

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

SPECIAL ISSUE

15 AUGUST 1998 THE ANNIVERSARY OF  
SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTHDAY

PRICE: Rs 10 00

## Revised Subscriptions

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

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Life Membership Rs 1400 00

Price per Single Copy Rs 10 00

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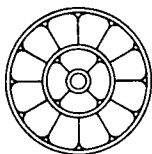
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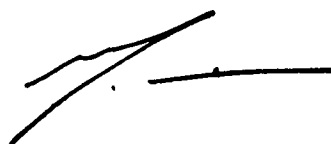


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled



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

Editor's Phone 34782

Publishers Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

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Published by H A R I K A N T C P A I I I

S R I A U R O B I N D O A S H R A M T R U S T I

P U B L I C A T I O N D E P A R T M E N T P O N D I C H E R R Y 6 0 5 0 0 2

Printed by A M I Y O R A N I A N G A N G U L Y

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press Pondicherry 605 002

P R I N T E D I N I N D I A

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

# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LI

No. 8

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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## AN INSIGHT AND A VISION

Swi Amabinda stands before the world as a life and a personality with a firm hold on the past, a hold which opens up in that mighty past an urge toward a still greater future.

Thus, for him, the Rigveda is not just a glorious record of spiritually inspiring ritualism with a set goal. It is a double pointer. At the same time it is a glorious signpost towards the magnitudes of inner self-realisation which shine out to us from the Upanishads and towards a goal which outlasts the Upanishadic realisations.

Though the Upanishads have an eye cast upon all earth which is to be illuminated, they direct the consciousness of that earth towards a Beyond which alone possesses in full the desired illumination. The Gita seizes again the earth-motive and is eminently a scripture of dynamic spirituality emphasising the Here and Now! Yet it is aware of idealisations in this emphasis of its Gospel.

And the final word appears to be  
that cry of Sri Krishna from a mighty  
distance: "You who must come into  
this transient and unhappy world,  
love and worship Me."

It is as if for all the lustrous  
possibilities of earth-existence, the  
final goal cannot help being a  
planary Beyond. We are an interim  
passage between what Sri Aurobindo  
has termed the Inconscient and the  
Superconscient. But the typical  
Aurobindonian insight has been  
missed — the insight that within  
the Inconscient the Superconscient  
lies hidden. The concealed Super-  
conscient has at the same time an  
inherent urge to glow out and  
respond to a pressure from the  
fully realised Superconscient above.  
This pressure promises that  
Superconscient's revelation in  
evolutionary terms — the splendor  
above working in full its own  
counterpart buried below.

At the heart of this counterpart  
there is a spark aware of its descent  
from that high home of illumination —  
the spark which Sri Aurobindo has  
named "the psychic being", the  
eternal soul in us which holds all  
godlike possibilities and gradually

With its full flowering, the Superegoicent  
above will descend and the Superegoicent  
below will ascend to build on earth the  
completely evolved and totally manifest  
form of the Supreme Divine.

All of us who have been a  
disciples of Sri Anandam and the  
Nayars will ultimately manifest  
in full their divinity. A pathway  
leading to that consummation they  
have set before us what they have  
called the Integral Yoga, the process  
of all-round spiritualisation and  
supramentalisation which we are  
striving to undergo with all  
our fumbling and stumbling and  
stumbling yet a determination never  
to give up but ever to carry on  
until we stand as true children  
of the all-enfolding spiritual Light  
that is Sri Anandam and the  
all-illuminating spiritual Law that  
is the Nayas.



(Transcription of the facsimile on the preceding pages)

### AN INSIGHT AND A VISION

SRI AUROBINDO stands before the world as a life and a personality with a firm hold on the past, a hold which opens up in that mighty past an urge towards a still greater future.

Thus, for him, the Rigveda is not just a glorious record of spiritually aspiring rishihood with a set goal. It is a double pointer. At the same time it is a glorious signpost towards the magnitudes of inner self-realisation which shine out to us from the Upanishads and towards a goal which outvastis the Upanishadic realisations.

