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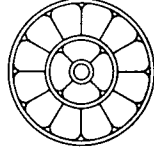
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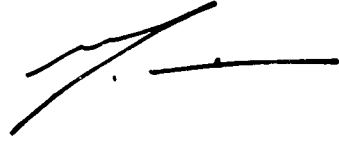


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled



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MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LI

No. 1

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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THE GOD TOUCHED IN TIME

ALL she remembered on this day of Fate;
The road that hazarded not the solemn depths
But turned away to flee to human homes,
The wilderness with its mighty monotone,
The morning like a lustrous seer above,
The passion of the summits lost in heaven,
The titan murmur of the endless woods
As if a wicket-gate to joy were there
Ringed in with voiceless hint and magic sign,
Upon the margin of an unknown world
Reclined the curve of a sun-held recess,
Groves with strange flowers like eyes of gazing nymphs
Peered from their secrecy into open space,
Boughs whispering to a constancy of light
Sheltered a dim and screened felicity,
And slowly a supine inconstant breeze
Ran like a fleeting sigh of happiness
Over slumbrous grasses pranked with green and gold
Hidden in the forest's bosom of loneliness
Amid the leaves the inmate voices called,
Sweet like desires enamoured and unseen,
Cry answering to low insistent cry
Behind slept emerald dumb remotenesses,
Haunt of a Nature passionate, veiled, denied
To all but her own vision lost and wild.
Earth in this beautiful refuge free from cares
Murmured to the soul a song of strength and peace
Only one sign was there of a human tread.
A single path, shot thin and arrowlike
Into this bosom of vast and secret life,
Pierced its enormous dream of solitude
Here first she met on the uncertain earth
The one for whom her heart had come so far
As might a soul on Nature's background limned
Stand out for a moment in a house of dream
Created by the ardent breath of life,
So he appeared against the forest verge
Inset twixt green relief and golden ray ..
At first her glance that took life's million shapes
Impartially to people its treasure-house

Along with sky and flower and hill and star,
 Dwelt rather on the bright harmonious scene
 It saw the green gold of the slumbrous sward,
 The grasses quivering with the slow wind's tread,
 The branches haunted by the wild bird's call
 Awake to Nature, vague as yet to life,
 The eager prisoner from the Infinite,
 The immortal wrestler in its mortal house,
 Its pride, power, passion of a striving God,
 It saw this image of veiled deity,
 This thinking master creature of the earth,
 This last result of the beauty of the stars,
 But only saw like fair and common forms
 The artist spirit needs not for its work
 And puts aside in memory's shadowy rooms.
 A look, a turn decides our ill-poised fate.
 Thus in the hour that most concerned her all,
 Wandering unwarned by the slow surface mind,
 The heedless scout beneath her tenting lids
 Admired indifferent beauty and cared not
 To wake her body's spirit to its king.
 So might she have passed by on chance ignorant roads
 Missing the call of Heaven, losing life's aim,
 But the god touched in time her conscious soul
 Her vision settled, caught and all was changed
 Her mind at first dwelt in ideal dreams. .
 And saw in him the genius of the spot...
 A king of life outlined in delicate air
 Yet this was but a moment's reverie,
 For suddenly her heart looked out at him,
 The passionate seeing used thought cannot match,
 And knew one nearer than its own close strings.
 All in a moment was surprised and seized,
 All in unconscious ecstasy lain wrapped
 Or under imagination's coloured lids
 Held up in a large mirror-air of dream,
 Broke forth in flame to recreate the world,
 And in that flame to new things she was born.

SRI AUROBINDO

MANTRA AND THE IDEAL SPIRIT OF POETRY

WHAT would be the ideal spirit of poetry in an age of the increasingly intuitive mind? For the possibility of such an age is that on which we have been dwelling I have spoken in the beginning of the Mantra as the highest intensest revealing form of poetic thought and expression. What the Vedic poets meant by the Mantra was an inspired and revealed seeing and visioned thinking, attended by a realisation, to use the ponderous but necessary modern word, of some inmost truth of God and self and man and Nature and cosmos and life and thing and thought and experience and deed. It was a thinking that came on the wings of a great soul rhythm, *chhandas*. For the seeing could not be separated from the hearing, it was one act. Nor could the living of the truth in oneself which we mean by realisation, be separated from either, for the presence of it in the soul and its possession of the mind must precede or accompany in the creator or human channel that expression of the inner sight and hearing which takes the shape of the luminous word. The Mantra is born through the heart and shaped or massed by the thinking mind into a chariot of that godhead of the Eternal of whom the truth seen is a face or a form. And in the mind too of the fit outward hearer who listens to the word of the poet-seer, these three must come together, if our word is a real Mantra, the sight of the inmost truth must accompany the hearing, the possession of the inmost spirit of it by the mind and its coming home to the soul must accompany or follow immediately upon the rhythmic message of the Word and the mind's sight of the Truth. That may sound a rather mystic account of the matter, but substantially there could hardly be a more complete description of the birth and effect of the inspired and revealing word, and it might be applied, though usually on a more lowered scale than was intended by the Vedic Rishis, to all the highest outbursts of a really great poetry. But poetry is the Mantra only when it is the voice of the inmost truth and is couched in the highest power of the very rhythm and speech of that truth. And the ancient poets of the Veda and Upanishads claimed to be uttering the Mantra because always it was this inmost and almost occult truth of things which they strove to see and hear and speak and because they believed themselves to be using or finding its innate soul rhythms and the sacrificial speech of it cast up by the divine Agni, the sacred Fire in the heart of man. The Mantra, in other words, is a direct and most heightened, an intensest and most divinely burdened rhythmic word which embodies an intuitive and revelatory inspiration and ensouls the mind with the sight and the presence of the very self, the inmost reality of things and with its truth and with the divine soul-forms of it, the Godheads which are born from the living Truth. Or, let us say, it is a supreme rhythmic language which seizes hold upon all that is finite and brings into each the light and voice of its own infinite.

This is a theory of poetry, a view of the rhythmic and creative self-expression to which we give that name, which is very different from any that we now hold, a sacred or hieratic *ars poetica*, only possible in days when man believed himself to be near to the gods and felt their presence in his bosom and could think he heard some accents of

their divine and eternal wisdom take form on the heights of his mind...

But this new vision will not be as in the old times something hieratically remote, mystic, inward, shielded from the profane, but rather a sight which will endeavour to draw these godheads again to close and familiar intimacy with our earth and embody them not only in the heart of religion and philosophy, nor only in the higher flights of thought and art, but also, as far as may be, in the common life and action of man .

And if this takes place or even if there is some strong mental movement towards it, poetry may recover something of an old sacred prestige. There will no doubt still be plenty of poetical writing which will follow the old lines and minister to the old commoner aesthetic motives, and it is as well that it should be so, for the business of poetry is to express the soul of man to himself and to embody in the word whatever power of beauty he sees, but also there may now emerge too and take the first place souls no longer niggardly of the highest flame, the poet-seer and seer-creator, the poet who is also a Rishi, master singers of Truth, hierophants and magicians of a diviner and more universal beauty . .

A greater era of man's living seems to be in promise, whatever nearer and earthier powers may be striving to lead him on a side path away to a less exalted ideal, and with that advent there must come a new great age of his creation different from the past epochs which he counts as his glories and superior to them in its vision and motive. But first there must intervene a poetry which will lead him towards it from the present faint beginnings. It will be aided by new views in philosophy, a changed and extended spirit in science and new revelations in the other arts, in music, painting, architecture, sculpture, as well as high new ideals in life and new powers of a reviving but no longer limited or obscurantist religious mind. A glint of this change is already visible. And in poetry there is already the commencement of such a greater leading; the conscious effort of Whitman, the tone of Carpenter, the significance of the poetry of A. E., the rapid immediate fame of Tagore are its first signs. The idea of the poet who is also the Rishi has made again its appearance. Only a wider spreading of the thought and mentality in which that idea can live and the growth of an accomplished art of poetry in which it can take body, are still needed to give the force of permanence to what is now only an incipient and just emerging power. Mankind satiated with the levels is turning its face once more towards the heights, and the poetic voices that will lead us thither with song will be among the high seer voices. For the great poet interprets to man his present or reinterprets for him his past, but can also point him to his future and in all three reveal to him the face of the Eternal.

An intuitive revealing poetry of the kind which we have in view would voice a supreme harmony of five eternal powers, Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life and the Spirit. These are indeed the five greater ideal lamps or rather the five suns of poetry. And towards three of them the higher mind of the race is in many directions turning its thought and desire with a new kind and force of insistence. The intellectual side of our recent progress has in fact been for a long time a constant arduous pursuit of Truth in certain of its fields, but now the limited truth of yesterday can no longer satisfy or bind

us. Much has been known and discovered of a kind which had not been found or had only been glimpsed before, but the utmost of that much appears now very little compared with the infinitely more which was left aside and ignored and which now invites our search. The description which the old Vedic poet once gave of the seeking of divine Truth, applies vividly to the mind of our age, "As it climbs from height to height, there becomes clear to its view all the much that is yet to be done." But also it is beginning to be seen that only in some great awakening of the self and spiritual being of man is that yet un-lived truth to be found and that infinite much to be achieved. It is only then that the fullness of a greater knowledge for man living on earth can unfold itself and get rid of its coverings and again on his deeper mind and soul, in the words of another Vedic poet-seer, "New states come into birth, covering upon covering awakens to knowledge, till in the lap of the Mother one wholly sees." This new-old light is now returning upon our minds. . Now we are moving back from the physical obsession to the consciousness that there is a soul and greater self within us and the universe which finds expression here in the life and the body

But the mind of today insists too and rightly insists on life, or humanity, on the dignity of our labour and action. We have no longer any ascetic quarrel with our mother earth, but rather would drink full of her bosom of beauty and power and raise her life to a more perfect greatness. Thought now dwells much on the idea of a vast creative will of life and action as the secret of existence. That way of seeing, though it may give room for a greater power of art and poetry and philosophy and religion, for it brings in real soul-values, has by its limitation its own dangers. A spirit which is all life because it is greater than life, is rather the truth in which we shall most powerfully live. Aditi, the infinite Mother, cries in the ancient Vedic hymn to Indra the divine Power now about to be born in her womb, "This is the path of old discovered again by which all the gods rose up into birth, even by that upward way shouldst thou be born in thy increase; but go not forth by this other to turn thy mother to her fall," but if, refusing the upward way, the new spirit in process of birth replies like the god, "By that way I will not go forth, for it is hard to tread, let me come out straight on the level from thy side, I have many things to do which have not yet been done; with one I must fight and with another I must question after the Truth," then the new age may do great things, as the last also did great things, but it will miss the highest way and end like it in a catastrophe. There is no reason why we should so limit our new birth in time. .

The two other sister lamps of God, colour suns of the Ideal, which our age has most dimmed and of whose reviving light it is most sadly in need, but still too strenuously outward and utilitarian to feel sufficiently their absence, Beauty and Delight, are also things spiritual and they bring out the very heart of sweetness and colour and flame of the other three. Truth and Life have not their perfection until they are suffused and filled with the completing power of delight and the fine power of beauty and become one at their heights with this perfecting hue and this secret essence of themselves; the spirit has no full revelation without these two satisfying presences. For the ancient Indian idea is absolutely true that delight, Ananda, is the inmost

expressive and creative nature of the free self because it is the very essence of the original being of the Spirit. But beauty and delight are also the very soul and origin of art and poetry. It is the significance and spiritual function of art and poetry to liberate man into pure delight and to bring beauty into his life. .

These powers can indeed be possessed in every scale, because on whatever grade of our ascent we stand, the Spirit, the divine Self of man is always there, can break out into a strong flame of manifestation carrying in it all its godheads in whatever form, and poetry and art are among the means by which it thus delivers itself into expression. Therefore the essence of poetry is eternally the same and its essential power and the magnitude of the genius expended may be the same whatever the frame of the sight, whether it be Homer chanting of the heroes in god-moved battle before Troy and of Odysseus wandering among the wonders of remote and magic isles with his heart always turned to his lost and far-off human hearth, Shakespeare riding in his surge of the manifold colour and music and passion of life, or Dante errant mid his terrible or beatific visions of Hell and Purgatory and Paradise, or Valmiki singing of the ideal man embodying God and egoistic giant Rakshasa embodying only fierce self-will approaching each other from their different centres of life and in their different laws of being for the struggle desired by the gods, or some mystic Vamadeva or Vishwamitra voicing in strange vivid now forgotten symbols the action of the gods and the glories of the Truth, the battle and the journey to the Light, the double riches and the sacrificial climbing of the soul to Immortality. For whether it be the inspired imagination fixed on earth or the soul of life or the inspired reason or the high intuitive spiritual vision which gives the form, the genius of the great poet will seize on some truth of being, some breath of life, some power of the spirit and bring it out with a certain supreme force for his and our delight and joy in its beauty....

The poetry of the future, if it fulfils in amplitude the promise now only there in rich hint, will kindle these five lamps of our being, but raise them up more on high and light with them a broader country, many countries indeed now hidden from our view, will make them not any longer lamps in some limited temple of beauty, but suns in the heavens of our highest mind and illuminative of our widest as well as our inmost life. It will be a poetry of a new largest vision of himself and Nature and God and all things which is offering itself to man and of its possible realisation in a nobler and more divine manhood; and it will not sing of them only with the power of the imaginative intelligence, the exalted and ecstatic sense or the moved joy and passion of life, but will rise to look at them from an intenser light and embody them in a more revealing force of the word. It will be first and most a poetry of the intuitive reason, the intuitive senses, the intuitive delight-soul in us, getting from this enhanced source of inspiration a more sovereign poetic enthusiasm and ecstasy, and then, it may even be, rise towards a still greater power of revelation nearer to the direct vision and word of the Overmind from which all creative inspiration comes ...

There it will lead in the journey like the Vedic Agni, the fiery giver of the word, *yuvā kavīh, priyo aṭhīr amartyo mandrajihvaḥ ṛtaci, ṛtāvā*, the Youth, the Seer, the

beloved and immortal Guest with his honied tongue of ecstasy, the Truth-conscious, the Truth-finder, born as a flame from earth and yet the heavenly messenger of the Immortals

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Future Poetry, SABCL, Vol 9, pp 199-208)

OUR CALL

OUR call is to young India. It is the young who must be the builders of the new world,—not those who accept the competitive individualism, the capitalism or the materialistic communism of the West as India's future ideal, nor those who are enslaved to old religious formulas and cannot believe in the acceptance and transformation of life by the spirit, but all who are free in mind and heart to accept a completer truth and labour for a greater ideal. They must be men who will dedicate themselves not to the past or the present but to the future. They will need to consecrate their lives to an exceeding of their lower self, to the realisation of God in themselves and in all human beings and to a whole-minded and indefatigable labour for the nation and for humanity. This ideal can be as yet only a little seed and the life that embodies it a small nucleus, but it is our fixed hope that the seed will grow into a great tree and the nucleus be the heart of an ever-extending formation. It is with a confident trust in the spirit that inspires us that we take our place among the standard-bearers of the new humanity that is struggling to be born amidst the chaos of a world in dissolution, and of the future India, the greater India of the rebirth that is to rejuvenate the mighty outworn body of the ancient Mother

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol 16, p 331)

DYUMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of December 1997)

My dear Mother,

Today I experienced that wherever I turned my eyes, I found You claiming all; I left all, ran to You, Mother, called You, threw myself at Your Feet, and I had all, and You.

