

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

DECEMBER 1997

PRICE: Rs. 10 00

## Revised Subscriptions

from January 1996, owing to considerable rise in costs, especially of paper

### INLAND

Annual Rs 100 00

Life Membership Rs 1400 00

Price per Single Copy Rs 10 00

### OVERSEAS

#### Sea Mail

Annual \$18 00 or £12 00

Life Membership \$252 00 or £168 00

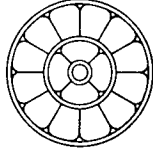
#### Air Mail

Annual \$36 00 for American & Pacific countries

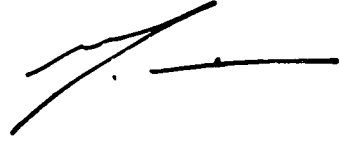
\$26 00 for all other countries

Life Membership \$504 00 for American & Pacific countries

\$364 00 for all other countries



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



All Rights Reserved No matter appearing in this journal or part thereof may be reproduced or translated without written permission from the publishers except for short extracts as quotations

All correspondence to be addressed to

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India

Editor's Phone 34782

Publishers Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

Editor K D SETHNA

Associate Editor R Y Deshpande

Published by HARIKANI C PATEL

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM TRUST

PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT PONDICHERRY 605 002

Printed by AMIYO RANJAN GANGULY

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press Pondicherry 605 002

PRINTED IN INDIA

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers under No R N 8667/63

# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. L

No. 12

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

### CONTENTS

<i>Sri Aurobindo</i>		
THE DESTINED MEETING-PLACE (Poem)		897
<i>Sri Aurobindo</i>		
THE AID OF MANTRA IN RAJAYOGA		899
<i>Dyuman</i>		
CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER		902
<i>Ruth</i>		
AT HER FEET (Poem)		905
<i>Amal Kiran (K D Sethna)</i>		
THE DEVELOPMENT OF SRI AUROBINDO'S SPIRITUAL SYSTEM AND THE MOTHER'S CONTRIBUTION TO IT		906
<i>Kishor Gandhi</i>		
“INSPIRATIONS FOR PROGRESS”		910
<i>Chinu Gandhi</i>		
A SOUL-TOUCHED TRANQUILLITY (Poem)		914
<i>Mangesh Nadkarni</i>		
A THEMATIC INTRODUCTION TO SAVITRI		915
<i>Mirek</i>		
I WROTE YOU A LOVE LETTER (Poem)		927
<i>R Y Deshpande</i>		
THE WAGER OF AMBROSIA		928
<i>Kailas Jhaveri</i>		
THE SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION		933
<i>Elizabeth Stiller</i>		
IF I SEE GOD (Poem)		938
<i>Harindranath Chattopadhyaya</i>		
WHO SAYS THAT YOU ARE FAR? (Poem)		939

<i>Pronab Kumar Majumdar</i>	
UNFURLINGS (Poem)	940
<i>Romen</i>	
15TH AUGUST 1961 (Poem)	941
<i>Mary (Angel) Finn</i>	
THE ONE IN ALL (Poem)	941
<i>Suryakanti Mohanty</i>	
ON A BIRTHDAY (Poem)	942
<i>Ashok Kumar Ray</i>	
DESCARTES	943
<i>Goutam Ghosal</i>	
K D SETHNA THE PROSE WRITER	949
<i>M S Srinivasan</i>	
TOWARDS AN INDIAN APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT— MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN GROWTH IN ORGANISATIONS	952
<i>Anurban Deb</i>	
THE EMERGENCE OF BIG SCIENCE	958
<i>Nilima Das</i>	
SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA	962
<i>Samar Basu</i>	
POLITICAL VEDANTISM—ITS CONCEPT AND PRACTICE	965
<i>G P Gupta</i>	
THE PARADOXES IN THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN PROGRESSION (Compilation)	969
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE	
<i>Shyam Sundar Jhunjhunwala</i>	
Review of SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM ITS ROLE RESPONSIBILITY AND FUTURE DESTINY by JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJEE	973
<i>Usha and Dhananjay Desai</i>	
Review of BHAGAVAD GITA by SHYAM SUNDAR JHUNJHUNWALA	974

#### STUDENTS' SECTION

<i>Mohor</i>	
THE MASTER (A Story)	978

## THE DESTINED MEETING-PLACE

BUT now the destined spot and hour were close,  
Unknowing she had neared her nameless goal .  
To a space she came of soft and delicate air  
That seemed a sanctuary of youth and joy,  
A highland world of free and green delight  
A crowd of mountainous heads assailed the sky  
Pushing towards rival shoulders nearer heaven,  
The armoured leaders of an iron line,  
Earth prostrate lay beneath their feet of stone  
Below there crouched a dream of emerald woods  
And gleaming borders solitary as sleep  
Pale waters ran like glimmering threads of pearl  
A sigh was straying among happy leaves,  
Cool-perfumed with slow pleasure-burdened feet  
Faint stumbling breezes faltered among flowers  
The white crane stood, a vivid motionless streak,  
Peacock and parrot jewelled soil and tree,  
The dove's soft moan enriched the enamoured air  
And fire-winged wild-drakes swam in silvery pools  
Earth couched alone with her great lover Heaven,  
Uncovered to her consort's purple eye.  
In her luxurious ecstasy of joy  
She squandered the love-music of her notes,  
Wasted the passionate pattern of her blooms  
And festival riot of her scents and hues  
A cry and leap and hurry were around,  
The stealthy footfalls of her chasing things,  
The shaggy emerald of her centaur mane,  
The gold and sapphire of her warmth and blaze  
Magician of her rapt felicities,  
Blithe, sensuous-hearted, careless and divine,  
Life ran or hid in her delightful rooms,  
Behind all brooded Nature's grandiose calm  
Primeval peace was there and in its bosom  
Held undisturbed the strife of bird and beast  
Man, the deep-browed artificer, had not come  
To lay his hand on happy unconscious things,  
Thought was not there nor the measurer, strong-eyed toil,  
Life had not learned its discord with its aim  
The mighty Mother lay outstretched at ease

All was in line with her first satisfied plan,  
 Moved by a universal will of joy  
 The trees bloomed in their green felicity  
 And the wild children brooded not on pain  
 At the end reclined a stern and giant tract  
 Of tangled depths and solemn questioning hills  
 And peaks like a bare austerity of the soul,  
 Armoured, remote and desolately grand  
 Like the thought-screened infinities that lie  
 Behind the rapt smile of the Almighty's dance  
 A matted forest-head invaded heaven  
 As if a blue-throated ascetic peered  
 From the stone fastness of his mountain cell  
 Regarding the brief gladness of the days,  
 His vast extended spirit couched behind  
 A mighty murmur of immense retreat  
 Besieged the ear, a sad and limitless call  
 As of a soul retiring from the world  
 This was the scene which the ambiguous Mother  
 Had chosen for her brief felicitous hour,  
 Here in this solitude far from the world  
 Her part she began in the world's joy and strife  
 Here were disclosed to her the mystic courts,  
 The lurking doors of beauty and surprise,  
 The wings that murmur in the golden house,  
 The temple of sweetness and the fiery aisle  
 A stranger on the sorrowful roads of Time,  
 Immortal under the yoke of death and fate,  
 A sacrificant of the bliss and pain of the spheres,  
 Love in the wilderness met Savitri

All she remembered on this day of Fate.  
 Earth in this beautiful refuge free from cares  
 Murmured to the soul a song of strength and peace  
 Here first she met on the uncertain earth  
 The one for whom her heart had come so far

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL, Vol 29, pp 389-393)

## THE AID OF MANTRA IN RAJAYOGA

As the body and the Prana are the key of all the closed doors of the Yoga for the Hathayogin, so is the mind the key in Rajayoga. But since in both the dependence of the mind on the body and the Prana is admitted, in the Hathayoga totally, in the established system of Rajayoga partially, therefore in both systems the practice of Asana and Pranayama is included, but in the one they occupy the whole field, in the other each is limited only to one simple process and in their unison they are intended to serve only a limited and intermediate office.

The psycho-physical science of Yoga takes account of the psychical or mental body behind of which the physical is a sort of reproduction in gross form, and is able to discover thereby secrets of the physical body which do not appear to a purely physical enquiry. This mental or psychical body, which the soul keeps even after death, has also a subtle pranic force in it corresponding to its own subtle nature and substance and this force is directed through a system of numerous channels, called *nāḍī* which are gathered up into six (or really seven) centres called technically lotuses or circles, *cakra*, and which rise in an ascending scale to the summit where there is the thousand-petalled lotus from which all the mental and vital energy flows.

This arrangement of the psychic body is reproduced in the physical with the spinal column as a rod and the ganglionic centres as the Chakras which rise up from the bottom of the column, where the lowest is attached, to the brain and find their summit in the *brahmarandhra* at the top of the skull. These Chakras or lotuses, however, are in physical man closed or only partly open. The whole energy of the soul is not at play in the physical body and life, the secret powers of mind are not awake in it, the bodily and nervous energies predominate. But all the while the supreme energy is there, asleep, it is said to be coiled up and slumbering like a snake,—therefore it is called the *kundalinī śakti*,—in the lowest of the Chakras, in the *mūlādhāra*. When by Pranayama the division between the upper and lower Prana currents in the body is dissolved, this Kundalinī is struck and awakened, it uncoils itself and begins to rise upward like a fiery serpent breaking open each lotus as it ascends until the Shakti meets the Purusha in the *brahmarandhra* in a deep Samadhī of union.

Put less symbolically, in more philosophical though perhaps less profound language, this means that the real energy of our being is lying asleep and inconscient in the depths of our vital system, and is awakened by the practice of Pranayama. By the thorough and unremitting practice of Pranayama the Hathayogin attains in his own way the psychic and spiritual results which are pursued through more directly psychical and spiritual methods in other Yogas. The one mental aid which he conjoins with it, is the use of the Mantra, sacred syllable, name or mystic formula which is of so much importance in the Indian systems of Yoga and common to them all. This secret of the power of the Mantra, the six Chakras and the Kundalinī Shakti is one of the central truths of all that complex psycho-physical science and practice of which the Tantric philosophy claims to give us a rationale and the most complete compendium of methods.

Rajayoga also uses the Pranayama and for the same principal psychic purposes as the Hathayoga, but being in its whole principle a psychical system, it employs it only as one stage in the series of its practices and to a very limited extent, for three or four large utilities

Asana is used by the Rajayoga only in its easiest and most natural position, that naturally taken by the body when seated and gathered together, but with the back and head strictly erect and in a straight line, so that there may be no deflection of the spinal cord. The object of the latter rule is obviously connected with the theory of the six Chakras and the circulation of the vital energy between the *mūlādhāra* and the *brahmarandhra*. The Rajayogic Pranayama purifies and clears the nervous system, it enables us to circulate the vital energy equally through the body and direct it also where we will according to need, and thus maintain a perfect health and soundness of the body and the vital being, it gives us control of all the five habitual operations of the vital energy in the system and at the same time breaks down the habitual divisions by which only the ordinary mechanical processes of the vitality are possible to the normal life. It opens entirely the six centres of the psycho-physical system and brings into the waking consciousness the power of the awakened Shakti and the light of the unveiled Purusha on each of the ascending planes. Coupled with the use of the Mantra it brings the divine energy into the body and prepares for and facilitates that concentration in Samadhi which is the crown of the Rajayogic method.

Rajayogic concentration is divided into four stages, it commences with the drawing both of the mind and senses from outward things, proceeds to the holding of the one object of concentration to the exclusion of all other ideas and mental activities, then to the prolonged absorption of the mind in this object, finally, to the complete ingoing of the consciousness by which it is lost to all outward mental activity in the oneness of Samadhi. The real object of this mental discipline is to draw away the mind from the outward and the mental world into union with the divine Being. Therefore in the first three stages use has to be made of some mental means or support by which the mind accustomed to run about from object to object, shall fix on one alone, and that one must be something which represents the idea of the Divine. It is usually a name or a form or a Mantra by which the thought can be fixed in the sole knowledge or adoration of the Lord. By this concentration on the idea the mind enters from the idea into its reality, into which it sinks silent, absorbed, unified. This is the traditional method.

Rajayoga is a psychic science and it includes the attainment of all the higher states of consciousness and their powers by which the mental being rises towards the superconscious as well as its ultimate and supreme possibility of union with the Highest. Moreover, the Yogin, while in the body, is not always mentally inactive and sunk in Samadhi, and an account of the powers and states which are possible to him on the higher planes of his being is necessary to the completeness of the science.

These powers and experiences belong, first, to the vital and mental planes above this physical in which we live, and are natural to the soul in the subtle body, as the dependence on the physical body decreases, these abnormal activities become possible



and even manifest themselves without being sought for. They can be acquired and fixed by processes which the science gives, and their use then becomes subject to the will; or they can be allowed to develop of themselves and used only when they come, or when the Divine within moves us to use them; or else, even though thus naturally developing and acting, they may be rejected in a single-minded devotion to the one supreme goal of the Yoga. Secondly, there are fuller, greater powers belonging to the supramental planes which are the very powers of the Divine in his spiritual and supramentally ideative being. These cannot be acquired at all securely or integrally by personal effort, but can only come from above, or else can become natural to the man if and when he ascends beyond mind and lives in the spiritual being, power, consciousness and ideation. They then become, not abnormal and laboriously acquired Siddhis, but simply the very nature and method of his action, if he still continues to be active in the world-existence.

SRI AUROBINDO

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, SABCL, Vol 20, pp 514-520)*

## DYUMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER

*(Continued from the issue of November 1997)*

*Dear Mother,*

*On this coming Wednesday, we are thinking of preparing Halwa Now that it is a routine dish, shall I try it once without cashew-nuts and raisins?*

WILL it not be a little tasteless?

19 January 1935

*Dear Mother,*

*My love for You is too little, too shallow My self-offering and devotion are too flat and full of turmoil My consciousness is too clouded, not clear and transparent*

*My dear Mother, I know this, yet I know also there is a certitude of Victory and Realisation*

It is all right to see the imperfections and deficiencies but only on condition that it brings a greater courage for a new progress, an increase of energy in the determination, and a stronger certitude of victory and future perfection

Always with you

21 January 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*I have deceived myself and You all along, I am filled with imperfections and lower impulses I boasted of my purity, but now I see that it was all boasting, full of pride and ego*

*Dear Mother, make me vividly conscious of all my defects and imperfections I lose neither courage nor heart nor strength My strength is You, and in You I rest*

Everything will be all right in time There is only to keep up a patient aspiration and an unflinching confidence in the Divine Grace and its assured victory

Always with you

23 January 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*B saw the cupboard to be repaired and told me "This is quite the old pattern, even if I repair it, it will not be safe Ask the Mother for a new one "*

*I told him "I have no heart to reject the old one."*

*He said "It is your economic nature that goes on using the old one. Everybody is giving away the old furniture and is asking for new"*

*My dear Mother, let us use what we have This attitude of B is a very big drain on the Ashram energy*

Yes—it is quite a wrong attitude

24 January 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*C told me "Sometimes when the flow of Light comes down from above, I say 'Not now, let me finish this work'" I said "Never do that Receive it, welcome it, allow it to come It is the physical consciousness that wants to have its own old nature"*

Surely what you said was right Moreover with a little practice the light can be fully received and still the work go on But this condition comes later

With all love and blessings *always*

28 January 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*An Aroumé servant asked for half a day leave for tomorrow morning I told D I need a replacement, but it seems he does not have sufficient hands and cannot spare a man If a servant comes to do part of the work, it is all right Otherwise, we can manage with what we have quite easily*

It is better to insist a little with D—the difficulties come from inadequate organisation and by insisting it obliges them to make an effort and the difficulties get solved.

6 February 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*Now You know F's absurdity, for she has written to You what she wanted to do today I am happy that she is now free from that.*

Sri Aurobindo has just read her letter to me—you did well to console her These ideas of incapacity are absurd, they are the negation of the truth of progress What cannot be done today, will be done another day—if the aspiration is there

6 February 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*F has gone into a state of depression and despondency To imagine, to invent, to justify and assent to falsehoods as the Reality and Truth—this is a chronic disease with many of us May this nature of purely vital ignorance and physical stupidity disappear from the Ashram*

Surely it will be a very good thing when all these ignorant depressions are chased away

7 February 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*What's the matter in the Dining Room? Why do we take pleasure in coming into conflict with each other? Is there even one day that has passed peacefully until now? Why do we seek for power instead of consecrating ourselves at the feet of the Divine?*

*Save, save us, O dear Mother*

There is only to be patient—all that will pass one day Perhaps in the state of their present consciousness they would find life too dull without quarrels

*Since yesterday I have been thinking of taking up the serving and distribution of food*

I do not think it is possible I do not like that you should be bound by a regular work like that one The rest would suffer

*My dear Mother, grant me an absolute loving consecration to Thee Make me Thy humble and docile servant And wherever I am asked to serve, give me gentleness and peace Teach me to be Thy docile servant*

Surely you will do more and more perfectly your service to the Divine

9 February 1935

*Dear Mother,*

*I am often called a "miser" because of my resistance to outer suggestions I am a miser! If I become generous and lavish, as the inmates want me to be—which is absolutely impossible—we must put aside not 16 thousand rupees for food but 30 or 40 thousand rupees How shall we do so?*

You are quite right and I do not find you a miser

If I listened to what the people say, we should have been ruined long ago.

*My dear loving Mother, make me more and more true and faithful to Thee O my dear Love, may the Divine Grace alone manifest*

You have chosen the right path Do not mind what the others say  
In all love and trust

10 February 1935

*(To be continued)*

---

## AT HER FEET

MOTHER, that tender touch of Yours, that touch  
I could not fully fathom—it was so much  
You poured into my nature's misty depth  
But never will my trembling soul forget  
Those wondrous moments when Your Love it met

Then to Your long and penetrating look  
I gave my eyes, yet knew not what I took  
Deep, deep into my body's open heart  
And deeper yet into my nature's need  
That must at last by your Light be freed.

With tender finger-tips You have firmly bound  
My soul to Your Soul, in You I have found  
The nourishing sweet nectar of Your Love  
That helps me from around and from above  
To give myself with all I am and have

O Mother, my inner being's subtle ear  
Yearns endlessly again Your Voice to hear  
As does a little child when left alone  
But lonely I am not—Your Love's embrace  
Stays fragrant with the flower of Your Grace

RUTH

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

(Continued from the issue of November 1997)

(e)

THE new knowledge changed for Sri Aurobindo the boundaries he had set to the Lower Hemisphere (*aparārdha*) of Reality and the Higher Hemisphere (*parārdha*). The general formulation in the *Arya*-days was as follows: "The Divine descends from pure existence through the play of Consciousness-Force and Bliss and the creative medium of Supermind into cosmic being, we ascend from Matter through a developing life, soul and mind and the illuminating medium of Supermind towards the divine being. The knot of the two, the higher and the lower hemisphere, is where mind and Supermind meet with a veil between them."<sup>1</sup> The exact significance of this formulation, before the First Part of *The Life Divine* where it figures was revised, emerges from another statement of Sri Aurobindo's in a series that has not received revision. There we obtain a more particular focus on the "veil." In the commentary on the Isha Upanishad's verse on Surya, the Sun of Truth, Sri Aurobindo writes: "The face of this Truth is covered as with a brilliant shield, as with a golden lid, covered, that is to say, from the view of our human consciousness. For we are mental beings and our highest ordinary mental sight is composed of the concepts and percepts of the mind, which are indeed a means of knowledge, rays of the Truth, but not in their nature truth of existence, only truth of form. We can only arrive at the true Truth, if Surya works in us to remove this brilliant formation of concepts and percepts and replaces them by the self-vision and all-vision."<sup>2</sup> The "veil" between the Lower Hemisphere and the Higher is the mental consciousness unenlightened by what is above it.

This view of Reality's dichotomy changes after the Overmind is sorted out from the Supermind. Now we are told: "A line is therefore drawn between the higher half of the universe of consciousness, *parārdha*, and the lower half, *aparārdha*. The higher half is constituted of Sat, Chit, Ananda, Mahas (the supramental)—the lower half of mind, life, Matter. This line is the intermediary overmind which, though luminous itself, keeps from us the full indivisible supramental Light."<sup>3</sup> About the Overmind we learn: "It is a power, though the highest power, of the lower hemisphere, although its basis is a cosmic unity, its action is an action of division and interaction, an action taking its stand on the play of the multiplicity. Its play is, like that of all Mind, a play of possibilities, although it acts not in the Ignorance but with the knowledge of the truth of

1 *The Life Divine* (American Edition 1949) p. 243

2 *The Isha Upanishad* (Arya Publishing House Calcutta 1924) pp. 95-6

3 *On Yoga II Tome One* p. 264

these possibilities, yet it works them out through their own independent evolution of their powers. It acts in each cosmic formula according to the fundamental meaning of that formula and is not a power for a dynamic transcendence."<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, expressing his new vision, tells us "we discover a superconscious cosmic Mind in direct contact with the Supramental Truth-Consciousness, an original intensity determinant of all movements below it and all mental energies,—not Mind as we know it, but an Overmind that covers as with the wide wings of some creative Oversoul this whole lower hemisphere of Knowledge-Ignorance, links it with that greater Truth-Consciousness while yet at the same time with its brilliant golden lid it veils the face of the greater Truth from our sight, intervening with its flood of infinite possibilities as at once an obstacle and a passage in our seeking of the spiritual law of our existence, its highest aim, its secret Reality."<sup>2</sup>

The face of the Isha Upanishad's Surya is now seen as veiled not by our perceptual and conceptual mental consciousness but by the creative superconscious Overmind. The Upper Hemisphere now commences beyond the Overmind plane. That plane is now to be placed at the farther end (the "violet" end, we may say) of a broad spectrum which can be designated as Mental in a general sense differing from the restricted sense of the *Arya*-days and even of a later period—a spectrum which bears at its nearer end (the "red" one, so to speak) "Mind as we know it." The Overmind plane marks the summit of the Cosmic Being as distinguished from the Transcendence. The Transcendence begins at the Supermind and completes an ultimate quaternary by holding Bliss (*ānanda*), Consciousness-Force (*chit-tapas*) and Existence (*sat*) at the back of the Supramental plane (*vijñāna*).