Though the Upanishads have an eye cast upon an earth which is to be illuminated, they direct the consciousness of that earth towards a Beyond which alone possesses in full the desired illumination. The Gita seizes again the earth-motive and is eminently a scripture of dynamic spirituality emphasising the Here and Now. Yet it is aware of limitations in this emphasis of its gospel. And the final word appears to be that cry of Sri Krishna from a mighty distance: "Thou who hast come into this transient and unhappy world, love and worship Me."

It is as if for all the lustrous possibilities of earth-existence, the final goal cannot help being a plenary Beyond. We are an interim passage between what Sri Aurobindo has termed the Inconscient and the Superconscient. But the typical Aurobindonian insight has been missed—the insight that within the Inconscient the Superconscient lies hidden. The concealed Superconscient has at the same time an inherent urge to glow out and respond to a pressure from the fully realised Superconscient above. This pressure promises that Superconscient's revelation in evolutionary terms—the splendour above evoking in full its own counterpart buried below.

At the heart of this counterpart there is a spark aware of its descent from that high home of illumination—the spark which Sri Aurobindo has named "the psychic being", the inmost soul in us which holds all godlike possibilities and gradually evolves them through life after life on earth. With its full flowering, the Superconscient above will descend and the Superconscient below will ascend to build on earth the completely evolved and totally manifested form of the supreme Divine.

All of us who have been disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother will ultimately manifest in full their divinity. As a pathway leading to that consummation, they have set before us what they have called the Integral Yoga, the process of all-round spiritualisation and supramentalisation which we are striving to undergo with all our fumbling and grumbling and stumbling yet a determination never to give up but ever to carry on until we stand as true children of the all-enfolding spiritual Light that is Sri Aurobindo and the all-illuminating spiritual Love that is the Mother.

AMAL KIRAN  
(K. D. SETHNA)

## WHO IS THIS THAT COMES?

Who is this that comes, the bride,  
The flame-born, and round her illumined head  
Pouring their lights her hymeneal pomps  
Move flashing about her? From what green glimmer of glades  
Retreating into dewy silences  
Or half-seen verge of waters moon-betrayed  
Bringst thou this glory of enchanted eyes?  
Earth has gold-hued expanses, shadowy hills  
That cowl their dreaming phantom heads in night,  
And guarded in a cloistral joy of woods,  
Screened banks sink down into felicity  
Seized by the curved incessant yearning hands  
And ripple-passion of the up-gazing stream:  
Amid cool-lipped murmurs of its pure embrace  
They lose their souls on beds of trembling reeds  
And all these are mysterious presences  
In which some spirit's immortal bliss is felt,  
And they betray the earth-born heart to joy.  
There hast thou paused, and marvelling borne eyes  
Unknown, or heard a voice that forced thy life  
To strain its rapture through thy listening soul?  
Or, if my thought could trust this shimmering gaze,  
It would say: thou hast not drunk from an earthly cup,  
But stepping through azure curtains of the morn  
Thou wast surrounded on a magic verge  
In brighter countries than man's eyes can bear.  
Assailed by trooping voices of delight  
And seized mid a sunlit glamour of the boughs  
In faery woods, led down the gleaming slopes  
Of Gundhamadan where the Apsaras roam,  
Thy limbs have shared the sports which none has seen,  
And in god-haunts thy human footsteps strayed,  
Thy mortal bosom quivered with god-speech  
And thy soul answered to a Word unknown  
What feet of gods, what ravishing flutes of heaven  
Have thrilled high melodies round, from near and far  
Approaching through the soft and revelling air,  
Which still surprised thou hearest? They have fed  
Thy silence on some red strange-ecstasied fruit  
And thou hast trod the dim moon-peaks of bliss

