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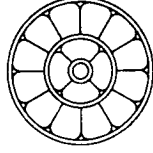
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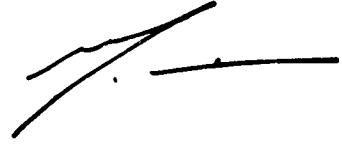
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. L

No. 10

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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SAVITRI RECEIVES THE ADESH

“O SPIRIT, traveller of eternity,
Who camest from the immortal spaces here
Armed for the splendid hazard of thy life
To set thy conquering foot on Chance and Time,
The moon shut in her halo dreams like thee.
A mighty Presence still defends thy frame
Perhaps the heavens guard thee for some great soul,
Thy fate, thy work are kept somewhere afar,
Thy spirit came not down a star alone
O living inscription of the beauty of love
Missalled in aureate virginity,
What message of heavenly strength and bliss in thee
Is written with the Eternal’s sun-white script,
One shall discover and greaten with it his life
To whom thou loosenest thy heart’s jewelled strings.
O rubies of silence, lips from which there stole
Low laughter, music of tranquillity,
Star-lustrous eyes awake in sweet large night
And limbs like fine-linked poems made of gold
Stanzaed to glimmering curves by artist gods,
Depart where love and destiny call your charm.
Venture through the deep world to find thy mate.
For somewhere on the longing breast of earth,
Thy unknown lover waits for thee the unknown
Thy soul has strength and needs no other guide
Than One who burns within thy bosom’s powers.
There shall draw near to meet thy approaching steps
The second self for whom thy nature asks,
He who shall walk until thy body’s end
A close-bound traveller pacing with thy pace,
The lyrist of thy soul’s most intimate chords
Who shall give voice to what in thee is mute
Then shall you grow like vibrant kindred harps,
One in the beats of difference and delight,
Responsive in divine and equal strains,
Discovering new notes of the eternal theme
One force shall be your mover and your guide,
One light shall be around you and within,
Hand in strong hand confront Heaven’s question, life
Challenge the ordeal of the immense disguise

Ascend from Nature to divinity's heights;
 Face the high gods, crowned with felicity,
 Then meet a greater God, thy self beyond Time ''

This word was seed of all the thing to be.
 A hand from some Greatness opened her heart's locked doors
 And showed the work for which her strength was born.
 As when the mantra sinks in Yoga's ear,
 Its message enters stirring the blind brain
 And keeps in the dim ignorant cells its sound;
 The hearer understands a form of words
 And, musing on the index thought it holds,
 He strives to read it with the labouring mind,
 But finds bright hints, not the embodied truth:
 Then, falling silent in himself to know
 He meets the deeper listening of his soul:
 The Word repeats itself in rhythmic strains:
 Thought, vision, feeling, sense, the body's self
 Are seized unalterably and he endures
 An ecstasy and an immortal change,
 He feels a Wideness and becomes a Power,
 All knowledge rushes on him like a sea:
 Transmuted by the white spiritual ray
 He walks in naked heavens of joy and calm,
 Sees the God-face and hears transcendent speech:
 An equal greatness in her life was sown.
 Accustomed scenes were now an ended play.
 Moving in muse amid familiar powers,
 Touched by new magnitudes and faery signs,
 She turned to vastnesses not yet her own;
 Allured her heart throbbed to unknown sweetnesses,
 The secrets of an unseen world were close ..
 Delight had fled to search the spacious world

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL, Vol 29, pp 373-376)

THE DIVINE WORD

SPEECH OF OUR SPEECH

THE [Kena] Upanishad, reversing the usual order of our logical thought which would put Mind and Sense first or Life first and Speech last as a subordinate function, begins its negative description of Brahman with an explanation of the very striking phrase, Speech of our speech. And we can see that it means a Speech beyond ours, an absolute expression of which human language is only a shadow and as if an artificial counterfeit. What idea underlies this phrase of the Upanishad and this precedence given to the faculty of speech?

Continually, in studying the Upanishads, we have to divest ourselves of modern notions and to realise as closely as possible the associations that lay behind the early Vedantic use of words. We must recollect that in the Vedic system the Word was the creatrix; by the Word Brahma creates the forms of the universe. Moreover, human speech at its highest merely attempts to recover by revelation and inspiration an absolute expression of Truth which already exists in the Infinite above our mental comprehension. Equally, then, must that Word be above our power of mental construction.

All creation is expression by the Word, but the form which is expressed is only a symbol or representation of the thing which is. We see this in human speech which only presents to the mind a mental form of the object, but the object it seeks to express is itself only a form or presentation of another Reality. That reality is Brahman. Brahman expresses by the Word a form or presentation of himself in the objects of sense and consciousness which constitute the universe, just as the human word expresses a mental image of those objects. That Word is creative in a deeper and more original sense than human speech and with a power of which the utmost creativeness of human speech can be only a far-off and feeble analogy.

The word used here for utterance means literally a raising up to confront the mind. Brahman, says the Upanishad, is that which cannot be so raised up before the mind by speech.

Human speech, as we see, raises up only the presentation of a presentation, the mental figure of an object which is itself only a figure of the sole Reality, Brahman. It has indeed a power of new creation, but even that power only extends to the creation of new mental images, that is to say, of adaptive formations based upon previous mental images. Such a limited power gives no idea of the original creative puissance which the old thinkers attributed to the divine Word.

If, however, we go a little deeper below the surface, we shall arrive at a power in human speech which does give us a remote image of the original creative Word. We know that vibration of sound has the power to create—and to destroy—forms, this is a commonplace of modern Science. Let us suppose that behind all forms there has been a creative vibration of sound.

Next, let us examine the relation of human speech to sound in general. We see at once that speech is only a particular application of the principle of sound, a vibration made by pressure of the breath in its passage through the throat and mouth. At first, beyond doubt, it must have been formed naturally and spontaneously to express the emotions created by an object or occurrence and only afterwards seized upon by the mind to express first the idea of the object and then ideas about the object. The value of speech would therefore seem to be only representative and not creative.

But, in fact, speech is creative. It creates forms of emotion, mental images and impulses of action. The ancient Vedic theory and practice extended this creative action of speech by the use of the Mantra. The theory of the Mantra is that it is a word of power born out of the secret depths of our being where it has been brooded upon by a deeper consciousness than the mental, framed in the heart and not constructed by the intellect, held in the mind, again concentrated on by the waking mental consciousness and then thrown out silently or vocally—the silent word is perhaps held to be more potent than the spoken—precisely for the work of creation. The Mantra can not only create new subjective states in ourselves, alter our psychical being, reveal knowledge and faculties we did not before possess, can not only produce similar results in other minds than that of the user, but can produce vibrations in the mental and vital atmosphere which result in effects, in actions and even in the production of material forms on the physical plane.

As a matter of fact, even ordinarily, even daily and hourly we do produce by the word within us thought-vibrations, thought-forms which result in corresponding vital and physical vibrations, act upon ourselves, act upon others and end in the indirect creation of actions and of forms in the physical world. Man is constantly acting upon man both by the silent and the spoken word and he so acts and creates, though less directly and powerfully, even in the rest of Nature. But because we are stupidly engrossed with the external forms and phenomena of the world and do not trouble to examine its subtle and non-physical processes, we remain ignorant of all this field of science behind.

The Vedic use of the Mantra is only a conscious utilisation of this secret power of the word. And if we take the theory that underlies it together with our previous hypothesis of a creative vibration of sound behind every formation, we shall begin to understand the idea of the original creative Word. Let us suppose a conscious use of the vibrations of sound which will produce corresponding forms or changes of form. But Matter is only, in the ancient view, the lowest of the planes of existence. Let us realise then that a vibration of sound on the material plane presupposes a corresponding vibration on the vital without which it could not have come into play; that, again, presupposes a corresponding originative vibration on the mental, the mental presupposes a corresponding originative vibration on the supramental at the very root of things. But a mental vibration implies thought and perception and a supramental vibration implies a supreme vision and discernment. All vibration of sound on that higher plane is, then, instinct with and expressive of this supreme discernment of a truth

in things and is at the same time creative, instinct with a supreme power which casts into forms the truth discerned and eventually, descending from plane to plane, reproduces it in the physical form or object created in Matter by etheric sound. Thus we see that the theory of creation by the Word which is the absolute expression of the Truth, and the theory of the material creation by sound-vibration in the ether correspond and are two logical poles of the same idea. They both belong to the same ancient Vedic system.

This, then, is the supreme Word, Speech of our speech. It is vibration of pure Existence, instinct with the perceptive and originative power of infinite and omnipotent consciousness, shaped by the Mind behind mind into the inevitable word of the Truth of things, out of whatever substance on whatever plane, the form or physical expression emerges by its creative agency. The Supermind using the Word is the creative Logos.

The Word has its seed-sounds—suggesting the eternal syllable of the Veda, A U M, and the seed-sounds of the Tantriks—which carry in them the principles of things, it has its forms which stand behind the revelatory and inspired speech that comes to man's supreme faculties, and these compel the forms of things in the universe, it has its rhythms,—for it is no disordered vibration, but moves out into great cosmic measures,—and according to the rhythm is the law, arrangement, harmony, processes of the world it builds. Life itself is a rhythm of God.

But what is it that is expressed or raised up before the consciousness by the Word in the world? Not Brahman, but forms and phenomena of Brahman. Brahman is not, cannot be expressed by the Word, he does not use the word to express himself, but is known to his own self-awareness and even the truths of himself that stand behind the forms of cosmic things are always self-expressed to his eternal vision. Speech creates, expresses, but is itself only a creation and expression. Brahman is not expressed by speech, but speech is itself expressed by Brahman.

Therefore it is not the happenings and phenomena of the world that we have to accept finally as our object of pursuit, but That which brings out from itself the Word by which they were thrown into form for our observation by the consciousness and for our pursuit by the will. In other words, the supreme Existence that has originated all.

Human speech is only a secondary expression and at its highest a shadow of the divine Word, of the seed-sounds, the satisfying rhythms, the revealing forms of sound that are the omniscient and omnipotent speech of the eternal Thinker, Harmonist, Creator. The highest inspired speech to which the human mind can attain, the word most unanalysably expressive of supreme truth, the most puissant syllable or *mantra* can only be its far-off representation.¹

THE MANTRA

A supreme, an absolute of itself, a reaching to an infinite and utmost, a last point of perfection of its own possibilities is that to which all action of Nature intuitively tends

in its unconscious formations and when it has arrived to that point it has justified its existence to the spirit which has created it and fulfilled the secret creative will within it. Speech, the expressive Word, has such a summit or absolute, a perfection which is the touch of the infinite upon its finite possibilities and the seal upon it of its Creator. This absolute of the expressive Word can be given the name which was found for it by the inspired singers of the Veda, the Mantra. Poetry especially claimed for its perfected expression in the hymns of the Veda this name. It is [not] confined however to this sense, for it is extended to all speech that has a supreme or an absolute power, the Mantra is the word that carries the godhead in it or the power of the godhead, can bring it into the consciousness and fix there it and its workings, awaken there the thrill of the infinite, the force of something absolute, perpetuate the miracle of the supreme utterance. This highest power of speech and especially of poetic speech is what we have to make here the object of our scrutiny, discover, if we can, its secret, regard the stream of poetry as a long course of the endeavour of human speech to find it and the greater generalisation of its presence and its power as the future sign of an ultimate climbing towards an ultimate evolution as a poetic consciousness towards the conquest of its ultimate summits.²

SRI AUROBINDO

References

- 1 *The Upanishads* SABCL, Vol 12, pp 168-172
- 2 *Sri Aurobindo Archives and Research*, Vol 3, p 19, April 1979

SRI AUROBINDO ON HIMSELF: BIODATA

BORN 1872.

Sent to England for education 1879.

Studied at St. Paul's School, London, and King's College, Cambridge.

Returned to India February, 1893.

Life of preparation at Baroda 1893-1906

Political life—1902-1910.

The "Swadeshi" movement prepared from 1902-5 and started definitely by Sri Aurobindo, Tilak, Lajpatrai and others in 1905. A movement for Indian independence, by non-cooperation and passive resistance and the organisation (under a National Council or Executive, but this did not materialise,) of arbitration, national education, economic independence, (especially handloom industry including the spinning-wheel, but also the opening of mills, factories and Swadeshi business concerns under Indian management and with Indian capital,) boycott of British goods, British law-courts, and all Government institutions, offices, honours etc. Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement was a repetition of the "Swadeshi", but with an exclusive emphasis on the spinning-wheel and the transformation of passive resistance ("Satyagraha") from a political means into a moral and religious dogma of soul-force and conquest by suffering. The running of the daily paper, "Bande Mataram", was only one of Sri Aurobindo's political activities.

Imprisonment—

Thrice prosecuted

first for sedition and acquitted

then in 1908 along with his brother Barindra (one of the chief leaders of the revolutionary movement) on a charge of conspiracy to wage war against the established Government. Acquitted after a year's detention as an undertrial prisoner, mostly in a solitary cell

last, in his absence in 1910, for sedition. This case also failed on appeal.

After 1909 carried on the political (Swadeshi) movement alone (the other leaders being in prison or in exile) for one year. Afterwards on receiving an inner intimation left politics for spiritual lifework. The intimation was that the Swadeshi movement must now end and would be followed later on by a Home Rule movement and a Non-cooperation movement of the Gandhi type, under other leaders.

Came to Pondicherry 1910.

Started the "Arya" 1914.

(Sri Aurobindo wrote out these biographical data sometime during the 1920s; they especially clarify his part in the freedom movement in the first decade of the century. They were first published in *Sri Aurobindo Archives and Research*, Vol 3, pp 100-101, April 1979—Editor)

DYUMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of September 1997)

My dear Mother,

I read Sri Aurobindo's notice about You. I read it again and then read it once more

My Lord, the Mother has no rest, may she have some Lord, grant that wherever I go and move and work, there may be nothing but peace and happiness

My dear Mother, this is my humble prayer to the Divine may You have rest

JUST now, I am resting quite all right Surely the best way to help is, indeed, to be peaceful and happy. And if peace and happiness were spread in the Ashram much of the work would be saved

Our love and blessings are always with you.

1 December 1934

My dear Mother,

Ah, the moment we remain fully conscious and vigilant, all our difficulties vanish—they cannot stand! It is impossible for them to face the flaming fire of the Divine. Grant me full consciousness, complete vigilance and that flaming fire

Surely you will have more and more the divine fire of progress and purification burning in your heart

With our love and blessings

3 December 1934

My dear Mother,

Happy am I that You are in my heart, Your Love and Light surround me.

Yes, I am always in your heart and the peace, protection and help are constantly surrounding you.

With love and blessings

7 December 1934

My dear Mother,

This evening at 8 p.m a very strong giddiness came in my head and began to make me unconscious. I sat down for a few minutes and it passed away

Why do such things happen? I know why in 1935 we enter the Eternal Consciousness, a consciousness of complete peace, joy, harmony and happiness In order to obstruct this, such things come

To be quiet and fearless is the condition in which these adverse forces can do no harm at all

Always with you

8 December 1934

My dear Mother,

F has taken so many photos and there is now an album. People ask me "Where are you?" I answer. "In the heart of the Mother"

I have only one place, and it is Your heart

My dear child,

Well, you have lost nothing from not being photographed because the photos are far from good!