Once the World of the Gods was seen—some years before 24 November 1926—as not a subordinate province of the Supermind but only as a preparatory stage for the Supermind's descent, the *parārdha* ceased to start immediately above the mind with a rising supramental gradation: the Supermind was pitched far beyond with a ladder of ascending non-supramental Knowledge in between.

Not that Sri Aurobindo completely denied a veil between the mind and what is above it. A phrase in *Savitri* written long after he had distinguished Overmind from Supermind repeats in a certain context the vision of the *Arya*-days

All the grey inhibitions were torn off  
And broken the intellect's hard and lustrous lid<sup>3</sup>

But the great divide actually comes, according to Sri Aurobindo's full realisation, at the top of the Overmind. As *Savitri* itself puts it

Then stretches the boundless finite's last expanse,

1 *The Life Divine* p. 846

2 *Ibid.* p. 255

3 *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1971) p. 25

The cosmic empire of the Overmind,  
Time's buffer state bordering Eternity <sup>1</sup>

Again, we read

There is the Godhead's universal gaze  
And there the boundaries of immortal Mind  
The line that parts and joins the hemispheres  
Closes in on the labour of the Gods  
Fencing Eternity from the toil of Time <sup>2</sup>

The critical newness of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, rendering defunct all the old spirituality which in various forms hailed from the Overmind and which, because of the Overmind's dazzling splendours, could not look beyond it—the critical newness is hit off very strikingly in the verses

As if a torch held by a power of God,  
The radiant world of the everlasting Truth  
Glimmered like a faint star bordering the night  
Above the golden Overmind's shimmering ridge.<sup>3</sup>

These lines are unique in Sri Aurobindo's writings—and more than anything else from his hand they can serve as the packed nucleus of a whole revolution in spiritual philosophy, an astonishing reversal in the final vision of reality. For, they posit a “night” between the Overmind and the Supramental Truth-World, and so vast, so deep is it that the latter appears beyond the former as no more than a tiny scintillation at the remotest end of the darkness. The only parallel to this view is to be found in a talk by the Mother in 1931 to some of us who used to gather in the “Prosperity”-room before the evening's Soup-distribution. Let me quote a recollection I put into a talk I myself gave to the students of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education on 20 October 1971 <sup>4</sup>

“When we usually talk of Supermind and Overmind, we do draw a marked distinction between them, but we do not go beyond saying that the latter is only the delegate of the former and therefore an inferior power by comparison and not capable of achieving the ultimate victory of the Divine. All the same, compared to mind, it is a mighty splendour and we couple it with the Supermind while we mental creatures stand dwarfed below. The Mother shook us up by saying that the gap we feel between our

1 *Ibid* p 660

2 *Ibid* pp 660-1

3 *Ibid*, p 41

4 *Light and Laughter: Some Talks at Pondicherry* by Amal Kiran and Nirodbaran (All India Press, Pondicherry 1974) p 77



mind and Overmind is less than the gap existing between Overmind and Supermind. Her words put things quite topsyturvy. But if we think clearly they should strike us as quite natural. After all, the Overmind is only the divine aspect of the mind. The Supermind is the Divine self-experienced in His creative movement directly, immediately. The Overmind is the Divine projecting Himself into the highest mental formulation of His nature. The Divine there is self-aware at one remove. Because of this the Overmind is, according to Sri Aurobindo, the top of the Lower Hemisphere; the Higher Hemisphere starts beyond it. Yet we are always impressed by its proximity to the Supermind and forget the radical, the colossal difference between the two. The Mother threw this difference into remarkable relief."

However, the difference, though never to be forgotten, must not be counted as the single last word. Another word has to pair with it, or else the Overmind would hardly be what Sri Aurobindo makes it out: a passage to the supreme Truth-Consciousness by its delegated power no less than an obstruction to that Ultimate by its own immensity and grandeur. The definitive formula for it must be the paradox of "a protective double, a screen of dissimilar similarity", as Sri Aurobindo<sup>1</sup> puts it, a Siddhi and Victory which is indispensable as an aid and anticipation in order to be itself renounced and surpassed, where

In the realms of the immortal Supermind  
Truth who hides here her head in mystery,  
Her riddle deemed by reason impossible  
In the stark structure of material form,  
Unenigmaed lives unmasked her face and there  
Is Nature and the common law of things <sup>2</sup>

*(To be continued)*

AMAL KIRAN  
(K D SETHNA)

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 255

<sup>2</sup> *Savitri*, pp. 661-2

## “INSPIRATIONS FOR PROGRESS”

*(Continued from the issue of November 1997)*

WITH entire trust in Her Love—constant, unfailing, all-knowing, all-powerful, all-forgiving, infinitely kind, gentle, tender,— without any doubt or shame or fear or guilt, to always turn towards Mother, to take entire refuge in Her, to surrender entirely to Her, to give all and leave all in Her Hands, to depend on Her for all things, always to draw closer and closer to Her, always to open more and more to Her—that is the only thing to be done. All the rest is of secondary importance.

Not to want to be, to have, to do anything except what She wants you to be, to have, to do—that is the true law of life.

Do not worry about your blindness and impotence, do not bother about your difficulties and defects—give yourself to Her entirely with perfect trust and leave all to Her.

There is nothing that She does not know  
There is nothing that She cannot do  
And Her Love is constant, unfailing

O do not be foolish to carry your burden in your hands—leave all to Her with entire trust in Her Omnipotent Love.

Forget yourself—remember Her with love  
*That is the secret—  
To be Her child*

18.2.1961

♪

In dealing with my weaknesses and difficulties I must now take more and more the right attitude of Purusha and psychic.

I must not consider them as my own but pressures and invasions from Nature to which some part in the physical or vital responds either due to past habit or incapacity to reject. In this attitude I must remain more and more detached and separate from the wrong movement. “It is not mine.”

I must always keep the will sincere, i.e. sincerely will to get rid of the wrong movement and reject it and keep on rejecting it whenever it comes or however long it persists or recurs. “I do not want it.”

But if I am not able to reject it by my will at once or even after long struggle—I must never feel ashamed or guilty or disheartened. Especially the defects that are ingrained in the constitution persist and recur even after repeated rejection.

Here I must take the psychic attitude of complete surrender to Mother and more and more offering of the wrong movement to Her, calling Her Grace for its removal with entire Trust in Her Omniscient Omnipotence and Her unfailing Love

Without shame or fear, keeping the will to get rid of the wrong movement I must turn to Her, open to Her, offer the wrong movement to Her, call Her Grace and Protection and depend on Her entirely with assured Trust

This is the key-movement in sadhana in dealing with wrong movements

Her Infinite Power and Love and Irresistible Grace are unfailingly with me

I have only to be sincere—i.e. whole-heartedly want to change—and, taking refuge in Her Arms, give up all to Her and instead of blindly struggling with my defects and weaknesses, offer them to Her without fear or shame and depend on Her for their removal with entire trust

Never allow fear or guilt or doubt or dejection to create obstructions in your entire turning, opening and surrender to Mother

The more you feel helpless in your struggle with wrong movements, the more you should turn towards Her, cling to Her, call to Her for help

In this way, even the defects and difficulties become opportunities in drawing closer to Mother, of opening more to Her, of intensifying and extending the true relation of love with Her

22 2 1961

\*

Always remembering the constant, intimate and unfailing support of the All-Strength of Mother never admit any suggestion of weakness, incapacity or incompetence. Never lower your standard and quality of work or sadhana or any endeavour for progress—on the contrary, relying on Her assured help always try to improve your standard, always try to do better and better to move ever forward and upward in all things

Be extremely careful not to admit the subtle and persistent attempt of suggestions of unfitness, defeatism, weariness, breakdown, etc., to encroach on the consciousness and to settle in it and make a fixed lodging. Remain always detached from them and always with a clear resolute will reject them—and keep on tirelessly rejecting them so long as they keep on coming

Be always self-possessed, confident, clear and firm. Always think, speak and act in a happy, confident tone

Always keep the eyes open to the Great New Life that is coming and prepare yourself more and more for it

Keep the doors of your consciousness wide open to receive the marvellous New Things that will soon manifest on earth

23 1961

\*

In dealing with oneself and others *look* more and more to the positive side and *stress* it Do the opposite with the negative side

Give up the petty, personal, narrow, egoistic view of persons—be impersonal, large, wide, generous

The petty, sensitive, egoistic view blocks up more and more the free passages, closes up one door after another continuously, closes up all the streams of intercourse with the universe—till finally it tightly imprisons you in your extremely small stifling self

Beware of this tendency Let it not grow upon you unconsciously till it completely strangles you

Practise assiduously the contrary process

Open up more and more lines of intercourse with the universe Let there be free in-and-out streaming of the energies

Be wide, large-hearted, generous, always positive, constructive, optimistic, always kind, sweet and benevolent.

Do not mind, do not stress, do not harp upon small annoyances and petty grievances and past wrongs done by others

Open wide to the free air, the smiling light, the inexhaustible energy, to Mother in all things in the universe

23 1961

\*

He—the Supreme Lord—is now my constant companion

I have to be clearly and decisively conscious of His constant companionship and without the least doubt or hesitation leave all things—health, work, sadhana, relations with persons, all things—in His Hands and depend on Him entirely with deep assured confidence

I must resolutely cast away this habit of folding upon myself and struggling by my own self against difficulties and the world That way I only get more and more compressed in this stifling prison of ego And that is the cause of all anxiety, fear, unhappiness, uncertainty, worry, trouble.

This is [the] new attitude in which I must now whole-heartedly live

I and my life are all for Him

I belong to Him entirely and for ever

My own longing is to unite with Him in love's pure truth and do His Will

With this longing ever-becoming [firm] in my heart I have turned towards Him and have given myself to Him He has accepted me, taken me in His Almighty Arms of Love and He is now my constant companion on the way

Defects and difficulties are there and will be till they are removed

But since He is with me, carrying me in His Arms, they will be removed—because His Power is Omnipotent, His Will Invincible, His Love All-Victorious.

And His Love is so tender and kind and gentle and all-forgiving! He never blames, He understands everything He does everything He removes all defects, wipes out all sins, dissolves all barriers.

With entire trust in His All-Tender Omnipotent Love I must now take complete refuge in His Arms and leave all things in His Hands

I must constantly remember that He is with me at every moment and that through all He will surely take me to Him, clasp me to His Bosom, make me one with Him forever

With this conviction I must remain deeply peaceful and happy

21 4 1961

\*

It is not the difficulties that matter but the attitude towards them or the spirit in which they are faced and the manner in which they are dealt with are the things of real importance

Faced in the right spirit and tackled in the right manner, difficulties become opportunities for greater progress

It is best not to create or invite difficulties or to let them remain if they are there. But if they come or stick or persistently recur or increase, one must learn to make use of them for a greater progress

On the path of Yoga the first thing is not to struggle blindly with defects and difficulties but to stand detached from them and to *see* precisely what they are

The second thing is to act on them with a firm, resolute, confident will, subtly, tactfully, aptly

The third thing is to persevere tirelessly.

The fourth thing is to endure with rock-like strength and a smiling, cheerful temper with absolute certitude of the Victory

And the supremely effective thing is to remain conscious that you are not alone but the Almighty, All-Kind Lord is at every moment with you

To take refuge in His Arms, to give all to Him, to leave all in His charge, and to depend on Him with a peaceful, happy, confident heart for all things—this is the supreme secret.

It is very simple—

He is the Supreme Lord

Nothing can resist His Will

His Love and Grace are constantly with us

He is our unfailing companion on the way to Him

We have only to take refuge in His Arms and abandon ourselves into His care.

He will do all for us  
 He will remove all veils  
 He will take us to His Bosom  
 In His Heart is our Home  
 In His Love is our Life  
 In Him, by Him, for Him we shall live

29 4 1961

*(To be continued)*

KISHOR GANDHI

(Compiled by Arvind Akki)

---

## **A SOUL-TOUCHED TRANQUILLITY**

In the limpid silence of a moon-white space,  
 Sweet Mother, lulled in Thy lap of tender grace  
 I slept, drunken with a clear crystal dream  
 That blossomed like a lotus of bliss supreme

With virgin lips I drank Thy smile nectar-sweet,  
 And kissed, Beloved Mother, Thy flower-like feet,  
 That tuned my lonely lyre with miraculous art  
 To symphonies unknown to the human heart

From Thy eyes, serene like the depths of a silent well,  
 Descended a soothing hush, a mystic spell,  
 More cool and tender than the rays of the moon,  
 That brought to my weary heart an unwaning boon

Composed, O Mother, like a lotus of immaculate grace,  
 In a soul-touched tranquillity I saw Thy Angel Face

CHINU GANDHI

## A THEMATIC INTRODUCTION TO SAVITRI

*Savitri* is too unique a literary phenomenon both in scope and value for it to find in our age a universal appreciation, even recognition. While quite a few men of acknowledged literary taste and culture have most enthusiastically welcomed the appearance of *Savitri* as the dawn of 'future poetry', of the spiritual poetry of tomorrow, quite a few others, including some acute literary scholars, have found in it no poetic merit whatsoever, and have even dismissed it as vague and fatiguing in its verbosity. Such extreme reactions are characteristically called forth by a literary work which is so bafflingly new and unparalleled as *Savitri* is; there simply is no other work with which it can be meaningfully compared. As we are about to enter a new millennium, we are also on the threshold of a New Age, and *Savitri* heralds this new age, it is both modern and spiritual. It is modern in the sense that "it has the same rationality, clarity, concreteness of perception as the scientific spirit has in its domain and still it is rounded off with a halo of magic and miracle." What one needs to appreciate *Savitri* is in some measure at least a sensitivity to the rhythms and subtleties of the Overhead inspiration. To see in Sri Aurobindo no more than a belated Romantic, a lesser Keats, or a vague, second-rate Milton is to declare the limitations of one's literary taste and culture.

I do not think that it is possible to establish or prove that *Savitri* is great poetry to the satisfaction of those who have not been able to respond to it. For one thing, there is no mechanical measure of poetic greatness. I have been enthralled by its music, by the power of its rhythm, by the grandeur of its similes, by the masterful variation and modulation of its blank verse, and by the living power of its diction as much as by the wealth of its thematic content, and above all by the flood of spiritual illumination it brings. I have read out extensive parts of it to large audiences in India who have enthusiastically responded to it.

But its poetic merit is not the only count on which people have misconceptions, equally grave misconceptions are prevalent about what it is all about, its thematic content. And strangely enough, the theme of *Savitri* has hardly ever figured in any of the writings in print on the poem that I have seen. Most people assume, because of the title of the poem, that Sri Aurobindo's primary purpose in writing this epic was to narrate the Puranic story of Savitri and Satyavan in English verse and, therefore, they are totally unexcited about the prospect of reading it. People have even wondered why in the 20th century we needed another attempt at bolstering up the male chauvinism which is implicit in such folklore of mediaeval vintage! Some others are misled in their approach to it by the common epithet of 'mystic' that is often used to describe Sri Aurobindo's writings. They therefore are inclined to see it as an attempt to portray in English verse some personal and private spiritual experience of the poet which may have nothing to do with the world we inhabit and its problems, struggles and aspirations. I do believe that one can try and remove some of these misconceptions and this is the primary purpose of this brief article. But in its thematic scope *Savitri* is as vast as life itself, and in the scope of a single article I can hope to do no more than

outline some of the broad areas of its thematic concerns. Of these only those which cluster around the theme of Aswapati's Yoga described in the first 3 Books of *Savitri* will be discussed in some detail. Others will only be mentioned in passing.

Sri Aurobindo has described *Savitri* as 'a legend and a symbol'. The legend, of course, is the ancient story of Satyavan and Savitri narrated by Vyasa in the Book of the Forest in the Mahabharata. Most people on hearing the title of the epic poem conclude that Sri Aurobindo must have made a simple story, one of the best known from the Mahabharata, complicated,—since while Vyasa narrates this story in 300 shlokas (about 700 lines) Sri Aurobindo does so in nearly 24000 lines. Is it possible that Sri Aurobindo needs this amplitude to commend the glory of conjugal fidelity which is supposed to be the moral of the Puranic story of Savitri and Satyavan? No wonder *Savitri* is so widely misunderstood.

What then really explains this nearly 35-fold expansion which the narration of the story undergoes at Sri Aurobindo's hands?

A brief answer to the question is that Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* is not just an ancient tale retold in a modern language, the framework of the story is also used as a symbol with many levels of meaning. That is why Sri Aurobindo subtitled it "A Legend and a Symbol". But even in the Mahabharata, the symbolic significance of the Savitri story is quite unmistakable. As Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, "Satyavan is the soul carrying the divine truth of being within itself but descended into the grip of death and ignorance, Savitri is the Divine Word, daughter of the Sun, goddess of the supreme Truth, who comes down and is born to save, Aswapati, the Lord of the Horse, her human father, is the Lord of Tapasya, the concentrated energy of the spiritual endeavour that helps us to rise from the mortal to the immortal planes, Dyumatsena, Lord of the Shining Hosts, father of Satyavan, is the Divine Mind here fallen blind, losing its celestial kingdom of vision, and through that loss its kingdom of glory." But Sri Aurobindo did not have to write *Savitri* if this symbolic meaning was all that he wished to convey. That has already been done by Vyasa. Nor would it justify the amplitude which the narration has received at his hands.

Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* is quintessentially an epic for the modern man and addresses primarily his concerns and his existential angst. By 'modern man' I mean humanity which has reached a stage in its evolution when it has achieved the highest and the best that the mental consciousness can give and yet finds itself unfulfilled and still confronting the age-old problems of death, suffering, inadequacy and ignorance. It is not generally recognised that, in fact, the inner limits to our consciousness translate themselves as inequality, corruption and exploitation in our social, economic and political life and as arms race, war, terrorism, and as economic aggression in the relationship among nations. Many have been the prophets and sages, revolutionary thinkers, and economic reformers, who have tried to change this situation and bring fulfilment to man and perfection to life. And yet they have all failed and each time the excuse given for the failure is different, which has made many observers of the human scene such as Arthur Koestler and Konrad Lorenz declare that humanity is a doomed



species without any future *Savitri* was born out of Sri Aurobindo's concern for mankind and its future, it delineates the precise nature of the crisis mankind is facing and shows the way to resolve it. No other epic in human history has dealt with a theme as vast and as grand as this, and no literary form other than the epic would have been adequate to handle such a theme. In other words the Vedic myth of the *Savitri* story earns a new lease of life in Sri Aurobindo's hands and becomes the symbol of the evolutionary saga which has reached a critical stage in our times.

While *Savitri* touches on the world of human affairs, it does something which no other epic has even attempted on such a grand scale—the revelation of ranges of consciousness. What baffles many a modern reader is the way Sri Aurobindo has forged English into a language capable of expressing the experience of the overmental ranges of consciousness. Outside of Vedic Sanskrit there never has been spiritual poetry on such a massive scale, its mantric cadence and power are something new, and therefore it is no wonder that *Savitri* baffles the academic critic to no end. In English at least, *Savitri* marks a new kind of poetry, what Sri Aurobindo calls ‘‘future poetry’’, and we need a new science of aesthetics to come to terms with it.

Basically Sri Aurobindo adheres very closely to the *Savitri*-story as found in the Mahabharata legend. And yet the changes he has made in the treatment of the various parts of the story are most significant and revealing. Within the scope of this brief article I can deal with only some of them.

1. In the original Mahabharata story Aswapati performs an austere tapasya which lasts for 18 years, and its purpose is to obtain progeny. Vyasa narrates this part of the story in just about 24 lines, and the actual description of the King's tapasya is described in about 6 lines of Sanskrit verse as follows: ‘‘Therefore he resorted, with the concern of getting a child, to holy austere practices, only at fixed times he ate a little, and he observed continence, and restrained the senses fully. Daily a hundred-thousand oblations he, the most excellent among the kings, offered to Savitri [the Goddess propitiated], and it was only in the sixth part of the day that he took a small quantity of food. Eighteen years passed this way, he being given to observances of such rules of penance, at the end of the eighteen-year period Savitri was much pleased with him.’’ (*Vyasa's Savitri*). Sri Aurobindo does it in almost 12000 lines—nearly the whole of Part I of the Epic. What accounts for this enormous expansion?

Sri Aurobindo's Aswapati too is engaged in an arduous tapasya, but his tapasya is not for progeny. This Aswapati is not merely a Puranic king, he is in spirit the representative modern man who, like Sri Aurobindo himself, is acquainted with the best in the thought and culture of the East as well as of the West, with the religious and spiritual lore of the East as well as with the science and technology of the West, with the literature and philosophical thought of both and with the history of mankind and who wonders, again like Sri Aurobindo himself, why in spite of all this power and wisdom man has still not been able to find a way out of his age-old problems, a way to perfect life for the individual as well as for the society. Almost all the religions have been preaching to us that this world is a vale of tears and will for ever remain this way.

A wise man is he who realises the worthlessness of this all and withdraws into himself and finds the kingdom of God within him and the peace and bliss and the feeling of immortality it brings. Aswapati is not happy with this answer either. He feels that there must be a way out. And he starts on a journey to find a solution to this problem baffling mankind—a journey which is simultaneously macrocosmic and microcosmic, which is described in the poem as Aswapati's Yoga. In one of his letters on *Savitri* Sri Aurobindo has told us that Aswapati's yoga falls into three parts. First, he is achieving his own spiritual self-fulfilment as the individual. Next, he makes the ascent as a typical representative of the race to win the possibility of discovery and possession of all the planes of consciousness, but this too is as yet an individual victory. Finally, he aspires no longer for himself but for all, for a universal realisation and a new creation. (See *Savitri*, p. 778.)

