessary modes of our action because the triune powers of the divine Life are divorced from each other, Knowledge from Strength, Love from both, by the Ignorance which divides. It is the Ignorance, the dominant cosmic Falsehood that has to be removed. Through the Truth, then, lies the road to the true harmony, the consummated felicity, the ultimate fulfilment of love in the divine Delight. Therefore, only when the Will in man becomes divine and possessed of the Truth, *amṛtah ṛtāvā*, can the perfection towards which we move be realised in humanity.

Agni, then, is the god who has to become conscient in the mortal. Him the inspired Word has to express, to confirm in this gated mansion and on the altar-seat of this sacrifice.

"How must we give to Agni?" asks the Rishi. The word for the sacrificial giving, *dāśema*, means literally distribution; it has a covert connection with the root *daś* in the sense of discernment. The sacrifice is essentially an arrangement, a distribution of the human activities and enjoyments among the different cosmic Powers to whose province they by right belong. Therefore the hymns repeatedly speak of the portions of the gods. It is the problem of the right arrangement and distribution of his works that presents itself to the sacrificer; for the sacrifice

must be always according to the Law and the divine ordainment (*ṛtu*, the later *vidhi*). The will to right arrangement is an all-important preparation for the reign of the supreme Law and Truth in the mortal.

The solution of the problem depends on right realisation, and right realisation starts from the right illuminative Word, expression of the inspired Thought which is sent to the seer out of the Vast. Therefore the Rishi asks farther, "What word is uttered to Agni?" What word of affirmation, what word of realisation? Two conditions have to be satisfied. The Word must be accepted by other divine Powers, that is, it must bring out some potentiality in the nature or bring into it some light of realisation by which the divine Workers may be induced to manifest in the superficial consciousness of humanity and embrace openly their respective functions. And it must be illuminative of the double nature of Agni, this Lord of the lustrous flame. *Bhāma* means both a light of knowledge and a flame of action. Agni is a Light as well as a Force.

The Word arrives....

SRI AUROBINDO

(*The Secret of the Veda*, SABCL, Vol 10, pp. 263-267)

## DYUMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of December 1996)

*My Mother,*

*I hope that You will not hesitate to tell me anything required to be done during our crucial Darshan days.*

Be quiet and confident, it is all that is required.

Blessings.

19 February 1934

*Dear Mother,*

*All kinds of bad suggestions about myself come and pass away, I have no time at present to pay attention to them, but every possible thing tries to enter: (1) I am bad; (2) I am fallen, (3) The body is a failure, I would like to give it up; (4) I have received nothing, progressed nowhere; and many more such things.*

All this is mere nonsense and falsehood and nothing more You do well to pay no attention to it.

22 February 1934

*Dear Mother,*

*The fever is over. I am quite all right Tonight I will drink the decoction again and I am sure I will get up 100 per cent cured. My Mother, You are with me and our relation is now more close, more compact and more loving*

Certainly our relation is bound to become more and more close and strong and intimate.

Only your insistence is on *the work*—and my insistence is on *your health* first.

I have just heard somebody coughing. Is it you? It seems to me that, *until you are quite free from this cough*, it would be better not to rise before the sun rises, because these early morning hours are *very cold* and that helps in prolonging the illness.

My love and blessing are constantly with you, whatever are the circumstances.

3 March 1934

My child,

Why are you not taking honey and butter? They are both good for your health and will give you strength. It is light and wholesome food. For cough it is recommended to drink very hot milk sugared with honey (2 tea-spoons in a cup of milk). Or the drink that X prepares for you can also be sweetened with honey.

What you say about my trust in you is quite true—and that in itself should give you the strength and the courage to do what is needed to get completely cured.

With love.

5 March 1934

*(Regarding the disciple's physical condition. He had a headache, sore throat and fever, and suffered from general nervous strain and weakness.)*

To get over this attack soon, one thing is needed: remain quiet, calm, peaceful. Do not get upset, do not fear, do not get restless or impatient. A quiet, firm trust in the Divine's Grace is the one thing needed.

The anxiety of the mind, the restlessness of the vital delay the cure more than anything else.

Our love and protection are always with you.

21 March 1934

## INSPIRATION AND BEAT-BEATING

### NIRODBARAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

*Sending you one more poem by Nishikanta Seems a very interesting piece. If it could have been done well, it would have been very attractive and original.*

IT is indeed matter of which a fine poem can be made Nishikanta has imagination and the ideas carry beauty in them, the language also, but he has not yet knowledge of the turns of the English tongue which make the beauty effective. I have tried to make it as perfect as an hour's work can do—but that is not enough, it might be better

*But from the immensely profuse amount of corrections you have made and have to make, I wonder whether we are taking too much liberty with your precious Supramental time. But Supramental is beyond Time—that is the hope.*

If I have not time, I shall keep till I have. The poems are such good matter of poetry that it is worth the trouble.

*Amal says you take very little time in these things.*

Usually, yes A quarter of an hour is enough; but these last two took more time.

*If Nishikanta goes for the proper technique at present, there may be a check on his flow, no?*

Possibly, though fidelity to metre can be a help as well as a check as it makes the God of Words more alert, skilful and subtle.

*About my metre, shall I approach Amal or Arjava? Amal is willing.*

Either.

*Everyone is doing something. I am only Tennysonning. Don't you feel pity for me, Sir?*

Not so much. If you were browning, I might.

On second thought, I keep the poem one day more.

*I don't say that images, expressions may not sweep in, but one has to beat, beat and beat.*

Beat-beating is not sweeping in.

*I have found that a poem may follow automatically, spontaneously with rich images and expressions, though one doesn't know what will follow next. That gives a real delight and what comes is genuine stuff.*

That is the proper way of inspiration.

*Two of my poems that you liked very much came in that way. But unfortunately all don't and one has to work hard. Sometimes there is success, at other times failure. Can you tell me on what these variations depend?*

It depends on whether the inspiration flows in or the fabricating mind labours. You are obliged to have a mixed method, part inspiration, part mental, because the inspiration is not yet free to pass through. Beat-beating is the sign of the mind at work like a God-forgotten blacksmith; the flow is the sign of the Muse pouring down things at her ease.

*You can keep this notebook, but what about the one lying with you?*

I was returning it this morning, but I found one place all wrong and have been beat-beating at it—penultimate stanza 2nd and 3rd lines. Made something at last but not very very right.

*Two poems by Nishikanta enclosed, one old and the other new. But no use asking what the metre is. He has already begun learning it.*

All right, I think. Rereading it, I find it *très jol*. Congratulations to myself and Nishikanta with Nirod Talukdar in the middle.

*Why bother about the metre, precise English, etc.? They will come some day and in the meantime let him go on writing and learning by corrections, lessons, so on.*

That's all right—but I rub in a bit about metre and stresses so that his ear may learn—and yours also. Judging by the last poem there is a distinct progress—but where is the credit? Corrected by Amal? or only by your sole poetic self?

*How do you rhyme "life" and "cliff", "smile" and "will", "came" and "whum"? Are they all whims?*

These are called in English imperfect rhymes and can be freely but not too freely used. Only you have to understand the approximations and kinships of vowel-

sounds in English, otherwise you will produce illegitimate children like “splendour” and “wonder” which is not a rhyme but an assonance

*By the way you didn't like my poem or you hesitate to call it mine, because of so many corrections by Nishikanta? Others say that it is very fine*

It was very good; mixed parentage does not matter, so long as the offspring is beautiful

*Nishikanta has written.*

*“I am tuned in thy tremolo of dreamland, heaven and earth.”  
Is the word tremolo all right?*

It is rather strange, but perhaps it will do.

*The credit of this poem goes entirely to him. You'll be glad to see that your effort of metrical lessons has proved fruitful*

Evidently with a little care and practice Nishikanta ought soon to be able to handle English metre. He has the gift.

*I have no objection to being the trait-d'union in the “mixed parentage”, but for heaven's sake drop that appendage Talukdar<sup>1</sup>, Sir It is absolutely prosaic when I am trying to be poetic!*

All right Only it is a pity—it was such a mouthful! It may be prosaic in Bengali, but to one ignorant of the meaning it sounds as if you were a Roman emperor

*As for the next poem, it is as usual, of mixed parentage. Please see if it has blossomed as a beauty! Nishikanta finds it one of my best, but when I completed it, I said, “Won't do! Won't do!”*

[*Sri Aurobindo underlined “Won't do! Won't do!”*]

Rubbish! It is exceedingly fine and your won't do is nonsense

*If Nishikanta is right, then my poetic sense is no good, or am I too self-critical?*

Your poetic sense seems all right when you judge Nishikanta's or other poetry  
Not self-critical, self-depreciatory.

<sup>1</sup> A small land-holder



# LIFE—POETRY—YOGA

## SOME PERSONAL LETTERS

THESE days I have practically ceased to be a man of letters. I write very few literary articles and have cut down my once-profuse correspondence to the bare minimum. Even the minimum comes after quite a pause. But somehow I have risen fairly soon to the occasion in regard to your question. You are puzzled by the fact that you fail to keep the Mother's Presence consciously with you all the time. I think your failure should not startle you. Of course, you should not take it "lying down", as it were. But you must not forget that your forgetfulness is most natural and does not stigmatise you as a particularly black sheep in the Mother's fold of disciples. To be her disciple is never an easy job unless what she terms the "psychic being"—the true inmost soul in us—is always up and doing instead of being startled into attention once in a long while. It is good enough that there are occasions when you "get conscious of Her presence" within you. It shows that she is definitely installed in your heart or rather that her secret eternal presence in your heart as in all hearts comes to the fore now and again. Her clear emergence to the forefront at all hours is now a matter of time. Your regret that she is not there as much as you would wish is a bright pointer to a not-so-far future when you will hear a happy "Hello" from her all the while. But you are right in feeling acutely about "spending uselessly, dragged by vital currents, the precious times that are flowing ceaselessly" Your heartfelt phrase reminds me of Andrew Marvel's *To his Coy Mistress*:

And at my back I always hear  
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near  
While ever more before me lie  
Deserts of vast eternity.

I am myself often plagued by the sense of days flying by with our main work—God-realisation—kept hanging. One of my poems begins:

This is my prayer: Let me all things forget  
Save that the Spirit remains unfathomed yet  
In its omnipotent tranquillity.

Our nature is to be slack—especially when we figure God-realisation as a colossal task. Our arms drop limp by our sides when we contemplate the height towards which they have to strain. But we should not be discouraged. The arms of the Divine Beloved are always straining more towards us than we can ever stretch ours in her direction. Such is the nature of Grace So we should not

despair on any count. I am sure the Mother has—to employ your imagery—“forged the inner conscious connection” with you even though you feel you have not done so with her. Otherwise you would not fret so much. May I tell you that I have the firm sense that there is nothing really wrong with your sadhana? On my side—in answer to your appeal for assistance—I am inwardly making the gesture of lifting you high up towards her. May you experience more than ever the warm radiance of her nearness to you! (17 1996)

\*

I was delighted to get the card expressing the delight so rare a personality as Bede Griffiths had taken in my Dante-adaptation. Yours is indeed a response from what I can only call the “soul”. Both heart and mind merge in that inmost element and, from the single truth of them, speak the word of truth, at once spontaneous and discerning. Very few readers let poetry reach so deep and still fewer respond to its call straight from the bright depth attained. Your estimate is couched in no more than three or four lines but they speak a great deal to me both about my own work and about yourself. Thank you for this gift. I appreciate especially your going to the original. It must have told you that we come so close together through my verse because I have a strong Christian turn in the midst of my Aurobindonian commitment while you have a profound Aurobindonian strain within the general Christian creed to which you are pledged.

As you must have gathered from *The Secret Splendour*, Dante attracts me immensely. Sri Aurobindo once noted that Dante always inspired me to my best. Indeed I seem to live with the great Florentine if not even in him and share his devotion to and transformation by that Smile he visions in Beatrice, first *dolce* and then *santo*. Believing as I do, both philosophically and by an inner sense, in reincarnation, I feel sure I must have been many times born in Christian Europe—the age of Augustine, the age of Dante, the age of Leonardo are familiar to my being, just as are the period of ancient Athens and that of Augustan Rome as well as some post-medieval epochs in England and elsewhere.

Mention of *The Secret Splendour* sends me back to another postcard of yours, the one you sent me before your trip to the USA. I have been waiting for a chance to thank you for your most encouraging comment—a comment which makes a number of vital points with an admirable economy of expression. Rarely have I had such a penetrating and significant statement on my poetry in a few phrases.

Before I send you the letter in which I have touched on the salient features of your “summing-up” after your return from the States, I should like to say something about your early autobiography, *The Golden String*. I have already

told you how it fascinated me the moment I plunged into it. It started speaking at once to me out of my own generation and my own psychology as a young man, extremely westernised, in search of some ultimate to be experienced on one's very pulse, through nature, through literature, through life's vicissitudes, through empathy with all who in the past or in the present have longed and looked for the "Secret Splendour". The books that meant much to you were my own boon companions—Plato and Marcus Aurelius and Spinoza, Wordsworth and Shelley and Swinburne and many others. I studied Roman Catholic thought with great interest, starting with St. Augustine and ending with Chesterton's *Everlasting Man* and Papini's book on Jesus. We were also in the same boat inasmuch as neither of us was a born Roman Catholic, though perhaps I was more influenced by Roman Catholicism, having had as my educational background St. Xavier's School and College and the association with European Jesuits from early boyhood at the same time that I steeped myself in Zoroastrian lore. It is clear from your book that the wideness and richness of your inner life are due to the fact that you came to Catholic Christianity from the outside. If you had been born to it, you would never have sought out so much that is non-Catholic to form the many-sidedness of your mind. For instance, I feel that a Catholic could never have entered into the high and lucid spirit of Spinoza the "God-intoxicated" pantheist who is the bugbear of the Catholic Church; nor perhaps would he have responded so exultantly to the panpsychic or pantheistic Nature-mysticism of the young Wordsworth. I don't remember your mentioning Luther anywhere, but I would not have been surprised if, like Chesterton, a fellow-convert, you had called him, in spite of his crudities, "a great man", a compliment which only of late has become possible to Catholics. But converts have a certain tendency too, which is not very agreeable and which possibly a born Catholic may not so often indulge in—namely, to keep extolling and exalting the new faith in comparison with other religions notwithstanding an instinctive sense of their wonderful value, as you do repeatedly in the last two chapters of your book—"Catholicism" and "Epilogue"—which from p. 172 are unnecessarily and in my opinion unjustifiably provocative in several places and, for all the widening viewpoint praised at times, impress me as short-sighted on the whole. One can hardly believe that what you criticise and belittle in comparison with Christianity is the India of the glorious vari-visioned Upanishads and of the Gita's vast as well as supple and diversely convergent synthesis, not to mention the medieval saints and devotees and the marvellous modern Ramakrishna. When you wrote your book you had no idea of Sri Aurobindo, but what could be known was enough to prevent the "superior" self-congratulatory variety of Christianity from breaking out here and there in so charming and authentic a document of the soul. I would wish the offensive matter could be expunged or modified. But let me not dwell on the blind spots towards the conclusion of your narrative. Despite the jarring notes at the tail-

end, I shall always remember how almost the entire book is both beautiful and profound with a straightforward simplicity across which a keen subtlety of mind shines out.

I don't think any inward-looking autobiography that I have read of the Christian *genre* can match yours—not even Newman's *Apologia*. I could find no mystico-spiritual urge in Newman, only a very cultured religious fervour. Even as a piece of writing, I found nothing memorable other than the great set passage on the sense of some “aboriginal calamity” in man's inner history, the haunting presence of what Catholicism designates the “Fall”. You have, again and again, inspired pages. I have never wanted to read Newman a second time, whereas I am just waiting for a spot of leisure to go back to your life-story, and enjoy and appreciate the vivid account of the long search that brought you, as a Christian with a deep need of historical background, into the Catholic fold—a search that is highly illuminative up to the point I have indicated—and even beyond that point if we ignore what I have considered instances of short-sight. Perhaps I should be less distressed even by them after having known you intimately through our correspondence and come in contact with your personal tolerance, courtesy, honesty, sensitive response to all genuine mysticism. Anyway, in a final estimate nothing can obstruct my gratitude to you for sending me a copy of *The Golden String*.  
(6 12.1983)

AMAL KIRAN  
(K. D. SETHNA)

## BASANTI REMEMBERS AURO-DADA\*

### WHERE DID HE DISAPPEAR?

ON his release, my father, Krishna Kumar Mitra, returned from his incarceration in Agra Jail, by the Punjab Mail, on 11 February 1910. Just a few days later, when I went into our living-room to call Auro-dada for lunch, I found a group of people had come to meet him. Seeing me he gestured with his hand and I withdrew from the room and waited in the belief that he would come any moment for his meal. Quite some time passed but he did not turn up. Then, peeping into the room I found no one there—not even Auro-dada. Amazing! Where had he disappeared without taking his lunch?

That day he walked out—he did not return even at night—not even the next day—and many more days elapsed—until one day at last I received a letter. He had written to me—I have come away to Pondicherry.... At the end he had bestowed his blessings on me.