And surely it is better to be in my heart (where you actually are) than in an album.

18 December 1934

My dear Mother,

G has not taken her evening food, for reasons she knows I do not know, but most probably I am the culprit.

I do not think you are the culprit. I must be the culprit because she wanted to embroider a crown for me in gold and I said that I had no gold thread that I could give, which is the plain truth

All these moods are absurd, and the best thing is not to mind them at all. A perfect equanimity is the strongest power

19 December 1934

My dear Mother,

May G have submission and love for the Divine, may she be filled with gratitude, may she progress in the sadhana

I shall add. may she have a simple humility, because that is what she needs most.

The Divine Grace is infinite O Mother, grant me a perfect receptivity I give myself to the Divine

Yes, my dear child, it is with the widening of the consciousness and the one-pointedness of the aspiration that the receptivity increases

23 December 1934

My dear Mother,

I don't know how far it is true, but I feel that I am a being who has come down upon earth and taken up the human form only to manifest the Divine Will. I am eternal, unborn and immortal.

Let me tell You, after having this consciousness I feel myself untouched by anything and I find the strength of the lower life completely broken.

Your consciousness is quite true and I am happy you have come to realise this. Keep this consciousness in all humility towards the Divine because such is the condition of an integral realisation.

Our blessings are with you.

23 December 1934

My dear Mother,

May You rest, and the best way of giving You rest is for me to rise above the lower nature and progress in the Divine Light so that I may live only as a spark and ray of the Light.

If each inmate determines to do this and progresses, surely, my dear Mother, You will have more rest and ease

You are quite right, the only thing that can give me rest is that each one should take the right attitude and progress.

I am much better today

With love and blessings always

25 December 1934

My dear Mother,

Seeing You this evening, this prayer arose in me so fervently. "O Lord, may my Mother get completely cured tonight." Surely had we been devoted to You, a collective prayer and aspiration would have arisen, instead of the sneezing, yawning and coughing. How nicely we receive You! You appear on the steps, and we begin this noise

My dear Mother, may a collective and concentrated will be created, a will consecrated to the Divine for the manifestation of the Divine Love.

My very dear child, yes it is quite sure, if many could think and feel like you, things would become so much easier and so much time would be saved!

All love to you

27 December 1934

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SRI AUROBINDO'S SPIRITUAL SYSTEM AND THE MOTHER'S CONTRIBUTION TO IT

(Continued from the issue of September 1997)

(c) contd.

YES, there is nothing from Sri Aurobindo earlier to hand. But the turn of expression here suggests some familiarity with the name and thus its existence in a preceding time, even though it may not have been made public. "How long ago?" we may ask. Is there any clue in the type of terminology? What seems likely is a separation by Sri Aurobindo of "the divine gnosis" proper which is the Supermind from the Above-Mind planes below it which, by being a gradation of the Cosmic Knowledge and not of the Cosmic Ignorance, are in general entitled "gnostic", a gradation whose member nearest to "the true supermind gnosis" is named "the gnostic overmind". We have no information at this period about the precise names of the levels below the Overmind nor about any nomenclature for shades or strata within it. Confronted without prejudice from subsequent usage and placed in a framework of vision not distant from the epoch when the whole overhead consciousness in its several gradations was reckoned as supramental, the terminology has the look of being a recent broad classification with some demarcating lines in it but still carrying some vestige of the old common denominator.

Nor can the broad character we assign to the classification be deemed an arbitrary choice on our part with no support at all from any later usage. Actually, this character can be shown to persist, among various other more preferred descriptions, right up to the final months of Sri Aurobindo's life. In the very last article he dictated in 1950 for the *Bulletin* we have the entire overhead range denoted as "gnostic" in general,¹ although in the background are all the detailed distinctions of this range² and in the years anterior to 1950 a particular division of the developing Yogic experience of the Overmind into three possible strata—first, that which takes up the Illumined Mind and Higher Mind and even the intellect to form a mental Overmind, next an uplifting of these lower movements and the Intuitive Mind together to constitute the Overmind Intuition, which is like the Intuitive Mind grown massive and widened, lastly the Gnostic Overmind or Overmind Gnosis bearing some colour of the Supermind and awaiting the supramental transformation.³ Speaking of "the descending order of the gnostic mind", Sri Aurobindo goes on in the article to describe it.

1 *The Supramental Manifestation on Earth*, SABCL, Vol 16, p 72

2 *Ibid*, pp 71-2

3 "Overhead Poetry" *Poems with Sri Aurobindo's Comments*, edited by K D Sethna (Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education Pondicherry 1972), pp 11, 33

Mind luminous and aware of its working still lives in the Light and can be seen as a subordinate power of the Supermind, it is still an agent of the Truth-Consciousness, a gnostic power that has not descended into the mental ignorance; it is capable of a mental gnosis that preserves its connection with the superior Light and acts by its power. This is the character of Overmind on its own plane and of all the powers that are dependent on the Overmind.

So our reading of the classification made around the end of 1926, when the later subtleties are not in evidence and may not be expected, is hardly unnatural. However, the note by Sri Aurobindo which falls within this classification, while suggestive of something more at its back because it assumes a certain system of viewing the overhead consciousness, does not by itself indicate how long ago that system emerged and the appellation "Overmind" came into existence. What the classification indicates is simply that their arrival could not have been too far away. If we are definitely to assert that the appellation was nonexistent prior to the Victory Day and must have been absent even on that Day, we have to credit the arguments mustered apart from the note. All depends on whether their apparent strength is genuine.

We have been disposed to ascribe to a mere back-look the phrase "Krishna or the Overmind or something equivalent." But actually it sounds as though it were just a variant of the other—"Krishna or the Divine Presence or whatever you like." The first term is common to both, the final locution in either has semantically the same ring there seems no ground to differentiate the middle turn of speech—"the Divine Presence"—in the latter phrase from that in the former as exclusively the *verba ipissima* on the occasion of the Victory Day. The two phrases mention with equal explicitness the identical spiritual descent into the material. The word "Overmind" is quite conceivable as having been within access on that occasion. It too might very well have been employed.

Even if it was not employed, the fact that the Overmind-plane's distinction from the Supramental had already been discovered creates the near-certainty of the name's crystallisation for intellectual purposes. In the long essay on the Powers and Personalities of the Divine Mother, where the knowledge of the Overmind-plane as distinct from the Supermind is patent, do we not still mark the absence of the appellation in spite of the latter having occurred earlier in the private note? On balance the odds are heavy that it crystallised before 24 November 1926.

Our discussion has moved a long way from the Master's illuminating banter with Nirodbaran. While leaving his replies behind, it is worth touching on one more facet of spiritual autobiography which they spotlight and which many of his interpreters may miss. Sri Aurobindo realised the Supermind on its own Everest-plane considerably before he initiated the process of bringing the power of that Mount of Supreme Vision to the embodied human level. He has to be seen as multi-poised. Sri Aurobindo ever aware far beyond this level, "pinnacled high in the intense inane", and at the same time Sri Aurobindo here below with the brain-mind and body-consciousness catching

the radiance of the extreme altitude and drawing it increasingly into the stuff of mortality—a glorious whole of interconnected luminosities, labouring to render every part an equal acme of supernal Truth. When his correspondence was scintillating, night after night, in response to the call of Nirodbaran, Dilip, Nagin, myself and several others, all had already been achieved except physical supramentalisation. And towards that last alchemy of God's Grace he was gradually moving after the incarnation of the Overmind Divinity which is the source and sovereign of a myriad Godheads.

However, we may here legitimately ask. 'How was 24 November 1926 designated as the Victory Day, the Siddhi Day, if for Sri Aurobindo Victory and Siddhi could not but connote the descent of the Supermind?'

The reply can be given from more than one angle. Perhaps it is best as implicit in a brief statement by Sri Aurobindo which has a special interest and importance because it was the very last thing he dictated on questions pertaining to his Yoga. He dictated it a few days before 5 December 1950, on which day he withdrew from his body. The statement was made apropos of a disciple's note on the significance and consequence of the Overmind Divinity's descent twenty-four years earlier. The Master instructed the disciple to say:¹

It is only then that Sri Aurobindo started his Ashram, being sure that with the co-operation of the Gods the Supermind would descend upon the earth.

What happened on the twenty-fourth of November prepared the possibility of this descent and on that day he retired into seclusion and entered into a deep dynamic meditation so that all the possibilities involved might be realised.

The operative phrase is "being sure." Victory and Siddhi of the Supermind were seen to be a possibility not only theoretical but also inevitable in the future once the Overmind had been incarnated. Under the aspect of an unflinching promise, the incarnation was regarded as that Victory and Siddhi itself in seed-form.

The same impression we get from what is not the last explication of the Victory Day during Sri Aurobindo's life but is perhaps the earliest—this time from the Mother. In *A Sadhak's Diary* by A.B., the entry for 21 November 1930 reads:²

Datta had declared the great victory on the 24th November 1926 thus 'He [Sri Aurobindo] has conquered life, conquered death, conquered all. Lord Krishna has come.'

Mother explained last night: it is not that Lord Krishna was not there, on the 24th he manifested in the most material consciousness and Sri Aurobindo said that he knew that now the time had come to take up the work of the new creation.

Speaking of those days Mother said that the atmosphere was intense because it was a psychic atmosphere. The Overmind, the plane of the Gods, was brought in

1 *Mother India*, November 1975, p. 882

2 *Sri Aurobindo Circle Annual*, No. 33, p. 74

touch with the physical plane, this touch was necessary, otherwise the supramental transformation would not be possible

From another angle we may view in the descent of Krishna a herald of the supramental transformation by insighting in it a meaning deeper than merely the coming down of the Overmind. When in 1933 a sadhak wrote to Sri Aurobindo of the struggle he was undergoing between devotion for Krishna and the sense of the Mother's divinity, the Master replied "This struggle in you is quite unnecessary, for the two things are one and go perfectly together. It is he who has brought you to the Mother and it is by adoration of her that you will realise him. He is here in the Ashram and it is his work that is being done here."¹

Again, referring to a sadhak's vision of blue light, Sri Aurobindo says "Ordinary pale blue is usually the light of the Illumined Mind or something of the Intuition. Whitish blue is Sri Aurobindo's light or Krishna's light."² We are told the same thing in another letter "Whitish blue Sri Krishna's Light (also called Sri Aurobindo's Light)"³ Along with this esoteric information we read the implication of "whitish" by glancing at two more letters "The white light is the Mother's light and it is always around her"⁴—"The white light is her own characteristic power, that of the Divine Consciousness in its essence."⁵ Not only is a fusion of Sri Krishna and Sri Aurobindo indicated but also the Mother's presence is shown to be in it.

Elsewhere Sri Aurobindo, speaking of the various modes of Krishna's being, first mentions the many-sided supreme reality that is Krishna of the Gita and then describes him as "the Godhead who was incarnate at Brindavan and Dwarka and Kurukshetra and who was the guide of my Yoga and with whom I realised identity"⁶ Side by side with this "identity" we may observe how Sri Aurobindo concludes his explanation of the Mother's Flag "The blue of the flag is meant to be the colour of Krishna and so represents the spiritual or divine consciousness which it is her work to establish so that it may reign upon earth."⁷ Once more the Master, the Mother, and the Godhead incarnate at Brindavan, Dwarka and Kurukshetra merge.

From their personal oneness as well as the oneness of their work so repeatedly expressed, we should find it easy to equate with the Victory proper to Sri Aurobindo and to the Mother the Victory denoted by Krishna's descent into matter on 24 November.

To see Krishna as no more than the Overmind Divinity is but to affirm a half-truth. Sri Aurobindo has called him also the preparer of "the descent of Supermind and Ananda" (Bliss) because he is "the Anandamaya" who "supports the evolution

1 *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* (1953), p. 476

2 *Ibid.* p. 272

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.* p. 457

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.* p. 209

7 *The Mother* SABCL Vol. 25 p. 359

through the Overmind leading the towards the Ananda''¹ As the Anandamaya he is far beyond the Overmind and belongs to the same Transcendence as Sri Aurobindo whose Supermind is the creative aspect of the Ananda-plane itself taking the shape of a primal archetypal cosmos from where all manifestation originally derives and in which awaits the secret of earth-existence's total transformation. No wonder Sri Aurobindo accepted as in essence his own typical Siddhi the victorious advent of Krishna into his body.

(To be continued)

AMAL KIRAN
(K D SETHNA)

1 *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* (1953), p 208

NATIONAL FLAG AND NATIONAL ANTHEM

INDIA became free in 1947. All around the country there was celebration: fireworks, illuminations, singing processions in the morning, parades, etc.

During this time I spoke to Mother about the national flag and the national anthem. I told her that even though *Vande Mataram* was the national hymn, *Jana Gana Mana* had to be played by the band as the national anthem. Mother said that *Vande Mataram* was not merely a song, it was a mantra. We played to her a record of Rabindranath's musical rendering of *Vande Mataram* and *Jana Gana Mana*. Then I played to her Timirbaran's rendering of *Vande Mataram*. Mother preferred Timirbaran's rendering. It was also more suitable for the band. But we did not have its musical notation for the band. At first we tried to get our Hiru Ganguly to contact Timirbaran but we could not. Sahana-di wrote down a notation thanks to which we could at least sing Timirbaran's *Vande Mataram* to Mother in the Playground and she really liked it.

In the meantime, I found out that an English music conductor named Simpson had prepared a musical notation for a brass band. That tune was much better than *Jana Gana Mana*. It was almost like a mantra and most appropriate for a national anthem.

And so, before starting any programme in the Ashram, we always begin with that piece played by our brass band. And for those programmes that are also attended by people from outside the Ashram and from the government, we play *Vande Mataram* at the beginning and *Jana Gana Mana* at the conclusion of the programme.

I also spoke to Mother about the national flag at that time. The Indian government had asked many people and organisations just before our Independence about the design of the Indian flag. From the Ashram Jayantilal-da sent the Mother's flag. Finally the Indian government chose the tricoloured Congress flag to represent the country. The central "charkha" was replaced by the "Ashoka-chakra". The tricoloured flag was orange on top, white in the centre and green below. The three colours symbolised freedom, peace and progress. The dharma-chakra at the centre symbolised movement and union.

After seeing the national flag Mother told us that the chakra was there only on the white band in the centre and since it did not cover all the three colours the total life of all the communities of India, their movement and union were not symbolically highlighted. She thought that this would not help in making India's unity and oneness symbolically stable. On seeing this flag, one gets the impression that India's unity is slightly disturbed. If the chakra in the centre had covered all the three colours then it would have been much better.

Incidentally, in 1947, while the whole country was celebrating our Independence Day, Mother came out of Sri Aurobindo's room and she seemed to be in a trance. I was standing under the covered verandah in front of her room. She came out and told me with a lot of intensity that in forty years from then India would go through a very bad time.