Aswapati begins by realising his self, by achieving his own psycho-spiritual transformation, and this is described in Cantos 3 and 5 of Book I. One of the most capital realisations on the spiritual path is the concrete experience that we are not merely a complex of the body, vital energies and the mind, we are a Spirit. This is the Self in us which is not palpable on the surface but is seated deep within us behind several veils, as it were. Primarily spirituality consists of realising this Self and making it the leader of our earthly journey.

This bodily appearance is not all,  
 The form deceives, the person is a mask,  
 Hid deep in man celestial powers can dwell  
 His fragile ship conveys through the sea of years  
 An incognito of the Imperishable  
 A spirit that is a flame of God abides,  
 A fiery portion of the Wonderful,  
 Artist of his own beauty and delight,  
 Immortal in our mortal poverty

(*Savitri*, p. 23)

In many ways this spiritual journey of Aswapati shows characteristic features of Sri Aurobindo's own Integral Yoga. Here I shall content myself by referring to just one such distinctive feature, namely, opening oneself to the descent of all that belongs to the higher consciousness, the spiritual peace and silence, the Light, the Power, the Knowledge and the Ananda. This descent has two aspects and both are described in Aswapati's yoga—one is static, a condition of wide peace, freedom, silence, and the other is the dynamic, a condition which is described in these words:

A strong Descent leaped down. A Might, a Flame,  
 A Beauty half-visible with deathless eyes,  
 A violent Ecstasy, a Sweetness dire,  
 Enveloped him with its stupendous limbs

And penetrated nerve and heart and brain  
That thrilled and fainted with the epiphany (*Savitri*, p 81)

As Aswapati gets into the universal Self, he is liberated from the ego. Now Aswapati is described as entering “sunbelts of knowledge, moonbelts of delight” and he is “Stretched out in an ecstasy of wide�esses/Beyond our indigent corporeal range.” Our so-called objective view of the world is totally distorted because we look at the world through the lens of our ego. Thus freed from the hold of the ego, Aswapati looks at the world as it has been evolving and realises the following

In Nescience began her mighty task,  
In Ignorance she pursues the unfinished work,  
For Knowledge gropes, but meets not Wisdom’s face  
Ascending slowly with unconscious steps,  
A foundling of the Gods she wanders here  
Like a child-soul left near the gates of Hell  
Fumbling through fog in search of Paradise (*Savitri*, p 135)

The second stage of Aswapati’s yogic journey (Book II) takes him into our evolutionary past and also to our evolutionary future. First he takes a plunge into the subtle physical world and then into the various vital levels with their glories and agonies. He meets beings and creatures appropriate to these levels and moved by the laws governing the respective regions. Thus he moves on into worlds of the higher vital and into the borders of the mental. As we follow Aswapati’s progress through the early stages of consciousness traversing the vital range, we see how long, how wasteful the evolutionary journey must have been and yet see it in a new light as “a heavenly process” “labouring to achieve its dumb unseemly work”, as “A camouflage of the Inconscient’s need/To release the glory of God in Nature’s mud.” (*Savitri*, p 138)

Aswapati finds that all these worlds are stricken with certain sinister influences which bring corruption and perversion to all movements in these regions. Looking for the cause of the insufficiency and failure of life, he explores the worlds of Ignorance and Nescience. He comes into the very heart of the Night of Ignorance and Obscurity and Falsehood. Here he has experiences and meets hostile and dark forces more sombre than those which Dante had encountered in his *Inferno*. These evil forces prey upon earth’s creatures who try to move out of the prison house of ignorance to the Light of the Spirit. Aswapati realises that the spiritual aspirant has to traverse this path. Furthermore he realises that this hell is “a shortcut to heaven’s gates.”

After journeying through the world of Falsehood, he comes to the Gandharva region which he finds felicitous but static. From there he moves on to the worlds ruled respectively by instinct, sense-perception, pigmy thought, rash intelligence and Reason (A coherent account of man’s evolutionary journey and destiny can be found in pages 158 to 162 of the Poem.) From there he moves on to the higher levels of the Mind

These are the worlds in which the immortal sages, the archangels, and the gods themselves live But even these he finds to be partial truths The purpose of his journey, we are told early in Book II, was to “know the obscure cause/ Of all that holds us back and baffles God/ In the jail-delivery of the imprisoned soul ” (*Savitri*, p 135) Here, then, we have the story of the evolution of consciousness which explains many things which the Darwinian theory of the evolution of physical forms cannot

At the end of this journey Aswapati realises that there does not seem to be in any of the worlds the power that man needs to transcend the limitations of his mental consciousness

All we have done is ever still to do  
 All breaks and all renews and is the same  
 Huge revolutions of life's fruitless gyre,  
 The new-born ages perish like the old  
 Too little the strength that now with us is born,  
 Too faint the light that steals through Nature's lids,  
 Too scant the joy with which she buys our pain (Savitri, p 342)

Aswapati reaches the uppermost levels of mental consciousness and is overwhelmed by the powerful experience of Nirvana when he feels that he has done with this world and with its worries Once we have this experience, regarded as the highest in the post-Buddhistic period of Indian spirituality, the world loses its reality. To this experience, Brahman is the only reality, the world is an illusion But Aswapati refuses to be limited by this experience and feels that the negation of this world cannot be life's ultimate sense When he is fully immersed in this experience he hears a voice say this to him.

The ego is dead, we are free from being and care,  
 We have done with birth and death and work and fate  
 O soul, it is too early to rejoice!  
 Thou hast reached the boundless silence of the Self,  
 Thou hast leaped into a glad divine abyss,  
 But where hast thou thrown Self's mission and Self's power?  
 On what dead bank on the eternal's road? (Savitri, p 310)

This voice goes on to tell Aswapati:

A high and blank negation is not all,  
 A huge extinction is not God's last word,  
 Life's ultimate sense, the close of being's course,  
 The meaning of this great mysterious world  
 To free the self is but one radiant pace,  
 Here to fulfil himself was God's desire (Savitri, pp. 311-312)

This going beyond the experience of Nirvana to the realisation that this world is the self-expression of the Divine and which is evolving toward the fulness of its own nature marks Sri Aurobindo's attempt to erase the great shadow of negation that had cast a bleak shadow on India's destiny since the time of the great Buddha. Here Aswapati realises that the great vocation of man, who is himself divine in his person, is not to escape the world into the mystical bliss of union with the transcendental Divine but to bring the world and himself to perfection. Each one of us here is worthy of eternal life and the world itself is worthy of our sincere devotion and dedicated action. The exploration of the various worlds of consciousness convinces Aswapati that this fulfilment of the world requires a greater power than the highest which man has now at his command, the mental consciousness.

So now Aswapati's quest becomes a quest for a new power of consciousness which he wishes to bring down to earth. He realises that the Divine Mother whom he meets at the end of his long yogic journey is the transcendental creative power of the Supreme who alone can bring down this power to earth. Aswapati does not want his realisation to be just limited to himself but to be a boon for the whole of mankind. For this purpose the Divine Mother has to come down on earth. Savitri is this Divine Mother who is born as Aswapati's daughter and her mission is to defeat all that death symbolises, thus to resolve the evolutionary crisis confronting mankind. It is in this part of the Epic that we find "philosophy, the history of evolution, the history of man, of the gods, of creation, of Nature."

Thus in describing Aswapati's yoga Sri Aurobindo also answers such basic questions as: What is this universe? Where has it come from and where is it going? How is man related to this creation? Why is he here? Does his life here have an aim and if there is, what is it? Why is it that the repeated attempts made by great souls to bring human life to perfection have always ended in a fiasco, the latest of these being the revolution attempted by Karl Marx?

Much of the literature of the West in our century is born out of a feeling of alienation which plagued all sensitive people in these countries. There was, and still is, a feeling that we as conscious human beings are strangers in this universe, that we are no more than an accidental by-product of blind evolutionary forces, with no particular role to play in the scheme of things. There is everywhere in the West the existentialist anguish that life has no significance, no meaning, that there is no truth to be found and everything is permissible. In *Savitri* Sri Aurobindo gives us the assurance that no matter how grim or tragic-seeming the present predicament, life is not a tale told by an idiot, this world is not an unfortunate accident but a marvel that is slowly moving towards its perfect expression. The grounds for this hope are brought out most clearly in the part of this Epic which deals with Aswapati's yoga. It must also be noted that Sri Aurobindo's Savitri is born not merely to avert a personal danger or to bring a personal fulfilment to Aswapati, but to accelerate the pace of cosmic evolution and to usher in a new age of global human fulfilment. That is why when she is offered fulfilment of all that is dearest to her and to Satyavan, Savitri insistently demands "My spirit's liberty I ask for

all'' (p 649) and says, "Imperfect is the joy not shared by all '' (p 686)

2 In Canto One of Book IV of *Savitri* there are wonderful descriptions of the seasons, particularly of the rainy season and of spring, which seem to be the poet's favourite seasons. These descriptions are remarkable for their Kalidasian sensuousness combined with a rare refinement of taste

Asocas burned in crimson spots of flame,  
Pure like the breath of an unstained desire  
White jasmynes haunted the enamoured air.  
Pale mango-blossoms fed the liquid voice  
Of the love-maddened coil, and the brown bee  
Muttered in fragrance mid the honey-buds  
The sunlight was a great god's golden smile  
All Nature was at beauty's festival

(*Savitri*, p 352)

Then in the same Canto we have the description of the advent of the Avatar, of the birth of Savitri. Sri Aurobindo in his *Essays on the Gita* develops a most satisfying notion of the Avatar, and in *Savitri* in many places we get a poetic delineation of this notion, since Savitri herself is an Avatar. In describing Savitri through the various stages of her life, her childhood, girlhood and young womanhood, Sri Aurobindo has given us a fascinating portrait of a woman who belongs to the earth and to the higher regions simultaneously. "Harmoniously she impressed the earth with heaven" (p 355), says the poet about Savitri. None of this is found in the original Mahabharata story. The incident that prompts Aswapati to say to Savitri "Depart where thy love and destiny call your charm / Venture through the deep world to find thy mate" is also not found in the Mahabharata story. Savitri then sets out on her quest and her chariot travels first through "clamorous marts and sentinel towers / Past figured gates and high dream-sculptured fronts / And gardens hung in the sapphire of the skies / Pillared assembly halls with armoured guards" and then later through fields of solitary mirth, "Planes hushed and happy in the embrace of light" and still later through thick forests and abodes of hermits and ascetics of all kinds. Thus in Canto 4 of Book IV, we have a fascinating description of the Aryavarta of the Puranic times.

Nor does the Mahabharata story contain any details of the first meeting between Satyavan and Savitri. The whole of Book V, The Book of Love in Sri Aurobindo's Epic, is altogether his own. His treatment of love here is a rare literary triumph. As observed by M. V. Seetaraman "The meeting and union of Satyavan and Savitri blend all the qualities of romantic, Platonic and Christian love" (1964). Love here is spiritual all right, but without cancelling the corporeal ecstasy of it. To give just one example to signify their Gandharva wedding, Savitri places on Satyavan's bosom a "candid garland" and he takes her in his arms and this is how the poet describes this supreme moment.

Around her his embrace became the sign  
 Of a locked closeness through slow intimate years,  
 A first sweet summary of delight to come,  
 One brevity intense of all long life  
 In a wide moment of two souls that meet  
 She felt her being flow into him as in waves  
 A river pours into a mighty sea  
 As when a soul is merging into God  
 To live in Him forever and know His joy,  
 Her consciousness grew aware of him alone  
 And all her separate self was lost in his  
 As a starry heaven encircles happy earth.  
 He shut her into himself in a circle of bliss  
 And shut the world into himself and her

(*Savitri*, p. 410)

Even if Sri Aurobindo had written nothing else but just *The Book of Love in Savitri*, he would have been deemed to have left behind him an exquisite contribution to the world of poetry

3 Nor is there any mention in the original Mahabharata story of any extended dialogue between Narad and Savitri's mother in Aswapati's court after Savitri announces her choice of Satyavan as her life's companion. Sri Aurobindo introduces such a dialogue (Book VI Canto 2) in which he offers his solution to one of the most challenging problems for all philosophy, namely, the vexed problem of suffering, pain and evil. Although this is a metaphysical problem, some of the most glorious and inspired poetic passages in *Savitri* occur in this dialogue and the problem itself receives an answer which is the most illuminating given so far in any philosophy. We get here a totally new perspective on Ignorance and Falsehood which are the primary cause of suffering, pain and evil in human life.

4 In Vyasa's version, towards the close of her first year of married life, Savitri performs the three-night vow—the *trirātra* vow—of fasting and standing in one place through the entire period,—in order to gather the strength needed to confront Death whose encounter with Satyavan was imminent. Vyasa describes the observance of this vow in about 8 lines. In Sri Aurobindo's epic this gets transformed into Savitri's yoga to the description of which the whole of Book VII with its 7 Cantos and nearly 3000 lines is devoted. She is shown here traversing the inner regions of Matter, Life and Mind, and during this journey of self-discovery she meets the triple soul-forces—the Madonna of Suffering, Mother of Might, and Mother of Light. The Madonna of Suffering symbolises love and compassion in this world which she is yet unable to save.

I have seen the peasant burning in his hut,  
 I have seen the slashed corpse of the slaughtered child,

Heard woman's cry ravished and stripped and haled  
 Amid the bayings of the hell-hound mob,  
 I have looked on, I had no power to save  
 I have brought no arm of strength to aid or slay,  
 God gave me love, he gave me not his force (Savitri, p 504)

Each of these Madonnas is followed by a perverted opposite of hers. Thus the Madonna of Suffering is followed by the Man of Sorrows who has pity for his fellowmen, but it leads to indignation and cynicism, he declares:

I am the victim of titanic ills,  
 I am the doer of demoniac deeds,  
 I was made for evil, evil is my lot,  
 Evil I must be and by evil live  
 I suffer and toil and weep, I moan and hate. (Savitri, p 507)

The Madonna of Strength is followed by her opposite, who symbolises the vitalistic ego of modern science and technology and who claims:

I have grown greater than Nature, wiser than God  
 I have made real what she never dreamed,  
 I have seized her powers and harnessed for my work  
 I will make glass and raiment out of milk,  
 Make iron velvet, water unbreakable stone .  
 What God imperfect left, I will complete  
 His sin and error I will eliminate,  
 What he invented not, I shall invent  
 He was the first creator, I am the last (Savitri, p 512)

For the spiritually inclined reader, this section of *Savitri* is a veritable goldmine. Here we have a vivid description of Savitri finding her true soul and then a grand description of the waking up of the Kundalini in Savitri and the transforming touch of this Mother-power as it touches the various chakras in the subtle body. Then Savitri finds herself plunged into the blank and wide ocean of Nirvanic calm and nothingness. Savitri, like Aswapati, goes beyond the Nirvanic experience and undergoes a stupendous transformation as a result of which she attains the gnostic consciousness of the Supramental level which makes her feel one with the secret being manifesting itself in the universe.

She was a subconscious life of tree and flower,  
 The outbreak of the honied buds of spring,  
 She burned in the passion and splendour of the rose,  
 She was the red heart of the passion-flower,



The dream-white of the lotus in its pool  
 The cosmos flowered in her, she was its bed  
 She was Time and the dreams of God in Time,  
 She was Space and the wideness of his days (Savitri, p. 557)

5 In the concluding part of the Savitri story in the Mahabharata we have the famous dialogue between Savitri and Yama, the God of Death. Yama is immensely pleased with Savitri's speech, her diction and her reasoning and by the sublimity of her thought. He grants her boon after boon until he is persuaded to return the living Satyavan to her. Savitri's conversation with Yama centres round the themes of an ideal manhood, the divine beauty of virtue and the ethical order and a civilisation founded on Dharma. In Sri Aurobindo's Epic, the level of this discourse is lifted to very great heights. Here Savitri's quest of the living Satyavan and her determination to bring him back to earth for a life of fulfilled love symbolises Sri Aurobindo's quest of terrestrial perfection for humanity. And the God of Death becomes the great adversary of this noble endeavour. He assumes by turns almost all possible philosophical positions against Sri Aurobindo's ideal represented here by Savitri's quest, he tries to dissuade Savitri from seeking what is generally regarded as the impossible. He first argues like a Nihilist, and then like an Idealist, he then takes the position of the Illusionist, Adwaita, of Buddhist Negation, of the Dualist. Savitri meets each argument of the God of Death with a great force of conviction. In fact, Sri Aurobindo himself gives in this part of his Epic all the possible philosophic objections to the position he takes as an Integral Evolutionist and Adwaitin in his major philosophical work *The Life Divine*. But it must be emphasised here that in Sri Aurobindo's hands philosophy is transformed into poetic passion,—and in world literature, it would be difficult to find another example of philosophical thought presented with such passion and poetic force and beauty. Here we may quote just one or two examples of this poetic magic. Listen to the God of Death pooh-poohing all idealism, including love, because it can never be fulfilled in Time.

Immortality thou claimest for thy spirit,  
 But immortality for imperfect man,  
 A god who hurts himself at every step,  
 Would be a cycle of eternal pain  
 A sweet secretion from the erotic glands  
 Flattering and torturing the burning nerves,  
 Love is a honey and a poison in the breast  
 Drunk by it as the nectar of the gods  
 Earth's human wisdom is no great-browed power,  
 And love no gleaming angel from the skies,  
 If they aspire beyond earth's dullard air,  
 Arriving sunwards with frail waxen wings,  
 How high could reach that forced unnatural flight?

The Ideal is a malady of thy mind,  
 A bright delirium of thy speech and thought,  
 A strange wine of beauty lifting thee to false sight

(*Savitri*, pp 618-619)

By way of a small example let us hear one of Savitri's vibrant replies. In response to his argument that you have to choose here either Spirit or Matter, as this world is made that way, and so far nobody has been able to change it, Savitri is expounding the Theory of Emergent Evolution to Yama

How sayst thou Truth can never light the human mind  
 And Bliss can never invade the mortal's heart  
 Or God descend into the world he made?  
 If in the meaningless Void creation rose,  
 If from a bodiless Force Matter was born,  
 If Life could climb in the unconscious tree,  
 Its green delight break into emerald leaves  
 And its laughter of beauty blossom in the flower,  
 If sense could wake in tissue, nerve and cell  
 And Thought seize the grey matter of the brain,  
 And soul peep from its secrecy through the flesh,  
 How shall the nameless Light not leap on men,  
 And unknown powers emerge from Nature's sleep?

(*Savitri*, pp 648-649)

Finally, the confrontation between Savitri and Yama ends when the latter is vanquished. At that stage a Light emanates from Savitri's being and consumes Yama and he stands transformed into the god of light and everlasting life. And then he throws at Savitri the bait of the last temptation, the most dangerous and insidious of all. He urges Savitri to abandon the vexed world and forget humanity for which she has been waging this struggle against Yama, he tells her to come and stay with Satyavan in a Paradise for ever as "godheads who care not for the world". Savitri rejects this offer with disdain.

I climb not to thy everlasting Day,  
 Even as I have shunned thy eternal Night  
 Earth is the chosen place of mightiest souls,  
 Earth is the heroic spirit's battlefield,  
 The forge where the Archmason shapes his works  
 I know that I can lift man's soul to God,  
 I know that he can bring the Immortal down

(*Savitri*, pp 685-687)

This godhead is now supremely pleased with Savitri and asks her to choose whatever she wishes. But what does Savitri choose? She chooses the Lord's peace, oneness with him, his energy and his joy but each time for earth and for men. Human history has never witnessed a greater lover of mankind than Sri Aurobindo and *Savitri* is a testament of his love for all of us.

MANGESH NADKARNI

---

## I WROTE YOU A LOVE LETTER

I STARTED writing a letter this morning,  
then the sun changed into sleet and rain

But before the weather turned around,  
there was someone whistling within me  
and I felt a shivering joy of freedom  
singing out from the sea of my being

My very breathing was a celebration  
My smile, a perfect reflection of you  
My eyes, a living miracle of your love

And knowing that you were listening,  
I said, A door must open very soon!

But then the weather turned around

So! I pushed my pen through the weather  
and started to write you another love letter  
on the changeless and timeless blue sky beyond

MIREK

# THE WAGER OF AMBROSIA

## VII. The Theory of the Triple Purusha

### Part A

*(Continued from the issue of October 1997)*

JNANESHWAR was essentially a Yogi-Poet and not a philosopher or metaphysician dealing with abstruse problems of creation. His expression is that of a mystic who uses the poetic language of symbols and metaphors while giving shape to his ideas and concepts. He piles simile upon simile, example upon example to make a certain point of deeper import, the technique being in the nature of an address to a devout gathering. But this is a technique which a strict logician will not accept. According to him any serious discourse ought to be carried out in a rigorous manner. However, the poetic method has its own convincing validity, particularly when several shades of meaning can emerge from the intuition it bears. Jnaneshwar was not a *darshanakar*, a founder of a school of mystical thought, he had not formulated any system of causes—the first and the subsequent pragmatic or natural causes of things and happenings. We must also remember that he wrote his work only at the age of fifteen when he must have just studied and acquired the traditional lore that had come down to him as a part of the mediaeval upbringing. His father Vitthalpant himself was a man of deep learning and must have seen that his children were taught scriptural and Yogic literature in its proper context necessary for a truer wholesome religious life. The Brahminical rituals and their strict observations must have moulded his outlook, coming as these did from the seats of learning at Paithan and Kashi. Apart from adherence to routinised customs and practices, it was also the age when the intellectual spirituality was primarily dominated by the Advaita Philosophy of Shankara, indeed, we may well take it that Jnaneshwar had come under its full sway and in these matters did not exercise his own judgement. The dialectical persuasiveness of the powerful Acharya—who had vigorously defended and propagated the Vedantic knowledge against the Buddhist doctrine—had held in grip the religious society for several centuries.

