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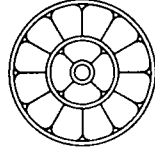
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

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. 11

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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LET THY BLESSING PUT THE IMMORTAL'S SEAL

“O SEER, thy bright arrival has been timed
To this high moment of a happy life
Then let the speech benign of griefless spheres
Confirm this blithe conjunction of two stars
And sanction joy with thy celestial voice
Here drag not in the peril of our thoughts,
Let not our words create the doom they fear
Here is no cause for dread, no chance for grief
To raise her ominous head and stare at love
A single spirit in a multitude,
Happy is Satyavan mid earthly men
Whom Savitri has chosen for her mate,
And fortunate the forest hermitage
Where leaving her palace and riches and a throne
My Savitri will dwell and bring in heaven
Then let thy blessing put the immortals' seal
On these bright lives' unstained felicity
Pushing the ominous Shadow from their days
Too heavy falls a Shadow on man's heart,
It dares not be too happy upon earth
It dreads the blow dogging too vivid joys,
A lash unseen in Fate's extended hand,
The danger lurking in fortune's proud extremes,
An irony in life's indulgent smile,
And trembles at the laughter of the gods
Or if crouches unseen a panther doom,
If wings of Evil brood above that house,
Then also speak, that we may turn aside
And rescue our lives from hazard of wayside doom
And chance entanglement of an alien fate ”
And Narad slowly answered to the queen
“What help is in prevision to the driven?
Safe doors cry opening near, the doomed pass on
A future knowledge is an added pain,
A torturing burden and a fruitless light
On the enormous scene that Fate has built
The eternal poet, universal Mind,
Has paged each line of his imperial act,

Invisible the giant actors tread
 And man lives like some secret player's mask
 He knows not even what his lips shall speak.
 For a mysterious Power compels his steps
 And life is stronger than his trembling soul.
 None can refuse what the stark Force demands,
 Her eyes are fixed upon her mighty aim,
 No cry or prayer can turn her from her path,
 She has leaped an arrow from the bow of God''
 His words were theirs who live unforced to grieve
 And help by calm the swaying wheels of life
 And the long restlessness of transient things
 And the trouble and passion of the unquiet world.
 As though her own bosom were pierced the mother saw
 The ancient human sentence strike her child,
 Her sweetness that deserved another fate
 Only a larger measure given of tears
 Aspiring to the nature of the gods,
 A mind proof-armoured mailed in mighty thoughts,
 A will entire couchant behind wisdom's shield,
 Though to still heavens of knowledge she had risen,
 Though calm and wise and Aswapathy's queen,
 Human was she still and opened her doors to grief;
 The stony-eyed injustice she accused
 Of the marble godhead of inflexible law,
 Nor sought the strength extreme adversity brings
 To lives that stand erect and front the World-Power
 Her heart appealed against the impartial judge,
 Taxed with perversity the impersonal One
 Her tranquil spirit she called not to her aid,
 But as a common man beneath his load
 Grows faint and breathes his pain in ignorant words,
 So now she arraigned the World's impassive will

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, Revised Edition, 1993, pp 426-27)

WEAPON OM OF UDGITHA

देवासुरा ह वै यत्र सयेतिर उभयं प्राजापत्यास्तद्ध देवा उद्गीथमाजहुरनेनैनानभिभविष्याम इति ॥१॥

1. The Gods and the demons strove together and both were children of the Almighty Father Then the Gods took up for weapon OM of Udgitha, for they said, “With this we shall overcome these Titans ”

ते ह नासिक्य प्राणमुद्गीथमुपासाचक्रिरे ।

तहासुरा पाप्मना विविधुस्तस्मात्तेनोभयं जिघ्रति सुरभि च दुर्गन्धि च पाप्मना ह्येषा विद्ध ॥२॥

2. The Gods worshipped OM as Breath in the nostrils, but the Demons came and smote it with the arrow of Evil; therefore it smells both alike, the sweet scent and the evil odour For it is smitten through and through with Evil.

अथ ह वाचमुद्गीथमुपासाचक्रिरे ।

ताहासुरा पाप्मना विविधुस्तस्मात्तेनोभयं वदति सत्य चानृत च पाप्मना ह्येषा विद्धा ॥३॥

3. Then the Gods worshipped OM as Speech; but the Demons came and smote it with the arrow of Evil, therefore it speaks both alike, Truth and Falsehood. For it is smitten through and through with Evil

अथ ह चक्षुरुद्गीथमुपासाचक्रिरे ।

तद्हासुरा पाप्मना विविधुस्तस्मात्तेनोभय पश्यति दर्शनीयं चादर्शनीय च पाप्मना ह्येतद् विद्धम् ॥४॥

4. Then the Gods worshipped OM as the Eye, but the Demons came and smote it with the arrow of Evil, therefore it beholds both alike, the fair to see and the foul of favour. For it is smitten through and through with Evil

अथ ह श्रोत्रमुद्गीथमुपासाचक्रिरे ।

तद्हासुरा पाप्मना विविधुस्तस्मात्तेनोभय शृणोति श्रवणीय चाश्रवणीय च पाप्मना ह्येतद्विद्धम् ॥५॥

5. Then the Gods worshipped OM as the Ear, but the Demons came and smote it with the arrow of Evil, therefore it hears both alike, that which is well to hear and that which is harsh and unseemly For it is smitten through and through with Evil.

अथ ह मन उद्गीथमुपासाचक्रिरे ।

तद्हासुरा पाप्मना विविधुस्तस्मात्तेनोभय सकल्पयते सकल्पनीय चासंकल्पनीयं च पाप्मना ह्येतद्विद्धम् ॥६॥

6. Then the Gods worshipped Udgitha as Mind but the Demons came and smote it with the arrow of Evil; therefore it conceives both alike, right thoughts and unlawful imaginations. For it is smitten through and through with Evil

अथ ह य एवायं मुख्य प्राणस्तमुद्गीथमुपासाचक्रिरे ।
तहासुरा ऋत्वा विध्वंसुर्यथाशमानमाखणमृत्वा विध्वसेत ॥७॥

- 7 Then the Gods worshipped OM as this which is Breath in the mouth and the Demons rushing against it dashed themselves to pieces, as when an object strikes against firm and solid rock, it dashes to pieces upon the rock

एव यथाशमानमाखणमृत्वा विध्वसत एवहैव स विध्वसते य एवविदि पाप
कामयते यश्चैनमभिदासति स एषोऽशमाखण ॥८॥

- 8 And even as an object hurling against firm and solid rock dashes itself to pieces, so he hurls himself upon destruction whoso desires evil against the Knower or whoso does him hurt; for the Knower is as that firm and solid rock

नैवैतेन सुरभि न दुर्गन्धि विजानात्यपहतपाप्मा ह्येष तेन यदश्नाति यत्पिबति तेनेतरान्प्राणानवति ।
एतमु एवान्ततोऽविध्वंसोत्क्रामति व्याददात्येवान्तत इति ॥९॥

- 9 With this Breath one cognises neither sweet scent nor ill odour, for it has flung Evil from it. Whatsoever one eats with this or drinks, thereby it cherishes the other breaths. At the end and last when he finds not the breath, the Spirit goes out from the body; verily he opens wide the mouth as he goes.

तहाङ्गिरा उद्गीथमुपासाचक्र एतमु एवाङ्गिरस मन्यन्तेऽङ्गानां यद्रसः ॥१०॥

10. Angiras worshipped OM of Udgitha as Breath in the mouth and men think of Breath in the mouth as Angiras because it is essence of the members of the body.

तेन तह बृहस्पतिरुद्गीथमुपासाचक्र एतमु एव बृहस्पति मन्यन्ते वाग्धि बृहती तस्या एष पति ॥११॥

11. By the strength of Angiras, Brihaspati worshipped OM as Breath in the mouth, and men think of the Breath as Brihaspati, because Speech is the great goddess and Breath is the lord of Speech

तेन तंहायास्य उद्गीथमुपासाचक्र एतमु एवायास्य मन्यन्त आस्याद्यदयते ॥१२॥

- 12 By the strength of Brihaspati, Ayasya worshipped OM as Breath in the mouth and men think of the Breath as Ayasya, because 'tis from the mouth it comes

तेन तंह बको दाल्भ्यो विदाचकार ।
स ह नैमिशोयानामुद्गाता बभूव स ह स्मैभ्यः कामानागायति ॥१३॥

13. By the strength of Ayasya, Baka the son of Dalbha knew the Breath. And he became the Chanter of the Sama among the Naimishiyas and he chants their desires for them unto fulfilment.

आगाता ह वै कामाना भवति य एतदेव विद्वानक्षरमुद्गीथमुपास्त इत्यध्यात्मम् ॥१४॥

14. Verily, he becomes a chanter unto fulfilment of the desires of men who with this knowledge worships OM of Udgitha, the eternal syllable Thus far concerning Self is the exposition

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Upanishads, SABCL, Vol 12, pp 387-90)

SRI AUROBINDO'S COMMENT ON THE DRAFT OF AN ARTICLE BY ANILBARAN RAY

It is better not to write of the superman until you know what the superman is, at present you can only say what he is not. The positive part of your article is on that account too weak and vague to pass

It is better not to write of the superman until you know what the superman is, at present you can only say what he is not. The positive part of your article is on that account too weak and vague to pass

The Ideal of the Superman (Anilbaran Ray)

It was Nietzsche, the German and mystic poet-philosopher, of Germany who first used the word Superman as an ideal. The goal

N B The author's revised article has a different title —Editor

DYUMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of October 1998)

My dear Mother,

If there were even a few in the Ashram whose physical consciousness could readily receive the Divine Force and allow it to be effective in its working, I feel that a greater part of the illnesses in the Ashram would be pushed aside, and there would be sounder health.

May the body consciousness awaken, give itself completely to the Divine and allow the Divine Force to work out its Will.

YES, what you say is quite right. It is of the greatest importance that the body consciousness should open to the Divine, that alone can put an end to all these illnesses rising in the Ashram.

Always with you, my dear child.

28 October 1935

My dear Mother,

Teach me to rely more and more on You

In the peace and the inner silence you will more and more become conscious of my constant presence.

30 October 1935

My dear Mother,

The cold in my head is bad now, I took green "pastilles" from G and I may ask him for a few drops of oil in the nose. But this is the last time I am thinking of taking medicine. The next time the body should take up the true attitude and depend only upon the Divine Force.

The power that the body must get is to be aware of the illness at the moment of its coming and to reject it *before* it has time to settle in the body. But once the illness has caught hold of the body, then we must by one means or another help the body to recover.

Always with you

31 October 1935

My dear Mother,

This evening H told me: "The moong dal is not clean. Will you get it cleaned by

your granary workers?" I thought "This is too much for me and there will be no end to it!" Also the people asking for Prasad are increasing and H is actively canvassing them!

All the above is purely from the viewpoint of discipline and organisation But when I see things from a wider angle, I feel totally different discipline too is progressive, what is good today may not hold good tomorrow There will be a change in our outer life as a result of our inner progress and the descent of the consciousness from above

My dear Mother, both these viewpoints are placed before You, the former arising from the egoistic mind, the latter from a wider mind, humble before Your working

A harmonious combination of the two attitudes, each one working at its place and time, is the right thing

J asks me to tell you that she no more wants to go home in the afternoon and she is ready to do the work that is needed in the kitchen This is the result of a true progress in her consciousness and it has to be encouraged

All love and blessings to you, my dear child

1 November 1935

My dear Mother,

May I know You more and more as You are, and not as I think You are

Surely, my dear child, you will know me more and more as you become more and more conscious of my presence near you

4 November 1935

My dear Mother,

K informs me that she gets fever now and then, and it troubles her much The only thing that I feel about all our fevers is this let us turn ourselves to our Beloved, the Divine So long as we have not turned ourselves fully, we shall have to endure the consequences patiently

Surely all these troubles come from a resistance somewhere, something that opposes the work of transformation.

5 November 1935

Beloved of my heart,

May I get more peace and quietness under all circumstances and push forward vigilantly and patiently

Yes, my dear child, let the peace settle more and more in you, especially in your physical mind and rely more and more on my love and blessings.

12 November 1935

My dear Mother,

A need for a complete quietness, even in my exterior consciousness, has arisen now. Inside there is always a force, but to make it more effective in its manifestation a complete quietness in all the being is the immediate need.

Yes, quietness, quietness, a calm and concentrated strength, so quiet that nothing can shake it—this is the indispensable basis for the integral realisation.

With love and blessings always

7 December 1935

(To be continued)

TO A FRIEND

You had your fill of misery
 and lying like an upturned cloud
 driven through the loud ringing
 of the flying bells you knew
 that the fuse of your mind
 would some day hold the
 lightning that makes art happen.
 You grew to be a strong wind
 unafraid, and flew, wings spread,
 shaking the dead leaves of October
 towards the lost wisdom stars
 singing in the alphabet sky.
 You sang to the trembling minutes
 that threw bright shadows on
 the palimpsest of your mind.
 You are no longer maimed by
 misery, troubled by tradition

RANAJIT SARKAR

OMNI-REALISM

SUGGESTIONS TOWARDS A KEY TO THE PROBLEM OF PERCEPTION

(Continued from the issue of October 1998)

2

THE sole remaining alternatives to our conclusion—the objective reality of all qualities—are two. Berkeleyanism and Kantianism. Both Berkeley and Kant maintain that the qualities we perceive are either wholly objective or wholly subjective. In this they are right; for, as we saw, it is impossible to sit on a fence between the construct and the non-construct. Berkeley and Kant maintain also in common that no qualities have an objective reality distinct from the mind of the percipient. This concurrence of theirs we have to examine, as well as their divergence. Where they part company is in Berkeley's denying the existence of any reality outside the perceiving mind and in his affirming the dictum *Esse est percipi*—"to exist is the same as to be perceived." Kant asserts that there is something outside perception, but the nature of it is never known by the sensory and intellectual capacity of the human consciousness because what we know through perception is determined by the constitution and activity of the human consciousness. Kantianism, however, should not be mixed up with the idea we have discussed above, that energy is the sole objective existent. Energy, after all, is something we can measure in a laboratory and use in an atom bomb: it can be studied by science. Kant says: "There are two orders of reality: the 'phenomenon' which is wholly the aspect given to a thing by our perceiving mind, and the 'noumenon' or 'thing-in-itself' which is ever beyond the perceiver's knowledge, even if the perceiver employ the subtlest instruments of science."

The Berkeleyan starting-point—"to exist is the same as to be perceived"—leads, as Hume pointed out, to solipsism, the doctrine of "I alone." Every man has only his own perceptions to begin with. To begin with anybody else's perceptions is to assume that there are existences independent of the only perception he is aware of—namely, his own, and to make such an assumption is to cut from under himself the sole ground he can bring forward to equate an object's existence with perception. In short, to be a logical Berkeleyan, I must say that nothing exists outside my perception. But then I have to say that not only the world of so-called matter but also other men, other human beings, other conscious selves do not exist outside the perception-contents of my Berkeleyanly philosophising mind which is the one percipient existing.

