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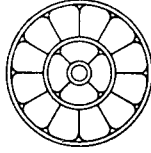
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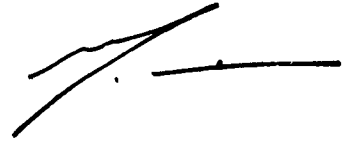
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born
The things that were promised are fulfilled



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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No. 3

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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‘I AM SAVITRI, PRINCESS OF MADRA’

Thus Satyavan spoke first to Savitri.
“O thou who com’st to me out of Time’s silences,
Yet thy voice has wakened my heart to an unknown bliss,
Immortal or mortal only in thy frame,
For more than earth speaks to me from thy soul
And more than earth surrounds me in thy gaze,
How art thou named among the sons of men?
Whence hast thou dawned filling my spirit’s days,
Brighter than summer, brighter than my flowers,
Into the lonely borders of my life,
O Sunlight moulded like a golden maid?
I know that mighty gods are friends of earth.
Amid the pageantries of day and dusk,
Long have I travelled with my pilgrim soul
Moved by the marvel of familiar things
Earth could not hide from me the powers she veils.
Even though moving mid an earthly scene
And the common surfaces of terrestrial things,
My vision saw unblinded by her forms,
The Godhead looked at me from familiar scenes,
I witnessed the virgin bridals of the dawn
Behind the glowing curtains of the sky
Or vying in joy with the bright morning’s steps
I paced along the slumberous coasts of morn ..
The day and dusk revealed to me hidden shapes;
Figures have come to me from secret shores
And happy faces looked from ray and flame.
I have heard strange voices cross the ether’s waves
I have beheld the princes of the Sun
Burning in thousand-pillared homes of light.
So now my mind could dream and my heart fear
That from some wonder-couch beyond our air
Risen in a wide morning of the gods
Thou drov’st thy horses from the Thunderer’s worlds.
Although to heaven thy beauty seems allied,
Much rather would my thoughts rejoice to know
That mortal sweetness smiles between thy lips
And thy heart can beat beneath a human gaze
And thy aureate bosom quiver with a look
And its tumult answer to an earth-born voice

If our time-vexed affections thou canst feel,
 Earth's ease of simple things can satisfy,
 If thy glance can dwell content on earthly soil,
 And this celestial summary of delight,
 Thy golden body, dally with fatigue
 Oppressing with its grace our terrain, while
 The frail sweet passing taste of earthly food
 Delays thee and the torrent's leaping wine,
 Descend. Let thy journey cease, come down to us
 Close is my father's creepered hermitage
 Screened by the tall ranks of these silent kings,
 Sung to by voices of the hue-robed choirs
 Whose chants repeat transcribed in music's notes
 The passionate coloured lettering of the boughs
 And fill the hours with their melodious cry
 Amid the welcome-hum of many bees
 Invade our homed kingdom of the woods,
 There let me lead thee into an opulent life
 Bare, simple is the sylvan hermit life,
 Yet is it clad with the jewelry of earth
 Wild winds run—visitors midst the swaying tops,
 Through the calm days heaven's sentinels of peace
 Couched on a purple robe of sky above
 Look down on a rich secrecy and hush
 And the chambered nuptial waters chant within.
 Enormous, whispering, many-formed around
 High forest gods have taken in their arms
 The human hour, a guest of their centuried pomps
 Apparelled are the morns in gold and green,
 Sunlight and shadow tapestry the walls
 To make a resting chamber fit for thee ''

Awhile she paused as if hearing still his voice,
 Unwilling to break the charm, then slowly spoke
 Musing she answered 'I am Savitri,
 Princess of Madra ''

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL, Vol 29, pp 400-402)

THE POET, THE YOGI, THE RISHI

It is quite natural for the poets to vaunt their *métier* as the highest reach of human capacity and themselves as the top of creation, it is also natural for the intellectuals to run down the Yogi or the Rishi who claims to reach a higher consciousness than that which they conceive to be the summit of human achievement. The poet lives still in the mind and is not yet a spiritual seer, but he represents to the human intellect the highest point of mental seership where the imagination tries to figure and embody in words its intuition of things, though that stands far below the vision of things that can be grasped only by spiritual experience. It is for that that the poet is exalted as the real seer and prophet. There is too, helping the idea, the error of the modern or European mentality which so easily confuses the mentalised vital or life being with the soul and the idealising mind with spirituality. The poet imaging mental or physical beauty is for the outer mind something more spiritual than the seer or the God-lover experiencing the eternal peace or the ineffable ecstasy. Yet the Rishi or Yogi can drink of a deeper draught of Beauty and Delight than the imagination of the poet at its highest can conceive. The Divine is Delight and it is not only the unseen Beauty that he can see but the visible and the tangible also has for him a face of the All-beautiful which the mind cannot discover.

10 11 1934

*

Poetic intuition and illumination is not the same thing as [the] Rishi's intuition and illumination.

11 2 1936

*

A Rishi is one who *sees* or discovers an inner truth and puts it into self-effective language—the *mantra*. Either new truth or old truth made new by expression and realisation.

He [Raman Maharshi] has expressed certain eternal truths by process of Yoga—I don't think it is by Rishi-like intuition or illumination nor has he the *mantra*.

A Rishi may be a Yogi, but also he may not; a Yogi too may be a Rishi, but also he may not. Just as a philosopher may or may not be a poet, and a poet may or may not be a philosopher.

11 2 1936

*

Evidently the poet's value lies in his poetic and not in his prophetic power. If he is a

prophet also, the intrinsic worth of his prophecy lies in its own value, his poetic merit does not add to that, only it gives to its expression a power that perhaps it would not have otherwise

†

I never heard of anyone getting genius by effort One can increase one's talent by training and labour, but genius is a gift of Nature By Sadhana it is different, one can do it; but that is not the fruit of effort, but either of an inflow or by an opening or liberation of some impersonal power or manifestation of unmanifested power No rule can be made of such things; it depends on persons and circumstances how far the manifestation of genius by Yoga will go or what shape it will take or to what degree or height it will rise

28 7 1938

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Future Poetry, SABCL, Vol 9, pp 517-18)

PARTY AND THE COUNTRY

THE uses of party are a secret known only to free nations which value their freedom above all other things. Men of free minds and free habits are too strong of soul to be the slaves of their party feelings and too robust of mind to submit to any demand for the sacrifice of their principles on the altar of expediency. It is only in a servile nation unaccustomed to the habits of freemen that party becomes a master and not an instrument. The strength of mind to rise above personal feeling, the breadth of view which is prepared to tolerate the views of others while fighting resolutely, even aggressively, for one's own, the generosity of sentiment which can clasp the hand of an opponent so long as the claims of patriotism are satisfied, these are qualities that do not grow in the barren soil of servitude or flourish in its vitiated atmosphere. The pains of wounded vanity are as strong in slaves as in children; the pride which will not forgive defeat, the malice which broods over an affront for ever, the narrowness which does not allow good in an opponent or honesty in his opinions, while arrogating all virtues for oneself and one's party, these are the growth of the unhealthy air of slavery. So long as these are present, party is a curse because it becomes faction. And without party self-government is impossible

The growth of parties immediately before the Swadeshi movement was one of the signs of an approaching awakening in the national mind. When the intellect is stirred and feelings become sincere and acute, parties arise, each passionate for its opinions, eager to carry them out, full of enthusiasm for an imagined ideal. The air becomes vibrant with life, the full blast of hope and endeavour fills the sails of destiny and through a sea sometimes stormy and never quite placid, the ship of a nation's fate plunges forward to its destination. A political life in which there are no parties is political stagnation, death-in-life. It means that the intellect of the nation is torpid, its feelings feeble and flaccid, its aspirations untouched with passion of sincerity, fervour of hope unawakened, love of the country an inoperative sentiment confined to the intellect only and not yet close to the heart. The patriot is consumed with the passion to serve his country, to make her great, free or splendid. His brain is full of plans for the fulfilment of his hopes and he seeks helpers and followers to bring it about, while he tries to disabuse the country of ideas which he believes injurious to his plans. A Mazzini planning the republican freedom of Italy creates the party of New Italy, a Garibaldi filled with the same hope but bent on freedom first and republicanism afterwards forms his Legion of Red Shirts and holds the balance of parties. a Cavour full of grandiose schemes of a Kingdom of Italy leads the old monarchical sentiment of Piedmont and all that gathers round it. These parties fear and distrust each other, but all have one clear and unmistakable purpose, the freedom of Italy, and work for it, each doing something towards the common end which the others could not have done. Thus the purpose of God works itself out and not the purpose of Mazzini, or the purpose of Garibaldi, or the purpose of Cavour Parties are necessary but they must have a common end overriding their specific differences, the freedom, greatness and splen-

dour of their Motherland. Only one party is inexcusable, inadmissible, not to be parleyed with, the party which is against freedom, the party which seeks to perpetuate national slavery

In the India of today* there are in appearance two parties at issue over the destiny of the country. One puts Swaraj as its goal, the other a modified freedom under the supreme control of a paramount and protecting Britain. Men of both parties try to show that their party is that of the true patriots, the other a faction fatal to the best interests of the country, both claim the lead of the country, the true right to be the representatives of its feelings and in possession of the future. If they were equally patriotic, this opposition would work for the good of the country and not for evil. If both were equally bent on the freedom of their country, they would supply each other's deficiencies, do each what the other is unfit to do and by their mutual rivalry work out the salvation of their country. The Moderate Party contains a certain number of men who are really patriotic and desire the freedom of their country, whatever they may think it prudent to profess in public. If these men formed the whole or the bulk of their party, the present strife of parties would be an unmixed blessing, but unfortunately for the country there is a large and powerful element which is of a very different stamp. The representatives of this clique are the true movers of the Convention** and their aims are hardly disguised. They do not believe in the capacity of their people for self-government or in the desirability of freedom for India and, if they subscribe to the formula of self-government, it is avowedly as a distant millennium which is to be kept outside the pale of practical politics. Their political aims are bounded by such changes in the existing system of administration as will give them and their class a greater share in the bureaucratic administration and a safe, easy and profitable road to position, popularity and honours. Patriotism is with them no ideal, no overmastering passion, no duty, but an instrument for advancing certain interests and gaining certain advantages. These men are Loyalists of a baser type, who desire the continuance of the British absolutism out of self-interest and not from any love of it or conviction of its goodness and utility. It is these men who have brought about the Surat fiasco, the Convention, the creed and the Allahabad constitution and the Surendranaths and Gokhales have been tools in their hands. Conventionalism is a factor in our politics which makes for reaction, a revolt against the new ideas and a direct negation of our future. As such it will serve the ends of bureaucracy, tighten the chain and militate against progress; it can never be a factor helping towards our liberation. If the Bengal Moderates cling to the Convention, they too will be no longer a factor in the work of liberation but an enemy and an obstacle like the Italian Moderates who clung to the Austrian domination as necessary to Italy. They are forfeiting their future when they deny the future of their country. If parties are to arise henceforth, it must be among those who are the advocates of freedom and workers for freedom, for they alone can differ without faction and work together for a common

* The article was written in April 1908 —Editor

** See the next item

end on different lines. Those who make the negation of the country's future the test of admission to their counsels, will themselves be excluded from the counsels of the Power that is shaping that future. Without them, for they are too feeble to be reckoned as an opposing force, that which they deny will accomplish itself.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Bande Mataram*, SABCL, Vol 1, pp 875-878)

THE *BENGALEE* FACING-BOTH-WAYS

We confess we cannot understand the position taken up by the *Bengalee*.... The Bengal Moderates at the Convention tried partially but not completely to carry out the country's mandate, but when they were outvoted, they made no protest and have not separated themselves from the action of the Convention. We take it therefore that when the Moderate Convention under the usurped name of the Congress meets at Surat in December, they will take part in it with Dr Rash Behari Ghose at their head. If so, they sever themselves from the country and forfeit their political future in Bengal, but their position is intelligible. The *Bengalee*, however, talks of reconciliation and the Convention in one breath. It trusts that the path of reconciliation is not yet definitely closed, although the Convention to which Srijiut Surendranath belongs has definitely enough adopted an exclusion clause and is going to summon a new-born Congress of its own. It is even bold enough to say that the resolution of the Convention does not preclude reconciliation. We find it difficult to command words which will properly characterise the audacity of this assertion. Does the *Bengalee* imagine that the Nationalists are going to accept a Congress called by the Convention, a Constitution framed by a handful of gentlemen meeting at Allahabad and a creed or "statement of objects" which contradict their fundamental principles? Its appeal to the country to bring about an united Congress stands convicted, coming after such a sentence, as a piece of meaningless vapidity. The *Bengalee* evidently wants to cling to the Convention and yet pose as a champion of reconciliation but this double attitude will not serve. It cannot both have its Convention cake and eat it.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Bande Mataram*, SABCL, Vol 1, p. 878)

THE MOTHER ON INDIA

LET us all work for the greatness of India.

*

Let India work for the future and set the example Thus she will recover her true place in the world

Since long it was the habit to govern through division and opposition

The time has come to govern through union, mutual understanding and collaboration.

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

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

*

*India must
find back and
manifest her soul.*



India must find back and manifest her soul

(CWM, Vol 13, p 377)

DYUMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of February 1998)

My dear Mother,

How is it that I read nothing, learn nothing? Some people learn languages, some learn painting, some learn singing, many read books on yoga and some are typing out Sri Aurobindo's articles in 'Arya'

ALL that is for people who have a restless mind and need some mental occupation

How is it I do nothing? This becomes a riddle to me at times, and I have no solution except this it does not matter, let me have my Mother, it is quite sufficient if I have her.

This is surely the best.

Always with you, my dear child

28 April 1935

My dear Mother,

In advancing towards the realisation there might come difficulties. I pass over them as the Mother's child, I begin the sadhana as a child of the Mother, I advance like that and even in fulfilment I remain Thy child, my dear Mother, a child of eternity

Yes, you will always be my dear child and thus you will reach the realisation

29 April 1935

My dear Mother,

Tomorrow I am finishing the medicine for boils May this be the last medicine for me O body consciousness, open yourself to the dear Mother and get yourself filled with her Love

Yes, there comes a time when medicines are no more needed, but that means that the body consciousness is quite opened to the force from above and that a strong unwavering will is established in the material

With all love and blessings to you, my dear child

30 April 1935

My dear Mother,

I have seen this the Ashram has no hostile forces, it is filled with the Mother It is

only when we open to these hostile forces, calling them in that they come and disturb us If we remained calm, quiet and open to the Divine alone, the life of the Ashram would undergo a very rapid transformation and there would be peace, joy and happiness

This is quite true The peace and the happiness are always there
With you always

30 April 1935

My dear Mother,

Peace and an unshakeable equanimity are the firm basis for happiness, joy and progress towards the Goal May it increase in me, in all of us in the Ashram

Our love and blessings are always with you, establishing equanimity as an indispensable basis for the Realisation

2 May 1935

O my dear Mother,

My heart is filled with gratitude that You brought me here You fished me out of the lower nature and kept me in the bosom of Your eternal love

O my dear Mother, teach me to love Thee, to surrender to Thee, teach me to be Thine, more truly Thine

Yes, I am keeping you in my arms and surrounding you with my love which united to your aspiration will take you to the goal

6 May 1935

My dear Mother,

In Aroumé there are a good number of people having moods, none can say when these moods will come—they come without any reason

Moods are all over the Ashram—they come from the obscurity and bad will of the physical mind When the physical mind will consent to open to the light all these moods will disappear

With love and blessings always

11 May 1935

My dear Mother,

Too frequently I meet people in their difficulties and bad conditions. In this state I

go deep down within myself, and my being rises in a great and fervent prayer to You.

O my dear Mother, make me more and more selfless, completely selfless, filled only with Your Purity, Peace, Consciousness, Love and Light

I am always with you and you will never call me in vain—our peace, love, help and protection will always answer to your call

13 May 1935

My dear Mother,

There is misuse of filtered water in Aroumé, people are taking too much water in their tumblers and then throwing it away No external rule can alter the situation, there has to be a change of consciousness and a complete consecration to the Divine

Surely you are quite right—but we have to provide until the change of consciousness takes place!

Herewith a notice that can be put in Aroumé and also here near the filter

Always with you

14 May 1935

My dear Mother,

When anything happens to the body, it loses courage at once and becomes weak, helpless and full of fear In one word, there is no peace and equanimity in the body consciousness. Not only the body but the entire consciousness gets clouded and veiled, there is no remembrance of the Divine in the physical consciousness and it is this that catches the illness and prolongs it

Yes, this is quite rightly observed—but to have become conscious of it is a big step towards a successful transformation of the body consciousness and the victory over illness.

My love and blessings are always with you

15 May 1935

(To be continued)

QUOTATIONS FROM CHAMPAKLAL'S PAPERS

[The following quotations from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were found among Champaklal's papers after his passing away. All but a few were written in his own hand, each on a separate slip of paper, but in no apparent order. Here they have been arranged broadly by subject. The texts reflect Champaklal's simple and direct approach to sadhana, emphasising the fundamental discipline of the Integral Yoga. These quotations are as written by him.]