Now when we think about it we realise that she had spoken truly. However,

Mother has also repeated constantly that with her spiritual force India will become great again And one day it will show the path to the earth's future India will be the guru of the world

The partition of India prior to Independence had pained Mother very much But she said "Sri Aurobindo has said that India will become one again" About India Mother said

"India is like a big pot in which ingredients have been brought from everywhere to cook a fine dinner"

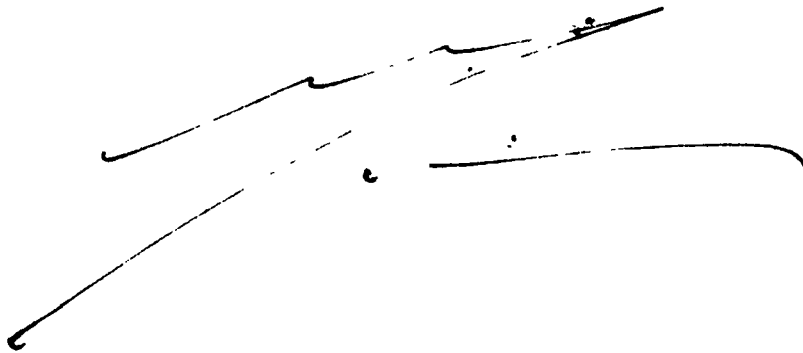
PRANAB KUMAR BHATTACHARYA

(An extract from the author's book, *I Remember* , pp 212-14)

“INSPIRATIONS FOR PROGRESS”

FACSIMILE TO COME HERE

To Kishor
with blessings
for his
“Inspirations
for
Progress”



Introduction

KISHOR-BHAI’s full name was Kishorlal Hiralal Gandhi. He was born on 5 March 1915, at Pithapur in Gujrat, and first visited the Sri Aurobindo Ashram on 1 March 1940; afterwards he continued to come off and on, the last visit being on 20 November 1945. We do not know when exactly he settled down in the Ashram. He himself says, ‘‘There is no exact date of my joining the Ashram. I started coming to the Ashram from 1940, and after some time settled down here.’’

During this period he compiled *Letters of Sri Aurobindo* which came out as early as 1947 from Bombay. Some of his articles also appeared as small booklets, for instance, *What is Sri Aurobindo Doing?* This was first published by Jayantilal in 1946, following this *Sri Aurobindo and the World-Crisis* (1949) and *Lights on Life-Problems* (1950) came out. The compilation of the last book had been seen and approved by Sri Aurobindo. He authored other books including *Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the New Age* and *The Fallacy of Karl Marx*. Besides, he edited *Sri Aurobindo Circle* right from the beginning and carried on for 51 years till his end.

Kishor-bhai, as he was called by his students, began teaching in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education from 1953. He taught Sociology, Political Science, Integral Psychology and Indian Culture. He was such a dedicated teacher that he would not let go a class even on the last day of the session. By nature he was reserved and reticent, hardly ever indulging in light gossip. Therefore his students and others found him unapproachable and austere.

He was not only organised in his ideas and academic pursuits, he was a perfectionist even on the material plane. His room was tidy, simple, with things and books neatly arranged. It was also a mini-library. The cupboards were filled with books, all in order. His memory was like a huge reservoir. He knew each and everything that was in his room, as well as the contents of his treasured books. If I had a difficulty in finding a reference from Sri Aurobindo’s or the Mother’s books, I would approach Kishor-bhai and he would in no time give me all the details.

A large part of his time was spent organising and conducting *The New Age Association*. Towards this a quarterly seminar-cum-meeting was held around each Darshan. The first seminar was inaugurated with the Mother’s blessings on 12 July 1964. The Mother gave the following message:

Never believe that you know. Always try to know better. Blessings

For some of the seminars the Mother herself gave the subjects. When the subject was in the form of a question, she herself gave her answer which was to be read out at the end of the seminar. Always, a list of subjects used to be submitted from which she would select one or two topics. Both the present and past students of the Centre of Education took part in it. Most of these speeches were later published in *Mother India*. The first compilation of them under the title *The New Age Association* was brought out in 1977.

Sometimes Kishor-bhai would ask me to buy something for him. Usually it was biscuits. He would take out money to pay me. If I refused, the next day he would insist that I take the sum. He would say, "Arvind, I have money, please take it." Whenever I bought him something, he would always insist on paying.

He used to offer some money every month to the Ashram. Even while in the Nursing Home, he continued to do this. He would request me to go to the Meditation Hall in the Ashram and put his offering in the box. In spite of his physical difficulties, Kishor-bhai saw to it that his practice went on as usual.

As he could not attend the Annual Conference on 11 August 1996—he was in the Nursing Home—he gave me detailed instructions. He even took pains to correct the speeches of the *New Age Association* members. After the programme was over, he asked me to give him a full report. He asked me for precise details, such as how the speakers spoke and how many minutes each one took to deliver his speech, and so on. Such was his loving concern for and affinity to the *New Age Association*.

He passed away on 13 August 1996. The curtain seemingly has dropped. But the New Age goes on, not only in the heart of all his students but in all who are preparing for its advent.

Once when I had gone to meet Kishor-bhai in the Nursing Home, a visitor was engaged in talking to him. I sat at the next table quietly. After a while when Kishor-bhai noticed me, he told the visitor that I was waiting for him. The visitor took his leave. I told Kishor-bhai, "You could have continued your conversation with him." Kishor-bhai said, "You see, Arvind, he went on praising my book, *The Fallacy of Karl Marx*, that I was a prolific writer, and so on." Then he changed the topic to other matters. From this I understood that he was quite indifferent to praise.

Once in his room he told me that the Mother had visited him several times and that she had given him many interviews. So I requested, "Why don't you write all this down? We will all be benefited by it." Then he said, "Arvind, if I write all that down, it will become a book." And somehow he changed the topic to other matters.

During his last days in the Nursing Home, I went there almost every day to see him. But if I missed a day, he would say, "Arvind, please come and see me every day, at least for a few minutes." He was so understanding in his approach that I felt bad if I did not do that. Once he wanted to write something, but he had no pen and paper. A nurse, who was nearby, lent him a pen and a piece of paper. He was not keen on using these since he felt, the nurse would need them for her work. He asked me, "Arvind, do you have a pen?" I said, "No." Then he requested me to go to his room and get one. I brought it and gave it to him along with a letter pad. He had sent me a number of times to his room to fetch something or other. And his directions were so accurate that I would invariably find the things exactly where he had told me to look! So sharp was his memory!

These are my brief memories of Kishor-bhai. But more important are his 'records of yoga'. To fathom some of the little-known depths of this unique sadhak, we have his own notebooks and diaries which date back to as early as 1942. He wrote many prayers

to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo Besides, he wrote his impressions, experiences, his deep understanding of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

In one of his notebooks he made these significant statements:

I shall not rest till I find what I want Nothing prevents me from that

16-8-43

*

My success depends not on my knowledge or my capacity but on my sincerity and my trust in Mother

19-8-43.

*

They shall make me Real.

27-8-43

*

One cannot but admire his deep sincerity and unshakable trust in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In one of his notebooks of 1958, he wrote at the beginning: *Inspirations for Progress* Most of his notebooks and diaries vibrate with his very soul, inspired to progress And this continued throughout his life In one of his diaries, covering the period 1961-1967, the Mother herself wrote on the first page. “To Kishor with blessings for his ‘Inspirations for Progress’.” We have reproduced this in facsimile at the beginning of this series.

The following is a compilation from that diary and we are grateful to Jayantilal for permitting us to publish it.

(To be continued)

ARVIND AKKI

NARAD IN SRI AUROBINDO'S SAVITRI

NARAD, a popular figure of myth and legend in India, as we will see presently, is believed to exist even today. Sri Aurobindo takes his character from Vyasa's tale of Savitri in the Mahabharata and invests it with qualities that make him a unique personality. In Vyasa he appears to be just a functional character who serves the purpose of bringing to the notice of Savitri and her father Ashwapati that Satyavan's life is short, not extending beyond a year from the moment of speaking. Satyavan is an extraordinary youth who has no blemish of any kind. His only *dosa*, not in the sense of blemish but disadvantage, is the brevity of his existence on the earth. When Savitri insists on marrying him, since one can choose one's husband only once, Narad admires her for her attitude and blesses her with happiness.

Sri Aurobindo mentions Narad twice in letters to his disciples. His longer letter, which includes the point made in the shorter one, may serve as a starting-point for the discussion of the Master's treatment of this character in the epic. He says

I am afraid I don't know much about Narad. Mother once saw him standing between Overmind and Supermind where they join as if that was his highest station. But he has his action on the lower plane though I don't quite know what it is. In the Puranic tales pure love, Bhakti on the one hand and, on the other hand, a pleasure in making human beings quarrel seem to be his salient characteristics.

The words "I am afraid I don't know", "I don't quite know" seem to reveal a divine humility reminding us of his own lines

Therefore we know by that humility
That Thou art God

All that Sri Aurobindo implies is that he has not seen Narad directly like the Mother. We mentioned at the start that the Sage is as much "alive" today as in the past.

The salient characteristics of the Puranic Narad are quietly absorbed into the portrait in *Savitri*. His pure love and Bhakti, are indicated in lines like.

He sang the name of Vishnu and his birth
And the joy and passion of the mystic world

The traditional Narad's pleasure in making human beings quarrel is totally transformed in the epic. Ashwapati's Queen "quarrels", if we may say so, with the Creator himself and with Fate and the state of this world. Though Savitri cannot be said to quarrel with her mother she quietly refuses to comply with her mother's desire that she should set out on her journey again seeking another life-partner better-fated than Satyavan.

There is another characteristic of the Puranic Narad that Sri Aurobindo does not

mention in the letter to the disciple but absorbs into his own presentation of him. In the tales of Dhruva and Prahlad we see Narad helping them to discover their missions in life. Dhruva, who is not permitted to sit on the lap of his father, is later directed by Narad to seek the love of the Divine himself. In the tale of Prahlad we see Narad bringing out literally the truth of the statement of the Mother that the education of a person begins even when he is in his mother's womb. It is when the baby is yet to be born and christened that Prahlad is initiated into the life of devotion to the Lord. That becomes a necessity in order to bring about the destruction of his father who is the arch-enemy of God and Man. The Lord has to appear as half animal and half man (Narasimha) to kill Hiranyakashipu. Sri Aurobindo points out that the various forms the Lord is said to have taken in the ten incarnations symbolically represent the evolution from an aquatic creature to the spiritual man.

Narad in *Savitri* helps the incarnation of the Mother to discover her mission of conquering Death and taking the world to the Eternal Day. Immediately he steels her heart against the impending doom of Satyavan's death in twelve months' time. *Savitri's* words show how she discovered why she has come to the earth¹

And yet I know this is not all my fate,
Only to live and love awhile and die.
For now I know why my spirit came on earth
And who I am and who he is I love.

It is in Narad's answer to the Queen that we see that he belongs to a state of consciousness not conceived by the Puranic tales or by Vyasa. It is not for nothing Sri Aurobindo makes him his mouthpiece when he presents the aspect of cosmic Pain and Fate.

It is customary to see something of Sri Aurobindo in Ashwapati and perhaps even in Satyavan. *Savitri's* Sadhana is seen as a presentation of the Mother's own Sadhana. A minute's brooding would show that there is something of Sri Aurobindo in Narad too, which shows that Narad as we see in *Savitri* not only includes but transcends the Puranic and the Vyasian elements. Sri Aurobindo's presentation has correspondence with the vision of the Mother of him standing on the borderline between the Overmind and Supermind.

In Narad's speech various sections, including the presentation of Christ's experience which of course is not presented as absolute but as a part of a vast universal experience, become meaningful only if we know the state of consciousness from which he is speaking. We see from the highest standpoint the meaning of pain and suffering from which even the incarnate God is not free and which he has to undergo to help the evolution of matter into spirit. Narad anticipates the experience *Savitri* herself has to undergo in her encounter with Death in order not only to save Satyavan for herself but also to save the whole of mankind from death. Narad says,

A greatness in thy daughter's soul resides
That can transform herself and all around,
But must cross on stones of suffering to its goal

In his answer to Ashwapati, Narad clearly shows how Fate is only a power in the hands of God to lead the world to his own ends.

Thus in his portraiture of Narad Sri Aurobindo reveals him at a high level even while not excluding the elements of the character in Vyasa and the Puranas which have a certain unexpressed greatness of their own

SWARNA GOURI

THE WAGER OF AMBROSIA

(Continued from the issue of September 1997)

VI. The Tree of Cosmic Existence

THE fifteenth chapter of the Gita begins with a description of the astounding tree of cosmic existence, having its roots in the infinite above and its thousand branches plunging and spreading here around. But it is not possible for us to know the true nature of this strange Ashwattha tree, with its foundation fixed in the timeless Eternal, it is an ever-widening movement carrying the ancient urge to act and grow, in activity to give shape and form to the manifestive Spirit and in growth to bring and establish more and more of its Light, Knowledge, Truth, Love, Beauty, Joy in the workings of a ceaseless process. The whole secret of this tree, with its roots in heaven and its branches and its thick green foliage in the world of men, is in the triple personality of the Supreme, his three poises or statuses of consciousness, the outward-going or the externalising, the passive or retiring from action, and the trans-creational that holds together birth and non-birth and all that is in them and beyond them. In the language of the Gita, we have Kshara, Akshara and Uttama Purusha in the greatness of what is and what shall be as the expressed Truth of the Absolute. Such is the unimpaired basis of the formulation worked out by the Gita.

It is therefore necessary to see the problem of phenomenal creation in the context of this fundamental postulate; in it alone can our dilemma arising out of discordant perceptions find its complete resolution. The Gita handles it in terms of cyclic movements of the dynamic Self, Kshara, witnessed and supported by the quiescent immutable Self of Silence, Akshara, potent in its aspects of manifold becoming, transcending and yet holding all this vast becoming there is ever present the supreme Lord, Purushottama, indivisible, without beginning and without end, from whom arise these countless universes and in whom they live or into whom they merge when they fulfill his will which has brought them into birth.

This is the great doctrine, the esoteric Shastra taught by the Teacher on the battlefield of life to his fond friend and dear disciple; he has been gradually prepared to receive this occult-spiritual knowledge which alone can unravel the mystery of this existence. It is a sure means to overcome the travails of this earthly life, a path which leads the seeker-soul away from all conflicts and clashes and takes him to the truth of divinity in creation. In it all his understanding and action and feeling find their perfection, he then lives always working out his *swabhāva*, his characteristic nature, in the ideality of the eternal Dharma. Thus indeed he comes to know the meaning and marvel of the great Ashwattha tree.

Arjuna was given the psychological basis to arrive at a point at which he would be in a position to free himself from what is mundane and binding. The description of the Kshara Purusha may appear to take him away from all world-action, fleeting and

blameworthy as it is. If what is, is nothing but a semblance, an appearance, then the only way available would be to get out of it. The spirit working in these short-lived insubstantialities cannot offer any redemption to man bound to the inferior play of the lower Nature. There is also the immutable Being, itself without activity though supporting activity. This Akshara Purusha leads us away from creation, this phenomenal becoming, to the condition of self-existence in its immobile impersonality. If so, the injunction of the Gita "to fight and conquer" would appear to come as a contradiction for the warrior on the battlefield of life. The Gita, however, reconciles these two opposing tendencies in its formulation of the Uttama Purusha who simultaneously holds these both together in his nature of luminous manifestive activity. Arjuna is enjoined to recognise this and act in the dharma of his soul.