Berkeley himself did not embrace solipsism. The universe, in his view, did not cease to exist when a particular man stopped perceiving it: it existed always, but in God's consciousness. But to posit God's consciousness is to go logically beyond the subjectivist's starting-point which is that I never experience anything that is not

experienced by *me* Stapledon rightly reasons that from this starting-point I can reach just the conclusion that nothing exists that I do not perceive, whereas Berkeley in effect argued. "Everything that I experience is a thing experienced by *me*. Therefore everything must be experienced by *someone*." The argument is fallacious. And if the subjectivist philosopher goes beyond solipsism and accepts a universe existing outside his own individual perception he is left in doubt whether it exists in God's consciousness or by itself and independent of any consciousness. If, further, he proceeds not only to God's consciousness but also to other people's consciousness and holds that individual percipients other than himself exist, he has no ground left for denying existence to the objects he perceives beings outside his consciousness and objects outside his consciousness bear to his consciousness the same relation in the perceptual act and, if the former are admitted, what reason can there be for not admitting the latter? According to strict logic, the moment solipsism is rejected the reality of a world independent of all individual percipients has to be accepted.

The question, however, remains: Is solipsism tenable? The absurdity of it to commonsense cannot weigh in philosophy. Can philosophy itself counter it? Yes. Even if in my experience the object perceived goes always together with my perception and the two are never known to be separate, it scarcely follows that they are *necessarily* connected and could not occur apart. In Stapledon's words "what is perceived does not *involve* the perceiving except in the redundant sense that, when I perceive, the meaning is that something is perceived." The existential dependence of what is perceived is not proved. Of course, it is not disproved either, on this line of reasoning. But if for other reasons I incline to believe that objects exist apart from perception I need not be debarred from doing so by Berkeley. Even Berkeley must have felt that there are other reasons else he would not have required to drag in God's consciousness to contain the things no man perceived.

Apart from these reasons, there are also two logical flaws in solipsism. The first is it assumes that the mind creates the world. We have no sense of any creating of the world by ourselves. If the world is a creation of my consciousness, the creating is done not by what I ordinarily call myself: some consciousness other than myself though having myself as its surface-status must be creating the world. But this—in the Berkeleyan sphere of discussion—is as much a hypothesis as that the world which I perceive exists independently. Only, I have the actual sense that there is an independent world interacting with me, and therefore out of the two hypotheses the latter is to be preferred. The former may not be untenable on other grounds, but by means of the solipsist argument it certainly is. The second flaw in solipsism is that a solipsist cannot claim for his own view truth in any sense applicable when judging philosophical theories. Truth, as between philosophical theories which are equally self-consistent or internally coherent, implies comparison of a theory with an objective reality. If there is no objective reality, with what is the solipsist to compare his theory? His theory can never be confirmed. It, of course, cannot be denied either. But then there is no point in arguing about it. And as arguing is the only means of logically establishing a theory,

solipsism falls outside the scope of logic and therefore of philosophy. What remains for logic and philosophy, as far as Berkeleyanism is concerned, is the objective reality of the world and the world's omni-qualifiedness.

(To be continued)

AMAL KIRAN
(K D SETHNA)

HEARD-UNHEARD

I HAVE heard many songs in the course of time
 But many more songs have remained unheard,
 But then there is no end to the course of time
 And there are yet wide silent spaces to be stirred.

All these hours must pass like fading dreams
 And all the notions of life and its mystery
 Deepen into sleep that is God's one great gift
 Holding in its joy revelation's strange memory

I am not worried that there were wasted hours
 Or that I spoke at times the vernacular of despair,
 For the unknown, the unseen, is a wondrous hope
 And it carries the quiet flame up on the flaming stair

But the sky there is not a misty or tenuous blue
 Nor is my unsung song made of uncertain stuff;
 Now that the morn of morns, and the day of days,
 Has come I tell you the unheard is not the far-off.

I might have lived unlived love for too long,
 Cherished feelings that sharpen the points of pain;
 But 'tis pain that pushes unhappy things behind,—
 To such an extent that love it shall forever gain

R. Y. DESHPANDE

“INSPIRATIONS FOR PROGRESS”

(Continued from the issue of October 1998)

FOR all things, internal and external, learn more and more to rely upon Mother—All-Wise, All-Powerful, All-Loving—with deep, entire, happy trust.

Remember that She is always with you in every thought, feeling, action and that Her Grace is unailing. In all things that have to be done, do not depend upon your own capacity, but upon Her unailing Grace. Shrink from nothing that has to be done out of the sense of your incapacity but, relying on Her ever-present and All-Powerful Grace, go forward.

In all things, depending on Her with happy entire confidence, always lift yourself to the highest

Keeping the aspiration (integral union with Her) sincere and strong, always move forward, onward, upward, opening to Her more and more, offering all things to Her more and more, relying on Her alone with deep, absolute, loving, happy trust.

15-12-1967

*

Without shame or fear look straight at yourself and admit the shadow that is there in your nature.

Admit it, and offer it up to Mother for deliverance Do not try to be righteous and virtuous See yourself truly and frankly acknowledge the shadow—but do not struggle with it

In all humility and all sincerity, offer it up to the Supreme Light and Power and Love of Mother and, like a child, ask Her to rid you of it

Be sincere, keep on offering and be sure that She will set you free

27-12-1967

*

Whatever the difficulties, whatever the defects of nature, do not grieve, do not fear, do not feel guilty, do not feel broken, but always more and more offer them to Him, ask Him for deliverance by His Grace and His Love and remain absolutely confident that He will grant deliverance. But also remain patient—leaving it to Him to deliver you in His own time

Meanwhile quietly, firmly, but with absolute confidence and deep, entire loving trust, endure.

Take entire refuge in His All-Powerful, All-Wise, All-Tender Love, go on offering to Him all experience and, relying entirely on Him with absolute trust, cast away all fear, all trouble, all anxiety, all guilt

When difficulties press, when defects and weakness overpower, do not turn away from Him in doubt or fear or shame, rather turn more intimately towards Him, surrender to Him more radically and trust Him with greater resoluteness

There is nothing that He cannot do and will not do if you take refuge in Him.

Not to fall upon, fold upon yourself but always to turn more and more to Him, open more and more to Him, give more and more to Him and leave all to Him with absolute loving confidence—that is the secret key of all deliverance from this old life and of birth and growth in the New Life.

This I must do—radically, decisively, entirely, absolutely

Nothing else matters but this alone—to cast off the old life and to be new-born in the new life of Truth

Loving, trusting surrender to Him is the key-secret of this transformation

That I must now practise with all-engrossing sincerity.

31-12-1967

*

Think not of your faults and weaknesses, your difficulties and troubles

Think of the Lord, of His All-Powerful, All-Forgiving, All-Kind Love.

Relying on Him absolutely for everything at every moment, cast away all fear and trouble, all doubt and anxiety, all despair and guilt

Depending on Him with entire loving trust, taking complete refuge in His Love, offering to Him everything, remain perfectly confident

He never fails

Do not say. "I have these faults, weaknesses, defects, I have these great formidable difficulties, so He will be displeased with me, will not help me, so I cannot succeed."

All these are utterly false suggestions and must be completely, resolutely, persistently rejected till they entirely disappear.

What counts in yoga is sincere aspiration, faith and surrender—given these the victory is absolutely certain

Give up this insistence on personal effort and this habit of feeling helpless because it does not succeed

Simply and wholly give everything to Him with love and with loving trust leave everything to Him

Simply and more and more open to Him, His Peace, His Light, His Force, His Joy, His Love, His Presence and let Him do everything for you

There is nothing that He cannot do and will not do if you remain surrendered and trustful

Only time is needed which must be given. Meanwhile to remain very quiet, happy, confident

Also to remember that He is at every step on the way and not only at the end

And never to forget that He understands everything, forgives everything, is endlessly kind, always loves, helps, guides, uplifts

Turn away from your small, little self, do not be hypnotised by your faults and difficulties, always remember Him, turn to Him, give up everything to Him and depending on Him go forward with cheerful confidence

The New Birth and New Life He will surely bring. Oneness with Him in the Truth of Eternal Love shall be realised

4-2-1968

*

Make your surrender more and more decisive, complete and unreserved, and with entire confidence leave all things to Mother and Lord

Remember always that They are All-Knowing, All-Powerful and All-Loving, and that They are always with you Be sure that if you surrender to Them and leave everything to Them with entire trust, They will do everything for you.

Do not be obsessed by your defects and difficulties, inner or outer—only be sincere in your aim, only make your surrender real and unreserved, only make your trust deep and entire and absolute,—then Victory is certain.

Fear nothing. never have any doubt, guilt or despair.

Relying on Their All-Powerful Love, taking refuge in Their Hands with complete trust, persevere in opening more and more to Them—and remain absolutely confident that They will do everything for you, deliver you from obstructions, bring about your New Birth and New Life of union with Them in the eternal truth of Love

18-2-1968

*

Be always positive, constructive Always radiate light and joy and sweetness in your dealings with others

Be always full of goodwill for all and patient, tolerant, considerate in dealing with them

23-2-1968

KISHOR GANDHI

(Compiled by Arvind Akki)

BHAVANI BHARATI

To celebrate Sri Aurobindo's 125th Birth Anniversary some inmates of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram performed a dance-drama (on 17 August 1998) based on Sri Aurobindo's Sanskrit composition *Bhavani Bharati*. It was an immensely difficult task to translate the Mantric power of *Bhavani Bharati* into the language of body through dance movements. But finally it turned out to be quite successful. The whole programme was a humble offering of collective effort to express sincere gratitude to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on this great and auspicious occasion.

It will be appropriate to say here a few words about the text of Sri Aurobindo's *Bhavani Bharati* and its subject matter.

Bhavani Bharati is the only Sanskrit poem composed by Sri Aurobindo. He wrote it sometime between 1904 and 1908. The manuscript of this poem was confiscated by the Calcutta police in May 1908. This was recovered and published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1985. The poem is patriotic in nature and contains 99 verses in the Upajati metre. From the point of view of national integration this poem occupies an important place. The story runs as follows.

While Indians are sleeping happily and enjoying worldly pleasures their Motherland India is being oppressed by Titans who are sucking Her life-blood. The poet, who represents the whole race, develops a feeling of humiliation and sense of guilt that not only has he been unable to help Mother India in this dire situation but has been sleeping happily.

At this time he hears an inner call. His sleep is disturbed by the touch of a dreadful hand. He sees Mother India standing before him in the shape of Kali: a garland of human bones round Her neck, a chain of human skulls on Her waist, scars of Titan lashes on Her back. She is hungry. She is poor. She is fearsome. She is naked. She is dark. Her hair dangles on Her back and She looks dreadful. Her voice is like thunder. This dreadful dark figure declares that She is Mother India, the Mother of the beloved children of God who are invincible in the face of Fate or Time or Death. She calls these children to protect Her. She makes them aware of their glorious past. She says that once India shone on the earth like a thousand suns because of the purified strength, knowledge and severe austerities of the Rishis and because of the great heroes who enjoyed smearing the blood of their enemies on their body and could not tolerate any opposition from their foe. But She feels sorry for the pitiful and cowardly nature of Her present children. She berates them and calls them to arise and strive to enrich Her.

On hearing this clarion call of the Mother, the poet leaves his house, possessions and kinsmen and goes out. Then he sees the Mother surrounded by Titans. She is oppressed by them. The Titans are nourishing their offspring by sucking Her blood. They are huge and vile in their appearance. They are inflated with the pride of their strength. They are unrighteous and boasting of righteousness. On seeing this the poet's heart burns with an undying wrath. Then the dreadful Mother comes to his side. She is formidable like night. The earth shakes, the sea trembles and heaven thunders with the

awful violence of Her words Her angry looks engulf the creation with a deluge of fire She lifts her weapon, a fire-hurling bow, and rushes on the fearsome Titans, roaring in battle. The land is flooded with blood

The poet then sees a rising sun shedding a ruddy glow in heaven repelling darkness and piercing the adversary with arrow-like beams He also sees far in the north a white light in the form of a woman—gracious, delightful, with a radiance of twenty million dazzling suns Then the enraptured Gods, of luminous realms, sing Her praises, the birds start chirping; men prostrate themselves before Her. Himalayan Yogis, steadfast in meditation, sing Her praises with joy

All pray to Her, She being Omnipotent, Terrible, Mighty, Compassionate, the Preserver, the Primeval Goddess, the Supreme Power, the Mother of the Aryans, Bharati They pray to Her as Kali, the utterly ruthless one; Annapurna, the merciful and gracious one, Radha, the incarnation of love, Savitri, the radiant one, the ten-armed Durga; the thousand-armed Mother of Unthinkable energy. With this the poet hears the chanting of the Veda in the forest, as in ancient times, and sees the resplendent Lakshmi with a smile on her lips residing permanently with the Indians The whole world hastens to Her, praising this gracious and awe-inspiring Mother, the fulfiller of mighty vows They pray to her by singing

प्रीतिर्दया धैर्यमदम्यशौर्यं श्रद्धा तितिक्षा विविधाश्च विद्या ।
 अनन्तरूपे त्वमसि प्रसीद चिर वसार्थे हृदि भारतानाम् ॥
 सिन्धून् हिमाद्रिञ्च सुसौम्यभासा प्रकाशयन्ती सुदृढप्रतिष्ठा ।
 तिष्ठ प्रसन्ना चिरमार्यभूमौ महाप्रतापे जगतो हिताय ॥

O infinite in thy forms, thou art contentment, compassion, patience and indomitable heroism, faith and endurance and knowledge of every kind Be gracious, noble Goddess; dwell long in the hearts of the Indian people!

Illumining these rivers and mountains with a gentle lustre, be firmly established in the Aryan country. Abide forever gracious in this land, O Mighty One, for the good of the world.

SAMPADANANDA MISHRA

ON THE MOTHER

EVER since the news came on the air on the morning of November 18, her numerous disciples and admirers from all over India had been rushing, flying, to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, to have a last darshan of the Mother as she lay in state covered by gold-laced silk shawl in the Meditation Hall. As the devotees filed past in an unending stream, they felt the living Presence of the Mother charged with an aura of limitless love and protection. The sharp sense of personal bereavement became muted because it was shared by tens of thousands, and was exceeded by the realisation that the Divine Consciousness that the Mother had embodied was now permanently settled in the Ashram (and earth) atmosphere.

From the early hours of the morning of 20th November, the Courtyard of the Ashram gradually filled, and by seven there were perhaps a thousand sitting in close space in silent meditation and chastened expectancy. Some minutes past eight the Mother's body was carried by eight sadhaks in a silver-lined rosewood casket, and preceding and following the casket were those who have been physically closest to the Mother for years past in daily service or executive responsibility. At 8-33, a moment in time abstracted from Time's flow, the casket was slowly lowered into the samadhi-chamber under the Service Tree and covered by four concrete slabs. Sovereign meditation in the rich immaculate silence led up to the finale which was a hymn to the accompaniment of organ music wholly tuned to the occasion.