Sincerity

SINCERITY IS the key of the divine doors

The Mother

*

To be entirely sincere means to desire the divine Truth only, to surrender yourself more and more to the Divine Mother, to reject all personal demand and desire other than this one aspiration, to offer every action in life to the Divine and do it as the work given without bringing in the ego. This is the basis of the divine life.

Sri Aurobindo

*

Open with sincerity. That means to open integrally and without reservation, not to give one part of you to the divine working and keep back the rest; not to make a partial offering and keep for yourself the other movements of your nature. All must be opened wide, it is insincerity to hold back any part of you or keep it shut to the Divine.

Sri Aurobindo

*

The Divine gives the fruit not by the measure of the sadhana but by the measure of the soul's sincerity and its aspiration. One should say, "I am ready to be not what I want but what the Divine wants me to be."

Sri Aurobindo

*

If earnestly you say to the Divine, "I want only Thee", the Divine will arrange the circumstances in such a way that you are compelled to be sincere.

The Mother

*

If you try sincerely, you will always end by succeeding

The Mother

*

A sincere heart is worth all the extraordinary powers in the world

Sri Aurobindo

Aspiration

A simple, straight and sincere call and aspiration from the heart is the important thing and more essential and effective than capacities

Sri Aurobindo

*

Aspiration, constant and sincere, and the will to turn to the Divine alone are the best means to bring forward the psychic

Sri Aurobindo

*

This taste for supreme adventure is aspiration—an aspiration that seizes you wholly and flings you without calculation or reserve, without possibility of withdrawal, into the great adventure of the discovery of the Divine, the great adventure of meeting the Divine, and the still greater adventure of realising the Divine

The Mother

*

Whether you look for the Divine outside or within, whether you look for it under a form or without form, if your aspiration is sufficiently sincere, you are sure to reach the goal.

The Mother

*

Aspire intensely but without impatience

Sri Aurobindo

Rejection of Wrong Movements

You have only to be perfectly sincere and aspire for purification and reject whatever is wrong in you. The Divine Force will then act and do the rest. That is the simple and true way.

Sri Aurobindo

*

If the consciousness remains quiet, the psychic will manifest more and more from deep inside and a clear feeling will come of what is true and spiritually right and what is wrong or untrue and with it also will come the power to throw away what is hostile, wrong or untrue.

Sri Aurobindo

*

It is what turns you towards the Divine that must be accepted as good for you—all is bad for you that turns you away from the Divine.

Sri Aurobindo

Discipline

To live and act under control or according to a standard of what is right—not to allow the vital or the physical to do whatever they like and not to let the mind run about according to its fancy without truth or order. Also to obey those who ought to be obeyed.

Sri Aurobindo

*

The true freedom is to be free from desire
 The true independence is to be independent from passion
 The true mastery is to be master of oneself
 That alone is the key to happiness, all the rest is passing illusion.

The Mother

(To be continued)

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

(Continued from the issue of February 1998)

(e) contd

In one of his final essays, Sri Aurobindo discussed the possibility of a materialisation of this sort in a time yet to come. He wrote "A soul wishing to enter into a body or form for itself a body and take part in a divine life upon earth might be assisted to do so or even provided with such a form by this method of direct transmutation without passing through birth by the sex process or undergoing any degradation or any of the heavy limitations in the growth and development of its mind and material body inevitable to our present way of existence. It might then assume at once the structure and greater powers and functionings of the truly divine material body which must one day emerge in a progressive evolution to a totally transformed existence both of the life and form in a divinised earth-nature"¹ As Sri Aurobindo was still in his body, the vision he had delineated had no relation to himself. The Mother related it to him as well as made it depend on the event of the human supramentalised. The human supramentalised would develop and exercise the ability to effect a materialisation of beings from a higher plane, which would bypass the common phenomenon of birth by sexual means.

In view of Sri Aurobindo's occult affirmation to the Mother after leaving his body that he would return to earth in a non-evolutionary supramental manner at some future date, we may adjudge the Mother's vision as having in general his private seal upon it.

In several talks she named the evolutionary aspect of supramentalisation the Intermediate Race or the Race of Superman. To quote her own words on the nature and function of the ultimate product of Yogic evolution "This species may be considered as a species of transition, because it will discover, as it is to be foreseen, the means of creating new beings without passing through the old animal method, and it is these beings, having truly a spiritual birth, that will form the elements of the new race, the supramental race. One might thus name supermen those who still belong by their origin to the older method of generation, but who, by their achievement, are in conscious and active relation with the new world of supramental realisation"²

What the Mother calls "the new world of supramental realisation" is something unique in evolutionary history. Perhaps it is not correct to speak of evolution at all in this connection. When the life-world manifested, even when the more subtle and potent mind-world found its expression and that special superior race was once formed, there never were sheer beings of these planes precipitated directly upon earth in their own

1 *SABCL* Vol 16, p 33

2 *Bulletin*, August 1958 p 85

characteristic spirit and substance. For, the ability to bring about a lasting direct materialisation from any plane will arise only with the evolution of the Intermediate Race—and what is brought about will be an involution, in the Mother's sense, of an utterly unprecedented nature.

Thus the Intermediate Race, even if transitional, has a crucial role. In one place the Mother has doubted its transitional fate: She has envisaged a continued side-by-side play of the Supreme-body and the pure embodiment of the Supermind, as each would possess a beauty of its own and have its *raison d'être*.¹ To keep a sign of animal origin must not be understood as a radical imperfection. We must remember that "the truly divine body", of which Sri Aurobindo has spoken in his *Bulletin*-article, is said by him precisely to be the one emerging "in a progressive evolution"—the body of the Mother's Intermediate Race. The Mother herself, in 1931, enumerated the attributes of this body, which she then called "supramental" rather than "superhuman" since the two aspects of the fulfilment of her work and Sri Aurobindo's were not yet visualised. She said. "The supramental body which has to be brought into being here has four main attributes: lightness, adaptability, plasticity and luminosity. When the physical body is thoroughly divinised, it will feel as if it were always walking on air, there will be no heaviness or *tamas* or unconsciousness in it. There will also be no end to its power of adaptability: in whatever conditions it is placed it will immediately be equal to the demands made upon it because its full consciousness will drive out all that inertia and incapacity which usually make Matter a drag on the Spirit. Supramental plasticity will enable it to stand the attack of every hostile force which strives to pierce it: it will present no dull resistance to the attack but will be, on the contrary, so pliant as to nullify the force by giving way to it to pass off. Thus it will suffer no harmful consequences and the most deadly attacks will leave it unscathed. Lastly, it will be turned into the stuff of light, each cell will radiate the supramental glory. Not only those who are developed enough to have their subtle sight open but the ordinary man too will be able to perceive this luminosity. It will be an evident fact to each and all, a permanent proof of the transformation which will convince even the most sceptical."²

Only in comparison with "the supramental body built in the supramental way" is the Intermediate Race's physical vehicle open to criticism. In itself it will be as if—in Shakespearean phrase—

Heaven had made another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite

At the beginning of 1969—that is, about thirteen years after the subtle-physical manifestation of the Supermind—the Mother announced that the force to realise the Intermediate Race had come in its own right to the earth—evidently from the subtle-physical. She distinguished the occasion as the advent of the Superman Consciousness

1 *Ibid*, April 1963, p. 49

2 *CWM*, Vol. 3, pp. 175-176

and mentioned some of its outstanding qualities. About the non-evolutionary aspect of her work—the supramental humanised from its own level, the New Race, as she named it—she has not said much. But it is this race that, according to her, would really merit to be regarded as composed of Gnostic Beings and making the Gnostic Community.

Evidently her New Race and her Superman do not coincide as mostly did Sri Aurobindo's. Nor are her Gnostic Being and Gnostic Community the same as his. Doubtless, the description "New Race" is at a few places employed by her for the human supramentalised, as when she says: "We must not confuse a supramental transformation with the appearance of a new race." Earlier, when she opened the All-India Convention held in Pondicherry on 24 April 1951, about four and a half months after Sri Aurobindo's departure, she gave a message which reflected in its closing words his vision of the great time ahead: "preparing the future humanity to receive the supramental light that will transform the elite of today into a new race manifesting upon earth the new light and force and life." By and large, however, the Mother distinctly reserves the "New Race" title for the other phenomenon.

Thus, owing to altered circumstances, the Mother's terminology extended that of Sri Aurobindo in several respects, and the vision of the Supermind's revealed presence in the world changed in its final details—although both the extension and the change were along lines which could be recognised as having Sri Aurobindo's silent support.

(To be continued)

AMAL KIRAN
(K D SETHNA)

“INSPIRATIONS FOR PROGRESS”

(Continued from the issue of February 1998)

REJECT also all fear from all layers of the being. Remember always that you are constantly in the All-Mighty, All-Loving Hands of the Mother and the Lord. Take complete refuge in Their Love and Grace, trust in Them deeply, decisively, completely and throw away all fear. Do not fold on yourself, give yourself into the Hands of the Mother and the Lord with loving reliance and remain confident and fearless.

*

Always, in all circumstances

Absolute Certitude of the Lord's Victory

More and more *faithfulness* to the Lord, to Mother, to their Work

Unflinching *perseverance* in the endeavour with ever increasing *sincerity* and ardour

Absolute *faith* that They are always with us and that if we remain turned to Them in the right attitude Their Grace will never fail us

More and more *self-giving*, and more and more *trust*, ever more and more *love*

31-8-61

*

The most important and the most decisive movement now necessary for me is loving surrender to the Master and entire trust in Him. Along with trust there must be long patience, courage and endurance.

Always on the Path the following guidance of the Master must be remembered:

Our nature is not only mistaken in will and ignorant in knowledge but weak in power, but the Divine Force is there and will lead us if we trust in it and will use our deficiencies and our powers for the divine purpose.

The Master of our work and our Yoga knows the thing to be done, and we must allow him to do it in us by his own means and in his own manner

Step after step has to be firmly taken, difficulty after difficulty has to be entirely experienced and entirely mastered. Only the Divine Wisdom and Power can do this for us and it will do all if we yield to it in an entire faith and follow and assent to its workings with a constant courage and patience

3-9-61

*

Be always positive and constructive Look at, look for and stress the positive side of things

Observe the negative side but without exaggeration, without stressing, without personal feeling—impartially, impersonally, dispassionately.

Be always and utterly benevolent. Radiate more and more light and joy and sweetness and harmony.

Make everyone and everything a friend.

‘‘Turn all things to honey, this is the law of divine living’’¹

29-3-62

*

There are two fundamental ways of dealing with the defects and difficulties of the nature in sadhana:

I The way of the Purusha—

To remain detached, separate, untouched, uninvolved;

To remain firmly equal;

To see clearly, accurately,

To exercise a steady, resolute, confident will

The best way to get this poise of Purusha is to make the mind calm, to draw within and to bring down more and more the higher Peace, Silence, Wideness

II. The way of the Psychic—

To surrender entirely to the Lord all the difficulties and defects;

To have absolute confidence and trust in Him;

To depend on Him for all things constantly;

To call for His Help, Protection, Guidance in all things;

To love Him truly, deeply, passionately, and utterly rely on His All-Powerful Love.

Both these ways can be simultaneously used. When the second way of psychic surrender is complete the first way is taken up in it Even before that the personal effort of detachment and rejection and the establishment of the poise of Purusha should be done more and more in the attitude of loving surrender to the Lord and dependence on Him for the result

The most effective way now made possible is to be quiet, very very quiet and steady, to draw inwards or press above and enter into effective contact with the Supramental Light that has come down and manifested up to the subtle physical

Not to struggle with the defects and difficulties but steadily to open more and more

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Aphorisms*, SABCL, Vol 17, p 115

to the Supramental Light and let it work out all the necessary change—that is the best and the swiftest way.

That Light knows what is to be done and how to do it radically and effectively—simply open to it in all the parts and let it do the work of transformation in its own way Do not interfere with the ignorant mind

Only be more and more quiet, in-gathered, conscious and in effective contact with the Supramental Light and with the Lord’s Presence Doing this, leave all to His All-Powerful Love with entire loving surrender and trust.

9-12-62

(To be continued)

KISHOR GANDHI

(Compiled by Arvind Akki)

VENUS

A LINK between the light of Venus and my heart,
A string by which I’m bound in love to her
I feel, yet we must always stay apart,
I here on earth, she in the starry spheres

O Venus, into me your beauty pour,
Into my heart your perfect harmony,
Open a bit your beauty-castle’s door
Fill me with joyous creativity.

And keep a little spot near where you shine
For me when all my work is done on earth
And offered at your feet all that was mine
To dwell in your love’s and beauty’s mirth

Meanwhile adorning Venus I will spend
My life in faithful service to the end.

RUTH

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

Extracts of Letters from Russian Correspondents

(Continued from the issue of February 1998)

I AM thirty-four years old I have been working on my self-perfection for several years and at the age of twenty-nine I began to practise transcendental meditation A year later I completed a course on extra-sensory perception and have finally come to the Integral Yoga . I would like to know about meditation, as my mental part is curious

In Latvia there is a town of the future like Auroville, dedicated to Mother It is in the town Rezkne, not far from Preily

21 September 1994

Larisa Mikhailova (Preily, Latvia)

*

My name is Elena and I am twenty-one years old A little more than a year ago I read Satprem's book *The Adventure of Consciousness* At that time I already had a definite understanding about the world based on the Theosophical teaching and I had some idea of Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga . The search for Truth has occupied me very much However not one of the systems I was acquainted with seemed to give the absolute Truth In each one there was some error, but I could not define the error and had only the inner feeling of it Satprem's book I accepted with difficulty at first, as I could not reconcile myself to being without a personality or feelings in my body My thoughts were the reality for me. To lose them would be to reject my own "I" Therefore I decided not to stop thinking but to observe my thoughts For about one month I have been busy learning about my mind Once, while trying to understand my thoughts, I happened to stop all thinking—no words, no images, everything disappeared. The experience did not last long, but it was a start I realised I hadn't lost anything

Now yoga has become the basis of my life I have read *The Synthesis of Yoga, Techniques of Meditation, The Psychic Being*, etc But today I still have many problems My progress in yoga I compare to a swing moving back and forth I move very quickly from a stable condition, leaning either to one side or the other There are many reasons—egoism, pride and desire I try to control them at least mentally and often receive new answers which manifest in many ways Only love for the Divine is able to bring me back and my inner aspiration does not leave me In my meditations I succeed now and then in quieting my mind The Supramental Force is coming down and it remains inside me on a level below the heart Now and then I see a light and am able to maintain mental quiet if I am engaged in dynamic meditation The knots on the level of the heart chakra suddenly began to open up like a star inside, resolving all problems and difficulties

I have a great desire to increase my knowledge of the yoga I am reading the books but seldom find an analogy with actual experiences. Once, in the course of practising, I did not come out of a condition of meditation. I observed in myself then a new and very unusual awareness—nothing called forth from me any feelings or emotions, as if I had emptied myself. I cannot explain it and considered it safe to return to my normal consciousness

Undated c October 1994

It is difficult for me to describe what is going on with me I am noting down my experiences at different times in my life, but to put them into some system is certainly beyond my capacity At present, I am living alone Three years ago I married and left my parents' home, but for the last half a year I have not lived together with my husband. I left higher school after three changes of speciality At present I am going in for music and photography I do not have any constant job, but from time to time I look for casual work so that I have something to eat. I do not have attachment to anything, only I do not feel like working if I do not see some reason for it I cannot settle my life in my own society, because I am seeing all around me only illusion Nothing here has any meaning You feel that you do not need anything Maybe it is sheer foolishness, but I feel that I am looking for something, the Truth of things I do not find the exact words to describe that. You may say that I am too sensitive; perhaps you are right Something always creates difficulties for me I want to do useful work, work which is necessary For me it is an indispensable condition It is said that the indispensable work that one has to do will come by itself at the right time Is it so?

Another question that bothers me is: Who is doing this yoga? Is it Nature or man? If the supramental energy is manifesting and is preparing instruments for its working regardless of man, then what is the role of man? Because if the doer of this yoga is Nature, then man in his outer life can be whatever he is and he may even be unaware of what work is going on in him Can the inner work go on without any participation by man? Therefore the first thing we must do is to open ourselves to Light, to this Energy as much as we can What must we do for that purpose? What must our outer life be like, so that it does not impede our inner life?

Now I note down some of my experiences

10 August 1994 I have a feeling that everything (all deeds and actions) is rather delusive; that all these things exist somewhere beyond me. I cannot get rid of pride My consciousness exists as if beyond all that, but cannot achieve separation and sitting apart Inside me is reigning some dyarchy From one side I have an urge to purify myself and grow to a higher consciousness, and from another side I have an urge to involve myself in passive fight, directed to achieve a better opinion about myself The mind must control the senses and be able to govern them, but in my life it is as if the other way round I sit for meditation, but everywhere all around me I see reigning only emotions and desires I begin to feel fear All my feelings are going from one extreme

to another—either I feel extremely well or extremely unwell. Moreover, to notice the transition from one state to another is impossible—all is going on in an elusive moment. Is it possible to avoid such a rushing about? Whatever I speak or whatever I do, a feeling of dissatisfaction at every moment lies like a heavy burden upon me. I do not recognise my voice, and my gestures are as if they are foreign to me. It is not that they have somehow changed—I feel that they never belonged to me. As if I have suddenly found that I have lost myself somewhere and do not have enough strength to break through all this chaos inside to return to myself. The feeling of unpleasantness reigning in me is really terrible.