The introductory verses of Jnaneshwar, limiting the scope to the world-tree alone, run as follows: "One who is in possession of knowledge is the master of his being and has the merit of performing a hundred sacrifices to get the abundant wealth of heaven. Or, he is someone who has taken birth a hundred times to do the work of the Eternal, the work by which the Eternal himself acquires his status of being the Eternal; for, there is no other method. Or, the way the light of innumerable suns becomes available only to one who has a seeing eye, in that manner does the soul which is in possession of knowledge attain liberation." Having thus asserted the supremacy of knowledge, the Preceptor shows the path of enlightened detachment by which the ardent seeker of truth gets rid of the things and happenings of this transient and sorrowful world. In the present context, the Path of Relinquishment, *nivṛtti*, seems preferable to the Path of Affirmation, *pravṛtti*, as a necessity for the entangled creature to free himself from the bondage of his mortality. Viewed exclusively from this angle, the world-tree takes a distinct form of phenomenality of the Kshara Purusha, mutable as if without the support of the Immutable behind and above him. Thus alone would perhaps prosper the worldliness of the world.

With this preparatory groundwork Jnaneshwar expounds in great detail, and with high élan, the fundamental propositions emanating from the first shloka of this chapter, the discourse running into some hundred *ovis*. The terse, rather the dense and yet luminous expression of the original is rendered here into a language that is lyrically sweet and enchanting without becoming metaphysically irrelevant, in the process, in that joyous expansive mood, least does it suffer distortion. Not only do we have the substance of spiritual philosophy in its trueness; there is throughout the authenticity of overhead poetry with its genuine power of revelation from beyond the mental consciousness. Let us have a quick look at this Ashwattha tree depicted by the Yogi-Poet

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखं अश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।
छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥

*ūrdhvamūlam adhaḥśākham aśvattham prāhuḥ avyayam
chhandāmsi yasya parṇāni yah tam veda sa vedavit*

With its original source above, its branches stretching below,
 the Ashwattha is said to be eternal and imperishable, the leaves
 of it are the hymns of the Veda, he who knows it is the Veda-knower

You have taken the path,—expatiates Jnaneshwar on the Teacher's words spoken to Arjuna,—leading to the house of the supreme Being, but then what comes immediately as an obstacle in your way is a certain illusory sense of this universe. You begin to take its apparent character, the semblance, this mundane life and these futile rounds of birth as the whole meaning and substance of existence. But it is not really so. Instead, here grows and flourishes the Great Tree, *mahātarū*, planted by that Being himself. However, you should not make the mistake that this tree is just like any other common tree with its roots drawing nourishment from the soil and branches shooting upward. Its origin is in the Above and, what is amazing about it is that it spreads and spreads downward. No words can describe this marvel. All that we might simply say is that an axe cannot hew this cosmic tree, nor can fire burn it. Does not the sun shine at a great height in heaven and yet scatter abroad in all directions the network of its rays? The way the Flood at the end of a cosmic cycle, *pralaya*, inundates everything, so has this tree occupied the entire creation. If you are looking for a fruit to have its taste, or a flower to smell its fragrance, then you will find none there; for, indeed, whatever is, is this tree alone. The sky has become the cause for the rich and thriving expanse of its foliage, and the wind blows because of it, and the triple process of creation, sustenance and dissolution arises and abides in it. Such an Up-rooted tree, strong and majestic, thick and sprawling widely, has appeared here now in its universal form and it is from this tree that we desire to gather all merits.

But why at all do the well-versed in spiritual lore call this tree the Ashwattha? Actually, as far as the Eternal is concerned, it has no beginning and no middle and no end, there are no divisions in it, no boundaries, no directions marked for it in space and time, it being beyond them. But by the fact that it is above this tree, *ūrdhva*, we recognise it to be so, self-existent in its delight of awareness. Imagine a stringed instrument, —and it is but the original sound that is really present in it even before the string is plucked, imagine a flower,—and it is but its fragrance before the flower blooms. It is the self of bliss even long before the sense of enjoyment is born out of it. It has no here and there, and no spot specific to it and no event tells anything about it; it has no front and no back and, remaining invisible, it can yet see though it doesn't seem to have an eye. By its attributes and qualities, its descriptive and discriminative faculties, with several names and several forms is it known to us, even as in its manyesses it grows and expands in the sky. It is neither the knower nor the known, but only the knowledge. It has occupied the whole creation by being there as an all-pervading subtle presence. It is neither cause nor effect, duality nor non-duality, but it is comprehending and apprehending consciousness,—such is that Eternal. Out of that Eternal, the supreme Brahman, has come into existence, by its conceptively creative power, by its mysterious *Maya*, this astounding tree itself known as Ashwattha. In

Maya is the reality of this enormous tree holding a cosmic purpose in the Will of the Eternal

Speaking about this Ashwattha tree Tilak in his remarkable *Gita Rahasya* brings out several references from the ancient scriptures. We may mention *en passant* that Tilak wrote his commentary on the Gita when he was given "compulsory rest" in Mandalay Jail from 1908 to 1914. There is an inspired directness and clarity in his style, indicating a wide-ranging mind and a will that affirms itself in life. Referring to the inverted tree of the first shloka of the fifteenth chapter, he says "It is a description of the Eternal Tree, Brahma Vriksha, which otherwise is known as the World Tree, Sansar Vriksha. Sansar here means the world as is visible to us, the phenomenal world or the creation we can perceive and cognise, and not just the trivial rounds of our daily life. Sankhya calls it the multifold wideness of the active Prakriti and Vedanta the sprawling expanse of God's Maya. Anugita names it Brahma Vriksha and Brahmavana or Brahmaranya. The way an imposing sky-embracing tree grows from a tiny seed, so appears out of the unmanifest Supreme Lord this tree in the nature of a visible creation. This metaphor or conception about the tree is present not only in Vedic literature, but also in other old writings of Europe. Ancient India calls it Vishva or Cosmic Tree. In the Rig Veda (I.24.7) there is a description about a radiant tree in the World of Varuna, while the source of its rays is above, the rays emanating from it spread here down below. In the *Thousand Names of Vishnu* the Tree of Varuna is one of the names of Vishnu. Under this tree (Supalash Vriksha) Yama and our forefathers sat together to share a drink (X 135.1); two birds of beautiful plumage dwell on it (I 164.22); this is the same tree whose leaves rustle as the Winds blow (V.54 12). In the Atharva Veda this Ashwattha tree is located in the third celestial world, the World of Varuna. Once Agni, in the guise of a horse, Ashwa, stayed under this tree for a year and hence it is called Ashwattha. In the Katha Upanishad we have the eternal Ashwattha tree whose root is above but whose branches are downward. The Gita has undoubtedly lifted up this image and brought out its true significance in several details while incorporating it in its revelatory discourse. ..."

Tracing the origin of the World-Maya in Brahman, Jnaneshwar proceeds to describe it in relation to the phenomenal creation. We can neither say that she exists, nor can we maintain that she exists not, she is neither *sat* nor *asat*, and thought cannot figure her out, or give to her a name by defining her in any way. She is so, primordially ever there, without any beginning, Energy of the Supreme in the act of creation. As it is wrong to speak of the children of a barren woman, so is she known to us, known only in ignorance and appearing unreal in knowledge. Indeed, there is no illusory Maya in Brahma Jnana, in the Knowledge of the Eternal. Elaborating further on the nature of this mysterious Maya, Jnaneshwar gives a number of examples. She is a chest of drawers containing innumerable doctrines and principles and propositions, she upbears this mundane existence which is just like a drifting and inconstant unsteady cloud in the wideness of the sky, only because of her, everything here looks like the folds of a piece of cloth.

So, in the immediate view, what we have here is, after all, just the growth and vigorous blossoming of Prakṛiti, Prakṛiti Vistar, the imaginative-creative display and functioning, the daily trivia, the rut of household affairs and matters of Maya, Maya Prapancha. Such is she established in Brahman the Spirit, working in its potency. She is a tiny seed from which issues forth, as the Vedantist says, this world-tree. Hers is the theme for human action in the theatre of human life. She is a lamp of contradictive and misleading light that does not give true knowledge. Coming out of the Eternal and yet as if throwing a shadow on the Eternal, is she; she seems to make even that Eternal forget itself. Jnaneshwar explains this with the help of a vivid example. Think of a person who has fallen asleep and in that sleep experiences a dream: A beautiful young woman is seen sharing his bed; after a while, as she gets up in that dream, she embraces him and excites his passions which he carries with him even when he is awake. In this way we can understand the infatuation of the Eternal that it becomes self-oblivious under her sway. Therefore what is here is all ignorance, *avidyā*. In the Pure Existing is now carried on the play of this strange inexplicable Maya. We witness her as lower Nature or *Apara Prakṛiti*, cut off from the supreme Source. It even gives us a strong sense of abiding illusion. Non-cognisance of that supreme Origin in this wide functioning of hers is at the root of this world-tree's appearance as non-Brahmic.

Jnaneshwar then proceeds to link up her works with the Sankhya description of this vast material creation. It essentially follows the Puranic tradition of the gross physical universe as a product of the eightfold Nature, *aṣṭadhā prakṛti*, emanating from and working in the power of Maya. Out of the Consciousness-Force, *cidvṛtti*, shoot out, like twigs and branches of this cosmic tree, the three subjective principles and five objective faculties. Primordial matter as Prakṛiti is unmanifest, eternal, exists both as cause and effect, is undifferentiated and as the source of all categories gives rise to this creation. There are twenty-four categories or *tanmātrās* defining, in a way, the aspects of the Qualified Eternal, *saguṇa brahma*; these evolutes are made of five gross elements (earth, water, fire, air, ether), five subtle elements (smell, taste, colour, touch, sound), four internal senses (mind, understanding, ego, reason), five senses of perception (hearing, touch, sight, taste, smell) and five organs of action (tongue, hands, feet, organs of generation and defecation). But Prakṛiti by herself cannot proceed in her works, without the agency of Puruṣa activating her. Puruṣa as Kala or Time therefore becomes the twenty-fifth evolute. The Creator by his own Energy, Maya, abides, unaffected, in living beings as the Puruṣa, the Inner Controller, and outside them as the dynamic force of effectuation, Kala. The nature of this Kala is seen as a constant change occurring in the cosmic tree called Ashwattha. Tracing the etymology of the word *aśvattha*, Jnaneshwar says that *śva* means tomorrow and therefore *aśvattha* means that which does not stay the same until tomorrow. Yet it is imperishable, does not disappear in Time. Its perpetuity is the aspect of immortality in the mortal world. It is always there. Its steadfast constant and unceasing motion presents itself in the nature of stillness; its stability lies in the eternal recurrence of movement. A spinning-top appears stationary while whirling rapidly on its axis; so does this world-tree. Jnaneshwar gives

half-a-dozen examples to illustrate the point, with the intention of bringing out the changing, if not evanescent, feature of this phenomenal existence

The general drift of these verses of Jnaneshwar is towards the exclusive approach of the man of knowledge, Jnanī. His Maya-Yoga essentially highlights the ephemeral or fleeting character of the Ashwattha tree. *upādhiḥcheni pade ksanikatva* is what this world is, which is in quite sharp contrast to the featureless and impersonal immutable Self of Silence. The Lord of this constantly changing formation of Maya, Kshara Purusha himself, thus seems to acquire the character of impermanence. This is a natural consequence of the acceptance of the Path of Relinquishment, Nivṛtti Marg.

In order to get out of this phenomenality, it is necessary to use the strong sword of detachment, *asanga śāstrena dhrdena chhitvā* is the injunction of the Gita. While this is perfectly valid in the pragmatism of the process, and without it there cannot be any real spiritual progress, it must be considered only as the initial step, as a functional aspect in the recognition of the present parameters of existence. We must withdraw and sever ourselves from what is false. But there is another complementary sequence also, promoting action, Pravṛtti Marg which indeed should change this nature. And could that not be the real intention behind the process?

Jnaneshwar, however, following Nivṛtti Marg, is practically subscribing to the Shankarite Theory of Maya as an illusory power and not as a conceptively creative force in world-manifestation. Not that this interpretation is altogether indefensible. Nor is such a spiritual experience entirely invalid. The first few shlokas of this chapter of the Gita can very easily lend themselves to such a possible point of view or explanation of this cosmic tree of existence. "The branches of this cosmic tree extend both below and above (below in the material, above in the supraphysical planes), they grow by the gunas of Nature, the sensible objects are its foliage, downward here into the world of men it plunges its roots of attachment and desire with the consequences of an endlessly developing action. The real form of it cannot be perceived by us in this material world of man's embodiment, nor its beginning nor its end, nor its foundation: having cut down this firmly rooted Ashwattha by the strong sword of detachment, one should seek that highest goal whence, once having reached it, there is no compulsion of return to mortal life, I turn (says the Vedantic verse) to seek that original soul alone from whom proceeds the original sempiternal urge to action. To be free from the bewilderment of this lower Maya, without egoism, the great fault of attachment conquered, *jītasangadosa*, all desires stilled, the duality of joy and grief cast away, always to be fixed in a pure spiritual consciousness, these are the steps of the way to that supreme Infinite." (*The Message of the Gita*, edited by Anilbaran Roy, based on Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*) But, at a later stage, the Gita speaks of the three Purushas, synthesising the Kshara and Akshara in the Uttama. In fact, transference of the attributes of the drifting and unsteady phenomenal Nature, the play of inferior Maya, to the ever-existent Kshara Purusha, who presides over the works of this Nature, is not acceptable to the Aurobindonian experience and philosophy of the spirit. That which belongs to Nature, and for whatever reason or purpose it be there, cannot be considered directly as a part of

the Being We have to fully understand and appreciate the working of what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind Maya Jnaneshwar,—or for that matter the ancient esoteric seer and thinker,—was not really concerned with the physical universe and hence always a hiatus remained between the material and the spiritual. However, we should also remember that the scriptural poetry is never a metaphysical treatise and we have to understand its shades and nuances in their full richness. The language of the poet, which is always a suggestive language, does not necessarily bind him to any specific system of philosophy and it is his Word of Revelation alone which we must accept

R Y DESHPANDE

“SUNDERING OF THE HEART-STRINGS”

(Continued from the issue of September 1997)

PART III

Krishnaprem on “Heart-Strings”

KRISHNAPREM IS well known to many of us through his superb commentaries on the Gita and Kathopanishad, and through his published correspondence with Dilip Kumar Roy. For those who do not know about him, as an introduction, I quote from what Sri Aurobindo has said about him.

Dilip Kumar Roy had been showing his correspondence with Krishnaprem to Sri Aurobindo. Subsequent to Krishnaprem’s visit to Pondicherry Dilip requested Sri Aurobindo for his impressions. This excerpt is from what Sri Aurobindo wrote to Dilip in reply: “You know very well the value I have always put upon his insight into spiritual things, the brilliance and accuracy of his thought and vision and his expression of them (I think I described it once as *pashyantī vak*) and on as much as I knew of his spiritual experience and constant acquisition and forward movement and many-sided largeness” (Quoted from *Yogi Sri Krishnaprem* by D. K. Roy, 1975, second edition, page 6, published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.)