The earlier cult of Yajnic sacrifices, sacrifices not too infrequently made to dubious gods,—the pre-Buddhistic overburdened Karmakand approach,—had already served a great purpose and the deeper questing urge was yearning for another breath of life. Vedicism had to halt, to make its transformed appearance later on. In the meanwhile, it made room for another adventure of spirituality. But, apparently, this spirituality posited only the frightening bareness of a nihilistic retreat, dismissing all that was Brahminical. Nonetheless, it turned out to be yet another, and perhaps necessary, extension of the wide-ranging spirit to tackle the problem of phenomenality by first denying it completely.

The Buddha saw this world filled with sorrow, *duhkha*, with human craving, *trishnā*, as its cause, but then he also proclaimed that this sorrow can be removed and

the way to remove it is by following the Eightfold Path of Righteousness. The entire issue thus reduces to the release from the universal Law of Action, *karma*, which could be accomplished by extinguishing the fire of desire and finally disappearing into the utter state of Nirvanic Non-Self. But then the ferry-boat,—to use the Mahayana image,—that takes one to the Shore of Silence, away from this shore of ignorance and craving and death, does not make the return trip, consequently, whatever gets left behind remains in the same state of suffering. In fact, this 'behind' remains totally dismissed—as in the Vedantic argument in which we cannot know ignorance while we are in ignorance and no more there exists ignorance, and its world, when we have the knowledge of Reality. Everything gets extinguished in Accomplishment of the Transcendental Wisdom, *prajñā-pāramitā*. But trying and strenuous is the path, hard and painful and full of danger. The quest of the goal itself becomes a trap. "Difficult to be attained through Awakening is the Perfect Transcendental Wisdom," says the disciple. The Teacher answers "That is the reason why no one ever attains it through Awakening." The effort itself is the limitation. Howsoever puzzling or Zen-like the statement be, the notion of this-ness or, for that matter even of that-ness, ought no more haunt the serious seeker. "Hence Buddhism denies," in the words of Zimmer, "the force and validity of everything that can be known." In the final analysis, which derives a certain spiritual support also, there is "neither the realm of life and death nor that of release. Moreover there is no Buddhism—no boat, since there are neither shores nor waters between. There is no boat, and there is no boatman—no Buddha. The great paradox of Buddhism, therefore, is that no Buddha has ever come into existence to enlighten the world with Buddhist teachings." (*Philosophes of India*)

Such extreme negation of whatever is, phenomenal or essential, is the boldest step taken by the Enlightened. Occult-spiritually, this is an experience of paramount importance in which get eliminated the last vestiges of superficial personality that we fondly cherish and value in our life. It is only when this knotted individuality is dissolved, that there can be the leap into the utter Blank where all manifestation characterised by pain and misery and death ceases to be. This is the faultless solution offered to get out of the composite and sorrowful existence driven by desire and bound by karma as it is. For that reason the compassionate Buddha himself had refused to enter into Nirvana while the world behind lay suffering. He proposed to take man to a state of pure and perfect non-egoistic self-less transcendence. However, in it there is a shortcoming of a serious nature, its empty spaces do not become available to establish the manifestation's true primaevality.

But then, paradoxically, under the ascetic and life-abnegating sway of Buddhism flourished great kingdoms and orders, and art and literature and exact reason and occult sciences. The path of Non-Existence led to an intense state of existentiality. Negation asserted itself vehemently in a million ways of expression. However, this activity of the Monk must be considered to be entirely different from the dynamism of the ancient Rishi who had posited and promoted positive values in life, the life which is a rich and fruitful field for performing works to claim celestial felicities. One shows the door of

escape, the other opens out the possibility of a happy fulfilment. In one there is total immersion and disappearance, in the other the life of immortality in the splendour of the gods.

The spell of Buddhism on the collective life had to end and in that task we witness the greatness of Shankara. "Philosophy is the self-expression," writes Radhakrishnan, "of the growing spirit of mankind, and the philosophers are its voice. Great thinkers appear in all great ages, and are as much the creatures as the creators of their era. Their genius lies in the power to seize the opportunity of the hour and give voice to the inarticulate yearnings that have been for long struggling in the hearts of men of expression. A creative thinker of the first rank, Shankara entered into the philosophic inheritance of his age, and reinterpreted it with special reference to its needs. Though Hindu thought had practically triumphed over Buddhism, the latter had instilled its secret strength into the people. The shadow of distrust which Buddhism threw over cherished beliefs did not completely vanish. It was a critical period in the history of the Hindu nation, when there was a general sense of weariness with the wrangling sects. The age needed a religious genius who was unwilling to break with the past and yet open to the good influences of the new creeds, one who could stretch the old moulds without breaking them and synthesise the warring sects on a broad basis of truth, which would have room for all men of all grades of intelligence and culture. Shankara announced his Advaita Vedanta as offering a common basis for religious unity." (*Indian Philosophy*, Vol 2, pp 466-67)

We may well ignore the rhapsodical element in Radhakrishnan's assessment of the work of the great Advaitin, but it did prevail in our consciousness for more than a thousand years. But what was the real nature of his contribution "to all men of all grades of intelligence and culture"? While it dismissed Nihilism with a new system of powerful and impeccable spiritual dialectics, sharp and keen in its logical exactness, it succeeded only in asserting the reality of another negation in the exclusiveness of the passive Brahman. It robbed the dynamic Absolute of its legitimate existence in activity. "Do the souls inhere in Brahman or Brahman in the souls? Every attempt to bring Brahman into connection with the world of becoming ends in failure." Ultimately the world itself becomes an illusion which gets dispelled only in the reality of the static Eternal. Therefore, according to this Theory of Brahman, there is no possibility of any real becoming, no prospect for enlightened life here, in fact, our only concern ought to be to get out of this illusory world by the practice of the Yoga of Self-Knowledge.

Shankara had taken the Shruti, the Revelation of the ancient Rishis, as the basis for his formulations in the context of his own spiritual realisation, of the blank featureless actionless Absolute. He saw only that and discounted what is around as fleeting and false and mundane. Effectively, he threw away God from this world. He saw everything in the scriptures only from this point of view and interpreted these accordingly. The Gita's

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सत ।

*nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate satah* (II 16)

“Of the unreal there is no being, and of the real there is no non-being” he chose to tackle the haunting problem of the ultimate reality in his own way. Finally he arrived at the unreality of this changing world in contrast to the immutable unchanging reality which alone exists. In the words of Radhakrishnan “The world is said to be unreal since it is sublated by true knowledge. The objects of the world are changeable. They never are, but always become. Nothing that changes is real, which is eternal transcendent being. In this sense the changing world is not real.. The realisation of the Atman is the final end (avasana) of all worldly activities, which is not reached so long as the world as world persists. The relation of being and non-being is one of exclusion, of contradiction, and the former tries to overcome non-being, negate it by transforming into being. This is the aim of the process of becoming presided over by Ishwara, who is ever active in pushing non-being out of existence and bringing forward an eternal procession of existence out of it, but, at the logical level, it is an impossible feat to force non-being into the equivalence of being. Brahman alone is pure being, possessing whatever there is of reality in all things, without their limitations or elements of non-being. Whatever is different from it is unreal. The nature of samsara is always to become what it is not, to transform itself by transcending itself.” (*Indian Philosophy*, Vol 2, pp 563-64)

The Shankarite upshot of all this excessively fine argumentation is “The world neither is nor is not, and so its nature is indescribable, *tattvānyātvabhyam anirvacanīya*.” Indeed, it goes even a step farther, lending a kind of illusiveness to Ishwara, to the personal aspect of the Eternal. This extreme position lands the Advaitin into a difficult situation when he comes to the three Purushas described in the fifteenth chapter of the Gita.

Take a brief example of the verse hinting at the nature of Jiva, the individual soul “It is an eternal portion of Me that becomes the Jiva in the world of living creatures and cultivates the subjective powers of Prakriti, mind and the five senses.”

ममैवाशो जीवलोके जीवभूत सनातन ।  
मन षष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥

*mamaivāśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtah sanātanah*  
*manah sasthanīndriyāṇī prakṛtisthāni karsati* (Gita 15.7)

Sri Aurobindo, commenting on the phrase “an eternal portion of Me,” writes “This is an epithet, a statement of immense bearing and consequence. For it means that each soul, each being in its spiritual reality is the very Divine, however partial its actual manifestation of him in Nature. And it means too, if words have any sense, that each manifesting spirit, each of the many, is an eternal individual, an eternal unborn undying power of the one Existence. We call this manifesting spirit the Jiva. But in truth it is something greater than its present appearance. And when this soul arises above all ignorant limitation, then it puts on its divine nature of which its humanity is only a temporary veil, a thing of partial and incomplete significance.” (*Essays on the Gita*, pp 430-31)

The difficulty of the Advaitic philosophy lies in the apparent contradiction of the partless having parts, in the division of the Indivisible. Radhakrishnan himself points out that Shankara "is not faithful to the intention of the author of the Gita when he says that *amsa*, or part, indicates an imaginary or apparent part only" (*Op Cit*, Vol 1, p 549). Certainly then *à la* Shankara there are no future prospects available to the soul which according to him is a fiction. But it is not only here that he is going contrary to the sense of the Shruti, he does not recognise the implications of the image of the two birds found in the Veda as well as in the Upanishads, the vivid metaphor of the Soul and the Oversoul connecting in an organic way the individual and the cosmic in their works here. In the process he also dismisses the Puranic experience of Nara and Narayana, of Man and God. No doubt the world is full of falsehood, but is certainly not false and there is a chance for it.—because the *amśa*, the Immortal in the Mortal of the Veda, is present here.

Jnaneshwar had grown in this milieu of Brahminical Advaitism and generally accepted its formulations. Indeed, he is interpreting the Gita in the Shankarite way in which there is no place for a personal God, in which there cannot be parts of the Partless. Not that this is his position throughout, but in the discourse, whenever metaphysical issues pop up, he happens to lean more towards the prevalent ideas and concepts of his age. In *Jnaneshwarī* we witness this at a number of places, even to the extent that the Mayavadin's symbols and analogies keep on coming at regular intervals. Very frequently we are given the examples of the famous snake-and-rope, experience in a dream in which everything appears real, the mother-of-pearl, the mirage, the children of a barren woman, the pot and the sky held by it and yet not getting limited by it, and so on. Through all these what is hammered into us is that the reality of the world is unreal, *mithyā*.

But the remarkable thing is that the spiritual quality of Jnaneshwar's poetry never suffers. There is always the inspired freshness and genuineness of word-value and sound-value with the rhythm faultlessly bearing them in the breath of the spirit. This authenticity is so powerful, and ever so appealing, the breath of the spirit so satisfying, that its own sense tends to ignore the sense and substance of a philosophical discourse that has the ring of a doubtful conclusion. There are always very profound utterances true to the Yogic intuition and the insights these bring are invaluable. For the purpose of our present discussion, however, we shall keep aside the aspect of poetry and focus the attention on a few issues of thought alone. It is necessary that the vastness of a spiritual experience, particularly as we experience in the Gita, does not get confined to a specific sectarian or logical-metaphysical formulation. The Scripture far exceeds the Advaitic Doctrine of the Quiescent Eternal, the Revelation far transcends the Argument of Knowledge, *brahmavāda*, which is but one of many systems to describe the ultimate Reality. We may take here Jnaneshwar's relevant commentary which inevitably makes this world an unredeemable product of ignorance, *avidyā*.

(To be continued)

R Y DESHPANDE



# THE SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION

(Continued from the issue of November 1997)

(This is a text originally prepared for a slide show by Kailas Jhaveri to present the significance of the symbols of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in terms of the Integral Yoga through flowers. It is based on their writings and includes direct quotes wherever possible. The spiritual names of the flowers are given here in italics.)

## 2. THE MOTHER'S SYMBOL

THE MOTHER comes in order to bring down the Supramental. And it is the descent which makes her full manifestation here possible. It is a *divine sacrifice*. For, in her deep and great love for her children she has stooped here into the Darkness that she may lead it to the *Light*, into the Falsehood and Error that she may convert it to the *Truth*, into this Death that she may turn it into godlike Life—*supramentalised life-energy*, into this world-pain and its obstinate sorrow and suffering that she may end it into the transforming ecstasy of her sublime *Ananda*.

The centre of the Mother's symbol represents the Mother as the Divine Consciousness-Force of the Supreme and is far above all she creates. She is the Adya Shakti, the one original transcendent *Divine Consciousness, Aditi*.

### Aditi

Nothing can be here or elsewhere but what she decides and the Supreme sanctions. Alone, she harbours the absolute Power and the ineffable Presence—*Divine Presence*. The Supreme is manifest in her forever as the everlasting *Sachchidananda*. But she acts in the universe and directs the working out of her thousand forces through her personalities embodying her powers. The four petals of her symbol represent the four great powers of the Mother: Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati.

### Maheshwari

Imperial Maheshwari is seated in the wideness above thinking mind and will, and sublimates and greatens them into *wisdom* and largeness or floods with a splendour beyond them. For, she is the mighty and wise One, who opens us to the Supramental infinities and the cosmic vastness, to the grandeur of the supreme Light—*supramental sun*—, to the treasure-house of miraculous knowledge—*supramental knowledge*—, to the measureless movements of the Mother's eternal forces.

Nothing can move her because all wisdom is in her, nothing is hidden from her that she chooses to know. She comprehends all things and all beings and their nature and what moves them and the law of the world and its times and how all was and is and must be—*Divine knowledge*. A strength is in her that meets everything and masters and none can prevail in the end against her vast intangible wisdom and high tranquil

power—the effective power of the Supramental Consciousness Tranquil is she and wonderful, great and calm forever—*psychic tranquillity* Equal, patient and unalterable in her will, she deals with men according to their nature and with things and happenings according to their force and the truth that is them For, the truth of things is her one concern, knowledge her centre of power and to build our soul and our nature into the divine Truth her mission and her labour—*absolute truthfulness*

### **Mahakali**

Mahakali is of another nature Not wideness but height, not wisdom but force and strength are her peculiar power—*dynamic power*

There is in her an overwhelming intensity, a mighty passion of force to achieve, a divine violence rushing to shatter every limit and obstacle—*conquering fervour* All her divinity leaps out in a splendour of tempestuous action—*power of action* For, she is the warrior of the worlds who never shrinks from the battle—*conquest of the armies*

The impulses that are swift and straight and frank—*straightforwardness, frankness*, the movements that are unreserved and absolute—*entire self-giving*—, the aspiration that mounts in flame—*the flame of aspiration*—are the motion of Mahakali For she too is the Mother and her love is as intense as her wrath and she has a deep and passionate kindness—*The Divine Love*

Nothing can satisfy her that falls short of the Supreme ecstasies, the highest heights, the noblest aims, the largest vistas Therefore, with her is the victorious force of the Divine—*perfect victory*—and it is by *Grace* of her *fire* and passion and speed if the great achievement can be done now rather than hereafter

### **Mahalakshmi**

The Mother manifests herself as Mahalakshmi through her powers of beauty and *harmony*. There is no aspect of the Divine Shakti more attractive to the heart of embodied beings than this miracle of eternal beauty, an unseizable secret of divine harmonies, the compelling magic of an irresistible universal *charm*. She throws the spell of an intoxicating *sweetness* of the Divine

To be close to her is a profound happiness and to feel her within the heart is to make existence a rapture and a marvel—*spiritual happiness*

Wherever she fixes her wonderful gaze or lets fall the loveliness of her smile, the soul is seized and made captive and plunged into the depths of an unfathomable bliss—*victorious beauty, divine Ananda*

Magnetic is the touch of her hands and their occult and delicate influence refines mind, life and body—*refinement of senses, feelings, habits*—and where she presses her feet course miraculous streams of an entrancing Ananda

And yet, it is not easy to meet the demand of this enchanting power or to keep her presence Harmony and beauty of the mind and soul—*spiritual beauty*—, harmony and beauty of thoughts and feelings—*aristocracy of beauty*—, harmony and beauty in every outward act and movement—*abundance of beauty*—, harmony and beauty of life

and surroundings—*collective harmony*—, this is the demand of Mahalakshmi

But all that is ugly and mean and base, all that is poor and sordid and squalid, all that is brutal and coarse repels her advent—*detachment from all that is undivine*

Where there is affinity to the rhythms of the secret world-bliss and response to the call of the All-Beautiful and concord and unity—*beauty aspiring for the Supramental Realisation*—and the glad flow of many lives turned towards the Divine—*beauty of attachment for the Divine*—, in that atmosphere she consents to abide For, it is through love—*victorious love*—and beauty—*power of beauty*—that she lays on men the yoke of the Divine—*power of spiritual beauty*

Life is turned in her supreme creations into a rich work of celestial art and all existence into a poem of sacred delight—the *beauty of tomorrow manifesting the Divine*, the world's riches are brought together and concerted for a supreme order—*splendour and opulence of the material life*—and even the simplest and commonest things are made wonderful by her intuition of unity and the breath of her spirit—*supramental riches*

### **Mahasaraswati**

Mahasaraswati is the Mother's power of work and her spirit of perfection and order—*Mahasaraswati's perfection in works* The youngest of the Four, she is the most skilful in executive faculty and the nearest to physical nature—*skill in works*

Maheshwari lays down the large lines of the world-forces, Mahakali drives their energy and impetus, Mahalakshmi discovers their rhythms and measures, but Mahasaraswati presides over their *detail of organisation* and execution, relation of parts and effective combination of forces and unfailing exactitude of result and fulfilment

Always she holds in her nature and can give to those whom she has chosen the intimate and precise knowledge—*intuitive knowledge*—the subtlety and *patience*, the accuracy of *intuitive mind* and conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker—*accurate perception, clear mind*

This power is the strong, the tireless, the careful and efficient builder, organiser, administrator, technician, artisan and classifier of the worlds—*result of harmonious organisation* When she takes up the *transformation* and new-building of the nature, her action is laborious and minute and often seems to our impatience slow and interminable, but it is persistent, integral and flawless—*flawless planning of work*

For, the will in her works is scrupulous, unsleeping, indefatigable, leaning over us she notes and touches every little detail, finds out every minute defect, gap, twist or incompleteness—*integral thoroughness* Moulding and remoulding she labours each part till it has attained its true form, is put in its exact place in the whole and fulfils its precise purpose—*thrust for perfection* all is solid, accurate, complete, admirable Nothing short of a perfect perfection satisfies her and she is ready to face an eternity of toil if that is needed for the fulness of her creation—*perfect New Creation*

Kind, smiling, close and helpful, not easily turned away or discouraged—*eternal*

*smile*—, insistent even after repeated failure,—*eternal youth*—, her hand sustains our every step on condition that we are single in our will and straightforward and sincere—*resolution, determination, concentration, straightforwardness, sincerity*

A mother to our wants, a friend in our difficulties—*friendship with the Divine*—a persistent and tranquil counsellor and mentor, chasing away with her radiant smile—*divine smile*—the clouds of gloom and fretfulness and depression, reminding always of the ever-present help—*divine help* Pointing to the eternal sunshine, she is firm, quiet and persevering in the deep and continuous urge that drives us towards the integrality of the higher nature—*perseverance*

\*

There are other great Personalities of the Divine Mother Most of all, one who is her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and *Ananda* which flows from a supreme *Divine Love*, the *Ananda* that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter—*Ananda in the subconscious*

Only when the Four have founded their harmony and freedom of movement in the transformed mind and life and body—*integral conversion*—, can those other rarer Powers manifest in the earth movement and the *supramental action* become possible

### **The Twelve Petals**

The twelve petals of the Mother's symbol represent the following twelve powers of the Mother manifested for her work

*Sincerity*—To be sincere is to be pure As Sri Aurobindo tells us, "Desire nothing but the purity, force, light, wideness, calm, *Ananda* of the Divine Consciousness, and its insistence to transform and perfect your mind, life and body "

*Humility*—True humility is humility before the Divine It is a precise, exact, living sense that one is nothing, one can do nothing, understand nothing without the Divine Even if one is exceptionally intelligent and capable, this is nothing in comparison with the Divine Consciousness

*Gratitude*—There is nothing which gives you a joy equal to that of gratitude One hears a bird sing, sees a lovely flower, looks at a little child, observes an act of generosity, reads a beautiful sentence, looks at the setting sun.—no matter what—suddenly, this kind of emotion comes upon you so deep, so intense, that the world manifests the Divine, that there is something behind the world which is the Divine

*Perseverance*—The road of yoga is long Whatever method is used, persistence and perseverance are essential A yoga like this needs patience, because it means a change, both of the radical method and of each part and detail of our nature

*Aspiration*—One must have a fixed and unflinching aspiration, vigilant and constant—an aspiration of the entire being—an aspiration that takes hold of you completely, an aspiration to unite with the Divine to give oneself totally to the Divine,

not to live outside the Divine Consciousness, so that the Divine may be all in all

*Receptivity*—This means to receive the Divine Force and allow it to work, guiding one's sight, will and action. There must be a complete and never-failing assent, a willingness to let the Divine Power do with us whatever is needed for the work that has to be done

*Progress*—The very first condition of inner progress is to recognise whatever is or has been a wrong movement in any part of nature—wrong idea, wrong feeling, wrong speech, wrong action—and by wrong is meant what departs from the truth, from the higher Consciousness and the higher Self, from the way of the Divine. Once recognised, it is offered to the Divine for the Light and Grace to descend and substitute for it the right movement of the true Consciousness

*Courage*—As Sri Aurobindo says ‘‘The forces that stand in the way of the sadhana—the spiritual discipline—are the forces of the lower mental, vital and physical nature. Behind them are the adverse powers of the mental, vital and physical worlds. All I say is, ‘keep the mantra of success, the determination of victory, the fixed resolve and go bravely on with your yoga .. The inner doors will open ’’’

Goodness, *Benevolence*—One should not be good with an interested motive. One should not be good so that others may be good to you. It is always the same lesson. One must do as well as one can, the best one can, but without expecting a result. One must be good for the love of goodness.