Since that day, for the last 40 years, we did not meet, but that warm affection of his which I had received I cannot forget. Such agony I feel now, that the letter in his own hand, that poem he wrote on my birthday,<sup>1</sup> they are no longer with me. In the riots of 1946 our Park Circus home was ransacked.

On 5 December 1950, the same day on which my father had passed away in 1937, Auro-dada too left this world for the other world. .. Memories of those bygone days now flood my mind...

Full of reverence and with a weeping heart, I quote these lines for a Mahayogi like him:

*Adbhuta sadhana taba ashcharjya je tumi  
Ashcharjya santan pelo taba janmabhoomi.*

\* Basanti Mitra-Chakravarti, *Amader Auro-dada* in *Galpa Bharati* (Bengali), Pausa 1357, pp 784-785

<sup>1</sup> See below

### THE SPRING CHILD

On Basanti's Birthday—Jyestha 1900

Of Spring is her name for whose bud and blooming  
We praise today the Giver,—  
Of Spring, and its sweetness clings about her  
For her face is Spring and Spring's without her,  
As loth to leave her

See, it is summer; the brilliant sunlight  
 Lies hard on stream and plain,  
 And all things wither with heats diurnal;  
 But she! how vanished things and vernal  
 In her remain.

And almost indeed we repine and marvel  
 To watch her bloom and grow,  
 For half we had thought our sweet bud could never  
 Bloom out, but must surely remain for ever  
 The child we know.

But now though summer must come and autumn  
 In God's high governing  
 Yet I deem that her soul with soft insistence  
 Shall guard through all change the sweet existence  
 And charm of Spring.

O dear child soul, our loved and cherished,  
 For this thy days had birth,  
 Like some tender flower on some grey stone portal  
 To sweeten and flush with childhood immortal  
 The ageing earth.

There are flowers in God's garden of prouder blooming  
 Brilliant and bold and bright,  
 The tulip and rose are fierier and brighter,  
 But this has a softer hue, a whiter  
 And milder light.

Long be thy days in rain and sunshine,  
 Often thy spring relume,  
 Gladdening thy mother's heart with thy beauty,  
 Flowerlike doing thy gentle duty  
 To be loved and bloom

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Collected Poems*, SABCL, Vol 5, pp 29-30)

# RECOLLECTIONS OF SUDHIR KUMAR SARKAR

## HIS EARLY ASSOCIATIONS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

*(Continued from the issue of December 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 ]*

### At Alipore Jail

THE next phase was one of searches and arrests. At Narayangarh, there was a bomb attack on the Viceroy's train; the engine was damaged and the train derailed. Then came the Muzaffarpore bombing; there were searches, bombs and pistols were found and arrests made.

I made my escape to Khulna with the intention of hiding in the forests of the Sunderbans. But, as a result of Naren Goswami's treachery, Samsul Rahaman came to Khulna with a warrant of arrest. Out of consideration for my father and others who were in service, I surrendered myself voluntarily. There were about ninety of us lodged in Alipore Jail, all arrested in connection with the Alipore Bomb case. Besides us there were some others brought from Bombay and Madras. The jail became for our high spirits a veritable place for amusement. Sri Aurobindo went into meditation in the evening and in the early hours before dawn. On days when there was no court to attend, he would often spend the time with us,—sometimes we played word-making games for learning the Bengali language; sometimes there would be a mock court in which Ullaskar would be the judge and Sri Aurobindo himself would become the Public Prosecutor imitating the arguments of Norton. He would expound on subjects like the philosophy of British law and justice, the morality and immorality of Anarchism, Imperialism, revolution, the morality of political dacoity, bombing, killings, etc.; he spoke with such lucidity, arguing on both sides, that it seemed he had a map of all those topics spread out before him.

### His Humour

A certain speaker from the student community of Harrison Road arrived after surrendering. His name was Probash Deb. The subject of discussion was

the Formula of the Bomb. Probash's way of speaking, eating and moving was always brisk. His face was small for his body and he had closed-cropped hair. When giving an oration he would throw his arms and legs about just like a boy of ten though he was twenty-five or more. At times, when the orator became grave, we would tease him in order to lighten things. Here is an example:

Seeing Sri Aurobindo meditating, we also started to meditate at night. Bijoy Bhattacharya had been arrested while making bombs. He used to join us in these activities. Everyone liked him. One day, seeing Probash, the orator, deep in meditation at midnight, Bijoy took a palm leaf fan in hand, held it like a flute in the pose of Krishna, stood before Probash and whispered "Here I have come!" What insolence! How dare he make fun of a spiritual emotion! Pandemonium broke out! Probash jumped up and chased the fake god through the length of the big hall. The noise of the stampede woke all of us. Finally Bijoy took shelter under Sri Aurobindo's wings. Then and there the complainant demanded justice from Sri Aurobindo. He threatened that if the case was not dealt with, either Bijoy would be annihilated or the sadhak himself would commit suicide! So a court was set up at two in the morning! At the orator's request, Ullaskar was made the judge and Sri Aurobindo agreed to take upon himself the role of counsel for the defendant. The court began. The counsels for the accused were Upen Bandopadhyaya, Hemchandra Das and others. The rest of us became witnesses for one side or the other.

### Yoga in the Jail

Every morning after taking his bath Sri Aurobindo selected a corner in the hall as his living space. There, with his head on the floor and feet in the air, he spent hour after hour. One day the Governor of Bengal, Mr. Baker, came to see our ward. Sri Aurobindo was then in that pose, with his feet upwards. Baker remained standing for about half an hour without uttering a word. When Sri Aurobindo did not stir in any manner he left, thinking the posture to be another instance of the occult and unintelligible performance of the Indian mystics. We were filled with apprehension: "Now," we thought, "we are finished. The Governor surely came to speak with him. He must have felt that he was being ignored. Obviously they will shoot us now. Perhaps a little conversation would have softened him."

On the day Naren Goswami was killed by Kanai, the sound of the firing brought cheer to our hearts. For, it had been decided beforehand that we would make an attempt to escape by forcing our way through the main gate of the prison as soon as help in the form of bombs and pistols arrived from outside. We thought that help had come. But those repeated sounds of firing seemed to come not from the direction of the main gate, but from the hospital. By and by news reached us that Kanai had overpowered and finished off Naren Goswami in front



of the jail hospital. We felt like dancing out of sheer joy. The alarm bell had already started ringing following the sound of the shots.

Sri Aurobindo was then taking his bath and he went on with it as if he had heard nothing. I was wiping his body. Those days every morning I used to bathe Sri Aurobindo in the presence of the guards since, during that period, he had ceased to make any effort at doing things himself, eating, bathing or anything else; he had even stopped making comments. He remained in the state of perpetual unmindfulness. Our elders, Upen-da and others, finding me a strong and healthy lad, had selected me to look after him. I told Sri Aurobindo that the guards were asking people to get inside their rooms, and that the alarm bell was ringing because Goswami had been murdered. Shots could still be heard outside. Sri Aurobindo seemed to be totally unaware of all this as he slowly entered the room. Such a big event for us! He seemed hardly to take any notice of it. He never made any comment on these events even afterwards. His silence was something totally unlike that of ours, which is just the shutting of our mouths. Slowly his silence spread itself inwardly and outwardly; all became silent, as if all the inner mechanisms of his body, even the breathing, were suspended. When I could not reconcile his silence with my own feeling, I would mutter to myself: "Has he gone mad?" But within me I could not accept this. Whenever I came in contact with him, I felt a deep attraction towards him, a sympathy, such as one feels towards one's very own

### Self-lost

Then Sri Aurobindo stopped speaking altogether. His eyes seemed to look far away, though they were not vacant, as if he dwelt in some far-off twilight region. He used to go to the court wearing his dhoti tightly tucked up in the manner of working men. He would put on his cotton shawl drawing one end below his right arm and throwing the other over his left shoulder. Was this the dress or manner of one who could have become a district magistrate in the I.C.S.? Rather he looked like a mendicant, a fakir! He was just like any other prisoner, a criminal, a thief, a robber. He had nothing to discuss with his lawyers, C. R. Das and Byomkesh, no comments to give them about his case. He would sit in a corner of the dock and sometimes laugh heartily. What he saw he alone knew. During the identification parade he failed to move aside even when he was told to do so. Was it reckless madness or some profound reliance? His black hair glistened always as if oil was dripping from it. His face resembled that of a child's, without any anxiety, a tender face perpetually filled with a happy smile. His eyes were full of profound peace and tranquillity. His smile was unlike ours; it was expressed in the glance of his eyes. His body exuded a fragrance like that of a baby's tender body. His nails grew to half an inch, his hair and beard grew longer and longer. Our hair never had that oily sheen of his. I ventured to ask him: "Do the European warders bring you oil in secret?" He neither smiled

nor answered, as if he had not heard me. At night the warders would come and tell us, "Arvind remains standing the whole night, his bedding folded in the corner." They did not disturb him by pressing him to lie down. They did not even call him up at night as was their practice with us, in our case they called us quite regularly to make sure that we were there and no one had escaped.

*(To be concluded)*

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## THE WAITING

BEHIND the ritual-winds of slumber-peace  
 Thy hush awaits sovereign, alone and bare,  
 An awakened tide of inner sleep that sees  
 A somnolence of light no death can share.

Behind the words of time a Word awaits,  
 Supreme in felicity, a deathless flame,  
 Eager to open God's inscrutable gates  
 A power behind all might, a name behind name.

Behind all moods one mood of lightning is all,  
 Stout with a passion-blaze, with ocean-feet,  
 Moving a hound, a kite invincible,  
 A hungry dart of gleam with creative heat.

Behind the earth, Thy earth, the sun is yet unborn,  
 Awaiting for the tread of a noon the morn

15.3 1959

ROMEN

(From the late poet's unpublished diaries )

## HOPE\*

*You have sounded very optimistic about the Transformation in one of your previous articles. But in the Group there is a lot of negativism and disinterestedness amongst members. So what are the hopeful signs that indicate that we are progressing?*

I FIND the situation not as bad as you write. It is true that there are some amongst our students whose attitude towards physical education is as you have said in your question. Most probably they are not fit to be here, in our institution. But all our students are not like that. I know that there are many who consider the opportunities offered to them unique and who are making the best of these for their progress. They are putting sincere efforts, making good progress in every way, and are quite happy with the situation.

There is a Sanskrit saying which begins with “*Ekaschandra Tamo Hanti...*”, one moon can remove the darkness. I believe that even if one member can achieve what we have set as our goal, new vistas will open in front of us which will create opportunities for progress for the whole of humanity. Here I have my hope.

Health, physical fitness and all the mental, moral and spiritual qualities that are acquired through a programme of Physical Education being common, each institution has an ultimate aim for its achievement. Schools aim at producing ideal citizens. Colleges, universities and clubs try to produce champion athletes who would increase the prestige of the nation. Police organisations want to see their men as ideal custodians of the law, while military organisations want to see their men as ideal soldiers who would be required to defend the country. Democratic countries want that men should lead a democratic life while totalitarian countries want their men for labour and defence.

We have also our Ideal. We want to achieve through Physical Education “the body consciousness”, that will ultimately lead us to Physical Transformation, which we have set as our ultimate goal.

All our students are not ready for our Ideal. Those who are not will fall off and those who are fit will continue.

Mother one day explained to me that in the material plane everything follows the material laws and we are accustomed to see them and find them most natural. When the Overmental Consciousness interferes, we see miracles and we appreciate them and understand them. But in the Supramental Consciousness there is no place for miracles. Everything that happens will seem to be quite natural and when we see things happen we shall feel that this thing was to happen. For example—you would like to see somebody and he happens to meet

\* Pranab's answer to some young members of the Department of Physical Education, *SportsSpirit*, August 1996

you. You feel that a certain thing should take a certain turn and it does become like that.

I believe that the Supramental Consciousness is fully at work, I believe that all that is happening in the individual or the collective life in the world now is due to the action of the Supramental Consciousness. Even the children born now seem to be so different from children born earlier. Most of the children born now are so conscious and so open to higher forces! I pin my hope on them.

PRANAB KUMAR BHATTACHARYA

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## THE PARROT

“No, no, this cannot be, it’s never been”—  
 Parrot-fashion we go on saying this;  
 Casting the spell of dark despair within  
 Your earth-bound spirit’s pet—what bird it is!  
     You guard it in the gilded cage of lust  
     And thirst for life. Thus aeons pass slowly by.  
     You make it sing the song of love for dust,  
     It yearns for earthly joy. It cannot fly  
 Up to the higher sphere of deathless life.  
 Then make it breathe the breath of unaging age;  
 Let this earth-bound spirit learn sans strife  
 To bring endless freedom inside the cage.

Let it sing the song of hope for ever:  
 “Yes, it happens thus,—that which happened never.”

NISHIKANTA

(Translated from the original in Bengali, page 30 of *Vayayanti*, by Ratri Ray )

# BASIS FOR A FUTURE WORLD

## EAST-WEST CULTURES

EVERY major culture has achieved exceptional results and produced exceptional individuals, whether viewed from within the culture itself or from outside it. Yet each culture, however variegated, has its own character, its own temperament, not necessarily superior or inferior, but different, that guides the mass of its adherents. In their large sweep, cultures are said broadly to fall under the categories of Occidental and Oriental. In essence, western cultures give primacy to matter while eastern ones give it to spirit, and a debate rages on the relative merit of their positions. It should be clear that there is, through an intrinsic quest for completeness and through long association, already a mixture if not a true synthesis of material and spiritual pursuits in both eastern and western cultures. Yet we may hold with due fairness that there exists an essential dichotomy in their emphasis, of one on matter, of the other on spirit. Let us discuss then their relative capabilities and limitations and ultimately their synthesis.

Dynamism, stability, humanness and aspiration are the attributes of cultures that one should study to gauge at this broad level their relative merits. For surely if a culture is not vibrant and creative enough to survive or stable enough to persevere then in the long trajectory of human progress its contributions will be a mere ripple. Creative vibrancy and persevering stability are inherently opposed, one dynamic and the other conservative, one seeking the harmony of interaction with other cultures and the other seeking an intrinsic and internal harmony, one driving the other and the other constraining the first. The balance of dynamism and stability is the first characteristic that one should identify in a culture. Of necessity, humanness is fundamentally involved in a culture, for culture is a mode of human society, and the vision of the human condition promulgated by a culture is the dominant characteristic of its merit. But even more pressing is the aspiration of a culture—what it hopes to be, to accomplish, to realise, to manifest—its very reason for existence; and in the final analysis this is the paramount characteristic of a culture.

Clearly, eastern cultures have survived; Indian culture has certainly survived. It has brought forth not only rich classical cultures but also has effloresced into thriving contemporary cultures expressed through more than a dozen widely spoken languages, concomitant literature, idiom, theatre, cinema, cuisine and several arts, all woven into the fabric of a common Indian spirituality and world-view. More surprisingly, ancient Indians who forged the Indian archetype created such a dynamic and resilient culture that it withstood and assimilated extremely hostile intermittent attacks for twenty-five hundred years (since Alexander), and continuous for a thousand years, embodying Moghul and European occupation. It could also create and assimilate internal perturbations such

as Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and many others. For survival a culture constantly adapts to the other cultures it interacts with, and with its creative energy brings forth a rich multitude of forms, revealing its dynamism. Thus, surely we shall see reflections of western cultures in modern eastern ones alongside the reflections of their ancient forms. Western culture itself is relatively young and dynamic and agile, and will adapt too to eastern cultures which are certain to survive through their dynamism and stability.

At present, western culture does not seem to be sustainably stable. This is due to its model of growth which relies on relatively unfettered individual freedom and predominantly twofold use of technology: imperialism and consumerism. Imperialism relies on maintaining artificial differentials in availability of markets and suppliers to the advantage of the imperialist, through the use of superior military technology. Consumerism relies on universalisation of technological advances by which tools and conveniences are brought to each individual. Though consumerism at home and imperialism abroad is a good formula as evidenced in the US, we are also seeing both imperialism and consumerism abroad in the Japanese strategy. But more and more, imperialism cannot succeed against the largely self-sufficient societies of China and India. Further, consumerism inherently reduces the differentials that imperialism raises. Given the powerful universalising capability of technology, we shall increasingly see a level playing field. Since there are no Americas left to discover, we have to keep making difficult choices in resource allocations. Hence, we shall more and more see unbridled individualism failing as a sustainable culture. Sharing, interdependence, give-and-take will become important features of a stable culture. In fact, one often equates these qualities with culture. On the other hand, eastern cultures have had a long training on the frontier of their capabilities. In their youth approximately five thousand years ago, they expanded into virgin territories full of conquest and glory. However, for more than two thousand years now they have been on a fairly constant frontier, honing their culture through difficult choices in interdependence and sharing. Now, acquiring newer technology and moving into an expanding frontier, they have a relatively sure compass and instinct for stability and sustainability.