12 August 1994. I think I have solved my problem. I am now convinced that the source of the alternating condition is the vital world. After some calm was established in my mind, I saw my vital and tried to keep myself aloof from it and also to still it. In the end a force descended into me and has brought with it light and peace. I have achieved the possibility of controlling my vital being and also my mental being.

21 August 1994. A fear to open myself is brought about by feeling that I am not completely real.

2 September 1994: A marvellous day. The feeling of intense joy continues with me all day. Today early in the morning an extremely powerful and warm radiance in my chest woke me up and in a moment I experienced self-possession and solved all my problems. Perhaps human love is a flame from which love for the Divine is lighted. Although this experience did not last, it was really marvellous.

7 September 1994: Again and again, by turns, I am ascending above the earth and descending to it. My consciousness is now almost centred around my inner life. The outer life is only a development from the inner. As I enter into the depths, I am encountering more powerful resistance. I have found a method to fight with my egoism—this method Sri Aurobindo has explained in his *Synthesis of Yoga*.

16 September 1994. I do not have the strength to express the great love that is welling up within me; it seems to embrace the whole world. If my brain begins to forget this in the turmoil of everyday cares, then my soul itself reminds me about it and after recollection, I again immerse myself in that love.

The feeling of the divine presence is always in me; it is impossible for it to be absent. I am nothing without it. Pride and vainglory, how repugnant and hideous they are! From the depths of my being the prayer rises: “My Lord, save me, save me from them.”

21 September 1994: Again I do not recognise my voice, my word, my gestures, everything has become strange to me. I do not have the strength to overcome this condition.

24 September 1994. I begin to feel some vibration in me which is still, full of joy and undisturbed by the outer turmoil. The presence of this vibration gives me great strength and I find I am free from all feelings and desires

I sat for meditation, from every side, love came pouring down, bad thoughts left me and force, like a condescending father, descended into me

People have begun to misunderstand me because my reactions to situations have undergone a complete change To avoid misunderstanding, I must behave in the way I used to, but that is very difficult I cannot behave with my friends the way I used to and they have started leaving me alone I think that this presence and force within me, radiating love and tenderness, has protected me from hysterical fits

30 September 1994: Only with much difficulty I have managed to give myself to the power that has entered into me. More and more I have tried to give myself to this power so that it could settle in my consciousness The mental being has become quiet and is almost non-existent. This power has brought joy, but it does not seem to be psychic. Trying to concentrate myself, I feel myself almost merged with the vast space

Undated c. January 1995. Gradually a new ‘I’-consciousness of myself and my surroundings is appearing in me The appearance of such a condition resolves all problems, which now seem illusory and senseless With great joy I am trying to understand and develop this consciousness. In meditation I try to give myself entirely to it—the grace of the Mother—so that nothing untoward can happen, for I was told something bad could happen. I found a group practising Integral Yoga and contacted one of its members, Victor Sokolov The whole meeting was full of a tangible love. It is much easier to meditate with Victor and reach what I aspire for. The first time I almost cried with joy, thinking it was the Mother who brought me to the group. I now participate in their work—it is marvellous.

*Wherever I look there is Light,
To my questions it is my answer
With a feeling of joy we reach everything,
So let us sit quietly.*

I study every week with Victor Many questions arise and Victor answers them, but my questions are becoming fewer and fewer The answers come before I formulate the questions

Man learns about the surrounding world by identification. I am identifying with Victor Occasionally I experience unpleasant feelings in my chest and stomach, feelings I have not noticed before which bring anger and irritation I have the unpleasant desire to improve myself for the better—I don’t know if this is self-pride I think it is not worthwhile to struggle, just open to the Mother and be more receptive

Lately the joyful feeling of the Presence is constant This is good and I think that

my life will be long and I will be able to be conscious of the Divine Presence. But I am tired in the evenings. In the day I am more attentive and concentrated and don't know where the disturbances come from. Victor said that when there will be full consecration all this will disappear. When Victor looks and speaks to me, waves of peace and joy arise in me.

Often it is easy, since no question arises about experiences or how to act—everything occurs spontaneously. Once this summer in my dream the Mother appeared and said that She would never leave me. Later I discovered that I would never be able to leave Her. She exists everywhere in all living things and I do not suffer from Her absence because She is the whole world.

*I will bring myself as an offering
And consecrate myself
Let the singing continue in the Truth
And the brilliance of the grass*

Somewhere inside me there is a voice that tells me if I am sincere and it knows the answers to all my questions, wherever they come from. I have doubts about my inner life, but the voice says, "Open up, open up." Recently I woke up in the night because I felt that the body was crying like a child closed up in a dark room. The body wanted to open and express itself and I was surprised at its sincerity.

There is a constant dialogue with this inner voice. It says, "You want to be better than you are—well, open up more and more, it is the only way." The Integral Yoga is done by the Divine, man does not do it by himself. Now the yoga is not the same for me as some years back, the momentum is constantly changing. Now the Force is present in the body. When I try to give my consciousness to the Mother, I melt into Her consciousness and something arises in the consciousness of the body. I feel it really does happen and this feeling is very real—but on what level does it happen? I try not to analyse, but to give all my efforts to the Mother, but I have read that first one has to raise oneself towards the Light. Have I had this raising?

10 December 1995

Elena Mikhaseva (Moscow, Russia)

[This lady visited the Ashram recently and was present on the occasion of Sri Aurobindo's 125th birth anniversary.]

(To be continued)

THE WAGER OF AMBROSIA

(Continued from the issue of January 1998)

VII. The Theory of the Triple Purusha

Part C

THE problem of Brahman being without a second, apropos of the Jiva in a world of birth and death, haunted the Advaitic metaphysicians over the long and weary centuries after Shankara. It can be well summarised in the language of Radhakrishnan as follows: "Badarayana says that the soul is *jna*, which Shankara interprets as intelligence, while Ramanuja takes it as an intelligent knower. Vallabha agrees with Shankara, while Keshava thinks that the soul is both intelligence and knower. The individual soul is an agent (*kartā*). Birth and death refer to the body and not the soul, which has no beginning. It is eternal. The Jivatman is said to be *anu*, of the size of the atom. Ramanuja, Madhva, Keshva, Nimbarka, Vallabha and Srikantha accept this view. Shankara is of the opinion that the soul is all-pervading or *vibhu*, though it is considered to be atomic in the worldly condition. Badarayana holds that Brahman is in the individual soul, though the nature of Brahman is not touched by the character of the soul. As the Jiva and Brahman are different as the light of the sun from the sun, and as when the light is covered by clouds the sun is not affected, even so, when the Jiva is subject to pain, Brahman is not. The embodied self acts and enjoys, acquires merit and demerit, and is affected by pleasure and pain, while the highest self has an opposite nature and is free from all evil. The statements 'That art thou' and 'This Atman is Brahman' attempt to show that the two, Brahman and Atman, God and man, are in reality one. If Brahman be the cause of everything, it must be the cause of the individual soul as well. The absolute divine essence is present in all its manifestations. Every individual shares in the spirit of God. It is not clear, from Badarayana's account, in what exact manner the individual is related to Brahman, as a part (*amśa*) or reflection (*ābhāsa*) of the universal self. The passage saying that the Jiva is a part (*amśa*) of the highest reality is taken by Shankara to mean 'a part as it were' (*amśa iva*). Since Brahman, who is not composed of parts, cannot have parts in the literal sense, Bhaskara and Vallabha assert that the Jiva is a part of the Lord because there is difference as well as identity between them. Ramanuja, Nimbarka, Baladeva and Srikantha think that the Jiva is a real part of Brahman. The view that the Jiva is both different and not different from the Supreme, even as a serpent is both different and not different from its folds, is refuted. Ramanuja, however, disputes the view that matter is only a different posture of Brahman and not different from it. Both Jiva and matter are parts of Brahman. There is strong support for the view that Badarayana looks upon the difference between Brahman and the individual soul as ultimate, i.e. something which persists even when the soul is released." (*Indian Philosophy*, Vol 2, pp 439-40)

Keeping this background in mind let us see Jnaneshwar's interpretation of the relevant verses from the fifteenth chapter of the Gita

Jnaneshwar calls the Upanishadic Brahman That Thing, *te vastu*, thus giving to it a certain happy substantiality which has the merit of bringing closer to us its form and figure. But immediately he slips into Advaita Vedanta and takes away all its defining qualities, relegating it to the featureless impersonal Alone. If such is that Reality then our main concern should be to get out of this phenomenality and live elsewhere, unperplexed, without any activity, without any issue troubling us there. It is in that direction that all approaches should orient themselves. Company with the saints, practice of *yoga-yajna*, detachment from things of bondage, devotional service at the feet of the Guru, and doing righteous work are some of the means by which is removed the endless hold of me-ness and ignorance that mislead and pervert our life. Man's happiness lies in recognising this and in following the path undeterred. There is no way of seeing the sun in the night, but with the sunrise we come to know the sun by the rays of the sun itself. The knowledge of the Eternal brings illumination by which the Eternal reveals itself to us in that respect. We generally remain tied to our corporeal state and, at the most, follow ritualistic prescriptions in an exclusive dogmatic way, thinking that we will get the fruits of heaven; but what always lies in store is only misery. However, the Gita's Teacher does not quite disown or condemn even this defective thinking and this behaviour of ours, he avows that he is the Originator of everything, including this nescience of ours. The cloud covers the sun but actually it is the same sun which, by its illumination, shows the contours of the cloud. All our attempts to know the Brahman are simply governed by our faulty sense of cognition. By speaking about it our hesitant speech only indicates what really is ungraspable. Peroration over the Attributed is only a way to tell of the sheer Unattributable. The Scripture attempted to speak of the Eternal but, in doing so, it shot out into a thousand branches of the tree of knowledge. It proclaimed the Great Principle, Mahasiddhanta, but it got totally baffled while describing its threefold status of purity, *trisuddhi*, as Jnaneshwar says. The breeze carries away the fragrance of the flower and disappears with it in the sky; so do all utterances even as they approach the Ineffable. Expression gets lost. Once this happens the very notion of duality also disappears and what remains is only the Advaitic One. With the dawning of knowledge no darkness is left behind, nor flame nor soot nor snuff when camphor is set ablaze. That conception which has given rise to nescience also vanishes. As a matter of fact there is no scope for ignorance then. The two-ness of Nara and Narayana, of Man and God, in its essentiality exists no more. We need two lips to talk, but the speech is one, we need two legs to walk, but the act of walking is one,—*dohi vohi ek bolane, dohi charani ek chālana*. What is experienced is the indivisible Brahman, the featureless qualityless Undefinable, without any activity. Yet, tells the Teacher, though attributeless, it has a form which can only be inferentially cognised in terms of qualities, it can be addressed by a thousand names, though it is nameless. In that sense we may cognise that which has actually no determinative character. Skimming of butter from butter-milk, removing the dross from molten gold,

pushing the moss to collect pure water on the bank of a river, or else dispelling the cloud to get a clear vision of the sky, sifting of grain from the husk.—these are just indicative of the fact that, after describing it in so many ways, what remains behind is only the Indescribable. But, being beyond our understanding, it transcends all categorisation. There is only the relationless Absolute or the utter Unmanifest.

With this preparatory background Jnaneshwar comes to the following famous verses of the fifteenth chapter of the Gita describing in its own metaphorical language the triple status of the Supreme in poises of the individual, the cosmic, and the transcendental.

द्राविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।
 क्षर सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥
 उत्तम. पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।
 यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य विभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वर. ॥

(*The Gita 15 16-17*)

There are two Purushas (spiritual beings) in this world, the immutable (and impersonal) and the mutable (and personal); the mutable is all these existences, the Kutastha (the high-seated consciousness of the Brahmic status) is called the immutable.

But other than these two is that highest spirit called the supreme Self, who enters the three worlds and upbears them, the imperishable Lord.

(*The Message of the Gita*, pp. 218-219)

Jnaneshwar talks about these three Purushas in great detail but in a very intimate homely way. In this city of life, *sansār-pātana*, there dwell just two persons and, being inhabitants of the same city, they know each other well. They live in it together, as day and night in the same sky. One of them is a blind and lame and stupid fellow, whereas the other is of strong build. There is a third one also but he is aloof from them and lives elsewhere; when he arrives he draws into himself everything, including this city. The one who exists everywhere, right from the Great Principle or Mahattatva down to the humblest blade of grass, who has name and form, is tied by the three Gunas and sees eightfold differentiation of Prakṛti, who is under delusion in this transient world, he the cultivator of this field with its thirty-six constituents, who is asleep and in the dream sees all relations, father, mother, child, or friend, and feels happy in their company, or otherwise miserable,—he is the Mutable or Kshara Purusha. He looks at his own reflection in a well full of water and gets excited about it, in this state he experiences duality and ignorantly adheres to it. In the world of living creatures, *jiva jagat*, he is called so, Kshara, because of imposition of its attributes on him. When the water in the well dries up, there is no more that reflection and with it also disappear all impositions.

On the other hand, the Immutable or Akshara Purusha stands unconcerned about

every relation, of nescience as well as sescience. He does not see differences and does not get, like a silent witness, entangled in knowledge or ignorance. Like the moon devoid of phases on the Amavasya or no-moon night, is he unknown or unseen. His condition is that of a dried-up sea without a wave, without shape or form. Wakefulness has gone out but the dream-condition has not yet arrived, illusory perception has declined but the knowledge of the Self is still far away. In such unknowingness as he stays, he is called Akshara. The fruit on the tree has ripened and the seed is ready to turn into a tree,—such is, as the Vedanta says, this seed-state, *bija-bhāva*. From it springs up the jungle of ideas and concepts and notions in this living world of the Jīva. All ascriptions and attributive features have disappeared in the unmanifest state of deep slumber, *ghana ajnāna* or *suśupti*, which is just next to the state of the attainment of the Brahman, *brahma prāpti*. In it meet the two states of wakefulness and dream, *jagrīta* and *swapna*.

These two states, of waking and dream, arising out of the perversions produced by the illusory power of Maya, get dissolved in the state of deep sleep, but in the knowledge of the supreme Self that state of sleep itself disappears,—in the way fire ceases to exist after using the fuel completely. What remains behind in that perceptionless condition is then That Thing only, *te vastu*, entirely different from these two states. If these are Kshara and Akshara Purushas belonging to the City of Life, then the third, independent of and beyond them, is the Transcendental Being or the Best Person, Uttama Purusha. He is distinct from these two in the manner fire is distinct from tinder wood.

At the time of Pralaya, the Great Cosmic Deluge, no trace of Jagrīta, Swapna, and Sleep exists, in its fiery splendour, *pralaya-teja*, day and night disappear—and stays behind neither monism nor duality, neither the sense of companionlessness nor of companionship, *ekēpana na duje*. Nothing remains and what stays is only the Unmanifest. It is that, so to say, where speechlessness is the speech, and perceptionlessness is the perception, and eventlessness is the event, That Thing, *te vastu*, is that wherein even the experience of He am I, *so'hamasmi*, is no more present, of it, therefore, whatever comes should be taken as its form. Such is the form of the Formless without attributes.

He is illumination but there are no objects there to be illumined; there is nothing there to be lorded by him, the Lord; there, in the wideness of that space, he is the only wideness occupying it completely, he is the melodious to listen to melody, *nāde aikyata nādu*, and the flavour to taste flavour, and joy to enjoy, he is the fullness of the fully perfect, and retreat and rest for the restless, of brilliance he is the brightness, and a vaster nothing into which sinks this nothing. Greater than greatness he is that greatness, he devours the devourer and, more than these several manys, innumerable he is.

जो प्रकाशयेवीण प्रकाशु । जो ईशितव्येवोण ईशु । आपणेनीचि अवकाशु । वसवीत असे जो ॥ जो नादे ऐक्यजता नादु । स्वादे चाखिजता स्वादु । जो भोगिजतसे आनदु । आनदेचि ॥ जो पूर्णतेचा परिणामु । पुरुषु गा पुरुषोत्तमु । विश्रातीचाही विश्रामु । विराला जेथे ॥ सुखासि सुख जोडले । जे तेज नेजासि सापडले । शून्यही बुडाले । महाशून्यी जिये ॥ जो विकासही वरी उरता । ग्रासातेही ग्रासून पुरता । जो बहुते पाडे बहुता । पासून बहु ॥

(Jnaneshwari 15, 546-550)

He is yet the one who supports appearance without actually becoming so, of gold an ornament is made but that does not mean that, because of it, it suffers diminution. He becomes the world but, when the world is dissolved, he does not get dissolved with it. He is a companion to himself and there is indeed nothing else that he can be compared with, *jayāche sāngāde jayāsi*. He is superior to Kshara and Akshara and is the one single reality proclaimed in the world of the Veda as Purushottama.