Reveal, O winged with light, whence thou hast flown  
 Hastening bright-hued through the green tangled earth,  
 Thy body rhythmical with the spring-bird's call.  
 The empty roses of thy hands are filled  
 Only with their own beauty and the thrill  
 Of a remembered clasp, and in thee glows  
 A heavenly jar, thy firm deep-honied heart,  
 New-brimming with a sweet and nectarous wine.  
 Thou hast not spoken with the kings of pain  
 Life's perilous music rings yet to thy ear  
 Far-melodied, rapid, grand, a Centaur's song,  
 Or soft as water plashing mid the hills,  
 Or mighty as a great chant of many winds  
 Moon-bright thou livest in thy inner bliss.  
 Thou comest like a silver deer through groves  
 Of coral flowers and buds of glowing dreams,  
 Or fleest like a wind-goddess through leaves,  
 Or roamest, O ruby-eyed and snow-winged dove,  
 Flitting through thickets of thy pure desires  
 In the unwounded beauty of thy soul  
 These things are only images in thy earth,  
 But truest truth of that which in thee sleeps.  
 For such is thy spirit, a sister of the gods,  
 Thy earthly body lovely to the eyes,  
 And thou art kin in joy to heaven's sons  
 O thou who hast come to this great perilous world  
 Now only seen through the splendour of thy dreams,  
 Where hardly love and beauty can live safe,  
 Thyself a being dangerously great,  
 A soul alone in a golden house of thought  
 Has lived walled in by the safety of thy dreams.  
 On heights of happiness leaving doom asleep  
 Who hunts unseen the unconscious lives of men,  
 If thy heart could live locked in the ideal's gold,  
 As high, as happy might thy waking be!  
 If for all time doom could be left to sleep!

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL, Vol 29, pp 418-20)

## OM IS THIS IMPERISHABLE WORD

ओमित्येतदक्षरमिदं सर्वं तस्योपव्याख्यानं, भूतं भवद् भविष्यदिति  
सर्वमोङ्कार एव । यच्चान्यत् त्रिकालातीतं तदप्योङ्कार एव ॥१॥

- 1 OM is this imperishable Word, OM is the Universe, and this is the exposition of OM. The past, the present and the future, all that was, all that is, all that will be, is OM Likewise all else that may exist beyond the bounds of Time, that too is OM

सर्वं ह्येतद् ब्रह्म, अयमात्मा ब्रह्म, सोऽयमात्मा चतुष्पात् ॥२॥

- 2 All this Universe is the Eternal Brahman, this Self is the Eternal, and the Self is fourfold.

जागरितस्थानो बहिष्प्रज्ञ सप्ताङ्ग एकोनविंशतिमुखः स्थूलभुग् वैश्वानरः प्रथम पाद ॥३॥

- 3 He whose place is the wakefulness, who is wise of the outward, who has seven limbs, to whom there are nineteen doors, who feels and enjoys gross objects, Vaishwanara, the Universal Male, He is the first.

स्वप्नस्थानोऽन्तःप्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्ग एकोनविंशतिमुखः प्रविक्वित्भुक् तैजसो द्वितीयः पादः ॥४॥

4. He whose place is the dream, who is wise of the inward, who has seven limbs, to whom there are nineteen doors, who feels and enjoys subtle objects, Tajasa, the Inhabitant in Luminous Mind, He is the second

यत्र सुप्तो न कञ्चन काम कामयते, न कञ्चन स्वप्न पश्यति, तत् सुषुप्तम् ।  
सुषुप्तस्थान एकीभूतः प्रज्ञानघन एवानन्दमयो ह्यानन्दभुक् चेतोमुखः प्राज्ञस्तृतीयः पादः ॥५॥

- 5 When one sleeps and yearns not with any desire, nor sees any dream, that is the perfect slumber. He whose place is the perfect slumber, who is become Oneness, who is wisdom gathered into itself, who is made of mere delight, who enjoys delight unrelated, to whom conscious mind is the door, Prajna, the Lord of Wisdom, He is the third.

एष सर्वेश्वर एष सर्वज्ञ एषोऽन्तर्याम्येष योनिः सर्वस्य प्रभवाप्ययौ हि भूतानाम् ॥६॥

- 6 This is the Almighty, this is the Omniscient, this is the Inner Soul, this is the Womb of the Universe, this is the Birth and Destruction of creatures

नान्तःप्रज्ञ न बहिष्प्रज्ञ नोभयतःप्रज्ञ न प्रज्ञानघन न प्रज्ञ नाप्रज्ञम् ।  
अदृष्टमव्यवहार्यमग्राह्यमलक्षणमचिन्त्यमव्यपदेश्यमेकात्मप्रत्ययसार  
प्रपञ्चोपशम शान्त शिवमद्वैत चतुर्थं मन्यन्ते स आत्मा स विज्ञेय ॥७॥