Humanness, one must admit, one finds only with difficulty in western culture as it is. To industry, a person is a unit of labour, a more or less recalcitrant factor of production; to the political machinery, a person is a vote; to the economic machinery, a person is a consumer. to the social machinery, a person is a social unit to be listed in statistics and reluctantly to be cared for when down. Why, I ask, doesn't one feel like a cow, its straw fed, its udders milked, occasionally scrubbed or petted, and of course, under capitalism free to roam the meadow? Under communism you may not so roam. Secular humanism strives to fill this vacuum and propounds a very necessary baseline of human social conduct, but it is moralistic and mechanical, and cannot suffice. Of course, there

are spots of brightness when one comes in contact with real persons, humans. But on the whole, this is despite the system and not within it. On the other hand, one could fault the eastern cultures for too much humanness, to the extent that the society becomes inefficient and even humanism becomes perverse. And in as much as world cultures are set in a jostle of competition, this inefficiency directly affects their ability to compete with western cultures.

The aspiration of a culture characterises its higher goal, its very reason for existence. Efficiency seems to be one aspiration of western culture—and this has certainly raised the stakes for sheer survival. But this cannot be a goal in itself: it can only be a means. Arts and the general pleasure of life seem to be another goal. And this indeed has been a redeeming feature of western culture, imparting it some humanness. But again, hedonism alone doesn't seem to be a satisfying motive for civilisation. Philosophy and intellectual pursuit could be the leading principle of culture. But it is too dry for the mass of humanity and provides no sustaining motive. Religion and mysticism, too, have been a strong quest of all human cultures. But in the west it is said that the overt influence of mystic religion on life has diminished. To sum up, the west presents satisfaction of desires through efficient material means assisted by a keen intellect as the goal of civilisation and culture. All these are innate human tendencies. However, in the east in addition to these the spiritual quest has been recognised as the imperative and overarching motive of existence. Most, it is said, follow the leisurely pace of normal life—through its vicissitudes, yearnings, satisfactions and play, and some at an accelerated pace, so to speak, through yoga. These latter have been hailed by these cultures as seers who could found and propagate civilisation. They were not reclusive hermits but dominant teachers and guides—directing kings and their affairs and wars, building, organising and propagating knowledge, imparting supreme vision and wisdom, and setting the keel of civilisation's vessel, charting its course and unfurling its sails to be filled by the breath of the Lord. Certainly, in India the quest was of union with the divine, here on earth, and if not here then in other domains. In completely unambiguous terms full plenitude of life and indeed immortality itself were laid down as the goal for man—attested by the Upanishads. To the extent that the “here on earth” was ignored by its culture, India lapsed and was susceptible to external attacks and now needs to develop and assimilate respect for matter. But in its aspiration it is supreme, unmatched by any other culture.

### **The Basis of a Rational Society**

In as much as the east-west cultures are in opposition about the primacy of spirit or matter, the synthesis of a new world-culture is also based on a synthesis of spirit and matter. A culture based exclusively on the spirit is bound to fail here on earth. But let us also explore the foundations and the limitations of an

exclusively materialistic and rational culture, and then look for a fulfilling synthesis of matter and spirit.

The fundamental issue of the human individual in society is that of a balance between liberty and fairness. All modes of social power, whether political organisation, ownership of resources, production, trade, science and technology, religion or spirituality, when applied to the individual in society go back to the questions of liberty and fairness. Fairness itself can be traced to the concept of equality: a given situation between two individuals is fair if neither is averse in principle to a reversal of their roles. In essence, the sum of social power along with the balance between liberty and equality is captured in the concept of social welfare. The question that a rational society poses to itself is, "Does there exist a rational constitution by which all of society could abide so that individual liberties are guaranteed in a socially fair manner while welfare is maximised?" The constitution, should it exist, resolves conflicts of individual preferences in a fair and rational manner. Let us make more precise the notions of liberty, fairness and rationality. Consider a society that faces more than two mutually exclusive states of the world. Each individual in this society expresses a partial order of personal preferences over these states of the world. The constitution, based on these subjective choices, then proposes a preference ordering over the states of the world that all individuals follow. In order to guarantee individual liberties, the constitution must permit individuals in society to express any preference ordering that they choose. Further, in order to be fair, the constitution must not project any single individual's preference onto the whole society. To ensure that the constitution is rational, we require two further conditions: first, if all individuals prefer a given choice to some other, then the constitution must also prefer that given choice over the other, for otherwise it would be perverse, and second, when a new state of the world becomes possible, if all individuals continue to have the same preference ordering over the previous states, then the constitution's preference over previous states must be the same, for otherwise it would be inconsistent.

In Arrow's thesis on the impossibility theorem on which this discussion is based, the above conditions on the constitution are called, respectively, "universal domain," "no dictatorship," "pareto optimality" and "independence of irrelevant alternatives". "Universal domain" captures liberty of individuals, "no dictatorship" captures fairness to or equality of individuals, while "optimality" and "independence" capture rationality of the constitution. Based on these assumptions, Arrow proves the Impossibility Theorem which states that a constitution that satisfies these conditions may not exist. Arrow's theorem points out that a rational constitution that guarantees fair individual liberties and social welfare may not exist. There is a fundamental limitation in the ability of rational social organisation to reconcile and harmonise liberty and equality.

Faced with this impossibility, society can take several paths. For one, it



could limit itself to at most two choices in the possible states of the world. But this is not realistic for even the most rudimentary societies. For another, society could relax the rational conditions of optimality and independence on the constitution. But this could lead to sub-optimal choices that make society inefficient. Some societies “choose” to have a dictator, or rather, have one forced on them. But this violates fairness and equality of society. Worse yet, in a theocracy, neither liberty nor equality is permitted. Another possibility is for society to account for the intensity of preference that each individual feels for available choices. This relies on subjective criteria which cannot be precisely verified, but with greater communication and discussion, social understanding of diverse points of view could improve, leading to possible consensus. However, this could lead to conflict as well. A final possibility is for society to limit, voluntarily or forcibly, individual liberties to the extent that a relatively fair constitution emerges through compromise and consensus or through coercion. In essence, these options—discussion and consensus—are adopted by pragmatic non-authoritarian societies. The mechanisms for implementing the restriction of individual liberties along with the extent of this restriction, and for gauging the intensity of preferences, varies from society to society. Yet, what this implies is that an underlying commonality of world-view, or of cultural imperatives, or essentially, fraternity is inescapable in a free and harmonious social organisation. In this matter, rationality can identify the various minimal necessary commonalities amongst individuals, but rationality cannot mould or dictate the form and direction that commonality should take. It is not reason but faith on which this coherence can be based. And given the dynamics of human societies, no narrow faith or creed or dogma or morality can suffice for this necessary coherence of world-view, but a broad and inclusive synthesis alone can suffice, for in the end, the oneness of the human spirit is the only enduring fraternal principle in the world.

### **Basis for a Future World**

Secular humanism and the pursuit of human rights display the modern pressure for a fraternal principle to bind all humanity. It is a lofty blend of several intellectual, moral, cultural and religious imperatives of western culture. Pursuit of secular practices by all political states is a necessary minimal condition for world-union. But finally, secular humanism lies only on the foundation of liberty and equality alone, and does not introduce an independent dimension that could resolve the crisis of rational society. While secular humanism for the state is necessary, it is not a sufficient basis for all modes of society.

The rational society has cast an analytical basis for the world, factoring each individual into social, cultural, religious, political, economic, industrial and military units; all sailing along the river of utility in the vessel of secular human-

ism. This factoring is important since it discovers the essential nature of each principle involved in the whole. From these factors, an efficient mechanism of society is then assembled in a rational society. But the assembled whole after this process is lesser than the original whole. While such a factoring enables efficiency of the social mechanism, an assembled society loses the subtle spirit of an organic whole. The apparatus of the state, while being secular and rational, must realise that it can never seize this organic spirit of society in the cloisters of law and constitution. Secular humanism of the state, while being the necessary baseline for social conduct, must not deny the spiritual possibility of the individual and society. Within the framework of a secular and rational state a spiritual humanism can seize and harmonise all modes of society and the world.

The basis of a future world comprises principles that emanate from the deep core of the spirit and extend continuously in the extreme corpus of matter—a seeking after organisation and propagation of physical and spiritual knowledge; dynamism and organisation of life, society and polity, striving for ideals and their protection, a largeness and nobility in wielding power; harmony of relationships and being, beauty of form and environment, culture, communication and consensus, distribution and balance of wealth and power and well-being; perfection in works, attention to detail and maintenance, usefulness and creativity in production, service and work, a solid and sustained stability of life and existence. These imply for the individual, inwardly a simultaneous and integrated pursuit of vision, will, expression and action, and outwardly a simultaneous and integrated pursuit of knowledge, power, harmony and service, and for society, organisation and institutions that enable and fulfil these pursuits of all individuals. In particular, social institutions are needed that pursue and impart physical knowledge and spiritual guidance, education of the mind and life and body and spirit; institutions that invite commitment and participation of individuals in organised society and that distribute responsibility to them for planning and action at local, state, national and international levels, institutions that promote culture and communication and consensus, that open and increase trade and commerce, and create and sustain beauty and harmony of the environment; institutions that provide opportunity for production and service and work that is valued, encourage detailed perfection, creativity, diligence and stability. A repeated interaction of such individuals through such institutions will define the character of society. Of necessity, a social organisation with such individuals, institutions and interactions will lead to organic communities, each dynamic and harmonious, and together weaving the larger communities of the nation and the world through a rich and multifaceted interchange.

The practice of a broad, enlightened rationality and secular humanism by nation-states and the play of the inclusive synthesis of spiritual humanism through organic communities and their world-wide interaction shall constitute the basis of the future world. This basis is not a radical alteration of existing

institutions, for events have ever steadily pressed towards world-union, but rather is a heightening of their aim and orientation and a widening of their purpose and methods. As the first steps towards this new basis, nation-states must increasingly step back from narrow ideological espousal—whether of capitalism or communism or religion or any other system—and move towards fulfilling the freedom and potential of their individuals in an orderly and united environment, and towards greater co-operation amongst themselves to increase opportunities and well-being. Individuals must move from their current factored existence towards greater integration of their personalities and beings based on the foundation of inner spiritual seeking and expressed through diverse fields of action. And finally organisations must move from their current exclusive emphasis such as on business or politics or religion, towards a greater diversification of their activities and an integrated approach to education, technology, business and culture, displaying commitment to holistic individuals and organic environments, thereby becoming the nuclei of future communities. In its ultimate fulfilment such a basis will not lapse into some foreordained homogeneity, but rather richly express the diverse character and nature of diverse peoples, each taking its place in a harmonious and multifaceted whole. Such an emergent culture will be dynamic through its freedom and movement and globalisation, stable through its communication and consensus and unity, human through its ideal of organic spiritual humanism and supreme in its aspiration for the fulfilment of the human spirit.

AKASH DESHPANDE

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## DO YOU HEAR ME?

Do you hear me?  
 You are deep inward,  
 My being, I know.  
 I know my voice  
 Is stifled by earthly din.  
 I know there is no easy route  
 To reach you, you won't be  
 Accessible even in a lifetime.  
 All this in desperation I know.

Yet yearnings don't ebb out  
 And I cry hoarse for you;  
 I have no place to anchor  
 In vast ocean of ignorance,  
 No lighthouse kindled for me.  
 I am tossed on turbulent waters  
 And shouting for deliverance—  
 Do you hear me?

PRONAB KUMAR MAJUMDER

## THE CALL

A CALL was on him from intangible heights ..  
There is no end to the world's stupendous march,  
There is no rest for the embodied soul,  
It must live on, describe all Time's huge curve  
An Influx presses from the closed Beyond  
Forbidding to him rest and earthly ease,  
Till he has found himself he cannot pause. (*Savitri*)

“Whosoever is weary of the littlenesses that are, whosoever is enamoured of the divine greatnesses that shall be, whosoever has any glimpse of the Supreme within him or above him or around him, let him hear the call, let him follow the path. The way is difficult, the labour heavy and arduous and long, but its reward is habitation in an unimaginable glory, a fathomless felicity, a happy and endless vastness.” (*Words of the Master*)

The “Call” is considered the prime, indispensable requisite, the *sine qua non* for Sri Aurobindo's yoga.

What is the “Call”?

The Mother speaks directly:

“Do you want the yoga for the sake of the Divine? Is the Divine the supreme fact of your life, so that it is simply impossible for you to do without it? Do you feel that your very *raison d'être* is the Divine and without it there is no meaning in your existence? If so, then only can it be said that you have a call for the Path.” (*Conversations*)

This is simple and clear. But perhaps people may not know what exactly is meant by the “Divine”

Sri Aurobindo makes the meaning clear:

“It is immaterial whether he is first seen as an impersonal Wisdom, Love and Power behind all things, as an Absolute manifesting in the relative and attracting it, as one's highest Self and the highest Self of all, as a Divine Person within us and in the world, in one of his—or her—numerous forms and names or as the ideal which the mind conceives. In the end we perceive that he is all and more than all these things together. The mind's door of entry to the conception of him must necessarily vary according to the past evolution and the present nature.”

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*)

The “Divine” is something within us as well as outside. It is our highest Self. If we put it more simply, we have two selves, a higher and a lower, the soul and the ego. The soul is divine and immortal, representing Divinity. The ego is a construction of nature, temporarily representing this body, life and mind. A person’s consciousness is normally centred in the lower self, that is ego, rarely aware of anything higher.

The soul, or the psychic being, as Sri Aurobindo has termed it (the *chaitya purusha* of the Indian terminology), is a developing, immortal, divine entity. Originally a spark of the Divine, it passes through many phases, from mineral to vegetable to animal and to man. It develops, gathering the essence of all its experiences and gradually begins to take a definite form around the divine spark, and becomes individualised. The more developed it is, the more it influences the crudity of the outer nature of man. It is perceptible in a person’s sensitivity and response to truth, goodness, love, beauty and joy because in their purest forms these are its own nature. However, it generally remains behind the veils of body, life and mind and exerts whatever influence it can from behind. And even a very sensitive person does not generally know why he feels so deep a response within to all that is truest and divinest. But then a time comes when it can no longer remain quiet behind the veils because the life and the world, as they are, are a contradiction of all that it feels to be the highest. It cries out for deliverance.

“It is the very nature of the soul or the psychic being to turn towards the Divine Truth as the sunflower to the sun. Even when there is a formed psychic being, able to express itself with some directness in life, it is still in all but a few smaller portions of the being—‘no bigger in the mass of the body than the thumb of a man’ was the image used by the ancient seers—and it is not always able to prevail against the obscurity and ignorant smallness of the physical consciousness, the mistaken surenesses of the mind or the arrogance and vehemence of the vital nature....

“A call of the veiled psychic element oppressed by the mass of the outer ignorance and crying for deliverance, a stress of eager meditation and seeking for knowledge, a longing of the heart, a passionate will ignorant yet but sincere may break the lid that shuts off the Higher from the Lower Nature and open the floodgates....

“It insists on Truth, on will and strength and mastery, on Joy and Love and Beauty, but on a Truth of abiding Knowledge that surpasses the mere practical momentary truth of the ignorance, on an inward joy and not on mere vital pleasure,—for it prefers rather a purifying suffering and sorrow to degrading satisfactions,—on love winged upward and not tied to the stake of egoistic craving or with its feet sunk in the mire, on beauty restored to its priesthood of interpretation of the Eternal, on strength and will and mastery as instruments not of the ego but of the Spirit. Its will is for the divinisation of life, the

expression through it of a higher Truth, its dedication to the Divine and the Eternal.

“But the most intimate character of the psychic is its pressure towards the Divine through a sacred love, joy and oneness. It is the divine Love that it seeks most, it is the love of the Divine that is its spur, its goal, its star of Truth shining over the luminous cave of the nascent or the still obscure cradle of the new-born godhead within us. In the first long stage of its growth and immature existence it has leaned on earthly love, affection, tenderness, goodwill, compassion, benevolence, on all beauty and gentleness and fineness and light and strength and courage, on all that can help to refine and purify the grossness and commonness of human nature; but it knows how mixed are these human movements at their best and at their worst how fallen and stamped with the mark of ego and self-deceptive sentimental falsehood and the lower self profiting by the imitation of soul movement. At once, emerging, it is ready and eager to break all the old ties and imperfect emotional activities and replace them by a greater spiritual Truth of love and oneness. It may still admit the human forms and movements, but on condition that they are turned towards the One alone. It accepts only the ties that are helpful, the heart’s reverence for the Guru, the union of the God-seekers, a spiritual compassion for the ignorant human and animal world and its peoples, the joy and happiness and satisfaction of beauty that comes from the perception of the Divine everywhere. It plunges the nature inward towards its meeting with the immanent Divine in the heart’s secret centre and, while that call is there, no reproach of egoism, no mere outward summons of altruism or duty or philanthropy or service will deceive or divert it from its sacred longing and its obedience to the attraction of the Divinity within it. It lifts the being towards a transcendent Ecstasy and is ready to shed all the downward pull of the world from its wings in its uprising to reach the One Highest; but it calls down also this transcendent Love and Beatitude to deliver and transform this world of hatred and strife and division and darkness and jarring ignorance ”

*(The Synthesis of Yoga)*

So now we can understand something of what is meant by the “Call” and the “Divine”. The Eternal and the Omnipresent Divine is ever calling the souls to return to their divine homes, the eternity and the infinity of Bliss. Those souls which are developed enough respond by deeply yearning for the things divine. In the mind, as yet untouched by the Spirit, the soul’s call gets translated as a deep and poignant longing for something divine, a divine life, a divine love, a divine joy, a divine existence. But it is something that is not found in the ordinary world. In the measure of the soul’s development is the intensity of the pressure towards the things divine and the power to overrule the lower members that are the body, life and mind, and their influence where and when they are in conflict with the soul’s aspiration. It is only when a person is ready to give up everything

else for the sake of the Divine that he is considered ready for the spiritual path.  
But even so, the path is not easy

“First be sure of the call and of thy soul’s answer. .