Now and hereafter, how shall we remember the Mother, or recapitulate the epic history of her life and ministry? When she was requested by the AIR to record her reminiscences on her 90th birthday on 21 February 1968, she said with an all-sufficing absolute succinctness

I came to India to meet Sri Aurobindo. I remained in India to live with Sri Aurobindo. When he left his body, I continued to live here in order to do his work which is, by serving Truth and enlightening mankind, to hasten the rule of the Divine's Love upon earth.

She was born a banker-rationalist's daughter in Paris, and her ancestors had come from Egypt. Even as a child, Mirra Alfassa was given to long and sustained bouts of silent self-absorption, and in school her classmates readily conceded a natural leadership to her and abided by her advice, admonition or adjudication. While still young, she saw visions and dreamt dreams, and one face in particular—'Krishna', she called him—appeared frequently. She learnt occultism too, mainly under the guidance of the Polish Jew, M. Théon, in Algeria, and on her return to Paris formed a group dedicated to the task of hastening the "advent of a progressive universal harmony."

She had heard of Sri Aurobindo as early as 1910, but it was on 29 March 1914 that they first met at Pondicherry. Instantaneous recognition dawned upon her that he was indeed the 'Krishna' she had met in her dreams so often. Each found in the other a

kindred spirit and soul's comrade, for they had independently traversed similar paths though towards the same goal, and now their paths of Yoga were to merge to make a tested highway for all spiritual aspirants. One immediate result was the launching of the *Arya* on 15 August 1914, in which during the next six years and a half Sri Aurobindo's major prose works—*The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Essays on the Gita* and the rest—were to appear serially. The exigencies of the Great War took the Mother, first to France, then to Japan, but she was always, everywhere, Sri Aurobindo's wholly surrendered disciple and perfect collaborator. In 1916, she once addressed the "Women of Japan", telling them that "the true domain of women is spiritual", that "in the life of the future, there shall be no more room for disequilibrium between the masculine and the feminine", and that there must come "a new spiritual light, manifestation upon earth of some Divine force unknown until now, a thought of God, a new form, new for us here". This was her way of prophesying the coming Supramental Age.

24 April 1920 was the date of her second (and final) coming to Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo Ashram now took shape, and after 24 November 1926, when Sri Aurobindo went into complete retirement, the Mother took charge of the disciples, and began building the House Divine with its many mansions of creativity and realisation. The number of sadhaks and the range of activities grew from year to year, and the Yoga entered a decisive phase of collective endeavour. The Second World War was—to her as well as to Sri Aurobindo—a crisis in earth-history, the eruption of an Asuric force of unprecedented ferocity. But the crisis passed with the victory over Hitler in 1945. The coming of Indian independence two years later on 15 August 1947—which was also Sri Aurobindo's seventy-fifth birthday—reinforced the Mother's faith that India, now awake once more, would move towards the "horizon of true greatness" and become indeed the Guru of the world.

After Sri Aurobindo's passing on 5 December 1950, the Mother only redoubled her efforts to realise his dream of a reformed and transformed humanity. "I am French by birth and early education," she declared on 15 August 1954, and significantly added "I am Indian by choice and predilection. My only aim in life is to give a concrete form to Sri Aurobindo's great teaching." She organised the International Centre of Education for the Ashram children, and Education and Yoga—even Life and Yoga—became interchangeable terms. As she once remarked,

Education is a sacerdotaly, teaching is a sacerdotaly, and to be at the head of a State is a sacerdotaly. Thus if the person who fulfils this role aspires to fulfil it in the highest and the most true manner, the general condition of the world can become much better.

From her lone room in the third storey of the main Ashram building, the Mother guided, advised, organised, administered—and ordained the order to be. And her helping hand and her word of cheer and her smile of Grace have been the means of

rescue or redemption to tens of thousands of shipwrecked souls. Numberless are the wielders of power and authority and bearers of Atlantean burdens of responsibility who have sought and obtained the grace of her protection. In mid-September 1969 Rashtrapati V. V. Giri had a meditation with the Mother, and she said "Let us all work for the greatness of India." Not long after, the Prime Minister too saw the Mother, and after meditation, the Mother gave this message.

Let India work for the future and take the lead. Thus she will recover her true place in the world.

It was after her 90th birthday that the Mother had made mankind take a great leap into the future by inaugurating the international City of Dawn, 'Auroville', on 28 February 1968. But Ashram, Centre of Education, or Auroville, the Mother's far aims had a puissant centrality which on one occasion she stated as follows:

Life has a purpose

This purpose is to find and serve the Divine.

The Divine is not far, He is in ourselves, deep inside and above the feelings and the thoughts. With the Divine is peace and certitude and even the solution of all difficulties.

Hand over your problems to the Divine and He will pull you out of your difficulties.

Speaking of the Mother, the Hon. Monica Parish said in 1966: "The Mother is the Ashram. The Mother is Sri Aurobindo. Her consciousness is everywhere. She is an experience. Experience of her is peace, beauty, silence, love."

That Power of Consciousness—that incarnate Love—which we called the Mother has seemingly withdrawn from the body, but only to manifest itself the more widely, the more fully, the more creatively in the Ashram and the earth-atmosphere.

(Courtesy *The Weekly Mail Magazine*, Saturday, 24 November 1973)

THE WAGER OF AMBROSIA

IX. The Divine Assurance (B)

(Continued from the issue of October 1998)

JNANESHWAR pertinently introduces the key idea of Yogic lack of difference between various kinds of work, *karmasāmyadaśa*, and makes this the first condition for progress on the spiritual path. According to it among all the works there is one underlying common factor, that whatever be these works they are all intrinsically of equal significance, none too small or big, none inconsequential or particularly exceptional. Therefore, by recognising their essential oneness, their equality and the sameness of their value, the doer of works must perform them in the spirit of a Yogic quest itself.

Jnaneshwar then elaborates with a number of examples the necessity of remaining in work, but then he also adds that, while doing so, it is necessary to make a distinction between what is truly desirable or beneficial and what is harmful. Whether you do works according to the dharma or not, whatever you are going to do or you ought to do, the amount of effort you will put in them is always to be the same and in none will the labour and physical exertion be any less. Therefore your criterion for selecting an activity should be based not on the comfort you will derive from it, nor the ease of doing things; but the consideration should be fully in consonance with the quest itself. Indeed, as a pursuer of values of existence and as a seeker of the Self the grounds for selection should be psychological, more subtle in terms of proper spiritual gains. What promotes sensuous passions, what aggrandises egoistic fancies or desires will invariably carry more and more of demerit to you. Hence this *pāpa* you should scrupulously avoid, as you would avoid taking a dose of poison. The occupation that causes degradation of consciousness, that invariably leads to misery and sorrow and suffering, entangles you more and more in the network of life's thousand evils, traps you without any hope of escape from all that is sinful,—all these without any second thought must be kept at arm's length.

In this regard one safe rule of conduct a beginner should follow is to go by his own dharma, by his own law of being; he should go by it even if that law should be found wanting in any respect. He should entirely rely upon it as an injunctive and effective Word, *siddhamantra*. It is particularly so because this mantra has the kingly authority, *puruśārthāraju*, to help the seeker of the Self overcome every opposition and every obstacle, it has the superior ability which can save him from every calamity or mishap. In it is *uchit* as well as *param* fulfilment, the most appropriate and supreme satisfaction of the purpose for which is taken the difficult and arduous spiritual path.

Thus engaged in proper activity you remain undisturbed and unencumbered; you indeed attain a high state of perfection. You no longer get caught in corporeal transactions of the world, *dehādic samsār*. As the wind cannot be held in a netting of wire, so do you escape all these entanglements. Your ascetic renunciation cuts you off

from all complexity and enmeshment and it is that which unerroneously leads you to the experience of oneness with the spirit True knowledge begins to dawn upon you and with the arrival of this knowledge disappears from you the sense of illusion, you become free from faulty understanding and faulty perception Even the triple division of the doer of work, *kartā*, the work itself, *karma*, and the act of doing work, *kārya*, gets killed At the very root of things the problem is eliminated, it is as if a pregnant animal, *gābhunī*, herself has been slaughtered You justly escape all the shortcomings and all long-term or immediate consequences that are incumbent in this divisive state of your approach and your perception There is no doubt that when ignorance vanishes, with it also ceases the very act of knowing and what remains behind is the sheer calm and passive sentience

तैसे नेणणे जे गेले। तेणे जाणणेही नेले। मग निष्क्रिय उरले। चिन्मात्रचि ॥

(*Jñāneshwarī*: 18.977)

By any reckoning this is a great achievement and it is by that that you abide in a state of calm and perfect actionlessness, *nauskarmyasiddhi* In that condition no action will bind you to the past The way night takes her leave with the sunrise, or camphor becomes a smokeless flame when brought in contact with it, or a lump of salt just dissolves when put in water, or else when awake sleep and dream disappear from you, so you stay free from the consequences of your actions. The sense of duality haunts you no more, even as does happy fortune help you to find a preceptor who tells you of this extraordinary gain of yours Asceticism, the grace of the spiritual teacher or Guru, the sprouting of the seed of right discrimination, the sense of futility of the worldly existence and its illusory character, the recognition that the Eternal is everywhere and that in it ends even the urge for liberation, in which exists no more the worldly triad of knowledge-knower-known,—that is what you eventually secure, you become that

तैसा वैराग्यलाभु जाला। वरि सद्गुरुही भेटला। जीवी अकुरु फुटला। विवेकाचा ॥ तेणे ब्रह्म एक आथो। येर आघवीचि भ्रांति। हेहि कीर प्रतीति। गाढ केली ॥ परी तेचि जे परब्रह्म। सर्वात्म सर्वोत्तम। मोक्षाचेहि काम। सरे जेथ ॥ यया तिन्ही अवस्था पोटी। जिरवी जे गा किरौटी। तथा ज्ञानासिही मिठी। दे जे वस्तु ॥ ऐक्याचे एकपण सरे। जेथ आनदकणुही विरे। काहीचि नुरोनि उरे। जे काही गा ॥ तिये ब्रह्मी ऐक्यपणे। ब्रह्मचि होऊनि असणे। ते क्रमेचि करून तेणे। पाविजे पै ॥

(*Jñāneshwarī* 18 1001-1006)

Such is the outstanding *siddhi* you get and with it you start discovering the marvellous Riches of the Self, *ātmariddhi*

But then in order to arrive at this marvellous realisation, tells the *Yogi-Siddha*, you ought to ride the swift and strong Horse of *Rajayoga* Ascetic renunciation, *vairāgya*, removal of dualities, *dvandabhāva*, making a cave or a thick impenetrable forest as your dwelling, keeping yourself away from the crowd, with silence only as your speech, mind fixed in deep contemplation, holding always together both meditation and

union, *dhyāna* and *yoga*,—with these should you unwaveringly proceed on the path. With this preparatory groundwork the Kundalini soon gets awakened. You experience the rising of the occult life-force or *prāṇic* energy from the base-centre, *mulādhāra*, and pervading the entire subtle-physical, *sukṣma deha*. It surges upward and, passing through the centre of subtle vision, *aṅga chakra*, reaches the thousand-petalled lotus above the head. With it you acquire very many sharp and keen exceptional siddhis or powers.

That far a distance where the sight can reach when the light of the lamp is available, it is there that without delay comes to you all-round liberation in the condition of Brahmic consciousness. From you then go away pride, lust, the sense of possession, ego, haughtiness, arrogance, wrong assertiveness, self-will, ambition and all those who are the proud members of the clan. You no more make a discrimination between a foe and a friend; indeed you become *brahmarūpa*, like the Eternal. With this Selfward progress achieved, your ride on the Horse of Yoga becomes steady. You discard all the instruments of work, all the tools and means and aids, and all your accomplishments too, your trials and tribulations and struggles, your labour and effort and your striving,—everything gets left behind and you remain poised in the state of assured oneness. However, there is still a stamp of separateness on it, as yet this calm state of oneness does not quite obliterate your own unique and characteristic individuality. It is as if a river entering the sea were seen to be apart from the vastness of the waters stretching ahead of it. Beyond is only the ocean in its wide uniform expanse to which you have arrived, but you are as until now quite distinct from it. You get there, at the state of the supreme Brahman, but you do not become one with it, you do not as yet merge into it.

There is no doubt that a difference between the two, between the Yogin who has perfected himself to be Brahman-like and the wide immutable Brahman itself, still exists at this point. Nevertheless we may say that he has already qualified himself well enough so as to soon become one with it in its oneness, it will not take him much time hence to identify himself with it, to disappear in the infinity of its changeless unending peace and calm.

पै तेचि होणेनवीण । प्रतीती आले जे ब्रह्मपण । ते ब्रह्म होती जाण । योग्यता येथ ॥

(*Jñāneshwarī*. 18 1090)

After having acquired this qualifying *brahmabhāva* or likeness with the Brahman, you will get firmly established in happy understanding of the Self, *ātmabodhaprasannatā*. In its excellence, and in its serenity, will come to you the knowledge of the Eternal. All ignorance will disappear in it and you will not see anything but that alone.

Though you may be living in the state of waking or that of dream, and with you may still be present inferior knowledge, not too long from this moment afterwards shall everything get dissolved in that which had until now remained unexpressed or unmanifest. But then even that unexpressed or unmanifest shall gradually wear itself

out and finally disappear into the realisation of the ultimate Brahman.

At the end of a cycle of creation, *kalpa*, made of one day and one night of Brahma the Creator, all gets drowned in the great Cosmic Flood and there stays neither the sea nor the river. There exist no more these differentiated entities, but is present everywhere only the Brahman. You see or experience nothing else, nothing but Brahman, the Supreme alone Yet in reality what you actually experience is just its elemental state, its innate natural condition, *sahajasthiti*. It is this Brahmic state of the being which throws its own light on non-knowledge and reveals in it what that itself is.

Jnaneshwar further points out that when you arrive at such a realisation then, according to the Teacher of the Gita, you also get true devotion for Him, for the Lord of the Universe There is no more then any division between the seer and the seen, between the object and the observer. You go much beyond the understanding that had come to you through the narrow gates of knowledge Of this far-reaching kind is the merit of Yoga practised through Bhakti. The devotee who approaches the Lord of his Adoration with such knowledge is recognised as a Jnani Bhakta It is the Jnani Bhakta who becomes one with Him. Those who follow exclusively the Path of Knowledge call this attainment or this siddhi as the state of self-awareness or self-recognition, *sva-samviditi* These Yogi-Siddhas always remain in this unexceptional and beatific realisation. Likewise, the followers of the Occult-Tantric Method, the worshippers of its presiding deity Shiva, associate this state with his dynamic Energy or the supreme executive Shakti who then takes them in her hand. They see everywhere nothing but her play, her presence and power in the building of these thousand worlds, *chidvilās*. But then the reward one gets through the supreme devotion to the Lord, *parama bhakti*, is also received by the doer of the works when, in Karma Yoga, he attains union with the Master of the Works.