THIS is a very good experience.

My dear Mother, always Thy child, make me Thy child, a true child.

Yes, my true child whom I keep always in my arms.

12 February 1935

My dear Mother,

A display of tremendous energy: the lady workers of Aroumé worked from 5 in the morning to 3 in the afternoon. This is not the first time; once they worked from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. at a stretch.

O my dear Mother, let the energy be consecrated to the Divine consciously; let it be a pure self-giving to the Divine.

Yes, with consecration the work can be done much more easily and happily. But nobody must be asked a greater effort than what he can do.

27 February 1935

O my dear Mother,

I am becoming more quiet and peaceful. It is peace and equanimity that have made my work easier and simpler and brought goodwill where there was bad will.

Yes, let the peace and the quietness settle more and more in you and everything will become easy in your work.

Always with you

9 March 1935

My dear Mother,

The Aroumé servants are obedient and willing workers, never absent without informing me previously. Even when they are ill, they come and take leave. I think it is the result of my kind and gentle behaviour with them

Yes, I am sure that servants behave according to the way they are treated

10 March 1935

My dear Mother,

The negligence of G and H today reminded me of past cases where I and my fellow workers were treated like butlers and couriers. Happily, it passed away very quickly. We may not be close friends, but surely we have to co-operate fully in the work.

Yes, it is good to turn a difficulty into an occasion for a new progress.

With love and blessings always

12 March 1935

My dear Mother,

What should my attitude be towards F in her disturbances?

My dear Mother, let there be no attachment in me for others; let there be purely a goodwill and a heart filled with loving consecration to the Divine. If help of consolation comes from me, or rather through me, let it be purely a divine work.

Yes, it is like that that the help becomes true and effective.

To do at each moment the best we can and leave the result to the Divine's decision, is the surest way to peace, happiness, strength, progress and final perfection

With love and blessings always

15 March 1935

My dear Mother,

A complete reliance upon the Divine Grace alone gives peace, happiness and joy. That is because the Divine Himself takes up the devotee and carries him or her in His arms

Yes, the Grace is infinite for one who sincerely trusts the Grace.

Always with you, my dear child

15 March 1935

Dear Mother,

What about J? What work will he do? He has not spoken to me about anything

He has not been accepted as a permanent member and that is why no work has been given to him. He is married and has children and he wanted to bring the whole lot here.

He has always lived on K's charity We do not need this kind of people here

21 March 1935

My dear Mother,

A full trust and confidence in the Divine Love saves a sadhak from all dangers and difficulties and gives him happiness, peace and joy

My dear Mother, grant me a force that brings an integral and complete self-giving to the Divine

Yes, it is a sincere self-giving that saves one from all difficulties and dangers
With love and blessings always

28 March 1935

(To be continued)

THE GOLD INSIDE

AWASH in a burn of argent light,
Anchored at a secret harbour's calm,
Brimmed by billows of a blue infinite
The reflected moon's twin alarm

Choreographed in operatic harmonies
A myriad dreams and a myriad again
Weave secrecies of sight in smiling seas
Heaving to the wind's wan refrain

The boundless blind energies of the untiring cosmos
The universe has pledged as legacy to me
My plunge in the depths of the pathless source
Unearths the crust of an old treasury

The rusted key I turned with might and love—
The gold inside was the gold above

AKASH DESHPANDE

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

(Continued from the issue of December 1997)

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IN Yogic practice the master-technique in the days of the *Arya* and even later was to make "the thousand-petalled lotus", *sahasradala padma*, on the top of the head one's main centre of Yoga, helped by the inner and inmost being from below. But, after the first few months succeeding the descent of the Overmind on 24 November 1926 into their bodies, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother saw that the transformation from above could not be achieved in their disciples: the disciples were not ready for such a direct process. The sadhana assumed a new form. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother took their stations in the physical mind, which begins at the brain-level of the mental consciousness, and kept pulling there what was high up and from there acted upon individuals and the general earth-scene. The principal opening which they insisted upon in the sadhaks now was the *hrd-padma*, "the heart-lotus", in whose depths is the inmost entity in man, his true soul or psychic being.

The psychic being in full blaze had always been the Mother's secret of sadhana. And basically due to her example and to her guidance of the Ashram in the wake of 24 November the master-technique came to be the bringing forth of the "heart-lotus" into activity and the setting of it as the leader of the transformation. There was also a more direct working upon the "subconscient" and the "inconscient" in order to lighten their heavy drag upon the consciousness and to expose them to the inner as well as to the highest Illumination for a change of the physical being's habitual and automatic reactions.

Several other shifts of viewpoint and movement took place either on Sri Aurobindo's initiative or on the Mother's or else on that of both jointly. The final version of the Truth they sought to establish on earth may be considered not only Aurobindonian but also Mother-moulded. That is to say, the Mother introduced a number of extensions of significance and vision into the spiritual system we find in the Master's writings.

At least one term of Sri Aurobindo's acquired an extra meaning. He has used the word "involution" in three senses. The first covers the supreme Superconsciousness in which everything is merged beyond manifestation in a self-absorbed trance of the Spirit. In relation to this sense Sri Aurobindo considers the manifested cosmos, with the many levels or planes he demarcates in it, as "a self-graded evolution out of the

superconscient Sachchidananda”¹—or else he speaks of “Spirit in which all is involved and out of which all evolves downward...”²

But when he does not bring in this sense he regards the graded formation of levels or planes descending from the supreme Superconscience as a movement of “involution” because the gradation expresses a more and more limited quality, an increasingly held-in nature, of the Divine. There is first a cosmic hierarchy of powers above the mind, then a ladder of planes mental, vital and subtle-physical. These latter levels are different from the world which is ours and which we look upon as that of matter with life and mind appearing out of it. Our world has to be designated as gross-physical and as lying outside and under the cosmic ladder. For, all the rungs of that ladder are, according to Sri Aurobindo, “typal”: each is a diverse play of one type of consciousness without any other type arising from it: the other types are not absent but they are subordinate to the single principle which makes the particular plane, presenting a certain aspect of the Infinite and Eternal as the prominent ruling factor. Thus on the life-plane there is no expression of mind proper or of characteristic matter but only a mentality and a physicality subjected or subdued to the nature of the life-force’s impulses, desires, passions, ambitions, adventurous dynamisms, incalculable changes of motive and shape. In short, none of the typal planes has the phenomenon we name “evolution”—the state of affairs we find on our earth where we initially see a purely material existence and afterwards the outbreak of life in it and later the outbreak of mind in a life which has no self-conscious thought and will, and lastly the seeming preparation of a more-than-mental, an ever-luminous spiritual, consciousness in a mind which is a seeking ignorance. It is the fact of earthly evolution that brings in Sri Aurobindo’s third sense of “involution”.³

Evolution implies for Sri Aurobindo the gradual emergence of what was concealed: an involution of various powers precedes their evolution. Involution here differs from the movement of involution by which the typal planes are formed. And in its original state such involution signifies a total locking-up or engulfment of all the possible powers, in what the Rigveda (X.129.3) describes as “darkness wrapped within darkness”—an absolute Inconscience at the inverse pole to the Supreme Superconscience in which all the powers are plunged or lost in light.⁴ Our material world is the first upsurge from this Inconscience. It is the release of the subtle-physical principle hidden there, release due to the pressure upward of that locked element as well as the pressure downward of the same element from its free state on its own plane.⁵ And whatever is subsequently developed is the similar release of the hidden vital and mental and more-than-mental principles through the material world.

The Mother employs a fourth sense. In her talk of 21 October 1953 she opposes to

1 *The Life Divine* (American Edition, 1949), p. 684

2 *Ibid.*, p. 120

3 *Ibid.*, p. 591

4 *Ibid.*, p. 491

5 *Collected Works of the Mother*, Vol. 3, pp. 150-51

the phenomenon of evolution in which there is an ascent towards an ever higher consciousness the descent of a higher consciousness into the mould of an already evolved lower one: this to her is a phenomenon of involution. Thus the animal nature growing human is evolutionary: a mental being, entering from above, as it were, into the semi-animal semi-human would be involutory. In the traditional figure of the Ramayana's Hanuman, the ape-devotee, the Mother reads the symbol of "the evolutionary man", whereas in the traditional figure of the same epic's Rama, the Avatar, she discerns the symbol of the involutory being. "The evolutionary being is the one that's the continuation of the animals, and the other is a being from higher worlds. But in the evolutionary being there is that central light which is the origin of the psychic being, which will develop into the psychic being, and when the psychic being is full-formed, there is a moment when it can unite with a being from above which can incarnate in it. So this being from above which descends into a psychic being is an involutory being—a being of the Overmind plane or from elsewhere "

When I was writing in Bombay during 1953 my article on "the Mind of Light", which the Mother had realised on 5 December 1950, she let me know through Nolini that this Mind, which was constituted by the supramental Light settling in the physical mentality, was involutory rather than evolutionary. She meant that an already luminous consciousness was manifesting in a cast of evolving mind to create the new power

Even as early as 1931 the Mother spoke of "certain human organisms" in the remote past progressing enough to allow "a junction with certain beings descending from above". The junction led to the birth of "a race of the elite" and to the claims of races like "the Aryan, the Semitic and the Japanese" to be each "the chosen race". But, according to the Mother, there has been "a lot of intermixture" because of "the necessity of prolongation of the superior race, which drove it to intermix with ..animal humanity". After a few remarks on "some beings who had a very strong desire not to mix"—a desire which is "the real origin of race-pride, race-exclusiveness and a special caste-distinction like that cherished by the Brahmins in India"—the Mother concluded "at present it cannot be said that there is any portion of mankind which is purely animal: all the races have been touched by the descent from above, and owing to the extensive intermixture the result of the Involution was more widely spread "

Considering the date—1931—we should believe that the Mother's usage was known to Sri Aurobindo and accepted by him though he never employed it in his own writings. Our belief would seem to get a direct confirmation when in her talk of 2 November 1955 the Mother speaks as if Sri Aurobindo himself had it in mind. Asked whether the Vedic Rishis were men who had evolved to that state or were special manifestations, she wants to know if the questioner means "whether they were evolutionary beings or involutory beings". Her answer is "they were surely involutory beings. But the body was the result of evolution". Asked again whether

now the evolution would continue or be replaced by involution, she replies: "...there is one thing you forget—that Sri Aurobindo has said that each new species which appeared upon earth was the result of an involution. So there has always been the combination of the two. A double work—a work that goes from below upward, and an answer which comes from above downward."

Involution, in the Mother's extra sense, implies simply the descending penetration of a conscious force from a plane beyond the earth's formula of evolution in order to manifest there the nature proper to that plane.

The Mother has also given, on account of circumstances not visualised in the works of Sri Aurobindo, a somewhat altered perspective to the spiritual picture comprising features describable in Aurobindonian language as New Race, Superman, Gnostic Being, Gnostic Community

(To be continued)

AMAL KIRAN
(K D SETHNA)

A POEM AND A FLOWER

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

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

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

SURYAKANTI MOHANTY

“INSPIRATIONS FOR PROGRESS”

(Continued from the issue of December 1997)

WHEN disturbance comes do not allow it to cover up the consciousness with wrong movements. Remain detached and firmly hold on to the right attitude.

Keep the mind always, and especially in times of disturbance, very quiet, very steady and very clear. All exaggerations, wrong suggestions, distortions must be rejected. Have very clear perceptions in a quiet, steady and collected mind. Then most of the trouble will be over.

Have natural, normal and simple emotional reactions to things and persons. No hypochondriac exaggerations, no hypersensitivity, no irrational vital-emotional movements.

Be sattwic—cultivate a steady balance, equilibrium and poise in all parts of nature.

Have sincere goodwill and benevolence for all. Do not stress the defects of others or dwell on them. Do not harbour any grievances. Keep the consciousness free of all negative feelings.

Be positive, constructive, generous.

Do not tie up any knots with any persons. That is a bad psychological economy. Tactfully unravel all knots and make all contacts and dealings with persons positive, natural and easy. Take the initiative in doing this. Make everybody a friend. Meet everyone with a generous smile and a sweet heart. Open out, widen out, enlarge yourself.

Counteract this inward-pulling tendency in “relations with the world”. Enlarge, widen, open out.

Open out all folds, widen, stretch; let the New Consciousness pour more and more in all the strands of the being.

5-5-61

*

All things are here in the Ashram. Open your eyes and look around. Never think of going outside for anything.

Do not live in a shell, ostrich-like, enclosed within, blind to things outside.

Also have true perceptions, learn to have true values of things.

Then you will see more and more that the Ashram is full of the most precious, the most marvellous, even of incalculably significant things and persons.

It is the centre of New Creation.

A whole New Cosmic Manifestation is concealed behind its apparent surface life, and is pressing to be born and shall be born.

Forget your petty little self, see with *seeing* eyes and collaborate in the manifestation of New Things.

Then all troubles will disappear.

Then life will be a constant adventure.

Then living will be full of zest and enthusiasm

Then every second will be meaningful and purposive: every day a step forward on the never-ending Path of the journey towards the Eternal.

5-5-61

*

The surest and most decisive way to get rid of all fear, all doubt, all sorrow, all guilt and all the trouble and weakness that they create, is to turn to Mother and Sri Aurobindo and to take complete refuge in their All-Powerful, All-Knowing Love with absolute trust.

To surrender to them wholly with deep and entire confidence and to leave all things in their Hands is the Key-secret to end all troubles and to be new-born in their New Supramental Life.

This must be swiftly and surely done

1-8-61

*

Now that the Supramental Light and Force and Ananda are swiftly coming in the system, it is very necessary to establish a secure base of Calm, Peace, Silence and Equanimity

His Infinite Silence is above my mind I have only to aspire for it in a quiet mind It will descend more and more in the quiet mind and spread out and settle everywhere

More and more the Peace settles in the being, the feeling of detachment and equanimity will grow and purify, wideness and happiness will increase.