Such in great poetic style is the exposition in *Jnaneshwari* about the Gita's Theory of the Triple Purusha. But it is unfortunate that the author has opted to remain in the company of the powerful Monist philosopher. To speak of the Supreme as one who illumines himself is perfectly Advaitic, but to say that he is illumination sans objects to be illumined, *prakāśyevina prakāśa*, is to follow Shankara, denying the possibility of a manifestation in the Transcendent and dismissing it, if there is elsewhere any manifestation, simply as an illusion. This situation arises primarily because of accepting the passive Brahman as the sole reality in which there is no scope for activity. It is a complete non-recognition of the dynamic Absolute. The same difficulty is encountered regarding the eternal portion of the the Supreme that becomes the Jiva in the world of living creatures, the indivisible Brahman dividing itself into parts, *mama iva amśa sanātanah*. This debate of Monism, Advaitavada, takes great pains to reconcile with Scriptural statements a particular and perfectly valid experience of the relationless attributeless inconceivable One. According to it its relationship with the phenomenality of this existence, of this world of birth and death, Jivaloka or Sansar is, so to say, via the mysterious working of Maya.

Which simply means that this Shankarite Monism does not admit the possibility of real individualisation and, of course with it, of universalisation. In it the Eternal's triple poise of the individual, the cosmic, and the transcendental, or Soul, Spirit, God, does not exist. There is no scope in it for the World-Power or Para Prakriti carrying out her multifold activities in the Will of the Supreme Being who would, according to this experience, be only another appearance. That there can be very legitimate and meaningful differentiation in the One has no *locus standi* in it. While this Monism rightly posits the Absolute above all relation and non-relation, it wrongly denies to it the opportunity of having both. It makes Brahman a contentless void.

But if from Reality a real creation has to issue out, then, to participate in that creation, there has to be an individual being living by virtue of the universal being which in turn becomes meaningful by virtue of the individual being. "This means that cosmos and individual are manifestations of a transcendent Self who is indivisible being although he seems to be divided or distributed, but he is not really divided or distributed but indivisibly present everywhere"—asserts Sri Aurobindo. (*The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol. 18, p. 372) Apropos of these issues he writes in a letter as follows:

The word Jiva has two meanings in the Sanskritic tongues—"living creatures" and the spirit individualised and upholding the living being in its evolution from

birth to birth. In the latter sense the full term is Jivatma—the Atman, spirit or eternal self of the living being. It is spoken of figuratively by the Gita as “an eternal portion of the Divine” . . . the multiple Divine is an eternal reality antecedent to the creation here. An elaborate description of the Jivatma would be: “the multiple Divine manifested here as the individualised self or spirit of the created being.” The Jivatma in its essence does not change or evolve, its essence stands above the personal evolution, within the evolution itself it is represented by the evolving psychic being which supports all the rest of the nature.

The Advaita Vedanta (Monism) declares that the Jiva has no real existence, as the Divine is indivisible. Another school attributes a real but not an independent existence to the Jiva—it is, they say, one in essence, different in manifestation, and as the manifestation is real, eternal and not an illusion, it cannot be called unreal. The dualistic schools affirm the Jiva as an independent category or stand on the triplicity of God, soul and Nature.

(*Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 22, p. 266)

In another letter he writes

Purusha in Prakriti is the Kshara Purusha—standing back from it is the Akshara Purusha . . . The psychic being evolves, so it is not the immutable. The psychic being is especially the soul of the individual evolving in the manifestation the individual Prakriti and taking part in evolution. (*Ibid* , p. 291)

The integral Brahman holding the quiescent and the kinetic in its manifestive fold, and yet transcending them, is a spiritual experience which comes in a very definitive way from the assertion that Brahman itself enters, directly or indirectly, into this progressive material creation. If Matter is such a testing ground, then its denial can throw a strange shadow of illusion on the ethereal Spirit's substantiality itself, making it devoid of any contents, as much as the exclusive admission of the Spirit can make the world of Matter illusory. Shankara's theory threw the universe of commonsense perception out of the window of the house in which we live, that house itself being an appearance produced by the magic of Maya. However, it does not tell us as to who he is, if there is one, occupying this house, experiencing this unreality or, for that matter, experiencing the atomic Brahman when the illusion is gone. In fact, such a self-existent Brahman without the power to be in existence cannot be of any concern to us. But, along with the undeniable truth of the creative Maya, there is also accompanying it the truth of Para Prakriti, the higher executive Nature, sufficiently well indicated by the Gita's phrase 'by my Nature', *svām prakṛtim*, which for the purposes of cosmic manifestation has become the Jiva. But then in *Jñāneshwarī* we do not see the integralism of a completer and truer Advaita philosophy and therefore what we get, as far as metaphysics is concerned, is only the Shankarte interpretation of a great and revelatory synthesis which otherwise the Scripture is. Its quick traditionalist view, even

while it sings in sweet melodious strains the song of intense devotion, has no room for an unfolding divinity in the earthly life. But perhaps this spiritual vision was meant for another millennium

(*To be continued*)

R Y DESHPANDE

ENLIGHTENMENT

[On Huta's painting on page 3 of *About Savitri*]

THE earth lay in the midst of swirling waters
 Of evil, darkness and untruth,
 Steadily plunging into the deep valley of unconsciousness
 When from somewhere deep within
 The heart of the confusion and terror
 Piercing through the deep, heavy blanket of horror,
 Rose a single ray of light—
 Scaling the unclimbable walls of the valley
 It shot up, steadily, unstopably,
 With one aim—enlightenment.
 It broke through the churning waters,
 It broke through the void
 And burst into the haven of truth.
 Suddenly all fell silent.
 The waves of confusion ceased to break
 Against the walls of the earth;
 Terror ceased to reign supreme;
 The earth stopped sinking into nothingness
 The silence was deafening.
 And, as suddenly as it had begun, it ended
 The heavens opened up,
 And light poured into the river of darkness,
 The earth burst into blossom
 And opened its parched lips
 To drink the cool waters of truth

AURPON BHATTACHARYA

THE COSMIC DANCE

“THE moon shut in her halo” peeped through a slit in the window. The room was beautifully decorated with numerous bronze statues arranged with love and care by their owner, who was away on a tour. Only a thin beam of moonlight could enter and it touched softly the flute of the statue-Venugopal as if to awaken him from his sleep. The flute stirred and a music soft and impalpable, beyond the reach of human lips, began to float in the air. It was the ravishing flute of Krishna which stirred the Gopis to ecstasy as they rushed from all corners of Brindavan to their beloved Kannan. To hear him was ecstasy, to get a glimpse of him was Divine Rapture. Here too his magic call stirred the other statues.

What seemed inert suddenly became full of life.

Venugopal came down from his pedestal and, stepping softly from one statue to another, woke them up to his celestial music. Down came Parvati and swayed gracefully. The Shivakami bowed down and, full of adoration, offered flowers at the feet of Veenadhar Shiva. A cool northern breeze opened the window a little more and the silvery moon flooded the room with its mystic rays. In that ethereal atmosphere out stepped the Veenadhar Shiva from his low pedestal and played on his Veena re-creating, in the room, the charm, beauty and harmony of his abode—Mount Kailas. The admiring Venugopal stopped playing his flute and, from the records stacked with love and care by their owner, out floated the music of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven’s 9th Symphony. The Dancing Ganesha could hold himself back no more and climbed down gracefully from his pedestal and danced in ecstasy. He leaped in joy towards the Kaliyadaman statue. The Kaliya Nag’s hood with a thousand poisonous heads swayed menacingly. But Krishna standing on its hood stepped sprightly from head to head and sponged out all the poison of the world off its thousand mouths.

In time the other statues joined in the dance of Ganesha and Krishna. Some others watched silently the cosmic dance. The music of Bach and Mozart merged in harmony with Schiller’s *Ode to Joy*. The Dancing Ganesha abandoned himself to its accompaniment and moved in rapture, oblivious of his surroundings. A celestial harmony blended the music and the dance.

The moon and the stars watched awestruck and in admiration. Indra stopped his chariot in heaven and looked down on earth—surprised. Menaka, Urvashi and the other Apsaras stopped their dance and looked at one another askance and all amazed. What power, what manifestation has made the earth more heavenly than heaven above!

A celestial yearning now brought the Majestic Nataraja down from his pedestal. The music waned. The dancing stopped and out of the silence emerged the Vedic Chant.

इदं श्रेष्ठं ज्योतिषा ज्योतिरागात्
 चित्रं प्रकृतो अजनिष्ट बिम्बा ।
 यया प्रसूता सवितुः सवाय
 एवा राज्येषु यं निभारैक ।

Nataraja started his dance—not of destruction but of creation in the bliss of a New World—the world of golden light, love, truth and harmony

The gods could stay no more in heaven and came down The demons and the hostile forces too came And they wept with joy

Foreseeing the end of their long dreadful task
 And the defeat for which they hoped in vain,
 And glad release from their self-chosen doom
 And return into the One from whom they came. (*Savitri*, p 417)

Nataraja danced entranced The gods and the demons with folded hands prayed for the New World to be born and with the end note of the chant there arose the music of the spheres—the creative sound of Om from all the universes

The New World was born

A click in the locked door The statues went back to their pedestals. The music stopped Only the sound of Om vibrated in the air

The owner opened the door and felt the vibration, saw the moonlight flooding his room and, as soon as he switched on the light, saw the flute of Venugopal stir. A mistaken view! He went near each statue as was his habit every night and retired to bed full of serenity and bliss and an unknown expectation which he had never felt before

Early in the morning the statue of Crawling Krishna came to him in sleep and whispered in his ear of what they had done the night before: “It is because you love us and we, the statues and the music, love you that we played the celestial music and danced the Cosmic Dance which even the gods came down to watch—The Birth of the New World”

“Then why did you stop the moment I opened the door? I felt an ethereal vibration, I saw Venugopal’s flute stir! Why did you not allow me to watch?”

Then murmured the Crawling Krishna in his ear

Man is too weak to bear the Infinite’s weight. (*Ibid* , p 335)

KRISHNA CHAKRAVARTI

THE MOTHER'S GRACE

It was my son's birthday. It happened to be also the Deepavali day. The air was thick with the smoke of exploding crackers. Years ago auspicious notes of *nādaswaram* used to fill the air. Pious pipers would go round playing *saveri* or *bilahari*. They now rarely walk the streets to herald the festival with their holy tunes.

We had decided to visit the Sri Aurobindo Ashram on the day of Deepavali. Permission to see the Mother and get Her blessings for my son on his birthday had been obtained. It meant for us the quietest Deepavali at home. It also meant a simple fare without those specialities which generally grow into a feast of luxury. We went to bed early the previous night. But for others Deepavali does not mean 'festival of light'; for one could hear ceaseless detonations in the dark gloom of the New Moon.

I was full of the Mother that night. The spiritual light at Pondicherry alone kindled for me all the bright flames on this festal eve. The anticipatory bliss of meeting the Mother robbed me of my sleep. My son was sleeping by my side. Lying close to the window, I could see a large part of the sky. A few stars deepened my sense of awe already generated by the contemplation of the Mother. The Mother was past ninety. How would she receive us? What would be her mode of blessing? These and many other thoughts kept me awake till 1 a.m. Then I fell asleep exhausted, but I might have slept only for an hour and a half.

I woke up, however, without the least idea of the exact hour. But I had a vague feeling that something woke me up. I then became aware of a figure standing outside my compound, on the street. I also knew everyone dreaded to hear his voice. He covers himself with infinite bits of rags. A clumsy patch of vermilion reddens his forehead. They say he comes from the graveyard with the power of unerring prediction. A sort of soothsayer he is who roams the streets in the early hours of the morning. He stops before certain houses and foretells their fortunes. I caught sight of this unkempt diviner through my grilled window. At the end of every oracular utterance he shook the rattle in his hand. He spoke like one possessed. In the stillness of the hour, I could hear his ringing voice piercing sharply the morning air. He began on an auspicious note. He followed the usual pattern of his prediction, a bright future for my son, longevity for all of us, a marriage in the house and an official promotion for the bread-winner. It was pleasant to hear so much good news. But that morning he had something more to convey to us. I could fancy his minatory finger go up to flash this message to us, for suddenly he started shaking vigorously the rattle as if to cull the news from an occult source. Then without mincing words he predicted an accident that day away from Madras.

I must confess that my immediate reaction was one of panic. It perhaps revealed the weakness of my faith. I cursed myself for sharing a large measure of the gossips' credulity about the powers of the street gypsy. I knew he would return later to demand a dhoti or a shirt from me. Just then I heard a cock crowing. A second later I could see the man walking slowly towards the West. A hush fell, only to be broken by the telling

notes of the rattle that slowly died away at a distance I felt as if a phantom was retreating I sighed in relief when my milkman's cow led by him lowed for its calf. A sip of hot coffee brought clarity to my mind. The break of day revived my cheer and the image of the spooky clairvoyant faded from my mind.

It was with a light heart we boarded the luxury bus leaving for Pondy The conventional Deepavali showers failed us that year. I only thought of the Mother's shower of grace. I blessed my son for giving us a chance to meet the Mother.

We were nearly forty passengers in that bus, a solid conveyance that sped along the trunk road lulling us to sleep by the rhythmic whirl of its wheels. An hour later I was startled by a sudden spurt in the engine. It began emitting heavy smoke. The loud chat of the driver with the conductor woke almost everyone in the bus. He said he was doubtful about taking the vehicle to its destination I cursed the crew for taking out the bus without the routine tests. But the brewing crisis only made the driver grow more humorous to the chagrin of the passengers. He joked and laughed while the engine smoked. I was upset My mind went back to the collyrium-tipped eyes of the morning visitant His words of ill-omen kept haunting me. I prayed to the Mother to belie his prediction The driver was in a mighty hurry to reach a service station of the transport depot. Finally the smoking engine came to a halt at the depot at Tindivanam, nearly eighty miles from Madras

The depot had a spare bus for emergency The driver brought our bus speedily on to an elevated platform and parked it with a sigh of relief. There was no chance of its catching fire now The Mother had saved us from being burnt to death. I was chuckling with triumph at the misreading of our fate by the devil's alter-ego. Just then I saw an old lady rushing along the aisle towards the exit. A frantic sprint it was, for her luggage In her anxiety to collect her belongings, she failed to gauge the depth below Instead of stepping down on the raised platform she fell off it, breaking her legs. It was a bad accident and at once all my sense of triumph was reduced to ashes. For a second I felt that a phantom flitted past my eyes, gleefully baring its teeth.

But I knew it was the pathetic retreat of a beaten foe.

G VISWANATHAN

OUR MOTHER

OUR Mother is so sweet, she is so kind to us, she gives us everything. She is the Mother of the whole world She protects us from so many evils and dangers She helps us in difficulties When I go to her room I wish I could go there every day. When I see her smiling face it seems that a tremendous light is coming out from it and her body. When she is serious and calm I feel she is yet looking and smiling at us with a very loving face. She wants peace all over the world and she wants all the countries to be one, but alas! we cannot fulfil her wish. We trouble her so much by asking everything we want. That's our greed for getting things from her, but in exchange what do we give her! Nothing She doesn't expect anything more than that we don't fight with each other, and listen to whatever she, by coming down on the earth, has told us to do; all must try to become her Ideal Children So let's cooperate and try and try more and much more to help her and follow her guidance

NABARUN

EMBRACE OF BLISS

COME in this silver silence
When cool and calm is the night,
In the blue the moon is brooding
And the serene stars are bright

To this eager heart that is waiting
For Thee so long and mute,
Come with Thy voice of harmony,
Thy felicitous flute

Come to my lonely heart-temple,
O Rhythm-giver, and dance;
For filled is the heart of heaven
With stars smiling in trance

Life is vain and empty,
Thy holy presence I miss,
Come and wrap my yearning
In Thy wide embrace of Bliss

CHINU GANDHI

EVOLUTION OF MOBILITY

If earth is the centre-stage of evolution, what could be the purpose of the vastness of the physical universe, what the sense of these millions of stars and galaxies and light-years of inter-stellar space? What relation can the evolutionary consciousness of man, physically less than a grain of sand in the universe, have with the rest? And if there is any relation, what importance can this relation have, a relation between an infinitesimal being however conscious, and the physical Immensity however unconscious?

In this regard it is interesting to note that the Evolution of Consciousness, which is essentially an upward movement, has its other aspects, notably that of horizontal expansion, an expansion even in physical space

We observe that plants are practically immobile. Most of the insects live in an extremely limited circle, while more evolved animals like domestic pets move in a somewhat enlarged area. Even birds have their limited sphere of flying, barring of course certain species

Man, in his primitive stage, confined himself to the area occupied by his tribe and later on, to district, province, country. Being greatly evolved now, he has the capacity to travel all round the globe.