ज्ञानी इयेते स्वसंविति । शैव म्हणती शक्ति । आम्ही परमभक्ति । आपुली म्हणो ॥

(*Jñāneshwarī*: 18.1133)

By saying so Jnaneshwar has, we may mention *en passant*, almost suggested a synthesis of the various Paths of Yoga, of Bhakti, Karma, Jnana, Tantra He may not have fully worked out the several details and consequences of this synthesis, but the drift of his experiences and his expression is clear enough. However, it would turn out to be a synthesis directed only towards the attainment of Brahmanlike consciousness for which perhaps this multifold synthesis may not be absolutely essential. Any one of these Paths would be perfectly all right for such a transcendental gain. Its spiritual basis would not as yet take into account its own dynamism in possibilities of the worldly manifestation. In that sense, while it would remain quite true to the intent and purport of the Gita, there would be no prospect at all of its going anywhere closer to the supreme realisation of Purushottamahood itself entering into these thousand aspects of the cosmic operation. Transcendence, and not its play in the phenomenal world, would still remain the high goal of all these yogic-spiritual endeavours

However, let us proceed with *Jñāneshwarī*, restricting ourselves only to the spiritual approach it is propounding for us.

(To be continued)

R. Y. DESHPANDE

TWO POEMS

SIACHEN GLACIERS

'Tis in this cold cold land
That the Earth
Reveals to me
Her warmest tenderest self

SINDHU

They were times to remember
When to be with her
I would drive down the banks
Of my favourite river,

And as she gushed gaily
Through mountain, stone and rock
I would share with her
Her wild and joyous laughter,

But 'twas her enchanting beauty
That would hush me
Into a silence of love
Too deep for words

SURESH THADANI

PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA

I. Introduction

THE many systems of Yoga that are practised have union with the Divine as their primary and only aim. Sri Aurobindo was however not convinced of the entire efficacy of these systems of Yoga. To him the questions were: how can "a road of hard escape from the sorrow and the darkness" of the world into a blissful union with the Divine save the earth? "How shall a few escaped release the world?" And what about the "Life that is left behind on a fallen earth"? These were the questions that frequented his thoughts. Secondly, if union with the Divine was the ultimate and only goal of Yoga, then there was nothing for him to do, as the paths to the Divine had already been explored and set down for us to follow. However, he was convinced of one thing, that a dark and sorrowful earth could not be the ultimate Divine Plan. He was, therefore, very resolute that he would not tread any beaten path set by the traditional systems of Yoga, paths that leave the earth unredeemed. With this aim Sri Aurobindo, for almost half a century, was intensely occupied with research and experiments in the spiritual domain to evolve a new world-saving world-transforming Yoga.

Regarding the object of his Integral Yoga Sri Aurobindo writes: "The object of the yoga is to enter into and be possessed by the Divine Presence and Consciousness, to love the Divine for the Divine's sake alone, to be tuned in our nature into the nature of the Divine, and in our will and works and life to be the instrument of the Divine."¹ This is only the first part of his Yoga, the Ascent to the Divine as has also been the ultimate goal of all existing systems of Yoga. Regarding the newness of his Yoga, Sri Aurobindo elaborates: "The way of yoga followed here has a different purpose from others,—for its aim is not only to rise out of the ordinary ignorant world-consciousness into the divine consciousness, but to bring the supramental power of that divine consciousness down into the ignorance of mind, life and body, to transform them, to manifest the Divine here and create a divine life in Matter. This is an exceedingly difficult aim and difficult yoga, to many or most it will seem impossible."² This statement of Sri Aurobindo formulates the second part of his Yoga, the Descent, and the most difficult and the transformative aspect. "To find the Divine is indeed the first reason for seeking the spiritual Truth and the spiritual life; it is the one thing indispensable and all the rest is nothing without it. The Divine once found, to manifest Him,—that is, first of all to transform one's own limited consciousness into the Divine Consciousness, to live in the infinite Peace, Light, Love, Strength, Bliss, to become that in one's essential nature and, as a consequence, to be its vessel, channel, instrument in one's active nature."³ We must keep in our mind the aim and object of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga while we read the Mother's *Prayers and Meditations*.

The Mother from her very childhood was conscious of her mission on earth. She always felt that her advent was to assuage the miseries and sufferings of this earth. The

beautiful experience at the age of thirteen years is an outstanding testimony of her mission; this experience has been recorded by her in the prayer of February 22, 1914 * In another prayer of August 11, 1914 the Mother explicitly writes about her divine mission "Thou who hast not yet manifested Thyself, Thou awaitest the propitious hour and hast sent us upon earth to prepare Thy ways ." Yes, to prepare the ways for a divine life on earth is her mission. In the same prayer, addressing the Supreme, she continues, "I am the powerful arms of Thy mercy I am the vast bosom of Thy boundless Love My arms have enfolded the sorrowful earth and press it tenderly to my generous heart, and slowly a kiss of supreme benediction is laid upon this struggling atom the kiss of the Mother which soothes and heals." This is her mission; to give refuge to the death-bound earth in her heart of Love Listen to Sri Aurobindo

Love in her was wider than the universe,
The whole world could take refuge in her single heart †

Some of us often feel that if the Mother were the incarnation of the Divine Shakti, what need did she have of prayers to the Divine? Very true, the Mother does not have need of prayers for herself. Several reasons may be attributed as to why she recorded her prayers The first of these reasons is, perhaps, the Mother wishes to teach us how to pray to and approach the Divine. Secondly, men, as Sri Aurobindo writes, are "built on Nature's earthly plan" and

To be the common man they think the best,
To live as others live is their delight.⁶

Yet, men may respond "to the touch of greater things" or may be raised by some uplifting hand "to breathe heaven-air" The prayers may help us to breathe and live in an atmosphere of divine consciousness. Thirdly, the Mother herself records in the prayer of May 17, 1914 the reasons of her prayer "The first, as though the power of the prayer would not be complete unless it were traced on paper. The second, as though the stability of the experience could not be had unless I unburdened my mind of it by noting it down in writing " The reasons given here could very well be occult reasons. When asked about the Mother's statement of May 17, 1914, Sri Aurobindo commented "It was not meant as a general rule—it was only a necessity felt with regard to that particular prayer and that experience These things in spiritual experience are always plastic and variable. In some conditions or in one phase or at one moment expression may be needed to bring out the effectuating force of the prayer or the stability of the experience, in another condition or phase or at another moment it may be the opposite, expression would rather disperse the force or break the stability " The fourth reason of recording these prayers could be when men see one like them treading

* Given at the end of this part of the article on pp 826-27

the high and difficult road, they too may take up courage to follow that high road. So the embodied Divine must act on this earth in "God's human ways":

If far he walks above mortality's head,
How shall the mortal reach that too high path?
If one of theirs they see scale heaven's peaks,
Men then can hope to learn that titan climb.⁸

This could be an extremely significant reason for recording the prayers so that man may aspire to climb to his highest heights. Let us now see what Sri Aurobindo has to say "The Prayers are mostly written in an identification with the earth-consciousness. It is the Mother in the lower nature addressing the Mother in the higher nature, the Mother herself carrying on the Sadhana of the earth-consciousness for the transformation praying to herself above from whom the forces of transformation come. This continues till the identification of the earth-consciousness and the higher consciousness is effected.... There is the Mother who is carrying on the Sadhana and the Divine Mother, both being one but in different poises, and both turn to the Seigneur or Divine Master. This kind of prayer from the Divine to the Divine you will find also in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata."⁹

(To be continued)

ASOKA K. GANGULI

References

- 1 *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol 23, p 503
- 2 *Ibid*, p 505
- 3 *Ibid*, p 516
- 4 *Savitri*, p 15
- 5 *Ibid*, p 689
- 6 *Ibid*
- 7 *The Mother*, SABCL, Vol 25, p 385
- 8 *Savitri*, p 537
- 9 *The Mother*, SABCL, Vol 25, p 383

The Mother's Prayer of February 22, 1914

When I was a child of about thirteen, for nearly a year every night as soon as I had gone to bed it seemed to me that I went out of my body and rose straight up above the house, then above the city, very high above. Then I used to see myself clad in a magnificent golden robe, much longer than myself, and as I rose higher, the robe would stretch,

spreading out in a circle around me to form a kind of immense roof over the city. Then I would see men, women, children, old men, the sick, the unfortunate coming out from every side, they would gather under the outspread robe, begging for help, telling of their miseries, their suffering, their hardships. In reply, the robe, supple and alive, would extend towards each one of them individually, and as soon as they had touched it, they were comforted or healed, and went back into their bodies happier and stronger than they had come out of them. Nothing seemed more beautiful to me, nothing could make me happier, and all the activities of the day seemed dull and colourless and without any real life, beside this activity of the night which was the true life for me. Often while I was rising up in this way, I used to see at my left an old man, silent and still, who looked at me with kindly affection and encouraged me by his presence. This old man, dressed in a long dark purple robe, was the personification—as I came to know later—of him who is called the Man of Sorrows.

Now that deep experience, that almost inexpressible reality, is translated in my mind by other ideas which I may describe in this way.

Many a time in the day and night it seems to me that I am, or rather my consciousness is, concentrated entirely in my heart which is no longer an organ, not even a feeling, but the divine Love, impersonal, eternal, and being this Love I feel myself living at the centre of each thing upon the entire earth, and at the same time I seem to stretch out immense, infinite arms and envelop with a boundless tenderness all beings, clasped, gathered, nestled on my breast that is vaster than the universe. Words are poor and clumsy, O divine Master, and mental transcriptions are always childish. But my aspiration to Thee is constant, and truly speaking, it is very often Thou and Thou alone who livest in this body, this imperfect means of manifesting Thee.

May all beings be happy in the peace of Thy illumination!

A RED SEA SWINGS

A RED sea swings
On the crystal deep,
The rainbow sings
On a white wide sleep;
The greenwood bowl
To horizon-goal
Flows with a wine of golden streams.

The flame-lives dance
On a still life-fire,
The soul-songs glance
On a mute sapphire
Births are all dues
Of human hues—
Bubbles of wine with desire-hues.

But who is the deep
And what white sleep?
The giant hushed with intoxication
In drinking the dreams of his bubbling creation

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Sri Aurobindo's Comment:

Language and substance are very poetic and suggestive but the outlines of significance are rather confused, at any rate not very strong and clear. But perhaps in a poem of this type that is not necessary.

THE DIVINE SHAKTI

COSMIC, TRANSCENDENT, INDIVIDUAL

SEND Thy pure cadences, O Mother Divine,
To echo inly through the caves
Of a deepening heart which knows itself for Thine
Play Thy moon-music on the quiet waves
Of an ocean's wideness in the still soul,
Where tidal waters wait Thy hushed control

Unsullied wisdom of gold which was thrice refined,
Shine in the clear space of holy noon
On all the upland hollows of the mind:
May every shadow-harboured thought be strewn
With solar vastness and compelled
To feel all fear and all self-limits quelled.

Men have found Thee in wildness and the sharp-tanged air,
Breathed of green multitudes of earth,
Far from hate's city, orbits of despair,
Alleys of desire or sultry streets of dearth.
Take my offered will and let it be
Fragrant as Thine own, tameless, pure and free

April 27, 1934

ARJAVA

Sri Aurobindo's Comment.

The first two stanzas are noble and powerful, the second really magnificent. The third, though having something of the same quality, is not quite so good—there is some sense of effort not quite achieving its full result, but still a poetic result is there not at all negligible.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

A LONE wayfarer, you were a friend of all
Who groped in Night—till your strong bugle call
Sang of the Way proclaiming. “Love shall win
At the end of every road His Dawn of Sheen.”
Bonds of the world you burned to forge anew
Ethereal anchors which held when black winds blew.
You turned your back on earth to confront One
Whose touch makes earth the Heaven’s dominion

Full many a sage still thrives with miracle powers
Rare is the mystic child born of God’s showers
And bred in the soil where self is weeded out,
For there alone will love’s own dream-seeds sprout.
O beckoning star, mirrored in life’s wan pool!
O play of moon no dark clouds could outrule!
O flower of sun no canker might deprave!
O Nameless, who assumed a name to save!

1-10-47

DILIP KUMAR ROY

SRI AUROBINDO TO DILIP ON HIS POETRY

Blessings

Dilip,

When you write your poetry, the psychic being is always behind it. Even when you are in the depths of mental and vital despondency, as soon as you write your psychic being intervenes and throws its self-expression into what you write. It is this that has made people—with some inner life in them, those that have some touch of the spiritual—feel these poems of yours so much. Poetry and music come from the inner being and to write or to compose true and great things one has to have the passage clear between the outer mind and something in the inner being. That is why you got the poetic power as soon as you began Yoga—the Yogic force made the passage clear. I did not write to you because writing especially on these things, your poetry and your music, seemed to me superfluous. Your success in these things has become a *chose acquise*. But truly you are a unique and wonderful translator. How you manage to keep so close to the spirit and turn of your original and yet make your versions into true poems is a true marvel! Usually faithful translations are flat and those which are good poetry transform the original into something else, as Fitzgerald did with Omar or Chapman with Homer. Your sonnets are very beautiful indeed. The rhythm seems to come of itself. I note the lyrical note of your sonnets which you have preserved throughout. That is a feat! Glorious crop of poetry! Go on in the path of Yoga without doubt of the ultimate success. Surely you cannot fail.

TO THE ARK

THE long rain is beginning
To the ark—for where else can you go?
O poems for a single voice
private ecstasies
unnecessary talents
superfluous curiosity
sorrows and fears on a small scale
the desire to look at everything from six points of view

Rivers are swelling and overflow the banks.
To the ark—chiaroscuro and half-tones
Fancies, ornaments and details
silly exceptions
forgotten omens
innumerable shades of the colour grey
game for the game's sake
and, O tear of laughter

As far as the eye can see water and the misty horizon.
To the ark—plans for the distant future
rejoicing in differences
admiration for our betters
choice not restricted to one of the two
old-fashioned scruples
time to consider
and, O faith that all this
will be useful one day

For the sake of the children
we continue to be,
fairy tales have a happy end.
Now, too, no other ending will do
The rain shall stop
the waves subside
in the clear sky
clouds will disperse
and become again what clouds above people ought to be—
lofty and lighthearted
in their resemblance
to blissful islands

drying in the sun,
lamb,
cauliflowers,
and nappies

W SZYMBORSKA

(Translated from the Polish by Marta Guha)

SAVIOUR SILENCE

SILENCE, a sword, descends from the armoured unseen,
Silence, a lightning, leaps from the fort of calm
The army of sound defeated lies below
Before the golden onslaught of laughing hush
Enraptured the soul is released in the arms of height
Where silence becomes the revealing bosom of grace

29-11-1960

ROMEN

(From the late poet's unpublished diaries)

APHORISMS: GOD AND MAN

I AM not a madman, who declares himself a God, but I am a God, who declares himself a madman, when I, who am Shankara, speak, 'World is illusion.'