When Peace enters and settles in the heart, the psychic will come forward and will suffuse the consciousness with its sweetness and joy. Love will open its wings and benevolence will fill the heart

When Peace enters and settles in the being there will be a constant spontaneous feeling of well-being, harmony, repose

When the foundation of Peace is laid, the Supramental Light and Force and Ananda will descend freely in the system and work out the needed transformation swiftly

In the mirror of Silence His Face will be seen. . In the silence of the heart He will draw near and with the nectar of His Sweetness fill all the being

Be very very calm, peaceful, very very silent, and open out to Him *The critical hour of His coming is now .*

2-8-61

*

Absolute spontaneous *trust* is my great need. Aspiration, surrender are very essential, but without deep, entire, absolute trust they cannot bring the full result.

All this anxiety, fear, doubt, this “what-will-happen” attitude—much of it suppressed but active in the background of consciousness and powerfully influencing thought, feeling and behaviour—is a clear sign of lack of trust.

This serious defect must now be cured.

I must be *absolutely confident* that:

- 1) All that I aspire and pray for will be granted by Sri Aurobindo and Mother
- 2) All my real needs will be fulfilled by them
- 3) Whenever there is difficulty, their decisive help will not only come but will set everything right
- 4) Their victory in me and on earth is absolutely certain
- 5) I shall be New-Born in the New-Life of their New World and shall live in Them, by Them and for Them alone

With these absolute certitudes I must utterly throw away from all regions of my consciousness all doubt, all fear, all care and anxiety, and always remain deeply peaceful, confident and *exceedingly happy*.

3-8-61

*

These are the things which should be more and more cultivated until they are securely established in the nature:

- 1) Complete surrender to and trust in Mother
- 2) Entire love for Mother
- 3) Calm and equality in mind, vital, nerves and body.
- 4) Clarity, balance, happy disposition
- 5) Resolute, confident, effective will.
- 6) Absolute fearlessness

25-8-61

*

With a very clear understanding I have seen that all guilt and fear are wrong movements which must be thoroughly discarded. Sri Aurobindo and Mother want these movements to be completely rejected. They are dark, weakening, very troublesome movements, and obstruct the psychic opening to Sri Aurobindo and Mother.

So with a quiet, determined, resolute will and calling Their Help, I must constantly reject these movements and in their place establish the right psychic attitude in the mind, the heart and the vital.

Reject all guilt. Keep the will to progress. Do not fold upon yourself but with loving trust completely open out to Them. What is really wrong must be clearly seen,

admitted and corrected. For that Their guidance and help is always there But there should not be any hypochondriac sense of guilt and no folding upon oneself

With loving trust completely open out your heart and whole being to Them, hide nothing, fear nothing. Open out all to Their Sight and offer it and ask for Their Light and Grace to liberate you from all that is wrong.

Do this more and more and resolutely and absolutely throw away this dark tormenting force of guilt.

29-8-61

(To be continued)

KISHOR GANDHI

(Compiled by Arvind Akki)

TWO POEMS

THIS SHINING SEA-BLUE BEAD

THIS shining sea-blue bead
that I wear around my neck,
once adorned yours and
touched who and what you are:
the One and Only Reality.

A moment ago, I kissed it
and it breathed warmly molten—
like sun, like love.

Then as I stumbled about like a drunkard,
your hand stopped me from falling over.

EVERY SECOND OF EVERY DAY

Whenever I've lost anything in my life,
I've never really missed it enough to look for it again
But you, I miss every second of every day
I miss you even when I am with you

MIREK

THE WAGER OF AMBROSIA

(Continued from the issue of December 1997)

VII. The Theory of the Triple Purusha

Part B

THE QUESTION of the Individual and the Eternal, the Personal and the Transpersonal, is of fundamental importance in the metaphysics of this creation. If the formless featureless uncreated and uncreating Absolute were the only reality, then what we term becoming, having names and forms and qualities, with all these thousand aspects, would lose its substantiality and everything would appear as a shadow floating in a void. This appearance would be due to the mysterious working of Maya, the power of illusory formation, this Maya itself being indescribable. Naturally, therefore, it would be illogical to speak of the Lord of the Universe, Ishwara, who would have no *locus standi* here, or for that matter anywhere else, as there is no real universe to lord over. By dismissing the *saguna*-aspect, the Divine with qualities, the Presence with name and form and the will to be, to enjoy any manifestation, the phenomenal world or becoming, would become an inferior product under the sway of an all-powerful Nature or Prakriti, she casting her illusory spell over everything.

And yet there has to be a way to get out of this Mayic play of ignorance and attain oneness with the One who alone is. The first step is to be free from the bewilderment of this all-powerful lower Nature who is the moulder of the mortal's lot, who has made this world full of falsehood, distortion, egoistic assertion, infatuation, attachment, lust, jealousy, the dark hankering for possession, the cause of suffering and pain "Throw away desire," says the Gita, "conquer the fault of attachment, overcome the dual sense of happiness and sorrow, and other dualities, and abide always in the primal Self, *adhyātmanitya*" This is a verse which stipulates certain rules in the manner of practical guidance in the sadhana of the seeker of the Truth and is of direct concern for his progress; without it the real journey cannot begin. Only when all ties of phenomenality are unstrung is the Enduring reached and from it then there is no return; that is the true abode of rest, *padamavyam tat*

Jnaneshwar goes into a kind of poetic rapture while enumerating these Yogic prerequisites in any spiritual discipline: "At the end of the rainy season the dark clouds take leave of the sky; in that manner, with the arrival of knowledge, disappear from the spiritual seeker arrogant self-regard and foolishness and infatuation. Relatives avoid him who is cruel or is without fame or fortune or wealth, without good manners; so does one of merit remain away from all that disfigures and taints and distorts, that which causes disturbance. A banana plant topples when heavy with the weight of its own fruits; likewise, with the gaining of the might of the self, vanish one by one all actions bearing their consequences. The sense of duality, of opposition, doubt and

doubleness of intent or regard stay no more with him,—like the birds that fly away from a tree which has caught fire The wild grass that sprouts vigorously in the soil of disunion and dissension does not grow in the nature of such a man From him go away, along with ignorance, his haughtiness and pride and conceit of the bodily existence,—as does the night depart with the rising of the sun With the declining of the life-spirit the way the body suddenly abandons the Jiva, so is by him discarded duality.. . Winning a kingdom in a dream, or seeing our own death in it, assumes no meaning when we get up; precisely in that manner the pairs of opposites, like pleasure and pain, stay not with the awakened A serpent can never attack an eagle and therefore merit and demerit that flow from duality dare not approach him . The sun pours on the earth its own essence, in the nature of rain, and takes back the water using the network of its rays; in precisely such a way does that one which appears scattered here, in twelve different directions, because of self-delusion, *ātmabhrāntī*, gathers everything back in the illusionless sight of knowledge The stream of the Ganges plunges into the sea and attains oneness with it, so does he whose power of discrimination of the essential from the phenomenal becomes established in the Self. Indeed, because of the self-sameness everywhere, there can remain no wish with such a person to reach anything else.”

पै आघवेचि आपुलेपणें । नुरेचि तया अभिलाषणे ।
जैसे येथूनि पन्हां जाणे । आकाशा नाही ॥

(*Jnāneshwarī*: 15 300)

Is not the sky present everywhere? and does it desire to go anywhere else to some beyond? Does it travel from one village to another village?

To continue. “On the hillock of fire no life can sprout, in that way in the mind of the seeker no disturbing movement can spring up. . The full moon does not lack any phase to make its roundness complete; so is he who has become free of want and desire and attachment. . The speck of dust gets blown off by the wind and likewise the objects of sense remain not with him who has offered himself in the sacrifice of knowledge, the brightly kindled *jñānāgni*, gold is poured into gold, *hemī hem* Such is that place, *padamavyayam tat*, which cannot be particularised, nor can it be envisioned or cognised by the faculty of our senses ”

This is a straightforward stipulation of universal Yogic preconditions which ought to be strictly followed to make a beginning on the spiritual path. Naturally, therefore, there cannot be any dispute about Jnaneshwar’s commentary on the fifth shloka of this chapter But when he comes to the next verse, pragmatically Upanishadic with the force of the Mantra, asserting the greatness of the Abode of the Supreme, *parama dhāma*, we at once notice the Shankarite interpretation entering into the description That place, that Abode of the Supreme, says the text, the sun illumines not, nor the moon, nor the fire, but is itself the luminousness of the eternal Being In *Jnāneshwarī* we have

That which is seen with the bright flame of the lamp, or which is illumined by the

moon in the night, or which the sun makes radiant,—all that seeing is after all not its seeing, nor is seeing it, but only the appearance of the universe, concealing that itself behind it. The immediate view of whatever is, consequently, turns out to be only a formation, a perception of the percipient and not the true reality behind the perceived. When the sense of the pearl-shell becomes less and less insistent, more and more starts appearing true the silver form; when we forget the fact of the rope, the illusion of the snake riding on it assumes a convincingness in our minds. In that way, the moon and the sun and the great bright objects shine here brilliantly, deriving their splendour from the one who is the piled mass, the heap of light, *tejorāśi*, who illumines all that is formed. When that shines the sun and the moon fade away, even as on all objects they cast only the shadow of that Brilliance. Perhaps just in such a manner can we speak of them as its organic parts, the aspects, the limbs of its indivisible body, the waves on the surface of the ocean.

The beating of the kettledrum heard in a dream falls silent on waking, the mirage disappears with the coming of the evening. So is, tells the Teacher of the Gita, my house of dwelling, *nyadhāma*, that place where vanish all hallucinatory perceptions, where exists no nescience. Having reached it, there can be no return to this ignorant life; for the streams, when they merge into the sea, go not there whence they came. The salt image of a female elephant, *kunjarī*, when put in the salt water dissolves and can never recover her lost shape, or the flames that have climbed to the sky cannot come back, or else, as does water evaporate and disappear when poured on a piece of red-hot iron, so do they return not who reach my Abode. For them there is no coming back to resume the worldly rounds. In this way, and that is the only way, and purely in the merit of knowledge, those who come to me cease from the cycles of life.

दृश्यपणे देखिजे । कां ज्ञेयत्वं जाणिजे । अमुकें ऐसें म्हणिजे । ते जे नव्हे ॥ पै दीपाचिया बंबाळीं । कां चंद्र हन जे उजळी । हें काय बोलों अंशुमाळी । प्रकाशी जें ॥ ते अवघेचि दिसणें । जयाचे कां न देखणें । विश्व भासतसे जेणें । लपालेनी ॥ जैसे शिपीपण हारपे । तंव तंव खरे होय रुपे । कां दोरी लोपतां सापें । फार होइजे ॥ ३ तैसीं चंद्रसूर्यादि थोरें । इये तेजे जियें फारे । तिये जयाचेनी आधारे । प्रकाशती ॥ ते वस्तु कीं तेजोराशि । सर्वभूतात्मक सरिसी । चंद्रसूर्याच्या मानसीं । प्रकाशे जे ॥ म्हणौनि चंद्रसूर्य कडवसां । पडती वस्तूच्या प्रकाशा । यालागीं तेज जे तेजसां । ते वस्तूचे आग ॥ आणि जयाच्या प्रकाशीं । जग हारपे चंद्रार्केसीं । सचंद्र नक्षत्रें जैसीं । दिनोदयीं ॥ ना तरी प्रबोधलिये वेळे । ते स्वप्नीची डिंडिमा मावळे । कां नुरेचि साजवेळे । मृगतृष्णिका ॥ तैसा जिये वस्तूच्या ठायी । कोणहीच कां आभासु नाहीं । ते माझे निजधाम पाहीं । पाटाचे गा ॥ पुढती जे तेथ गेले । ते न घेतीचि माघौतीं पाउले । महोदधीं का मिनले । स्रोत जैसे ॥ कां लवणाची कुंजरी । सूदलिया लवणसागरीं । होयचि ना माघारी । परती जैसी ॥ नाना गेलिया अंतराळा न येतीचि वन्हिज्वाळा । नाहीं तप्तलोहौनि जळा । निघणे जेवीं ॥ तेविं मजसीं एकवाट । जे जाले ज्ञानें चोखट । तयां पुनरावृत्तीची वाट । मोडली गा ॥

(*Jnāneshwarī*. 15.307-20)

Such is the excellence of that Abode of the Supreme, *param dhām*. There is no fall into the ordinary mundane existence when that faultless and incomparable excellence is reached. One becomes one with the Godhead. But, at this point, a question of great

occult significance may be raised,— vis-à-vis the very existence of the individual who is going to have such a relationship with the indivisible Godhead, with the relationless partless Absolute. In this union does the individual lose his individuality, or does he still exist in oneness with the single One? Does he remain distinct or does he get obliterated in the Eternal? Also, for the Eternal, is there that sameness throughout or are there differences? Does God see himself to be different from his creation?—*devesu bhinna ki abhinna?* (*Jnāneshwarī* 15.322) If they have been always distinct from each other, then it would be absurd to speak of oneness. On the other hand, if they are sempiternally identical, this talk of attainment and union becomes meaningless. Union with whom when all is one?

Jnaneshwar resolves the dilemma by first asserting the validity of both, that they are distinct as well as not distinct. In fact, according to him, this perplexing situation bearing a self-negating character is not at all present in any true spiritual awareness; it is a projection of our ignorance on the unseverable reality of the One. This separateness, or this division, is an appearance and it has really no foundation to stand upon. In knowledge distinctions totally disappear. It is only by the power of Maya that prevail these manynesses which have no substantiality of their own. When knowledge gets limited only to the bodily existence, then it loses its trueness and there is the sense of separation from the Indivisible. The distinctionless Self accepts the authority of Prakṛiti and conducts itself according to her wishes and her moods and methods, it is her commerce which is really witnessed in all this hubbub and turmoil. It cannot be said that there is a square or a circular piece of sky, though the sky takes the shape of the container in which it is confined; otherwise, its repose is always in the limitless which has no confining or defining boundaries or forms.

Such is the uncompromising position of the Advaitic philosophy, holding firmly to the concept that duality is entirely due to ignorance and that, with the arrival of the dawn of knowledge, no divisions can arise in the Indivisible. Perhaps we cannot even speak that One is all or is in all or all is in One.