The outer instruments of mortal man have no force to carry him through the severe arduours of this spiritual journey and Titanic inner battle or to meet its terrible or obstinate ordeals or nerve him to face and overcome its subtle and formidable dangers. Only his spirit’s august and steadfast will and the quenchless fire of his soul’s invincible ardour are sufficient for this difficult transformation and this high improbable endeavour

Imagine not the way is easy; the way is long, arduous, dangerous, difficult. At every step is an ambush, at every turn a pitfall. A thousand seen or unseen enemies will start up against thee, terrible in subtlety against thy ignorance, formidable in power against thy weakness. And when with pain thou hast destroyed them, other thousands will surge up to take their place. Hell will vomit its hordes to oppose and enring and wound and menace; Heaven will meet thee with its pitiless tests and its cold luminous denials.

Thou shalt find thyself alone in thy anguish, the demons furious in thy path, the Gods unwilling above thee ...

Ask of his chosen and they will tell thee how often the Eternal has covered his face from them, how often he has withdrawn from them behind his mysterious veil and they have found themselves alone in the grip of Hell, solitary in the horror of the darkness, naked and defenceless in the anguish of the battle. And if his presence is felt behind the veil, yet is it like the winter sun behind clouds and saves not from the rain and snow and the calamitous storm and the harsh wind and the bitter cold and the atmosphere of a sorrowful grey and the dumb weary dullness. Doubtless the help is there even when it seems to be withdrawn, but still is there the appearance of total night with no sun to come and no star of hope to please in the darkness.

Beautiful is the face of the Divine Mother, but she too can be hard and terrible. Nay, then, is immortality a plaything to be given lightly to a child, or the divine life a prize without effort or the crown for a weakling? Strive rightly and thou shalt have, trust and thy trust shall in the end be justified; but the dread Law of the Way is there and none can abrogate it.” (*The Way*)

So beautifully and graphically expressed, without mincing matters or any attempt at toning down, this is the Law as has been understood for the spiritual life all over the world. And yet it does not do justice to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, to the ever-present help and guidance they gave and give, within and without, often unasked and unnoticed; the powerful and decisive interventions at critical moments of a disciple’s life, tilting the scales heavenwards; the general and constant push towards the goal.

The difficulties come because human nature is complex:

“The most disconcerting discovery is to find that every part of us—intellect, will, sense-mind, nervous or desire self, the heart, the body—has each, as it were, its own complex individuality and natural formation independent of the rest, it neither agrees with itself nor with the others nor with the representative ego which is the shadow cast by some central and centralising self on our superficial ignorance. We find that we are composed not of one but many personalities and each has its own demands and differing nature. Our being is a roughly constituted chaos into which we have to introduce the principle of a divine order....

But even though the concentration of all the being on the Divine is the character of the Yoga, yet is our being too complex a thing to be taken up easily and at once, as if we were taking up the world in a pair of hands, and set in its entirety to a single task.” (*The Synthesis of Yoga*)

Sri Aurobindo’s yoga is especially open to misunderstanding because, depending upon the soul’s aspiration and its power to do things in the right way on its own, it imposes no outward and absolute rules. Further, the life and the world itself are included in its field of work. The nature itself is accepted for transformation and not rejected. Therefore it demands a greater vigilance and a clearer inner sense of discrimination of right and wrong rather than any outward conformity to rigid rules and appearances.

It is necessary here to understand something of Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy. It is Adwaita, but a realistic Adwaita and not an illusionist one. (There are also certain differences in practice and in the ultimate goal. But we can take these up later.) All things and lives and souls originate from the One. These One and Many are classified in different philosophies in different ways. Sri Aurobindo considered the Vedic and the Upanishadic classification the best and adopted it. Accordingly there are seven principles or seven different worlds with one principle predominantly operative in each. These are the higher triple worlds of Sat, Chit and Ananda, the lower triple worlds of matter, life and mind with the link between them of Supermind or the Gnostic world. (These divisions are made for the mental understanding and not because the principles are absolutely divided. They intermingle and interact in infinite ways in our world.)

Because everything comes from the One, the Infinite, the Eternal, the absolute knowledge, Power and Bliss, all things are good and right and happy in their origin. But because of their perversion due to some reason not comprehensible to our present intellect (an intellect that can question every explanation) they have turned into pain, sorrow and suffering on earth. Therefore the remedy proposed is not only to get back to the Origin but also to reconvert, to transform all parts of our nature into their divine counterparts rather than rejecting them



*en masse* and aiming at only the soul's liberation from them. However, this cannot be rightly done without first knowing what the soul and these divine parts are. And for that purpose one has to discover the Divinity first.

“In the growth into a divine life the Spirit must be our first preoccupation; until we have revealed and evolved it in our self out of its mental, vital, physical wrappings and disguises, extracted it with patience from our own body, as the Upanishad puts it, until we have built up in ourselves an inner life of the Spirit, it is obvious that no outer divine living can become possible...

This then is the first necessity, that the individual, each individual, shall discover the Spirit, the divine reality within him and express that in all his being and living. A divine life must be first and foremost an inner life, for since the outward must be the expression of what is within, there can be no divinity in the outer existence if there is not the divinisation of the inner being.”

*(The Life Divine)*

*(To be concluded)*

SHANTILAL VIRANI

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## UNPOLLUTED PRESENCE

In my polluted city  
 Children like angels have been born.  
 They jump, they play  
 They fall, they rise,  
 They love, they embrace  
 Yet they are not alike.  
 My eyes roam around in joy  
 To find the multifarious manifestations  
 Of the infinite in them.

Like the tiny candid children,  
 Marigolds too have bloomed happily  
 In the traffic islands  
 Of this morbid city  
 To remind me of an unpolluted presence.

SITANGSHU CHAKRABORTY

## I DO NOT FORGET FOR A MOMENT

I DO not forget for a moment  
That the Mother is many-booned,  
Since unto Her mystic Meanings  
The spirit is now attuned:  
And so with equal joy I receive  
From Her both blossom and wound.

For whatever the Mother gives me  
Of Her own free-will and choice  
Is the only gift worth getting  
Which can make the heart rejoice:  
And against Her sacred Giving  
How dare I raise my voice?

Whatever She granteth freely  
Is a gift beyond all price,—  
What once by Her is decided  
Can not be decided twice:—  
Remember that what is given  
Is Her act of Sacrifice,—

Whatever, my heart, whatever!—  
Whether joyous or sad to our sight,  
There is always the Mother's Blessing  
With the gift whether dark or bright  
Whatever the gift it cometh  
From Her single Immortal Height.

O why should one ever question?  
And why should one ever complain?  
She brings Her radiant glory  
To the heart that is breaking with pain:  
And unto the heart that hardens  
She brings Her thunder and rain.

In the Mother's manner of Giving  
There never was flaw or rift:  
There's a meaning in every Movement,  
And a Grace in every gift:—  
For She knows to beat the strongest down  
And the weakest one, to uplift.

Whatever She grants you freely  
Accept with a grateful hand,  
Nor ever try to judge the Gift  
Nor even to understand,  
For only the Holy Mother knows  
The way in which things are planned.

More powerful is Her feeblest Touch  
Than any magician's wand  
If only you could learn, O heart!  
To know Its power and respond,  
The Mother would take You away from the night  
To the Light that is waiting Beyond.

Her briefest Look or Her sharpest  
That works like a dagger-thrust  
Is only a need in the Mother  
To waken in you a Trust  
That will open a light in your bosom  
And a sweetness out of your dust.

And as for me, sweet Mother!  
Who wandered once as a wraith  
Of loneliest grief across the world,  
Exposed to bruise and scathe,  
Enough for me that I've come to receive  
From Thee a Gift of Faith!

Enough for me that I've found Thy Feet,  
Nor need to wander about  
Like a flickering spirit of shadowy flame  
On the point of being put out:  
Enough for me that Thy Love hath taught  
This bosom never to doubt

Enough for me, a piteous thing,  
To receive Thy Holy Grace,—  
Each morn and eve to know Thy smile  
And gaze on Thy angel Face;  
To arrive at last from a struggling world  
At Thy Feet, our resting-place!

Mother! Eternal Sweetness!  
 What greater Gift canst Thou give  
 Than the promise of Deathless Rapture  
 To the troubled fugitive,—  
 And terrible gifts of loveliness  
 That he may learn to live.

The sorrows and separations  
 Which once I thought were mine,  
 In the light of this new-born Vision  
 Are changed to Thy Gifts, Divine!  
 Torture and pain and broken pride  
 Is each but a gift of Thine!

So I do not forget for a moment  
 That Thy Gifts are many and rare,  
 That whether a gift of happiness  
 Or a gift of dark despair,  
 Is a mystic symbol of Thy Great Love  
 And a mark of Thy Motherly Care

Whatever Thy dear hands give me  
 Is a Gift that shall never fail,  
 Be it a cup of common clay  
 Or be it a golden grail:  
 Since each is flooded equally  
 With the sweetness-behind-a-veil.

And so I bend before Thee,  
 O, Mother! nor ever wince  
 At any Gift Thou mayst grant me,  
 Or cool or fiery, since  
 Whatever be dealt in Thy Kingdom,  
 One always remains a prince!

3-30, Afternoon

7-2-34

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Sri Aurobindo's Comment: Exquisite and perfect (in the left margin at stanza four)

(There is also a remark in an unidentified hand "This is a magnificent poem" at the bottom of the first sheet of the typescript )

## THE NON-PHYSICS OF PHYSICS

IN recent times people have made great claims about physics entering into the domain of mysticism. There are perhaps reasons for believing it to be so when we look at certain formulations of scientific concepts and theories which have questioned the harsh materialism of yester-years. While in the strictest sense these formulations pertain to professional problems and their solutions, logical extensions are made to draw conclusions that go far beyond their immediate context. It is even argued that we cannot escape drawing such conclusions when they do derive their validity from some experimentally observed data or sound theoretical ideas or rigorous mathematical proofs. But can we say that the derivations have scientific acceptability?

Not that such a demand on science is altogether new. Not also that suggestions and surmises of science were not exploited. The discovery of America by Columbus in 1492 owes a good deal to the astronomer Ptolemy's idea that the earth is round. Though the basis of science in this adventure was very thin—it was more prompted by the theological-commercial interests of the fifteenth century—it made possible for the brave voyager to sail beyond the Pillars of Hercules. In contrast to this, today's space travel is a hundred per cent scientific-technological enterprise, confirming unequivocally the deterministic laws of classical physics. Yet it is impossible to assert that these laws have universal validity; nor can we say that nature is entirely deterministic. If at one end the problems of cosmology demand the application of relativity, at the other we have to resort to the probabilistic description of quantum mechanics. In any case the metaphysical-mystical implications of these theories fall completely out of the concerns of physics. To drag them into physics is not to understand it.

The success of the satellite programme is a grand justification of the Law of Universal Gravitation given to us by Newton. But, while making calculations to put Man at a precise place on the surface of the Moon, a greater difficulty that lay in its conceptual framework was kept aside. All the wise objections that were raised against this theory of gravity didn't seem to matter. Newton postulated a force of attraction between two objects which is directly proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance separating them. The force has its origin in the materiality of the physical object itself. What Newton called "brute matter" was instinct with force. It at once explained Kepler's laws of planetary motion and predicted accurately the appearance of comets at regular intervals. But then there were problems—of a philosophical nature. How does an object act where it is not? Is there a medium to communicate an action? Is the action instantaneous? In fact, Leibnitz, Newton's contemporary and also the inventor of the Calculus, condemned him in very severe terms: "...some immaterial substances, or some spiritual rays, or some accident without a substance, or some species intentionalis, or some other I

know not what. . Of which sort of things, the author seems to have still a good stock in his head, without explaining himself sufficiently That means of communication is invisible, intangible, not mechanical. He might as well have added, inexplicable, unintelligible, precarious, groundless and unexampled... It is a chimerical thing, a scholastic occult quality ” Not that Leibnitz’s fears were unfounded. To propose the action of an object where it is not virtually amounts to witchcraft and cannot be elevated to the status of a scientific theory. Perhaps Newton could have accepted Descartes’s ether filling space for the purposes of contact-action, but this ether would have created for him more problems than it would have solved the present difficulty He was quite correct in refusing to make any explanatory suggestion regarding this action-at-a-distance. His argument was: I posit no further causes, *hypotheses non fingo*. We see in this stand a perfectly rationalistic attitude and it is that which did so much good to science In fact, if we are to sum up Newton’s achievements in a single phrase, then that phrase would be ‘scientific positivism’. It was a kind of no-nonsense approach to things which otherwise seemed to be totally intractable. He gave a definiteness to study and investigation of the material nature and demonstrated that there are laws and relationships which tie up processes and events in a convincing and predictable way. A mechanism, an order, a harmony put the cosmos on its course In contrast to this Newton’s antagonists, who had no alternative theories to offer, were talking non-physics. Perhaps in a certain sense we may say the same about Newton too. When he started attributing the property of bruteness to matter, he had actually stepped out of the domain of his operative parameters and entered into that of theology. However, his *Principia* is a masterpiece and his defence of the concept of gravity impeccable. But what is most recommendable is his method of scientific reasoning “We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances.” For a working professional’s benefit he brought in what we might call today the method of algorithmic economy and definiteness of thought based on observation. It is that we celebrate in him.

Most probably it is the same thing which we applaud in Einstein too. When Archbishop Davidson asked him if the theory of relativity had any effect on religion, the reply was: “None. Relativity is a purely scientific theory, and has nothing to do with religion.” To read extra-scientific things in a scientific theory is to practise non-science. In fact, Einstein could have as well stopped at the first part of his clarificatory statement. Similarly, to seek support for thought, idea-concept, metaphysics, mysticism from science is to use borrowed and uncertain props. It is another kind of non-professionalism and amounts to abdication of responsibility towards one’s own discipline of work and pursuit. Extension of scientific conclusions will have scientific acceptability only if these conclusions can pass its rigorous tests of experimentation and observation The same will equally apply to ideas and concepts brought into it from other disciplines if they

have to get logged in its data-book. It becomes meaningful to talk about things if only they qualify themselves as well-objectified facts of physics. Such firm empiricism is the *sine qua non* of its methodology. Perhaps it will also be rewarding to adhere to it always.

If such is the desirable foundation then, surely, there is a lot of merit in Bohr's accepting the outcome of quantum mechanics rather than in Einstein's rejecting it as an incomplete and hence a provisional theory. We might have made a great virtue of the Uncertainty Principle; we might have raised the Probability concept to the dignity of a fundamental Law of Nature; we might have even resorted to *ad hoc* methods to solve specific problems in our professional career. But what we see is that its empirical validity always remains intact. Are we to sacrifice this wonderful gain just because there is confusion and conflict in matters philosophical? Quantum mechanics has incorporated probabilistic interpretation in its method of approach; however, its enthusiasts, like Jordan himself, read free-will in it. But Schrodinger is very clear in his formulation: "Could perhaps the declared indeterminacy allow free-will to step into the gap in the way that free-will determines those events which the Law of Nature leaves undetermined?"—asks he and proceeds to answer as follows. "The net result is that quantum physics has nothing to do with the free-will problem. If there is such a problem, it is not furthered a whit by the latest development in physics." The issue is whether free-will can become an object of scientific investigation; if it cannot, then it must be kept away from its considerations. Otherwise it would be talking non-physics. Actually it is this counsel and restraint that we admire in Schrodinger.

No doubt there are limitations in the method of physics, but these are worth accepting for the rich rewards the method brings to us. Schrodinger himself says: "Scientific picture of the real world around me is very deficient. It gives a lot of factual information... but it is ghastly silent about all that really matters to us... beautiful and ugly, good or bad, God and eternity. Science sometimes pretends to answer questions in these domains, but the answers are very often so silly that we are inclined not to take them seriously." To the "unfathomable question" there is no answer from science.

Perhaps one need not regret it. But what has to be definitely regretted are the unholy extensions of the findings of science beyond the operative domain of science,—and also the reverse, without establishing their claims to come within the purview of science. But if these can be validated by its systematic tests, then they will acquire a substantiality which will be enduring in the world of Matter. Such a marvellous possibility always exists and openness to it is an aspect of progressive physics. After all, what is only conceptual-ideal has to be given a concrete shape and form, brought into the realm of realised determinateness. It is with this perspective that we must pursue physics and dismiss non-physics.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

# BIBHUTIBHUSHAN BANDOPADHYAY

## The Man and the Writer

AROUND the third decade of the present century, between the period of the First World War and the days of the great depression, the influence of Marxian and Freudian thought pervaded the intellectual world of Bengal. Continued foreign domination, a sense of defeat in the massacre at Jalianwalla Bag and failure on many other fronts left the thinkers and intellectuals disconcerted and raging. Leading young poets and litterateurs of the Kallol group in Bengal were vociferous in expressing their bitterness about life. They were depicting life bare and nude, as they found it. They were up in revolt against the old and established poet Rabindranath. Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay, in such a cultural milieu, was content to depict, in minute detail, rippleless nature with men and women as part of it. The guiding force behind his expression was Ananda, a gladness in everything. In his diary note of 3 April 1925 he wrote: "The doors of innumerable storehouses of Ananda are kept open in this universe... the duty of a litterateur is to make this joyous news reach the people." On that day he started writing *Pather Panchali*, a trilogy.