I am not a fanatic, who declares himself a God, but I am a God, who declares himself a fanatic, when I, who am Chaitanya, speak, 'Glorify Krishna.'

I am not a human son, who declares himself a God, but I am a God, who declares himself his own son, when I, who am Jesus, crucified on the cross, speak, 'Father, why hast Thou forsaken me?'

I am not an enlightened one, who declares himself a God, but I am a God, who declares himself an enlightened one, when I, who am Buddha, speak, 'There is neither I nor God.'

I am not a man, who declares himself a God, but I am a God, who declares himself a man, when I, who am Krishna, speak on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, 'I am a God.'

I am not a superman, who declares himself a God, but I am a God, who declares himself a superman, when I, who am Sri Aurobindo, speak, 'God is Man.'

GLEB NESTEROV

A READING OF SRI AUROBINDO'S POEM *JIVANMUKTA*

THE theme of the poem looks heavy and ponderous but Sri Aurobindo treats it with effortless ease and elegance and makes it enjoyable "The subject is the Vedantic ideal of the living liberated man—*jīvanmukta*—though perhaps I have given a pull towards my own ideal which the strict Vedantin would consider illegitimate," says Sri Aurobindo in Notes on Poems in New Metres (*SABCL*, Vol 5, p 581)

Jivanmukta is not merely a poem but a transcript of a spiritual condition, one of the highest in the inner Overmind experience. To express it at all is not easy. If one writes only ideas about what it is or should be, there is failure. There must be something concrete, the form, the essential spiritual emotion of the state. The words chosen must be the right words in their proper place and each part of the statement in its place in an inevitable whole. (Cf *SABCL*, Vol 9, pp 435-436)

The perceptive reader of the poem will find that the first four stanzas speak of Silence, Light, Power, Ananda, these are the four pillars of the *Jivanmukta* consciousness. In the second stanza Splendour is Light. In the fourth stanza bliss is Ananda.

The Silence spoken of in the first stanza is unknown to earth's dumb spirit. It is vast and immobile, formless and marvellous, higher than Heaven, wider than the universe.

The Splendour in the second stanza is Light unknown to earth. The two lines.

Revealed it wakens when God's stillness
Heavens the ocean of moveless Nature

do not mean the divine stillness surrounding the world "which is not at all what I either said or meant. The lines express an exact spiritual experience with a visible symbol which is not a mere ornamental metaphor but corresponds to exact and concrete spiritual experience, an immense oceanic expanse of Nature-consciousness (not the world) in oneself covered with the heavens of the Divine Stillness and itself rendered calm and motionless by that over-vaulting influence" (*SABCL*, Vol 9, p. 435)

The Power in the third stanza cannot be perturbed even by Fate. It is wide, calm and bears the worlds and ages.

The bliss, Ananda, of the fourth stanza is an immortal rapture, an everlasting ecstasy. The possession of it obliterates the division between the Lover and the All-Beloved.

The fifth stanza speaks of the tremendous and beautiful being, in the breast of the Eternal, who is the All-Beautiful, All-Beloved.

The sixth stanza says The *Jivanmukta* "can go wherever his aim was fixed, into a state of Nirvana or one of the divine worlds and stay there or remain wherever he may go, in contact with the earth-movement and return to it if his will is to help that movement" (*SABCL*, Vol 22, p 441)

In the seventh stanza Sri Aurobindo says that the help the Jivanmukta of the Integral Yoga can give is to bring God's forces to waiting Nature, to help with wide-winged Peace her tormented labour and heal with joy her ancient sorrow, and chief among them all, cast light on the unconscious darkness.

The eighth and the final stanza says how the Jivanmukta acts and lives, having consented to a mortal body. He returns to earth to carry on the evolution. With the riches of his realisation he helps us to live released in the world, not released out of the world.

In conclusion we may be enlightened by Sri Aurobindo's remark "The Jivanmukta has, for perfect knowledge and self-fulfilment, to stand on the threshold of Parabrahman, but not to cross the threshold. The statement he brings back from the threshold is that That is and we are That, but what That is or is not, words cannot describe, nor mind discriminate" (*SABCL*, Vol 17, p 66)

C SUBBIAN

JIVANMUKTA

There is a silence greater than any known
To earth's dumb spirit, motionless in the soul
That has become Eternity's foothold,
Touched by the infinitudes for ever

A Splendour is here, refused to the earthward sight,
That floods some deep flame-covered all-seeing eye,
Revealed it wakens when God's stillness
Heavens the ocean of moveless Nature.

A Power descends no Fate can perturb or vanquish,
Calmer than mountains, wider than marching waters,
A single might of luminous quiet
Tirelessly bearing the worlds and ages.

A bliss surrounds with ecstasy everlasting,
An absolute high-seated immortal rapture
Possesses, sealing love to oneness
In the grasp of the All-beautiful, All-beloved.

He who from Time's dull motion escapes and thrills
Rapt thoughtless, wordless into the Eternal's breast,
Unrolls the form and sign of being,
Seated above in the omniscient Silence

Although consenting here to a mortal body,
He is the Undying, limit and bond he knows not,
For him the aeons are a playground,
Life and its deeds are his splendid shadow.

Only to bring God's forces to waiting Nature,
To help with wide-winged Peace her tormented labour
And heal with joy her ancient sorrow,
Casting down light on the inconscient darkness,

He acts and lives. Vain things are mind's smaller motives
To one whose soul enjoys for its high possession
Infinity and the sempiternal
All is his guide and beloved and refuge

THE YOGA OF LOVE AND DEVOTION IN THE LIGHT OF SRI AUROBINDO

GOD

Thou who pervadest all the worlds below
Yet sitst above,
Master of all who work and rule and know,
Servant of Love!

Thou who disdainest not the worm to be
Nor even the clod,
Therefore we know by that humility
That Thou art God !

THIS short poem by Sri Aurobindo explains that God is not only beyond the world, but is universal and immanent in all that exists. There is God, One without a second, the Infinite and Eternal, the Absolute and Supreme Lord. The status of the Supreme Being, Purushottama, is twofold. One aspect is Nirguna (without attributes), Avyakta (the unmanifest), formless, silent, immutable and beyond Time and Space. The other is Saguna (with attributes), manifest as Sat-Chit=Tapas-Ananda (Existence-Consciousness=Force-Bliss) and also beyond Time and Space. The Power of Consciousness (Chit-Tapas) and Bliss (Ananda) of the Supreme Being is represented by Adya Shakti, The Divine Mother.

For the purpose of manifestation in Time and Space, we have the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, in the Indian mythology. And the Divine Mother manifests as Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalaxmi and Mahasaraswati, representing her four aspects and personalities.

There are Avatars like Sri Rama, Sri Krishna and for us, in the present age, Sri Aurobindo; there are as well gods like Ganesh, Kartikeya and Hanuman to help Man at various stages of his evolution.

Each god, goddess and Avatar is a particular aspect and power of the Supreme, manifest in the world as a living or active presence to influence, intervene, protect and help our life and action towards ever greater and more perfect manifestation of the Divine. It is through faith and devotion or by their grace that one can realise their living presence.

To the ordinary intelligence, devoid of faith, it is inconceivable that what is inert, senseless, helpless—as an idol appears to it—can be so powerful. Well, God confirms our faith and proves to the agnostic and unbeliever that He exists and overrules our mental reasoning and its shallow ignorant logic.

It is difficult for Man to live by reason alone or to approach and realise God by the rational mind. So, Man creates an image to worship and to pray to, but the prayer is

received by the living presence behind the image. As Sri Krishna says in the Gita, whatever be the form or the object of worship, it reaches him. God scorns nothing. He responds to our faith.

According to the spiritual vision and experience of the rishis of the Upanishads, all that exists is verily the Brahman. As Sri Aurobindo explains, even at the centre of each atom, there is hidden the Supreme Divine Reality, and the purpose of Existence is to find it.

Sri Aurobindo accepts all systems of Yoga, all ways and means of finding God and whatever helps one to ascend to higher planes of consciousness so as to remould life into the image of God. As a matter of fact, Sri Aurobindo accepts and affirms all truths of other religions too. He includes them in his all-comprehensive Integral Yoga. He wants us to be vast, open-minded and infinite in our understanding, not narrow, dogmatic or sectarian.

Sri Aurobindo had a major experience of the living presence of Vasudeva while he was reading the Gita in jail, where he was imprisoned as an under-trial offender. He saw Sri Krishna everywhere, in everything. He received the Adesha—inner command—to leave the political field and to work for the spiritual resurgence of India. Another major experience of the descent of Sri Krishna with the full power of his consciousness and bliss into him, down to the physical being, came to him on 24th November 1926.

Sri Aurobindo accepts all that is essential in the Yoga of the Gita, but his own unique contribution on the basis of his spiritual experiences is the concept of the inevitable spiritual evolution of Consciousness from the Inconscient Matter to the Superconscious Spirit for the realisation of the ultimate aim of Existence: the Divine Manifestation in all its splendour and glory upon this very earth.

The Buddhist tradition regards terrestrial existence as transient and painful and offers as the ultimate aim cessation from rebirth by entering Nirvana. The Hindu tradition after Shankaracharya aims at merging into the silent, formless, immutable Brahman since that is the only Reality, according to him, all else being an illusion. The Gita views the world as a field of play or lila and expounds the realisation of liberation from the ego and its desires and the attainment of a state of equality by concentrating on the consciousness of the Immutable Self within as a proper basis for action. One must offer all action to the Lord without any desire for the fruits of the action. The aim is to become perfect in action, which is achieved by the perfection of love and devotion for the Lord and the Knowledge of God, the Purushottama.

In Sri Aurobindo's view, neither the Yoga of Knowledge, nor the Yoga of Love and Devotion, nor the Yoga of Works by itself is complete and perfect without the other two. He proposes the synthesis of all Yogas, and the transformation of all the parts of the being down to the physical by the descent of the light of the Divine Consciousness, its Knowledge, Power and Bliss into them.

Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the words "maya" and "lila" are radically different from the traditional. Maya in its root sense is to measure or to limit. Hence

when Sri Krishna says that the whole creation is put forth out of Himself by the power of His Yoga-Maya, it means according to Sri Aurobindo that Purushottama, the Supreme Lord, infinite and eternal, omnipotent and perfect with Self-existent Divine Knowledge and absolute Bliss, has the power to so limit Himself into myriad finite forms that He can become even the opposite of what He is in truth, without losing the innate Truth-Consciousness, Knowledge, Power and Bliss. Thus, by the power of His maya, He involves Himself in the whole manifestation, hiding Himself in Inconscient Matter, the vegetal kingdom, the animal kingdom and the human race, and will finally emerge in his full glory. This is his lila or play.

He is everywhere, in every atom, but hidden and by His self-existent secret power within each thing and each being evolves out of apparent limitations and gradually manifests Himself in ever greater Consciousness of His true Nature, Para-Prakriti. According to Sri Aurobindo, this spiritual evolution cannot cease at so imperfect a creation as Man who, even with the highest intellectual and rational development of his Mind, however spiritualised, cannot solve the problems created by him. Man must transcend his limited egocentric and divisive mental consciousness till he realises the Supramental Consciousness or the Truth-Consciousness and transforms his entire being into the being of the godhead seated within.

This possibility was conceived by the Vedic Rishis. There are hints given in the hymns of the R̥gveda and the Upanishads: "Become high uplifted, O Strength! Manifest in us the things of the Godhead." A hymn of the Upanishads says: "O Sun of Truth, remove the golden veil that hides thy face so that we may see the Truth."

However, there is no description found anywhere of this world of Truth, nor any process given for realising it. Ascending to this plane of consciousness by his own spiritual askesis, Sri Aurobindo gives us a glimpse of this world of Supramental Truth. He gives us the knowledge of this journey with the discipline of the Integral Yoga to meet the forces active in the universe and within us.

Let us now see what is the Yoga of Love and Devotion in the light of Sri Aurobindo's view of the aim of Existence. We know from the Gita that there are four kinds of devotees:

1. Those who worship God in order to take refuge from pain and suffering of the world—*ārta*
2. Those who come to God with the hope to acquire some good, benefit or reward—*arthārthi*
3. Those who come to God for knowledge—*jijñāsu*.
4. Those who selflessly adore and worship God with knowledge—*jñānī*

Similarly, there are many kinds of love. There is a saying in the Upanishad that one loves the wife not for the sake of the wife but for the sake of the Self. There is always a hope for benefit and return in ordinary human love even when one worships God. There are three stages of love:

1. One wants to be loved. A child is spontaneously attracted towards someone who loves it.

2. One wants to love and be loved in return. One not only seeks a recognition of one's love, but also an exchange and a demand for return.

3. Then, comes a stage when one seeks an object fit for one's love and to whom one can give oneself freely—a person, family, country, humanity, a cause or whatever.

As one grows in perfection of one's love, one realises the joy of loving for the sake of love, without which life would be barren and dry. But one attains the fullness and perfection of love only in one's love for God or the Divine. For, in truth, when one loves, it is the Divine in the object of love that one loves. Essentially, love in whatever form, however weak and limited, is a spiritual force and seeks the Divine.

The highest and the most perfect example we have of absolute love and devotion is Radha's love for Sri Krishna. It is Love in its true form, which is an entire self-giving for the sake of love, spontaneous and selfless, without any expectation or bargain. The joy of loving is its only reward. One loves because one cannot help but love. It is spontaneous and absolute in its joy of total self-giving. Radha's love for the Lord Sri Krishna was perfect in self-giving and total in devotion. She lived for Sri Krishna alone. She could not live nor breathe without Him. To obey the will of the Lord without any question or any reserve was her joy. To live for Sri Krishna every moment of her life, to be devoted to him fully, without any reserve, and to serve him unconditionally was for her pure Bliss. To live in Him, by Him, for Him was the very purpose of her existence, the only fulfilment she sought.

How to attain this perfection in one's love and devotion? As in the Yoga of Action, Karma-Yoga, in the Yoga of Love and Devotion too, a state of equality and a liberation from the ego, its desires and attachments, is required. Sri Krishna explains in the Gita what is meant by equality. Sri Aurobindo gives a detailed analysis of the psychology of Man, the different parts of his being—physical, emotional and vital, mental, psychic and spiritual as well as the different planes of his existence from the Inconscient to the Superconscient Spirit. He describes the lower nature of Man in the grip of the three gunas—tamas, rajas and sattwa—which govern his physical, emotional, vital and mental being. The aim of the Integral Yoga being the total transformation of the body, life and mind, the lower nature has to be purified of all its pettiness, inertia, unwillingness to change, obstinacy and obscurity. The vital nature's unrefined cravings, desires, selfishness, pride, lust, jealousy, passions and ambitions must be rejected. The mind must be freed of its ignorant opinions, preferences, bias and prejudices, its narrow, cock-eyed vision and half-lit knowledge, its dogmas and disbeliefs. For Sri Aurobindo, all life is Yoga. So, all the activities of life,—all our thoughts, feelings, all the impulses and movements of our being must be purified of their dross and pettiness. They must be offered to the Divine so that they may be freed by the light of the Divine Consciousness and transformed into love for the Divine. Love itself must be purified and perfected by the light of the soul within, which is essentially a presence of the Divine in us. Love for the Divine is the most powerful way for transforming the whole nature into the nature of God and awakening the true

Individual, the godhead seated within, who is always united with the Lord of Existence.