But then such a position leaves many issues unanswered. The necessity of God's Vibhūti doing his works here, or he himself taking birth from age to age as incarnate divinity to establish righteousness and destroy the dark agents who cause the decline of the Dharma, the identity with the golden Puruṣa chanted triumphantly by the Upanishad in the assertion of *so'hamsmi*, the Puranic relationship of Nara-Narayana, or the two famous birds dwelling on the same tree as we see them in the ancient Śrutis, or else the vivid parable of Kutsa-Indra so convincingly presented by the Vedic Rishi showing the oneness-with-a-difference in the manifestive splendour of the higher Nature, Para Prakṛiti—all these remain totally unrecognised. Jnaneshwar himself, in a certain sense, speaks of duality in non-duality that is needed for relationship. There has to be Arjuna-ness for the being of Krishna to have a friend 'in party and banquet' and a warrior doing his will on the battlefield. Asks Krishna to Arjuna in *Jnāneshwarī* 'How do I embrace you?' Indeed, if there were not to be this two-ness, who is going to embrace whom? But then exclaims the Friend: 'To enjoy your friendship, let me for

a moment create this duality; otherwise this happiness, this delight, I will miss.’’ Otherwise the play will become impossible Jnaneshwar, however, adds that it is only a thin veil thrown with a specific intent (*Jnāneshwarī*. 6 114) A certain difference between God and Man, as if for the purposes of a joyous relationship, is thus accepted But this is a relationship of ‘‘the sky in the sky’’, *gaganī gagan layā jāye*. (*Jnāneshwarī* 6 310)

What this means is that Jnaneshwar is not exactly working out a comprehensive thesis or disposition of spiritual philosophy, but is only offering comments apropos of each shloka in the immediate context This also he is doing in the light of the tradition that he has inherited It is in this tradition that we should see his discussion of the Triple Purusha of the Gīta Here we may also mention *en passant* that Maharashtra produced great Yogīs or devotee poets, but has given no Shankara or Sayana or Ramanuja or Madhva or Vallabha bringing with him the originality and power of intellectual penetration which we find with remarkable abundance in the Southern spirit

(*To be continued*)

R. Y. DESHPANDE

HER EYES

HER eyes are rain-drops of secret sky,
 Her eyes are mouths of infinity
 Pouring its heart on the core of dream
 A source of hidden delight. A stream
 From where began the world’s long cry
 Towards the richness of a viewless sea.

4-9-60

ROMEN

(From the late poet’s unpublished diaries)

A DIALOGUE WITH SRI AUROBINDO*

A Few Issues in the Nature of Specific Questions and Answers— an Imaginary Dialogue

The World View

DA By the time you were born the British had thoroughly established themselves and the empire seemed to last forever I would like to describe this period as a time of steady denationalization of Indians. The higher classes who obtained English education, moreover, those who returned from England after their higher studies shamelessly adapted to the English way of life as the more enlightened one Indeed, you did not have to search for more glaring example than that of your own father who had done his specialization in medicine in England These educated people renounced their culture as superstitious, out-dated and unenlightened They embraced the Western culture, although it seemed so out-of-place yet they aped it and still worse flaunted it, forgetting and becoming ignorant of a refined and mature ancient culture. They followed the English education that made one nothing more than a desk-clerk, as for character building and citizenship the less is spoken the better

SRI AUROBINDO The nineteenth century in India was imitative, self-forgetful, artificial It aimed at a successful reproduction of Europe in India, forgetting the deep saying of the Gita, ‘‘Better the law of one’s own being though it be badly done than an alien dharma well-followed, death in one’s own dharma is better, it is a dangerous thing to follow the law of another’s nature.’’ For death in one’s own dharma brings new birth, success in an alien path means only successful suicide.¹

Political Freedom

DA. The Cripps Offer was rejected Worse, in August the same year India started the ‘‘Quit India’’ movement and further confused its stand. The Allies won the war. Independence came to India, too But it was a divided nation, a bleeding nation with partition, refugees and a question mark on Kashmir All this tragedy and misfortune could have been avoided if they had accepted your advice on Cripps However, we cannot undo what has happened How do you visualize India’s position for the future?

SRI AUROBINDO: .. the old communal division into Hindus and Muslims seems now to have hardened into a permanent political division of the country It is to be hoped that this settled fact will not be accepted as settled for ever or as anything more than a temporary expedient For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India’s internal development and prosperity may be impeded, her position among the nations weakened, her destiny impaired or even frustrated²

* These are excerpts from the author’s forthcoming book *Freedom and Future* —Editor

Freedom as Economic Liberation

DA. The instinct of self-sustenance or self-preservation in man has superseded all his other activities including self-protection and self-propagation. Today, the countries of the world are ready to sacrifice their military ego for the sake of economic progress, disarmament, sharing of military intelligence, pacts and treaties have put curbs on unbounded military might. Nations have seen reason in the economic welfare of the people. As a part of boosting their economic strategy they have large plans to curtail the population growth. Thus, we see that economics is taking precedence over and above man's basic instinct of self-protection and reproduction.

SRI AUROBINDO: Ancient man was in the group primarily a political being, in the Aristotelian sense,—as soon as he ceased to be primarily religious,—and to this preoccupation he added, wherever he was sufficiently at ease, the preoccupation of thought, art and culture. The economic impulses of the group were worked out as a mechanical necessity, a strong desire in the vital being rather than a leading thought in the mind. Nor was the society regarded or studied as an economic organism except in a very superficial aspect. The economic man held an honourable, but still a comparatively low position in the society; he was only the third caste or class, the Vaishya.³

Freedom of Science

DA. Jawaharlal Nehru, our first prime-minister, who introduced industrialization in the country, always insisted on a *scientific temper* as the only key to progress. Even after fifty years of independence and much building of dams and factories, India is one of the poorer nations of the world. With a billion mouths to feed survival alone has become a big problem. The most basic thing in life, drinking water, has become scarce. A roof over one's head and two square meals per day is not in luck to almost forty per cent of the population. India has the largest illiterate population in the world. Millions of people are steeped in superstition and believe in magic. The root cause of our poverty and illiteracy may be traced to the absence of the scientific temper in the masses.

SRI AUROBINDO: Science is of immense importance not because it discovers the secrets of Nature for the advancement of knowledge, but because it utilises them for the creation of machinery and develops and organizes the economic resources of the community.... Politics, government itself are becoming more and more a machinery for the development of an industrialised society. Free thought and culture remain on the surface of this great increasing mass of commercialism and influence and modify it, but are themselves more and more influenced, penetrated, coloured, subjugated by the economic, commercial and industrial view of human life.⁴

Freedom as Social Liberation

DA. I must observe that the new caste system in India is not based on the

profession pursued Today, India has a president who is a highly educated man, was a renowned diplomat, scholar and politician. Yet, he is branded in the political culture as *dalit* Thus today caste in India is less a social and economic problem, it is more of a political problem

SRI AUROBINDO: When the economic basis also breaks down, then the unclean and diseased decrepitude of the old system has begun; it has become a name, a shell, a sham and must either be dissolved in the crucible of an individualist period of society or else fatally affect with weakness and falsehood the system of life that clings to it That in visible fact is the last and present state of the caste system in India ⁵

Religious Freedom

DA. Various cultures around the world somehow, sometime in history, transcending their normal, natural life have found a way to the spiritual, the supernatural life Man has experienced a *spark*, an unmistakable imprint that has made him look instinctively beyond his physical, rational, mortal life. *Instinct* tells him that beyond the perceptible there is something imperceptible, beyond the physical there is something transcendental, beyond the mortal there is something immortal, beyond the human there is something divine This instinct, I am of the opinion, is the basic religious experience. People admit that Indians have this instinct in greater measure than the others in the rest of the world

SRI AUROBINDO: this seems reasonable and at first sight a satisfying solution; for religion is that instinct, idea, activity, discipline in man which aims directly at the Divine, while all the rest seem to aim at it only indirectly and reach it with difficulty after much wandering and stumbling in the pursuit of the outward and imperfect appearances of things. To make all life religion and to govern all activities by the religious idea would seem to be the right way to the development of the ideal individual and ideal society and the lifting of the whole life of man into the Divine.⁶

DANIEL ALBUQUERQUE

References

- 1 SABCL, Vol 2, pp 36-7
- 2 SABCL, Vol 26, p 404
- 3 SABCL, Vol 15, p 463
- 4 *Ibid* , p 465
- 5 *Ibid* p 8
- 6 *Ibid* , p 162

INTEGRAL YOGA IN THE ERSTWHILE U.S.S.R.

Extracts of Letters from Russian Correspondents

[In August 1992 a bright young spectacled Ukrainian, Alexey Ksendziouk, visited the Ashram for a stay of eight months. During this period he was associated with the Ashram Archives where he engaged himself in translating into Russian passages from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Alexey thought that one way of putting his translations to good use would be to start a journal in Russian devoted to the aspects of Integral Yoga. The journal was named Sadhana and he prepared the text and layout for the first two or three issues. The first sixteen-page issue was ready early in 1993. It was printed in Germany and 20,000 copies were sent to Russia for distribution. The circulation of this issue had an impact on many Russians as evidenced by the fact that, since its appearance, the Archives has been receiving letters from people residing in all the parts of the former Soviet Union, and also from Russians living in neighbouring countries.]

Most of the letters received from the correspondents were written in Russian and had to be translated into English. After replies were sent in English, some correspondents attempted to write back in English. However, the meaning of some phrases in the letters is not very clear: this is primarily because of their lack of acquaintance with English.

All the correspondents show a general interest in the Integral Yoga and enquire about the Ashram and Auroville, some also express a desire to stay either in the Ashram or in Auroville. Quite a few speak of their deep aspiration and relate their spiritual experiences.—Editor]

I read Satprem's book *The Adventure of Consciousness* and this started my spiritual life. I read it like a fairy tale that I wanted to believe and at the same time I tried not to limit my common sense. Four years have gone by and my world has changed very much. I have consecrated the last four years to the Integral Yoga, though there were periods when I would forget spiritual life and lead a normal life. Nevertheless, I am systematically studying the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and their followers and I make an effort to practise sadhana.

23 July 1993

Igor Michin (Rostov-na-Donu, Russia)

*

We are most grateful to receive the issue of *Sadhana* prepared at the Ashram and wish to share with you our common happiness that the teaching of Sri Aurobindo finds students in Russia and that it lights up our hearts. This is a Grace from above. After a difficult journey we have come to Sri Aurobindo and this gives us the possibility of

understanding the higher Truth We haven't had a teacher like this before on earth

We are getting only crumbs of Integral Yoga which we apply in practice We have a centre in a small village. Your journal helps us a great deal

26 December 1993

Opya Vdovna (age 31), Marta (age 33) & Vasilli (age 31) (Sovetski, Russia)

*

I bought Sri Aurobindo's book *Rebirth and Karma* Really I had never read something like it. It opened for me a new level of understanding of being. The thing that fascinated me most was that the teaching is completely free of primitivism. A friend has given me another book of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, *The Spiritual Evolution of Man* (in Russian).

Undated, c December 1993

I have received the book you sent, *Sri Aurobindo. A Century of Light and Action* The book was very useful for me. Thank you.

I have been doing meditation according to the system of Integral Yoga for several months Sometimes in meditation I have seen Sri Aurobindo. At first it was not easy to differentiate his emanation from that of creatures of the vital But now I can see the real emanation of the Teacher. He has given me a mantra: "Om Avatara Purna Parame" What is most interesting for me is that I have seen Sri Aurobindo not as in the picture of April 1950 that is in the room of my Guru, but like in the picture of around 1920 in the book I had never seen this photograph before I got your book Sometimes in meditation I have seen something like a golden powder everywhere It is impossible to describe the extraordinary feeling of inner calmness I feel then I asked my Guru why I could achieve it within a few months of meditation, while others cannot, even after years. I was told that the main problem with most people is that their inner being is not ready

7 February 1994

After the initial success in my sadhana, I had a phase of bad periods joined with depression. Sri Aurobindo writes in his books about difficulties on the spiritual way. I understand that the main thing is to continue the sadhana, not to be a *bhrashta*, one who falls from the path

I have had some spiritual experiences that were, I think, recollections of my earlier lives. But the main problem for me is to distinguish between the profound memory of the mental being and the possible products of imagination

27 June 1994

Kir R. Stepanovich (Sambir, Ukraine)

(To be continued)

BLAKE'S HEXAMETER

WILLIAM Blake is a figure of a kind rare in England (and more so in the rest of the English-speaking world), though common enough in China and Japan. That is, he cultivated both poetry and painting, and may be said to have achieved greatly, and with equal ability, in both. This is not to say that he was anything like a flawless artist. Except on relatively rare occasions, he was lamentably ill-educated by the force of his circumstances, and just as lamentably ill-disciplined by the very stubborn force of his will, the perverse if perhaps heroic integrity of a man who would be *himself* at any cost, and find strength in his very limitations. It is a curious thing, that his personal life was well-ordered, neither dissipated nor waywardly impractical: it was in his art that he indulged his insistence upon disorganization, and upon "inspiration" first and last, with technique such a secondary thing and obedient servant as frequently hardly to serve, or even to be present at the holy exercise of the fire of energy.

Here the subject is not his painting. In his poetry his lack of knowledge and discipline became disastrous, and denied him the great place that he thought was his, and that perhaps he might have had. He has given us some exquisite lyrics, in which he respects verse and is docile to the formal requirements, and it is by these that he will keep a rare place in our literature—a place not unlike that of Herrick, though his inspiration is from deeper springs. In his brief songs he *was* inspired, but in his long "prophetic" works, to which he gave so much of his later life, the inspiration (I mean the *poetical* inspiration) is intermittent and seldom strong, and the confusion, of idea and execution and of purpose altogether, is ubiquitous ruinously. He would not be "enslaved" by another man's system, or an established prosody, he had to make his own private complex of symbols and would-be symbols, whether it be communicable or not, or even intelligible, or meaningful at all—and to put it into rhythms whose "freedom" consisted in their being broken, rough or feeble, dissociated in principle from any metrical regularity. He confused energy with illumination, words brought to the service of his energy with illuminated expression. He *would* not be a metrist, and so his power he hobbled and largely vitiated by prosodical vagary. He was pleased (in the face of Milton and Shakespeare!) to call blank verse "monotonous", and to repudiate any regular versification as a "fettering" of the free spirit. We of the twentieth century are well acquainted with this kind of ignorance, of course, and have heard it *ad nauseam*; and we have never seen it to be justified in practice. Even Whitman, the most powerful and respectable example, is at his best when he is most regular: most *Homeric*, in fact, even in the verse form. The same is true of Blake: and he is indeed more regular than his expressed theory or rather rebellious attitude would seem to sanction, or lead one to expect. He continually falls into or approximates a long iambic line—or perhaps more accurately a two-count rising measure, in seven parts—the old "fourteeners," without rhyme. Even against himself he does recognize the importance of regularity, and the heightened and fuller power that it gives; but, wilfully, he will not let it prevail.