- 7 He who is neither inward-wise, nor outward-wise, nor both inward- and outward-wise, nor wisdom self-gathered, nor possessed of wisdom, nor unpossessed of wisdom, He Who is unseen and incommunicable, unseizable, featureless, unthinkable, and unnameable, Whose essentiality is awareness of the Self in its single existence, in Whom all phenomena dissolve, Who is Calm, Who is Good, Who is the One than Whom there is no other, Him they deem the fourth: He is the Self, He is the object of Knowledge

सोऽयमात्माध्यक्षरमोङ्कारोऽधिमात्र पादा मात्रा मात्राश्च पादा अकार उकारो मकार इति ॥८॥

8. Now this the Self, as to the imperishable Word, is OM and as to the letters, His parts are the letters and the letters are His parts, namely, A U M.

जागरितस्थानो वैश्वानरोऽकार प्रथमा मात्रा, आप्तेरादिमत्त्वाद् वा,  
वा, आप्नोति ह वै सर्वान् कामानादिश्च भवति य एव वेद ॥९॥

9. The Waker, Vaishwanara, the Universal Male, He is A, the first letter, because of Initiality and Pervasiveness: he that knows Him for such pervades and attains all his desires: he becomes the source and first.

स्वप्नस्थानस्तैजस उकारो द्वितीया मात्रा, उत्कर्षादुभयत्वाद् वा,  
उत्कर्षति ह वै ज्ञानसन्ततिं समानश्च भवति, नास्याब्रह्मवित् कुले भवति य एव वेद ॥१०॥

10. The Dreamer, Tajasa, the Inhabitant in Luminous Mind, He is U, the second letter, because of Advance and Centrality: he that knows Him for such, advances the bounds of his knowledge and rises above difference nor of his seed is any born that knows not the Eternal.

सुषुप्तस्थानः प्राज्ञो मकारस्तृतीया मात्रा, मितेरपीतेर्वा, मिनोति ह  
वा इदं सर्वमपीतिश्च भवति य एव वेद ॥११॥

11. The Sleeper, Prajna, the Lord of Wisdom, He is M, the third letter, because of Measure and Finality: he that knows Him for such measures with himself the Universe and becomes the departure into the Eternal

अमात्रश्चतुर्थोऽव्यवहार्यः प्रपञ्चोपशम. शिवोऽद्वैत एवमोङ्कार आत्मैव,  
सविशत्यात्मनात्मान य एव वेद य एव वेद ॥१२॥

12. Letterless is the fourth, the Incommunicable, the end of phenomena, the Good, the One than Whom there is no other: thus is OM He that knows is the Self and enters by his self into the Self, he that knows, he that knows.

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Upanishads, SABCL, Vol 12, pp 289-91)

# DOES THE DIVINE RESPOND TO OUR EMOTIONS?

## SRI AUROBINDO'S ANSWER

THE ground on which sceptical unbelief assails Religion, namely, that there is in fact no conscient Power or Being in the universe greater and higher than ourselves or in any way influencing or controlling our existence, is one which Yoga cannot accept, as that would contradict all spiritual experience and make Yoga itself impossible. Yoga is not a matter of theory or dogma, like philosophy or popular religion, but a matter of experience. Its experience is that of a conscient universal and supracosmic Being with whom it brings us into union, and this conscious experience of union with the Invisible, always renewable and verifiable, is as valid as our conscious experience of a physical world and of visible bodies with whose invisible minds we daily communicate ...

So far, then, all Yogic experience is agreed. But Religion and the Yoga of Bhakti go farther; they attribute to this Being a Personality and human relations with the human being. In both the human being approaches the Divine by means of his humanity, with human emotions, as he would approach a fellow-being, but with more intense and exalted feelings; and not only so, but the Divine also responds in a manner answering to these emotions. In that possibility of response lies the whole question; for if the Divine is impersonal, featureless and relationless, no such response is possible and all human approach to it becomes an absurdity, we must rather dehumanise, depersonalise, annul ourselves in so far as we are human beings or any kind of beings, on no other conditions and by no other means can we approach it. Love, fear, prayer, praise, worship of an Impersonality which has no relation with us or with anything in the universe and no feature that our minds can lay hold of, are obviously an irrational foolishness. On such terms religion and devotion become out of the question....