Krishnaprem, in his book *The Yoga of Kathopanishad* published by the New Order Book Co., Ahmedabad, in 1982, under license from Robinson and Watkins Books Ltd., U.K., gives a very interesting exposition of the three verses from Kathopanishad, Nos. 13, 14 and 15 in the Second Cycle, Chapter 3. I give now excerpts from this exposition together with his translation of these verses (pages 245-255 of the book).

Verse 13: As a bare ‘He is’ He should be realised (first) and (also) in his essential being (*tatva bhavena*). Of these two (modes), the realisation of the essential being comes as the gift of grace (*prasādati*) to him who has already realised Him as a bare ‘He is’.

“The previous verse (12) has told us that the word *astī* represents the bare knowledge of His timeless being, is the utmost limit to which the understanding can soar, at least unaided. Here it is said that in addition to this realisation there is another, the *tatva-bhava* or knowledge of His principal being—His truth and essence. That knowledge of *tatva* or essence, as the Gita tells us (Gita VII, 3), scarce one amongst thousands of ‘successful strivers’ gains, is the sheer gift, the grace (*prasāda*) or gift of love—the Self-revealing gift of love which comes when man has striven to his utmost bound and reached the knowledge of mere Being.

“This is the same teaching that was imparted at the end of the Gita where Sri Krishna tells Arjuna how, having cast aside egoism and passions, the disciple becomes

the stainless, sorrowless Brahman and *becoming That*, attains supreme devotion for him ‘By that devotion,’ Sri Krishna goes on to say, ‘he comes to know Me in essence (*tatvatah*), and taking refuge in Me, through My grace (*prasāda*) attains to the eternal indestructible Abode’

Verse 14 When all the desires that cling to the heart are detached, then the mortal becomes Deathless Here and now he attains Brahman

Verse 15 the Knots of the Heart here (in this life) are cleft asunder, then the mortal becomes the Deathless up to this point proceeds the Teaching

“Once more we have the statement (in Verse 14) that all the outer desires that cling to the heart must be detached This teaching is cardinal in all yogas We sometimes find attempts made to distinguish between the ‘purely negative’ Yoga of the Buddhist and the ‘more positive’ teachings of the Upanishadic schools. But such a distinction is, in the end, illusory. The fact is that all this quest for ‘a more positive way’ arises from the hankering to keep some at least of our cherished desires, to achieve some sort of compromise between the naked Truth and our beloved egos

“ ‘Kill out desire’, says the *Voice of the Silence* Desire is the cause of sorrow with the cessation of desire the Sorrowless is attained; thus teaches the Buddha and precisely the same statement is made in our text.

“Faced with these clear and corrosive statements the first thing we attempt is to defend ourselves against them Desire is part of the cosmic process, without desire there would be no life at all; does not condemnation of desire constitute an indictment of the universe? Do not other Upanishads teach us that the One *desired* to be many? Is not the aspiration for attainment also a desire?—so we go on, in our minds, always the willing servants of our desires, finding plenty of reasons for denying or at least toning down, the truth of the teaching

“Desire is part of the cosmic process; it is the force which produces manifestation, it is the force which produces life—and death. But this Path is the Path to Life beyond these opposites, the Path, as the Teaching tells us, to the Deathless There is no obligation for any to tread it who does not feel called upon to do so; but, if we decide to tread it, we should not blind our eyes to its nature As for the aspiration towards the Goal, it is quite true that, in us, it is mixed with desire, just as, in us, love and compassion are mixed with baser elements. As the disciple proceeds upon the Path, however, the admixture becomes less and less, until with Attainment, it vanishes for ever, or to put it the other way, with its vanishing, Attainment shines forth

“Incidentally, the Teachers are not offering indictment of the universe All things have their proper place: this is the Path of Return. He who still feels the other Path, the Path of Forthgoing, is his is invited to leave this one alone.

“Another defence of our minds, when faced with this teaching, is the child’s trick of extreme reaction ‘You do not want me to play in the mud, then I won’t play at all’

And then the child proceeds to make itself unpleasant to all around it by adopting an attitude of stony negativity until an unwise parent says, 'Oh go and do what you like.' But the cosmos is not an unwise parent and a sound box on the ear is all we are likely to get as the result of our sulky negativism on this path

“And in any case, what exactly is desire? Desire is a movement of the psyche (mind) towards or away from (for aversion is only the negative form of desire) some object thought of as outside itself. It is thus essentially a movement of ignorance, for there is nothing that is in truth outside the Soul. The imagination creates an image and then, following the Path of Forthgoing and projecting the image 'outside', we strive towards it or away from it in ignorance of the fact that its true being is within the Soul. Thus arises the outer world of desirable objects and thus arises our bondage to the world ”

Coming to Verse 15, Krishnaprem says:

“As regards the Knots of the Heart mentioned in Verse 15, Shankara states that they are the formations of Ignorance which bind us fast by causing us to assert 'I am this body, this wealth is mine, I am happy or sorrowful.' This statement is perfectly correct but its effect upon most modern men who read it will be to suggest that the knots in question are so many false intellectual beliefs which a proper knowledge of Vedantic 'metaphysics' will correct. Such a view, however, is far from adequate. Intellectual beliefs are only a part and, in some sense, one of the least important parts of the contents of the psyche. They are symptoms and not causes, for they are rooted either in the desire-nature below or in the *Buddhi* above. Let us not forget that the mind is a mirror, a tool in the hands of either the 'evil daemon' below or the 'good daemon' above, or, more usually, the battlefield for these contending forces. It is, however, a *living* battlefield, one which itself takes the side of one or other of the combatants, assisting it by every means in its power by altering its configurations to suit the favoured side. No man has ever had the slightest difficulty in dealing with his intellectual opinions, modifying and reversing them with the utmost ease—*provided he really wished to*.... Intellectual beliefs are in fact flags waving in the wind, whether that wind be the changeable dust-laden winds of the earth's surface or the pure and steadily driven tides of higher regions. Such flags serve a useful purpose in indicating the direction of the wind but no more and, as the old proverb has it, a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. We believe what we want to believe, or rather, what something in us wishes us to believe, and what that something is, whether a mocking spirit or a beneficent God, will depend on our general psychic condition rather than on any purely intellectual consideration. Hence the sterility of mere courses of 'metaphysical' study, Vedantic or other. The actual Knots of the Heart are something far deeper and more difficult to untie than any mere intellectual belief ”

Krishnaprem now gives a brief outline of the Kundalini Yoga because the Verses 13, 14 and 15 are sometimes interpreted from this viewpoint, a view "though true within its limitations, is only an aspect of a much wider truth". He points out that in Kundalini Yoga, in the path of the ascending Kundalini lie "three Knots situated at the

centers corresponding to the navel, heart and eyebrows and known as the Knots of *Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra*” which have to be pierced After piercing the last of these the yogi proceeds to the Abode of *Brahman* in the Thousand-Petalled Lotus Krishnaprem then says “Its chief [Kundalini Yoga’s] attraction appears to be in the vividness and the sense of concrete reality that arises through the preoccupation with physical processes and at least quasi-physical sensations It is also in this that its danger lies. It offers little to counteract our already excessive tendency to think of the physical as the only real, at least in any vivid sense of the word, and of only too many of its followers it is true that what begins with the body ends there also That which commences with abnormal physiological practices is only too apt to end at mere abnormal psychic powers The gross body and its subtle counterparts are only the lowest concretisations of the total psychic being¹ and it is therefore to the psyche as a whole that we should direct our attention, for it is there and not in the spine, gross or subtle, that the fundamental Knots are found If however, our excursion into *Hatha Yoga* has given rise to any sense that we are dealing with something far more real than mere intellectual opinions, our time has not been wasted.

“Let us return, however, to the point of view of *Raja Yoga* which, making use only of a few simple physical preliminaries, in order to clear the table as it were, starts its work directly upon the mind which is the master-key of the whole process The mind, as befits its central position, is to be trained to perform two functions, to control the senses below and to be controlled by the *Buddhi* above The average man’s mind is itself dragged hither and thither by the unruly horses of sense On such a mind the *Buddhi* can only manifest in the form of an all-controlling fate whose dark complexion is the inevitable counterpart of such irresponsible, sense-directed careering Yoga is balance He who would command must also obey and it is only by submitting itself to the commands of the *Buddhi* in all matters, by listening at all times to the Inner Voice, the Voice of the Cosmic Harmony, or *Rita*, that the mind can gain the power of imposing its commands on the senses. Then and then only can the process of *laya* be achieved, and in the words of our text (Verses 10 and 14), the senses be merged in *Manas*, *Manas* in *Buddhi*, *Buddhi* in the Great Self and that in the Peace beyond (‘Here and now he attains the Brahman’) It is that ascent that is the fundamental, the archetypal ascent of the Coiled One, an ascent of which all processes taking place in the spine or elsewhere are but outward manifestations, partial expressions on their own limited scale Water the tree and the whole tree will flourish.

“On that Middle Path of the Spirit’s ascent there are three main Knots which have to be pierced, or rather untied, which untying may, as the *Hatha Yogis* truly say, involve considerable pain and danger. The first of them is the Knot of *Brahma*, the Knot which ties the Light of the Spirit to the sense world in general and the physical body in particular, making us say ‘I am this body’ As long as we identify ourselves with physical forms, so long we share the inevitable fate of those forms, birth and death

1 The words *psychic being* are not used in the Aurobindonian sense

“The second Knot is the Knot of *Viṣṇu*, that by which we are bound to the desire world, the world of feeling, and on account of which we say, in Shankara’s words, ‘I am happy or I am sorrowful’, and then proceed towards or away from the fancied causes of our happiness or sorrow in desire or aversion.

“The third, the tightest Knot of all, is the Knot of the mind, that which binds the Spirit to the world of thought, the rooting place and ultimate fortress of separate selfhood. All things may pass and be taken away from me but in my thoughts I live for ever. Here is my self, my ultimate monad, unique, aeonian, the icy Pole Star of the universe, the diamond pivot on which all else revolves, hard with a diamond’s cold and gleaming fire.”

These are the three Knots symbolized (from one point of view at least) by the triple-knotted sacred thread which the Sanyasi offers up in the fire of renunciation. They are the Knots which bind together the whole universe as we know it, not the divine and harmonious Cosmos of unity above, but the sorrowful and weary world below. All compounded things, said the Buddha, are full of sorrow. These are the Knots that bring about the compounding, the triple cement that holds together our sorry dwelling. The first cement is of mud and can be washed away by water, the second is harder and must be loosened by the pointed iron of the mind while the third is the hardest of all, a secret invisible cement that can only be removed by the fire of Spirit, by burning, as the alchemist said, by ‘well-regulated fire’. Only *Rudra* Himself in the form of *kālāgni*, the World-destroying Fire, can dissolve the final Knot, the Knot of *Rudra*. By the *Atman* itself is the *Atman* to be attained. In that glowing Fire all that is mortal is consumed; that which was imprisoned in the husk of mortality reassumes its naturally Deathless nature; the Gold of the Philosopher shines in its own bright radiance. In the words of Buddha.

O Builder, thou art seen, never again shalt thou build a house for me,
Broken are all thy beams, shattered thy ridge pole.
My mind is set on the Uncompounded; extinguished are desires

A description of the process at this stage, the stage of dissolving the third Knot in the Centre between the eyebrows, is given in the *ṣaḍ cakra nirūpaṇam* or *Description of the Six Centres* as follows: “Having closed the House which hangs without Support, that is known through service of the Supreme Guru and, by repeated practice, dissolving the mind in the abode of bliss, the yogi sees within the middle of that space starry sparks of fire distinctly shining. Thereafter he sees the light (of the *Atman*) glowing between Heaven and earth like a flaming lamp, like the newly risen sun. It is in this place that the Divine Being becomes manifest in full power, imperishable, knowing no decay, as in the region of the Sun, Moon and Fire.”

“The House hanging without support is of course the mind which has been isolated from all worldly connections. The sparks are the lightning-like flashes, the preliminary perceptions which herald the rising of the mystic Sun in all its fullness.”

Krishnaprem concludes this exposition of Verse 15 repeating the last sentence ‘Up to this point proceeds the teaching’ and says ‘Beyond this there is no teaching. It is written that for him who is on the threshold of divinity no law can be framed, no guide exist. Yet to enlighten the disciple the final struggle may be thus expressed: Hold fast to that which has neither substance nor existence. Listen only to the Voice which is soundless. Look only on That which is invisible alike to the inner and the outer sense.’

(To be concluded)

DINKAR D PALANDE

I HAVE SOUGHT THEE

I HAVE sought Thee through the ages,
And with trembling mouth have kissed
Thy footprints on the roadways
Of alternate fire and mist;
I have sought Thy magic Beauty
Between the gold and black
Of many fleeting lives through which
Lay the mysterious track

And now I can scarce remember
The several births I've borne,
The several mournful manacles
Of form that I have worn,
And the several boats in which I've sailed
A-weathering gale and storm,
In the struggling stranger-voyage
Towards Thee beyond all form

Beloved, tell me truly!
Hast Thou not felt my dearth
Striving towards Thy fullness,
Birth after passing birth?
Hast Thou not heard my crying
In the chilly dark of night,
A solitary child, Mother!
A-crying for the Light?

Hast Thou not seen my lantern
Wait in the agelong dark
Loyal, upon my shadow-boat,
Unto Thy promised Spark?
Hast Thou not heard its quiet keel
Strike on the ocean's sharp
And boistrous-heaving waters,
The sobbing of a harp?

I have sought through myriad lifetimes
Thy Beauty aye-deferred,—
I have followed Thee, Beloved!
As a streak of flight, a bird

I have followed Thee, my Mother!
 In Thy dim and deathless Trip,
 As a trail of dark, a meteor,
 As a wake of green, a ship.

Between the inky midnight
 And the coloured light of day,
 O Flower! I have sought Thee
 Through wild agonies of clay:
 And in every flaming passion
 And in every scarlet sin,
 I have glimpsed the correspondence
 Of a sacred Love within!

How silently, Beloved!
 Thou hast hidden in each deed,
 As a rich and final flowering,
 Sweet inwardness of seed;
 How patiently, O Silence!
 Thou hast dwelt within my words,
 As the consciousness of heaven
 In the blindest flight of birds

Thou hast been a watchful neighbour
 Through all my erring ways,
 And hast brought me to Thee finally
 Through terrible delays:
 And now that I have found Thee
 I have learned that martyrdom
 Of every lifetime is a Voice
 Crying to us "I come!"

6-30, Evening, 6-2-34

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Sri Aurobindo's comment: Exceedingly beautiful.
 The Mother's comment. This is a magnificent poem

THE MUTE AND GOLDEN RAY

THE mute and golden ray pours from above
A creative flood with aerial intensities,
Charged with a living infinity that shapes
The human mass to God's extravagance.
The inward call is merged with the mask of life,
The moment's gross and outer sting of fate.
The sky of the mind is stunned with whitenesses,
The cave of sense invaded with roseate dross.
Pouring from the invisible fount of the vast
Inarmed with sheer burning impulses of joys,
Armoured with peace and wide with omniscient height,
The kinetic splendour-noons upon the earth.
A lotus-dream of dreamless firmament
The soil is lost in that wonder and the call
The heart lies prone with eternity of love—
A global load of immortality.
The mind alone is awake, a witness-star
Gazing at the strides of the experience-flame,
The one touch that would transmute the travelling mire.