In his later work he develops more variation (though it cannot be said to be more *effective* variation), and in *Milton* especially he breaks the iambic quality of the lines, and swings or stumbles often into a dactylic rhythm. On occasion he comes even to the epic hexameter, as recognizing more or less consciously its fitness for an exalted purpose (as his usual indistinct paltering is not). Here I give examples: the strict line being rare, the modulated (as desiderated and given a basis in theory and practice by Sri Aurobindo) more common, the awkward approximation, stumbling toward and falling away from, commonest of all

By your mild power descending down the Nerves of my right arm ..
 Became its prey, a curse, an offering and an atonement .
 They Bulded Great Golgonooza Times on Times, Ages on Ages .
 Beneath the Plow of Rintrah & the Harrow of the Almighty.
 Here the Three Classes of Men take their Sexual texture, Woven..
 Satan was going to reply, but Los roll'd his loud thunders' .
 Thy Work is Eternal Death with Mills & Ovens & Cauldrons. .
 Palamabron with the fiery Harrow in morning returning...
 From Golgonooza, the spiritual Four-fold London eternal. .
 Here the Three Classes of Mortal Men take their fix'd destinations.
 Rag'd with thick flames redundant, & the Harrow madden'd with fury
 Los in his wrath curs'd heaven & earth. he rent up Nations,
 Standing on Albion's rocks among high-rear'd Druid temples. .
 And Satan, not having the Science of Wrath, but only of Pity,
 Rent them asunder, and wrath was left to wrath. & pity to pity
 He sunk down, a dreadful Death unlike the slumbers of Beulah .
 Satan is fall'n from his station & never can be redeem'd
 But must be new Created continually moment by moment .
 And Leutha stood glowing with varying colors, immortal, heart-piercing .
 For then the Body of Death was perfected in hypocrite holiness .
 Astonish'd at the Transgressor, in him beholding the Saviour ..
 The Seven Angels of the Presence wept over Milton's Shadow..
 But from my left foot a black cloud redounding spread over Europe .
 Los, the Vehicular terror, beheld him, & divine Emtharmon...
 And thus the Shadowy Female howls in articulate howlings: .
 Glow'd on his rocky Couch against the darkness loud thunders
 O Swedenborg! strongest of men, the Samson shorn by the Churches .
 While on the Earth they live in sorrowful Vegetations

And that the Seven Eyes of God may have space for Redemption .
 Reuben & Manazzo & Gad & Simeon & Levi .
 Loud sport the dancers in the dance of death, rejoicing in carnage
 Awaking of Albion our friend and ancient companion...

These are the Children of Los; thou seest the Trees on mountains..
 So they are born on earth, & every class is determinate
 The Natural power continually seeks & tends to Destruction..
 And here the Sun & Moon receive their fixed destinations .
 Creating form and beauty around the dark regions of sorrow,
 Giving to airy nothing a name and a habitation
 To measure Time and Space to mortal Men every morning
 And Satan is the Spectre of Orc, & Orc is the generate Luvah.
 Weave the black Woof of Death upon Entuthon Benython
 The veil of human miseries is woven over the Ocean..
 Weeping for Milton. mute wonder held the Daughters of Beulah.
 Thou perceivest the Flowers put forth their precious Odours...
 The idiot Reasoner laughs at the Man of Imagination...
 The Oak is cut down by the Ax, the Lamb falls by the Knife,
 But their Forms Eternal Exist For-ever. Amen. Hallelujah!
 When I first Married you, I gave you all my whole Soul .
 On Couches soft with mild music, tended by Flowers of Beulah..
 One to the East, of Luvah' one to the West, of Tharmas .
 They stood in a dark land of death, of fiery corroding waters .
 Those Visions of Human Life & Shadows of Wisdom & Knowledge..
 Milcah's Pillars shine from Harrow to Hampstead, where Hoglah.
 Loud roll the Weights & Spindles over the whole earth, let down.
 Covering over the Rock of Odours his bright purple mantle .
 Lark met the female Ololon descending into my Garden.
 But not thus to Immortals' the Lark is a mighty Angel .
 Is it again to plunge into deeper afflictions? behold me .
 Adam, Seth, Enos, Canan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch. .
 Of Forty-eight deformed Human Wonders of the Almighty..
 Out from the eastern sky; descending down into my Cottage...
 But turning toward Ololon in terrible majesty, Milton..
 To cast off Bacon, Locke & Newton from Albion's covering .
 To cast aside from Poetry all that is not Inspiration
 Over London, in volume terrific, low bended in anger.

Though these sixty-five lines are not a very large percentage of nearly two thousand, taken together they are a substantial quantity, and their quality and force are the more substantial, in a way, for having come by accident, or at least not by clear design. What led Blake to this tentative and sporadic development at all is not a question that can be surely answered, but he was perhaps not altogether ignorant of the sweep and sound of Homer's hexameter: for not long before he had assisted Hayley with his life of Cowper, in the course of which he heard Cowper's translation compared with Homer line by line. It would seem a safe and reasonable assumption, that some

influence here was carried over. And then, Blake was well acquainted with the King James Bible, and there and especially in the Psalms may be found much dactylic rhythm, and even a few hexameter lines.

Here in Blake's *Milton* (which incidentally has somewhat more of an epic cast than his other "prophetic" books), two things are demonstrated: that a dactylic rhythm can be quite natural in English, and not awkward (this indeed having already been made evident by King James's translators), and that Blake himself might have written, not just competent or good, but great hexameter. He has the epic spirit, and the afflatus and the power. If he could have worked consciously and conscientiously, accepting the necessary discipline in full respect for the form, he would have given us great verse at least, and not the anomalous and raggedly maundering hotch-potch that he did give us.

In *Jerusalem* the mixture became more chaotic, and there is less verse of any recognizable character at all, and hardly any as powerful and expressive as his prose introductions, but in the beginning, though almost as if he begrudges it its place, and indeed not really giving it a proper and adequate place—at the end of this triplet he strikes out one of his best lines:

This theme calls me in sleep night after night, & ev'ry morn
Awakes me at sun-rise; then I see the Saviour over me
Spreading his beams of love & dictating the words of this mild song.

It is not difficult to believe in Milton's nightly visitant, for we have the great roll of his anything but monotonous verse. But if we must take Blake's statement here at face value, then we shall be forced to acknowledge that as a poet the Saviour would win few laurels. That Blake's individuality was not mortified by the acceptance of dictation from so high a source, we may note not without approval; but that a man who could write by whatever process or means this noble verse—verse of this character and stature—should fight or renege against the full cultivation of the art and the stabilization of it and reject it in the name of "freedom", is a circumstance that has nothing to do with the history of poetry.

JESSE ROARKE

IF THERE WERE NO FAREWELL AT ALL

If there were no farewell at all,
Beloved, if there were no farewell,
We would not have heard the coloured call
From the plume of a bird or a shell
It is just because of a farewell-note
That Thou art able to set a-float
Yon cloud in the sky like a sailing boat
Towards what shore, none can tell!

Beloved, if there were no good-bye,
Creation would never have been begun,
Thou couldst not have shed from the deepening sky
The wonderful red of the sun!
I am certain that what we call the world
Is a long good-bye to Thyself, unfurled,
Revolved in a solitude, countless pearled,
Which Thou barest, lonely One!

A high self-severance on Thy part
Hath floated the images everywhere:
Whether it be in the human heart
Or the wandering sea or the air!
Since colour itself at first occurred
When Thy sorrow of self-separation stirred,—
And colour is only another word
For the loneliness Thou dost bear.

When Thou didst break Thyself into shapes
Of light and of warmth, and honeys and hues,
In emerald clusters glimmered the grapes,
Like limpid lustres the dews:
Dawn-splendours streamed, noon-shadows ran,
And the dove was as white as Thy Thought in man,
While the peacock, time's gaudiest mood, began
To publish its golds and blues.

With a sapphire sound and a silver hiss
The sea-waves lengthen, and coil and break,
Printing the deep with kiss upon kiss
With the spring and the leap of a snake!

And the sea-mews wheel and the sea-mews cry
 To some Beloved beyond the sky,
 "We are sure we shall meet You by and by
 When out of ourselves we awake!"

My loneliest Love! When the sun dips down
 And vanishes, fringing a cloud or two
 With a deep fire-red or a copper-brown,
 A swift white shed on the blue:
 The liquid treble of one lone bird
 In the dim evening hush is heard
 Like a single re-iterated word
 Of Thy peace that is coming true!

For what was a separation once
 Shall grow to a union very soon,
 And my thirst leaps up in a wild response
 To drain the white cup of the moon
 For Thy silence within me taking root
 Is ripening into a rounded fruit,
 Thy self-separation in me like a flute
 Is playing a marriage-tune!

Everywhere that I gaze I find
 A sense of exquisite rest at last,
 And learn to rejoice in my deepest mind
 At the slow deep Voice of the Vast
 No more do shapes and shadows press
 On the universe with a parting-stress
 Since now in Thy single Consciousness
 Mine own is tranquil-glassed!

6-30, evening, 5-5-34

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Sri Aurobindo's comment. Exceedingly beautiful.

HYMN TO ABIRAMI

ABIRAMI Andadhi, *A Century of Songs*, authored by Abirami Bhattar about three hundred years ago at Thirukkadavur in South India, contains the spontaneous lyrical outpourings of intense devotion and spiritual experience. As a priest at the shrine of Abirami, drunk with the mad luminous wine of divine delight, Bhattar passed for a somewhat insane person. On a new-moon day, the king of Tanjore, to hold him in conversation, asked him what day it was, based on the waning and waxing moon.

The priest and author drenched in the spiritual flood-light answered that it was a full-moon day. A little later he realised that it was a new-moon day. Angered with the reply, the King threatened him with dire punishment, if the full-moon did not appear in the sky on the same day.

To get out of the piquant situation, the author poured forth a hundred songs "in profuse strains of unpremeditated art". When he composed the 79th stanza signifying the sweet glances of the deity, the Divine Mother, it is said, removed one of her earrings and threw it in the sky. Lo! there was the full-moon and a flood of light all over the Universe. The King was amazed at the miracle and apologized. He also offered large grants of lands and estates to the priest who refused them. But his descendants receive even today small sums and continue the worship of Abirami. The poet lifted himself to Her until the spirit leapt into the Spirit's embrace.

Light like a burning tongue licked up his thoughts,
Light was a luminous torture in his heart,
Light coursed, a splendid agony, through his nerves .
His body was eaten by light, his spirit devoured (Savitri, p 667)

INVOCATION

Decked with a garland of Konrai and Champak blooms,
Born of Uma, Spouse of Shiva of sacred Thillai,
O, Lord, Ganapathi! dark-hued as the teeming clouds,
Grant this adoration to Abirami, ever stay in my heart!

*

THE HYMN

Dawn-glow-red Sun, *nilak* of vermillion on the forehead,
Rare and radiant ruby of those gifted with vision,
Pomegranate bud, lightning fork, Lakshmi of the red Lotus,
Fragrant-kumkum red Abirami, thou art my soul's support (1)

Support, worshipped Angel, my Love, Maker, Mother,
 The root and branch and bloom of the Veda-Tree
 Wielder of the *ankusa*, the bow and flower-shafts
 O, Tiripurasundari! Madonna of Truth art Thou!—I have known Thee (2)

Known have I Thy sweet secret lore unknown to many,
 Surrendered have I my all at Thy sacred feet,
 Severed have I the company of those heading for hell,
 Shut out have I, those loveless for Thee, among men (3)

Men, seraphs, King-sages bow down at Thy feet
 And gaze at Thy head sporting the Konrai blooms,
 Wearer of the crescent moon, the serpent, the perennial Ganges, Shiva,
 And Thyself should ever in my heart stay (4)

Stayest Thou above the triple mystic heaven,
 With close heaving breasts on a slender waist, Manonmani!
 With the blue-throated Shiva by thy side,
 Andhari! Spirit of spaceless ether! Thy feet I adore (5)

Adorer am I of Thy radiant, petal-soft feet,
 Thou art the ever-chanting mantra in my heart,
 The happy throng of men who sing the glory of thy name,
 With the aid of sacred texts: I too join and repeat (6)

Repeating the cycles of birth as the butter-churning rod
 I should stop and attain freedom and bliss of my soul,
 The triple godheads, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva worship Thee,
 Thy face with the red mark on thy forehead of striking beauty (7)

Beauteous Form, Shiva's spouse, dispeller of desires and distresses,
 With thy feet on the head of Mahishasura, the strong-willed Titan,
 Blue-complexioned maiden, supporter of Brahma!
 Thy flower-feet ever should remain in my thought. (8)

Thought-burdened and ever present to my sight,
 With thy huge breasts that suckled the divine Child—
 The sugarcane-bow and flower-arrows in thy hand
 With thy white, radiant smile thou shouldst ever stand (9)

Standing, sitting, lying, walking, my thought goes to Thee,
Ever I worship thy feet, the abode of the unwritten Veda,
Gracious Form, Uma, Himavan's daughter,
Thou art the giver of eternal liberation and delight. (10)

Delight incarnate, Pure Reason, Spirit immortal,
Thy feet the terminal point of the four Vedas
Ever rest on the head of Shiva, the dweller
In the desert, in the burning ghats, in all His glory (11)

C SUBBIAN

INTIMATIONS

MAYBE this tamarisk can help us,
Its tender green feathers
Tipped with dust-pink foam?

These motionless gliding gulls
Must know something of what we seek.

Certain stones seem to call to us
What are they saying, these troll-bones
(knuckles, ulnae, scapula, skull)
These primordial figurines,
Scoured featureless now,
These scraps of sea-gem,
Cabochon-smooth and subtly shaded,
Salmon, lime, lapis, tan?

We pick one up
And turn it over and over,
Smooth it with the thumb.
But each time, the signal fades
And we discard it

We have been doing this
Since paws became hands—
Probing, lifting, scanning,
Searching for signs
On the shore of the infinite sea

But still, this is not yet
The sign we seek.

SHRADDHAVAN

MYSTIC FIRE

REMEMBER, O soul, the Rishis of the early dawn
Whose birth, life and mission,
Whose spirit's passion for the Unknown
Are now obscure But the words of their vision,
Their inspiration, the wealth of their subtle hearing
Mingled with the alchemy of golden rhyme,
Have left immortal marks on the forehead of time.

O expectant initiates of the future noon,
Catch hold of the mind's mane;
Call forth the oncoming boon
To kindle the sacred light, to link up the cut-off vein
Obscurity will remain no more;
Revealed shall be the radiant face
Of the triumphant Truth of the Vedic lore,
Ablaze anew the Mystic Fire of the ancient race

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

EMBRACE US, O LORD!

A SWEET touch of you
Has kindled a little flame of truth
Yet darkened parts refuse to obey,
Leave us not in this chaos, O Lord!
We are not pure yet to rise to the blue,
Let the heavens come down to us, O Lord!

SITANGSHU CHAKRABORTTY

TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIAL ORDER— AN AUROBINDONIAN PERSPECTIVE

I

ONCE S Chandrasekhar, the legendary Nobel-laureate astrophysicist, was asked by his biographer, K C Wali: “So, your discontentment is not in the sense that there is still so much to be done?” To that the scientist replied with poignant candour: “Not so much. No, I don’t feel I have to do as much in science .. But there are other things in one’s life. I always remember the story by Chekov, *Rothschild’s Fiddle*. Rothschild is a man who constructs coffins. He had a book where he always wrote his losses. For example, he wrote, ‘There was a lady from Kharkov. She was sure to die, but she went to Kharkov for higher medical attention, and she died there. What losses!’—because he couldn’t make the coffin for her. And then his wife died. After his wife was buried, he went to the riverside and sat there and began to think and suddenly a picture arose in his mind of his once having had a little child and his child had died. And he said, ‘What losses? Why have I always been rude and cruel to others? Why didn’t I think of going on that boat, playing my violin and earning money?’”