Each stage of evolution gives a hint of the stage to come, thus plants show rudiments of feeling, animals rudiments of reasoning and man beginnings of intuition. Similarly it is interesting to note that in the sphere of widening movement also, that is to say, in terms of 'horizontal' expansion, man has taken up activities, research and even travel into outer space. This aspect is actually indicative of the movements of the next stage, while a complete mastery of space travel is surely beyond the capacity of man's present bodily instrument.

For it seems highly probable that the future being—call him superman or otherwise—thanks to his pliable body, will undertake journeys to distant planets or solar systems as naturally as man today trots the globe. For confinement to an area however large, even as large as this space-ship earth, is a limitation and the goal of evolution is to be beyond limitation of every kind.

It is therefore as foolish to get appalled by the size of the universe as it would be for the insect to worry about the size of the planet earth. For conquest of space is also a part of the evolutionary goal, and earthly evolution has already proceeded on those lines which it will surely pursue in its future course as well.

Evolution is not only a heightening of the force of Consciousness but also a widening of the scope of action in the material universe, as an essential power of the manifested being. This is the *raison d'être* of the Evolution of Mobility.

A D SAVARDEKAR

THE HEAVENWARD ANGUISH...

THE heavenward anguish of the Mother-Bird
Shot downwards in rare poignancies of Light.
Each fledgling on the lower levels heard
And strove to spread itself in sprouts of flight.
The Mother-Ocean rising from repose
Called to her own from aether-states of sky.
Each drop that heard her voice in rapture rose
To meet the circling vastness of the cry!
Beyond the darkness-brimming space afar
The Light of Lights called, "Higher! higher and higher!"
Below, from agelong sleep, awoke each star
And panted keenly for the Fountain-Fire.
And colour ran on every side for joy,
And music leaped on every side for bliss!
O who shall [ever]* fathom or destroy
The Moment of true Metamorphosis?
Higher and higher they rose: the fledgeling bird,
The drowsy drop, the listening star, and stirred
Into invisible glories as they went
Winging their way through the lone firmament,
And in their heavenwardness they trailed, each one,
Through swift ascensions right beyond the sun
The moon and all the myriad lesser lights,
From lowest deeps of earth to lordliest heights
Beyond the furthest heavens, columns that came
Out of smoke-swirls, like tall and elegant flame
Multiplied to solid grandeur in the Mansion
Of new Manifestation.. In each column
Whirled all creation's creatures as in solemn
Cold depths of water in a cave of glass.
And as I watched I knew a strange expansion
Of Consciousness through which I saw them pass
Into Significances that surpassed all speech;
When through still Nothingness I strive to reach
Even the meaning's shadow, but alas!
All for a fleeting moment was a blank
Grey-naked as a lotus-widowed tank
But soon I saw the mansion float above

* N B The metre demands two syllables —Amal Kiran

Immaculate, light-poised as a dove,
 While far below in depths of smoky-gold,
 Forgotten worlds on worlds in darkness rolled
 Unnoticed and unguided, like a bare
 Vision of Growth, slow-dying of despair
 Vapours and mists and jet-black shadows curled
 Funereal remnants of Time's broken world'
 Then once again beyond the heavens I heard
 The Fountain-Fire, the Ocean and the Mother-Bird.

1-20, Noon, 25th Sept 1933

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Harin: Mother-Bird, Fountain-Fire,—
 the Vision born of the 2nd Piece—Has it any
 correspondence at all—
 and what sort of theme has it turned out to be?

Sri Aurobindo: The poem is a very beautiful one. But the second piece of [Mother's] music was a dance of faeries in the moonlight. The few lines marked seem to correspond, but for the rest the movement of the music must have started the sense of another kind of dance, the whirl of new-creation.

THY BODY...

THY body bears the nameless spaces of flame,
The wide vistas and supernal seas of light,
The giant worlds of stars and suns and gods
And moving wings of countless universes.
Thy limbs are throbs of rhythm from the Infinite
And great silence cascading ocean-dreams.
In thy body lives the pearl-depths of living fire
That built the planes of life and measureless thought
Thou art in thy body's eternal stance
And outstripping, movest to the heights unnamed,
Measuring with thy cosmic limbs the unknown
But to us thou art the beauty's paradise-beat,
A sheath of life of diamond enchantment, free;
A shape of lightning frozen to a human shape,
Whose feet I can enclasp, whose lips I kiss,
Whose arms of bliss are round my dying dust
O glory of immortal form, thou art here
To change the very substance of our name,
To lead us to God's wonder-vastnesses
And to rename the earth with thy seed, thy sun

(From the late poet's unpublished diaries)

ROMEN

THE DIVINE'S HELP

At the Samadhi,
that tiny red hibiscus,
so potent with the Divine's power,
named by the Mother
The Divine's Help
And yet so tiny, so tiny,
easily lost to the sight
among the pile of flowers,
but I search for it alone
as if to confirm
and be reassured
that the Divine Hand
is ever-present
to succour, to guide,
to protect

Yet, It is always there unfailing,
stretching its mighty hand,
though ever so tiny,
I cannot find it.
And when I am about to leave,
frustrate and anguished,
it calls me back, teasing:
"No faith?"
Ashamed, I mumble:
"Not quite so! but, Mother,
I need your help!
—at every step"
Deep comes the Mother's voice
strong and reassuring:
"What for? Do you not feel me
in your heart-throbs?
I know you wholly
in each and every part,
and do what is needed

before you even know"
"I know, I know, it's so true!
And yet effort has left me,"
I say, "Am I not drifting?"
"Are you happy?" she asks, smiling
"Oh, supremely happy, Mother
How can I not be,
when you are there
Even without my calling?"
"Then, why are you complain-
ing?" she demands.
"There is no effort any more,
and I cannot pray. All is
quiet, at peace, as if nowhere
to go!" I say.
The Mother laughs. "Did you
achieve anything by your effort!
Who made the effort in you?
What did you achieve?
Where do you want to go?
All is here in the Eternal Now,
Be one with it
And do effortlessly
that which is impelled
by a deep joy in you"
"But your help, Mother!"
"Is it not always there?"
"It is, but your confirmation?"
"Is it not there?"
"It is, but. . ."
"No Faith, eh?"
"I trust you, Mother Bless me!"
Chimes in the Lord: "So be it"
"So be it. So be it!",
Rings the golden voice

KAILAS JHAVERI

A THOUSAND TIMES...

A THOUSAND times shall I return
To be Thy clay, O Master-hand'
Till Thou hast moulded every grain
Of dust into the Perfect Urn

A thousand times shall I return
From distant lands of sheltering sun.
Till all the earths and all the skies
In a golden joyous Fire burn.

A thousand times shall I return
To sing Thy Name, O Secret One'
Till all Thy Sweetness wakes in men
And all Thy timeless toil is done.

A thousand times shall I return
Till Truth and Bliss for earth are won
And all that was Life's native right
God, Freedom, Unity reign in might

ALOK PANDEY

K. D. SETHNA: THE PROSE WRITER

MID-LIFE THOUGHTS ON THE MASTER'S EARLY POETRY

(Continued from the issue of December 1997)

ABOUT the time Sethna was reaching close to his 50th year, he took up Sri Aurobindo's early blank verse narratives for investigation. These are the most revealing observations on the Master's early blank verse, most detailed, and they reflect the critical temperament of a devotee who has always been on "bended knees".

I would like to draw the attention of the readers to his essay entitled *Sri Aurobindo's Blank-Verse Inspiration*. Instead of blind praise, we have here a cool examination of the exact achievement of Sri Aurobindo. Being himself a competent practitioner of the form, Sethna knows well that "blank verse is the hardest to infuse with poetic life. ." But he refutes the view that Sri Aurobindo has failed here completely.

An inspired *anaphora* from Sethna is punctuated by swift statements and apt illustrations and they show the multi-dimensional nature of Sri Aurobindo's blank verse.

There is the phrase of swift felicity

. the thrilled eternal smile that makes
The Spring

There is the phrase of power mingled with piquancy

. knit life to life
With interfusions of opposing souls
And sudden meetings and slow sorceries

There is the phrase of tense grandeur:

And the young mother's passionate deep look,
Earth's high similitude of One not earth

There is the phrase of audacious subtlety.

Cold lusts that linger and fierce fickleness...

Sethna's knowledge of the finer points of poetic metre and technique gives him a great advantage in his investigation

The end-stopped line, compactly holding a thought or image, is companioned again and again by a leaping enjambment. Lines running over and linking up by means of swift speed or strong staccato. The accent falls resolute and close-

patterned to beat out a forceful meaning or convey a psychological hardness mark how the sense is brought home by the packing together of stresses in that phrase “The loves close kin to hate”, while the three spondees in “Racked thirsting jealousy and kind hearts made stone” give us the precise tension and torture and perverse rigidity that are sought to be uttered. At other places the accent leaps lightly to express happy emotion, or else the scattering is alternated with the clustering where more than one mood is touched and transitions are intended. In fact, the diversity of foot accompanied by a constant shifting of the pause is so great from line to line that—barring the syncopated unit in which one stressed syllable does duty by itself—all the resources of metrical modulation seem tapped.

This is how Sethna moves from general to particular and then from particular to general. At times, he projects very authentic insights in his generalised views. Let us take an example.

Sri Aurobindo’s later work has many dynamic moments of poetic thinking, but his young blank verse is seldom charged with intellectual values—it has no conscious philosophical atmosphere, it lays bare an idealism of emotion and character rather than of intellect, and its thoughts are but glowing passions becoming mentally clear to themselves and forging arguments from that fiery self-knowledge. The temperament that has fashioned it is akin to the Elizabethans and not to the Victorians or the poets of our century. But it has also a Miltonic strain, a deliberate and collected inspiration, so it is saved from the extravagance, the conceit-coloured flamboyance into which the Elizabethans used to fall. There is not absent a large and steady discipline of the mind—only, the Miltonic note is here as an intermediary between the rich life-force of the Elizabethans and a half-mystical half-mythological plane—it does not sound the conceptual depths proper to the intellect but catches in terms and tones of thought a breath of semi-occult vistas from which the mind is visited by myths and which seem to open upwards into a first inkling of spiritual vision. In this respect Sri Aurobindo’s blank verse hints the Indian in him and affines him to the genius of Kalidasa.

The passage proves once again the effort at penetration. The balance-antithesis scheme which supports the texture of this prose is not an external trick. The essence of it is an inspired logic which is an upthrow from the intuitive intelligence of Sethna.

The poetry of youth is the poetry of Sri Aurobindo’s youth and naturally it is not callow or crude. Sethna gives a series of examples to show the psychological sense in an otherwise sensuous love poetry.

(To be continued)

GOUTAM GHOSAL

*(All the quotations are from *The Poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo* by K. D. Sethna.)*

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

A STUDY IN THE LIGHT OF INDIAN AESTHETICS

Antony and Cleopatra is the work of Shakespeare's mature artistry. This Roman tragedy has given rise to controversy among literary critics. Such controversies should not influence the standpoint of the student of the *rasa* (aesthetic delight) theory, yet it is necessary to know the two major views. According to one school Antony is an infatuated fool who loses a kingdom for the sake of love. The other school, voicing a romantic view, looks upon the hero as the very embodiment of pure and idealistic love.

This play can be called a *nāṭaka* (drama) as the story as well as the characters are taken from history. Nearly all the characteristics of *nāṭaka* as given by Acharya Dhanañjaya can be found in it. In addition to the fact that both the theme and the characters are *prakhyāta*, wellknown, so far as the structure of the play goes, it is as if Shakespeare had consciously followed the dictum:

*Ādyantamevam niścītya pañcadhā tadvibhājya ca*¹

(The writer should decide the beginning, middle and end of the story and divide the story into five parts.)

As far as *rasa* goes, the rule says

*Eko raso-angīkartavva vīra śrngāra eva*²

(There should be one main *rasa*: *vīra* or *śrngāra*)

Here *śrngāra* (the sensuous) is the main *rasa*. One feels doubtful about the hero, but this will be discussed later.

From the very first scene the *śrngāra rasa* makes its presence gloriously felt. This does not happen in any other tragedy. Among the comedies it is only in *Twelfth Night* that *śrngāra* establishes its sovereignty from the very beginning. Antony's intimate associates do not like infatuation. Philo laments

The triple pillar of the world transformed
Into a strumpet's fool³

Antony and Cleopatra have already come upon the stage, and now they speak.

Cleopatra If it be love indeed, tell me how much?

Antony There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd⁴

In the twinkling of an eye the spectator ascends the heights of *śrngāra rasa*. In fact the *rasa* theory explains the very special impact made by this dialogue as no other theory

can One can write a thousand words trying to explain the effect of these lines, but one will feel that something still remains to be said But when one says, even in a bald matter-of-fact manner, 'Here the *śrngāra rasa* is created', at once economically, even tersely, the effect is explained. A blinding light reveals strange and glorious vistas

If one objects that this tenderly humorous dialogue evokes *bhāva* and not *rasa*, then all such doubts are removed when we reach the speech 'Let Rome in Tiber melt', etc The waves of *śrngāra rasa* flood the spectator's soul This is *manjusthā śrngāra* which manifests itself in splendour and glory and yet runs deep The wonderful poetry of Shakespeare's mature art universalizes and elevates the lovers to a level that mocks at the barriers of space and time Antony and Cleopatra are, both of them, *āśraya* (recipient) and *ālambana* (fundamental determinant) of this *rasa* This is a love that does not need any *uddīpana* (stimulant). The lovers are steeped in love all the time. Taking into consideration the fact that both are historical figures, it is surprising how easily the spectators establish *tādātmya* (identification) with them The lovers get universalized into common people

The next scene shows the rise and fall of many emotions, but none of these emotions can turn into *rasa* In the third scene there is a lovers' tiff One can hear the gentle murmurings of *śrngāra rasa*

Eternity was in our lips and eyes,
Bliss in our brows' bent ⁵

Antony's impending departure serves as the *uddīpana* here The last scene of this act shows Cleopatra suffering all the pangs of separation Like a *prositabhartrkā nāyika* she is impatient and full of grief

Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he or sits he?
Or does he walk? Or is he on his horse?
O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony. ⁶

When Alexas comes bearing the message and gifts of Antony, Cleopatra exclaims: "How much unlike art thou my Antony." The particular type of *śrngāra rasa* shown here is *vīpralambha śrngāra*. This has many subdivisions The one being shown here is *kāryavaśāt vartamāna prabāsa* Antony has gone to Rome on a matter of important business, and that is why this description can be applied to this separation Antony, though absent, is the *ālambana* here and Cleopatra is the *āśraya* Their separation is the *uddīpana*

The first Act shows the establishment and enjoyment of *śrngāra rasa* quite a few times but no other *rasa* is generated Can it be said, therefore, that there is *rasaviḡhna* (loss of aesthetic delight) due to repetition? There is no reason to think in such terms because after each evocation of *śrngāra rasa* one or two scenes come in which there is only *bhāva* and no *rasa* The *bhāvas* also are such as have no relations with *śrngāra*

Thus we have humour and amusement in the conversation among Charmian and the others and contempt in the scene figuring Caesar. Thus the spectator becomes mentally prepared to experience *śrngāra* again. The poet had little Latin, less Greek, and no Sanskrit in him, yet he had deep and extensive knowledge of the human psyche

We see Cleopatra suffering all the pangs of separation but Antony, after reaching Rome, surprises us by getting married again (his first wife Fulvia having passed away) In the entire scene Antony never says anything to make us think that he is acting reluctantly because of the pressure of circumstances The reader understands these pressures but Antony himself never expresses any reluctance in a soliloquy or even in an aside It is this scene which contains the celebrated description of Cleopatra

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water, the poop was beaten gold
Purple the sails, and so perfumèd that
The winds were love-sick with them ⁷

This is a long description, with other characters interrupting briefly from time to time This avoids monotony and gives breathing-space to the actor The description, however, proceeds undeterred and reaches a climax in the last lines Here Menecrates says, ‘‘Now Antony must leave her utterly’’ Enobarbus, with clear definiteness, answers

Never, he will not,
Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety, other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies ⁸

Now we understand why Antony did not express reluctance. He cannot imagine that he can ever be unfaithful to her, and after reading this description the reader cannot imagine it either

The *rasa* created here is *adbhūta rasa*. It is true that scholars have said.

*Atīlaukaḥ padārthaiḥ syādvismayātmārasodbhūtaḥ*⁹
(*adbhūta rasa* is generated out of surprise at supernatural things)

It can be said that the description of Cleopatra's beauty seems to be the description of a beauty that has superhuman grace about it The *sañcārī bhāvas* of this *rasa* are *sādhuvāda* (applause), *harṣa* (joy), *āvega* (deep feeling), etc We see the two listeners, Agrippa and Menecrates, exclaiming again and again ‘‘O rare for Antony’’ and other such interjections, Shakespeare's words cast an enchantment that makes Cleopatra's beauty almost visible to the audience She becomes the *ālambana* and, with Enobarbus and the two spellbound listeners as *āśraya*, *adbhūta rasa* overwhelms us. One

remembers Housman's description of the effect exercised by fine poetry. He talks of a shiver down the spine (*śiharana*) and gooseflesh (*romāñca*). Had it been possible he would perhaps have described it as *brahmasvādasahodara*.