In painting the rural life of Bengal and Bihar he followed the path of Saratchandra Chattopadhyay. But he proved himself entirely different from his predecessor who, although a great novelist of his time, was emotional, dramatic and sometimes sentimental also. Although he did not make haste to paint life in an epic form, he never forgot that speed is life. In fact that was his deeper and intimate understanding of life. In the notebook of a teenage-girl who came to him for an autograph and whom he later married, he wrote: "Speed is life, dearth of speed is death." And he knew that everything moves. After the death of his beloved sister Durga, Apu heard an inner voice: "O ignorant boy, my path has not come to an end in the bamboo grove of your village, under the banyan tree, in the den of the club-wielding dacoit Biru Roy or at the end of Dhalchite's boat-house! Away from your Sonadanga's field, beyond the Ichhamati river, passing by the Madhukhali pond full of lotuses, crossing the Betravati river in a small boat, my path goes ahead, ahead, only ahead... beyond the country to a foreign land, from sunrise to setting sun, beyond the known towards the unknown..." (*Pather Panchali*)

At a time when there was a definite turn, a change in the course of Bengali literature, he did not care to follow the new path. He moved with life and literature according to his inner urge. It seems all the circumstances of his life were so arranged as to facilitate his gaining newer experiences and materials for writing. Though most of his stories and novels are based in rural and forest setting, in conditions of colonial poverty, there was no sense of defeat or grief anywhere. Characters of his novels, like Apu of *Pather Panchali*, had a strange



quest for knowledge. They wondered at the sight of new things. This thirst and wonder carried them on their way despite obstacles and defeats.

Bibhutibhushan was born on 12 September, 1894 in his maternal uncle's house at Muratpur Village in the 24-Parganas District in Bengal. His father Mahananda Bandopadhyay Shastry lived the life of a village bard, moving from place to place, singing and delivering discourses on the Puranas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, etc. After a long absence he would occasionally reappear at home with some goods, money and eatables. He felt no regular responsibility towards his growing family. While moving from place to place he would, at times, take his son Bibhutibhushan with him. The boy would enjoy meeting the village folk, observe their habits and enjoy the surrounding nature besides enjoying the journeys. He cherished the idea of becoming like his father, when grown up.

Bibhutibhushan was admitted in succession to four village schools (*Pathshala*) for primary education but his father being unable to pay tuition fees regularly he had to leave them one after another. Out of school, he was happy moving in the surrounding jungles, happy to know by heart the seasons and the concomitant changes in nature, happy to learn the habits and movements of birds and butterflies. As he grew older his friends, who were admitted to better schools, surpassed him in learning. In shame and with a thirst for proper education he approached his mother for money. She could provide only a few coins. Seeing his thirst for knowledge and his helpless condition, the Headmaster of Bonogram High School admitted him to class five in mid-term. The student proved his mettle. He stood first at the end of the session and was awarded free-studentship.

But a problem cropped up. He was regularly late in coming to the school. It was not because he had to walk daily some eight or nine kilometres to come from his native place, Chaki Barrackpore, and to go back covering the same distance in the evening, for it was no hardship to him. On enquiry it was found that, unlike other students, he would take the zigzagging jungle paths covering more distance; on his way he would enjoy the company of trees, birds, butterflies and beasts. As his father had no means to pay the monthly hostel charges of five rupees regularly, the Headmaster was kind enough to take the student in as a member of his family. He passed the matriculation examination in the first division and entered Rippon College in Calcutta as a first-year Arts student. Soon after this his father died. He continued his studies and maintained himself on tutorage. He passed F.A. in 1916 and B.A. in 1918, both in the first division.

Bibhutibhushan was married at this time, in 1917, at the age of 23 years. He then commenced studying for M.A. in Philosophy in Calcutta University and at the instance of his rich father-in-law, who was a practising lawyer, studied Law at the same time. Though the couple had a good bond of love and affection, the bridegroom's side was very poor and they could not maintain a financial parity.

with their in-laws. As it happens, the daughter was sometimes humiliated in her father's house by her sisters and others. The father often kept his daughter with him. Thus the young husband and his wife were estranged for no fault of theirs. She died of a severe illness together with her mother who was also ailing.

After this tragic event Bibhutibhushan could not pursue his studies any more. He was the eldest son and had the responsibility of maintaining the big family. His younger brother was studying Medicine and he had to support him also. Through the influence of a friend he was appointed Assistant Headmaster of a school at Jangipara where he reported for duty on 7 February, 1919. But the school authorities did not actually want him as they had their own favourite candidate for the post. Bibhutibhushan had already joined the Theosophical Society at Calcutta and was practising communication with the dead through the planchette. They found this and other such excuses to take a decision to oust him. Next he approached the famous Acharya P. C. Roy on whose recommendation he got the job of teacher at Harinabhi Anglo-Sanskrit Institution at Harinabhi in 24-Parganas. There he was offered for his stay an old and vacant house belonging to the Headmaster's family. He was alone. Observing his hapless condition Nibhanani, the wife of the elder brother of the Headmaster, took pity on him and regularly visited to help him manage his domestic affairs, particularly cooking. Her daughter also used to come to help. In a village life each one knows the affairs of others and Bibhutibhushan, a keen observer of the ways of human life, soon found out that Nibhanani was a neglected woman with many sorrows suppressed. She became the subject of his first story published in the January 1922 issue of the famous monthly *Prabasi*. The title of the story was *Upekshita*, The Neglected One. It made him known as a writer. After this success, he wrote another story about the daughter of Nibhanani, entitled *Umarani*. While he was thus writing, receiving praise and finding delight in the company of the jungle and the trees as was his wont, people in the village got a very palatable subject for gossip. They took it as a teacher's impertinence to write about the ladies of their village. Gossip, criticism and rumours forced him to take a decision. He remembered having read the poet Moore's words during his childhood, "Go where glory waits thee." He left the place.

From Harinabhi he came back to his old college mess. There he first met his fellow-writer Nirad C. Chowdhury. Nirad praised and encouraged his friend to write and to ignore canards. But Bibhutibhushan required to earn as well. For six months he was engaged as canvasser and publicity officer of an association for the protection of cows. Then from January 1923 he got the good job of private tutor at Zemindar Khelat Chandra Ghose's house at Calcutta. At Bhagalpur in Bihar, Ghose had a big forest estate. Knowing that Bibhutibhushan was interested in open-air life, his employers offered him the job of Assistant Superintendent of the estate, which he readily accepted. The vast estate was called Jungal Mahal and was situated at Ismailpur.

Soon after coming to the estate at the end of January 1924, Bibhutibhushan started living in the heart of the jungle in a mud-built, straw-roofed house and after a few days' practice he learnt horse-riding. Soon he was seen riding alone through the length and breadth of the jungle during the day and on moonlit nights. In his diary he wrote "One who is to be a family-bound creature should not get acquainted with this face of nature. The enchanting beauty tempts one to leave his family and friends."

Bibhutibhushan's deep love for and attachment to nature, particularly the flora, reminds us of the Mother's affection, love and concern for nature throughout her life. She felt: "The movement of love is not limited to human beings and it is perhaps less distorted in worlds other than the human world." At Jungal Mahal, the seed of a solemn creation was sown in the writer's heart. The birth of *Aranyak*, *The Dwellers of the Forest*, took place in black and white years later when he was living in Calcutta.

In the meantime the writer-poet ("After all, I am a poet"—he used to say) was deeply remembering his native place. The everflowing Ichhamati river, and all kinds of trees and their flowers in different hues were close to his heart. He remembered his parents, his sisters and the village folk, every one of them, including the inquisitive boy with a stick in his hand walking through the bushes. This boy was the writer himself. His first duty was to write about them, he felt. Thus he wrote *Pather Panchali* which was serially published during the years 1928-29 in the famous monthly journal *Bichitra*. Immediately it attracted the attention of the connoisseurs of literature. But no publisher came forward to bring it out as a book. One of them said, "We know it contains the names and descriptions of many plants. It is a book of botany. We don't publish such books." Others said, "No love, no sex, no murder or adventure, nothing of the sort! Go away, please." Finally, obtaining a loan, Sajanikanta Das, Nirad C Chowdhury and the writer himself jointly published the book on 2 October 1929. The book has stood the test of time and proved worthy of the choice of many well-wishers, including the film-maker Satyajit Ray.

Bibhutibhushan was beginning to be famous and was more and more engaged in writing. He could no longer go back to Bhagalpur. His employers retained him as a teacher in their school at Calcutta. There he continued to remain in service till November, 1940 when news reached him of the death of his only living sister Jahnavi. Immediately he left for Bongaon where he had already rented a house for his widowed sister and her children. Jahnavi was accidentally drowned in the Ichhamati, the river so much adored by the writer from his childhood. The whole town was plunged in sorrow. Bibhutibhushan was the only one left to look after the children. Neighbours came to see him. Two girls also came with their mother. One of them, Kalyani, who was already writing in magazines, felt very sympathetic towards him. In fact she was in love with him. It was a case of love at first sight, for both perhaps. But Bibhutibhushan was aware

of the uneven match with regard to their difference of age and he told her so before the marriage. They were married on 3 December 1940 when Kalyani, alias Rama Devi, was 18 years old and her husband 46.

After marriage Bibhutibhushan settled with his wife at their native place, in his father's house. He was no longer a teacher at Calcutta. But none wanted their teacher to retire. He was engaged in nearby Gopalnagar High School as a teacher and was enrolled as such till his last days.

Bibhutibhushan's works, mainly novels and short stories, form a quite faithful documentation of life that was around him, expressed in the light of his own observations. About his deeper self we have his diary note: "From a very distant shore a deep and sacred wonder trickles down into my mind—that is inexpressible either verbally or through written words."

In *Pather Panchali* we find the writer projecting himself as Apu, a teenager boy with a stick in hand, moving through hedges and bushes. He had seen deaths one after another. To the writer death is neither violent, dramatic nor tragic. It is a loss that happens spontaneously. Death brings out a sense of sadness silently and, he believes, it gives maturity and profundity to life. So, after the death of his beloved sister, Apu gets a sense of profundity. While Sarbajaya and Harihar, the parents of Apu, are representatives of the writer's parents, Durga represents his sister. Towards the end Apu, grown-up and a family man in *Apur Sansar*, comes back home, to his native village. This happened also in the writer's life.

Bibhutibhushan was not only a lover of his own home, he was attached to it. Like poet Jibanananda Das, he wanted to be reborn in sylvan surroundings and to live among the poor simple folk who live in mud-houses. They were very near to his heart. Homecoming was the subject of many of his stories like *Budir Badi Fera*, *Pratyabartan*, etc. Though Bibhutibhushan loved a simple life without ostentation, and loved nature in its original form, he was aware of the inevitable that occurs with the progress of time. In *Pather Panchali* Durga and Apu put their ears on the poles by the side of the railway track to hear the sound of an approaching train, which is a thing of wonder to them and at the same time a symbol of distance, of the unknown, of imminent change. The last request of Durga on her death-bed to Apu was to show her a train. Trains come with new hope in his story *Kinnardal*.

(To be concluded)

AJU MUKHOPADHYAY

# POLITICAL VEDANTISM—ITS CONCEPT AND PRACTICE

(Continued from the issue of September 1996)

## CHAPTER II (contd.)

### THE PARTITION OF BENGAL AND THEREAFTER

“Afterwards there came the partition of Bengal and a general outburst of revolt which favoured the rise of the extremist party and the great Nationalist movement. Sri Aurobindo’s activities were then turned more and more in this direction and the secret action became a secondary and subordinate element. He took advantage, however, of the Swadeshi movement to popularise the idea of violent revolt in the future.”<sup>13</sup>

In depicting the outburst of discontentment against the Government’s sinister policy of ‘divide and rule’ Sisir Kumar Mitra has stated, “.. the spirit of revolt [against foreign rule] that had so long been simmering within, did now burst into open demonstrations and these intensified thousandfold when the partition took effect on 16th October 1905.\* The whole people.. united in registering its indignant protest against the sinister move to disrupt its natural solidarity.”<sup>14</sup> Soon the Government took repressive measures to stop the agitation. Students’ participation in public meetings and processions and other demonstrations—which were then being organised in the thousands all over the province—was immediately banned. This spontaneous outburst with ‘Bande Mataram’ as its war-cry gave fresh impetus to the Swadeshi movement—boycotting of British goods—which had just begun. The students openly defied the Government order, and as a consequence were subjected to all kinds of repression and persecution. They left schools and colleges *en masse* and became freedom-fighters and joined national institutions.

It was about this time that the need of founding a National Council of

\* The Government passed the Partition Act on 20th July 1905

On 12 March 1906 the Declaration of the *Yugantar* was filed. It created tremendous enthusiasm among people—high and low, rich and poor. Every word of the paper glowed with fire that inflamed the hearts of the people. Upendranath Banerjee, a co-worker of Barindra in his revolutionary activities, who was arrested with Sri Aurobindo and others in the Alipore Bomb Case and later deported to the Andaman Cellular Jail says

“The *Yugantar* sold like hot cakes. One thousand five thousand ten twenty thousand copies every week that was how the sale kept up in the course of a single year.”

“The *Yugantar* became so popular and its importance was so much appreciated that often people would pay many times its price, and substantial donations came from well-known landlords like Brajendra Kishore Roychowdhury, Narendranath Khan and Gaganendranath Tagore, the famous artist. Its office was a centre of

Education was acutely felt in Bengal by thinkers and educationists like Ashutosh Chowdhury, Sister Nivedita, Subodh Mallick, Satish Mukherjee and others to meet the need of the young students who had boycotted their schools and colleges or were rusticated by the authorities for taking part in the Anti-Partition Movement.

During this tumultuous period Barin proposed to start a Bengali paper as their organ. Sri Aurobindo agreed. Thus appeared the *Yugantar*\* in March 1906. The main purpose of the paper, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, "was to preach open revolt and the absolute denial of the British rule and include such items as a series of articles containing instructions for guerrilla warfare. Sri Aurobindo himself wrote some of the opening articles in the early numbers and he always exercised a general control, when a member of the sub-editorial staff, Swami Vivekananda's brother [Bhupendranath Dutta], presented himself on his own motion to the police in a search as the editor of the paper and was prosecuted, the *Yugantar* under Sri Aurobindo's orders adopted the policy of refusing to defend itself in a British Court on the ground that it did not recognise the foreign Government and this immensely increased the prestige and influence of the paper."<sup>15</sup>

Then came about, on 14 April 1906, the famous Barisal Conference—a memorable event in the history of Indian Nationalism. Both Nationalist and Moderate leaders went from Calcutta to attend the Conference. Sri Aurobindo also attended as he was at that time on leave (without pay). There would be no procession and no cry of *Bande Mataram*—ordered the Administration. But the leaders and delegates defied the order and the Conference was broken up by the police. Sri Aurobindo then toured East Bengal along with Bepin Pal, addressed public meetings affirming the Nationalist Ideal and associated himself closely with the revolutionary groups.

Now gradually the time drew nearer for Sri Aurobindo to come out into the open despite his temperamental preference to remain in the background. His involvement in active politics, though not publicly, demanded of him all his time

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revolutionary work for which many recruits were made. This may be said to be the nucleus of the Maniktole Garden Centre started by Barindra under Sri Aurobindo's direction' (Sisir Kumar Mitra, pp. 55-56)

'It had as its chief writers and directors three of the ablest younger writers in Bengal, and it at once acquired an immense influence throughout Bengal. It may be noted that the Secret Society did not include terrorism in its programme, but this element grew up in Bengal as a result of the strong repression and the reaction to it in that Province' (SABCL Vol. 26, p. 24)

\* On 18 December 1938 Sri Aurobindo, in commenting on the *Yugantar* movement stated, 'My idea was an armed revolution in the whole of India. What they [Barin and others] did at that time was very childish, killing a Magistrate and so on. Later it turned into terrorism and dacoities which were not at all my idea or intention. Bengal is too emotional, wants quick results and can't prepare through a long course of years. We wanted to give battle by creating a spirit in the race through guerrilla warfare' (A. B. Purani, *The Life of Sri Aurobindo*, p. 96)

and energy. He was quite aware of this. His decision to take long leave from the Baroda Service was his soul's urge. For some time he had been thinking of relinquishing it. "The founding of the Bengal National College [by the National Council of Education which had been set up earlier] gave him the opportunity he needed and enabled him to resign his position in the Baroda Service [on 18 June 1907 on expiry of his one year's leave without pay], and join the College as its Principal [in August 1906]. Subodh Mallik, one of Sri Aurobindo's collaborators in his secret action and afterwards also in Congress politics, in whose house he usually lived when he was in Calcutta, had given one lakh rupees for this foundation and had stipulated that Sri Aurobindo should be given a post of professor in the college with a salary of Rs. 150, so he was now free to give his whole time to the service of the country."<sup>16</sup>

The origin of the National Education movement may be traced to the earlier endeavours of Sister Nivedita and Satish Chandra Mukherjee (the founder of the Dawn Society), and others who were instrumental in the formation of the National Council of Education, Bengal. Many distinguished leaders of the time, including Rabindranath Tagore, were associated with this National Council of Education. Satish Chandra Mukherjee was the first Superintendent of the Bengal National College.