21 2 62

ROMEN

(From the late poet's unpublished diaries)

VATES

(A Poem in Greek Logaoedics Metre — An Experiment)

WORLDS of light-force on the receptive nature impinge, arching channels
Plastic and strong for the rhythms that move, raising life rich and open,
Unshadowed truth from the intricate depths free and straightforward blazing,
This unique earth of developing souls born for god-breathing ripeness

From the far home of the ultimate comes impetus seeking grandeur,
Noble accord of the whispering grace wrings divine song immortal,—
Sure, creative, in slow building and swift charge the word, bright and lordly,
Weaves close fabric of the perfect existence of growth wrought to whole terms.

Full-fledged arrows of the infinite sea blaze and cleave true their passage,
 Ever highest in the wheel of the planes turns to bring something salient,
 Finding what serves to the expressive way tempered for balanced bearing,
 Flow and music of some region of greatness that draws life to soar free.

Clogged, reluctant, to the imperious voice deaf, the hard stretch avoiding,
 Often flagging is the instrument dull, fending, warping and spilling,
 The all-clear stream in a lessening cloud's weakness thwarted and stifled,
 To the poet the glorious inspiration a lost hope and promise.

Unrelenting the divine struggle bears on the world golden-seeded,
 Unfolding sure in its so perplexed course fields and rich-gleaming towers,
 All price paying, as the focus of song sore endures, giving his substance
 For the great life in his vision to come, sealed of light born the race true

Fuller with years all capacity blooms, reared the fit heirs of glory;
 Pregnant darkness swelling to greater dawn, wrought to high pitch the fire-spined
 Substance-delight all-sphered in the one eye wandering aplanatic,
 Stand men goodward, delivering their charge, more than men based for sun-stead

JESSE ROARKE

ON THE SEA

As the waves dance and roll with each other,
 So my mind with Thy Infinite music dances.
 When the Sun is setting,
 and the sky is drooping down,
 upon the sea like a weary eye,

I sat in front of the Sea,
 and my thoughts sank
 into the bottom of the deep,
 amid the eternal secrets of its silence.

DAXA

ON AN UNFAMILIAR SHORE

THE ocean of life has cast us up—
Bruised, exhausted—
On this unfamiliar shore

After the storms and hardships we passed through
The climate here seems temperate,
The natives friendly:
They provide food and shelter
But can offer no clue
Where we have come from,
Where we must go.

Exploring the hinterland
We discover many ruins
Evocative remains we cannot decipher,
Enigmatic fragments
That stir elusive memories.

The horizon shifts
As hills and islands come and go,
The sea changes colour,
Clouds cover the sky we used to steer by.

SHRADDHA

WIDER THAN THESE...

WIDER than these were once my worlds
Horizon to horizon gave a blue call,
The argent air whispered to gladed emeralds
And earth drank the sweetness of a mystic waterfall

Here no music wells to uphold the skies,
And I measure the seas with a human embrace,
Limitless visions meet not my eyes,
Life is a joyless desert, a blackness is space.

Pyramids of stone swarm the belly of the Sphinx,
 Dead within, carapaced to the Enigma's smile,
 The midgets here bleed through armours and chinks,
 And dance on a divided stage and masquerade awhile

But my worlds are within me; they secretly imbue
 My ritual acts with a spirit that is true.

AKASH DESHPANDE

THE TWO WHO ARE ONE

He is the fire
 She is the flame
 Always together they're one
 and the same.

He is the sun
 She is the rays
 Together they've helped us
 through difficult days

Shiva's the Lord
 Shakti's the force,
 Aurobindo and Mother are always
 the source

They shape our destiny
 They shape our lives
 And see that each soul
 always survives

The love that they give is
 Second to none,
 Aurobindo and Mother—The
 Two Who Are One.

MARY (ANGEL) FINN

ANOTHER STEEP AND WINDING DAY

ANOTHER steep and winding day—
but somehow it too has passed!

I was walking under a long rope
holding onto nothing but blind darkness,
when a glowing stillness swallowed me.

And I wanted nor asked for anything,
yet everything I needed was given.

Now I am quietly sitting in bed and listening to
the winds of your love breaking the world into one.

MIREK

A WALK INTO GOD

As I walked down the path of doom,
Cramped by death as there was no room
I wondered what it would be like in hell.
Would it be burning hot as stories tell?

I walked on and on down the endless road
Thinking about my future abode,
Looking ahead into the pitch-black hole,
With not a single body to bear a soul.

And as I was about to reach the end,
Turning around the last death-bend
I saw the Gods in my head
Full of life never to be dead.

On turning the final bend I found all bright,
For before me sat a heavenly sight,
A being too pure for the mortal eye,
A thing too deep that can never die

Then I realised I was not alone,
I had my soul, my flesh and bone,
And then it became more clear in my mind—
The LORD of all. I finally DID FIND

And then I found that I was laid
In my soft daily bed,
For the strange night was finally dead!

MATTHEW SMITH
(Age 15 years)

THE SUN TEMPLE AT KONARAK

ASTROLOGICAL AND COSMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Appearance

KONARAK IS a small village in district Puri, Orissa, 3 km from the Bay of Bengal. It was meant to be a shore temple but the water of the Bay has receded over the years. Konarak can be reached from either Bhubaneswar or Puri, both important temple sites and railway stops. Approaching the temple, one finds it a colossal and magnificent ruin, facing us, sphinx-like, with an overall sense of awe and enigma. On the east-west axis, one observes the remains of the *deul*, of which hardly much else than the platform remains, the *jagamohan*, and separated by a distance of about 10 m, a *nata-mandira*. The remains of a small platform for musicians (*bajeni-mandapa*) takes its place between the *jagamohan* and the *nata-mandira*. To the southwest of the *deul* is what remains of a smaller Mahagayatri Temple, while behind this structure, in the southwest corner, is a ruined brick-temple to Narayana. Foundations of several other structures exist within the compound, including a *parayatra-mandapa* for ceremonial occasions and a *nyasa-mandapa* for consecration of the puja-image. There are also several smaller platforms, two wells and, some distance to the south of the *nata-mandira*, the remains of a large kitchen. To the southeast of the compound is a tree, the *arkavata*, mentioned in the *Surya-Tattva Vistara*. The *jagamohan* is the best preserved of the structures, and its solitary magnificence, grandeur, harmony of overall form and detail, and profusion and excellence of sculpture would be enough to command the admiration and awe of the spectator. The entire temple is conceived in the form of a chariot with twelve wheels, and driven by seven horses. The walls of the structures in the general style of Orissa temples are packed with carving, featuring sculpture and decorative motifs in layer on layer along the perpendicular axis. The themes of the decoration may be broadly classified as: (i) deities, (ii) musician-nymphs of the celestial spheres, (iii) secular sculptures, (iv) birds, beasts, aquatic animals and composite and mythological figures including *nagas*, *naginis* and *vidalas* sometimes with the head of an elephant or demon, (v) architectural motifs like *pidha-mundis*, *khakhara-mundis*, *vajra-mundis*, pilasters, mouldings, chaitya-windows, trellises, etc., and (vi) purely decorative patterns woven out of floral, plant and geometric motifs.¹ The secular sculptures include *alasa-kanyas*, musicians, dancers, erotic scenes of all possible description, and scenes from the life of the king and his court. Three kinds of stones are used in the structures: a tough and resistant dark green chlorite is limited to the door frame and a few sculptures, laterite is used in the foundation, and in the invisible core of the platform and staircases, and a poor quality of easily weathering khondalite used for the rest. This third has been largely responsible, no doubt, for the general erosion and decomposition of the structure.

A number of questions arise inevitably in the mind when faced with this

monument. The most important of these undoubtedly concern (i) the history of its origin; (ii) its place in the Orissan temple tradition, (iii) the significance of its profuse sculpted themes; (iv) the history of its collapse and ruination. In this discussion we will be mainly concerned with the first and third of these questions.

Scattered historical records exist that are of some help to us in answering these questions, but as with much in the Indian tradition, much here remains obscure, and a subject of conjecture. This of course is due to the relative paucity of supporting written documentation, the Hindu experience of Time being largely a-historical. Still, the available sources do include a number of important Orissan manuscripts that provide a wealth of detail on the temple and its origins. Apart from these, are the descriptions of travellers, mainly Muslim and British. Of invaluable aid in the reconstruction of the history of this temple are a set of four palm-leaf manuscripts, discovered, relatively recently, by Alice Boner and others. These manuscripts are supposedly later copies of records kept during the construction of the temple and during the period that the temple was in worship, though some doubt exists as to their authenticity.² These documents include (i) a survey report made in the early 17th century on behalf of Raja Purushottama of the Khurda dynasty and giving detailed descriptions, including measurements, of all the temple parts, along with illustrations, albeit slipshod and inaccurate, (ii) the *Trikala Mahamaya Archana Vidhi*, explaining the religious significance of the smaller Mahagayatri temple and showing a full design of the original aspect of this shrine, (iii) the *Baya Cakada*, a book of accounts that also gives a detailed chronicle of building operations of all the temples, and (iv) the *Padmaksara Deula Karmangi*, a manual of the ritual established in the temple. Prior to the discovery of these documents, the principal textual source for our knowledge of the history of the temple had been the *Madala-Panji*, the chronicle of the Jagannatha Temple at Puri, which includes reports on this temple.³ This remains, still, a major historical document in the study of Konarak, acting as a corroborative source to the manuscripts discovered by Boner, and providing, as well, factual evidence not included in the above. Some copper plate inscriptions, ascribed to the successors of the Ganga king Narasimhadeva (c. 1238-64 C.E.) exist; these refer to the supreme achievement of Narasimha as the builder of the Sun temple.⁴ Later records include a 16th century description by Abul Faz'l, the chronicler of Moghul emperor Akbar (1556-1605 C.E.) in the *Ain-i-Akbari*,⁵ a description dated c. 1626 by the traveller Mahmud, born Amir Wali, librarian of the Jainid ruler Nadhir Muhammad, indicating that the temple was intact at that time. A number of 19th century descriptions by Englishmen exist, principally those by A. Stirling, who went to the site before 1825,⁶ James Ferguson, who visited the temple in 1837 and has left an illustration of the temple as he saw it⁷ and Markham Kittoe, who visited a year later, in 1838.⁸ Finally, the report of Rajendralal Mitra made from his visit in 1868 brings us up to date, with a description of the temple that matches its present state of collapse,⁹ prior to the restoration efforts of the British and later, the Archaeological Survey of India.

The Origin of the Sun Temple

Legends, as embodied in the *Madala-Panjī*, the *Kapila-Samhita* and the *Prachi-Mahatmya* relate the sanctity of Konarak to a mythical king who had been cured from leprosy by Surya (the Sun-god) after being cursed by Vishnu. In her work on the subject, Debala Mitra points out that the legends of these late texts are an obvious adaptation of a much earlier tradition as recorded in the *Bhavishya-Purana* and *Samba-Purana*.¹⁰ According to these Puranas, a similar tale is told of Samba, a son of Krishna, who was proud of his handsome appearance and once ridiculed Narada on his looks. Intending to teach the young man a lesson, Narada contrived to lead him to the bathing-place of his stepmothers and then led Krishna to the spot. Krishna cursed his son with the destruction of his beauty through leprosy. Samba proved his innocence to his father, but the curse could not be withdrawn, so he was advised to propitiate Surya in Mitravana, near the Chandrabhaga. Samba did so, and after twelve years of austerities, was graced by the blessing of the Sun-god, healer of all skin diseases, and thus recovered his health and good looks. In gratitude he built a temple to the god in Mitravana, installing therein an idol fashioned out of Surya's body by Visvakarma, the craftsman of the gods, that he had discovered while bathing in the Chandrabhaga. Mitra points out that the Chandrabhaga as identified by the *Bhavishya-Purana* is the Chenab, the tributary of the Indus that passes through the Punjab. The spot came to be known after Samba as Sambapura, or Mula-Sambapura, which is modern Multan, the Sun Temple of which region finds a glowing description in the account of Huen Tsang.¹¹ Mitra suggests that the identical name Chandrabhaga at Konarak, given at present to a shallow pool of water immediately by the side of the sea and within 3 km of the temple may have been borrowed to further substantiate the identification with the legend from the *Bhavishya-Purana*.¹² Such a borrowing might be possible, with the aim of augmenting the sanctity and fame of the temple by making it the site of Samba's original temple.

There is little doubt, at present, that the temple as we know it was commissioned by the Ganga king Narasimha I who reigned in Orissa from 1238-1264 C.E. The *Madala-Panjī* also states that the project was started when that king was still a crown prince aged eighteen, who, as Commander-in-Chief of his father's army, returned from a victorious three-year expedition to the south with much treasure. The boy's mother suggested that the booty be used to construct a very large temple to the Sun-god at Konarak, the only *kshetra* of the important four which was still without a big shrine. (The other important *kshetras* were Bhubaneshwar, Puri and Jaipur.) From this account, however, it appears that the site was already considered sacred or important for astrological reasons and it is unclear why, unless there existed some smaller more ancient shrine here. It is not clear also why the Sun-god should be chosen as the deity in this place. Of the *kshetras* mentioned, we well know that Bhubaneshwar, Puri and Jaipur are centres of Shaivite, Vaishnavite and Shakta worship, respectively. Could it be that the *kshetra* of Konarak had been designated by Puranic, Tantric or Astrological

authorities as a place of Sun worship? No clear answer is available, the question remaining all the more mysterious since, though Shiva, Vishnu and the Goddess have been and are worshipped all over India, Surya has remained a relatively unimportant god¹³

Mitra refers to an unpublished manuscript of the *Madala-Panjī*,¹⁴ which reports a temple of *Konaraka-deva* built in the *Arka-kshetra* by Purandhara-kesari of the Kesari dynasty, for the service of the deity. He had also promised to enlarge the temple of Purushottama (*Jagannatha*) at Puri, but failed to fulfil this promise. His son, Narasimhadeva, to relieve his father of the sin of failing his promise, erected through his officer (*patra*), Siva Samantaraya Mahapatra, a temple in front of the one built by Purandhara-kesari and installed in it the image from the earlier temple. Mitra admits the questionable reliability of the *Madala-Panjī*, but finds corroboration for Narasimhadeva's commissioning of the temple in copper plates of that king's successors, which mention the supreme achievement of Narasimha as the builder of a *maha-kutira* (great dwelling) of *Ushnarashmi* (Surya) in the corner of Trikona.¹⁵ Mitra further identifies the earlier temple of Surya with the present Mahagayatri temple, arguing that the Surya idol from this temple was moved to the new larger temple. Whatever the motive of the earlier builder of the temple, if the above account be true then at the time of Narasimha's building, the location had already been established as a site of sun worship. This, along with his mother's prompting and/or his father's unfulfilled promise, could have led Narasimha to choose this site for his building, though it is not entirely satisfactory in answering the specific choice of Surya, as against enlarging the temple at Puri as his father had wished, or building a new temple to another one of the more popular gods. Another possible key to this choice is suggested by Mitra, in her indication of the fact of Narasimha's possible physical deformity, as he was traditionally known as *langulia* (one having a tail). Her suggestion is that Narasimha may have had a protuberance of the spinal cord and sought the curative grace of Surya (as in the legend of Samba) by building a monument to him.¹⁶ This suggestion may have some merit, since the association of Surya with healing and wish-fulfilment is quite common. She also suggests that the temple may have been an offering of thanks for the fulfilment of a prayer for a healthy son. This is indicated by the fact that Narasimha named his son Bhanudeva, the first solar name in that royal line.¹⁷ The naming of the son seems certainly significant, but this may have been the result of the choice of building a monument to the Sun. A third possible reason, mentioned by Mitra as a surmise of unspecified scholars, is the erection of a memorial by an ambitious monarch after his successful campaign against the Muslims.¹⁸