Even if the Supreme be capable of relations with us but only of impersonal relations, religion is robbed of its human vitality and the Path of Devotion ceases to be effective or even possible. We may indeed apply our human emotions to it, but in a vague and imprecise fashion, with no hope of a human response: the only way in which it can respond to us, is by stilling our emotions and throwing upon us its own impersonal calm and immutable equality; and this is what in fact happens when we approach the pure impersonality of the Godhead. We can obey it as a Law, lift our souls to it in aspiration towards its tranquil being, grow into it by shedding from us our emotional nature; the human being in us is not satisfied, but it is quieted, balanced, stilled. But the Yoga of devotion, agreeing in this with Religion, insists on a closer and warmer worship than this impersonal aspiration. It aims at a divine fulfilment of the humanity in us as well as of the impersonal part of our being; it aims at a divine satisfaction of the emotional being of man. It demands of the Supreme acceptance of our love and a response in kind; as we delight in Him and seek Him, so it believes that He too delights in us and seeks us. Nor can this demand be condemned as irrational, for if the supreme and universal Being did not take any delight in us, it is not easy to see

how we could have come into being or could remain in being, and if He does not at all draw us towards Him,—a divine seeking of us,—there would seem to be no reason in Nature why we should turn from the round of our normal existence to seek Him.

Therefore, that there may be at all any possibility of a Yoga of devotion, we must assume first that the supreme Existence is not an abstraction or a state of existence, but a conscious Being; secondly, that he meets us in the universe and is in some way immanent in it as well as its source,—otherwise, we should have to go out of cosmic life to meet him, thirdly, that he is capable of personal relations with us and must therefore be not incapable of personality, finally, that when we approach him by our human emotions, we receive a response in kind. This does not mean that the nature of the Divine is precisely the same as our human nature though upon a larger scale, or that it is that nature pure of certain perversions and God a magnified or else an ideal Man. God is not and cannot be an ego limited by his qualities as we are in our normal consciousness. But on the other hand our human consciousness must certainly originate and have been derived from the Divine; though the forms which it takes in us may and must be other than the Divine because we are limited by ego, not universal, not superior to our nature, not greater than our qualities and their workings, as he is, still our human emotions and impulses must have behind them a Truth in him of which they are the limited and very often, therefore, the perverse or even the degraded forms. By approaching him through our emotional being we approach that Truth, it comes down to us to meet our emotions and lift them towards it, through it our emotional being is united with him.

Secondly, this supreme Being is also the universal Being and our relations with the universe are all means by which we are prepared for entering into relation with him. All the emotions with which we confront the action of the universal existence upon us are really directed towards him, in ignorance at first, but it is by directing them in growing knowledge towards him that we enter into more intimate relations with him, and all that is false and ignorant in them will fall away as we draw nearer towards unity. To all of them he answers, taking us in the stage of progress in which we are; for if we met no kind of response or help to our imperfect approach, the more perfect relations could never be established. Even as men approach him, so he accepts them and responds too by the divine Love to their Bhakti, *tathaiva bhajate*. Whatever form of being, whatever qualities they lend to him, through that form and those qualities he helps them to develop, encourages or governs their advance and in their straight way or their crooked draws them towards him. What they see of him is a truth, but a truth represented to them in the terms of their own being and consciousness, partially, distortedly, not in the terms of its own higher reality, not in the aspect which it assumes when we become aware of the complete Divinity. This is the justification of the cruder and more primitive elements of religion and also their sentence of transience and passing.

## DYUMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of July 1998)

*My dear Mother,*

*May the wideness and depth of Thy seat increase in my heart; may it be Thine, Thine integrally.*

YES, I am always seated in your heart, consciously living in you.