It is this union of Radha and Krishna, of the Self with the Lord that we secretly seek so that we may play our unique role in the cosmic Play of Sri Krishna, the divine *rāsa-līlā*, and enjoy the eternal Bliss of His Presence in multiple forms in all circumstances, everywhere. For, it is the One God who eternally manifests Himself in many forms. Our love for him therefore must be as wide and infinite as He is. Our love for Him will be incomplete unless we love Him in all that exists and work for His full manifestation here on earth. As Sri Aurobindo explains, if the Lord has entered into the forms of terrestrial existence, if the Divine is immanent in all that exists, it can only be to enjoy Self-manifestation in its full splendour and glory. This earth is “a battlefield for heroic souls, where escape brings not the victory and the crown” We are all Arjunas in the battlefield of this world, impelled to discover the true law of our nature so as to fulfil the truth of our being by uniting with the intention and the will of God—a divine life on this very earth. This is the perfection of our love and devotion to God

To conclude with a few lines from *Savitri*:

If our souls could see and love and clasp God's Truth,
Its infinite radiance would seize our hearts,
Our being in God's image be remade
And earthly life become the life divine²

KAILAS JHAVERI

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“ASPIRATION” IN THE VIEW OF SRI AUROBINDO

THE Metaphysics of Sri Aurobindo is not only an intellectual articulation of the nature of the Infinite, its evolution, relationship with the world, Prakriti and Self, its progress, attributes, involution within Matter and culmination in the Spirit, but it is the sadhana, Yoga and inward aspiration of the soul to become identical with the Infinite. In the first chapter of his *magnum opus The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo holds that four basic truths of the human soul and aspiration viz. God, Freedom, Light and Immortality are bound to appear again and again in the onward march of thought in spite of its apparent failure and try for its fruition as mankind does not find true satisfaction in the arrival at final truth. The intellectual systems laid down by rational pursuit of human intelligence are varied and they are at times at extremes of thought. Philosophical thinking seems to be largely negative, presumptuous and moving round in the circle of larger bias and larger assumption.

In Indian tradition it is significant to find that there stands curiosity at the beginning of an inquiry, *athāto brahma jijnāsa*. It is well known that Shankara holds four conditions to be necessary to equip the knower of Brahman. The world is believed to be momentary, fleeting, and the human soul is said to have taken repeated births. So it desires to get freedom from the cycle of frequent births. The meaning of liberation is said to be freedom from birth. Indeed *mumuksutva* is said to be one condition of acquiring knowledge of Brahman. However this desire is vital, in the sense that it is an escape from the cycle of birth. Desire and aspiration are distinct, as desires come and vanish whereas aspiration is constant and abiding. Instead of philosophising about the nature of the Infinite, what is needed is the constant thinking of God and the aspiration for the Infinite.

Of course it is true that there is the denial of God and Reality and the thinker may arrive at negative thought. This, however, cannot be outside the Infinite. Even the negative thought pertains to Reality. Just as an appearance is that of the Real and of none other, the Reality is persisting in spite of its appearance. Similarly negative thought is not denied, but it is somehow absorbed in positive attributes of God and Reality. This is how duality, negation, appearance and untruth, error and illusion find their rectification in thought and Reality. Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923) in his *Essentials of Logic* has said that there cannot be bare negation. At its back there is affirmation. To negate is to show its position in the framework of thought and universe of discourse.

World and Reality

To think about the multiplicity of the world is to observe plurality in its varied qualities and relationships. It is said with adequate reason that philosophical thinking is not possible without presumption. One is required to assume world or Reality in order to arrive at either single or plural reality. Just as in algebra, arithmetic and geometry

one cannot do without numbers or figures, similarly in philosophy it is natural to think about World and Reality. It is true that this is all ‘language’ with its ‘ambiguity’, but one may retort that this in turn brings up the question of the true or false use of language. One cannot escape the question of appearance and Reality, truth and falsity. So the question of thinking about the World and Reality springs up again in the context of our aspiring search for the Infinite. Bradley (1846-1924) held in his *Appearance and Reality* that the aim of metaphysics is to conceive the general nature of Reality. This means that when a thinker thinks about becoming, multiplicity, error and falsity in the world, then it is natural for him to presume the existence of Reality and Being. It is said at times that philosophical thinking is open thinking, but this is a misleading statement as philosophical thinking proceeds with a definite assumption. However, this assumption is itself adequately examined by free thinking and questioning. That is why the questioning process is quite healthy in the field of philosophy. Probably it is in philosophy alone that its assumption is properly examined. That is why it is said that the philosophical method is self-examination. Plato in his dialogue *Protagoras* employs this method of examining the assumption of ‘Idea’ and ‘Supreme Idea’ in the quest of final Reality.

Postulate of the Infinite

The idea of the Infinite is itself a contradiction of the plural world. Our day-to-day world is full of strange phenomena and unexplained errors. Usually we leave our idea of this world in its own place and touch new horizons and fringes of the world. They are never explained by our methods of partial truths and half-lighted experiences. We need the Infinite to explain contradictions and dualities of the world. Matter and Spirit, Being and Becoming, Truth and Falsity, Body and Mind, Internal and External Values, Gross and Subtle layers are a few illustrations of opposite feelings and experiences. They cannot be explained by contradictory rules and suppositions. This is the reason why it is said that life and individuality are full of ambiguities. They require a harmonious principle to explain them. Sri Aurobindo holds that “all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony”. Ultimate Reality is one and it is transcendent. It is beyond all contradictions and oppositions. As we are finite beings, there ought to be a Reality which is infinite. Our dissatisfactions cannot be resolved by relative and finite reality.

The problem of relation involves the problem of quality, primary quality proceeds towards secondary quality, motion leads to staticity, space to extension, time to succession, and self to sensation, image, memory, sleep and death. Our life concerns itself with inconsistency and illogical paradoxes. Unless one presupposes the Infinite, finite oppositions and relative phenomena cannot be satisfactorily explained. That is why the French philosopher Voltaire (1694-1778) said, “If there is no God we will have to invent God”. God alone can bring harmony among the oppositions and contradictions of life and thought. Sri Aurobindo holds that God is both static and

dynamic, personal and impersonal, transcendent and immanent, cosmic and a-cosmic

Aspiration to find and establish God is itself a demand of logical thought and the searching intelligence. This is the seeking of the psychic being (Chaitya Purusha) which implies constant zeal and yearning. The psychic being is present in the individual as a burning fire and it constantly aspires for the Infinite. It inspires the individual to act in accordance with the best rule of universality, altruistic good, goodwill of dispassionate attitude, love and divinity. We may recall here what Yama told young Nachiketas in the Katha Upanishad. When the question of selecting good amidst many pleasant things arises, then the soul brings forward the aspects of courage, will and force to follow the best course of action. It is noteworthy that the source of desire is vital energy and breath, whereas the source of aspiration is the psychic being which is the living soul of the individual. Morality cannot be superficially imposed upon the human conscience and self. It is the natural and spontaneous outcome of human will. Similarly, human aspiration for the Infinite arises from the inner soul which is the psychic being. Sri Aurobindo says: "So too we have a double psychic entity in us, the surface desire-soul which works in our vital cravings, our emotions, aesthetic faculty and mental seeking for power, knowledge and happiness, and a subliminal psychic entity, a pure power of light, love, joy and refined essence of being which is our true soul behind the outer form of psychic existence we so often dignify by the name" (*The Life Divine*, 1970 edition, p. 220)

The psychic being and true individuality are the real carriers of the true inward nature of human personality. Idealists at times are inclined to distinguish between true and false self and regard ego as the false self. Desire is the product of egoistic awareness and during waking hours there are indeed dominant desires which delude the human action and will leading to empirical aims of life which distort the world. As human personality is imperfect and finite, it is understandable that one should think of the Infinite and the Absolute. Realists and Pragmatists are bound to object to the idea of the Infinite and call it 'block universe' or 'vacant zero'. However, if it is human aspiration it cannot be escaped and it would be the call of the inward soul. Hence it would be rational to assume the Infinite, in order to think wholly about the multiplicity of the world. Philosophical thinking is rational and it would be natural to arrive at the Infinite after finding out the 'Appearance' in the world. Bradley, while considering contradictions in things and phenomena of the world, says that they belong to the category of human thought. Advaita Vedanta calls it Maya, as it is a wrong projection of the mind which distorts the external world. However, it is not illusory and unreal. Even though there is appearance, it is of the real. So Appearances and Reality are bound to be absorbed in a single embrace. As against this, Sri Aurobindo considers the world as real Maya, a manifestation of the Supermind which is the real power of the Infinite. Our human mind is an outcome of the Supermind and our thinking about the Infinite is bound to be real and true. So, even though philosophical thinking at times falters and argues about the existence of God, self, reality of the world, true logic of categories, it attempts to rectify its errors by critical thought of the true Infinite. Hegel

(1770-1831) did it by evolving the Logic of the Finite whereas Sri Aurobindo has propounded the Logic of the Infinite. Our logic of negation and affirmation cannot be applied to God or the Infinite, as it is limited to ‘object’ of thought. In the case of the Infinite, it is pure affirmation in which there is no iota of negation and limitation. It is again not by crutches given to thought but by direct thinking about the Infinite that its thought is articulated by pure mind. Relationship of the Infinite with the world is positive and direct. St. Anselm (1033-1109) argued that he had an idea greater than which nothing can be conceived. This idea is that of the most complete, perfect and Infinite Being. Again, he argued, while defending the argument for the existence of God, that it would be better to conceive that he exists rather than that he does not exist. This can be regarded as an illustration of direct relationship of God with the world. Human aspiration ought to reach the Infinite directly rather than in a truncated manner, i.e., from the finite standpoint to the Infinite. That is the reason why Spinoza (1632-1677) called it *sub specie eternitatis*, which means that Substance or God is to be conceived as it is and not how we human beings think about it. Our aspiration ought to reach the Infinite in its attribute of the Infinite. Sri Aurobindo called it the Supermind which is ‘Real-Idea’. It is not only the theoretical, conceptual and universal attribute of the Absolute, it is the manifestive, creative and ever-expanding attribute of the Absolute.

Soul and God

Human thought regarding the Infinite is through mental intelligence, egoistic awareness and ignorant mental attitude. It is fraught with contradictions. Worldly experience is full of oppositions, inconsistencies and disparities. It is in the psychical experience that an individual finds an abiding criterion, paradigm and bedrock by which it is possible to find access to the Infinite. It is true that mental idea and ‘Idea’ in the Platonic sense carry the human mind to the ‘vision’ of truth and the conceptual citadel of philosophy which is the house of the Infinite. However, such a concept is theoretical and it does not carry the power of manifestation in the world. Ultimately Platonic philosophy remains dualistic and it does not bridge the gap between matter and spirit, body and soul, a thing and its idea. It is still dependent upon the ‘correspondence’-view of truth. In order to bring truth nearer to Reality it is necessary to harmonise it with adequate reason and experience. This is the thrust of saying that the finite is not self-explanatory. Truth ought to be self-consistent as well as comprehensive. Aspiration for the Infinite is an indication that the human self intends to grasp the truth in the most coherent manner. Just as the law of contradiction is not external and simply evident as bare fact, in a like manner inward fault, lacuna and discrepancy are not felt visibly. Contradiction in egoistic awareness is to be felt and eradicated with the help of abiding psychical feeling and the urge for the Infinite. It is the urge for wholeness which seeks the Infinite and removes the self-centredness.

There is an ascent of truth and knowledge starting from bare inference to psychical

urge and aspiration for the Infinite. It is when the individual knower comes across contradictions among things and phenomena of the day-to-day world that he aspires for the self-evident and self-explaining Absolute. Again, contradiction is not easily visible among things of the world. It is inwardly felt. It is the psychic spark within the individual that rises to fathom the nature of the Infinite. Ordinary sources of inspiration and knowledge carry the knower to relativity and impersonal reality. It is the psychic being, the inward soul which is capable of awakening the true Infinite, concrete, personal and universal, holding the individual in the vast embrace of that unity. As Plotinus (205-270 A.D.) said, "Truth lies at the bottom of the well." It is not visible on the surface. In a like manner, aspiration for Truth and Reality lies very deep within; it is the psychic urge of the human soul.

It is true, in a way, that such an aspiration is ethical and spiritual in character; but it should not be understood in that sense alone. For, aspiration is abiding and it does not depend upon relative conditions and factors of vital life and instinctual cravings. Aspiration itself, in the moral and spiritual progress of the individual, turns into a Yogic practice, an effort to seek identity with the Infinite. The faith in the Infinite turns the individual seeker towards the discovery of the Infinite and its relationship with the world. The Infinite is of course not an assumption in the mathematical and logical sense. It is the urge of the human soul to seek a higher layer of personality and harmonious living. To seek the Infinite is inwardly to transcend egoistic awareness and dualistic division in consciousness, it is to seek unity at a higher level, as the self which is static and dynamic. The soul is indeed an eternal portion of the Infinite, *mamaivānsho jivaloke jivabhūto sanātanah* as the Gita says (XV. 7).

Conclusion

In Eastern as well as Western thought considerable emphasis is put on the starting-point, both in metaphysics and philosophy. However, in Indian thought the stress is on Sadhan Chatushtaya and Aspiration for the Infinite, or God. The *Republic* of Plato, in Book V, also arrives at the 'Vision of Truth'. In Greek thought philosophers sought various truths, physical, mental and social, and they have intellectually evolved the rational method in philosophy. But to perceive as the Infinite perceives, it is imperative to reach it directly. Sri Aurobindo has carved out the psychic-spiritual approach to the Infinite which is at once Personal and Impersonal, Static and Dynamic, Transcendent and Immanent. The Infinite is pure affirmative and the world in the Infinite is itself transformed.

HARSIDDH M. JOSHI

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of October 1998)

As a convenient starting point, Sri Aurobindo takes up the German theorist Lamprecht's idea and adopts the names of the stages of the social cycle given by him. It would be interesting to know something about this German historian and his theory of History. What Sri Aurobindo has said about him and his theory is too little; it is no more than a mere mention of the central point of his theory and a brief indication of its shortcomings. Sri Aurobindo has referred to him as "an original intelligence" by whom "in pre-war Germany a first psychological theory of history was conceived and presented." Sri Aurobindo did not find in the writings of great thinkers and historians of Europe terms which could be useful for his initial writing of *The Human Cycle*. Sir James Frazer saw human history as moving from the age of magic to the age of religion, and again from the age of religion to the present age of science. Oswald Spengler has elaborated with immense erudition his theory of growth and decline of civilisations, and Arnold Toynbee has likewise seen the historical process as a succession of challenges and responses. A theory is but a theory, a formula is but a formula, and human nature comprises too many imponderables, too many intricate chain-reactions of fission or fusion.