Surya was an important god in the Vedic pantheon. But over time, as with most other Vedic gods, he faded into relative, though not entire insignificance, peppering Puranic and Tantric literature with occasional appearances. In this essay, we have already seen Debala Mitra's invocations of the *Bhavishya* and *Samba Puranas*. Boner, Sarma and Das make references to the *Surya Tantra*.¹⁹ Still, in the field of general Hindu worship, Surya seems to lack cosmological significance, in comparison with

Vishnu, Shiva or Shakti the Goddess In the sister field of astrology, however, Surya continues to reign supreme, as the pre-eminent planetary deity, responsible for fame, wealth, conquest and delight. The difference between these two pantheons is subtle, but significant. Whereas the Puranic gods can be and are worshipped for material gains, they far transcend that scope, their cosmological aspect becoming an object for pure devotion, as lord and master of the universe, present in all things, including the devotee himself/herself. Even when asking for a boon, submission is enjoined on the devotee to the superior wisdom of the god, whose refusal, too, is tantamount to Grace. The astrological pantheon, on the other hand, wears the much more comfortable aspect of pure propitiation. The moods and tastes of these gods are fixed and predictable, like their movements across the sky. Pleasing these gods indeed yields predictable results, making the devotee in power and capacity like the god Narasimhadeva was an ambitious king. In the 13th century, with Muslim invaders all around, he was not content with a defensive stance, but aggressively attacked his neighbours to north and south, defeating them and plundering the Muslim stronghold in Bengal. It is very likely that he sought the astrological enhancement that men of more modest means in India, even today, seek through the agency of propitiatory rituals, such as reading of mantras or wearing of precious stones, having acquired vast monetary resources through his conquests, he spent these to create a lasting monument that would proclaim his fame through history while, at the same time, demonstrating to Surya the extent of his devotion and seeking his favours of fortune and fame.

The *Baya Cakada* spells out many of the details of the construction, and much is known as a result about the work processes, the organization of labour and relationship between patrons, administrators, artisans and labour forces, technical details of construction such as the methods used for quarrying, transporting and lifting stones and the process of casting huge iron girders used in the construction. Also revealed are the names of the leading artists and all other categories of workers, with their remuneration details. The most important of these figures is Sadashiva Samantaraya Mahapatra, who held the title *Sutradhara*, director and final authority on every point of the construction.²⁰ We need not enter here into these details of construction, except for noting the fact that Narasimha kept prodding the *Sutradhara* to speed up the work as he wanted it to be consecrated when *Magha-sukla-saptami*, the great festival of the Sun-god would fall on a Sunday, in the year 1258 C E. The work was completed in proper time, but it is possible that this enforced haste may have impaired the cohesion and strength of the upper parts of the temple.²¹

(To be concluded)

DEBASHISH BANERJI

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PROBLEMS OF RELATIONSHIPS

A PERSONAL NOTE

WHEN I used to read letters to the Mother there were many messages of distress, specially from women devotees (though also many from men) on the difficulty and pain in their failed human relationships. In many, many cases it was the central difficulty around which all else revolved, the knot that couldn't be untied and which unsundered caused depression and desperation and blocked spiritual progress.

The Mother's advice was always that one should surrender everything to the Divine, with the promise that if it were done in all sincerity the problem would resolve itself. This was of course not a promise that the loved one would return the love, though that might be, but that the pain would be resolved, transformed.

There were so many heart-rending situations, as I have said, and I myself still receive so many letters from abused or betrayed women that when I read the following written by a friend of mine I seized upon it and asked her if it could be published.

It needs no further comment.

MAGGI

A LETTER

Thank you for your letter. I feel you such a kindred spirit, and am always happy to hear from you.

Yes, this has been a strange time for me—these last few years have been a kind of “vanishing zone” where nothing seems to materialize in my life, at least for very long—in terms of relationship, work, where I should be, what I should be doing, my creative purpose—and it has been very frustrating at times and discouraging. But I also realize what is being asked of me at a very deep level—that I am not being allowed to lean on anything “out there” to ease the pain of apparent separation—that I am being pushed to fully explode the illusion of separation itself, and the pain is a pointer to where that illusion is still hanging in, still dense. Some of us just get the full Shiva treatment I guess—actually they call it Mahakali—where nothing is spared, no hiding-place for the slightest attachment, until we surrender it all to the All—a mercilessly sharp knife en route, but ultimately maybe the most magnanimous!

For whatever reasons these problems with relationships in particular are coming up for you and me, it is becoming more and more obvious what the message is behind them—that I can't look to a “person” to take away my personal pain, that the sense of person-hood itself must be offered back to the Divine, directly, along with the pain. That all our conditions must be surrendered back to the Unconditioned for our lives to be truly fulfilled, in whatever form it chooses.

I do a little meditation, like this: First I completely allow, even invite the energy of the pain, anger, frustration or whatever,—the full energy of the “me-ness”, the parti-

cular conditions I am experiencing as my “self” at that moment I even let it exaggerate itself if it wants to, without any judgment or restriction. Then I become aware of what is aware of that energy nexus, the consciousness in which it is displaying. Then I move back and forth between the two—the unconditioned Consciousness, and the particular conditions that I’ve been calling “me” within it, until it is unclear which “I” I am—at which point the distinction between the two breaks down, and the conditioned “me” merges with the Unconditioned.

It is a way of returning the pain, the sense of separation, to its divine source, Consciousness, to melt it down and transform it into its own power. Since anyway we’re being pushed to the limit, the only way is to move through—to transform our “personal powerlessness” back into the Universal Power.

It’s got to work, it’s got to triumph, because the Universal Power is so much stronger than our piddly powerless “person-hoods!” So I guess we can basically lie back and relax, and let our weakness be our strength, so to speak.

I’m sure it will become our strength, as the most severe pruning—which always looks desolate at the time—gives rise to the most beautiful blossoms. And Mahakali is surely a master gardener!

This is the ultimate task, the Divine’s and the Divine’s through us. It is not an apology or excuse for any of the abuses or injustices that a male-dominated society perpetrates on women, and which, at the relative level, is often the cause of our pain. Much the opposite. That has to, and will change. But women can only rediscover their power to effect that change by returning to the divine power itself. Because as we return our energy to the divine power, that power itself will be recharged with the energy of the feminine. And it will suffuse the whole of creation, helping us move beyond the energies of violence, domination and individualistic competition into a new evolutionary phase, based on the interconnectedness and unity of all within the Divine, as the Divine itself.

Women have little use struggling within the power structures of men, either as their victims or as their competitors. Neither is our true nature. And that is to return to the power behind all creation, and from there begin to heal the wounds of divisiveness, born of the original illusion of division.

SILLOO-BEN

LOOKING at her eyes with those compassionate eyes of Hers and holding her hands in both Hers, the Mother said: “Silloo, I am grateful to you ” That was in 1971 when the Mother wanted Silloo-ben to accompany Akka, Vasudha-ben, to Bombay for her operation Before leaving, Silloo-ben went to Her and those were the precious words that the Mother spoke. What a *punyatma* she must have been that she could be such an apt instrument of the Divine Mother Her purified soul was uplifted into a glorified one Those words were the ultimate recognition of her detached, selfless and disinterested service to the Mother and to so many Ashramites till her last day She left us so very suddenly Even years after this event, whenever she spoke about it, her eyes would fill with tears as she remembered what she had spoken to the Mother, “Mother, I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to serve you ” As “the sword has a joy in the battlefield, the arrow has a mirth in its hiss and its leaping”, those were the tears of joy and gratitude of an instrument being used by the Divine

This was her life all through. To serve the Mother by serving the ill and the sick Ashramites To cook something for the disabled ones, to visit them and be with them in their testing times Straightforward, calm, composed, soft-spoken and quietly well-dressed, she would enquire about anybody she met on the road, stop for a few words, a smile, a look of concern if something was not all right with the person That’s how she kept in touch with one and all How could we ever forget how she and her sister Sutapa served Pavitra-da during his illness, quietly and dutifully till his last day, doing all along their regular work, because the Mother wanted them to do so?

In 1955, she came with her family to settle down in the Ashram. The Mother gave her part-time work Silloo-ben complained She would like to work full-time for the Mother. And our Mother, being a Mother to all her children, said: “But you have to look after the family. That is also a part of my work ”

And she did her yoga of work sincerely, silently and faithfully to the last day. That fateful day, she completed her daily routine and retired for the night. Sometime later she had chest pain and was taken to the Nursing Home. The next morning on the 19th of March, just fourteen days after she had completed her 80th birthday, silently—fully conscious, in full control of all her faculties—with not even a cry of pain—smoothly she crossed over to the other world.

She was a Parsee and embodied in her physical appearance as well as in her work the beauty, the delicate artistry and softness of the Persian culture Even at her advanced age she embroidered saris for the February and August Darshans. The pett point was her domain and she would blend the colours so finely that one often mistook it for painting.

We all were acquainted with her helpful nature and some of us were grateful for her service to us We knew her as a dedicated Karma Yogi, but who could have guessed the inner sadhana that she had done? Only the Mother knew After leaving her body the calm, the peace, the serenity which she possessed spread out and pervaded the

atmosphere. Her face glowed. She looked just like the young bride of her marriage picture. Where was the suffering—where was the decay? She slept—peaceful and charming—with that habitual mastery over herself. Death could be so beautiful!

The Persian Rose is no more But one can still feel her grace and charm in the air.

A GRATEFUL ONE

K. D. SETHNA: THE PROSE WRITER

(Continued from the issue of September 1997)

On Blake

Blake's Tyger: A Christological Interpretation is a landmark in Blake criticism. There is a tradition behind Sethna's thesis, but the detailed clarification and revelatory hints are fresh additions to this line of criticism. The linking with Sri Aurobindo ('Gleaming eyes and mighty chest and soft soundless paws of grandeur and murder') is very apt and revealing. Yeats and Ellis, editors of the first collection of Blake's complete works (*The Works of William Blake*), foreshadow Sethna's argument.

The "Tiger" is, of course, the tiger of wrath, wiser in his own way than the horse of instruction, but always, like the roaring of lions and the destructive sword, terrible also to be a portion of eternity too great for the eye of man.

S. Foster Damon, in his monumental work *William Blake His Philosophy and Symbols*, finds the question of the poem to be 'how to reconcile the forgiveness of Sins (The Lamb) with the punishment of Sins (The Tyger)'. The Wrath of the Tyger had to be of divine origin. The purpose of Wrath is to consume Error, to annihilate those stubborn beliefs which cannot be removed by the tame 'horses of instruction'. Yet Damon also thinks that "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" is not an 'exclamation of wonder, but a very real question, whose answer Blake was not sure of'.

But then Sethna, who calls it "the question of questions" (p. 28), is quite sure about Blake's conviction. Another tradition behind Sethna's thesis is Joseph H. Wicksteed, author of the most detailed commentary on the *Songs*. He believes that the poem's questions do seem to have a definite answer, "the whole of the thesis of *The Tyger*," he writes, "is that he is a spiritual expression of the creator himself."

Kathleen Raine, whom Sethna contradicts on this vital issue, pursues a different method. According to Raine, the creator of *The Tyger* is such a devil maker. She suggests sources in Gnostic and Hermetic mysticism as proof that "the Lamb was made by the son of God, the second person. The Tyger was made by the demi-urge, the third person of the (Gnostic and Cabalistic) Trinity. Lamb and Tyger inhabit different worlds and are the works of different creators." To Raine the Tyger seems "a symbol of competitive, paedacious falsehood" (*Who Made The Tyger?, Encounter*, 11, 1954). In the chapter entitled *The Internal Pattern of the Poem*, Sethna draws our attention to the antithetic phrase "burning bright". This is not only Sethna's perceptive memory of Geoffrey Keynes, but also an effort to indicate Blake's cryptic novelty. In the Old Testament texts, fire burns. Sethna draws our notice to the "celestial smithy", a remarkable phrase from the pen of a mystic poet. It is "a special creation out of a far

fire'' The climax of Sethna's exposition comes in the form of apophthegms. 'Forests cannot be this Tyger's ultimate home'' Then he says, 'Blake's Tyger comes always, and not only on occasion, in a form of the most beauty-lustrous dreadfulness. If the animal symbolises the devil, we must take the poet to mean that Evil is ever a stupendous beauty'' Sethna traces the tradition of the poem in the Old Testament texts in the chapter entitled *The Internal Pattern and Christian Tradition* The most significant phrase is 'The Wrath of the Lamb', which he picks up from *The Revelation*, (Ch VI, 12-17) He refers to other relevant passages from *The Revelation* and the argument falsifies the rash remark by T S Eliot that Blake never works on 'a conceptual framework of tradition' (*Blake. Selected Essays*). Blake uses the 'star'-image with an eye on The Book of Job and the New Testament texts

Sethna's attempt to relate Blake with Milton is one of the most fresh portions of the book. Christ, the Tyger, fought with the rebellious angels. Blake's mentality is less severely Puritan, more humanely sensitive, than Milton's. Apart from Milton, comparative aspects are found in various features of the general Christian tradition to elucidate the relationship the poem suggests between God the Father and Christ the Son, as well as the poem's picture of the winged maker of the Tyger, ascending to 'seize the fire'' with which to create his dreadful instrument. Sethna has deeply studied the other texts by Blake and he shows his masterly ability to relate them. He exhibits this quality in his study of the Shakespeare sonnets also. Once again we see here the analytic mind working with the power of revelation The book seems to be a final answer to the identity query Christ has two fiery eyes hidden in the Lamb

(To be continued)

GOUTAM GHOSAL

THE EMERGENCE OF BIG SCIENCE

(Continued from the issue of September 1997)

6. The Participation of the Industry

THE Manhattan Project was initiated to exploit the process of nuclear fission for military purposes. It was well realised that the hitherto unknown energy stored within the atom would play a decisive role in turning the tide of the Second World War. By now Hitler had already occupied most of Europe and, therefore, to execute the Project speed was of great priority. It was, besides speed, necessary to see that the Enemy did not come to know anything about it. In fact, maximum economisation of time dictated the guidelines of the Project's policies.