The next two scenes take the action forward but do not evoke any *rasas*. Cleopatra is seen again in the fifth scene. She hears of Antony's marriage and acts in a manner that is almost insane and uncontrolled. The intensity of feeling is definitely expressed but it cannot be said that any *rasa* has been created in this restless and uncontrolled behaviour of Cleopatra. Perhaps this is because of her impatience and lack of decorum that hinder the spectator's establishing *tādātmya* (identity). Thus there is a flaw (*rasa-vighna*). Acarya Abhinavagupta in a fine verse says:

Paragatatvanyamena deśakālaviśesāveśo

In other words, the spectator imposes spatio-temporal limitations (*deśakālarva*) upon the character or the actor. He thinks that the actor or the character present on the stage is such and such a person of such and such a country of such and such a time. Cleopatra remains Cleopatra, there is no universalization in this scene nor can the spectator establish identification. Strong emotions (*bhāva*) are expressed, but these *bhāvas* do not attain to *rasahood*.

The last scene of this act shows the manifestations of many different *bhāvas*, but no *rasas* are generated. Witty and humorous dialogue is there, but the air of conspiracy by Menas spoils the atmosphere. If any *rasa* had been there then one would have said that there is a flaw (*rasa-vighna*) in this scene.

The third scene of the third act shows Cleopatra cross-questioning the messenger. Her jealousy and the messenger's quick-witted replies create an amusing scene. Events crowd in thick and fast after this and preparations for war start. No battles are shown on the stage and thus neither *vīra* nor *raudra rasa* is created. We see the defeated Antony in the ninth scene. He is bowed down by grief and shame and not even Cleopatra can console him. He gains some mastery over himself towards the end of the scene and *karuna rasa* is generated for a short time. As a matter of fact there will be a continuous tug-of-war between *karuna* and *śrngāra rasa* from now on. Exactly the same situation develops in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*. In the latter *karuṇa rasa* is evoked towards the end, but in *Romeo* and this play it appears in the middle of the play. It is true that *śrngāra* and *karuna* are mutually exclusive yet the combination of these two does not give rise to conflict (*rasa-virodha*). The reason is the one already explained by Ānanda-vardhana.

Vivaksite rase labdhapratisthe tu virodhinām. angabhāvan bā

(When a certain *rasa* has been established, the description of even a conflicting *rasa* does not give rise to *rasa-virodha* if this second *rasa* is described as part of the first.)

Thus in this scene, *śrngāra* is established at first, and then *karuna* makes its appearance

The eleventh scene shows Cleopatra talking to Caesar's messenger and it seems as though she is going to betray Antony. Her real intention is not made clear. This scene shows a play of many emotions, but no *rasas* are created.

The fourth act has a few short scenes in the beginning. In the third scene the guards hear a wonderful music which comes from underneath the earth. The stage direction says that the music comes from under the stage. All the guards are surprised and puzzled. One of them says

'Tis the good Hercules, whom Antony loved
Now leaves him.¹⁰

Nobody contradicts this assumption. *Adbhūta rasa* is created for a short while. The scene is so short that one hesitates to say that it has been fully established. Much will depend upon the director's discretion.

The next few scenes, though brief, take the plot forward. There are brief accounts of the battle that is being fought. Antony enters the stage as a conquering hero in the eighth scene. Once again, after a long time *ujjala rasa* lights up the whole scene.

Lord of lords!
O infinite virtue! Com'st thou smiling from
The world's great snare, uncaught?¹¹

Here Antony is the *āśraya* and Cleopatra the *ālambana*. Before this, whenever *śrngāra rasa* was evoked, it was quite clear that Cleopatra also was the *āśraya*. This time, however, there is doubt in the reader's mind. Is Cleopatra still in love with him? Why did she agree to submit to Caesar? This doubt in our mind hinders Cleopatra from being the *āśraya*, she is only the *ālambana*. The victory of Antony is the *uddīpana* here.

Since Antony is a victorious hero, it can be said that he is the *āśraya* of *vīra rasa* also. The question arises: how can Antony be the *āśraya* of these two mutually conflicting *rasas*? It can be said here that Visvanatha Kaviraja, while he gives a list of the *rasas* that conflict with each other, has also given the circumstances that give rise to the conflict. One of these is the conflict of *āśraya aikya* where the recipient is the same person. He has not said that *vīra* and *śrngāra* are conflicting *rasas* from this point of view. This is a realistic and psychologically valid point. *Vīra* and *śrngāra* can easily have the same *āśraya* or recipient. Had this not been possible, a poem like *To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars*, could not have been written. So Antony is the recipient of *vīra* and, at the same time, of *śrngāra rasa* also.

The battle, however, has not ended yet. Now it shifts to the sea. Antony is defeated in this battle. One of the reasons for his defeat is the fact that Cleopatra has left him

Antony's mortification and despair at her betrayal gradually changes to anger and gives rise to *raudra rasa*. He becomes all the more angry when he sees her

'Tis well thou art gone
If it be well to live, but better 'twere
Thou fell'st into my fury, for one death
Might have prevented many ¹²

The play does not use *raudra rasa* to any noticeable extent as *śrngāra* is the main *rasa*. Here, however, *raudra* blazes up quite naturally. Out of the two varieties of this *rasa* the one we get in *vacanātmaka raudra* since the *rasa* manifests itself through Antony's words, not action. The despair and self-contempt engendered in his heart are the *anubhāva* and the *uddīpana* of the *rasa*. Cleopatra is the *ālabhana* of his anger. This highly appropriate manifestation of *raudra rasa* gives a significant vividness to this part of the play. Antony is not just a defeated soldier, he is a betrayed lover also and thus the universalisation of this character is easily effected.

After one more scene *karuna rasa* once more gains in importance. Antony gets the news of Cleopatra's death. This news is false, as the spectator knows, but it changes the entire atmosphere. Antony was getting ready to die like a warrior but now he says

Unarm, Eros; the long day's task is done
And we must sleep .
No more a soldier, bruised pieces go,
You have been nobly borne.¹³

He is overwhelmed by grief and the gentle murmur of *karuna rasa* is heard when he requests Eros to give him the gift of death. Rather than obey him, Eros kills himself and Antony falls upon his sword. *Karuna rasa*, however, is not properly established here because Antony's attempt at suicide does not succeed. Before he can die, Cleopatra's messenger arrives and tells him that she is still living. The attendants then bring him to the tower in which she is hiding.

Antony dies in the next scene. His death, Cleopatra's lament and the reactions of the others create *karuna rasa* in a highly effective manner. The poet has given Cleopatra some celebrated lines

The crown o' the earth doth melt My lord!
O withered is the garland of the war,
The soldier's pole is fall'n, young boys and girls
Are level now with men ¹⁴

Karuna rasa surges up with Antony as the *ālabhana*, and Cleopatra and the others as *āśraya*. Yet the scene contains *śrngāra rasa* also. It is difficult to say which is the

stronger. We know that *śrngāra* and *karuṇa* are mutually conflicting *rasas*, therefore it is necessary for us to remember that the variety of *śrngāra rasa* that we get in Cleopatra's lament is *vipralambha śrngāra*. This and *karuṇa rasa* can easily complement each other in the same *āśraya*. The experience of *rasa* in such scenes is truly akin to bliss (*brahmasvādasahodara*). This has been variously termed as tragic equilibrium, catharsis, etc., but the *rasa* theory can describe and analyse such experience more economically, precisely and effectively.

The reverberations of *karuṇa rasa* continue in the next scene. Caesar and the others, coming to know of Antony's death, are deeply moved and praise him:

A rarer spirit never
Did stir humanity, but you Gods will give us
Some faults to make us men ¹⁵

Here we have pure and unmixed *karuṇa rasa*. The admiration and deep respect for the dead makes the scene doubly effective. The next scene again gives a mixture of *vipralambha śrngāra* and *karuṇa* in Cleopatra's speech:

His face was as the heavens and therein stuck
A sun and moon, which kept their course, and lighted
The little, O, the earth
His legs bestrid the ocean; his rear'd arm
Crested the world, his voice was propertyed
As all the tunèd spheres ¹⁶

Śrngāra and *karuṇa* combine together to produce a truly wonderful effect. Apart from everything else, who but Shakespeare could have used the 'O' so effectively? We remember another rule given by the scholars: there is no conflict when *śrngāra* is created through memory. *smāyāmana viruddho'pi*. Here *karuṇa* is the main *rasa* and *śrngāra* exists indirectly, in the reminiscences. This undercurrent of *śrngāra* and the obvious and direct *karuṇa rasa* complement each other. There is no question of *rasābhāsa* or *rasavirodha*. The spectator does not experience any difficulty establishing identification. After this, different emotions rise and fall in this long scene. Cleopatra's end draws near. There is no despair or grief in her as she prepares to die. She welcomes death like the queen she is:

Give me my robe, put on my crown, I have
Immortal longings in me. Now no more
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip ¹⁷

Such is the magic of this poetry that not only *karuṇa*, but *adbhūta rasa* has also been created here. Cleopatra proves that she is not just a woman, not just a lover, but a queen.

as well. We have respect for her glorious death and are surprised at her intense desire for union with Antony. She sees death as a bridge between herself and Antony. Surrounded by her courtiers, dressed in full regalia, she ventures forth to meet her beloved beyond death. There is an impression of something that soars far beyond the limitations of normal day-to-day life and it is this quality that creates *adbhūta rasa*. This is the only *rasa* which does not conflict with any other, and therefore the mingling of two different *rasas* elevates the reader to a rarefied height of bliss. Acharya Abhinavagupta, visualising precisely this kind of situation, said

Ānandaghanamāsvādyate Tatra kā duḥkhāśankā?

(The experience is full of bliss. Where is the fear of sorrow?)

This analysis shows that *śrngāra* is the *angirasa* in this play. The radiance of *ujjala rasa* lights up the whole play from the very first scene and the two main characters are activated by this *rasa*. Their actions, life and death all proclaim the triumph of love. The total effect of the play is also based on *śrngāra*. Just as Romeo and Juliet are thought to be almost the archetypes of lovers, so are these two characters. The influence of *śrngāra* is so strong that when Dryden dramatised the same theme, he called it *All For Love*.

On trying to analyse the two main characters, we come up against the fact that Antony approaches the *dhīralalita nāyaka* the nearest. The *Daśarūpaka* tells us *nścinto dhīralalitaḥ kalāsakta sukhī mrduh*¹⁸. It might be objected that the Antony of *Julius Caesar* appears as a warrior, how then can he be *dhīralalita* here? This is because in this play he appears as a different person. In this play Antony neglects his duties and is utterly infatuated with Cleopatra. Even his own attendants regretfully realise that he has been transformed from a warrior to a lover. He has succumbed to comfort and wallows in luxury. This is remarked upon again and again.

Antony, leave thy lascivious wassails

or

Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts,
Keep his brain fuming, Epicurean cooks
Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite,
That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour¹⁹

He reveals himself as a warrior in the second half of the play. This does not prevent him from excelling as a *dhīralalita* hero, as Acharya Dhananjaya says that the hero should be *sūro drdhaśca tejasvī*, a strong, resolute and powerful man.

The *dhīralalita* here is also eloquent and humorous. There is at least one scene in which the witty aspect of Antony is seen. In the seventh scene of the second act he

becomes humorous at the expense of Pompey's drunkenness. Pompey wants to know what a crocodile is like

- Ant* It is shaped, sir, like itself; and it is as broad as it hath breadth; it is just so high as it is, and moves with its own organs, it lives by that which nourisheth it, and the elements once out of it, it transmigrates
- Lep* What colour is it of?
- Ant* Of its own colour too
- Lep* 'Tis a strange serpent
- Ant* 'Tis so; and the tears of it are wet ²⁰

We think that this kind of cheap humour is not worthy of Shakespeare or of Antony. This humour, however, is not pure laughter. Instead, Antony's lack of respect for Pompey expresses itself through satire: a drunkard does not deserve or value wit

Cleopatra is an extraordinary creation of Shakespeare. His heroines are usually either very young, or adolescent. Cleopatra is an exception. She is a mature, forthcoming and impatient heroine (*pragādhayauvanā pragalbhā adhīrā*). Dhanikacharya's highly interesting comments on Dhananjaya's description make one think that the Sanskrit scholars, in their hair-splitting analyses, completely neglected the psychological aspect of love. In Shakespeare, however, one never gets merely the physical aspect. Cleopatra's is not based totally on the body and therefore it would be unjust to narrow her down by labelling her with these Sanskrit terms. There are forceful descriptions of her extraordinary beauty which age cannot wither. These qualities by themselves can never give a character tragic dignity. Cleopatra blazes up with immortal incandescence only when she joyfully welcomes death. We too, along with Charmian, exclaim

Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies
A lass unparalleled ²¹

Different scenes present different facets of her personality. If we think of the eight-*nāyikā* classification, at once it becomes clear that she is a *svādhīnabhartṛkā* heroine in the scenes in which she appears with Antony. Likewise in the scenes of separation she is a *prositabhartṛkā*. The best aspects of this character are revealed in the death-scene where, like an *abhisārikā*, she dresses herself for her last tryst with her beloved. Juliet also killed herself, her death also evokes *karuṇa rasa*, but she does not have the dazzling brightness of the empress-glory of Cleopatra. It is but fitting that she does not have it, for Juliet is an adolescent who has spent her life under the protection of her parents and Cleopatra is an empress.

Antony and Cleopatra is a highly successful tragedy from the *rasa* point of view. It is noticeable that not many *rasas* have been evoked. There are many scenes which contain only *bhāva* and no *rasas*. Actually, all the scenes in which Antony and Cleopatra do not appear fall flat. The only exception is the celebrated description given

by Enobarbus Even there Cleopatra, though absent, dominates the scene Perhaps the other characters did not fire the poet's imagination as these two did. Though this is a mature work, it contains less variety of *rasas* than many other tragedies of Shakespeare *Othello*, in which *śrngāra* predominates, contains all the nine *rasas* except *sānta* *Antony and Cleopatra* contains only four *śrngāra*, *karuna*, *raudra* and *adbhūta* Emotions like amusement, fear, chivalry occur, but are not elevated to *rasahood* No statements about Shakespeare can be final, but it can be pronounced that this play is a fully successtul, or *rasottīrna*, play

RATRI RAY

Notes

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|---|---|
| 1 <i>The Daśarūpaka</i> , 3 29 | 12 <i>Ibid</i> , IV x, 52-55 |
| 2 <i>Ibid</i> , 3 33 | 13 <i>Ibid</i> IV, xii, 35-43 |
| 3 <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> , I, 1, 12-13 | 14 <i>Ibid</i> , IV, xiii, 63-65 |
| 4 <i>Ibid</i> , I, 1, 14-15 | 15 <i>Ibid</i> V, i, 31-33 |
| 5 <i>Ibid</i> , I, iii, 35-36 | 16 <i>Ibid</i> V, ii, 78-84 |
| 6 <i>Ibid</i> , I, v, 19-21 | 17 <i>Ibid</i> , V, ii, 281-283 |
| 7 <i>Ibid</i> , II ii, 198-201 | 18 <i>Daśarūpaka</i> , 2 4 |
| 8 <i>Ibid</i> , II ii 243-246 | 19 <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> , I, iv, 56, II, i 23-26 |
| 9 <i>Daśarūpaka</i> , 4 18 | 20 <i>Ibid</i> II, vii, 46-56 |
| 10 <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> , IV, iii, 16-17 | 21 <i>Ibid</i> , V, ii, 317-318 |
| 11 <i>Ibid</i> , IV, iii 16-19 | |

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of February 1998)

THE opening chapter of Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita* is "Our Demand and Need from the Gita" Right at the outset he proceeds to examine what exactly is the sacrifice of which the Gita speaks, what we expect to get from it and how we should approach it " its monistic elements and the high place it gives to quietistic immergence in the one Self of all And undoubtedly its emphasis on devotion, its insistence on the aspect of the Divine as Lord and Purusha and the doctrine of the Purushottama, the Supreme Being who is superior both to the mutable Being and to the Immutable and who he is, and what is His relation to the world we know as God, are the most striking and among the most vital elements of the Gita "'1

The Purushottama of the Gita is the Supreme Being in whom Knowledge, Action and Devotion meet and become one and a perfectly equal balance is preserved We shall revert to this anon