The Human Cycle chiefly deals with the individualist and subjective stages in the evolution of society. The first chapter briefly mentions the three earlier stages as preparation for the effective take-off in the second chapter.

Sri Aurobindo pointed out that after the stages of "symbol" and "type" there are the stages of individualistic revolt, the assertion of reason, the beginning of the reign of Science, the derogation of revelation and faith and religion. But then to what end? "The dawn of individualism is always a questioning, a denial."

"An individualistic age of human society comes as a result of corruption and failure of the conventional, as a revolt against the reign of the petrified typical figure. Before it can be born it is necessary that the old truths shall have been lost in the soul and practice of the race and that even the conventions which are and replace them shall have become devoid of real sense and intelligence, stripped of all practical justification, they exist only mechanically by fixed idea, by the force of custom, by attachment to the form. It is then that men in spite of the natural conservatism of the social mind are compelled at last to perceive that the Truth is dead in them and that they are living by a lie. The individualism of the new age is an attempt to get back from the conventionalism of belief and practice to some solid bed-rock, no matter what, of real and tangible Truth. And it is necessarily individualistic, because all the old general standards have become bankrupt and can no longer give any inner help, it is therefore the individual who has to become a discoverer, a pioneer, and to search out by his individual reason, intuition, idealism, desire, claim upon life or whatever other light he finds in himself the true law of the world and of his own being."

“It is in Europe that the age of individualism has taken birth and exercised its full sway, the East has entered into it only by contact and influence, not from an original impulse. And it is to its passion for the discovery of the actual truth of things and for the governing of human life by whatever law of the truth it has found that the West owes its centuries of strength, vigour, light, progress, irresistible expansion. Equally, it is due not to any original falsehood in the ideals on which its life was founded, but to the loss of the living sense of the Truth it once held and its long contented slumber in the cramping bonds of a mechanical conventionalism that the East has found itself helpless in the hour of its awakening, a giant empty of strength, inert masses of men who had forgotten how to deal freely with facts and forces because they had learned only how to live in a world of stereotyped thought and customary action. Yet the truths which Europe has found by its individualistic age covered only the first more obvious, physical and outward facts of life and only such of their more hidden realities and powers as the habit of analytical reason and the pursuit of practical utility can give to man.”²

Sri Aurobindo explained further: “It must find a general standard of Truth to which the individual judgement of all will be inwardly compelled to subscribe without physical constraint or imposition of irrational authority. And it must reach too some principle of social order which shall be equally founded on a universally recognisable truth of things.”³

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

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THE POETRY OF NIRODBARAN*

THE best poetry is God's voice tapped in moments of silence. It is a creative silence, which maps the contour of consciousness by another kind of eloquence. The best may be a rare expression, but even shadows of the best are enough to explain Sri Aurobindo's occupation with this art form. Poetry is the highest form of art. Poetry is the most powerful camera for consciousness-photography. It often comes like an accident surprising the medium who might be a businessman, a mechanic, a professor of physics, a maid or a medical practitioner.

That explains Nirodbaran, the Doctor who turned poet at a certain period of his life. He never knew that so many things had been buried inside him. It was a natural efflux; the trainer supervised. He added, deleted, re-arranged, doubted, and okayed with relevant praise.

The gorgeousness and the frequency of compounds are not the influence of the dictionary. Things came naturally using the medium who had no training in prosody. Of course, he had a few lessons on metre from Arjava (John Chadwick). But it was mostly a spontaneous game of words and rhythm. The use of compounds in Nirodbaran and Sethna will raise a controversy. Are such strange compounds permissible in modern poetry? Such fantastic compounds had never been used in English poetry. The point is they came like that without any deliberate exercise in forming them. They are essential in expressing the new sights or feelings of the poet. Randolph Quirk expresses his leniency in *The Use of English*. It is a very necessary leniency. Man is not a full stop, not even a comma. Language has to mirror the evolutionary movement of Man. Hence, we have to examine the authenticity of Nirodbaran and to judge by our own perception whether the lines are real poetry or not. The beauty of a poem is self-expressive and when one reads a stanza like the following, well, one has to recognise its genuineness.

Calm like the mountain and inviolable
Rises this star out of the morning-sea
Hewn slowly from God's hushed creative will,
First word breaking the womb of agony

This is a comparatively simple style from Nirodbaran, but if we take some more heavyweight lines we shall see there the same authenticity, the same passion for framing the exact structure for his vision.

I hear hushed voices of earth
Come burdened with the tears
Of time, drifting along
The spaces of shadow-years

* On 17th November Nirodbaran will be 95 — R Y D

But a magic breath of flame,
 A strange entranced glow
 Figured on a wide calm
 Intensity of snow,

Like a way-lost golden sun
 Carries the infant dawn
 In its mysterious womb
 Timelessly sleeping on

Prema Nandakumar believes that the aspirant is “more like Aswapati, a forerunner, a representative, a Voice” and that “behind this conscious individual prayer is the cry of the collective unconscious which is burdened with ‘the sorrow and struggle in time’.” She further adds “Such has been the emasculation of the collective voice that it is quite, quite feeble. The common man manages to carry on somehow, anyhow, to keep afloat as a drifting weed. And this has been going on for years beyond historical recordation.”¹

Overhead poetry is not just the poetry of sight, it is also the poetry of listening. In the above lines, the poet has fused his listening and sight, starting with listening and then mixing the two kinds of experience from the second line and then finally taking a plunge into pure visuals.

In Nirodbaran’s prayer poetry, the directive verbs are followed by a majestic appeal for transformation. Unlike the controlled fire of Sethna in his precise directive prayers, Nirodbaran opens up a glowing lava of emotion in his call for a change—

Colour my dawn and desert-noon
 With wonder-fires of thy delight
 And tune my heaven’s dusky mood
 To symphonies of thy starry night

Or, to take another variety

Make my heart thy home and lead to the far
 Vision where thy timeless breath
 Glows beyond the sapphire-winged star
 In the tranquil dome of Death

But is this just emotion? Sri Aurobindo explains the essence of emotion while distinguishing between the outward and the real speech as follows

in emotion, it is not the mere emotion itself the poet seeks, but the soul of the emotion, that in it for the delight of which the soul in us and the world desires or accepts emotional experience.²

Nirodbaran's emotion is "the soul of the emotion" shaping itself out in rich images

My days are changed into a gold
 Unquenchable fire of soul
 That climbs from the body's dragon-hold
 Towards the timeless whole

The caverned distances of my mind
 Are filled with incense-breath
 Of beauty blown by a crystal wind
 From a land of aureoled Death

A very genuine stress of the soul-perception behind the word can be felt in the above lines. Sometimes the emotion comes like a "vengeance",—to borrow Sri Aurobindo's word on the poem,—and then culminates in a supreme poetry of silence

They are my spirit's moon-deep prayer to Thee
 Growing from earth-encumbered fiery seed
 On a rocky curve of lone eternity—
 Woven-incense words and heaven-revered

The vision of a "lone eternity" is Nirodbaran's obsessive quest. He uses different phrases in different poems to image it. But the quest is too certain, the emotion and the translation too authentic, the effect of silence begins with the phrase "moon-deep prayer", moon being a reminder for silence. It is a fitting preface to the silence of the third line.

The poetry of Nirodbaran demands a special power to see and feel, a respect for a certain kind of life style. One thing is certain. There is not much of tradition behind this poetry in English literature. Even Sri Aurobindo's poetic style, in a way of speaking, is assimilated and transformed by Sethna and Nirodbaran.

GOUTAM GHOSAL

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AN INTERVIEW WITH AMAL KIRAN*

February 1997

L.P.: How old were you and what kind of a fellow were you when you joined the Ashram?

A.K. I was 23 years old and I had become a believer in spirituality after having been an unbeliever for a long time.

L.P. Why did you decide to join the Ashram?

A.K.: I did not decide to join the Ashram immediately. I came here and it was my idea at that time to look up all the well-known spiritual centres in India and then decide where I would stay. When I came here and met the Mother for the first time she impressed me a great deal. There was a sort of subtle radiance about her and, although she did not speak much, her presence was very convincing, impressive, and sort of penetrating.

L.P.: What was it like to be near Sri Aurobindo and the Mother?

A.K.. We were not near Sri Aurobindo physically, except for the few occasions of Darshan. The Mother of course we met every day, and several times a day. We breathed a different kind of air, and we were in the presence of somebody who didn't talk from the mere mind. Her presence seemed to be radiant and you felt that whatever she said, she spoke out of a direct kind of knowledge.

L.P. Did you stay all your life in the Ashram?

A.K.. No. I stayed at a stretch for six and a half years. And then I went to Bombay to see my grandfather who threatened to die. He said, "I am now 74 years old and I might die any time, you must come and see me." I went, but he completely fooled me because he died 25 years later, at the age of 99!

L.P.. Why did you stay many years out of the Ashram?

A.K. I stayed at the Ashram for nine and a half years on the whole and after that I went to Bombay and spent many years there, then I came in 1954 and from then onwards I have been here... In the Ashram it is a celibate life, no sex, not even romance, except with the Divine. So, since I came here at the age of 23, and four months after my marriage, it was difficult for me.

L.P.: What were Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's characteristics and how did they complement each other?

A.K.: Sri Aurobindo had a Himalayan look—if you can think of the river Ganges flowing from the Himalayas down to our valley, that was like the Mother. She came

* On 25th November Amal Kiran will be 94 — R Y D

close to us Sri Aurobindo too was close enough in his correspondence—I used to get 2 or 3 letters a day sometimes from him and we could ask him anything we wanted. on literature, life, philosophy, and not necessarily only on spiritual subjects.

L.P: What kind of contact did you have with the Mother?

A.K.: With the Mother the contact was fairly close. Apart from seeing her from day to day during all her movements and workings, we used to meet her personally every week for a special interview during which we could either meditate with her or ask her questions. She left us completely free.

L.P.: How was she with you and other disciples?

A.K.: Very warm, understanding, close-seeming, and with no air of being a superior person. She just was what she was, and we felt her to be superior. She didn't have to do anything or look in any way in order to be what she was—the incarnate divine Mother.

L.P.: Was she very strict?

A.K.: She was not strict with me, she left me free to do whatever I liked, go wherever I liked to go, maybe because she knew that if she were strict, I might run away!

L.P.: How did the Mother and Sri Aurobindo complement each other?

A.K.: Sri Aurobindo embodied supreme peace, tranquillity, serenity and the Mother warmth, love, intimacy. So they completed each other and that was extremely satisfying for us.

L.P.: Can you describe what it was like seeing them on Darshan days?

A.K.: We saw them together only on Darshan days. She sat on his right always, he put her there. In India generally the man is on the right and the woman is on the left.. except in spiritual sculpture, where the woman, the goddess, is on the god's right-hand side, because she is his Shakti, his force of manifestation, but for the Mother and Sri Aurobindo it was like that always—she on his right. When we would go to see them we would meet her first, and feel at home, and after her welcoming smile we would go to Sri Aurobindo's feet and look at him. He didn't generally smile except very faintly. Only on the last Darshan that I had of him before he passed away he smiled fully. That was the last gift of grace from him. Perhaps he knew in some way that he wouldn't be in his body for long.

L.P.: How did Sri Aurobindo regard the Mother? What was their relationship?

A.K.: Sri Aurobindo regarded the Mother as a practical guide even in his own life—her opinion, her view of things he would follow. And she on her side would always consult him. Before launching on any kind of spiritual programme, she would ask him and it depended on him to say yes or no. And she once summed up their essential relationship when she said: "Without him, I exist not; without me, he is unmanifest."

L P What did Sri Aurobindo and the Mother represent for disciples?

A.K They represented the supreme divine creator and creatress, the Divine in a double personal form projected on earth I would like to add that they never insisted on being regarded in such a revered way, they were very familiar with us, easy-going, and the devotion was expected to come spontaneously from us and not as a false answer to a demand.

L P Were they considered as Avatars?

A K We regarded both of them as Avatars and I believe that the inner sense of Avatarhood came to Sri Aurobindo at a late age whereas with the Mother it seems to have been there even from her childhood

L P What is an Avatar?

A K An Avatar is the Supreme Divine embodied in a human form suffusing humanity with divine light and knowledge so that the consciousness has radically changed

L P So why do you think Sri Aurobindo and Mother were Avatars?

A K I do not know, I did not think I just felt them, and felt them to be such.... We felt that they could understand us to our very depths and that whatever we wanted to know they could tell us in a satisfying and complete way If we wanted a human mother, the Mother could be that to us—pamper us, pat us, like a human mother; otherwise she was like a goddess and she would even look like one. Once during a meditation I opened my eyes and she looked completely transfigured, grand The eyes were shut, she looked no longer a human being, I would say That was her real self because normally she would come very close to us and be intimate and show an understanding of all our weaknesses

L.P. Was Sri Aurobindo also like that?

A K We had no means of finding out anything directly from day to day, but from his letters and replies he was just like that

L P And why couldn't you see Sri Aurobindo every day?

A K After a certain period of his sadhana he felt the need to withdraw from ordinary contacts and concentrate on his work in order to bring down the supermind as soon as possible That is why he retired But his retirement never meant breaking off his relationship with us The letters were there,—for five or six hours every night he used to sit up to answer our letters

L P · What kind of questions did you ask the Mother?

A K Similar to those to Sri Aurobindo, except that literature didn't figure a great deal To Sri Aurobindo I could ask all sorts of questions about poetry, various kinds of

poetry, especially the poetry he called overhead poetry, that which comes from regions beyond the mind

L.P.. When did Mirra change her name to Mother and why?

A.K.. She didn't change her name, I think. One of the disciples, a very old lady, began to call her Mother, and Sri Aurobindo accepted it; instead of referring to her as Mirra he referred to her as the Mother. In the early letters he referred to her as Mirra, and afterwards as the Mother. So Sri Aurobindo established her name as the Mother ...because he knew that she represents the divine creatress from whom all things come.

L.P. And from that time what was her role within the Ashram?

A.K. The Ashram started with her. She organized the Ashram and Sri Aurobindo seemed to have been waiting for her to come before he could have an Ashram, because she was the divine organizer.

L.P. How would you explain to a Westerner the meaning of surrender?

A.K. Surrender means a giving up of yourself into the hands of your guru, your master. And it is a movement from the deepest part of you, a movement of love, of complete confidence, which would like to live in the light of whatever the master would say. Surrender has to come ultimately from the deepest heart. The mind can surrender too, but still it would not be a complete movement where you throw yourself at the feet of the guru.

L.P. And how did you surrender to the Mother?

A.K. It came very naturally; she did not ask for it. In fact after my first interview with her, when she was going away, I went after her and stopped her; I said, "I want to bow at your feet; this is how we Indians regard our guru." And the Mother reported to Sri Aurobindo: "There was a young man who taught me how Pranam is made at the feet." She used to get scores of it throughout the day, wherever she went people fell at her feet, and I tried to teach her what we Indians do!