In September 1942 General L. R. Groves was appointed as the chief of the Project, with unprecedented powers bestowed upon him. He in turn gave complete freedom to the head of each department and the leader of each research group, guaranteeing the non-interference of any supervisory control in their researches. Financial support and procurement of raw materials were made available without bureaucratic hindrances. The military was interested in the final result in the shortest possible time, and therefore it did not intervene in any way in the activities of the working groups. It only required that reports on research be submitted at regular intervals by each department to assess the progress and feasibility of each research programme.

However, and understandably, the authorities of the Project introduced from time to time a number of changes even in the very basic approach in handling research problems. These later proved to be of a far-reaching consequence in scientific and industrial organisations.

A lot of attention was given to achieving positive experimental results. There was also some kind of insistence on this. To understand what is meant by this, let us make a comparative study of the environments in which academic scientists and those in the Project worked.

Scientists involved in front-line academic research activities are faced with the unknown, not being sure of what to expect. They grope in darkness and carry out their experiments by manipulating parameters such as temperature, pressure, electric and magnetic fields and study the effects. In doing these investigative researches they are by no means pressed for time. They can afford to fail a number of times, in fact, every error committed could be a help to improve upon the results.

In contrast to this, scientists involved in the Project had a clear goal set in front of them; there was also always the ticking hand of the clock. In many research programmes, there were more than one group of scientists occupied in trying to solve the same problem by different methods. Their research work often became a prestige issue, for, no one wanted to lose the race to domestic rivals in attaining the target first. Naturally, with this internal competition, the attention of every group was to get

everything with the minimum number of failures.

Let us consider an example to understand the situation better

The central problem prior to the designing of the bomb was. "How to develop efficient methods which would enable the bomb-planners to get sufficient quantities of the fissile materials?" So the target was set the production of bomb-grade uranium and plutonium

By May 1942 research on five different methods was considered for obtaining the needed grade of these elements on a production scale. The electromagnetic centrifuge and gaseous diffusion methods involved the separation of U^{235} . The other two methods—a graphite reactor and a heavy water reactor—involved the production of plutonium.

Unfortunately, none of these methods offered the certitude of success, nor was there any time for guessing wrong and trying alternatives. Since the authorities were unable to select one method over the other, they made one of the boldest decisions of the War. They agreed that all the five methods should be tried simultaneously. Such a programme would entail the building of five large plants such as had never been thought of earlier, whose equipment and technological infrastructure would have to be developed from scratch. New industries would also have to be prompted and set up on a colossal scientific and technological scale, an adventure of incalculable consequences.

At the end of the five-project race, two methods were finally decided upon for the production of the required fissile material—the gaseous diffusion process for uranium production and the graphite reactor for plutonium. The methods of centrifuge and the heavy water reactor were discarded at the initial stages of their development. The electromagnetic process was also ruled out as it proved to be disproportionately expensive.

Though the technology of production of uranium and plutonium overshadowed the technology of the other three processes, the entire effort was not futile. The resulting losses, owing to unproductive investments, later on got compensated in several respects. The decision to undertake research on five fronts simultaneously provided a wider set of options from which the most efficient process in terms of time, money and results could be selected. Competitive environment—a new concept in industrial research management—also guaranteed the maximum commitment of every contender and ensured the acquisition of the best. In other words, this marked the beginning of industries taking to Nature's age-old process of selection—the Survival of the Fittest. We are now well aware that institutions such as giant corporate groups thrive on this single mode of operation.

Once the problem of getting the fissile materials was solved, the authorities were faced with yet another hurdle. This time it was the difference of opinion between the scientific and military personnel regarding the production of the bomb. This difference turned out to be a major problem which in fact ultimately provided a further thrust to the Project. It heralded a new relationship between scientific research and industrial technology. Let us see how it came about.

Research scientists working on the bomb-grade uranium and plutonium were quite aware of the awesome destructive power of the new generation weapons. They were naturally thinking in terms of just one or two bombs. They argued that the destructive capabilities of these weapons would more than suffice to finish the job. The psychological effect on the enemy would lead to their immediate surrendering and conceding the victory.

This was, however, not the opinion shared by the military. It stuck to one of its fundamental principles that the ability to continue to deliver a weapon determines its usefulness.

This meant involvement of industry to carry out the production on a bigger scale. Making samples in the laboratory is one thing and getting large quantities is another. These circumstances eventually led to gradual participation of industries in the Manhattan Project.

Unlike chemists, who already had been absorbed in oil and chemical industries, the great majority of physicists had never had any experience with industrial processes. They had never worked with engineers; the problems of industrial design and construction were entirely foreign to them. This opened out another dimension for doing physics.

Another reason why the industries were pulled into the Project was to exploit their already existing expertise in various fields of research and manufacturing. The idea behind this move was to save precious months and fresh funds on research. An example will best illustrate the point.

Work on the graphite reactor had suddenly come to a halt as experiments proved that the air contained in graphite blocks had a bad effect on the nuclear reaction. So the designers and builders of the graphite pile decided to assemble the whole structure inside a sealed bag or balloon; the balloon with the reactor inside it could be evacuated when the reactor was ready to operate.

Accordingly the scientists approached with their specifications the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Akron, Ohio. The Company had extensive experience in manufacturing balloons for the armed forces. Within a few weeks, a square balloon was delivered, neatly folded, at Stag Field where the research on the graphite pile was under way.

This co-operation was significant from the point of view of both the organisations. Without it the scientists working on the pile would have had to perhaps shift their attention to another set of problems in chemical technology. This would have meant losing precious months. As far as the Goodyear Company was concerned this was a golden opportunity for them to assert their superiority in rubber technology, thus gaining advantage over other domestic companies in the same business.

The moral is the difference made by collaboration of several groups of professionals in executing a project. What started as a tactical decision to save energy, money and ensure a time-bound completion of the Project, has now grown into another kind of working culture. Scientists constantly require for their experiments technical assis-

tance, know-how, and manufactured goods from various industries. The industry benefits as business ties with scientific institutions and projects reaffirm its supremacy in the field of research and development.

We mention here *en passant* the importance defence work has to society. Recently the Indian Chief of Army Staff addressed the students of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education on general matters pertaining to the Organisation. In the Question-Answer session he was asked how the Army influences our daily life. As an answer to this question, perhaps the Manhattan Project provides the best example.

(To be continued)

ANIRBAN DEB

OUR TEA PARTY

DAHYABHAI Tatyasaheb and I used to take Masala Tea at breakfast on cold and rainy days in Ambabhikshu's Garden. I and Dahyabhai were staying in the Garden as we worked there. Sometimes Shital, Chandradip-ji, Jivan-da and Gajaraj-ji used to join us. Tatyasaheb was an expert at making Bread-Upama. So our breakfast was very simple: only Masala Tea and Bread-Upama.

One day when we were taking tea Biren-da suddenly came to me to talk about a tour. I said to him, "Biren-da, please have tea with us first. Then we shall talk about the tour." At once he said, "I do not take tea, please do not insist upon it." I replied, "Biren-da, this is not mere tea. This is a tonic for the cold and rainy season. Take a little and see how you like it." He asked me, "What do you put in the tea and how do you make the decoction?" I explained to him the whole process. "In the water we put Pudina leaves, Tulsi leaves, lemon tea leaves which people call 'China leaves'. We grind ginger and mix it with water. Moreover, if we have Tea Masala from Gujarat we add that too and then we boil the water for some time. Then we put tea leaves. After that we add milk and filter the mixture. Sugar is added according to one's taste. This is our tea or tonic. You can call it whatever you like!" After hearing all this he agreed to have a cup. While taking tea we finished discussing our tour also. So he left at once.

Next day in the morning when we were taking tea, Biren-da appeared before us again and said, "Miracle, Miracle! Give me your tea. It has done a miracle for me." We were all surprised to hear this as he had not been prepared to take tea the previous day.

So I asked Biren-da, "Let us know what miracle our tea has done for you." While taking tea with us he told us the whole story. He had a chronic nerve pain near the ear for a long time and the nerve gave him trouble again and again. He was not able to bear the pain. The Mother used to give him some money monthly and occasionally suggested him to take medicine.

Sometimes he used to become alright but after a while he again had nerve pain. On the first day when he took tea with us he had pain but after the Masala Tea it had stopped, so he came again the next day to have tea and also to tell us of the miracle which the tea had worked in him.

Because of this he was so pleased with me that he told me to join in a Tea Party in the morning once a week at his place in memory of this wonderful, miraculous Masala Tea, which he had never before tasted anywhere.

This is how our Tea Party came to be held every Friday. On that day I used to bring Masala Tea in a big flask to Biren-da's place in the morning. Pratima-di used to make Luchi and Alu Dam and Payas for all of us. We were four in all, Biren-da, Pratima-di, Mani and myself. We used this time to plan tours also. As I was fond of Luchi, Pratima-di was feeding me fully with the utmost care and love which I cannot forget in my whole life. This party continued for many years but I do not remember when we all agreed to stop it. Anyway one thing is certain that none of us can forget

this Friday morning Tea Party

One more thing I must add Biren-da was very fond of dogs I had a dog named Lassie who had received the Mother's Blessings Lassie's story has already been published in *Mother India*, in 1986, with her photo The story was very much appreciated by many people in the Ashram Lassie also used to come with me to join our Tea Party As soon as Biren-da would see her he would become extremely happy and start playing with her. He would start giving Lassie Luchis one by one, instead of taking them himself We all, including Pratima-di, would say, "Biren-da, start eating yourself, Pratima-di gives Lassie a separate dish" But he would not listen to anyone He was so happy to feed Lassie till she stopped eating and went away We all used to see this entertainment and enjoy it every Friday at Tea Time

As I have written about the Masala Tea I add here one more story of it

For every December 2nd Programme we do duty as volunteers in the Sportsground on the Dress Rehearsal Day We have to go at about 2 00 p m , as the programme starts early. Raju, who is a close friend, wanted tea at the Sportsground So, in the volunteers meeting, I asked Dada whether tea could be arranged We are more than 30 volunteers. There were some problems with making tea in the Corner House and giving it to volunteers who are on duty at different places This was not a practicable idea, so we were told to make our own arrangement.

I told Raju that I would bring tea in a flask So I prepared my Masala Tea and took it to the Sportsground It was a cloudy day with a little rain After a while, as the programme proceeded, Raju and I went for tea I invited Wilfy also He had never taken Masala Tea, he liked it very much and asked me, "Have you got some extra tea? I would like to call Udar and Nirod They will like this tea." He told me to bring Samosas also for us While offering tea Wilfy told them, "Mahendra has prepared special tea It is very nice." After appreciating my tea they asked me how I had prepared it. I explained to them the process and then they went away, giving me smiles and thanks.

Gradually my tea became very famous, so instead of one flask I had to make more. At present I take five big flasks on Dress Rehearsal Days and also on the 2nd of December Many volunteers enjoy my tea very much. As Raju likes it extremely I have to keep two cups for him. I have decided to continue it as long as it is possible for me Some have suggested I share the expenses but my heart does not agree with that. Nearly 30 volunteers take the tea, feel very happy and remember me and moreover appreciate the special Masala Tea which they hardly take anywhere else So what more do I want? This is enough for me and the whole credit goes to my dear friend Raju because of whom the Masala Tea became very famous Thanks to all who have taken this tea

MAHENDRAKUMAR

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

The Unseen River by Dr T. M. Raghuram. Published by Bodhi Books, Publishers and Distributors, Court Road, Calicut-673 001, Kerala, 1996 58 pages. Rs. 30, £ 2.95.

THE poems of T M. Raghuram continue to reverberate long after the initial reading and *The Unseen River* is no exception to this. After a pregnant silence of seven years the poet has brought out a slim volume of 32 poems whose principal virtues are accessibility, variety and readability Unlike poets who mask their mediocrity under the garb of obscurity, Raghuram writes with refreshing clarity. Even a cursory glance at the titles of the poems tells the reader how comprehensive and varied are the interests of the poet The moonlit scene of a remote countryside affects him as deeply as the brutal assassination of a national leader

The language of Raghuram's poetry is fairly straightforward. Like a clear stream it flows and it is with surprise and wonder we behold the sparkling gems of wit. The unexpected turn of phrase is there for the discerning reader, which is one among the many delights offered by Raghuram. the husband who could visit his wife only once a year is an "annual husband"

In *Prayer for Troubled Times*, with which this collection begins, the poet wishes that misfortunes should befall him when he has the strength to bear them, leaving him, in his old age,

. .to revel
in the music of the birds
and the great masters.

The Seminar of Silence brings out the futility of seminars and symposia so fashionable among the educated. This message is, however, implicit because the poem, by eulogizing silence, aptly brings out the torpor triggered by the torrent of words. The poet is critical of the young Keralite who emigrates to the Gulf leaving his young wife for the sake of Dinars, "draining his life to fill the coffers" (*The New Grass Widow*). In his own gentle, quiet way, the poet orchestrates the loneliness of the woman "thrice wedded" at the ripe old age of eighteen. But Raghuram can be biting critical if need be. He doesn't even spare God who resides in Heaven (or some other unreachable place) (*Prayer from a God-forsaken World*). His asides in parentheses are truly devastating. In *The View from the Top*, his roving eye takes in all the details of a cityscape, perched atop a "high hotel" Standing before this lap of luxury is a group of red-clad activists whose protests have become meaningless and routine. *Queues* begins as a description of all queues, but the poet perceives that we always stand in a queue, "in Destiny's unseen line", universalizing a situation that is typically Indian

Many a poem of Raghuram has as its subject matter a contemporary event like Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, or the Gulf War No poet obeys any restriction on choice

of themes, but it must be said to the credit of Raghuram that the topicality of his poems does not detract from their poetic merit. In fact, they transmit the deeply felt anguish of the poet over the contemporary situation which is portrayed as morally corrupt (*Where were we?*) or senselessly brutal (*Sriperumbudur, 21st May 1991*). It is not only public events which move the poet into poetry; he can be as deeply affected by a private sorrow, as shown by the title poem *The Unseen River* which recounts the inevitable death awaiting an ailing friend. Here is a poet who effortlessly moves from the realm of public events to the privacy of personal life, always upholding the virtues of all good poetry.

This slim volume which begins with a *Prayer for Troubled Times* ends with a search for Krishna in *Where are you, Krishna?* And there is certainly design in it, in spite of the poet's claim to the contrary.

The river seems to have cast an irresistible spell on the poet. It is "a river of life" (*The Childless Couple*) as well as a "bottomless black River" separating the living from the dead (*The Unseen River*). The corruption of modern times could pollute even the fabled Yamuna, which once resonated to the cries of Gopis and "The Divine Cowherd". The river now bears mute testimony to child-rape and murder by a drug-crazed youth.

If *Portrait of a Poet* were taken as a poetic manifesto, a declaration of the credo governing the writer's poetry, then it is apparent that the poet is much the same as the painter, using "language-brushes" to create life-breathing figures, with the page as his canvas. But a closer reading reveals that Raghuram has placed the poet on a higher level; the poet is also a "seer" (*Antenna Eyes*), a ceaseless explorer whose vision is not clouded by the film of familiarity. The poet is a "Verbal alchemist", maker of "sculptures of verse". Raghuram sets up quite a high standard for any aspiring poet to live up to. He himself has given a virtuoso performance in *The Unseen River*, consistently embodying all that is good in poetry and that which makes poetry readable even today.

M NAZIR ALI