*Generosity*—It is to give unstintingly, selflessly, without bargaining or any expectation. It is to give for the joy of giving. It is an opportunity that the Divine gives us for the liberation of the ego and servitude to self-indulgence, replacing it by the joy of participation in the divine work upon earth, for a true and beautiful and harmonious equipment and ordering of a new, divinised, mental, vital and physical existence in whatever way the Divine Mother herself decides in her creative vision.

Equality, *Equanimity*—The very first necessity for spiritual perfection is a perfect equality. The perfect equality of our Spirit and nature is a means by which we can move back from the troubled and ignorant outer consciousness into the inner kingdom of heaven and possess the Spirit's eternal kingdoms of greatness, joy and peace.

*Peace*—In the liberation of the soul from the Ignorance, the very first foundation is peace, calm, the silence and quietude of the Eternal and Infinite. A consummate power and greater formation of the spiritual ascension takes up this peace of liberation into the bliss of a perfect experience and realisation of the eternal beatitude, the bliss of the Eternal and the Infinite.

✦

The supramental change is a thing decreed and inevitable in the evolution of the earth-consciousness, for its upward ascent is not ended and mind is not its last summit—*steps to the Supreme*

Follow your soul and not your mind, your soul that answers to the Truth, not your

mind that leaps at appearances—*psychic aspiration*—trust the Divine Power—*trust in the Divine*—and She will free the godlike elements in you and shape all into an expression of Divine Nature—*total conversion*

If you desire this *transformation*, put yourself in the hands of the Mother and her Powers without cavil or resistance and let her do unhindered her work within you—*detailed surrender*

The Mother's power—*Aditi, the Divine Consciousness*—and not any human endeavour and *tapasya* can alone rend the lid and tear the covering and shape the vessel and bring down into this world of obscurity and falsehood and death and suffering, Truth and Light and Life Divine and the Immortal's Ananda. Then, *the aim of existence is realised*

(Concluded)

KAILAS JHAVERI

---

## IF I SEE GOD

If I see God  
 What do I see?  
 A fish, a flower,  
 A cloud, a man, a tree

If I do not see God  
 What do I see?  
 A fish, a flower,  
 A cloud, a man, a tree

But seeing all as God  
 And God *in* all—  
 What ecstasy!

ELIZABETH STILLER

## WHO SAYS THAT YOU ARE FAR?

Who says that You are far,  
Or that You do not care?  
How near to us You are,  
O Intimacy rare!  
My Mother! I have but  
These human eyes to shut,  
And lo, Your Love is there  
A-shining like a star!

Hourly, from chime to chime,  
You deepen in the heart,  
O wonderful, sublime  
Flame in all life and art!  
Slowly from hour to hour  
You deepen like a power,  
I see You all the time,  
Intimate, though apart

It is Your Presence drapes  
The universe with glows,  
Out of Your Dream escapes  
The colour of the rose,  
The wing-beat of a bird,  
The music of a word,—  
A universe of shapes  
Is born of Your repose

What atom, grain or dot  
Is of Your joy devoid?  
What moment, mood or spot  
Apparently destroyed  
In time, has ever ceased  
Or suffered in the least  
O Love, since are they not  
Within You re-enjoyed?

I see You everywhere,  
An image warm and true,  
The rainbow in the air  
Is but a streak of You!

Yon birdling's yellow bill  
Is painted by Your Will,  
Mother! it is Your care  
That makes all heaven blue.

Again and yet again  
You meet me through the hours,—  
I see You in the rain,  
I smell You in the flowers!  
I hear your endless tune  
Played in the sun and moon,  
On changing plane on plane  
You wield Your magic powers!

All day and all night long,  
Behind the whole world's rush,  
Behind the whole world's wrong,  
Behind the whole world's blush,  
I know Your Truth control  
My body, mind and soul  
I hear You in my song  
Awaken like a hush!

Beauty! at every turn  
I hear Your passing feet,  
I see You glow and burn  
In every lane and street,—  
In every passerby  
I see You drawing nigh  
In every step You yearn  
Myself in me to meet!

You have possessed me quite,  
In Your enchanted grip  
Across deep miles of light  
I seem to drop and slip  
Like a lone drop of dew  
Into the depths of You,  
Until upon a height  
I share Your comradeship

Who says that You are far  
 And that You do not care?  
 O more Familiar  
 Than earth and fire and air?

Nay, Mother, You are near,  
 It is your hands that steer  
 My life on waters bare  
 Beneath Your guiding-star!

1 o'clock, noon, 3-6-34

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Sri Aurobindo's Comment Wonderfully beautiful

---

## UNFURLINGS

EVERY unfurling blooms another star,  
 Another star storehouse of enigmatic existence,  
 Our askings grow in number every day  
 When, untravelling, open a thousand doors

We are confused in labyrinths, both of crowd  
 And emptiness, at the turn of every page,  
 Horizon recedes only to remain imagination,  
 Yet every footstep unfolds bits of truth

Humanhood projects ego at every conquest,  
 Every conquest is the incubating force  
 Of success,—in battles of confrontation,  
 Yet life remains unsure, as in the beginning

We should never learn to measure a life  
 And obliterate its mysteries, its mysticisms.

PRONAB KUMAR MAJUMDER



## 15TH AUGUST 1961

A HEIGHT S splendour engulfed the wayward world  
A vastness of flaming peace to earth was born  
Striking roots in the mire of starless change  
The eye of the unknown gazed down on time  
With momentless gaze of self-oblivion  
A new river of might awoke within  
Casting the vacant veils of seven skies  
And to the soul was revealed the golden pang  
The diamond need to clasp the Inviolable  
The imperishable cry of sun to God

15-8-61

ROMEN

(From the late poet's unpublished diaries)

## THE ONE IN ALL

Just look inside and you will see  
There's something special in you and me  
The Divine Shakti is in our soul  
And we are each part of a whole

There is no difference in the human race  
We all have a soul and all have a face  
We all seem different like night and day,  
Yet all the same in every way

She helps us through our daily life  
Through joy and illness and stress and strife  
She's The Mother of every one  
And never stops when the day is done

She picks us up every time we fall,  
Mother O' Mother—The One In All.

MARY (ANGEL) FINN

## ON A BIRTHDAY

I SOARED far off to the distant worlds  
And brought fragrant blossoms  
To offer to your palm

I drowned deep in the vast oceans  
And gathered glistening pearls  
To put on your neck

I climbed up the mountain peaks  
And fetched sacred water  
To give for your cool bath

But I am ashamed,  
For none of these is a fit gift  
From age to age, from life to life  
And from shore to shore of sunlit memories  
We meet each other on the same path  
You are ever Autumn and ever dewy  
Whose sweet smile weaves songs in me  
Whose loving voice flows like a murmuring stream  
You sail in my silvery pool  
Like clouds in the sky,  
Within undulates a soft music  
When you pass by

O Dear, what can I wish  
On your Happy Birth Day?  
You are half a heavenly fairy  
And half an earthly frame  
Vain dreams I have to reach your core  
This solitary heart is waiting  
Outside your closed golden door  
To shower gently its endless riches  
On your beauteous flowery feet

SURYAKANTI MOHANTY

## DESCARTES

RENE DESCARTES, the great mathematician and philosopher, was born on 31 March 1596. The small town, La Haye near Tours in France where he was born, now bears his name. In 1649, in the month of September, Descartes was obliged to accept the invitation of Queen Christina of Sweden and go to Stockholm to act as her tutor. He had to get up early in the morning to give philosophy tutorials to the Queen. Descartes could not stand the cold of such northern latitudes and died of pneumonia in Stockholm, on 11 February 1650, at the early age of fifty-four. Here we shall be concerned mainly with Descartes the philosopher, but for that very reason we shall have to talk about his contributions in other fields, specially where he was able to bring in new methodological changes and comprehensive outlooks.

Descartes is regarded as the father of modern philosophy. This is not a vain appellation. He is the first man perhaps whose philosophical outlook was greatly affected by scientific discoveries. He does not accept the foundations laid by his predecessors, but builds one on a radically new ground. There is a freshness about his work and his style is excellent—unpedantic and easy. It is very fortunate for Western philosophy that many of his successors on the continent and in England retained something of his stylistic merit.

Descartes was educated from 1604 to 1612 at the Jesuit College of La Flèche which seems to have given him a much better grounding in modern mathematics than he could have got anywhere else.

In 1612 he went to Paris and retired to a secluded retreat where he worked at Geometry. Friends soon nosed him out, however, for more complete quiet he joined the Dutch army (1617). He seems to have had peace for two years. But the coming of the Thirty Years' War led him to join the Bavarian army (1619). While in Holland he met the Dutch mathematician Isaac Beeckman (1618) and formed friendship with him. Inspired by Beeckman, Descartes devoted himself for almost a decade to Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry, with an attempt to find a relationship between different mathematical disciplines. It became the central theme of Descartes's philosophy that mathematics possessed a kind of precision which should be the goal of philosophy. Mathematics was referred to, by Descartes, as *Scientia*, his own term for genuine and systematic knowledge.

In Bavaria, on 10 November 1619, he had a striking experience in a dream. That day the weather was very cold and he stayed in a stove-heated room (*poêle*), there after an intense meditation, he fell asleep and had a series of three very striking and vivid dreams. The last dream was rare indeed. It was simply the appearance and disappearance of a number of books—first an encyclopaedia, then an anthology of poetry containing the Pythagorean motto for truth and falsity, and lastly an ode of Ausonius beginning with the line that may be translated as "What road in life shall I follow?" Descartes became convinced that his mission was to establish a new and comprehensive philosophical and scientific system.

Descartes talked of 'intuition' by which he meant the conception of a clear and attentive mind which is such that there can be no room for doubt. It is something that proceeds purely from the light of reason, *lux rationis* as Descartes says. We need not trace the biographical details of Descartes, but it may be mentioned that he stayed in Holland for almost the last twenty years of his life (1629-50) excepting occasional visits to France or elsewhere. The reason must be that Holland was at that time the only place in Europe where there was freedom for thinking and speculation. Spinoza (1632-77) also chose Holland for similar reasons.

The main preoccupations of Descartes during the early and the middle 1630s were scientific. His treatise on physics *The World (Le Monde)* was completed in 1633. Here we find that he had fully accepted Galileo's works which gave a strong support for the Copernican cosmology, dethroning the earth from its privileged central place. Galileo was, as we know, condemned by the Inquisition in 1633 and sentenced to house arrest for life. Descartes withdrew his own work from publication. His book, in fact, contained a complete description of the origin and workings of the physical universe in accordance with the 'laws of mechanics', in the concluding section of his *Treatise on Man (Traité de l'homme)* we find an account of human physiology in which he employed the same mechanical principles. Descartes's approach is strongly reductionistic leading to the conclusion that the body is essentially a machine. Descartes completely dispensed with the Scholastic line of thinking that explains functions like movement, digestion and sensation by appeal to the operation of the 'locomotive soul', 'nutritive soul' and 'sensory soul'. Descartes replaced psychism by mechanism, the animal as well as human organism is explained purely in terms of space-time analysis of the component parts. An animal is regarded by Descartes as an automaton. But it is to be noted that thought was put on a quite different footing and, to explain it, Descartes had to take recourse to a 'rational soul' (*âme raisonnable*), specially created by God and 'united' to the complex machinery of the human body. Part Five of Descartes's *Discourses on Method (Discours de la Methode)* includes a chain of arguments showing that the mechanistic schema which suffices to explain all observed functions in animals totally fails when it comes to explaining the capacity for thought and language in human beings. It is not conceivable, Descartes argues, that a machine should produce different arrangements of words so as to give an appropriately meaningful answer to whatever is said in its presence, as the dullest man can do. Human beings therefore must possess what Descartes calls a rational soul which cannot be derived in any way from the potentiality of matter, but must be specially created. One may bring into the discussion Charles Darwin, his *Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) entailed no special need for divine intervention, implying that man had evolved like other organisms and was not a product of special creation. Well, Descartes and Darwin both have their shares of truth. It depends upon the way we look at things. But the truth, deeper still, seems to be that the hand of God is always present behind creation at every point, big or small, "through crystal and plant, insect and beast and man". Strictly speaking, life even in lesser living creatures is not mere automation.

The question of the divine intervention should be properly understood 'Intervention' does not seem to be the correct word at all. Perhaps the hand is the hand of that supreme artist who knows that art conceals art (*art est celare artem*)

By 1637 Descartes was ready to publish three specimen essays illustrating his new scientific method. The third essay laid down the foundations of what we now call Coordinate Geometry. As regards Cartesian coordinate geometry the thinker J. S. Mill (1806-73) said "It constitutes the greatest single step ever made in the progress of the exact sciences." Prefaced to the three essays was an extended introduction in six parts, the *Discourses on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking the Truth in the Sciences*. This is briefly known as the *Discourses on Method* and has already been mentioned.

Part Four of the *Discourses* forms the metaphysical core of his work and may be said to be the precursor of his later comprehensive philosophy. Here Descartes stresses the need to make sure that the foundations of his science are really sound. For this he proposes to reject, as if absolutely false, anything in which he could imagine a doubt. "Thus," he says, "because our senses sometimes deceive us, I decided to suppose that nothing was such as they led us to imagine. Considering that the very thoughts we have while awake may also occur while we are asleep without any of them being at that time true, I resolved to pretend that all the things that had ever entered my mind were no more true than the illusions of my dreams. But, immediately, I noticed that even while I was endeavouring in this way to think that everything was false, it was necessary that I, who was thinking this, was something. And observing that the truth of 'I am thinking, therefore I exist' (*Je pense, donc je suis*) was so firm and sure that the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics were incapable of shaking it, I decided that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking." The argument has come to be known as the "Cartesian Cogito", from the Latin version *cogito, ergo sum* occurring in Descartes's later work *Principia Philosophiae*.

The *cogito*-argument then proceeded to a new phase. From 'I exist' the search began on the nature of this 'I'. Descartes arrived at a remarkable result. "I knew I was a substance whose whole essence or nature is thinking, and which does not require any place or depend on any material thing, in order to exist. Accordingly, 'I'—that is, the soul by which I am what I am—is entirely distinct from my body."

Descartes was thus led to propound one of his most controversial theses, that the thinking self is essentially incorporeal. What makes me 'me' is by nature entirely independent of the body and could exist without it. The thesis has been, for the most part, rejected by modern philosophers who refer to the doctrine as the doctrine of "the ghost in the machine." However, we are not at one with this criticism. We have a feeling that the Cartesian problem may have led Leibniz (1646-1716) to his Monadology. Perhaps the point is not that of a ghost in the machine, but that of a dominant human monad in an assemblage of millions of ordinary monads assembling round the dominant monad to serve special purposes for it as dictated by God above. It

should be noted that monads were granted point-existences in space by Leibniz in later days

We now turn to Descartes's meditations as reflected in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641). In the Third Meditation Descartes ponders over the innate ideas he finds within him and reasons that the odds for the objective reality of one of these ideas, that of a supremely perfect being, are so great that it could not have been constructed from resources of the meditations of our own finite mind, the conclusion is that God must really exist, and that, in creating me, He placed this idea in me to be, as it were, the mark of the Craftsman stamped on his work. The idea is noble enough. But a more cogent way of arriving at the existence of God could have been through the question 'by whom are all our senses and all that we see created and controlled?' This, incidentally, is the subject matter of the Kena Upanishad (*kena*—by whom) where the conclusions automatically establish the supreme perfection of God. In the Fifth Meditation we are offered a second proof for God's existence, namely, that the concept of a supreme perfect being implies that such a being cannot lack the element of existence and hence that such a being must, by its very nature, exist.

The flaw in the argument is quite obvious. For a property P it may be quite meaningful to say about some being that the being, by its very nature, must possess the property P. But the question of a being having a certain nature can arise only when the being exists. So the property P here cannot be the property of having existence. It is difficult to understand how Descartes, and later, Leibniz could fall into this faulty trap. The argument was first given by St. Anselm, a great theologian and the Archbishop of Canterbury. However, the lack of proof for the existence of God is not a proof of the non-existence of God either, as claimed by many atheists including the Sankhyas who said that God is invalidated due to lack of proof, *īśvarāśiddhe pramānābhāvāt*.

In the Sixth, that is the last, Meditation the existence of the external world is established. This is done by establishing first the existence of our body. Having used philosophical reasons to establish the distinction between mind and body, the Meditation invokes our experience of the sensations of hunger, thirst, pain and so on, as showing that mind and body, though distinct, are closely interconnected. We know that any ultimate reality was referred to by Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz as substance. For Descartes substances were three in number—God, mind and matter. Mind and matter were independent of each other. But Descartes invented the theory of vital spirits, through the medium of which mind and matter come into contact with each other.

The theory of vital spirits was rejected by Descartes's own followers, Malebranche and Goulinex, who maintained that mind and matter are independent, but providentially parallel. Goulinex supplied the famous clock-paradigm. If two clocks are so placed that we can only see one and hear the other, then we will see that whenever one strikes four, the other marks four. From this we may be led to believe that the two clocks are causally connected. But the fact is just that they are both working parallelly under a third outside cause. Similar is the case between matter and

mind, the outside cause being God himself. We would like to mention that providential parallelism is all right, but for that, rejection of the vital spirit is not necessary. Maybe, the parallelism between mind and matter is worked out better by Providence through the vital spirits. The rejection by the followers of Descartes must be because Descartes himself regarded life as an automation. Perhaps, the vital spirit was an improvement of Descartes over himself. We may mention that matter and mind indwelt by the vital spirit is an idea which comes very near to the idea of five sheaths (*pancha kośa*) of a being as explored in the Upanishad, these three are in fact the same as the first three sheaths—*anna, prāṇah, manah*—of the Taittirīya Upanishad.

In spite of bitter debates with a large section of theological and philosophical critics, Descartes's reputation continued to grow, particularly after the publication, in 1644, of the *Principles of Philosophy*. Descartes's programme for establishing a fully comprehensive philosophical system was, however, still incomplete in the sense that he had as yet said little about psychological and ethical problems. In the later 1640s, Descartes became interested in questions of ethics and psychology, partly as a result of the searching questions raised by Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia in a long and meaningful correspondence. In the Preface to the 1647 French edition of the *Principles of Philosophy* he referred to the project of constructing a 'perfect morality' (*la plus parfaite morale*).

Our life, Descartes came increasingly to underline, involves far more than the intellectual and volitional activities that belong to our essence as immaterial thinking things. The varied sensory awareness is an inescapable part of our everyday human experience. And it is this sensory and affective dimension that gives colour and richness to our lives as human beings. The fruit of this new interest of Descartes took shape in his last work *The Passions of the Soul* (*Les passions de l'âme*) in 1649. Dissociating himself from his earlier intellectual approaches to ethics, which had often attempted to suppress the passions as inimical to the good life, Descartes declared: "The philosophy I cultivate is not so savage or grim as to outlaw the operation of the passions, on the contrary, it is here in my view, that the entire sweetness and joy of life is to be found." Descartes's final project was to ground his ethics in a systematic understanding of the operation of the passions, both on a physiological and on a psychological level. This, he hoped, would help to channel our feelings and emotions in such a way as to lead us to a harmonious human life, lived in accordance with our best perceptions of the good for mankind. Cartesian science, pressed into the service of ethics, would allow us to fulfil the dream: instead of the abstract speculative philosophy of the past, we would have at our disposal a new and genuinely practical philosophy, one that would make us the "lords and masters of nature" and bring us closer to achieving perfection and felicity.

Descartes's ambitious programme could not see completion. Untimely death snatched him away. But, though he died leaving his work unfinished, the remarkably wide range of what he achieved had a permanent effect on the scientific and philosophical thinking of Europe. The writings of Spinoza (1632-77), Malebranche

(1638-1715) and Leibniz (1646-1716) on the Continent and Locke (1632-1704), Berkeley (1685-1753) and Hume (1711-76) in England bear testimony to Descartes's thought concerning the structure of human knowledge and the relationship between mind and matter. The deriding of Cartesian philosophy at the hands of the twentieth century philosophers of the Wittgensteinian or the Logical-Positivistic school appears really to be off the mark and not a thing to be worried about.

However, in matters of ontology, not Cartesian dualism of matter and mind with God above, but an intimate kind of dialectical monism seems to be a more consummate viewpoint. Here we would like to reiterate that Sri Aurobindo described the ultimate dynamical reality as "Consciousness Force", which shows that he was aware of the non-consciousness part also. Sri Aurobindo said " even in the view of the world as essentially an act of consciousness, an act is implied and in the act movement of Force, play of Energy " (*The Life Divine*, SABCL. Vol 18, p 82)

Cartesian doubt with the *cogito* is the foundation of modern epistemology. But God was easily seen to be beyond any doubt. Descartes's methods transcended those of the Scholastic schools and he is very justifiably called the father of modern philosophy.

ASHOK KUMAR RAY



## K. D. SETHNA: THE PROSE WRITER

### ON SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of October 1997)

SETHNA sees Sri Aurobindo from various angles. His observations from each of these angles is so high-serious that one has the impression that he is a specialist in each of the facets of the Master. He does not like rehash. Every time he takes up his pen to write something on Sri Aurobindo, he has something new in mind, something new to tell his specialist audience.

In the early works, like *The Poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo*, his defence of the Master's poetry is in a very specialised and technical language. If one compares this style with that of the letters to Kathleen Raine, which were written in the 60s, one instantly notices the evolution of Sethna's persuasive prose. But the basic trait of *refutatio* and exhaustive treatment has always been there since the beginning of his career as a writer.

However, the effort at clarifying the vision and work of Sri Aurobindo had started in the 40s under the appreciative eye of the Master himself. Unfortunately most of those comments are not presently available. The one remark that is with us is about his article on Free-Will in *The Vision and Work of Sri Aurobindo*. The comment was conveyed through Nirodbaran: "It is excellent. In fact, it could not be bettered." It is interesting that while talking on Yoga and spirituality Sethna's prose becomes clearer than his prose of literary criticism.