L.P. And why do you surrender to the guru and to the Mother?

A.K.. Because in that way alone she can remould us. Her consciousness takes charge of us inwardly and moulds us according to her vision of what we should spiritually be. She would know best all about us because of her more-than-human consciousness. She, because of her encompassing consciousness, could identify herself with us and know things about us even we were not fully aware of, we would trust her and give ourselves into her hands.

L.P. How did the Mother, as a French woman, have such powers to understand you?

A.K. She was the divine Mother embodied. She would know what exactly we are, because our souls have come from her. Being French or Indian made no difference.

L.P.: What was it like for you when Sri Aurobindo passed away?

A.K.: When Sri Aurobindo left his body it was a very great shock to me, because I depended so much on him; almost every day I would write to him and get his answer; so, really I was sort of left in a void. But when for the first time after his passing I saw the Mother, she caught my hand and said: "Nothing has changed. Ask for help from him as before—and you will get it" That put heart into me

L.P.: How did the Mother's role change after Sri Aurobindo's withdrawal in 1950?

A.K.: Her role remained the same, her role did not change essentially, only it increased in the sense that we had to write to her what we used to write to Sri Aurobindo—because to most of us she was the direct guru; there was no difficulty in our relationship with her, she represented Sri Aurobindo always to us. When he left his body she did her best to be for us what he used to be. The questions that I used to put to him I would put to her and she would answer from her knowledge. She had become so important and so close to us that when Sri Aurobindo passed away, although the gap was very big, it was still bearable

L.P.: How did the Ashram change from the thirties through the sixties?

A.K.: I don't know if one can speak of a radical change, it was just a gradual flow and development in one direction or another. Our relationship with the Mother remained the same. When I first came here we were a very small group, we were only 40 people, and I was the 40th; so the life was very narrow, in a certain sense, and we didn't go out much or mix with outsiders freely. It was a semi-monastic kind of life, without the rigour of the monastery—we could do whatever we liked to do, without imposition of any rule, but we were supposed not to mix too much with outsiders. Afterwards during the war when people began to send their children here, the life underwent a change. The same kind of restrictions you could not impose on children—they had to grow in a natural way; so the life also in general underwent some sort of alteration, but essentially it remained the same; only the Mother came out more and more into the open, because of the children.

L.P.: What was the Mother doing with the children?

A.K.: Moulding them in the most natural way without imposing anything on them directly. Her atmosphere, her presence, the way she acted influenced the children.... Children could go to her and tell her anything. She made herself available to them whenever they really wanted to tell her something.... Some children used to come to her with a toy and play on the floor and she would look at them and encourage them and enjoy it all. She didn't think that sadhaks were waiting to come and do Pranam to her. She had time enough for the children

L.P.: And how was the Mother with grown-ups?

A.K.: With grown-ups she was not essentially different because to her all were

children Some more grown, some less grown. But of course she would have more freedom with children and she would wait for them to take the first initiative, talking and all that.

L.P.: After the Mother passed away in 1973, what was her continuing influence on your life?

A.K.: The Mother had trained us to live in the physical absence of Sri Aurobindo and with that training we could try to live by feeling her presence more and more within us. When Sri Aurobindo passed away we felt a very great gap in our life, but somehow the Mother had trained us to live without his physical presence, and with that training we tried to live without the Mother's physical presence, though it was very difficult.... If your relationship is deep enough you can be in touch with her and feel her presence all the time. And the formula for us is: 'Remember and offer', to remember her on every occasion of life and to offer to her our problems, our questions, and draw inwardly the answer from her. And to get that answer we have to be very quiet inwardly.

L.P.: And yourself, are you in regular contact with her?

A.K.: I feel that I am in contact with her all the time, because something from my heart centre flows and flows towards her all the time.

L.P.: Finally, for you, who is the Mother?

A.K.: The Mother is the supreme divine creatrix in a human form, but she didn't try to make us think so. The way she lived, the way she dealt with us, convinced us that she could not be anything else.

LAURE POINSOY

LOGIC, LANGUAGE AND SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of October 1998)

Language and Metaphysical Truth

METAPHYSICS came into existence when man considered the world as in itself rather than as it appears. Naturally, the theories abounded from idealism to materialism, from atomism to empiricism. Philosophers started to explain the world as 'pure forms' (Plato), 'form and matter' (Aristotle and the Scholastics), as depending on the modes of understanding (Kant), 'atoms', the indivisible particles that form the things (Atomists, the scientists), 'sensations' (Empiricists) and so on. Yet none of the theories propounded a satisfactory theory and in vain they tried to unravel the mystery of the world. But Sri Aurobindo points out that the truth of the world is its mystery, a mystery that can be explained only through a transcendental language as it is experienced in our raised consciousness:

The mystery of things is the true truth of things, the intellectual presentation is only truth in representation, in abstract symbols, as if in a cubist art of thought-speech, in geometric figure. It is necessary in a philosophic inquiry to confine oneself mostly to this intellectual presentation, but it is as well to remember that this is only the abstraction of the Truth and to seize it completely or express it completely there is needed a concrete experience and a more living and full-bodied language.''

The short observation above speaks much more profoundly than what Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), a man who was greatly influenced by Vedanta, tried to explain in his double-volume monumental work, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (*The World as Will and Representation*). He had less room for mystery and explained that the world is an objectification of one's idea where subject and object have no distinction. Everything was grounded in sufficient reason: causality, knowing, being and acting—the fourfold root of all that exists. The will that objectifies itself is really one but multiplies itself as phenomenal forms. Thus what Schopenhauer endeavoured to do was to present the truth as a representation of the will to our intellect. In fact, many Western metaphysicians do not go beyond the phenomenal. They are handicapped by the finite language. The question is whether there is a way to go beyond the language trap. Sri Aurobindo has the following to say:

But when we speak of the mutual inclusion of the cosmic and the individual, the world in me, I in the world, all in me, I in all—we are evidently travelling beyond the language of the normal reason. That is because the words we have to use were minted by mind and given their values by an intellect bound to the

conceptions of physical Space and circumstance and using for the language of a higher psychological experience figures drawn from the physical life and the experience of the senses ²

It is clear from the above that we can use our language analogously to explain to us the world of extra-temporal and supra-spatial domain. We may understand the meaning of the terms in a specific derived sense. Although, logically it makes non-sense to say 'one in many and many in one'—an explanation of the evolution and devolution of Brahman—yet it makes sense in our elevated field of understanding, in our experience of supra-consciousness. As long as we are bound to this finite world we can explain only through a finite language. What we have to do with our finite language is to modify its use. When an instrument is stubborn and unpliant for a certain purpose and yet it is the only instrument that one has, then there is no choice but to change the way one uses it. Language is enormously limited to describe the transcendental, but it is the only instrument that we possess. We may overcome this difficulty by effectively changing the sense of the same finite words to understand the infinite. Sri Aurobindo explains

Evidently we have arrived at certain primary relations of the Absolute and they can only be intelligible to the mind if we see that the Transcendent, the individual, the cosmic being are the eternal powers of consciousness,—we fall again, this time without remedy, into a wholly abstract language,—of an absolute existence, a unity yet more than a unity, which so expresses itself to its own consciousness in us, but which we cannot adequately speak of in human language and must not hope to describe either by negative or positive terms to our reason, but can only hope to indicate it to the utmost power of our language ³

Thus, despite its inadequacy language functions as a spiritual window that lets in impressions of "the Truth, the Right, the Vast". To understand the transcendental position let us take the analogy of animal mind and human mind, the latter incomparably higher than the former. Likewise, human mind is enormously inferior to the supermind, but one is able to get a glimpse of it through the experience of higher consciousness ⁴

Expression

When the knowledge comes strongly from above, it very often brings its own language and the defects of the instrument are overcome. There are people who knew very little but when the knowledge began to flow they wrote wonderfully—when it was not flowing, their language became incorrect and ordinary ⁵

In the above context Sri Aurobindo gives the example of Sri Ramakrishna,⁶ the teacher

of the world-renowned Swami Vivekananda. He was an unlettered man, but he spoke of unfathomable mysteries in very simple expressions, inventing parables that burrowed deeply into eternal wisdom. In the case of spiritual wisdom, one becomes a passive instrument of the Divine giving away only what is given to him. This is called revelation, one gets enlightened due to some deep spiritual experience and it is that which is communicated. We may notice very clearly that philosophers, when they try to give a system its rational basis, become extremely technical and the whole stuff becomes uninteresting.

Expression, the utterance of a string of meaningful phrases or sentences, has its own metaphysics. The voice gives to it a form and the words its matter. Sri Aurobindo writes:

The voice brings a vibration of force which it is more difficult to put in writing which is a more mechanic vehicle—although the written word can have a special power of its own.⁷

The 'written word', as Sri Aurobindo observes, has its own power. Holy Scriptures, irrespective of the religion to which they may belong, are a constant source of spiritual strength to the followers; likewise the writings of great and renowned authors and thinkers. However, according to Jaques Derrida, the word that is written is dead to the author—what is written is written, it cannot change. But that may not be so for the readers. Expression, whether spoken or written, has an enormous impact on the lives of the people. Yet it has, as Sri Aurobindo points out, its limitations:

Thought and expression always give one side of things, the thing is to see the whole but one can express only a part unless one writes a long essay. Most thinkers do not even see the whole, only sides and parts—that is why there is always conflict between philosophies and religions.⁸

Since our knowledge itself is inadequate, incompleteness in expression is natural. It is obvious that our limited intellectual faculties and weak and deceptive senses are not able to grasp the Truth. But Sri Aurobindo's philosophy emboldens us to think that sometime in our evolutionary cycle, when our consciousness rises to the higher level, we may be able to do it. However, logic will not lose its importance, for the higher mental knowledge will need superior logic.

Conclusion

From the above delineation of language, logic and philosophical truth it is clear that still much has to be achieved by man. Our resources of intelligence, its system of logic and its expression of language do not guarantee us a definitive knowledge. But Sri

Aurobindo has also shown us that we may rise above our limitations and embrace the spiritual, the eternal and the unlimited.

(Concluded)

DANIEL ALBUQUERQUE

References

- 1 *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol 18, p 357
- 2 *Ibid* , pp 371-72
- 3 *Ibid* , p 374
- 4 See—language as spiritual window *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol 19, p 920, language is limited to express spiritual truth *Social and Political Thought*, SABCL, Vol 15, p 123, spiritual quest and language *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol 18, pp 49-50
- 5 *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL Vol 24 pp 1285-86
- 6 *Ibid* , p 1286
- 7 *Ibid*
- 8 *Ibid*

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

With Medhananda on the shores of infinity, published by Sri Mira Trust Pondicherry, April 1998; price not mentioned

MEDHANANDA (1908-1994) meaning 'Bliss of the discerning mind' was the name given by Mother to one of her foremost Sadhaks, Fritz Winkelstroeter, in 1952 This book is a collection of autobiographical material by Medhananda, noted and collected by Yvonne Artaud, corrected by Medhananda and translated from the French and the German by Shraddhavan In addition, it also contains texts written by him in the original or in translation

The cover design by Franz, light dancing on wave crests, a burst of light on the horizon through dark clouds whose blackness has already started to pale, light at once a power and a glory and a joy, tells us that within is a saga of light, full of joy and knowledge and enigmas and mysteries

I talked to some people here in the Ashram who had known Medhananda and their impressions and descriptions were similar someone gentle, always smiling, having a very wide range of knowledge on many topics, a true librarian whose mind was itself like a library, a very good Sadhak, and someone totally in love with all existence The following two passages from his prayers (page 79) tell us of the main stress in Sadhana.

Mother, I want my reason to stop I want to get rid of this habit of wanting to understand everything The man you have touched no longer understands anything—but embraces everything

Mother, in Ramakrishna's book it is said that the man who wants to realise you must concentrate I cannot concentrate—I want to lose myself Allow me to approach you by the path of devotion and adoration

As I read this book I perceive it as little bits of torn pages from a life full of delight in the seeking of one's inner self and later a wide existence full of the Ananda, the quiet joy of the soul's love for the Divine The book starts with a short introduction by Yvonne Artaud—his companion during his last 42 years—that gives some earlier biographical details. The nine chapters are in a chronological order. In the first two Medhananda talks about his childhood, adolescence and early professional life in 'law' in the land of his birth We get many glimpses of his developing character and the potential of his conscious spiritual journeys yet to come Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 7 are from his life in Polynesia. Here are some records of the different planes of consciousness he lived in, records of adventures and spiritual experiences. From Chapter 6 onwards are glimpses of his experience in the inner and outer worlds as a Sadhak of Sri Aurobindo's integral Yoga, starting when he comes across *The Mother*, the little book wherein is the essence of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, unimaginably compact and concise, every sentence a tome in itself

Many of the little stories and incidents and comments are enigmatic and need time and reflection to grasp and absorb. There is also the unique article (page 116), first published in *Mother India*, where Medhananda talks of the buttons, you just press the button by going inwards and you are in the natural state of bliss. Finally comes the last testament, tape-recorded in 1982 when he was very ill, that starts with this beautiful paragraph

The essential fact of my life is that all energies radiate and can be reflected on numberless planes, in numberless ways. This constitutes the phenomenon of the universe, its very existence, in relation to what we call the Truth—its relationship with the Self, with God.

I am deliberately avoiding giving examples of the little anecdotes, the stories, the experiences from vital planes, from higher mental planes, from his musings on *The Mother*. Oh how well he tells of the unique ethos of Polynesia, the simple wonderful people with deep natural insight he came across and befriended! Many are the instances when he became intimate and played with nature's own tiny beings in streams and flowers and mountains and trees and corals and fish. It is with an elevating joy that I read of his extraordinary experiences on Mehetia—the lonely, uninhabited, very alive small island with triangular stone altars and ancient trees and birds and the invisible beings that walked there long after their physical existence came to an end (Chapter 7). We often come across many cameos of his contacts, intimate and living, with nature—not only flowers and trees and grass and earth but the great ocean itself, and with stars and space. How to choose? There is something here about everything and anything one chooses to imagine.

He had started the quarterly journal *Equals One*, written almost exclusively by him. What is this One? This Oneness? One aspect of Oneness he describes on page 61-65. He is talking about the moment when everything you have done finds its justification, he writes about such a revelation which came to him when he was swimming in one of those lagoons that are full of marvels. In the last paragraph he says.

In such moments, first of all you are a visitor, a guest of honour, then you become everything around you, and at the same time you are the observing consciousness. I swam and floated in all that—it was such a great joy, such a shock that you cannot stay in yourself, you pass into ecstasy, every limitation vanishes. I went back there often, just to look, and at each time there was the same mutual ecstasy. We should always see everything like that. That is what we are here for—it is all that is required of us. Each flower wants us to look at it—it longs for this realisation, this glorification of seeing itself through us. Everything awaits this gaze from us, this wonder.

This book too awaits such a gaze from us.

DINKAR D PALANDE