Sri Aurobindo was disgusted with the British system of education followed in Indian schools and colleges and universities. He had his own ideas of what kind of education the nation needed the most for its all-round development. A series of his articles on the subject in seed-form was published in the *Karmayogin* in 1909 which he later elaborated in the *Arya*.

Sri Aurobindo, as we have already stated, joined the Bengal National College as its Principal in August 1906. For some time past he had been intensely feeling the necessity of an organised Nationalist party (within the Congress) to strongly voice its ideal and programme of work in the next session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta, in December 1906, and an English daily as its organ for wider propagation of the new evangel.

Now let us see how the situation grew and developed to provide Sri Aurobindo with the two things of which he was in need. "Bepin Pal, who had been long expounding a policy of self-help and non-cooperation in his weekly journal, now started a daily with the name *Bande Mataram*, but it was likely to be a brief adventure since he began with only Rs. 500 in his pocket [donated by Haridas Haldar] and no firm assurance of financial assistance in the future. He asked Sri Aurobindo to join him in this venture to which a ready consent was given, for now Sri Aurobindo saw his opportunity for starting the public propaganda necessary for his revolutionary purpose. He called a meeting of the forward group of young men in the Congress and they decided then to organise themselves openly as a new political party joining hands with the corresponding group in Maharashtra under the proclaimed leadership of Tilak and to join battle

with the Moderate party, which was done at the Calcutta session. He also persuaded them to take up the *Bande Mataram* daily as their party organ and a *Bande Mataram* company was started to finance the paper, whose direction Sri Aurobindo undertook during the absence of Bepin Pal who was sent on a tour in the districts to proclaim the purpose and programme of the new party. The new party was at once successful and the *Bande Mataram* paper began to circulate throughout India.”<sup>17</sup>

After nearly twelve years it was seen that the pen which M. G. Ranade and his colleagues in the Indian National Congress had intended to stop, started running more vigorously and with full logic and firm conviction through the pages of the *Bande Mataram* ‘Bande Mataram’ became the war cry of Bengal and soon it echoed and re-echoed from millions of Indian throats across the length and breadth of the country.

Later in 1908 Sri Aurobindo wrote: “. It was thirty-two years ago that Bankim wrote this great song and few listened; but in a sudden moment somebody sang *Bande Mataram*. The mantra had been given and in a single day a whole people had been converted to the religion of patriotism.”<sup>18</sup>

“The appearance of the *Bande Mataram*,” as depicted by Sisir Kumar Mitra, “is an event of very great importance in the history not only of Indian journalism but also of Indian nationalism. . it almost overnight changed the minds and hearts of Indians all over the country and generalised in them the idea of ‘absolute autonomy free from British Control’ as the political goal of India.”<sup>19</sup>

In the words of Sri Aurobindo: “The *Bande Mataram* was almost unique in journalistic history in the influence it exercised in converting the mind of a people and preparing it for revolution.”<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the whole nation, till then in slumber, at once awakened and was enlivened with a new enthusiasm. It was perhaps for this reason that the Government had to pass sleepless nights pondering over the question: How to get rid of the brain working behind the scene? It is evident from the letter of May 1907 of Sir Andrew Fraser, then the Governor of Bengal, to Lord Minto, the Governor General, that the information they had meanwhile acquired convinced them that Aurobindo Ghose had been the leader and the mastermind behind all revolutionary activities.\* The letter ran thus: “There is one matter which I desire to press strongly on Your Excellency’s earnest attention; viz. the necessity for deporting Aurobindo Ghose... He is the leader. He is regarded and spoken of by all as the disciples regard a great Master. He has been in the forefront of all But he has kept himself, like a careful and valued General, out of sight ‘of the enemy’. We cannot get evidence against him such as would secure his conviction in a court. But we have been fortunate enough to get papers which show his connection with the conspiracy and

\* An attempt was made on the life of Sri Andrew Fraser on 5 December 1907 at Narayangarh near Kharagpur. A bomb was thrown at the train in which he was travelling (A. B. Purani, *The Life of Sri Aurobindo*, p. 105)



information as to his action quite sufficient to convince the reasonable-minded and justify deportation.”<sup>21</sup>

Later we came to know his views from an article of Sri Aurobindo under the title “Bande Mataram Prosecution”, written after his acquittal on 23 September 1907 and published in the *Bande Mataram* on 29 September 1907. The article gave in its characteristic diction a befitting reply to the Government’s action. In contrast it should be well understood what damaging role the Anglo-Indian Press played to crush the Movement and how valuable and important to the Government were its editorial comments and views on matters that were then appearing in the pages of the *Bande Mataram*.

Now, one may question. What was there in the contents of the *Bande Mataram* that shook so severely the strong and well-founded edifice of the British Administration? Why was the *Bande Mataram* prosecuted? And how had the prosecution failed?

(To be continued)

SAMAR BASU

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- 15 *SABCL*, Vol 26, p 24
- 16 *Ibid* , pp 27-28
- 17 *Ibid* , p 28
- 18 Keshavamurty, *Sri Aurobindo—Future Hope of Man*, p 102
- 19 Sisir Kumar Mitra, *Towards Victory*, pp 62-63
- 20 *SABCL*, Vol 26 p 30
- 21 Sisir Kumar Mitra *Towards Victory*, p 64

## BLUE-WINGED ECSTASY

SRI AUROBINDO'S *Savitri* is a new Veda to me, full of haunting music and meaning. I have chanted it daily for many years now. Whenever I read it, a boundless joy seizes me and I feel thrilled with a divine sweetness flowing through the lines.

Sometimes, while reading its most complex lines, my thoughts become blank. Many years ago, a queer incident occurred which I can never forget in all my life. One particular morning I opened *Savitri* and began reading Book Twelve, the Epilogue. I was "rapture-stunned" at the following lines:

Lain on the Earth-Mother's calm unconscious breast  
She saw the green-clad branches lean above  
Guarding her sleep with their enchanted life,  
And overhead a blue-winged ecstasy  
Fluttered from bough to bough with high-pitched call.

I began to brood on what this 'blue-winged ecstasy' might be. The more I thought, the more complex grew the phrase. I could not think any more I closed the book. Many days, weeks and months rolled by It was winter One day when, as usual, I was chanting *Savitri*, a coil<sup>1</sup> came and perched on a nearby tree It began singing sweetly I wondered how the vernal bird could come to the tree in the month of November.

But suddenly a thought flashed in my mind Could it not be that the seer-poet of *Savitri* described the coil as a blue-winged ecstasy? I immediately opened the particular page and read the lines again I felt the fluttering of the wings of the bird of spring in those exquisite lines.

It was an unforgettable experience for me I was overjoyed that the little bird with its mellifluous music broke the mystery of the line

The bird vanished. But the sweetness of this memory still lingers in the depths of my being.

K. YEGGANNA

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo used the word 'coil' in *Savitri* as well as in *Songs to Myrtilla* with a special spelling The word appears in Book Four, Canto One, p 352 line 9, 1981 edition As in *Songs to Myrtilla* there are two dots on top of the second vowel, i, indicating that this vowel is to be taken in its own right and pronounced, making the word dissyllabic —Editor

# A TREASURY OF ANCIENT TAMIL LEGENDS

## 96. THE SPIDER

THE township of Sathamangai once occupied a predominant place in the ever-fertile land of the Chozhas. Legends galore speak of its glory in various ways. First and foremost, the town was peopled by holy Brahmins, whose Vedic chants arose from various Mutts. Sweet-tongued *Nakanavai*<sup>1</sup> birds imitated their chants by trilling forth their songs. As the beautiful Brahmin women plunged their graceful forms in the tanks, the swans vied with one another to plunge and play with them. As every Brahmin there was pious, so were their wives virtuous.

In that blessed town there lived a devotee of Lord Siva, named Thiru Neela Nakkar. A sincere follower of the esoteric teaching of the Vedas, he dedicated all his thoughts and service to worship. Twice a day he went to the temple, once at sunrise and again at sundown, and performed a pooja assisted by his dutiful and loving wife.

One evening Thiru Neela Nakkar entered the *sanctum sanctorum* with all piety and humility. He was followed by his wife, carrying a garland of different-coloured flowers in one hand and a platter of *vilva*<sup>2</sup> leaves in the other.

With his hands raised towards the heavens, Thiru Neela Nakkar sang hymns and then began to chant. While he continued with his chant and deeply meditated on Lord Siva, his wife threw the *vilva* leaves, one after another, on the Lingam.

While her eyes stood glued to the Lingam, and her mind followed the chants of her husband, she noticed a poisonous spider dangling in the air right above it. Before she could think of a means of driving it away, the eight-legged creature alighted on the image of the Lord.

Unable to bear the very sight of the creature crawling there, the woman mustered her strength and blew hard at the creature. The current of air thus sent out from her mouth carried the creature away. But unexpectedly a spray of spittle from her mouth hit the Lingam.

Thiru Neela Nakkar, who didn't notice the spider, misunderstood his wife. He looked daggers at her and howled, "Why did you spit at the Lord?"

"Oh, No! Why should I? I blew at the spider that had alighted on the Lord. But the spray of spittle fell on the Lingam unexpectedly," said his wife.

"How dare you defile the sanctity of the place, you insensible woman? You should have driven the spider away by some other means. Now that you have become a sinner by performing a mean act, you no more deserve a place either in my heart or in my abode. Leave me once and for all," yelled Thiru Neela Nakkar and left the temple.

<sup>1</sup> A species of the Maina, trained to talk

<sup>2</sup> A sacred tree *Crotalaria Religiosa*

The poor woman was in tears. Not knowing where to go, she decided to spend the night in the temple itself and leave her future to the mercy of the Lord

Lord Siva sympathised with the parted couple. In appreciation of the love they had for Him, He decided to bring them together

When it was past midnight, Thiru Neela Nakkar had a dream. He saw the Lord, who said: "Have a close look at my body. You will know how helpful your wife was to me in the time of need."

Thiru Neela Nakkar couldn't believe his eyes when he saw the Lord covered all over with blisters and sores except where his wife had blown with her mouth.

He woke up with a start. "What a senseless man am I!" he cried. Cursing himself for his failure to reckon the love that induced her action, he rushed to the temple.

He saw his wife weeping over her fate. "Oh! How merciless was I towards this devout woman!" said he and wiped her tears with his hand.

The lady stood up as a mark of respect to her husband.

"Pardon me, my dear!" he said. "Lord Siva has driven sense into my senseless head. Please come home with me and let us continue to live as usual, with of course more understanding."

The devoted and affectionate wife accompanied her husband in greater hope and joy.

### 97. A HAIRY CASCADE

Kanjarur, an affluent city in the Chozha kingdom, housed many beautiful women. The healthy hair they had on their heads was long enough to touch the floor. Every woman in Kanjarur prided herself on being blessed with such long silken hair, which greatly added to her beauty. If any woman lost her hair due to some illness or for any other reason, she was looked down upon by the others. Shame gnawed at her heart and drove her to find peace with death.

While women all over the world were jealous of the women of Kanjarur, the women of Kanjarur themselves envied a little girl of their own city.

The girl, the only daughter of a very rich agriculturist named Manak Kanjaranar, was extremely good-looking. Her hair, bushy, shiny and very healthy, flowed to the floor and trailed behind her when she walked.

"What a feast for our eyes!", commented the lads looking at the charming girl.

"Volumes can be written on her hairy cascade alone," said the poets. "But we run short of words," they added.

"She is a divine child, you know," said an old woman. "Manak Kanjaranar and his wife were childless for several years. The couple prayed to Lord Siva for help and this beautiful girl is the reward of their tapasya."

"Manak Kanjaranar ungrudgingly gives away whatever the holy ash-smeared

Saivites ask for. No wonder the Lord blessed him with such a beautiful girl," praised others.

The little girl—of enviable features—grew up. When time was ripe enough for her marriage, her father began his search for a suitable young man.

The search went on for several months and the best in the whole lot of suitors was selected. He was Eiyarkon Kalik Kamar.

Manak Kanjaranar selected him for his daughter because Kalik Kamar was in every way equal to him. Both of them rolled in wealth. As devotees of the Lord they helped the poor and needy Saivites in all possible ways and never said 'no' to them.

At the invitation of Manak Kanjaranar, Kalik Kamar and his parents with select relatives went to see the bride.

The guests were very much impressed by the bride at the very first sight and they unanimously okayed her.

The bride too looked at her would-be husband from the corner of her eye. She lowered her head and eyes in a shy reaction. She then expressed her willingness to her parents with a nod of her head.

"What would you like to say?" Manak Kanjaranar asked Kalik Kamar.

"Well! What's there to say, except that I like your daughter very much?"

"What appeals to you in her?" asked a guest with a wink.

"Everything... especially her healthy long hair," said the bridegroom, smiling.

Within a week, the betrothal ceremony took place and the date for the wedding was fixed.

Friends and relatives of Manak Kanjaranar started gathering in his house a week before the wedding day. The wedding guests helped the host in all possible ways for the proper arrangement and the smooth sailing of the marriage

Just a day before the wedding, Lord Siva in the disguise of a weird-looking Sadhu entered the house of Manak Kanjaranar.

Smearred with holy ash from forehead to toe, He wore a garland of human bones. A piece of cloth ran round his hip covering his nakedness, and a string of tiny human bones adorned the tuft of hair remaining on his shaven head. The skulls of babies beautified his earlobes and a thick rope woven of human hair ran across his torso.

While His presence made everyone in the house nervous, Manak Kanjaranar ran towards Him and welcomed Him showing all the respect a Sadhu deserved.

"What's going on here?" asked the Sadhu.

"Preparations for the marriage of my only daughter," came the reply.

"Let her be blessed with sixteen children,"<sup>3</sup> said the Sadhu and showed eagerness to see the bride.

<sup>3</sup> The Tamils bless their youngsters by saying "May you be blessed with sixteen children" 'Children'

Manak Kanjaranar took the Sadhu to the bride's room and signalled to his daughter to prostrate herself before the Sadhu and touch his feet to receive His blessings.

The bride did what was requested. The Sadhu's eyes fell on her hair. He blessed her and then said to her father: "This hairy rope across my chest is old and worn out I want to have a new one. The living threads on your daughter's head will make the best holy rope for me "

Manak Kanjaranar, without a moment's hesitation, took a knife and with a swish cut off his daughter's long plait and gave it to the Sadhu.

Receiving the plait, the Sadhu disappeared He reappeared in His original form along with his consort Parvati in the sky

Manak Kanjaranar and his daughter jumped with joy at the sight of the divine couple The guests too had the darshan of the Divine for a fraction of a second. All of them uniformly heard the Lord's voice say. "It's only to make others know about your love for me..."

An hour later, the bridegroom Kalik Kamər and his party reached the marriage hall Seeing the wedding guests in an ecstatic mood, Kalik Kamar inquired into the matter.

A rather sad smile flickered across his face. But he cheered up for he knew that the bride's hair would grow soon

On the morning of the next day, at the appointed auspicious hour the bridegroom joined hands with the bride And when Kalik Kamar tied the *thali* to his bride's neck, he saw her hair growing In a trice, it touched the floor and moved on it further, till it grew twice as long as before

"That's the blessing of my Lord," said Manak Kanjaranar

"Our Lord," corrected Kalik Kamar.

*(More legends on the way)*

P RAJA

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here doesn't mean 'human babies' but sixteen kinds of wealth Poet Abirami Pattar (18th century) in his poetical work *Abirami Anthathi* lists them all and requests the Goddess Abirami to bless him with all the sixteen children, viz , 1 Healthy body, 2 Education 3 Riches, 4 Food, 5 Beauty, 6 Fame 7 Good reputation, 8 Youthful spirit, 9 Knowledge, 10 Intelligent children, 11 Strength, 12 Courage, 13 Long life 14 Success, 15 Good thoughts and deeds, and 16 Enjoyment (through the senses)

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Bhagavad Gita for Changing Times**, by *D M Sinha*, published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1995. Price Rs. 550

It is a curious background from which this interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita emerges. The D M Sinha household (he retired from the IAS in 1980) is one of the most practically geared, one of the most cheerful and versatile one can see. Small wonder this, since training for life in right earnest begins here pretty early. His two daughters still recall the sense of appalled dismay when, as teenagers, they found their parents handing over the month's salary to them during the summer vacation with directions that for that month the girls should run the house! His colleagues in the Service nostalgically remember a fussy Chief Minister's encounter with Sinha. The former was dwelling on the need for honesty.. that officers should use an official pen for official work and a private one for private work. Registering what the Chief Minister thought was discomfiture, Sinha responded by saying that he had been sadly amiss in this respect, for all these years he had been using his personal pen for official work! On another occasion when caught in a ticklish situation, when one of the ministers would have him give 'appropriate' advice on file, Sinha cleared the situation unruffled, and disarmed the irate minister too, by submitting in all humility that the minister's anger was natural, but he would much rather take the latter's wrath on himself than do the minister injustice by giving him wrong advice. This technique worked effectively with latter-day officers too, to whom he quoted this incident to bring home the essence of 'Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam', skill in work is yoga, as expounded by Krishna.