“And he says, ‘What losses?’ and so on, you can have your life simply go by. [A fulfilled] life is not necessarily one in which you pursue certain goals, there must be other things.”¹

When one of the best minds of our age thus speaks his mind, we may stop to ponder. Is there a radical defect somewhere in the several aspects of human civilisation? Sri Aurobindo suggests that the radical defect of all our systems is their deficient development of just that which society has most neglected, the spiritual element, the soul in man which is his true being. “Even to have a healthy body,” says Sri Aurobindo, “a strong vitality and an active and clarified mind and a field for their action and enjoyment, carries man no more than a certain distance; afterwards he flags and tires for want of a real self-finding, a satisfying aim for his action and progress. These three things do not make the sum of a complete manhood; they are means to an ulterior end and cannot be made for ever an aim in themselves.”² Modern society has discovered a new principle of survival, progress, but the ‘aim’ of that progress, remarks Sri Aurobindo trenchantly, the society has not so far discovered. It only treats man essentially as a physical, vital and mental being, whereas in his turn towards a greater subjectivity alone is there a better hope.

II

But what is the present nature of human society? The normal human society, as Sri Aurobindo lays bare its nature in his path-breaking book *The Human Cycle*, starts from the gregarious instinct modified by a diversity of possible antagonism of interests, from an association and clash of egos, it attempts to patch up an accommodation of

converging interests and a treaty of peace between discords, founded on a series of implied contracts. But this remains precariously unstable for ever, for this is based on a narrow and truncated view of man. An alternative society free from conflict must discover the deeper truth of man and his real destiny.

We may then ask ourselves this fundamental question: What is Man, what is his true self, his destiny? Sri Aurobindo gives a very deep answer. The individual seeking for the law of his being can discover two great psychological truths.

First, what man calls the ego is not his true self, there is one self of all and the soul of the individual is a portion of that universal Divinity. If this is so then the fulfilment of the individual is not the utmost development of man's egoistic intellect, vital force, physical well-being and the utmost satisfaction of his mental, emotional, physical cravings. At this point, Sri Aurobindo adds that the will to be, the will to power, the will to know—which we see in our present society—are perfectly legitimate; to discourage and repress them is to mutilate and dry up or diminish the sources of life and growth. The key to true self-existence can only be found in the soul, in the imperishable fire that burns in every man.

What is the second great truth of the true individuality? It is, says Sri Aurobindo, that an individual is not only himself, but he is "in solidarity with all of his kind"; we are in our life and being not only ourselves but all others, for there is a "secret solidarity which our egoism may kick at and strive against, but from which we cannot escape." The words of a famous passage in one of Donne's sermons now take on a new life for us: "No man is an island unto himself but is a part of the main. Each man's death diminishes me. Never send to ask for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee."¹

III

Has this view of man some basis in reality? Is not man an inveterate egoist, a rational animal whose only aim is the maximization of self-interest? But before we go on to state the ideal law of development in an alternative society, as Sri Aurobindo sees it, let us first look at the empirical evidence regarding the assumption that a rational man is inescapably an animal maximizing self-interest.

The Neo-classical tradition in economics as we witness it presents before us forcefully a view of man somewhat at variance with that of Sri Aurobindo.* This tradition, with its neat elegant structure, has injected into the marrow of our bones a

* This statement, however, needs to be somewhat qualified. Sri Aurobindo too recognises in his own way the necessity of the 'ego' in the initial stages of the individual's evolution. "Nature invented the ego [so] that the individual might disengage himself from the inconscience or subconsciousness of the mass and become an independent living mind, life-power, soul, spirit, co-ordinating himself with the world around him but not drowned in it and separately in-existent and ineffective. For the individual is indeed part of the cosmic being, but he is also something more, he is a soul that has descended from the Transcendence. This he cannot manifest at once, because he is too near to the cosmic Inconscience, not near enough to the original Superconscience, he has to find himself as the mental and vital ego before he can find himself as the soul or spirit." (*The Life Divine*, p. 694) However, in this context Sri Aurobindo's conclusion is "Ego was the helper, ego is the bar."

mesmerizing idea of rationality. a rational individual is one who is consistent and always seeks self-interest's maximization. But, asks Amartya Sen, an original thinker and one of the greatest economists of our age: "Why should it be uniquely rational to pursue one's own self-interest to the exclusion of everything else? It may not, of course, be at all absurd to claim that maximization of self-interest is not irrational, at least not necessarily so, but to argue that everything other than maximizing self-interest must be irrational seems altogether extraordinary."⁴ Sen cites the case of Japan to point out that there is "strong empirical evidence" to suggest that "systematic departures from self-interested behaviour in the direction of duty, loyalty and goodwill have played a substantial part in industrial success" in Japan. He further points out that there are many activities inside economics and outside it in which "the simple pursuit of self-interest is not the great redeemer". After a searching analytical survey of the whole field of modern economics and applying his own insights, Sen comes to a bold and remarkable conclusion which helps us discern a broad hint of the truths of true individuality. Sen concludes: "One of the interesting points to emerge from the foregoing analyses is that departures from standard behavioural assumptions of economic theory...may arise from many distinct ethical considerations. They may involve bonhomie and sympathy for others. There may also be commitments to various causes. Further, there may be commitment to particular behaviour patterns, the violation of which may be seen to be intrinsically bad."⁵

But Sen is not alone in this finding. A host of modern writers have come out with their findings which vastly modify the view of man as a self-interest-maximizing animal. For example, Francis Fukuyama, author of the famous book *End of History*, has recently written a seminal work entitled *Trust—The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (1995) wherein he shows, with a wealth of examples drawn from experiences of different countries, notably Germany, Japan and partly the U.S.A., that "while people work in organizations to satisfy their individual needs, the work-place also draws people out of their private lives and connects them to a wider social world. That connectedness is not just a means to the end of earning a pay-check but an important end of human life itself. For just as people are selfish, a side of the human personality craves being part of larger communities." Marshalling a rich mass of details, Fukuyama also shows that one of the most important lessons we can learn from an examination of economic life is that a nation's well-being, as well as the ability to compete, is conditioned by a single pervasive cultural characteristic: "The level of trust inherent in the society." A number of illustrative examples can be given but the central message is quite clear. human beings generally suffer from what Emile Durkheim called 'anomie', an acute sense of unease, in the absence of norms and rules binding them to others; Fukuyama's research shows that the modern work-place serves "to moderate and overcome this unease", since each economic actor is motivated by "something broader than individual self-interest".

IV

To come back to Sri Aurobindo. If the concept of man which he posits and for which there is some empirical support is correct, then, according to him, what is the ideal law of social development? Sri Aurobindo sums up this law as follows: all things are one in their being and origin, one in their general law of existence, one in their interdependence and the universal pattern of their relations; but each realises this unity of purpose and being "on its own lines and has its own law of variation"⁶ by which it enriches the universal existence. Man has arrived at a greater and more vital power of variation than other creations of Nature. That is, he acquires the freedom to develop according to the general law of Nature and the general law of his type, but also according to the "individual law of his being". This is one of the most fundamental postulates of Sri Aurobindo.

Therefore, the object of society should be, to paraphrase Sri Aurobindo, first to provide the conditions of life and growth by which individual man and the race through the growth of its individuals, may in the end go beyond himself, beyond his mentality and open his consciousness into that from which mind, life and body proceed; and secondly, to express in the general life of mankind the light, the power, the beauty, the harmony, the joy of the self that has been attained. This happens more and more as man grows conscious of his real being, nature and destiny and not as now only a part of it.

But for the society to make this twin object flower into reality, certain basic principles must not be lost sight of. First of all, Sri Aurobindo stresses that the group-self has no right to regard the individual as if he were only "a cell of its body, a stone of its edifice, a passive instrument of its collective life and growth". Humanity is not so constituted. "We miss the divine reality in man," reminds Sri Aurobindo, "and the secret of the human birth if we do not see that each individual man is that Self and sums up all human potentiality in his own being. That potentiality he has to find, develop, work out from within. No State or legislator or reformer can cut him vigorously into a perfect pattern; no Church or priest can give him a mechanical salvation; no order, no class life or ideal, no nation, no civilisation or creed or ethical, social or religious Shastra can be allowed to say to him permanently, 'In this way of mine and thus far shalt thou act and grow and in no other way and no farther shall thy growth be permitted.' ..(he) asserts always in the end (his) divine freedom. Always he is the traveller of the cycles and his road is forward"⁷ No wonder that Praneshacharya, the central character in Ananta Murthy's novel *Samskara*, admits in a moment of poignant introspection "God has become to me a set of tables, learned by rote. Not an awareness, a wonder as He was to Kanaka—so no more God for me."

V

This might be all very well, the sceptic would maintain, but what about the individual's commitment to society or the world? The answer to this question was expected to be the

cornerstone of the former socialist countries, like Russia and Eastern Europe. Sri Aurobindo does not deny that the life and growth of an individual are for the sake of the world; but he would have us remember that the individual can help the world only in proportion as he can be more and more freely and widely his own real self. It must also be admitted that the individual has to use the ideals, disciplines, systems of co-operation without forgetting that he can use them well only if they are means to an end and not burdens to be borne by him; for all laws and disciplines tend to be tyrants of the human soul, whereas they should serve as instruments and servants. It is also true that the individual has to make the most of the experience of humanity's past ages and not roll himself up 'like a hedgehog, shut up in.. dogmas, prejudices, limitations', but this he can do successfully only by making the experience a 'principle of his own nature'. Thus, Sri Aurobindo concludes, 'The liberty claimed by the struggling human mind for the individual is no mere egoistic challenge and revolt, however egoistically or with one-sided exaggeration and misapplication it may sometimes be advanced; it is the divine instinct within him, the law of the self, its claim to have room and the one primary condition for its natural self-unfolding.'⁸

One question remains. If the central object in our vision of alternative society is to create an atmosphere, an ample opportunity for the soul of the individual to flower, what has this object to do with life, mind and body? Sri Aurobindo recognises this aspect and gives an illuminating answer—an answer that breaks new ground. Life, mind and body are to be regarded neither as 'ends in themselves', sufficient for their 'own satisfaction' nor as 'mortal members full of disease', which have only to be dropped 'for the rescued spirit to flee . into its own pure regions', but as 'lucid means' of the spirit's manifestation, thus spirituality will 'respect the freedom of the lower members', but it will not leave them to themselves, it will present to them the 'truth of the spirit in themselves, translated into their own fields of action, presented in a light which illumines all their activities and shows them the highest law of their own freedom'.⁹

Thus, it is clear that Sri Aurobindo puts the freedom of the individual above all else—freedom in its instrumental as well as intrinsic sense. The basic rationale is that man cannot grow unless he is given a certain freedom to stumble in action as well as to err in knowledge. Coercion only chains the devil in man; it does not, and cannot, eliminate him. With an altogether extraordinary insight Sri Aurobindo hits the nail on the head: 'The real virtue of the dynamic and vital being, the Life Purusha, can only come by his finding a higher law and spirit for his activity within himself, to give him that, to illumine and transform and not to destroy his impulse is the true spiritual means of regeneration.'¹⁰

VI

All this may serve as a ballast for an evaluation of the current socio-political systems, particularly Socialism and Democracy, the inner truths of which are valued by Sri

Aurobindo However, regarding the actual performance of these systems, Sri Aurobindo did not mince words and made a penetrating evaluation long ago

“Democracy was the protest of the human soul against the allied despotisms of autocrat, priest and noble. Socialism is the protest of the human soul against the despotism of a plutocratic democracy; Anarchism is likely to be the protest of the human soul against the tyranny of a bureaucratic Socialism”¹¹

After the collapse of socialistic systems in Russia and Eastern Europe, it is felt that Democracy alone will be the great redeemer. Sri Aurobindo, we have seen, has always emphasized the supreme need for freedom (though for a much higher aim) and so he does not deny that democratic freedom has to be there, but he reminds us at the same time that the “innermost difficulty would not disappear even if the Socialistic State became really democratic, really the expression of the free reasoned will of the majority in agreement” This is because, explains Sri Aurobindo, “Whatever the perfection of the organised State, the suppression or oppression of individual freedom by the will of the majority or of a minority would still be there as a cardinal defect vitiating its very principle.”^{*12}

Where do we go from here? Should we turn to Anarchism of some sort or other? That is, to a kind of system where governmental force is abolished and man is able to live with his fellowmen by free agreement and co-operation? Intellectual Anarchism tends to accept such a system, relying on two powers – enlightenment of human reason and natural human sympathy.

Sri Aurobindo does not agree. Neither does he agree with the ideal of Stateless Communism which Marx and Russian thinkers envisaged, for, this ideal can hardly operate on the large and complex scale necessitated by modern life. He also does not agree with the free Communalism of the Anarchist, for, it is difficult to see how this can be maintained without some kind of governmental force and social compulsion. There is a danger that it may fall into a vigorous collectivism or else end in struggle, anarchy and disruption.** This is because the logical mind while building its social idea does not adequately take into account what Sri Aurobindo calls ‘the infrarational element’ in man and the ‘vital egoism’ that in the end defeats all the calculations of the idealising reason. The essence of the problem has been seized by Sri Aurobindo in this way. If the ego-force in man is too much repressed, too much rationalised, too much denied an outlet, then the life of man becomes “artificial, top-heavy, poor in the sap of vitality,

* In a letter dated 15.4.1949, Sri Aurobindo makes a very illuminating comment on the type of economic system to be adopted in future. He says that he does not regard either Capitalism or orthodox Socialism as the right solution for the world’s future, nor can he admit that the admission of private enterprise by itself makes the society Capitalistic. He goes on to add that the Socialistic economy can very well admit some amount of controlled or subordinated private enterprise as an aid to its own working or a partial convenience without ceasing to be Socialistic.