Spirituality is oneness with or at least effective participation in that secret existence: it is for evolutionary man the act or state of what India has called Yoga. The word "Yoga" has the same root as the English "Yoke"—it connotes the being yoked or joined or united with the more-than-human, the divine, the perfect, through a disciplined process of inner development. (*The Vision and Work of Sri Aurobindo*, p. 1)

This is a proper extension of Sri Aurobindo's simple definition of Yoga. A little later, on the next page, Sethna wishes to shed light on the old system. The purpose is clear: to clarify.

The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo starts straight with the consciousness and puts a double aim before it: transcendence and transformation. That double aim is in general all Yoga's, but much depends on the precise content read in it. In the past, the whole meaning of transcendence lay in getting beyond the ordinary human self into some aloof Absolute or some Cosmic Consciousness or some Oversoul that is this self's Lord and Lover. Transformation meant sagehood and saintliness,

a calmly compassionate, wisely energetic and helpful living from within outwards, which brings others not only happiness but also a touch of the transcendence achieved by the sage and the saint. The philosophy behind this spirituality has been either that the world is a huge illusion from which its victims have to be drawn away into an illimitable peace, or that here is a mysterious play of God with the soul around a theme of love's hide and seek, or else that a creative divine Force is sweeping the soul upward through various phases of effective self-expression to an ultimate identity with the Supreme Spirit above Nature. Ascetic quietism, ecstatic devotionism, enlightened dynamism have been the three main strands of the Indian spiritual life (*Ibid*, p 2)

Nothing is hazy in this exposition, at least for the audience whom Sethna is targetting. Only when he moves from Yoga to philosophy, he becomes difficult. For the common reader his clarity sometimes merges in dense obscurity. Yet if we read carefully the great expositions of Sethna, we never find him dull or monotonous. Take, for example, the following passage which is something like a restatement of Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution:

What we call evolution is a process by which the multiplicity of the soul-truths inherent in the Spirit shape various series of formulations on earth for the gradual revelation of their own shades of divine diversity at play in the divine unity. This, again, means that each soul-truth gathers and assimilates through these formulations or rebirths a certain growing experience which helps it to express its diversity on evolutionary lines, and which it holds together in an evolving intermediate psychological form of itself between its pure spiritual status and its expression here. That is to say, midway between the material existence in which life and mind develop because of a hidden spirit in it and the spiritual existence which contains the ideal realities of all that is gradually worked out here, there is a subtle psychological existence which reveals itself with its derivative light and power in the form and scope afforded them by nature-force on the material plane (*Aspects of Sri Aurobindo*, p 3)

Certainly this is not an example of clarity. But we have to remember that we are now face to face with a writer who has discovered the lost art of seriousness. The language is not difficult, the theme is complex. This is certainly not meant for the ordinary reader.

Jugal Kishore Mukherjee has rightly cautioned us that it would be a mistake to doubt the *Sadhana* of K. D. Sethna by simply accepting him as a writer (see *The Wonder That is K. D. Sethna*). Without having a deep sense of Sri Aurobindo's *Sadhana*, nobody could have clarified the sacrifice of Sri Aurobindo so masterfully. He even links up the great sacrifice with Sri Aurobindo's sonnet entitled *In the Battle*.

And if Sri Aurobindo the indomitable made the sacrifice, it must be one that was a sudden terrible short-cut to some secret victory for God in the world at the cost of a personal consummation We may remember the opening of *In the Battle*

Often, in the slow ages' wide retreat

On Life's long bridge through Time's enormous sea,

I have accepted death and borne defeat

If by my fall some gain were clutched for Thee

What occasioned the present sacrifice appears to have been earth's insufficient receptivity to the Aurobindonian gift of the descending supermind Something in the gross constitution of terrestrial creatures would not thrill to the Grace from on high, would not appreciate with a response deep enough the colossal work that was being done at a selfless expense of energy and with a silent bearing of "the fierce inner wounds that are slow to heal" If the earth's consciousness had been more receptive, the crisis of the human body's conversion into terms of divinity would have begun in a less radical shape and without so extreme an upshot for one individual in the van of life's fight towards perfection Hence much of the responsibility for the upshot lies with the absence of co-operation by the mind of the race It was as if the beings Sri Aurobindo had come to save had turned his enemies—not deliberately in all cases, yet with a dullness of perception and an inertia of the will that were as crucial (*Ibid* , pp 78-79)

Sethna then goes on to explain what Sri Aurobindo is actually doing by passing beyond the visible One sincerely hopes that in the near future all of Sethna's commentaries on Sri Aurobindo will be put together in a single big volume or in two or three less big volumes

GOUTAM GHOSAL

## **TOWARDS AN INDIAN APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT—MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN GROWTH IN ORGANISATIONS**

THE Art and Science of modern Management is a delicate balancing of the unpredictable, volatile and living human element with the mechanised precision of technology. Modern industrial and commercial organisations have attained a high level of mastery in managing the material and technological component of organisations. But it is in dealing with and harnessing the human element that the modern Manager finds the greatest difficulty. Innumerable theories, systems and strategies for managing “human resources” in organisations are offered, tried, tested, experimented with and practised with various degrees of success, but none of them seems to have solved the problem of “human resources development” with any decisive completeness.

Man is the living fulcrum of Management and the growth, prosperity and well-being of a human community—whether it is an organisation, commune, society or a nation—depends on how creatively its managers and leaders are able to nourish, foster and help to flower the human potential of the community. Even the technological potential of an organisation can be fully harnessed only when the human innovator—for technology is innovation and the innovator is a human being—is fully understood and his innovative potentialities are released in the organisation. Technology is only a tool which serves the values of its human user or manager. If the consciousness of the user of technology is crude, narrow and dark without the guiding light of any higher human values, then this great power of the modern age becomes, like the Frankenstein’s monster, a self-destructive force.

It is in this field of “Man-Management” that Indian spiritual philosophy and psychology can provide the modern manager with a deep, penetrating and holistic insight into the human dimensions of an organisation. This does not mean that the Indian approach has nothing to offer in other aspects of Management. There are many valuable insights of Indian yogic sciences which can provide a new and alternative system of transforming attitudes and values in the management of non-human inputs also like materials, capital, energy, technology and in the management of time.

The present article discusses the Indian approach to the management of human development in organisations.

### **“Human Resources” Management**

Managing human beings is the most difficult and tricky business in modern organisations. In the traditional management practice human beings are considered as “personnel” and managing human beings is called “Personnel Management”. Companies have traditionally had a “Personnel Department”. Personnel was an administrative function which involved recruitment and dismissal of employees, salary and wage administration, designing incentive and reward-systems, performance

appraisal, etc. In this traditional view, the higher needs, aspirations and values of the human being was given little or no importance.

Gradually, however, yesterday's personnel department has become today's Human Resources Management (HRM) group. This represents a change in approach as well as a change in name. Modern management professionals have realised the fact that a company's human assets—although they do not show up on the balance sheet—are at least as important as its fixed assets. The ideas, motives, values and actions of the employees make the difference between a successful company and one that goes bust.<sup>1</sup>

The HRM approach is undoubtedly a more enlightened attitude to human development than the traditional "Personnel Management" approach. Still the question remains whether human beings can be treated as a "resource" to be "managed". Even in the HRM approach the primary emphasis is on the worker and his productivity and not on Man and his well-being and development. If a greater attention is paid to the well-being and development of the employees it is not because of any respect or love for the human individual but because it leads to greater productivity and performance for the organisation.

But there is an awakening to the inherent worth and dignity of the human individual among some of the progressive and enlightened organisations in America. One book about the human development policies of some highly successful American companies says, "There was hardly a more pervasive theme in the excellent companies than respect for the individual, that basic belief and assumption were omnipresent" and sums up the basic tenets of this belief as "Treat people as adults. Treat them as partners. Treat them, not capital spending and automation, as the primary source of productivity gains."<sup>2</sup>

### **The Need for Right Attitudes**

The development of the human dimension in organisation is primarily a problem of creating an environment which fosters human growth. But this depends largely on the attitude of the Management towards the human work-force in the Organisation. The attitude of the traditional management culture towards the human element in Organisations is to treat the human beings as a "Resource" to be "Managed". But the crucial question is whether a human being can be treated merely as a "Resource" like any other inanimate resources?

The Word "resource" in our modern industrial-commercial culture has some negative connotations. First of all, this word is used to denote what we consider as inanimate things like material, energy, etc. The second association connected with the word "resource" is the sense of exploitation and utility. The "resources" are there to be exploited and utilised for the self-interests or welfare of the Society. So, when the word "resource" is associated with human beings and called "human resources" all these negative attitudes invoked by the word "resource" will be either consciously or unconsciously applied in our dealing with human beings.

## **The Indian Vision of Man**

In the Indian view, a human being is essentially a soul or a spirit with the body, life-force and mind as the instruments of the soul. The Indian approach to human development laid a primary emphasis on the fulfilment of the needs of the human soul and its growth. The ego-personality made of body, life and mind of man is viewed only as an instrument for the self-expression of the soul and as a means for providing the experiences needed for the growth of the soul. As Sri Aurobindo says

India has seen always in man the individual a soul, a portion of the Divinity enwrapped in mind and body, a conscious manifestation in Nature of the universal self and spirit. Always she has distinguished and cultivated in him a mental, an intellectual, an ethical, dynamic and practical, an aesthetic and hedonistic, a vital and physical being, but all these have been seen as powers of a soul that manifests through them and grows with their growth.<sup>3</sup>

## **Flowering the Human Potential**

An advertisement of Tata Steel says: We make Human Growth Opportunities—We also make Steel. There cannot be a more striking way of making clear the priorities of an organisation and the right way to human development.

Human growth cannot be engineered or “managed” or forced from some outside agency but has to come from within the human being. An organisation or an agency which has to deal with human beings can only create the right opportunity in which there is a spontaneous flowering of the human potential. This is the basic faith of the Indian spiritual tradition and it is beginning to be recognised by some of the modern management thinkers of the West. For example, Tom Peters and Nancy Austin say: “People cannot be truly motivated by any one else. That door is locked from inside, they should work in an atmosphere that fosters self-motivation, self-assessment and self-confidence.”<sup>4</sup>

In our Indian approach to Human Potential Development or for that matter any form of development the crucial key-factor which inspires or triggers the development process is Conscious Attention and the human growth possibilities are in proportion to the quantum, quality and extent of the field of attention.

When a human being is considered as just a pair of hands and nothing more than a material body with only some physical and economic needs and we pay great attention to only this physical-economic aspect of Man, then naturally the nature of the creative output of the human being doesn't go beyond the level of physical productivity and efficiency. On the other hand, if we consider the human being as not only a body with physical needs but also a vital being with vital, emotional and social needs like the need for Achievement, Power or Affiliation and pay equal attention to this dimension of the human being, then this part wakes up in the organisation and all the creative energies

locked up and remaining unmanifest so far are released into the organisation. This may also create additional, unexpected and fresh difficulties in managing the new energies released, but here is an inescapable challenge every human organism has to face and surmount to register evolutionary progress.

And when, progressing further, we consider man as a mental being and as a source of ideas with mental and cultural needs like the urge for knowledge, creativity, innovation, self-actualisation and self-development and pay attention to this part of the human being, then all the creative potentialities in the mental and cultural dimensions of the human system are brought forward into conscious self-expression in the organisation with correspondingly higher levels of creative growth in the organisation.

When we examine the evolution of modern management theory and practice, we find that it is a progressive manifestation of the different dimensions of the corporate life by paying conscious attention to deeper and deeper levels of group-life in the organisations.

Finally when we consider the human being as a spirit or a soul or a potential divinity and pay reverent attention to this divinity in Man with its spiritual needs for self-knowledge, self-mastery, self-transcendence, freedom, unity and love, then all the tremendous potentialities of the divine Self in man will begin to manifest in the corporate life.

But the manifestation of the spiritual dimension will not reject the other dimensions of the corporate life. One of the basic values of the human soul is harmony and integration. When the spiritual dimension manifests in the corporate life, there will be an all-pervading urge for integration, wholeness, totality and harmony. All mind-made artificial distinction which causes friction in corporate life—like for example the distinction made between the work-life and family-life of an employee—disappears in the progressive manifestation of the harmony of the soul or spiritual dimension. In the Indian approach to Management, the stress will be on the totality of corporate life and its integral well-being and growth.

In the case of individual human development also, each member of the organisation must be allowed to grow in freedom and in tune with the unique truth and law of his being, his Swabhava and Swadharma, his temperamental inclinations, his special talents and sometimes peculiar idiosyncrasies and eccentricities which normally accompany such special talents. But in actual organisational practices idealism needs to be tempered with pragmatism. Each human being must be given the freedom and opportunity and an understanding attention to grow in tune with the laws of truth—the deeper truth of his own being and the truth of the greater Dharma of universal life. But care should be taken that this freedom is not misused by the surface ego-personality to “do as it likes”. For the human ego always misinterprets the value of freedom as an urge towards the licentious and undisciplined pursuit of its vagabond desires in defiance of the collective needs of the Group life. We must respect the divinity in Man but need not always give respect to the arrogance, greed and undisciplined violence of the surface ego-personality. When this human ego tries to exploit the attention, respect

and understanding shown to the human essence, then the ego-self must be shown its right place with firmness Gary Jacobs, a business consultant and a practitioner of Management by Consciousness Approach, in his luminous exposition of the practical aspects of this approach, gives some valuable tips in dealing with the human element in organisation

“There are a number of criteria to ensure that each man receives the attention he deserves

1. He should be considered as a human being more than as an employee
2. The job he does should result in psychological satisfaction making him desire to have more work
3. He should find constantly newer skills added to his capacity
4. His work pattern should include built-in recreation that prevents accumulation of frustration or tension
5. His work should help to harness all his energies and give them to the work, so that tedium, except the physical part, will be minimal
6. There should be a genuine appreciation and psychological recognition of talents when they are found or freshly emerge. Work must help to reveal and develop those talents

There is a negative side to the attention as well

1. No man should be given even a little more than he deserves, he must not be in a position to take from the Management more than is his due
2. No more interest should be given than the person's psychological identification warrants
3. No man should be employed in such a way that only a part of his capacities are utilised. This gives him extra energies which often express themselves in a manner detrimental to the work
4. No man should be at any work requiring him to give an excessive effort which may create tension and spread to other men
5. The surest way of bringing trouble into any relationship is to give someone more than he deserves”

Just as a wild flower in a forest blossoms by the attention paid by Nature in the form of light and energy from the Sun and the rain from the Sky, so also a human Soul flowers and blooms and spreads its fragrance by the attention of light and energy, of Consciousness and goodwill and love in the Heart. And the possibilities of this growth in human potential depends on the quantum and quality of attention bestowed by the consciousness of the Management on the human element in the organisation. The quantum of Attention is just the right attention a human being deserves. Quality of attention depends on the genuineness, sincerity, goodwill and love and understanding and creativity inherent in the attention



*References*

- 1 Francis J Kelly and Heather Mayfield Kelly in *What They Really Teach You at the Harvard Business School* pp 141-43
- 2 Tom Peters and Robert Waterman Jr in *In Search of Excellence* p 223
- 3 Sri Aurobindo *The Hour of God* SABCL Vol 17 p 199
- 4 Tom Peters and Nancy Austin in *Passion for Excellence* p 241
- 5 *Management by Consciousness*, edited by Dr G P Gupta published by Sri Aurobindo Society pp 55-56

# THE EMERGENCE OF BIG SCIENCE

(Continued from the issue of November 1997)

## 8. The Pathfinder

GERMANY'S intentions of world dominion during World War II and the news of its efforts in developing nuclear reactors, and eventually a nuclear weapon to achieve its end, had stirred the wits of the Allied Nations. To counter this imminent threat top brains in the USA were brought under the same roof at Los Alamos. Thus was the Manhattan Project launched. This assemblage of experts on an unprecedented magnitude, conditions of time-bound performance and cost efficiency, and assuring strict military stipulations had necessitated the introduction of new principles of working in the milieu of defence secrecy, communications between research groups were absolutely prohibited. Nevertheless, a compromise was made later and to effect a more efficient progress of the Project, exchange of data between researchers allowed and initiated. In fact, the need for this efficiency resulted in practising the idea of borrowing existing technologies, instead of conducting fresh research and experiments. An environment of inter-departmental rivalry was set up as a strategy to acquire the best product within the shortest period of time. The delegation of autonomous powers to group leaders, with the requisite funds and facilities made available, was yet another major input to avoid the usual draft proposals—board meetings—sanction procedures. Perhaps, the ruins of Hiroshima and Nagasaki speak for themselves about the efficiency of a team of some 6,000 professionals brought together. This was essentially made possible by introducing drastically new measures in the management of the Project.

In the context of the development of the atom bomb, let us pause for a moment to assess the *raison d'être* for the use of these weapons on the two Japanese cities. Sometimes it is said that Japan had already agreed to surrender before 5 August 1945 and the bombs were dropped mainly to carry out the 'experiment' to its logical conclusion. To counter this argument, we may safely assert that two atom bombs were not necessary. The explosion at Nevada, before Hiroshima and Nagasaki, had already demonstrated the destructive capacity of the atomic weapon. Oppenheimer's exclamation of a thousand suns and his quoting the verses from the 11th Chapter of Gita are sufficient to acknowledge this fact. In an article written long ago by K. D. Sethna, in *Mother India*, we have a statement to this effect: "It was not known beforehand what terrific effect the bombs would have even on future generations. Hirohito was inclined towards surrender but his military staff was not. Even after Hirohito, there was no immediate change of mind on Japan's part." Perhaps this amply justifies the use of the two bombs in the War.

Returning to our discussion. The Manhattan Project was indeed a turning point in the manner of conducting scientific activities. The invention of the atom bomb was unmistakably a milestone which indicated that frontline science research had crossed

the domain of the individualistic spirit and entered into the culture of teamwork. In present times, research in almost every field of human quest involves hundreds of highly skilled professionals. This large-scale involvement is especially true in the areas of particle physics, cosmology, and space exploration. NASA is one such agency which has managerially committed itself to such a programme. Its pioneering effort to reach out into space visualises undertaking projects on a contract basis. NASA was established in 1958 to rival the erstwhile Soviet Union's progress in space technology and exploration. Presently it employs 21,000 scientists, engineers and technicians at 10 different installations. It established its superiority in space travel when, in 1969, its Apollo spacecraft became the first to land human beings on the moon. Since then, it has had a number of successes with manned and unmanned space flights. The unmanned flights included various kinds of artificial satellites and space probes that reached far and wide across the solar system. These were planned to study at close range the sister planets of the earth.

One such space mission has recently been in the news, the landing of the Pathfinder on Mars,—the first in a series of space ventures undertaken by NASA as a part of its Discovery Project. The purpose of the mission was to study the Martian soil for any clue whether life exists or did exist on the Planet.

The investigation got underway on 4 July 1997. After travelling 495 million kms since its launch on 4 December 1996, the Mars Pathfinder Spacecraft, enveloped in a cocoon of four inflated bags that cushioned its impact, landed with near precision in a dusty, red rocky-floor plain, called Ares Vallis. It immediately opened its three exterior panels and transmitted the first signal from Mars.

We must remember that the Pathfinder was not the first probe to touch down on the Martian soil, it had predecessors in Viking I and Viking II sent some 20 years ago. But, from the point of view of the technology that was used with maximum cost-efficiency, the success of the Pathfinder is overwhelming. In fact, it has ushered in a new era in NASA's approach to space explorations.

On a couple of earlier occasions NASA had come under heavy pressures for its manner of executing projects, the failure of some of the missions had drawn severe public and media criticism which had adverse effects of a serious nature. In August 1993, three days short of its orbital rendezvous with the Red Planet, the billion dollar Mars Observer spacecraft mysteriously disappeared into the unknown depths of space. Then the Viking probes, in spite of their success, had cost NASA something like 3 billion dollars. Such expensive scientific ventures, which sometimes end in failures, began drawing attention and criticism. In turn, these opinions influenced the government funding agencies, as to whether such costly research programmes should be promoted at all. It is in the wake of the imminent drop in public support for such research activities, that the success of the Pathfinder assumes much importance.

Stuffed with scientific instruments, the 1993 Mars Observer had actually exemplified the Old NASA approach. The spacecraft, instead of planning a series of successive probes over a period of time, was loaded with every instrument scientists could think

of The NASA administrator Daniel Goldin later put it as "the last ship out of port" He also consoled the scientists and graduate students, who had just seen their 8 years of hard work on Mars Observer vanish, by saying that it was "the dawn of a new era"

The Pathfinder mission heralds this new era At almost one-fourth the cost of the Mars Observer, the feat of successfully landing a craft on 17-foot air-bags, and the first-ever mobile exploration of another planet, proved that things can be achieved within a controlled budget without hurting public sentiments This new approach, initiated by Daniel Goldin, can be summed up in his three mantric words "better, faster, cheaper"

It is interesting to note that the guiding principles which proved so successful during the War-time Manhattan Project were, consciously or unconsciously, incorporated by Daniel Goldin in his handling of space missions Both Gen Groves and Goldin had to co-ordinate their respective researches under stressful conditions of anxiety The former was under the pressure of a possibility of losing the War, but the latter could sense the probable scrapping of NASA itself In other words, Gen Groves was pressed for time, whereas Goldin intended to minimise and curtail expenditure

In the case of the Manhattan Project, research groups were prevented from knowing the actual aim of their efforts Even those involved in research and development worked, at least initially, under a comparable environment of ignorance In contrast, the latest NASA culture can be summarised in what the flight software engineer Steve Stolpher, of Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, said "The idea was to grab young scientists who didn't know the job was 'impossible' This is because many NASA vets were skeptical of the cut-rate approach"

Like the Pathfinder, future missions will be designed in line with the NASA's new risk-taking culture "We can tolerate failures," says Goldin "We want to encourage people to take risks in spacecraft design" This kind of attitude is quite reminiscent of the attitude that was exhibited by Gen Groves, when he made a bold decision of undertaking simultaneously 5 different research programmes to develop reactor fuel "Risk means," says a news magazine, "that NASA's days of quintuple redundancy are gone"

The confidence in technology displayed by the team is such that only one radio-receiver on the Pathfinder's lander has been put If it should fail, the rover would not execute commands radioed from the earth-station at JPL, relayed to the lander and then to the Pathfinder

Another cost-saving move was to incorporate the state-of-the-art technologies by buying available parts off the shelf "For example," says JPL's Brian Muirhead, "every previous lunar planetary lander had been carried up to 120,000-feet at Mach-2 and then dropped to see how the parachutes work Viking, which touched down on Mars in 1986, underwent such tests at 10 million dollars a pop Partly because the Pathfinder was using the same parachute design as Viking and partly to save money, we didn't do these tests"

The telecommunications team for the Sojourner rover (of the Pathfinder mission), realised that they couldn't design and make modems any better than the Motorola

RNET 9000 and still meet the cost cap and launch date. In 1995, they bought 30 of these and made the necessary alterations to meet the frigid conditions of the Martian atmosphere.