Like the Veda or the Upanishads or any other ancient scripture, the Gita is principally engaged in seeking the one ultimate and eternal Truth. It is obvious that a Truth of truths, such as this, cannot be tied down in set-dogma, cannot be contained in all its bearing in any single philosophy or in the teachings of any one Teacher But one and eternal though it be, it is made up of two distinct elements or aspects—one, temporary and mutable applicable to the idea of a definite period and country, and the other of eternal and universal application. Also, as time progresses, this latter Truth takes new forms and new terms and modes of expression, what is really valuable is whether it has been lived and experienced and seen with a higher vision How the Gita was understood by the contemporary men or by men at the periods that followed, is but of little importance There are many commentaries on this great book. Says Sri Aurobindo about the metaphysical connection "That it is not possible, is shown by the divergence of the original commentaries which have and are still being written upon it, for they all agree in each disagreeing with all the others, each finds in the Gita its own system of metaphysics and trend of religious thought. Nor will even the most painstaking and disinterested scholarship and the most luminous theories of the historical development of Indian philosophy save us from inevitable error But what we can do with profit is to seek in the Gita for the actual living truths it contains, apart from their metaphysical form, to extract from it what can help us or the world at large and to put it in the most natural and vital form and expression we can find that will be suitable to the mentality and helpful to the spiritual needs of our present-day humanity "'2

We have already dealt with the subtle symbolic sense imparted to the yajna or sacrifice of the Veda. Vedism and Vedantism have both been put forward and reconciled. Equally, shows Sri Aurobindo, with the element of current philosophical terms and religious symbols that have entered into the book we shall deal in the spirit. Sri Aurobindo says

“The philosophical system of the Gita, its arrangement of truth, is not that part of its teaching which is the most vital, profound, eternally durable, but most of the material of which the system is composed, the principal ideas suggestive and penetrating which are woven into its complex harmony, are eternally valuable and valid, for they are not merely the luminous ideas or striking speculations of a philosophical intellect, but rather enduring truths of spiritual experience, verifiable facts of our highest psychological possibilities which no attempt to read deeply the mystery of existence can afford to neglect. Whatever the system may be, it is not, as the commentators strive to make it, framed or intended to support any exclusive school of philosophical thought or to put forward predominantly the claims of any one form of Yoga. The language of the Gita, the structure of thought, the combination and balancing of ideas belong neither to the temper of a sectarian teacher nor to the spirit of a rigorous analytical dialectics cutting off one angle of the truth to exclude all the others, but rather there is a wide, undulating, encircling movement of ideas which is the manifestation of a vast synthetic mind and a rich synthetic experience.”³

But Sri Aurobindo further elucidates

“In the Gita, the Sankhya and Yoga are evidently only two convergent parts of the same Vedantic truth or rather two concurrent ways of approaching its realisation, the one philosophical, intellectual analytic, the other intuitional, devotional, practical, ethical, synthetic, reaching knowledge through experience.”⁴

Sri Aurobindo further clarifies the object of the Gita in the following words

“Our object, then, in studying the Gita will not be a scholastic or academical scrutiny of its thought, nor to place its philosophy in the history of metaphysical speculation, nor shall we deal with it in the manner of the analytical dialectician. We approach it for help and light and our aim must be to distinguish its essential living message, that in it on which humanity has to seize for its perfection and its highest spiritual welfare.”⁵

Indian spirituality has been particularly rich in these great syntheses. The method of the Gita, as we have indicated before, “does not cleave asunder, but reconciles and unites.” Its thought is not pure Monism though it sees in the one eternal unchanging Self the basis of all creation. It is not Mayavada (Illusionism) though it speaks of the Maya of the three modes of Nature, Krishna tells Arjuna, “Enveloped by Yoga Maya, I am not manifest to all beings.” It is not Sankhyavada though it explains creation by the dual principle of Prakriti-Purusha. It is not qualified Monism though it lays more stress on dwelling in the Divine than in dissolution as the great goal. It is not Vaishnava theism though it places Krishna in the forefront as the Supreme Ishwara. Krishna says in the text “There is no Principle higher than myself.” The Gita is all these lines of thought and yet none of them.

The Gita is a gate opening into the whole world of spiritual truth and experience

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

References

- 1 *SABCL* Vol 13 p 27
- 2 *Ibid* , p 3
- 3 *Ibid* pp 5 6
- 4 *Ibid* p 5
- 5 *Ibid* p 8

POLITICAL VEDANTISM— ITS CONCEPT AND PRACTICE

(Continued from the issue of February 1998)

Chapter IV

EVER since his sudden disappearance from the scene, even after his confessional announcement through the *Hindu*, questions were raised by many prominent leaders as to why Aurobindo Babu had suddenly left politics. Was it because of the failure of his utmost endeavour to revive the Nationalist Party? Or was it for his personal spiritual gain that he had left the world and affairs like politics? If it was not so then why did he suddenly depart from his great and responsible role leaving the movement for India's freedom and regeneration at an immature stage? A few even painted him as an escapist.

His ardent followers, both in politics and later in his spiritual pursuit, knew very well that the departure, though unexpected, was actually moving from one front to another. Instead of the outer he would carry on his work from the inner Yogic front, and that was to fulfil the Will of the Divine. He himself clarified this issue in a letter written to one of his disciples in October 1932. "I may also say that I did not leave politics because I felt I could do nothing more there; such an idea was very far from me. I came away because I did not want anything to interfere with my Yoga and because I got a very distinct *adesha* in the matter. I have cut connection entirely with politics, but before I did so I knew from within that the work I had begun there was destined to be carried forward, on lines I had foreseen, by others, and that the ultimate triumph of the movement I had initiated was sure without my personal action or presence. There was not the least motive of despair or sense of futility behind my withdrawal."³⁴

To have a more explicit answer to the question, we may recall what he had stated in his letters written in 1920 to two prominent nationalist leaders who appealed to him to come back to British India and resume leadership in Indian politics.

The first letter was written on 5 January 1920 to Joseph Baptista who had requested Sri Aurobindo to return to British India to take up the editorship of an English daily which was proposed to be brought out from Bombay as the organ of a new political party which Tilak and others were intending to form at that time.

The second letter dated 30 August 1920 was addressed to Dr. Munje—one of the most prominent leaders of the Congress at Nagpur, who requested Sri Aurobindo to return to British India to take up the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress. Dr. Munje had also come to Pondicherry in 1920 and had long talks on current Indian politics with Sri Aurobindo.

In reply to the first letter Sri Aurobindo wrote

Dear Baptista,

Your offer is a tempting one, but I regret that I cannot answer it in the affirmative. It is due to you that I should state explicitly my reasons. In the first

place I am not prepared at present to return to British India. This is quite apart from any political obstacle. I understand that up to last September the Government of Bengal (and probably the Government of Madras also) were opposed to my return to British India and that practically this opposition meant that if I went back I should be interned or imprisoned under one or other of the beneficent Acts which are apparently still to subsist as helps in ushering in the new era of trust and cooperation. I do not suppose other Governments would be any more delighted by my appearance in their respective provinces. . . But even if I were assured of an entirely free action and movement, I should yet not go just now. I came to Pondicherry in order to have freedom and tranquillity for a fixed object having nothing to do with present politics—in which I have taken no direct part since my coming here, though what I could do for the country in my own way I have constantly done,—and until it is accomplished, it is not possible for me to resume any kind of public activity. Pondicherry is my place of retreat, my cave of tapasya, not of the ascetic kind, but of a brand of my own invention. I must finish that, I must be internally armed and equipped for my work before I leave it.

Next in the matter of the work itself I do not at all look down on politics or political action or consider I have got above them. The importance of politics at the present time is very great. But my line and intention of political activity would differ considerably from anything now current in the field.

You may ask why not come out and help, myself, so far as I can, in giving a lead? But my mind has a habit of running inconveniently ahead of the times, —some might say, out of time altogether into the world of the ideal. . . In a word, I am feeling my way in my mind and am not ready for either propaganda or action. Even if I were, it would mean for some time ploughing my lonely furrow or at least freedom to take my own way. As the editor of your paper, I should be bound to voice the opinion of others and reserve my own. I am almost incapable by nature of limiting myself in that way, at least to the extent that would be requisite.³⁵

In his letter to Dr. Munje Sri Aurobindo expressed his inability for accepting the Presidentship of Nagpur Congress. He explained.

There are reasons even within the political field itself which in any case would have stood in my way. I am entirely in sympathy with all that is being done so far as its object is to secure liberty for India, but I should be unable to identify myself with the programme of any of the parties. The President of the Congress is really a mouthpiece of the Congress and to make from the presidential chair a purely personal pronouncement miles away from what the Congress is thinking and doing would be grotesquely out of place. These reasons would in any case have come in the way of my accepting your offer.

The central reason however is this that I am no longer first and foremost a politician, but have definitely commenced another kind of work with a spiritual

basis, a work of spiritual, social, cultural and economic reconstruction of an almost revolutionary kind, and am even making or at least supervising a sort of practical or laboratory experiment in that sense which needs all the attention and energy that I can have to spare. It is impossible for me to combine political work of the current kind and this at the beginning. I should practically have to leave it aside, and this I cannot do, as I have taken it up as my mission for the rest of my life. This is the true reason of my inability to respond to your call³⁶

From these two letters it is evident that the revolutionary work of spiritual, social, cultural and economic reconstruction not only of India but of the entire world was his mission for the rest of his life.

Indeed if one studies and contemplates his essays that appeared in the *Bande Mataram* and the *Karmayogin*, as well as his speeches delivered during this period, one would certainly realise that Sri Aurobindo had been carrying on unceasing public activities with a tranquil mind. He had awakened to a new consciousness and in this new status his politics and spirituality had fused. It is perhaps from this perspective that Keshavamurti, one of his devotees in the Ashram, in his book *Sri Aurobindo—The Hope of Man*, had commented. “Spirituality explained politics and politics fulfilled itself in spirituality.”

Long ago, in the first issue of the *Karmayogin* under the title “The Ideal of the *Karmayogin*” Sri Aurobindo emphatically stated, as we have observed earlier. “The task we set before ourselves is not mechanical but moral and spiritual. We aim not at the alteration of a form of government but at the building up of a nation. Of that task politics is a part, but only a part. There is a mighty law of life, a great principle of human evolution, a body of spiritual knowledge and experience of which India has always been destined to be guardian, exemplar and missionary. This is the *sanātana dharma*, the eternal religion. To understand the heart of this *dharma*, to experience it as a truth, to feel the high emotions to which it rises and to express and execute it in life is what we understand by Karmayoga. We believe that it is to make the *yoga* the ideal of human life that India rises today. It is a spiritual revolution we foresee and the material is only its shadow and reflex.”³⁷

Now perhaps we may understand, as we have already indicated, that Sri Aurobindo’s departure, though unexpected, was from the outer or surface front of politics to the inner front of Yogic pursuit. If in British India his role was that of a revolutionary leader to awaken the nation, here in French India he paved the path of terrestrial evolution towards its supramental destiny.

(concluded)

SAMAR BASU

References

34 *SABCL*, Vol 26 p 55

36 *Ibid*, pp 432-33

35 *Ibid* pp 429-31

37 *SABCL*, Vol 2 pp 16-17

UMA HAIMAVATI

A Dance-Drama in Five Scenes Based on a Story from the Kena Upanishad

(Continued from the issue of February 1998)

Scene 3

(Agni, Vayu and Indra)

(chorus)

Our blazing prowess
has killed the demon-lord,
and at the end of the painful night
light shines again in heaven

Our heroic strength
has expunged lawlessness
and the terrible thunder-fire
has burned down falsehood and delusion

We have brought down in heaven
a new stream of peace,
and once again the sun and the stars
are shining in the sky.

The false shadow of fear
has now vanished,
and our godly energy
has burnt the undivine Maya

Indra

I am the king of the gods, the lord of heaven, lone supreme lord,
the glory of my splendour has filled the heart of heaven and earth
When the earth was floating on the waters of the cosmic dissolution,
it was I who, by my command, made the unstable One solid and stable
I have spread out the sky on the primal emptiness
and delivered the seven rivers by destroying the great serpent
I have brought back the light-cows from the caverns of the Pani-robbers,
the adverse forces will no longer hold back the divine light
I am invincible, I am the killer of the robbers,
and it is I who have traced the path of the Dawn and the Sun in the vast sky

In wrath I have severed the wings of the outrageous mountains,
 and Shambara, the demon-magician, shudders when my thunders roll.
 I am the primal god, the drinker of Soma, I am Shakra,
 and my silently-hinted command makes the cosmic wheel go round

(The three gods in chorus)

We are unconquerable, glorious and luminous,
 there is none like us, none, none, none whosoever
 We are the terrible, most valorous, eternal and great
 It is our victory, ours Victory to us, victory!

Vayu

My golden chariot rolls thundering
 on the skiey road scattering a ruddy hue;
 my breath makes comets fly
 and the world-tree drop its leaves.
 I was asleep in the womb of the boundless time
 and woke up when Indra, the performer of a
 hundred sacrifices, called me,
 I am proud to be able to take part in the divine work,
 and I run turning and turning in whirlwinds
 I am the adventure of the unreposing hurricane,
 I am the leader of Vasava's wind-army,
 I tear down and scatter all evil barriers
 No one can check my terrible progress

(The three gods in chorus)

We are the supreme refuge of men, the saviours of the world
 There is none like us, none, none, none whosoever
 The obedient bring at our feet treasured offerings
 It is our victory, ours Victory to us, victory!

Agni

I am Krishanu of variegated lustre, the flag of sacrifice, bright;
 I am Vahni, whitely pure, the brother of Indra,
 in the sky I am the lightning, in the high heavens I am the sun.
 The night-roving demons flee from me in fear.
 I am the lord of oblations, Agni, priest of the divine sacrifice
 I spread my smoky matted locks throughout the sky,
 my flames roll like waves in roaring glee.
 In the war against the demons I am the terrible Time mightily blazing
 When the Wind is with me I run in swift violence

leaving under my feet nothing but burnt-out ashes.
I am the purifier, whitely pure, Indra's brother.

(The three gods in chorus)

We are the immortal lords of the three worlds, the terror of demon-forces.
There is none like us, none, none, none whosoever
We fulfil with our boons the desire of the world.
It is our victory, ours. Victory to us, victory!

Scene 4

(Indra, Agni and Vayu)

(*chorus*)

We have killed the demons The gods have no fear now
It is our victory, ours Victory to us, victory!

(*The gods dance with music*)

(Yaksha, the Spirit appears The three gods, in chorus)

Who is it that comes here, who?
Oh, what a wonderful vision!
Who is this Spirit, this image of light,
peaceful, unglaring?
Never before have we laid eyes on him
in heaven or on earth,
we feel that his beauty holds back
some profound mystery

(Indra and Vayu turning towards Agni)

Go, Agni, go and learn
who this Spirit is
of wonder unknown

(*Agni goes forward*)

Yaksha

Who are you? Who are you? Who are you?

Agni

I am Agni, the Fire, the knower of all things born, the devourer of oblations;
I know all that has taken birth in this world,
animals, birds, men, gods and demons, I know them all,
I am of the rising flames, of the bright countenance.
In the bodies of the creatures, in the atoms of this material universe,

I burn with countless flames
I am the knower of all things born, the devourer of oblations

Yaksha

Then say, O knower of all things born,
what is your function,
what are your capacities, your duties

Agni

I am the wrathful,
uncurbable is my strength
Whatever is there in this world, hard or soft,
blazing up, I can burn in the twinkling of an eye
With my flaming radiance I cast out demoniac darknesses
My valour is unbounded; I am the wrathful, the uncurbable.

Yaksha (*putting a blade of grass in front of Agni*)

God Agni, devourer of oblations, all-consuming Fire,
O unbearable strength, dire,
show me if you can burn this tiny blade of grass
(Agni tries to consume the grass, fails and returns with bowed head)

Agni

Oh, what a shame!
What a horrible failure!
I beg your pardon, Lord of the gods,
I have failed to learn who this Spirit is.

Indra (*turning towards Vayu*)

Go, Vayu, go and learn
Who this Spirit is
of wonder unknown

(*Vayu goes forward*)

Yaksha

Who are you? Who are you? Who are you?

Vayu

I am Vayu, the Wind, Matarishvan, growing in the womb of mother-ether,
I am Pavana, the pure, Prabhanjana, the stormy shatterer
My exalted voice resounds in the immense spaces
I am the respiration in the animals, the life-breath of the world

It is I who fix the life-span of all creatures;
I am the storm, the unshackled wind

Yaksha

Then say, O Matarishvan,
what is your function,
what are your capacities, your duties

Vayu

I am the swift, the eternally moving, the unrestrainable
Whatever there is in this world, I can lift and carry away
I am ever fleeting, with a tremendous speed crushing all resistance
Blowing with indomitable force I create waves in the oceans
Nothing can stop me, none can hold me back,
my strength is unbounded, I am the terrible, the unrestrainable

Yaksha (*showing the blade of grass*)

O breaker of all things, terror of the world,
O Wind of the fierce voice,
show me if you can lift up this tiny blade of grass.