Sinha's spiritual background is indeed variegated. Born of Aryasamaji parents in Bijnor in 1922, he grew up using the movement's rational spirit for analysing the causes of its erosion. In his enquiries, multiple strands wove their way in. His guru Rehana Tayyabji was the kind who would base her religious discussions at once on the Bhagavad Gita, Quran-e-Sharif and the Holy Bible. The other major influence in his life has been of Radha Baba of Geeta Vatika, Gorakhpur, who after scaling the heights of Gyanmarg swung with ease into the joyousness of Bhaktimarg. Along with Radha Baba, Sinha was deeply influenced by Hanuman Prasad Poddar ('Babuji' to most people). In Babuji he saw how managing the hard realities of life (Babuji ran the Geeta Press and edited 'Kalyan' for years) can be achieved successfully on the basis of an inner being steeped in Krishna Bhakti. After all Krishna was essentially "Mujassim ishque" (Pure Love) as Rehana Ma would put it.

Small wonder then that her young disciple volunteered to go any place where the Government needed a 'Muslim' officer! Such is the sweep of D.M. Sinha's catholicity which has made him cover under one of his eagle wings an

amazing range of proficiencies—vocal music, playing almost all stringed instruments, jaltarang and flute, composing music with a classical base, both Urdu and Hindi poetry, sports like billiards and tennis, even a membership of the Indian Mathematics Society for almost 20 years—and the highest reaches of spiritualism under the other wing. Here indeed is a true ‘Savyasachin’ as extolled by Krishna when he exhorts Arjuna to become an efficient Divine Instrument—the Ambidextrous One—par excellence... and efficient at that!

This spirit pervades everything that surrounds him. In the thimbleful (angushtha bhār) of sylvan tranquillity hidden within a tiny inlet in Meerut’s busy Abu Lane, ubiquitous little chits silently manage the household by assigning each one’s daily work separately. A composition is worked up extempore in Pahadi for the final Kirtan, to match D.V. Paluskar’s “Thumaki Chalata Ramachandra” for an evening of devotional music. Quotations from the *shairi* of Ravish Siddiqui are arrayed in support of the integral nature of Gyan Marg and Bhakti Marg... even the flickering electric supply is mischievously compared to the wilful flashes of lightning in the *rahasyavadi* or mystery poems of Sumitranandan Pant. .. Something in the atmosphere here sparks off the germ of creativity; and when an interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita comes out of environs which are as steeped in the practical and the spiritual as this one, one expects it to be more than a mellow philosophy to be savoured in autumnal years. That indeed it is! This interpretation does not just explain the Bhagavad Gita. It tells one how to apply its principles to the myriad maladies around us so that life could be one big song—The Divine Song.

A song sung in the battlefield—the Kurukshetra war, bridling the cumuli of dust raised by the chariotry, and not one festooned delicately on the icicles of the Himalayan nimbus. The first six chapters set out the basic principles. A brisk, no-nonsense approach to the realities of the individual self and the universal forms the base for explaining the two systems of Sankhya and Karmayoga. Both lead to the same goal but are different in themselves. Then follows an elaborate delineation of the doctrine of Karma and how one can get out of its fetters by delinking oneself with its results and offering these results to the Almighty. This is followed by a detailing of the discipline which can help to make Yoga out of Karma. The next six chapters deal with the manifest aspect of the Divine, and the final six dwell on the unmanifest. The last chapter rounds off the exposition with a consummate summary of the mechanism which can lead us to deliverance through evolution of the little individual self into the Universal in the spirit of complete self-surrender implying that in surrendering oneself there is only gain. This mechanism is implicit in the entire treatise, which a pure mind could discern with ease. However, most of us need to be held by the hand and guided along, to learn how to decipher the implications of our own individual self—being really the Universal—and the ramifications that this truth has for our day-to-day attitudes. It is here that this commentary acts as a competent guide, a gentle guru.



Not that this interpretation is without an intellectual base, but it does not obtrude like an arrogant spur. Nor does it detract from the overall impression that the base of knowledge is most meaningful only when it is applied, its understanding being an enabling position towards this end. A typical working person (the cover design covers students also in its range) would imbibe the intellectual underpinning, somewhere along the way. From the very beginning the interpretation strikes a note above the mundane and the obvious import of the word-meaning, unfolding at a parallel level. "The names that appear in these narratives.. (have) .. a deeper and more significant meaning than what appears on the surface." Often these meanings are rooted in etymology, as in the case of Sanjay where, with fine perception, he observes (Commentary, Ch. I:2): "It is the intellect alone which though being insentient, has the capability to reflect perfectly the Supreme Sentient Being. Thus Sanjay, as the Charioteer, exemplifies or represents a discerning intellect which has been spiritually awakened and sharpened by constant study of the scriptures." The author's own intellect stands out as a discerning one. Witness his ascription of the quality of insentience to the intellect, clearly placing it as part of the package of Creation, i.e.. Jada Prakriti or Insentient Nature distinct from Pure Consciousness. Advaita in its pristine purity is caught, by implication, and the act of discerning itself distanced from Pure Consciousness. Then with a comprehensive sweep he posits the equally valid Dvaita view (Commentary, Ch. X:14): "Both the capability and the process of consciousness emanate from the Lord"; then, again (Commentary, Ch X:15): "In the Lord exists the triad of Knower, Knowledge and Known." Truly, here we have a mind capable of treading over the razor's edge.

The introduction to Ch. IV interprets Manu, another symbol for man, as that which "signifies the power of contemplation on the one hand and worship on the other. As such, Manu is an entity in which both these functions coexist. The Sanskrit word for 'man' is also derived from the same root, as both these functions are distinctive features of man, against those of an animal. According to Vedantic philosophy the Supreme Self is the source of all such characteristics on the macro level, and as such 'Manu' signifies a level of consciousness distinctively characterised by these attributes."

In the Vibhuti Yoga (Ch. X) he continues in the same vein. Narad, for instance, stands for a consciousness imparting spiritual knowledge; Asita a consciousness free from worldly bondage; Devala a consciousness attaining Divinity through symbolic worship (*sākāra*), and so on. Consistently the effort is to wean the reader away from the apparent meaning to the exalted one. Thus all those names that one has heard since childhood get internalised as levels of consciousness: one's own consciousness if one looks at it from the perspective of Gyanmarg, or a consciousness aspiring towards Divinity if one sees it from the point of view of Bhaktimarg. Sinha's interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita is thus a continuation of that classical tradition embodied in our basic texts like the

Shrimad Bhagwat or the Ramayana where even a casual reading elevates the level of the individual consciousness of the reader from the worldly to the otherworldly through its very imagery. One recalls the *Ramcharitmanas* where Tulsidas likens Sita, walking in the Aranyavan between Ram and Lakshman, to Maya (Creation) poised between Brahma (Ram the Universal Self) and Jiva (Lakshman the individualised self)

Ubhay bich siya sohat aise,  
Brahma Jiva bich Maya jaise

The commentary strikes an original note right from the interpretation of the first shloka of Chapter I. In fact the entire analysis of the events in the first chapter of the Gita, as they occurred in the beginning of the Kurukshetra war, is indeed unusual. Dharma is not only the first word of the Gita, but its keynote. Taking a clue from Chapter XIII of the Gita Sinha links it up here to say that 'Kshetra' means body. And from here his interpretation strikes its individual path. The human body is posited as the battlefield where the warring demoniacal forces (Kauravas) and the Divine forces (Pandavas—'Panda' meaning the Self) fight their battles in the lives of each one of us. An empathetic chord is struck in the hearts of those who have been witnesses if not victims of conflict in any form—be they school-children struggling through their daily homework, a housewife coping with sudden guests, an executive trying to stand up to a corrupt senior, or an old man wondering whether he should end his own life instead of facing the indignities of being an invalid. A creditable range indeed to cover—and all with the help of this discerning insight that this is no narration of events but an allegory in which each one of us plays the central character.

Arjuna, according to Sinha, represents the individualised self present in all of us, his circumstances echoed in the conflicts we all face in our daily lives over matters big or small. His aplomb arises out of a basal ego we find mirrored in our own, as he asks Sri Krishna to position his chariot between the two armies. The commentary specially notices with a subtle perspicacity how, quietly without uttering a word, Sri Krishna promptly shatters traces of his ego. Arjuna's predicament on finding himself confronted by all his kinsmen is our own. (Commentary, Ch. I:28-29) "It is natural to feel affection for one's relatives and friends, but if this affection for one's relatives places obstacles in the execution of one's duties, then it does not bring glory to anyone." The reader can deduce that such an observation has been distilled out of a lifetime's experience in the administrative service. The approach is neither judgmental nor didactic, but purely analytical—"The reason for this delusion is that the bonds of the body have been falsely taken to be the bonds of the soul." (Commentary, Ch. I:28-29) Later, in the commentary to shloka 36 wherein Arjuna argues against war on the grounds that this will not give pleasure but lead to sin, the author makes a fine

point. Arjuna's is a case of a "misplaced sense of dispassion.... The real sense of dispassion pertains to a conviction of the mind and not to worldly consideration." All too often have we seen in this society of ours arguments based on self-interest masquerading as arguments based on duty to others.

One catches glimpses of the erstwhile administrator in the finesse with which lessons for practical life are culled out of the Shlokas of the Bhagavad Gita. To wit, the commentary on Shloka 2, Ch. I: By performing duty in the given context of the present, the principal determinant of action, not only administration but life itself could be made less stressful. Then, again (Commentary, Ch. III:12), the Shloka talks of nourishing the Gods by Yajnas: "Harm from weakening the Gods: It is commonly seen that if the potentials of irrigation, power etc. are used according to the prescribed procedures and their dues are not withheld then these potentials increase. But unauthorised tapping of power or diversion of these channels of non-payment of dues weaken these potentials, and society is put to great hardships. It is easy to imagine the harm accruing from tampering with such human and social systems. It is more so when the Divine systems are tampered with."

Fine points in Sinha's commentary nestle snugly in its fold and raise their heads with a smile when discovered. 'Parjanya', for instance, is defined as "That form of rain-water that sustains life." (Ch III:15) We see his distinctive touch again in the commentary to that oft-quoted Shloka (Ch IV:8) where Sri Krishna assures his appearance in every age, 'yuga': "The word 'yuga' used in the second line of this Shloka is generally taken to mean a particular span of time... this assurance. can be interpreted to have a more comprehensive meaning. In fact the word 'yuga' means a joint. Every moment that passes is a joint of the future with the past and, for the discerning, every moment is the moment when the Lord would incarnate Himself to protect righteousness from the onslaughts of unrighteousness." Even more reassuring is the interpretation of Ch. V:23: "In this Shloka the Lord does not lay stress on not allowing the impulses of desire and anger even to raise their heads at all, but lauds the strength to withstand them." Again the same inspiring, helping spirit is seen (Commentary, Ch. XVI:3) wherein twenty-six divine qualities of the self are detailed. "In fact these are the innate qualities of the Individualised self which is the reality of one's being. These qualities have not to be acquired from outside..." Ch. XII is rounded off with an exhortation in the same vein: "... nothing is impossible for the Lord... By strengthening one's faith in Him these qualities start manifesting in a person's life and then no effort is needed to acquire them. The Lord's loving grace rectifies the shortcomings of a devotee's discipline and to give him this strong assurance, the Lord says that such a devotee is extremely dear to Him "

Equanimity is the quality *par excellence*, expounds the Bhagavad Gita (Ch. XIV:22)—no bias even towards Sattwaguna (*à la* Khairnar or Alphons)! The commentary commends the using of the gunas "only to transcend them, in the

same way that a person uses a flight of stairs only to leave them when he reaches the room at the top”.

The relentless logic of this balance is well matched with a lofty perception of man's inherent divinity and a keen understanding of his failings, giving the analysis a surgical precision: "... the existence of desire is not the real nature of man. True human character is far above the pull of desires. But there is a trace of animality in every human being. Desires emerge as a strong force when undue emphasis is deliberately laid on this animality." (Ch. III:43) On the other hand the actions of Man acquire divinity when they are done not for mean, selfish ends but for the general good.

The Bhagavad Gita begins with a question from Dhritarashtra, a consciousness mildewed over with intense delusion. This does prod the reader to think that if the principal characters in this unfolding drama are all so close to ourselves and our failings, with the drama itself unfolding not in a wooded academy but in the theatre of war, should not one be working backwards from death to find out about birth and life itself? And that too before embarking on the business of life seriously and not after having finished with it! As Sinha puts it in one of his discussions, "the Bhagavad Gita's place is in the package of birth-rites and not funeral rites!"

Such pithy one-liners abound in his discussions. In his cosy sitting-room the air hums with the cadence of his deep spirituality, even as Sinha unfolds Krishna's concept of illusory permanence of the world with the help of Urdu poetry:

Sab tilesmat-e-tasavvur hai Shaqeel  
Varna aataa hai na jaata hai koi.

His daughter Rajat sits in another room with her children. Often they come first for the Gita Sessions. And when they start doing well in their studies, helping with the work at home and handling all responsibilities their tiny shoulders can bear, with a cheerfulness that would put many an adult to shame—it is then that the amazed parents troop in. A dazed one asks "Have you seen God?" "What else does one see?" asks Sinha with a straight face. The twinkle in the eye hints at a lurking spirit of good-humoured fun.

No pedestalled ecclesiastic do we have here. In his discussions, as in his book, the essence of the Gita is based on the workable—wholesome, sunlit, delightful, *anandaswarupa*; the same spirit fizzes in his Gita gatherings, which are often held in his palm-sized garden, bordered with the most impish of iceplant blossoms, hedged in by trellises of delicate sweetpeas, much in the manner of elder sisters minding baby brothers. Slices of iced cake, cups of hot tulsilaced tea (or 'bel' sherbet in the summers) are passed around and the 'King Philosopher' radiates a leonine beneficence. These sittings bespeak the 'Savya-

sachin' again—he speaks of matters deeply religious, his posture often a dead give-away of the erstwhile 'bureaucrat'!—legs loose-limbed elegantly crossed over, a languid arm thrown over the backrest of the chair as the head tilts back just a trifle. But, then, he sees no contradiction between the two, in fact one enriches the other and essentially they are all of a piece—in harmony, in yoga. "The Service," he says with conviction, "is spiritually handed over on a platter "

And that is why this interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita strikes home. In our tension- and neurosis-ridden world it weaves an insulating cocoon of pure homespun. Enough of getting quartered and lynched between the likes of 'value for money', 'optimisation of returns' and what-have-you. Step one—do your duty, your 'dharma', your 'kartavya karma' in a spirit of offering to the Supreme Being. Step two—surrender yourself, unburden yourself to Him, let Him carry your worries and tensions while you concentrate on doing your duty, your 'Karma'. Step three—once based on self-surrender this 'Karma' becomes 'Yagya', freeing you from bondage and putting you in alignment with a natural law triggering off a natural guarantee—

Ananyaschintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate  
Tesham nityabhiyuktanam yogakshemam vahamyaham.<sup>1</sup>

Sinha's *Bhagavad Gita for Changing Times* is thus not a 'book'—it is a programme for all future action for everybody.

SHASHI MISRA

**The Growth of a Flame.** *Compiled and edited by Roshan.* Printed at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry-605 002. Pages 73. Price Rs. 60.

This book by Roshan is a gem. Those who read it will find the answer to the needs of their spiritual life. As Sri Aurobindo explains,

It is by a constant inner growth that one can find a constant newness and unflinching interest in life. There is no other satisfying way.

It is evident that life will be spent in vain if the individual does not make an attempt to realise the spiritual truth. Roshan's attempt in this compilation is therefore to persuade the reader to take upon himself this task. His need and aspiration to be liberated can get uplifted by Sri Aurobindo's lines from *Savitri* about Savitri:

<sup>1</sup> "To those men who worship Me making Me alone the whole object of their thought, to those constantly in Yoga with Me, I spontaneously bring every good "

Near to earth's wideness, intimate with heaven  
 Exalted and swift her young large-visioned spirit,  
 Voyaging through worlds of splendour and of calm,  
 Overflowed the ways of thought to unborn things.

The inspired writer is impressed with the collection of some of the letters, birthday-cards and messages to Kamala from the Mother and Sri Aurobindo brought by Champaklal, who was an incarnation of Divine Service to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Once the Mother herself said: "Champaklal, you have become a part of me." It would have been a great mistake on the part of the writer to write on Kamala-ben without speaking about Champaklal who had been associated with her since her childhood.

The exquisite picture on the cover points through the lotus symbol to "an illuminating power of effecting spontaneous opening of our being to the Divine, especially to the Divine as Avatar".