These managerial strategies adopted by NASA remind us of the team involved in the development of graphite reactor in the Manhattan Project, which had made use of the existing rubber technology from Goodyear to serve its purpose.

Thus, despite the absence of any direct reference to the Manhattan Project, we do find, to safely conclude, ample evidence in NASA's methodologies that the administrator of the Manhattan Project did introduce a new chapter in management skills. The Management of Big Science. Perhaps at this juncture it would be appropriate to gauge in retrospect the importance of Heisenberg's meeting with Niels Bohr in Denmark during the War. Some inkling about Germany's ventures into atomic reactors got conveyed during their discussion, later, it necessitated the establishment of the Manhattan Project. The very task of developing a military weapon from a mere table-top experiment was mind-boggling. The dimensions of the goal set were simply beyond the capacities of one man. The involvement of a never-before congregation of experts from various fields was felt indispensable. This marked the turning-point in the method of doing science and technology. The success of the Pathfinder is a firm seal of confirmation of this new approach, indicating that Big Science has arrived to stay and give a new outlook to collective life on a material plane.

*(Concluded)*

ANIRBAN DEB

## SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

*(Continued from the issue of September 1997)*

THE Kena Upanishad gives the answers to a particular series of questions. The answers establish the conclusions of profound yogic psychology. The questions start asking, “What is the ground of understanding? Where is the true source of the diverse activities such as the mind, life-force, speech and the sensory faculties?” The power of thinking, of the nervous life-energy—of speech—of sensory cognition exercised by man, and similar results flow from the exercise. Isn’t there, then, a source of Mind, a source of life-energy, a source of sensibility? We may equate them with different Godheads. We may call them Vayu, Agni and so forth.

T. V. Kapali Sastry states

“The Upanishad resolves the seeming contradictions in the two statements that it is knowable and unknowable by the affirmation that it is a vaster and profounder existence behind our surface selves, and is the puissant Consciousness of which mind, life, sense and speech are only inferior modes, imperfect figures and external instruments. The commentary draws attention to the significance of the words employed in the text, bring to the forefront the subtle suggestions, elaborate the reasonings implied in the successive phrases and arrives at the established conclusions of the profound yogic psychology—call it parapsychology—of this Upanishad. And what we normally think as ourselves, mind, life, sense, speech, in short, the psychology of a mind that is involved in the brain is shown to be the outer fringe of man’s existence which consists in the eidolon of matter along with the nervous energy and its image reproduced in the mindstuff. In the manner that is distinctively his, Sri Aurobindo places before the reader here the fact of spiritual experience that we can always enter into relation with Brahman through these faculties—mind, sense, speech etc. by tracing them to their source, as these are the outer instruments of the respective aspects of the profound Reality. Brahman, that is behind and directs the mind, sense, speech etc. as their original truth, source and support.”

The latter part of the Upanishad narrates the parable that the Godheads think they are sovereign in their respective places. The story runs

“The Eternal conquered for the gods and in the victory of the Eternal the gods grew to greatness. This was what they saw. “Ours the victory, ours the greatness.”

The Eternal knew their thought and appeared before them, and they knew not what was this mighty Daemon.

They said to Agni, “O thou that knowest all things born, learn of this thing, what may be this mighty Daemon.” and he said, “So be it.”

He rushed toward the Eternal and It said to him, "Who art thou?" "I am Agni," he said, "I am he that knows all things born."

"Since such thou art, what is the force in thee?" "Even all this I could burn, all that is upon the earth."

The Eternal set before him a blade of grass, "This burn," and he made towards it with all his speed, but he could not burn it. There he ceased, and turned back, "I could not know of It, what might be this mighty Daemon."

Then they said to Vayu, "O Vayu, this discern, what is this mighty Daemon?" He said, "So be it."

He rushed upon That, It said to him, "Who art thou?" "I am Vayu," he said, "and I am he that expands in the Mother of things."

"Since such thou art, what is the force in thee?" "Even all this I can take for myself, all this that is upon the earth."

That set before him a blade of grass, "This take." He went towards it with all his speed and he could not take it. Even there he ceased, even thence he returned, "I could not discern of That, what is this mighty Daemon."

Then they said to Indra, "Master of plenitudes, get thou the knowledge, what is this mighty Daemon?" He said, "So be it." He rushed upon That. That vanished from before him.

He in the same ether came upon the Woman, even upon Her who shines out in many forms, Uma daughter of the snowy summits. To her he said, "What was this mighty Daemon?"

She said to him, "It is the Eternal. Of the Eternal is this victory in which ye shall grow to greatness." Then alone he came to know that this was the Brahman.

Therefore are these gods as it were beyond all the other gods, even Agni and Vayu and Indra, because they came nearest to the touch of That.

Therefore is Indra as it were beyond all the other gods because he came nearest to the touch of That, because he first knew that it was the Brahman.

<sup>2</sup> By some mistake of early memorisers or later copyists the rest of the verse has become hopelessly corrupted. It runs: "They he first came to know that it was the Brahman", which is neither fact nor sense nor grammar. The close of the third verse has crept into and replaced the original close of the second.

Now this is the indication of That,—as is this flash of the lightning upon us or as is this falling of the eyelid, so in that which is of the gods

Then in that which is of the Self,—as the motion of this mind seems to attain to That and by it afterwards the will in the thought continually remembers It

The name of That is ‘‘That Delight’’, as That Delight one should follow after It He who so knows That, towards him verily all existences yearn

Thou hast said ‘‘Speak to me Upanishad’’,\* spoken to thee is Upanishad Of the Eternal verily is the Upanishad that we have spoken

Of this knowledge austerity and self-conquest and works are the foundation, the Vedas are all its limbs, truth is its dwelling place

He who knows this knowledge, smites evil away from him and in that vaster world and infinite heaven finds his foundation, yea, he finds his foundation ’<sup>2</sup>

*(To be continued)*

NILIMA DAS

### *References*

- 1 *Collected Works of F V Kapali Sastry*, Vol 1, p 278
- 2 *The Upanishads*, SABCL, Vol 12 pp 148-152

\* Upanishad means inner knowledge, that which enters into the final Truth and settles in it



# POLITICAL VEDANTISM— ITS CONCEPT AND PRACTICE

## Chapter IV

(Continued from the issue of November 1997)

WE have already indicated that Sri Aurobindo was not disheartened, but resumed his public activity with a view to awakening the people whose growing zeal and enthusiasm had, for the time being, died down because of several repressive measures the Government had been taking since the Mazaffarpur incident. We may excerpt here some of the speeches he delivered in and around Calcutta during this period of frustration and despair.

It appears that his Uttarpara and Beadon Square speeches were delivered before the appearance of the *Karmayogin* and the Jhalakati speech on the very day the first issue of the *Karmayogin* was released. His other speeches in Calcutta and its suburbs were delivered on later dates.

At Beadon Square on 13 June 1909, addressing the gathering—though very small and that too consisting mostly of curious passers-by—Sri Aurobindo introduced himself in the third person and explained

Sri Aurobindo Ghose said that when in jail he had been told that the country was demoralised by the repression. He could not believe it then, because his experience of the movement had been very different. And what after all was the repression? Some people sent to prison, some deported, a number of house-searches, a few repressive enactments, limiting the liberty of the press and the platform. This was nothing compared with the price other nations had paid for their liberty. They also would have to suffer much more than this before they could make any appreciable advance towards their goal. This was God's law. It was his law that a fallen nation should not be allowed to rise without infinite suffering and mighty effort. That was the price it had to pay for its previous lapses from national duty. He [Sri Aurobindo] did not measure the strength of the movement by the number of meetings or of people present at the meetings. He measured it by the strength and indomitable obstinacy of feeling and purpose in the hearts of the people. Their first duty was to keep firm hold on their ideal and perform steadfastly the vows they had made before God and the nation. The rulers were never tired of saying that we should get self-government when we were fit. Fitness meant national capacity and strength was the basis of capacity. That was what Lord Morley really meant. He meant, was it a movement with real strength in it, a movement with elemental force enough in it to resist and survive? He [Sri Aurobindo] had heard vaguely of the reforms when in prison, he had heard them ecstatically described. He was surprised to hear that description. He had

been in England for fourteen years and knew something of the English people and their politics. He could not believe that England or any European people would give substantial reforms after so short an agitation and so scanty a proof of national strength. It was not the fault of the British people, it was a law of politics that they who have, should be unwilling to yield what they have until they had fully tested the determination of the subject people and even then they would only give just as much as they could not help giving. When he came out, he found what these reforms were. It would diminish the political power of the educated class which was the brain and backbone of the nation, it would sow discord among the various communities. This was not a real reform but reaction.<sup>12</sup>

He highly commended the courage and enthusiasm of the people who had awakened and risen to the occasion. And lastly he inspired them saying,

They must have the firm faith that India must rise and be great and that everything that happened, every difficulty, every reverse must help and further their end. The morning was at hand and once the light had shown itself, it could never be night again. The sun of India's destiny would rise and fill all India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world.<sup>13</sup>

We have observed that in his Beadon Square speech Sri Aurobindo made some passing comments only on certain aspects of the Minto-Morley Reforms. But he evaluated them more analytically on other occasions and vindicated his stand. Nonetheless the Moderates not only appreciated them but also entertained high hopes about these Reforms. Later we may take up the issue for further discussion.

Meanwhile let us contemplate how Sri Aurobindo explained, in his Jhalakati speech on 19 June 1909, the necessity of freedom on the basis of brotherhood vis-à-vis the helplessness of our position as a subject nation under the repression of an alien administration:

There are some who fear to use the word "freedom", but I have always used the word because it has been the *mantra* of my life to aspire towards the freedom of my nation. And when I was last in jail, I clung to that *mantra*, and through the mouth of my counsel I used this word persistently. What he said for me—and it was said not only on my behalf, but on behalf of all who cherish this ideal—was this: If to aspire to independence and preach freedom is a crime, you may cast me into jail and there bind me with chains. If to preach freedom is a crime, then I am a criminal and let me be punished. But freedom does not mean the use of violence—it does not mean bombs, it is the fulfilment of our separate national existence. We have no voice in the Government of our country, and the laws and their administration are things in which you don't allow us to have any concern. But one thing is in our power, our courage and devotion are in our

power, our sacrifice, our sufferings are in our power, that you cannot take away from us, and so long as you cannot take that from us you can do nothing. Your repression cannot for ever continue, for it will bring anarchy into the country. You will not be able to continue your administration if this repression remains permanent. Your Government will become disorganised, the trade you are using such means to save will languish and capital be frightened from the country.<sup>14</sup>

A week later, on Sunday, 27 June 1909, Sri Aurobindo spoke on 'The Right of Association' at the annual meeting of the Howrah Peoples' Association. In his long speech he dwelt at length on the three *mantras* of the French Revolution—Liberty, Equality and Fraternity—which tremendously stirred 18th-century Europe and thereafter the whole world. With no ambiguity he expounded

Three words have the power of remoulding nations and Governments, liberty, equality and fraternity. These words cast forth into being from the great stir and movement of the eighteenth century continue to act on men because they point to the ultimate goal towards which human evolution ever moves. We move from a state of bondage to an original liberty. This is what our own religion teaches. This is what our own philosophy suggests as the goal towards which we move, *mukti* or *moksa*. We in India have found a mighty freedom within ourselves, our brethren have worked towards freedom without. We have been moving on parallel lines towards the same end. They have found out the way to external freedom. We have found out the way to internal freedom. We meet and give to each other what we have gained. We have learned from them to aspire after external as they will learn from us to aspire after internal freedom.

Equality is the second term in the triple gospel. It is a thing which mankind has never accomplished. From inequality and through inequality we move, but it is to equality. Our religion, our philosophy set equality forward as the essential condition of emancipation. All religions send us this message in a different form but it is one message. Christianity says we are all brothers, children of one God. Mahomedanism says we are the subjects and servants of one Allah, we are all equal in the sight of God. Hinduism says there is One without a second. The equality which Europe has got is external political equality. She is now trying to achieve social equality. Therefore socialism is growing in Europe. Europe is now trying to achieve external equality as the second term of the gospel of mankind, the universal ideal.

Again there is fraternity. It is the last term of the gospel. It is the most difficult to achieve, still it is a thing towards which all religions call and human aspirations rise. This is the essence of humanitarianism, the modern gospel of love for mankind. Every man seeks the brotherhood of his fellows and we can only live by fraternity with others. Through all its differences and discords humanity is striving to become one.

As in Europe, so in India men united together for many interests and worked in association for common ideals. But by the inroads of invasion and calamity our life became broken and disintegrated. Still, though we lost much, we had our characteristic forms in which we strove to achieve that ideal of association and unity.<sup>15</sup>

Prior to the meeting at Howrah, Sri Aurobindo also spoke in two other meetings held in East Bengal, at Bakergunj on 23rd and Khulna on 25th June 1909.

In the Bakergunj meeting he analysed the current political situation in India with reference to the repression and the reforms and pointed out the defects of the reforms of Lord Morley. And in the meeting held at Khulna he explained the important aspect of the teachings of the Gita in which Sri Krishna unites the Vedanta philosophy with the philosophy of Sankhya. The topic of this speech related to something quite different from his earlier speeches. He concluded the speech thus: "The teaching of the Gita is the teaching for life, and not a teaching for the life of a closet. It is a teaching which means perfection of action. It makes man great. It gives him the utter strength, the utter bliss which is the goal of life in the world."<sup>16</sup>

In the Kumartuli Park (Calcutta) meeting, held on 11 July 1909, Sri Aurobindo sarcastically commented on how, since his release from Alipore jail, the officials in administration, including the police, had been observing his movements, the meetings in which he participated, the subjects of his speeches, his comments on the Reforms, etc. Then he declared, "If the voices that proclaimed it were silenced, if the organisers were taken away, others would rise in their place, if those were taken, still others would come, if few, yet faithful. Some would always be left who would not be afraid to utter the name of their Mother. Some would still preserve the faith and preach the Gospel, theirs was the blood of *raktabīja*. For their action sprang from no passing or material interest but from something that was imperishable and perennial."<sup>17</sup>

*(To be continued)*

SAMAR BASU

#### *References*

- 12 *SABCL*, Vol 2, pp 25-26
- 13 *Ibid* p 28
- 14 *Ibid*, pp 64-65
- 15 *Ibid* pp 83-85
- 16 *Ibid* p 430
- 17 *Ibid* p 157

## THE 'PARADOXES' IN THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN PROGRESSION

FOR man alone of terrestrial creatures to live rightly involves the necessity of knowing rightly, whether by the sole or dominant instrumentation of his reason or by the sum of his faculties, and what he has to know is the true nature of being and its constant self-effectuation in the values of life the forces within him and around him and their right utilisation for his own greater perfection and happiness and the greater perfection and happiness of his fellow creatures His business is to learn to live according to Nature Otherwise there would be an infinite chaos and not a world ordered even in the clash of its forces

Man seems, on the contrary, to possess a power of turning his mind and will upon Nature and a possibility of governing her movement, even of varying from the course she dictates to him But here there is really a deformative trick of language For man's mentality is also a part of Nature, his mentality is even the most important, if not the largest part of his nature . Man is subjected to this mental conflict and is therefore at war not only with others but with himself he is also capable of that which is denied to the animal, of an inner evolution, a progression from higher to higher type, a constant self-transcending

This evolution takes place at present by a conflict and progress of ideas applied to life In their primary aspect human ideas of life are simply a mental translation of the forces and tendencies of life itself as they emerge in the form of needs, desires and interests The human mind has a practical intelligence more or less clear and exact which takes these things into account and gives to one and another a greater or less value according to its own experience, preference and judgment Some the man accepts and helps in their growth by his will and intelligence, others he rejects, discourages and even succeeds in eliminating But from this elementary process there emerges a second and more advanced character of man's ideas about life, he passes beyond the mere mental translation and ready dynamic handling to a regulated valuation of the forces and tendencies that have emerged or are emerging in him and his environment He studies them as fixed processes and rules of Nature and endeavours to understand their law and norm He tries to determine the laws of his mind and life and body, the law and rule of the facts and forces about him that constitute his environment and determine the field and the mould of his action Since we are imperfect and evolutionary beings, this study of the laws of life is bound to envisage two aspects it perceives the rule of what is and the rule of what may or ought to be, the law of our actualities and the law of our potentialities The latter takes for the human intellect which tends always to an arbitrary and emphatic statement of things, the form of a fixed ideal standard or set of principles from which our actual life is a fall and deviation or towards which it is a progress and aspiration Whatever the ideas or ideals which the human mind extracts from life or tries to apply to life, they can be nothing but the expression of that life itself as it attempts to find more and more and fix higher and higher its own law and realise its

potentialities The social evolution of the human race is necessarily a development of the relations between three constant factors, individuals, communities of various sorts and mankind Each seeks its own fulfilment and satisfaction, but each is compelled to develop them not independently but in relation to the others The first natural aim of the individual must be his own inner growth and fullness and its expression in his outer life, but this he can only accomplish through his relations with other individuals, to the various kinds of community religious, social cultural and political to which he belongs and to the idea and need of humanity at large The community must seek its own fulfilment, but whatever its strength of mass consciousness and collective organisation, can accomplish its growth only through its individuals under the stress of the circumstances set for it by its environment and subject to the conditions imposed by its relations to other communities and individuals and to humanity at large Mankind as a whole has at present no consciously organised common life: it has only an inchoate organisation determined much more by circumstances than by human intelligence and will And yet the idea and the fact of our common human existence, nature, destiny has always exercised its strong influence on human thought and action One of the chief preoccupations of ethics and religion has been the obligations of man to mankind The pressure of the large movements and fluctuations of the race has always affected the destinies of its separate communities and there has been a constant return-pressure of separate communities social, cultural, political, religious to expand and include, if it might be, the totality of the race And if or when the whole of humanity arrives at an organised common life and seeks a common fulfilment and satisfaction, it can only do it by means of the relation of this whole to its parts and by the aid of the expanding life of individual human beings and of the communities whose progress constitutes the larger terms of the life of the race

The united progress of mankind would thus be realised by a general principle of interchange and assimilation between individual and individual and again between individual and community, between community and community and again between the smaller commonalty and the totality of mankind, between the common life and consciousness of mankind and its freely developing communal and individual constituents As a matter of fact, although this interchange is what Nature even now contrives to bring about to a certain extent, life is far from being governed by such a principle of free and harmonious mutuality There is a struggle, an opposition of ideas, impulses and interests, an attempt of each to profit by various kinds of war on the others, by a kind of intellectual, vital, physical robbery and theft or even by the suppression, devouring, digestion of its fellows rather than by a free and rich interchange This is the aspect of life which humanity in its highest thought and aspiration knows it has to transcend, but has either not yet discovered the right means or else has not had the force to apply it It now endeavours instead to get rid of strife and the disorders of growth by a strong subordination or servitude of the life of the individual to the life of the community and, logically, it will lead to the attempt to get rid of strife between communities by a strong subordination or servitude of the life of the community to the

united and organised life of the human race To remove freedom in order to get rid of disorder, strife and waste, to remove diversity in order to get rid of separatism and jarring complexities is the impulse of order and regimentation by which the arbitrary rigidity of the intellectual reason seeks to substitute its straight line for the difficult curves of the process of Nature

But freedom is as necessary to life as law and regime, diversity is as necessary as unity to our true completeness Existence is only one in its essence and totality, in its play it is necessarily multiform Absolute uniformity would mean the cessation of life, while on the other hand the vigour of the pulse of life may be measured by the richness of the diversities which it creates At the same time, while diversity is essential for power and fruitfulness of life, unity is necessary for its order, arrangement and stability Unity we must create, but not necessarily uniformity If man could realise a perfect spiritual unity, no sort of uniformity would be necessary, for the utmost play of diversity would be securely possible on that foundation If again he could realise a secure, clear, firmly-held unity in the principle, a rich, even an unlimited diversity in its application might be possible without any fear of disorder, confusion or strife Because he cannot do either of these things he is tempted always to substitute uniformity for real unity While the life-power in man demands diversity, his reason favours uniformity It prefers it because uniformity gives him a strong and ready illusion of unity in place of the real oneness at which it is so much more difficult to arrive It prefers it, secondly, because uniformity makes easy for him the otherwise difficult business of law, order and regimentation It prefers it too because the impulse of the mind in man is to make every considerable diversity an excuse for strife and separation and therefore uniformity seems to him the one secure and easy way to unification Moreover, uniformity in any one direction or department of life helps him to economise his energies for development in other directions If he can standardise his economic existence and escape from its problems, he is likely to have more leisure and room to attend to his intellectual and cultural growth Or again, if he standardises his whole social existence and rejects its farther possible problems, he is likely to have peace and a free mind to attend more energetically to his spiritual development Even here, however, the complex unity of existence asserts its truth in the end man's total intellectual and cultural growth suffers by social immobility,—by any restriction or poverty of his economic life, the spiritual existence of the race, if it attains to remote heights, weakens at last in its richness and continued sources of vivacity when it depends on a too standardised and regimented society, the inertia from below rises and touches even the summits

Owing to the defects of our mentality uniformity has to a certain extent to be admitted and sought after, still the real aim of Nature is a true unity supporting a rich diversity Her secret is clear enough from the fact that though she moulds on one general plan, she insists always on an infinite variation The plan of human form is one, yet no two human beings are precisely alike in their physical characteristics Human nature is one in its constituents and its grand lines, but no two human beings are

precisely alike in their temperament, characteristics and psychological substance. All life is one in its essential plan and principle but the unity of life admits and encourages an infinite variety of types. Therefore we see that in this harmony between our unity and our diversity lies the secret of life. Nature insists equally in all her works upon unity and upon variation.