** Sri Aurobindo’s idea of the role of the State runs as follows: “The business of the State is to provide all possible facilities for co-operative action, to remove obstacles, to prevent all really harmful waste and friction and, removing avoidable injustice, to secure for every individual a just and equal chance of self-development and satisfaction, to the extent of his powers and in the line of his nature. But all unnecessary interference with the freedom of man’s growth is or can be harmful.” (*The Ideal of Human Unity*, p. 283)

mechanical, uncreative”, on the other hand, if it is not suppressed, it will assert itself and derange the plans of the rational side of man, because it contains in itself “powers whose right satisfaction or whose final way of transformation reason cannot discover”¹³ “A rational satisfaction,” concludes Sri Aurobindo, “cannot give him safety from the pull from below nor deliver him from the attraction from above”¹⁴

VII

Does the spiritual or spiritualised anarchism appear to come nearer to the real solution? There is, points out Sri Aurobindo, much in it that is “exaggerated and imperfect” Its seers seem often to preach “an impossible self-abnegation of the vital life” and an asceticism which instead of “purifying and transforming” the vital being seeks to ‘ suppress and even kill it’ The result is that life is impoverished or dried up

However, these excesses notwithstanding, their contributions have brought in certain positive features But the real solution lies, concludes Sri Aurobindo, not in reason, but in the soul of man It is the spiritual or “inner freedom” that alone can create a perfect social order

VIII

It may be said that this is an old discovery and that, in the past, it governed societies under the name of religion But, explains Sri Aurobindo, spirituality and inner freedom were meant for the life of the individual only who looked beyond the earth for fulfilment Human society itself never seized on the discovery of the soul “as a means for the discovery of the law of its own being or on a knowledge of the soul’s true nature and need and its fulfilment as the right way of terrestrial perfection”¹⁵

But we see that the use society made of old religions was only of their “most unspiritual or at any rate of their less spiritual parts” It made use of them to give an “august, awful and would-be eternal sanction to its mass of customs and institutions”, it made of them “a veil of mystery against human questioning and a shield of darkness against the innovator”. so far as it saw in religion a means of human salvation and perfection, it “laid hands upon it at once to mechanise it, to catch the human soul and bind it on the wheels of socio-religious machinery,” to impose on it, instead of spiritual freedom, “an imperious yoke and an iron prison”¹⁶

This is what Sri Aurobindo calls false socialisation of religion, which he singles out as the chief cause of its failure to regenerate mankind For nothing can be more fatal to religion than for the spiritual element in it to be crushed or formalised out of existence by its “outward aids and forms and machinery”

It follows then that spirituality shorn of its formalised religious practices and soiling accretions, spirituality in the sole sense of finding of one’s highest self, the truth of one’s existence, can alone deliver But Sri Aurobindo does not stop at this point; in his masterly classic *The Life Divine* he goes on to add an altogether new dimension His

point is that spirituality liberates and illumines the inner being and helps mind to communicate with what is higher than itself; but, so long as it has to work in the human mass through the mind as its instrument, it can exercise an “influence” on the earth-life without bringing about “transformation” of that life. A higher instrumental dynamis than that of mind, called by him the “Supramental Consciousness” or “Truth-Consciousness”, is needed to transform totally this nature created by the Ignorance. That superior consciousness secretly supporting evolution and acting through many coats and layers, has to be made overtly active and that was what Sri Aurobindo sought to attain in his life-long Sadhana.

SUPRIYO BHATTACHARYA

(Based on a Talk given on 18 August 1996 at Jadavpur University, Calcutta)

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RETURN TO THE RED PLANET

ANOTHER giant leap in space exploration was made on July 4, when a robot-craft, dubbed Pathfinder, landed on Mars, our nearest neighbouring planet in the solar system. Mars which is said to look like a high-altitude, cold, wind-blown desert of red-coloured soil is not a place one would like to visit; however, the unmanned spacecraft did it on an important assignment—investigate the Martian surface for proof of life believed to have existed on it a billion years ago.

Launched on December 4, 1996 by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), U.S., as a part of its Discovery project, the Pathfinder travelled for seven months racing at about 20,000 kilometres an hour to reach the Red Planet in a circular path.

Mars, named after the Roman god of war, is the fourth planet from the sun and the third in order of increasing mass. After Venus, Mars is the brightest object in the night sky. It has two very small, heavily cratered moons, Phobos and Deimos. At its closest approach, Mars is about 55 million kilometres from the Earth.

When launched, the Mars Pathfinder weighed about 890 kg including the fuel used to propel it. However, the mass of the vehicle that landed on Mars was only 360 kg. It has equipment to perform geochemical and atmospheric experiments aimed at gathering proof of life. Apart from the NASA scientists and engineers, quite a few European laboratories have also contributed to the development of the equipment.

Generally we know that as a safety measure, spacecrafts are made to go in circular orbits before landing. However, in the case of Pathfinder, NASA scientists commanded it to plunge directly towards the Ares Vallis landing site, to reduce its payload. As the craft was moving at very high speeds and the time available for landing was less, they slowed the lander, initially using parachutes and then using retro-rockets. According to a NASA press release, the retro-rockets are so powerful that they can bring the lander to a screeching halt in just three seconds. These rockets were therefore fired just seconds before the Pathfinder landed. To cushion the impact of landing, they used giant cocoons of air bags made of bullet proof material. It is interesting to note that the air bags were sewn by the same woman, Eleanor, who sewed Armstrong's and Aldrin's moon suits for the Apollo 11 mission. These air bags were tested by NASA in the world's largest vacuum chamber at one of its research centres.

Its toy-like microprocessor-controlled robotic vehicle, named Sojourner, weighed just 11.5 kg. Also referred to as micro-rover, the six-wheeled robot was designed by NASA engineers to take samples of Martian rock/soil and to do chemical analyses on them. Using its alpha proton x-ray spectrometer, the robot bombarded the rocks with beams of protons, alpha rays and x-rays and analysed the reflected beams which contained the signatures of the constituents of the rock. The first few rocks analysed by the Sojourner were Barnacle Bill (named because of its barnacle-like features), Yogi, Casper and Scooby-Doo (named after cartoon characters). A significant finding, as reported by NASA scientists, is that the rocks are similar to those on Earth and unlike the ones on the Moon.

This robotic vehicle was powered by solar panels (of just 16 watt hours of peak power) and a primary battery (of peak power 50 watt hours) Initially, the Sojourner was expected to work for seven sol-weeks (a sol is a Martian day) However, as of today, NASA expects it to continue with the experiments and roam around the Martian surface for a few months

Communicating with the lander and commanding the robot is an interesting task by itself. Actually, the lander and the robot, which have just completed a week of their operations, are being controlled by Earth-based scientists using radio signals Even though these signals travel at the speed of light (300,000 kilometres a second) it takes about 10 minutes and 25 seconds for a signal from one end to reach the other end because of the distance involved Hence one cannot operate them in real time To overcome this, scientists resorted to an ingenious way With the photographs sent by the lander's camera, named Imager for Pathfinder (IMP), and using Virtual Reality Simulation of the surroundings, they planned the movement of the robot (such as where to go, which rock to select and what experiment to do) and programmed it hours before it actually carried out the operations. According to reports, they programmed the day-time operations the night before

Our previous knowledge of Mars has come from six missions carried out by unmanned U S spacecraft, between 1964 and 1976 The first views of Mars were obtained by Mariner 4 in 1964, and further information was gained by the flyby missions of Mariners 6 and 7 in 1969 The first Mars orbiter—Mariner 9, launched in 1971—studied the planet for almost a year. In 1976 two Viking craft landed on it and carried out direct investigations of the atmosphere and surface, and concentrated on biological experiments. The second Viking lander ceased operating in April 1980, the first worked until November 1982 The Soviet Union in 1988 sent two probes to land on the moon Phobos, but both of them failed

The Martian atmosphere consists of carbon dioxide (95 per cent) and a little bit of nitrogen, argon, oxygen, water vapour, carbon monoxide, and noble gases The average pressure is less than 1/100 of that on Earth Due to the thinness of the atmosphere, daily temperature variations and atmospheric pressure can be high It has been suggested that liquid water may exist just below the surface At certain seasons, some areas on Mars are subject to strong winds, it is said By far the most spectacular geologic discovery has been the channels that superficially resemble the valleys of dried-up rivers These have been singled out as proof that Mars had higher pressures and warmer temperatures in the past. The bright polar caps are apparently made of frost or ice Its seasonal cycle includes summer, winter, spring and autumn, just as we have on Earth. Mars does not have a measurable magnetic field or an active volcano

The reddish colour of Mars, that can be seen through a telescope, is due to its heavily oxidised, or rusted, surface. The mineral scapolite, relatively rare on earth, is said to be widespread, it may serve as a store for carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, according to the encyclopaedia. Now the Pathfinder has found that the iron that makes the soil red may be due to maghemite, another rare mineral on Earth

In the present case, using the Viking pictures, scientists decided to land the Pathfinder on a place called Ares Vallis, a rocky plain at the mouth of a wide channel, near the Martian equator. They chose the site because of various conditions including safety and manoeuvrability of the vehicle. Using its thermocouples, the Pathfinder recorded a daytime temperature of minus 12 degrees centigrade and a night temperature of minus 76 degrees centigrade. Its Atmospheric Structure Instrument and Meteorology Experiment have helped to study the Martian atmosphere. The rotation of Mars has been studied by using a Deep Space Network. It may take some time for NASA to release all the results obtained using the Pathfinder.

The difficult question is whether life ever existed on Mars, given the strong evidence of climatic change and the indications of a previously warmer, thicker atmosphere. Answering this question will involve collecting soil samples and sending them to earth for detailed analysis. Hopefully by the end of NASA's 10-year research programme on Mars, of which the present achievement is only the first step, we may get a satisfactory answer.

P SEKAR

(Courtesy *The Hindu*, 19-7-97)

A MIRACLE—A VICTORY OF THE MOTHER

A MIRACLE? Oh, yes Because for all these years since Nolini-da wrote the name মাযেৰ কোলে (*Mayer Kolay*, meaning ‘‘in the Mother’s lap’’) and *Mayer Kolay Association* was registered with a view to give a concrete shape to a proposed guest house bearing that name, everybody was saying (and it is a fact in this country) that it would be impossible for me to buy a piece of land or an old house in the vicinity of the Ashram, not because of the sky-high prices, but simply because no seller would part with his property without securing at least 50% of the total consideration as ‘‘black money’’ I have no black money and as a principle I must not, and cannot, pay anything of that sort

Years rolled on Bitter and disheartening experiences went on accumulating At last, at long last, a local friend of mine found some property very near the Ashram (within five minutes’ walking distance from the ‘‘Samadhi’’) for a sum of rupees sixteen lakhs, the owner (*i e*, the seller) was persuaded by him to take payment through the bank with necessary clearance from the IT Department By then we had rupees nine lakhs in the bank Since many ‘‘well-wishers’’ had assured me of the balance amount as soon as I had given some advance and made a registered agreement, I made a registered agreement with an advance payment of rupees eight lakhs Then I informed these ‘‘well-wishers’’ and urged them to come forward with the balance as early as possible I was terribly shocked to find that nobody was responding even when I made it clear to them that the advance was in danger of being forfeited I was crestfallen because I am answerable to the sincere donors who had given their hard-earned money for Nolini-da’s *Mayer Kolay* If a seller forfeits an amount, it is not possible to recover it in a lifetime The legal process is tardy and hopelessly vulnerable to dishonest defendants But the Mother was smiling behind the veil of appearances For She was about to perform a miracle! Yes, the seller sold the property to a French citizen of Pondicherry and returned the advance amount by the end of 1996 But at the same time, She twisted my ear and urged me to cut my coat according to the size of my cloth

I continued my efforts but was unable to find another seller ready to take payment through the bank. But the Mother, who had fore-ordained everything for Her Nolini’s *Mayer Kolay*, intervened again and performed another miracle reassuring us that

All can be done if the God-touch is there
And miracle will be a daily act

She pulled by the ear, as it were, a multi-millionaire from Gujarat and brought him here He happened to come in contact with Nirod-da. Nirod-da made to me, in the course of a discussion about *Mayer Kolay*, a prophetic utterance about this Gujarati businessman ‘‘This man will be of help to you for the materialisation of *Mayer Kolay*’’

A few days later, that businessman asked me, ‘‘What can I do for you?’’

“Nothing, Sir,” I told him, “except helping me to purchase a piece of land and/or an old building in the vicinity of the Ashram, within rupees eight lakhs. The entire payment will be through a bank.”

“I will, I will,” was his confident reply.

Then by virtue of his influence on a local acquaintance desirous of selling his property, he practically dictated to him to sign the necessary documents and accept the payment through a bank (*i e*, a/c payee cheques). The property at 21, Senganiamman Koil Street, Pondicherry-12, was purchased and registered in favour of *Mayer Kolay Association* on the 28th of August 1997.

After the transaction was completed, I realised that the Mother wanted *Mayer Kolay* to be registered on the momentous occasion of Sri Aurobindo’s 125th Birth Anniversary, in this auspicious year and in this auspicious month of August. Hence the delay. Uncheckable tears of gratitude rolled on as a mute prayer rose from the depths of my heart.

“Let us not forget even for a moment what we owe to Thee.”

SATADAL

POLITICAL VEDANTISM— ITS CONCEPT AND PRACTICE

(Continued from the issue of December 1997)

Chapter IV

IN his last public meeting in this series held at College Square in Calcutta, on 18 July 1909, Sri Aurobindo made an appraisal of a speech given in the Bengal Legislative Assembly by Sir E. Baker—the Lt. Governor of Bengal, and commented, “...a speech which I think is one of the most unfortunate and most amazing that have ever been delivered by a ruler in his position. The occasion of the speech was a reference to certain murders that have recently been committed in London.”¹⁸

The fact was something like this. A young man had committed certain murders; but there had been no proof that any other man in India or in England had any connection whatsoever with the murders. Besides, the crime was still under trial. Hence Sri Aurobindo questioned, “was this the occasion for the Lt. Governor of Bengal to rise from his seat in the Legislative Council and ..practically make the whole country responsible for the crime of a single isolated youth in London?”¹⁹ Sri Aurobindo further stated, “the Lt. Governor, in referring to the crime, said that there had been plenty of denunciations in this country but those denunciations did not go far. And he wanted from us one thing more and that was co-operation. He wants co-operation from the whole community. He further saddled his request with the threat that if this co-operation were not obtained steps would have to be taken in which there would be no room for nice discrimination between the innocent and the guilty.”²⁰

Sri Aurobindo wanted the Lt. Governor to describe what co-operation he demanded from the people. Then, in no ambiguous terms, he emphasised, “Co-operation can only be given if the Government which is now alien becomes our own, if the people have a share in it,...if, in short, they can be given some starting-point from which in future the Government of the country can be developed into a Government of the people.”²¹

For sometime past Sri Aurobindo had been deeply thinking over the question as to how to revive the national movement. It was about this time that Nivedita informed him about the intention of the Government. Sri Aurobindo recalls: “she informed me that the Government had decided to deport me and she wanted me to go into secrecy or to leave British India and act from outside so as to avoid interruption of my work.... I told her that I did not think it necessary to accept her suggestion; I would write an open letter in the *Karmayogin* which, I thought, would prevent this action by the Government.”²² For he had already had “an intuitive perception that the Government would not think it politic or useful to deport him if he left a programme which others could carry out in his absence.”²³