The writer shows a double movement, the Soul's aspiration and the Divine's Grace, in such a way that one can never say which precedes which. We know from Sri Aurobindo that "... He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite." There are two aspects of Divine Birth. One is descent, the birth of God in humanity, the Godhead manifesting itself in human form and nature, the eternal Avatar and the other is ascent, the birth of man into the Godhead, man rising into the divine nature.

The compiler says in her preface that this book is a collection of Kamala's correspondence which will take the readers to past luminous memories. Parts of this correspondence may appear, to us modern disciples, very trivial and superficial. But read carefully, they appear in a different light and prove to be very significant indeed. You find there are three significant aspects presented in the book. First, the relationship of the disciple with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Second, the extent of sacrifice the Mother has made for the disciples—*e.g.*, letting Sadhaks come for the pranam to her, attending to the daily activities, while standing on the door-step for hours meeting people. Similarly, it was amazing to see how Sri Aurobindo was keeping an invisible eye on Kamala in spite of his several occupations. Lastly, the writer has focused on Kamala's own relation with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo: how Kamala was disclosing her whims and views to the Mother, like a simple child. We shall be surprised to know how Sadhaks and Sadhikas of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram during that period have enjoyed and suffered and shared so much in common of the *lilā* of the double Divine Incarnation—the Supreme Purusha and Prakriti on the earth.

Kamala-ben came to the Ashram at the age of thirteen. She got the golden opportunity to spend her days with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. All her life was oriented to the Mother's stupendous love and guidance. In her routine work she followed her instructions which would give the key to the sealed heart of the

bhakta. She was conscious of the fact that she was engaged in the service of the Mother. Perhaps it was quite a common feature in the Vedic and Upanishadic days when the disciple was an integral part of the Guru's life. There was the sense of utter self-abnegation and sacrifice making him unmindful of all physical necessities. A single dominant note governed Kamala's consciousness—how to serve the Divine Guru who needed nothing, asked for nothing and yet was pleased with the bhakta's services of love and devotion.

Roshan in her introduction to the book has narrated lucidly the spiritual background of Kamala-ben. She was brought up by and inherited the spiritual bent of mind of her father Kashibhai, who was a deeply spiritual person. Before joining the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Kashibhai was a devotee of Lord Krishna and had founded an Ashram at Kansa, a few miles from Bharuch. He was keenly interested to bring up all his children under the spiritual guidance of saints. He took the utmost care of Kamala-ben up to the age of seven. Then he left Kamala in the care of her grandparents and came to join the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Later Kamala-ben came to the Ashram at the age of thirteen, on 20 February 1928

In her reminiscences she has said about the earlier period:

“When I came here I did not know anything. I learned English first from Janet and then from Pavita. All the time I remained occupied only with work. There was indeed a great joy in work.” The Divine Mother poured love on her and gave her the work which she used to like before. Kamala told the Mother that she was very fond of Aspiration flowers and used to collect them for her teacher. When she came to the Ashram the Mother gave her the work of counting Aspiration flowers.

In the earlier days in the Ashram there were very few Sadhaks. These aspiring lucky souls got the chance of living like one family.

This booklet is divided into six parts. The first part contains Kamala-ben's aspirations and prayers. I am quoting some illuminating ones below.

Mother,

Light the fire in my heart for Thy service and to be faithful to the Divine Mother. (11.3.33)

Keep me faithful to Thee and give me the power for surrender at Thy Lotus Feet. (17.3.33)

In the years 1935 and 1936, Kamala-ben drew beautiful designs on a sheet of paper expressing her aspiration, love and surrender. They are remarkable and show the growth of her soul towards the Divine. One of her designs is printed on page 10 of her book with the words. “Pranam to my gracious Mother—your happy child Kamala ”

The Mother replied:

Love and blessings to my dear child.

This is pretty.

Another of the Mother's gracious answers to Kamala runs:

My dear child,

Keep full faith in the Divine's Grace, do not attach undue importance to non-important things and the peace will come to you. With love and blessings.

The second part contains very luminous birthday-messages received from 1931 to 1970. All the messages provide aspirations and guidelines for the journey of the Soul. They indicate "a new birth into a new consciousness in which one will be above all little personal reactions because one will constantly feel in one's heart the presence of the Divine; may it give one the force to surmount all obstacles, all pettinesses and all difficulties." All the birthday-message cards were meticulously prepared by Champaklal with the Mother's blessings. They are very precious not to Kamala only but to the whole of humanity.

An experience of candid surrender by Kamala reads:

Mother Divine! O My Dear Mother—

Though I do not know how to pray to Thee, yet I like to pray at Thy Lotus Feet, at Thy holy feet, and like to live only for my Divine Mother. Ma—if my inner being is not wishing for Thee, I pray Thee to make it wish.

The third part displays Kamala's introspection. In this section one will feel the inner being of Kamala aspiring to do yoga and wanting the Divine exclusively. Without the Divine there was no value to her life. Her letter to the Mother, printed on the back cover of the book, reveals true mission in life:

Mother,

How can I do yoga when I do not know anything about your yoga? I do not also know what to do.

There are two ways of doing yoga, one by knowledge and one's own efforts, the other by reliance on the Mother. In the last way one has to offer one's mind and heart and all to the Mother for her Force to act on it, call her in all difficulties, have faith and bhakti. At first it takes time, often a long time, for the consciousness to be prepared in this way and during that time many difficulties can come up, but if one perseveres a time comes when all is ready. The Mother's Force opens the consciousness fully to the Divine, then all that must develop,



develops within, spiritual experience comes and with it the knowledge and union with the Divine.

9.4 37

Sri Aurobindo

The fourth section consists of "Guidance in Daily Activities". Kamala was keen to take guidance all the time from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, whom she considered her own Father and Mother

The fifth part contains the letters of Kamala on dreams. All her dreams were interpreted by Sri Aurobindo himself.

As we go through the various episodes in the book, we find that this path of Yoga is after all not too severe as one does not give up everything one is familiar with and one does not have to live in a cave, a forest or the Himalayas or perform severe physical austerities. The Mother's saviour love is always there to guide and help.

NILIMA DAS

## *Students' Section*

### THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

#### Eighty-first Seminar

21 April 1996

#### FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER'S VISION

#### Speech by Arvind Akki

SRI AUROBINDO's initial contribution in the sphere of education is of immense value even though it was made during the short period of his political life in the early twentieth century, when national education was one of the goals to which he gave great importance. He was disgusted with the type of education then given according to the British system. During his service as a professor in the Baroda College and as the principal in the Bengal National College at Calcutta, he had gathered full knowledge and experience of educational methods. He felt that the type of education given to Indian students, "tended to dull and impoverish and tie up the naturally quick and brilliant and supple Indian intelligence, to teach it bad intellectual habits and spoil by narrow information and mechanical instruction its originality and productivity."<sup>1</sup> He asserted that "National education must ... be on national lines and under national control. This necessity is the very essence of its being."<sup>2</sup>

In dealing with the basic problem of national education and its solution he explained that the "first problem in a national system of education is to give an education as comprehensive as the European and more thorough, without the evils of strain and cramming. This can only be done by studying the instruments of knowledge and finding a system of teaching which shall be natural, easy and effective."<sup>3</sup>

Today, the whole educational system has lost sight of its true aim and purpose. With the advancement of science and technology man too is rapidly becoming a machine. No doubt, calculators and computers have their importance and their role to play, but extreme dependence on them diminishes the capacity of original thinking that is inherent in every man. This excessive craze will only lead to dehumanisation and retard all the true cultural developments of man.

Sri Aurobindo's vision becomes pertinent, in fact supremely valuable, in building a better world of the future.

His vision of education encompasses all spheres of life, mind and spirit. He states three points which go to the making of a true education. He maintains, "I

think there can be no great dispute that there are three things which have to be taken into account in a true and living education, the man, the individual in his commonness and in his uniqueness, the nation or people and universal humanity." Further elaborating these three points he observes, "It follows that that alone will be a true and living education which helps to bring out to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter into his right relation with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with that great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, a separate and yet inseparable member."<sup>4</sup>

Regarding the true process of education Sri Aurobindo propounds three fundamental principles. "The first principle of true teaching," he says, "is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or task-master, he is a helper and a guide."<sup>5</sup> This seems paradoxical but the truth is that the student contains within himself all the potentiality of knowledge and the role of the teacher is only to help the student to bring out this latent knowledge according to his innate psychological tendencies. The Mother says that the teacher should be a yogi and it is he who should have a deeper perception of the nature of the child so as to show him the way of acquiring knowledge for himself.

"The second principle is that the mind has to be consulted in its own growth,"<sup>6</sup> says Sri Aurobindo. How many parents take the pains to find out their child's own interest in life and studies? Both parents and teachers force upon him their own ideas as to how he should be moulded. According to Sri Aurobindo, "The child's education ought to be an out-bringing of all that is best, most powerful, most intimate and living in his nature..."<sup>7</sup> The parents should remember that to mould the child according to their will is a great mistake. Sri Aurobindo says, "It is a selfish tyranny over a human soul and a wound to the nation, which loses the benefit of the best that a man could have given it and is forced to accept instead something imperfect and artificial, second-rate, perfunctory and common."<sup>8</sup> To allow the student's own Swabhava to flower should be the main endeavour in education everywhere

The third principle of education as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo is "to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be."<sup>9</sup> Man's nature is determined not only by his hereditary past but also by the environment and surroundings in which he lives. This has a great influence on the growing psychology of children. Sri Aurobindo cautions: "Not what a man learns, but what he observes for himself in life and literature is the formative agency in his existence, and the actual shape it will take is much determined by the sort of social air he happens to breathe at that critical moment when the mind is choosing its road. All else is mere dead material useless without the breath of a vivifying culture."<sup>10</sup> Of course, there are some exceptional souls who seem to be well ahead of their time. They should not be ill-treated just because they do not fit into the given structures. On the other hand, such souls should be guided and

encouraged to follow their own inner Swabhava and Swadharma. Anything alien which is not part of our life should be carefully presented to the children, without forcing them, to make use of it or assimilate it partly or wholly in their own lives or reject it according to their inner requirements. This is not inconsistent with the true aim of national education. "... the aim and principle of a true national education," elucidates Sri Aurobindo, is "not, certainly, to ignore modern truth and knowledge, but to take our foundation on our own being, our own mind, our own spirit."<sup>11</sup>

According to Sri Aurobindo, mind consists of four layers. These are: (1) The Chitta which is the storehouse of memory. It has two aspects, passive and active. The former needs no training at all, for all experiences are automatically recorded there; but it is the latter which needs education and proper training. (2) The Manas or mind proper. It receives images of things through sensations of sense-organs, mental images and impressions. Even in the training of the senses two things are required. One is accuracy and the other is sensitiveness. Children should be properly trained under the direct guidance of the teacher to master the different layers of the mind. (3) The Buddhi or the intellect which is the real instrument of thought. The training of the intellect is much more important than the others. Its functions are basically of two types: (A) The functions and faculties of the right hand. Its faculties are creative, comprehensive and synthetic, and the functions are imagination, memory, judgement and observation. (B) The functions and faculties of the left hand. These include comparison and reasoning. The critical and logical faculties consist of deduction, inference, generalisation, classification and conclusion. If the right hand is the master of knowledge, then the left hand is its servant. These are important functions of the mind and each needs systematic training and must be raised higher in the ladder of knowledge. (4) Lastly, there is another faculty which is inaccessible to man. It is known as genius or the direct revelation of truth. It is rarely revealed except in flashes. The teacher should take great care to welcome and encourage this rare faculty. This faculty of genius has immensely contributed to the advancement of mankind.

*(To be concluded)*

#### *References*

- 1 *On Himself*, SABCL, Vol 26, p 31
- 2 *Bande Mataram*, SABCL, Vol 1, p 718
- 3 *A System of National Education*, SABCL, Vol 17, p 203
- 4 *A Preface on National Education*, SABCL, Vol 17, p 198
- 5 *A System of National Education*, SABCL, Vol 17, p 204
- 6 *Ibid*
- 7 *Essays on the Gita*, SABCL, Vol 13, p 499
- 8 *A System of National Education*, SABCL, Vol 17, p 204
- 9 *Ibid*
- 10 *Bankim Chandra Chatterji*, SABCL, Vol 3, p 77
- 11 *A Preface on National Education*, SABCL, Vol 17, p 195

## POETRY AND YOU

Bonjour, Manik-dada

It is time to wake up, and get ready for lunch

You, my dear, are a great poet. The simplicity of those two sentences—I mean a simplicity which is seeming. For underneath this coat of everyday words hides a truth which is so evident, yet never before so beautifully shaped. Let us look at the words of this poem one by one.

*Bonjour, Manik-dada.*

This sentence immediately places both the speaker and the listener. One will be aware after reading or hearing these words that it is a conversation between two males. Not only males, but Bengali males, who are related to each other by the beautiful bond of brotherhood. It is the younger, the little one, talking to the elder one in a manner which is unfamiliar, as the former commands the latter (see the next sentence of the poem).

This immediately builds up an atmosphere of unreality, of surreality even, a strange and non-existent world. But let me take a closer look at the first word only. A word in a different language. So far, in the first sentence, three languages are united. *Bonjour* in French, *dada* meaning big brother in Bengali, and *Manik* in the universal language of names.

This gives the poem a more accurate position in the multidimensional field which is the poet's playground. One town springs to mind: a town in which both Bengali and French are fluently spoken and a town where it is pleasant to wake up, amidst white houses, close to the thunder of the waves of a sea. Pondicherry! Where else would one be more happy to wake up than in the straight streets of a surrealist South-Indian town? And where else is the typewriter an instrument of glory, of which the sound surpasses the street-sounds?

But, as we have mentioned before, this town is situated in a far-away dimension, where realism only takes up a small part of everyday life. The contrast between real life and unreality shown in the first sentence of this masterwork creates a field of electricity, so poignant with meaning, truth and beauty, that the idea of another dimension, the idea of surrealism, fades away to the background. This is what makes the strange situation so seemingly natural. In this lies the beauty of this line.

*It is time to wake up, and get ready for lunch.*

This sentence should not be split up in the two evident parts. Once you start seeing them as a unity, the contrast, the humour, and the time of day become clear. Also, the situation in which both of the characters can be found.

But more about this sentence in the second lesson of this course 'Poetry and

You.' Till then. Keep your mind on the move. Then we can also have a closer look at the rhythm of the words.

Bonjour, Manik-dada. It is time to wake up and get ready for lunch.

. . . . - - . . . . - -

Separately, this amounts to the following perfect metrum.

- . - . -

. - - - (Pause)

. - - -

MANIK SARKAR

N B Manik Sarkar is of Indo-Dutch origin and studies in the Netherlands

## HOPE

THE sun had risen,  
Throwing rays of inspiration  
Upon the earth.  
Shining like a knight in armour.  
He brought renewed energy to mankind;  
Victorious over the mysterious night,  
He gave mankind a new pedestal,  
A new power—Hope  
But soon clouds of discontent  
And endless desire  
Spread over the pure sky  
Slowly eclipsing the glorious sun  
And threw mankind into a deep slumber.  
The goddess of infinite darkness,  
Swathed in her black, blind robe  
Took over the golden chariot  
Of the setting sun.  
The past soon became dark and deep.  
Deeper than the waters  
In the ocean of desires,  
Deeper than the unbroken silence  
Which enveloped the earth;  
Deeper than the long nursed hatred  
Between bitter enemies  
Then the thorns of failure  
Pricked mankind.  
They pierced his flesh, and he bled.  
Drops of his dark blood  
Seeped into the infertile soil,  
And from this soil rose  
A single white flower  
Of Hope.

AURPON BHATTACHARYA (14)

## 1997—A SACRED YEAR

Dear Friend,

1997 heralds the 125th Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo. This year also marks the 50th Anniversary of India's Freedom from foreign rule. What a divine coincidence!

During this auspicious year let us put the IDEAL CHILD into the hands of every child around us. IDEAL CHILD, a booklet by the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry (India), is a compendium to carve out a perfect man in society. IDEAL CHILD is rendered into 15 Indian and 9 foreign languages and is priced only Re 1 per copy, Rs 90/- for 100 copies in India. You may purchase 1000 copies or more for distribution in which case the price in India is Rs 850/- (including transport) and for outside India U.S. \$ 80 by surface mail. The price of 500 copies is Rs 425/- in India and U.S. \$ 40 for outside India.

Thus far 27 million copies of IDEAL CHILD have been placed in the hands of children round the world.

Let us rededicate ourselves to meet the wishes of the Mother that 'this booklet must reach the hands of every child'. Our target for the year is at least 25 million copies more to reach the children round the world. Let us invite you to join us to meet this target!

For copies or contribution you may write to the undersigned. Hope you will consider the target of this project of IDEAL CHILD and do the best you can.

At the feet of the Mother  
Keshavji  
Sri Aurobindo Ashram  
Pondicherry

O India! Land of Light and Spiritual Knowledge! Wake up to your true mission in the world, show the way to union and harmony.

\*

To choose a collaborator, the value of the man is more important than the party to which he belongs.

\*

The greatness of a country does not depend on the victory of a party but on the union of all parties.

\*

Men, Countries, Continents!  
The choice is imperative:  
Truth or the Abyss.

— The Mother