(Vayu tries his utmost, fails to move the grass He comes back with bowed head)

Vayu

Oh, what a shame!
What a horrible failure!
I beg your pardon, Lord of the gods,
I have failed to learn who this Spirit is

Vayu and Agni (*turning towards Indra*)

We have not been able to know who this Spirit is
and have come back defeated,
O Lord of the gods, glorious, great,
go, go, friend,
go and learn, Lord of Heaven,
what this mystery means,
see if you can learn, friend,
something about Him

Indra

What is this strange thing! What is this mystery!
I shall go and see if I can learn who He is
If we cannot know Him, our victory will be vain,

vain the destruction of the demons,
vain my godly kingship, my heavenly throne

Who are you, Yaksha? Who are you?

(Indra goes forward)

(The Spirit vanishes)

(To be concluded)

RANAJIT SARKAR

THE LIFE DIVINE BY SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of February 1998)

13 The question arises. ‘If the universe of our perception and cognition is a creation by self-involution of the infinite Consciousness, then where is the room in it for ignorance?’ It cannot be part and parcel of inconscient Matter, for after all Matter is expected ultimately to outgrow the stains and ulcers of the ignorance. Neither can Ignorance be integral to the Spirit, for in that case Reality will be self-divided at the fountain-source itself—a supposition that must be ruled out altogether. What, then, is Ignorance?

Sri Aurobindo cuts the Gordian Knot by affirming that ignorance too is knowledge—only, it is partial or imperfect knowledge. He sees no need to presuppose the existence of a beginningless Power that creates the illusions and unrealities of the world of phenomena.

14 There is, indeed, a whole hierarchy of Knowledge or Consciousness, at the bottom it is ‘the abyss of the unbodied infinite’, the shadowy image of nescience or inconscience; at the top it is Knowledge and Superconscience, ‘the kingdom of the spirit’s power and light’, and in the middle region, ruled by the divided mind, it is ignorance or muddled knowledge, ‘a coalition of Uncertainties’. ‘Maya’ and ‘Avidya’ are, thus, not the terrible absolutes that they are in Shankara’s metaphysics. Ignorance arises on the way, like atmospheric mist or fog, and it will also disappear on the way. It is neither beginningless Maya nor the stain of some original Sin, it is no more than a characteristic colouring at one stage in the descent of Consciousness, and when the counter-movement of ascent passes that stage, the colour will begin to fade and soon pass away, leaving Knowledge stainless and pure.

15. Why should ignorance—even if it be only a transient eruption—ever arise at all? While attempting to answer this question, Sri Aurobindo refers to the concept of Lila, God’s sport or play, dismisses the cruder forms of its formulation, and then comes out with his own explanation. To paraphrase him: A God, himself all-blissful, who delights in the suffering of creatures or imposes such suffering on them for the faults of his own imperfect creation, would be no Divinity. But if the human soul is a portion of the Divinity, if it is a divine Spirit in man that puts on this imperfection and in the form of humanity consents to bear this suffering, or if the soul in humanity is meant to be drawn to the Divine Spirit and is His associate in the play of imperfection here, in the delight of perfect being elsewhere, the Lila may still remain a paradox, but it ceases to be a cruel or revolting paradox.

16 With regard to the broader question as to how an illimitable Divine Consciousness happened to undergo the process of limitation and separateness, Sri Aurobindo recalls the ancient concept of Tapas or ‘concentration of power of consciousness’ and cites this well-known passage from the Taittiriya Upanishad

He desired, ‘May I be Many,’ he concentrated in Tapas, by Tapas he created

the world; creating, he entered into it, entering, he became the existent and the beyond-existent, he became the expressed and the unexpressed. he became knowledge and ignorance, he became the truth and the falsehood

- 17 The individual ego is a pragmatic and effective fiction. It is separated by ignorance from other-self and from the inner Divinity, but is still pushed secretly towards an evolutionary unification in diversity, it has behind itself, though finite, the impulse towards the infinite. But this in the terms of an ignorant consciousness translates itself into the will to expand, to be a boundless finite, to take everything it can into itself.

But because it does these things as a separate ego for its separate advantage and not by conscious interchange and mutuality, not by unity, life-discord, conflict, disharmony arise, and it is the products of this life-discord and disharmony that we call wrong and evil. The evolutionary intention acts through the evil as through the good. This is the reason why we see evil coming out of what we call good and good coming out of what we call evil. Our standards of both are evolutionary, limited and mutable.

- 18 The Supreme Reality is indeed Sachchidananda, which as an aspect of its Lila resorts to Tapas, the Spirit thereby undergoing an involution into material forms, the One scattering into the Many. At the lowest level, where Consciousness is in a swoon, inconscience is the ruling law. The counter-movement of evolution starts from this material level, reaches up during the long aeons of geological time to the level of instinctive life in plant, insect and animal, and encompasses a further leap when out of life evolves mind and Homo Sapiens emerges as the visible crown and roof of creation. The analytical mind of man both clarifies and confuses, both helps and hinders further progress. Mental consciousness is apt to take the part for the whole, to be dazzled by false lights, to defeat itself by the very perfection of its analytical subtlety. Careering through an infinity of differentiations, it is apt to forget or deny altogether the integral harmony in which the differences vanish and only the unity remains. The progeny of Evil are real enough, but they are not the ultimate Truth. There are higher and more potent realities than they. Although man the mental being is not ordinarily aware of them, he chooses to be weighed down by the weary burden of the lower dualities. Of course, Evil is not outright illusion, and the pictures we form with the aid of our mental consciousness are neither Truth nor Falsehood—they are partly true and partly false. Imperfect as they are, the pictures do not cancel the richer and profounder reality of the living Spirit behind, any more than a photograph or a painting cancels the fuller reality of the person or object. As the Rishi affirms in Sri Aurobindo's poem *The Rishi*

For grief and pain
Are errors of the clouded soul, behind
They do not stain
The living spirit who to these is blind

(SABCL, Vol 5, p 309)

- 19 The evolutionary process (through this and other lives, this and other 'worlds') having now reached the stage of Man the mental being—Man with his languages, crafts, sciences and technologies, his philosophies and religions, his social and political institutions, his arts of life and his terrible arts of death—well, what next? If he cannot (or will not) shed the limitations of his present mentality and grow into the Truth-Consciousness, into the supramental status, he will have to be written off as a failure. But the indications are that Man himself may be able, either to attain the supramental status, or at least to make his mind, life and body a responsive field of experimentation where the first decisive advances towards the Supermind may be made. The inner urge towards spiritualisation is already there, and the only question is whether it will prove strong enough to pierce the barrier between Mind and Supermind.
- 20 If egoistic mental man is ultimately to change into the spiritual man and superman, his endeavour to forge ahead in the evolutionary scale must be met, half-way as it were, by a corresponding descent of Consciousness also. And this is how it will surely happen, as it has already happened in the earlier leaps of the evolutionary process. Human aspiration will organise itself into an integral effort to exceed the limitations of the ignorance, and, simultaneously, the opportune descent of Consciousness will flood the shining tablelands of human endeavour. But in the process of descent, while the lower nature may be raised a little, the higher descending consciousness may suffer "a modification, dilution, diminution" and the resulting change may have to share these limitations and obscurations. When Life descended into matter and Mind into life, they had to suit themselves to the resistance of the lower nature, and hence they were not able to make a complete transformation of their material into a fit instrument and a changed substance revelatory of their real and native power. Between the great potentiality and the hard reality there falls the shadow of frustration and semi-defeat.
- 21 The so-called ascending and descending movements are really the two ends of a single life-line of Consciousness, and what is needed is a closing of the gap, a joining, a soldering, an effective restoration of the circuit of the dynamic power of the Truth-Consciousness so that the "Big Change", the spiritual and supramental transformation, can be realised on the earth.

Now at long last we come to the heart of the matter, the Ascent towards the Supermind. Once the awakening to the inner soul-reality of our being and the awareness by identity of our soul-relationship with others and with the universe have been realised—that is the essence of the psychic and spiritual transformation—the stage is set for the supreme adventure.

- 22 In the Chapter on "The Ascent Towards Supermind", Higher Mind is described as "a mind no longer of mingled light and obscurity or half light, but a large clarity of the spirit" with a basic unitarian sense of being, Illumined Mind as a mind "no longer of higher Thought, but of spiritual light—an intense lustre, a splendour and illumination of the spirit", Intuition as a fourfold power of revelatory truth-seeing,

truth-hearing, truth-touch and truth-discrimination; and Overmind as “a principle of global knowledge which carries in it a delegated light from the supramental gnosis” The images are so vivid that it is clear that Sri Aurobindo is only describing what had become, since Alipur, a matter of daily experience for him. Although this “structural map of the ascent to the supramental summit” is more tentative than definitive, the main configuration will stand. And normally the conquest of each peak has to be consolidated before the assault on the next higher peak may be made.

The final or culminating assault or heave of the ascending ocean of consciousness is on the supramental citadel itself; Man must now grow into the complete Supreme, the supramental being, or the Gnostic being. The induction of the supramental principle and power into the human being must also mean the gradual supramentalisation of man’s environment, in other words the transformation of nature into supernature. The “gnostic being” would be the consummation of the climb of the spiritual man.

23. At the end of this monumental work, Sri Aurobindo refers to the present “evolutionary crises” in earth-history when two wholly opposed possibilities seem to be open to Man: either an accelerated pursuit of new wants and the “aggressive expansion of the collective ego” that must lead mankind to the Abyss, or a daring spiritual-supramental adventure of consciousness leading to the Life Divine on a terrestrial base.
24. Sri Aurobindo perceived that this world of ours is a developing progression of an unfolding Consciousness. Spiritual evolution is the process of this unfoldment. Consciousness is manifesting on the globe in developing forms, stage by stage. The stage of inert Matter was followed by the outbreak of life, that in turn was succeeded by the formation of mind; the next inevitable step, Sri Aurobindo points out, is the manifestation of the Spirit, the Soul, the Divine Mind which is a principle of Truth-Knowledge, Truth-Will, Unity. All evolutionary change and effort is inexorably moving in this direction. Man is on his way to becoming a God-man, a being with a God-consciousness of which harmony, peace, oneness are the natural working. Sri Aurobindo did 40 years of uninterrupted Sadhana to hasten the advent of this vision of Divine Consciousness. He and the Mother were engaged in establishing on earth the domain of this New Consciousness that promises nothing less than an unadulterated Life Divine to the human race. By his tapasya to actualise this state of the Truth-Consciousness on earth, Sri Aurobindo has made it possible for man to achieve this ideal of a divine Kingdom in himself and in the race, and built the path to this glorious destiny. Sri Aurobindo says.

To lead man’s soul towards Truth and God we are born,
To draw the chequered scheme of mortal life
Into some semblance of the Immortal’s plan,
To shape it closer to an image of God,

A little nearer to the Idea divine

(*Savitri*, p 720)

- 25 *The Life Divine* expresses more than any other work of Sri Aurobindo his cosmic vision, multi-faceted, universal and moving inexorably beyond all established limits. Let me quote from *Savitri*:

The frontiers of the Ignorance shall recede,
More and more souls shall enter into light,...
Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
The Spirit shall take up the human play,
This earthly life become the life divine

(*Savitri*, p. 710.)

(*Concluded*)

GOPAL BHATTACHARJEE

Students' Section

THE BLACK CHILD OF DOOM

THE sun beat mercilessly down on the already parched fields. The ground was baked and cracked like a gigantic jigsaw puzzle. There was not a plant in sight as far as the barren hills, miles away—that once provided the waters that sustained life on these fields. A clump of dead trees stood in the middle of the fields, on which in some bygone age there was always an abundance of crop. Now there was nothing. Not a soul stirred, not even a bug looking for food among the carcasses of cows and goats. Waves of heat rose from the parched land and lay like a heavy blanket—smothering all life—as far as the hills that marked the end of these lands.

This was the scene that the villagers of Bhojpur saw every morning. God knows how many cycles the moon had made since the showers of life had failed them on the day of birth of the village headman's child, and no-one cared any more about how many cycles the moon made; there was no consolation in counting them. All they had counted were how many cows had died, or how many goats were slain for food—but none remained now—and they counted how many days they had left before they too perished from famine and drought.

They had performed innumerable *pujas* and hundreds of sacrifices to the gods to lift the curse they believed plagued them and to send rains to wet their lands. But the only thing that wet their fields was the blood of the sacrificial goats. They had all given up hope for the rain that had sustained them and their forefathers for untold generations and made them the most prosperous village in the north of India. Those very rains had let them down and failed them miserably. They would not survive more than a few more lunar cycles without the rains.

Everyone remembered that fateful day at the onset of the monsoons, three years earlier, when the village headman's wife had died with the pain of labour while bearing him a child—all black in complexion. From that very day, the rains had ceased to quench the thirst of the land. The priest had warned them all that the child was destined to bring them trouble and great misery unless he was sacrificed to the gods. The headman had the priest removed from the village because he had wanted to kill his son. And so the black son of the headman lived. He lived, but at the cost of misery and suffering and pain to the village. He lived while slowly others died. Many infants perished from want of water and food but the black child blossomed.

The few village elders still alive began to talk of sacrificing the child of doom—as he was called—to appease the gods, but the headman had kept them at bay. Slowly the whole village began to clamour and threatened to forget respect and ethics if the black child of doom was not sacrificed. After days that turned into weeks and weeks into months, the headman, who had been burning in the fires of duty and love, could hold out no longer against the villagers. His senses had been deadened by the fires in which he had burned, and the date of the sacrifice was fixed for the day on which the moon

completed its cycle. At midday, two days later, the child of doom would laugh no longer.

On the appointed day, the villagers gathered at the headman's house. This day was hotter than any other they had experienced. It was as if the child of doom had sensed his destruction and tried to prevent it by making the day so hot as to make moving about a near impossibility. But the determination of the villagers was as grim as the heat that day.

A slow procession began from the headman's house. A mass of bones and scorched flesh plodded slowly into the fields. The hearts of the people beat furiously against their chests, but no expression showed on the taut skin of their faces. The idea of seeing rains again thrilled their every pore. They should have sacrificed the child of doom a long time ago. But would the delay affect the coming of the rains? Suddenly, doubts plagued their minds. When would they be able to open their parched mouths heavenward to let a few drops of the sweet rain trickle down their throats? No one knew.

In the distance a solitary black cloud approached the dejected group that crawled to the centre of the fields. As the villagers saw the cloud each one of them quickened his weak steps. As if in response the black cloud moved faster towards them. As the villagers moved towards the cluster of dead trees, so did the black cloud. It was soon above them. The headman placed his son on the altar of sacrifice, caked with dried blood. Everybody crowded in to see the end of the child of doom.

It was the headman's unfortunate duty to perform the sacrifice. Tears welled up in his eyes at the thought of his child's death, but they evaporated instantly under the glare of the midday sun. Slowly he raised the hand that held the axe—it gleamed like lightning. The edge was honed to razor sharpness so that the sacrificial one would not feel much pain. But many who gathered that day wished the axe was blunt so that the child of doom would feel pain—pain like the pangs of hunger that shot through their stomachs, pain as when the sun beat on their backs as they dug wells for water—yes, they wanted him to feel pain, a lot of pain!

Lying on the altar, the child of doom gurgled, a soft but ominous gurgle which sounded like water gushing over pebbles. The headman cut short the ominous gurgle with a swift stroke of his axe. It was buried deep in the breast of doom. Fortune could now smile on the village because the child of doom was dying!

As the first drop of blood fell from the altar to the ground, the black cloud overhead offered a drop of water. As blood flowed down the altar to the thirsting fields, a shower of rain fell from the cloud. Slowly more clouds gathered in the afternoon sky and each shed its load onto the fields. The fields drank the water greedily. Faces turned skyward to feel the downpour. More and more clouds sped to the scene and filled the entire dome over Bhojpur with black clouds. Torrential rain beat down on the upturned faces. Water trickled down the cracked lips into the parched mouths and finally into the throats of the villagers.

Their dusty skin suddenly began to shine and their sore eyes drank in the scene of

the bountiful rain that the gods had sent down. Praised be the Lord for his mercy The child of doom was dying

Greater and more ominous clouds gathered in the sky Lightning streaked and thunder rolled and still the rain came hurtling down The fields had drunk their fill, the earth had replenished her bowels but still the rain came pouring down The clouds gathered more rapidly, increasing the deluge of water from the sky The villagers began returning to the safety and security of their homes No one cared anymore for the child of doom, lying on the altar of death with the axe embedded in his tiny chest. Blood still spurted from his veins and rain still fell from the ever-increasing mass of clouds in the sky.

The blazing sun had long since been pushed into oblivion by the mass of black that spewed rain. Occasional lightning illuminated the desolate fields and huts Thunder roared and obliterated all other sounds

But slowly a soft gurgling—like the one uttered by the child of doom—now reared above the thunder Steadily, the soft gurgle became louder, more ominous, until it became a mighty roar. A great wall of water, flowing down the hills, was racing towards the villagers of Bhojpur The earth shook with the sound of the advancing doom. Nothing could stand in its way—everything was swallowed by the roaring laughter of the child of doom

Then, suddenly, everything was silent The sun broke weakly through the curtain of clouds A red pallor shimmered around the sun and reflected off the waters below. The fields were drowned in flood

The child of doom had merely killed as he lived, but he had destroyed as he died

SHILENDRA GUPTA

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