Accordingly “An Open Letter to my Countrymen” appeared in the *Karmayogin*

on 31 July 1909 The letter contained his deep feeling of agony as a public man who was determined to do his duty to India under British Administration, which he expressed in the form of a sarcastic note by a critic He also clearly indicated in it the firm views of the Nationalists on the Reforms The first para of the letter ran thus

The position of a public man who does his duty in India today is too precarious to permit of his being sure of the morrow I have recently come out of a year's seclusion from work for my country on a charge which there was not a scrap of reliable evidence to support, but my acquittal is no security either against the trumping up of a fresh accusation or the arbitrary law of deportation which dispenses with the inconvenient formality of a charge and the still more inconvenient necessity of producing evidence Especially with the hounds of the Anglo-Indian Press barking at our heels and continually clamouring for Government to remove every man who dares to raise his voice to speak of patriotism and its duties, the liberty of the person is held on a tenure which is worse than precarious Rumour is strong that a case for my deportation has been submitted to the Government by the Calcutta Police and neither the tranquillity of the country nor the scrupulous legality of our procedure is a guarantee against the contingency of the all-powerful fiat of the Government watch-dogs silencing scruples on the part of those who advise at Simla Under such circumstances I have thought it well to address this letter to my countrymen, and especially to those who profess the principles of the Nationalist party, on the needs of the present and the policy of the future In case of my deportation it may help to guide some who would be uncertain of their course of action, and, if I do not return from it, it may stand as my last political will and testament to my countrymen ²⁴

Then he suggested certain policies based on the doctrine of "No control, no co-operation" for the Nationalist Party to follow during his absence and concluded his historical letter

" on my next visit to her [Nivedita]," Sri Aurobindo commented later on, "she told me that the move had been entirely successful and the idea of deportation had been dropped " ²⁵

Now one may take note of the fact that the *Karmayogin* did not carry only the political writings and speeches of Sri Aurobindo which have been compiled in the Centenary Vol 2 It also contained his thoughts on national, religious, educational, literary and philosophical subjects As a matter of fact, the most enduring feature of the *Karmayogin* was the exposition of the truth inherent in the principles of the living Vedanta and *Sanatan Dharma* and their practice in various aspects of daily life In the issues of the Weekly was serialised Sri Aurobindo's English version of the *Isha*, *Kena* and *Katha* Upanishads as well as his unique translations of Kalidasa's *Ritu Samhar* and Bankim's *Ananda Math* (chapters 1-13) Among the other thoughtful works were *A System of National Education*, *The Brain of India*, *The National Value of Art*, *The Ideal*

of the *Karmayogin*, etc * Naturally the Weekly, unlike the *Bande Mataram*, flourished well and did not suffer financial difficulties

A few weeks after the publication of his 'Last Political Will and Testament' in the *Karmayogin*, Sri Aurobindo was preparing to attend the Hooghly Conference scheduled for 4-6 September 1909. The question of 'Reforms' with a view to creating a situation so that the Congress would be united was to be decided

Hence it is necessary to have a clear idea of various aspects of the 'Reforms' and the persons who were instrumental in making them operational We have already learnt that in his Beadon Square speech Sri Aurobindo made some passing comments on the Morley-Minto Reforms. He stated that when he was in prison he had heard vaguely of the Reforms and that when he came out he found what the Reforms were

Lord Minto who succeeded Lord Curzon in 1905 was a conservative Soon after he took over the charge in India, the British electorate installed the liberals in power and Mr. John Morley became the Secretary of State for India Thus a liberal Morley and a conservative Minto presided over the destiny of India during 1905-10 when Lal-Bal-Pal were indomitably active in Indian politics and Sri Aurobindo started playing his destined role in awakening the inert people to build a nation so that it might struggle for *Swaraj*—complete independence Commenting on Morley's pronouncement in the British Parliament, Sri Aurobindo writes in the *Bande Mataram* on 16 May 1909·

When Mr. John Morley entered politics, he entered as a literary man and austere philosopher and brought the spirit of philosophy into politics. His unbending fidelity to his principles earned him the name of Honest John As Indian Secretary, Mr Morley could not be expected to carry his philosophic principles into the India Office On the contrary, there were several reasons why he should be even more reactionary than ordinary Secretaries of State. The Secretary of State does not represent India or stand for her interests; he represents England and his first duty is to preserve British supremacy, but Mr Morley is also one of the foremost exponents of the most arrogant and exclusive type of enlightenment in nineteenth century Europe.. As such he was the last man to think well of or understand Asiatics or to regard them as anything but semi-barbarous anachronisms

Mr Morley makes no attempt to justify the arbitrary action he has sanctioned except on the plea of necessity . He does not tell us why Lala Lajpat Rai was deported or what were the charges against him, probably he does not himself know, but simply accepted the assurance of the able and experienced Denzil and the level-headed Minto that the step was necessary. For they are the men on the spot We need not discuss his utterances, they are merely faithful echoes of Anglo-Indian special pleading, in which there is nothing ..new and very little that is true But the threat which he held out to the Moderate Party is worth noting. For

* All these articles, dramas and translations have been compiled subjectwise in different volumes of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library

some time Mr Morley and Lord Minto.. have been talking big of some wonderful reform ... And now we are told or rather the Moderate leaders are told that they will lose these pretty toys if they do not help the bureaucracy to put down "disorder", or, in other words, to put down Nationalism. Mr Morley offers them a certain administrative reform if they can give up for themselves or can induce their countrymen to give up the aspiration towards freedom. Again, Mr Morley and Lord Minto have hinted that their measure is an instalment of self-government, yet Mr. Morley emphatically declares that he will never strip the Bureaucracy of any means of repression they possess. It is evident therefore that whatever "self-government" may be in store for us, it is a "self-government" in which executive despotism will remain absolutely undiminished and unmodified. We do not think any section of Indian opinion is likely to rise to this lure. Coerce, if you will—we welcome coercion, but be sure that it will rank the whole of India against you without distinction of parties ²⁶

In fact the British Administration was really getting worried over the possibility of their losing India—the most precious jewel of their imperial crown. For some time past the rulers had, with deep anguish, been witnessing how things were taking shape in Bengal, Maharashtra, Punjab and other places, and how the Swadeshi and Boycott Movements had been spreading with success. They realised that unless they introduced some semblance of reforms, more might be snatched away from their clutches than they were prepared to give. Hence on 16 May 1907 John Morley switched on the green signal by writing a letter to Lord Minto. And on 27 May Sri Aurobindo, through the columns of the *Bande Mataram* under the title "The Gilded Sham Again", made the people aware of what the proposed Reforms really meant. It was after his release from jail that he had come to know, as he indicated in his Beadon Square speech, of what actually was there in the Reforms.

(To be continued)

SAMAR BASU

References

- 18 *SABCL*, Vol 2, p 112
- 19 *Ibid*
- 20 *Ibid*, pp 112-13
- 21 *Ibid*, p 116
- 22 *Ibid*, Vol 26, p 70
- 23 *Ibid*, p 53
- 24 *Ibid*, Vol 2, p 124
- 25 *Ibid*, Vol 26, p 70
- 26 *Ibid*, Vol 1, pp 343-45

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

The Flowering of Management, by *Pravir Malik* (Sri Aurobindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences, Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry, 1997) 124 pages

MANAGEMENT IS one of the fertile fields of modern knowledge in which there is a tremendous proliferation of the written word. But when there is such an abundant profusion of literature on a subject, the quality of the output tends to suffer. Among the hundreds of books on management which are published in various parts of the world, many are just garbage presented in an attractive style and with a mystifying jargon; only a few are truly creative, thoughtful and make a meaningful contribution to the progress of knowledge on the subject. The book under review can be counted among these few books which try to bring a higher vision of values to business. And modern business is very much in need of such a vision.

For in our contemporary world, business is probably the most powerful and influential section of the society. The popular conception of business is limited to its most outward and material expression, the power of Money. Undoubtedly money-power is a major resource and strength of business. But modern business is something much more than mere money-power. Among the major organs of the modern society it is business which contains the highest concentration of pragmatic knowledge and power—not only economic power in the form of money, but also intellectual power in the form of Management and Technology and political power as the most effective interest-group in the society. From the point of view of human resources modern business has at its disposal the most educated, professionally-trained, youthful and innovative leadership and a highly skilled and organised work-force. And, in the course of its evolution, modern business has acquired a great capacity which the other organs of the society do not possess in the same measure; it is the capacity to convert a mental idea into a physical and vital fact or, in other words, to give a concrete shape in life and matter to a mental idea with the highest possible efficiency and economy. And the Science of Management is the mental dimension of business. This mind of modern business is not only a very active, innovative and pragmatic mind, it is an open and progressive mind, open to new ideas from all fields of knowledge. Thus modern business has great potential to make a meaningful contribution to the evolutionary progress of Humanity. When all these capacities and resources and the vital pragmatism at the disposal of the business community can be put at the service of some higher moral and spiritual values, they can bring about a rapid acceleration in the psychological and spiritual evolution of humanity. The book under review presents such a higher spiritual long-term vision to the business community.

The first part of the book discusses the inadequacy of the present approach to management and the need of a new approach based on a deeper and broader spiritual vision of business. The second part of the book deals with some of the latest concepts of management thought and practice, like quality circles, re-engineering and change

management, their present condition, their inadequacies and the alternative approaches to them in the light of a higher vision. The third part of the book presents the broad outlines of a new paradigm in management based mainly on Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolutionary vision. There are two interesting and illuminating articles in the book which are worth mentioning. The first is an article on "Money"—on the right use of Money-power, based on the Mother's insights on the subject. The second is an article, "Towards Comprehensive Business Efficiency", which pleads for a broader definition of business efficiency to "include corporation's real impact on Nature, society and humanity—not just what Wall Street analysts have so myopically, and in typical vital-centred fashion, presented as the final indicators of efficiency". The central idea or message of the book is that there must be a radical change in the management-consciousness of business. This is necessary if our organisations are to be managed more effectively and in consonance with the deeper laws of being. The nature of the change that is needed is a shift or an evolution from the present vital-centred motives working towards the satisfaction and expansion and glorification of the desires and ambitions of the vital ego of the individuals and the corporation at the expense of and in competition with others to the mind-centred motives in pursuit of "intuition and light, holism and that which integrates to create a synthetic whole of possibilities" and again in the next stage from this mental level to "psychic-centred" motives of "unity, brotherhood, joy, love and a deep and overarching wisdom".

The first phase of change, that is from the vital to the mental, has already begun, if not yet in practice, at least in thought. Modern management thought is on the verge of a mental and moral revolution. But the next stage of transition, from the mental to the spiritual, requires much groundwork and preparation in thought, conception and vision. First of all it requires a clear vision of the deeper spiritual truth of business and its evolutionary destiny. The book under review is a laudable attempt in this direction presented in a lucid and easy-flowing style without any obscuring jargon. We hope that it will initiate new and fresh thinking which will herald a new dawn of deeper and higher knowledge and vision in business.

M S SRINIVASAN

Beyond Man, The Life and Work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, by *Georges van Vrekhem*. Published by Harper Collins Publishers, India, 1997, pp xxiii + 544. Price. Rs 495

A lot has been written about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. But the general impression remains that a real evaluation of their life and work was something still to be expected, for much of what one reads about them is a rehash of points expounded by a few authorities on the matter. Therefore *Beyond Man, The Life and Work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother* by Georges Van Vrekhem comes as an unexpected, agreeable and

timely surprise in this 125th year of Sri Aurobindo's birthday and the 50th anniversary of India's freedom, to which not only Sri Aurobindo but also the Mother have contributed so much (though this is realised by so few)

Georges van Vrekhem, who lives in Auroville, has been working for six years on this book. He quotes extensively from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as well as from the writings by those who have been near to them. The result is a hefty volume of over 500 pages. But its story is gripping and will introduce the reader to the heart of the matter. In fact, the book is so informative and thought-provoking that its length feels rather like a bonus than an ordeal. It has clearly been the aim of the author to write an integral catholic text about his subject, based on all the 'documents' available.

While reading, one starts to realise how much outward facts are determined by interventions from other levels of consciousness, for which those facts are only the external signs. The writer has presented to us the biographical material in this context, for instance, when explaining Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's occult action on world events. The inclusion of interesting historical, philosophical and spiritual vistas drawn from other sources has resulted in a richly embroidered tapestry as a background to the exceptional life of the Two-in-One, 'the double-poled Avatar of the Supermind' as Van Vrekhem calls Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The book reveals the golden thread running through the realisation and fulfilment of the work of the double-poled Avatar. Highlights are the explication of the descent of Sri Krishna in Sri Aurobindo's body on 24 November 1926; the rationale behind the two World Wars, Sri Aurobindo's voluntary confrontation with Death, the manifestation of the Supermind on 29 February 1956, when the aim of the Avataric incarnation was fulfilled, and the Mother's ordeal while going still further and building the archetype of the supramental body.

The author shows that Sri Aurobindo progressed much farther in his Yoga than is commonly believed. He stresses the relevance of the double-poled Avatar, the One Consciousness incarnated in two bodies, which, *e g*, made possible that one half of the incarnated Avatar (Sri Aurobindo) could consciously enter death while the other half (the Mother) would remain on earth. He shows the Mother's acceptance, in her Love for mankind, to venture beyond every known limit for the realisation of the supramental body, in an effort that would have shortened the material manifestation of the new species by thousands if not millions of years.

In *Beyond Man*, the importance of the 'transitional being', called in French by the Mother 'le surhomme', is stressed. The Mother, announcing the descent of the consciousness of the 'surhomme' in January 1969, explains that, just as in every other great leap in evolution, this time too transitory beings or races will appear. They, born like all of us from human parents, but manifesting a certain degree of supramental consciousness, will in turn find the key for the creation of the supramental beings. This important element in the evolution, first described by Sri Aurobindo in *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth* and afterwards time and again elaborated upon by the

Mother, has rarely been given due attention. It is one of several illuminations in this important book.

Unavoidable in a book of this magnitude, some prevailing standpoints and opinions on the life and work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are being put in question. But Van Vrekhem's comments are always restrained and worded in a language of moderation. He clearly has been writing in a spirit of wide and constructive understanding. His guiding idea seems to have been to consider all 'Aurobindonians' as one family. So doing, *Beyond Man* shuns no important point or argument, but it is never polemical.

The publishers, Harper Collins Publishers, India, have done a fine job and produced a beautiful book that lies lightly and comfortably in the hand. Still, most of the printing errors might have been avoided if the proof-reading had been done with more care. It even happens in a couple of sentences that some words are omitted—and no, Sri Aurobindo did not marry in 1889, but in 1901—but the book as a whole reads very fluently and pleasantly indeed. The errors will surely be corrected when a second impression is issued—and we hope an index, indispensable for the really interested reader, will also be included then.

Beyond Man is a standard piece and a fount of information on the life and work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It is a *must* for all those who aspire to live in their Light.

CAREL THIEME