The quarrel between law and liberty stands on the same ground and moves to the same solution. The diversity, the variation must be a free variation. Nature does not manufacture, does not impose a pattern or a rule from outside, she impels life to grow from within and to assert its own natural law and development modified only by its commerce with its environment. All liberty, individual, national, religious, social, ethical, takes its ground upon this fundamental principle of our existence. By liberty we mean the freedom to obey the law of our being, to grow to our natural self-fulfilment, to find out naturally and freely our harmony with our environment. The dangers and disadvantages of liberty, the disorder, strife, waste and confusion to which its wrong use leads are indeed obvious. If a real, a spiritual and psychological unity were effectuated, liberty would have no perils and disadvantages, for free individuals enamoured of unity would be compelled by themselves, by their own need, to accommodate perfectly their own growth with the growth of their fellows and would not feel themselves complete except in the free growth of others. Human society progresses really and vitally in proportion as law becomes the child of freedom, it will reach its perfection when, man having learned to know and become spiritually one with his fellow-man, the spontaneous law of his society exists only as the outward mould of his self-governed inner liberty.

*Compiled by G P GUPTA*

(Sri Aurobindo, *Social and Political Thought*, SABCL, Vol 15, pp 395-404)



## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Sri Aurobindo Ashram: Its Role, Responsibility and Future Destiny**, by *Jugal Kishore Mukherjee* Pub. Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, pp xii + 91 Rs 50

THE Sri Aurobindo Ashram started in 1926 with twenty-four sadhaks. The number of inmates went on growing every year, also after the passing of Sri Aurobindo in 1950. In 1936 Sri Aurobindo wrote,

“An Ashram means the house or houses of a Teacher or Master of spiritual philosophy in which he receives and lodges those who come to him for the teaching and practice

“An Ashram is not an association or a religious body or a monastery—it is only what has been indicated above, nothing more. All depends on the Teacher and ends with his lifetime, unless there is another Teacher who can take his place.”

When Sri Aurobindo left his body, the Mother was there and there was not even a moment's break in the continuity of the Ashram. But on the passing of the Mother in November 1973 the Ashram ceased to exist in the sense given to it in the above statement of Sri Aurobindo.

After November 1973, naturally, the question has been arising about the continuity of the role of the Ashram. And, naturally again, there have been divergences of views and interpretations on the mental level. On the other hand, the Ashram has continued to exist and the number of the inmates has grown in spite of the number of natural deaths of the disciples who were accepted by the Mother.

In what sense has the Ashram continued to exist? Is there still a role left for it? If so, what is it?

Jugal Kishore Mukherjee, one of the seniormost teachers at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, has come out with a clear and firm proposition that the transformatory work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother still remains unfinished and so does the role of the Ashram which was founded for that work. Further, the Ashram continues to be guided by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who are still actively present here, although they have departed from their physical bodies, and the Ashram atmosphere continues to be vibrant with their Grace and Light and Force.

Then he dwells on the imperfections and shortcomings in the Ashram life which he acknowledges as the ground reality, not taking an ostrich-like view which a number of people in the Ashram love to take. He gives instances to show that these difficulties are the difficulties of human nature, especially of the human “vital nature” and that they have been there throughout from the very inception of the Ashram, as regular recurrences during the lifetimes of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who were patiently dealing with the eruptions.

He has made valuable suggestions in this regard which may not be liked by those disgruntled or dissatisfied elements in the Ashram who maintain a ‘bargaining’ or

'mess' attitude. who are anxious to reform and fight by the ordinary vitalistic means, as old as humanity, not learning anything from the happenings in the Mother's dream city of Auroville. He has given the specific advice that new entrants to the Ashram should be screened with more care by adopting other criteria than their mere usefulness for the outer work of the Ashram departments, that the growing tendencies of doing private business, of going out of the Ashram for reasons other than the Ashram work should be disciplined, but the basic remedy may be summed up in his exhortation to each one of us to "do our personal bit of sincere sadhana and live in peace without getting unduly bothered by what others are on their part doing or not doing"

This exhortation comes not from a professor's mind, but from the inner psyche of an old sadhak of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. With the base of sincere sadhaks the destiny of the Ashram is luminous indeed.

Jugal-da, as the writer of the book is popularly known, has rendered a valuable service to the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother by writing this book which will serve as a reference book in spite of its small size.

SHYAM SUNDER JHUNJHUNWALA

**Bhagawad Gita**, second revised edition, 1997, translated in free verse by Shyam Sunder Jhunjunwala, based on Sri Aurobindo's writings on the Gita. Pages 101, price, Rs. 40. Published by Sri Aurobindo's Action.

The Bhagawad Gita is one of the rare books which have proved a perennial source of inspiration and guidance to mankind down the centuries. Even among the scriptures of the world it holds a unique position, as it deals with the painful and baffling mystery of human existence in the midst of conflicts of life and as it gives a solution which is simultaneously practical, profound and luminous. It does not recommend renunciation of life but shows us a way to transfigure it. It accepts life in order to transform it. Moreover, it does not lay down commandments to be obeyed without questioning doubts. It is a dialogue between a friend-disciple, who is in an hour of grave psychological crisis, and a teacher-friend, who leads him from the twilight of doubt and misgivings into the dawn of realisation of a new vision of life. Hence it is not surprising that the Gita has continuously inspired writers to offer fresh interpretations and translations. The present book is one more welcome addition to numerous books on the Gita.

The book is a translation of the Gita in free verse. The translation is lucid, precise and flows smoothly. The eleventh chapter which is a stumbling block for any translator, has been rendered in English with good success. And the reason for the success is not far to seek. As the author makes it clear on the cover, it is based on Sri Aurobindo's writings on the Gita.

The eleventh chapter of the Gita is resonant with poetic power which expresses the

lofty theme of Sri Krishna, revealing himself as ‘‘God magnificent and beautiful and terrible’’ to the amazed eyes of Arjuna. The author, drawing upon Sri Aurobindo, has done justice fairly well. It will not be out of place to give a few examples.

As the torrents of rivers race towards the ocean, so are these heroes of the world of men entering into thy mouth of flame

or

I am Time, the Destroyer of Worlds, here arisen, full-grown with the will to annihilate the nations

The translation can be very simple and effective as when Arjuna describes Krishna the Godhead

Thou art what is and is not and that which is beyond

Even when he takes small liberties with the original, he enhances the beauty of his translation without in the least compromising the spirit of the text. As an example, the following may be cited

The Rudras who ride the storms,  
The Adityas of shining form .

The book is not just a beautiful translation, but, since it heavily relies on the *Essays on the Gita*, it becomes in the process of translation a luminous exposition of the inner meaning of the Gita.

The Gita, together with the Upanishads and the Brahmasutras, forms what is called in Sanskrit Prasthanatrayi, the scriptural trinity. They hold a place of supreme importance in the Indian religious tradition. But for this very reason, every proponent of a new religious school of thought in later times utilized the Gita to establish a personal point of view and win for it a recognized place in the Indian tradition. Even modern commentators, beginning with Bankim Chandra, have not been able to resist the temptation. All these commentators, in spite of their highest regard for the Gita, have used it as a weapon to win a philosophical war or as a mirror to see the reflection of their views. But the Gita is neither. It is a glorious sun guiding a perplexed pilgrim of the spirit, plodding his way amidst encircling darkness, to a Truth, vast and harmonious and all-embracing. After centuries of partisan interpretations, the Gita came into its own in Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*. It is no exaggeration to say that it is no mere commentary on the Gita but its reincarnation in modern times.

Sri Aurobindo, departing from other writers on the Gita, has brought out its greatness as a book of supreme spiritual synthesis where the different aspects of Sankhya

and Yoga, knowledge and works and devotion merge to evolve a grand and harmonious revelation of spiritual Truth. Hence even his translations or explanations of important words, frequently used in the Gita to express some of its key concepts, differ very much from those of others. He goes to the root of the word and translates in such a way that it imparts greater depth and width to the word. For example, the word नित्यसत्त्वस्थ in stanza 45 in chapter 2 is translated by most of the writers as 'ever remaining in सत्त्वगुण'. These writers evidently forget that Sri Krishna exhorts Arjuna to rise above the triple gunas in the same verse! If we go by other writers, it will be impossible for us to reconcile Sri Krishna urging Arjuna to rise above the three gunas and be based in one of them, that is, in Sattwa—सत्त्व—in the same breath! Sri Aurobindo's translation of this word as 'ever based in the true being' is an illuminating example of how this translation is close both to the word and spirit of the great scripture. Again the word मिथ्याचारः in stanza 6 of chapter 3 is generally translated as 'hypocrite' which does not convey the true sense of the word. Hence Sri Aurobindo translates it as "a man (who) has bewildered himself with false notions of self-discipline". The word लोकसग्रह which is translated as "welfare of the world" by other writers, has been translated by Sri Aurobindo as "holding together of the peoples" which is the exact etymological meaning लोक meaning people and सग्रह holding, from the root सग्रह meaning to lay hold on. Similarly the word नियतम् in stanza 8 of chapter 3 is translated as 'prescribed by scripture', 'fixed and formal', while Sri Aurobindo translates it as 'controlled', 'rightly regulated'. Again the word युक्त in stanza 17 of chapter 6 is generally translated as 'moderate', and the same word is also translated differently when used in another context. But Sri Aurobindo always translates युक्त as 'in yoga'. In the present stanza in Sri Aurobindo's translation it means 'in yoga with the Divine'. This completely changes the meaning of the word युक्त and raises it worlds above its conventional meaning, since युक्त no more means cultivated moral virtue but connotes a luminous state of spiritual consciousness and realization.

But all this does not mean that Jhunjhunwala's translation is without flaws, mostly minor but once or twice major too. Translating the 10-11 stanzas of the first chapter, he writes

Unlimited is this our army which Bhishma guards, while theirs though limited, is guarded by Bhima

It gives the impression as if Duryodhana wants to convey that the Pandava army, though limited, can be a match for his as it is guarded by Bhima. But perhaps what Duryodhana says is an objective statement or an expression of his satisfaction with his military strength vis-à-vis Pandava's, as his army is unlimited and led by Bhishma, the greatest warrior of the age. It would be better if "though" were dropped.

In the first stanza of the second chapter, the author writes, "his heart brimming with grief". But this is not quite consonant with the word विषीदन्तम् as the root word विषद् means to sink, overcome by grief, or sunk in depression. In the stanza 31 of chapter 10, for readers not at all conversant with Sanskrit, "Makar among fishes" will not be very

clear unless they know the English equivalent of Makar, alligator. The word 'Bharat' in stanza 8 of chapter 14 has been translated as "prince of India" which is not quite correct. The word means a scion of the dynasty of the great King Bharat. But these are small shortcomings of an otherwise satisfactory work.

However, the translation of ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् ऋच्छति, "to Nirvana he mounteth", cannot be easily condoned. Nirvana denotes extinction or merger. Hence there is nobody to mount and there is no mounting. As *Light on the Path*, the great Theosophical booklet, beautifully says, "It is beyond you, because when you reach it, you have lost yourself." Sri Aurobindo has appropriately translated it as "to attain to extinction in Brahman." Moreover, mere Nirvana connotes Buddhist Nirvana and means dissolution of self and not merger into Brahman, since Buddhist philosophy denies anything permanent.

In stanza 1 of chapter 17 the author has translated निष्ठा as 'fidelity'. This hardly conveys the true meaning of the word निष्ठा. English does not have its equivalent and that is why Sri Aurobindo has translated it as "concentrated will of devotion." It is a key concept for the spiritual aspirant, and if diluted in translation it will weaken the sense it intends to convey.

But, on the whole, here is a praiseworthy attempt and the book can be warmly recommended to anyone who wants to read the Gita in English.

The get-up and printing are neat and attractive and the book is very reasonably priced.

USHA and DHANANJAY DESAI

## *Students' Section*

### **THE MASTER**

DARKNESS, silence and myself, alone, alone, I am all alone spying on the ghastliness of this abandoned house Two days ago I lived here with my uncle Now, he is no more I am alone, reading his diary under the same light he used thirty-two years ago

19 9 60

*No, no, I am not satisfied Now I realise how vain and fruitless my life has been! What I have written till now has no value, all is empty, all is past But now, I know what I want to give to the world This new philosophy which I have conceived must be spread among men I must write a book and create a character who shall be real enough to live, breathe and move among men, shape their ideas My philosophy shall teach man to surpass himself He shall inspire a new race of men They shall be men of will like himself The world will be formed in their images, ruled by their reason, guided by their power Thus shall I show humanity the godhead it must become No, idea and art cannot do it themselves Occult power is needed for this work I must do it, I will it, and the will is the Creator*

This, my uncle! Why, is it possible? He was the weakest person I ever knew A little bald-headed, frail man with grey vacuous eyes, an inaudible voice murmuring unthinkingly to himself—am I to believe he wrote this?

21 10 60

*Man must be free from the bondage of Nature He must be free to hold his will as Law He must be his own legislator and judge I shall teach him to be victor, the self-conqueror, the ruler of his senses, the lord of all virtues Long, for too long, has man followed the tardy process of mortality Now he must surpass himself and be superhuman But how shall I spread this message in the world? Through my philosopher In him I must create a creator*

23 10 60

*This is an immense work I must have, myself, that power, that freedom which shall let me play on heaven's lyre tunes no human ear has heard Then only can I make Fate my Will and Will my Fate*

25 2 61

*I have made much progress in the occult art I must be silent, my mind calm I must isolate my mind, watch it as a scientist watches with a microscope, and chase away all thoughts from my little ken Then I must wait, patiently Suddenly it comes Like the unearthly calm that precedes the storm, a strange peaceful silence descends on me It*

*works my mind, my heart to immobility I am no more myself I become the mouthpiece of an almighty power Something is visible, audible It is strong, convulsive and it upsets me I hear, I possess the force, I do not ask for it A strange flood descends—a flood of power It brings in me the sense of superhumanity, of immense light, knowledge and will I am carried away in bliss, a bliss tense with emotion Everything that happens then is involuntary Yet I have a feeling of an absolute freedom, of a strange power, of my divinity*

*As the change from sleep to waking is unexpected, so is this experience It is a torrent I must obey my will and do my work*

27 2 61

*For man nothing is a miracle I have had strange experiences during the past months. I don't want to move mountains My task demands more strength I want to master that force which, if not in this life, then in other shall accomplish my work*

*What I have said till now has not yet reached men Indeed I want to go to them Through my book, my character, I shall reach them I want to be remembered as a philosopher, a seer, the creator of a new humanity, a bridge to the future world*

1 3 61

*Whenever there is a living creature, there is a will to power Even in the lowliest there is a will to be master The will of the creator is persuaded to obey that will of the stronger And the weak man's will wants to be master over those weaker still this is man's delight Nature destroys herself, again and again, to emerge stronger The strong has a right to destroy the weak, nature justifies it*

*A race of strong men must therefore be created, men who shall be victorious over mortality and suffering Their ascension shall be vibrant with the triumph-song of humanity They shall grow in knowledge, power, and mastery They shall be bold and swift and violent They shall produce the future world They shall rule themselves and the world.*

15 3 61

*The real work has begun I am to create my philosopher He shall be my last creation and through him I shall attain my goal In him I shall sow the seeds of superhumanity However much I love him, soon I shall oppose him and teach him to struggle himself out of this conflict Thus will my will have it. This is all my art and aim I want to compose into one story, one life, all that is a riddle and a dreadful chance Through him I want to redeem the past and to transform every 'it is' into 'I want it thus'*

This man is not the uncle I knew I remember him telling me the night before his death, "My son, you must believe in God Man is a weakling, a servant of his Fate, God and Fate are our masters There is a will of the world that determines the outcome of our deeds as part of the world-plan, there is also a will in us that, though concealed to our

thought and choice, determines our part in this world-plan But it is the 'All-existence' that gives us our reality and, while we calculate, it works in us its incalculable purpose ''

I disliked him, I detested his ideals The days of astrologers, prophets and god-believers are gone Now man can no more say, "Everything is fate, you shall, for you must '' Man's will is stronger than all fate I wanted to be a philosopher, my uncle tried to dissuade me I overcame all obstacles, taught myself Since my childhood I have planned my future independently and I have carried my plans to perfection I have become a philosopher I say that there is no incalculable Fate, no force however puissant that can subdue the power of my soul My uncle's idea of a new world seems to resemble mine But till now I thought that none other than myself ever conceived such a dream I teach man to cast off his indolence and become powerful He must cast off his degrading love and passion and grow into an idol of power Only Power shall be man's God

Thus new men must arise who, worshipping this God, shall grow into a race of the next future Men admire me, they call my ideas revolutionary

But I am surprised that my uncle had once proposed this idea What changed him? His diary continues after seven years

21 4 68

*I am living and excited Each moment of the past few years has been a constant trial for me But, at the end, I have succeeded. I have caught my glowing dream by the wings Where there is power, there dream becomes the master I have not only written the story of a man's life I have lived with him, each day of his twenty-four years It is a life conceived in my imagination, created by my power I have noted down my experiences with him, as his I have felt his passions, suffered his agonies, constructed his ideas, moulded his visions But now something bids me stop Yet, he is only twenty-four Something must happen now What? I must wait and see*

26 4 68

*Sometimes I wonder, I doubt—have I really written all this? It seems impossible It is not a man's dream It is a godlike creation This man is not a character, he is a real human being What's the difference? That between a dried-up bank and a great stream of living thought and action It cannot get drowned in the Lethe of literary achievements, it shall stand like the Olympus amidst them My mind wonders, but my heart knows, it has come from some distant home of Truth I am but its deliverer*

29 4 68

*My work must stop for a while Circumstances so press on me Subhash, my friend, arrived here two days ago He must leave for the war Malati shall stay with me till their child is born I came here to forget my past but it follows me everywhere*



You see my father was a soldier. My mother was a very beautiful woman. When he left for war, he knew she would be safe with his worthy childhood friend. My father died at the front even before my birth. Since then I have lived here.

29 4 68

*Malati, Malati, why have you come here, to my house? Oh, my dear, it is a torment to see you move around me as another's wife. Why did you choose him, Malati, a mere soldier? I loved you so much. I would have done anything for you. I would have made you a queen. I am lonely, dear, but I have no grudge. I never told you of my love. I loved Subhash. Could I steal the woman he loved? Believe me, I love you still and him too. Your child shall also be my son. But love is a danger for a most solitary man.*

1 5 68

*Malati, my love for you is no more a burning bird of passion, a painful ardour. It is a flame that lights the darkened caves of my mind. This solitary life has hardened my innermost being. I had lost the vision of the sweet, joyous and radiant face of God and saw only the convulsed visage of the Titan.*

*Malati, you have shown me the error of my dearest creation, the dangerous philosophy I was about to preach. You have reminded me of love, of harmony. The world I have dreamt of during the past years, was not of a superhuman race but of a race of Titans. They would be fiercely potent and arrogant men who would devour and trample into extinction what is not themselves.*

20 6 68

*God, can you be so cruel? God, and myself. . . I don't know what is happening around me. Malati is dead. She died in giving birth. Malati, I know you love your son, you want him to live, I can't forget those long hours you used to spend thinking about him, dreaming what he would be like. You knew you would die, the doctor said you knew. Why did you do this? You were noble, dear, therefore happy but God is cruel. Your son too lies by you, he doesn't cry. I know he is dead. I only want you to live, Malati. Agony is biting at my heart like a venomous serpent. I shall never be myself again. I am a sick man wearied by his sore torments and from sleep awakened by a bad dream. But there is still something in me that I call courage. If I have any power left in me now, I shall make you live again, Malati.*

On the next page was a letter addressed to me.

*My dear son,*

*Today, I am dead. But you live. Know me—I who wanted nothing more than to write a book, create a living character in it who would spread my ideas. Through him I wanted to create a future and to redeem by that creation all that was past. So had I written an unfinished story till your mother arrived. Then I realised that my*

*philosopher was not a godlike superhuman being, he was an omnipotent Titan But I had already written his life, until he was twenty-four You shall find it in the following pages of this diary Read it, and forgive me*

*After your mother's death, that night, agony had stilled my heart. In that silence I invoked the power; I was determined to revive her A stillness descended on me, a stillness of those who lie in the womb of time when great events are born. My heart, like a mournful moon, had moved the surges of that force. An intense concentration, pregnant with a creative will, descended It was one of those moments when the creator and the created are one, when the dreamer becomes the dream and it remains for God alone to breathe into it the breath of life Time passed Your mother lay still Instead, the baby cried out. You are he Then I realised how vain had been my pride, how false my conception of mastering the power which but used me as its instrument. An almighty power guides man through the illusion of his own will Since then I have watched you in awe For, in you I see that man whom I had half created in my book In your life I see my story. I try to dissuade you but, defying me, you live the thoughts, passions, ideals I had designed in my half ignorant youth. The philosophy you preach is mine But now you are twenty-four and I am dead Today, my dear boy, you are free. Take up my pen and end the story I began.*

MOHOR  
(Age 19 years)

Based on Sri Aurobindo's *Superman*

(The story was written as an assignment for the first year English Class of the Higher Course at Knowledge )