1 September 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*The Ashram had a dish from F on Monday, an extra dish on Wednesday, soup on Thursday and a fine dish of cabbage on Friday. My beloved Mother, for all this may a sense of gratitude arise in us—this is my prayer.*

It seems that this night, between 9.30 and 10 o'clock, some people were speaking against G's bath-room door while she was inside unnoticed. One person was saying something to this effect: how is it possible to work with such bad food? And another one answered: you ought to write to the Mother.

4 September 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*Yoga in the cave is easy, but yoga in life is altogether a different thing. There must be sincerity to the core and absolute self-giving to the goal.*

I do not believe that sadhana in the cave is easy—only there the insincerity remains hidden, while in life and action it is revealed. You can *look* like a yogi in a cave but in life the humbugging is more difficult, because you have to *behave* like a yogi

Always with you, my dear child

6 September 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*May the day draw nearer when all the reports of disturbances stop and You are informed only of galloping progress and flights of the being towards the Divine. Blessed will be that day.*

It is in a great peace that I am waiting for that day, the peace of the certitude of Victory. You must enter that peace, my dear child, and let nothing affect you. It is only when we



are not affected that we can always do the right thing at the right time and in the right way

Love and blessings to you, my dear child.

6 September 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*The D.R. workers often have second or third works at different places They have their main job, and in their free hours they do other things It should not be otherwise, but it would be better to have a few full-time workers rather than many part-time workers*

People can't do all day the same work; it is most taxing on the nerves and after some time they get tired, depressed, discouraged, speak of suicide, etc., etc

Even in ordinary life it has been recognised that for the sake of the work itself, a complete change of occupation for a few hours every day is most useful.

Always with you, my dear child

13 September 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*We were preparing bread for 3 years or more according to this proportion: 1 kg of wheat for 3 loaves (25 kg for 75 loaves) Since last August we have been using 35 kg for 75 loaves—the difference is 10 kg per day. This difference has always pained me*

*As the bread has not risen well recently, the consumption of loaves in the D R. has increased. It is not that the stomachs of the eaters are asking for more food, it is insincerity and a lack of discrimination on the part of the people eating the food*

The loaves are surely much better than those we used to have before (I am seeing them every day). But I have no objection to that. After all, apart from the milk, the bread is the most substantial food we are giving, and I do not think it would be fair to reduce it I think the chief reason why people are eating more bread is because the bread is much nicer than it used to be.

*I must say that before we took up cattle, we never separated the bran from the wheat—it went into the bread*

It makes the bread a little too heavy to digest I have said to give this small amount of bran (only 4%) to the milkmen

*My dear Mother, grant simple sincerity in the entire being, a sincerity which keeps the full light and consciousness and accepts only the Truth.*

The greatest enemies of a perfect sincerity are preferences (either mental, vital or physical) and preconceived ideas. It is these obstacles that must be overcome

I am always with you to lead you to victory.

15 September 1935

*My dear Mother,*

*I ask for "justice" from You. Here is my appeal!*

*O Lord, the human mind is too ignorant, too obstinate and obscure. May the Divine Grace be granted to it in order to set all things right.*

Yes, it is the Divine Grace that must be prayed for. If justice were to manifest, very few would be those who could stand in front of it!

My love and blessings are always with you.

19 September 1935

*(To be continued)*

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## THE MESSAGE

HERE is the message I found on the shore:

“Look seaward, traveller—  
off the edge of all your maps;

“Look skyward  
where the clouds unfrontiered wander;

“Look starward  
where the galaxies pulse and spin—

“Beyond all these  
your way you'll win.”

SHRADDHAVAN

## SOME WORDS OF THE MOTHER

To acquire a perfect and total consciousness of the world as it is in all its details, one must have, at the outset, no personal reaction to any of these details, no spiritual preference even as to what they ought to be. In other words, a total acceptance with a perfect indifference and neutrality is the indispensable condition for a knowledge by integral identity. If there be a single detail, however small, which escapes the neutrality, that detail escapes also the identification. Therefore, the absence of all personal reaction, for whatever end it may be, even the most exalted, is a primary necessity for a total knowledge.

One can thus say, paradoxically, that we can Know a thing only when we are not interested in it or rather, more exactly, when we are not personally concerned with it

\*

Every time a god has taken a body, it has always been with the intention of transforming the earth and creating a new world. But till today, he has always had to give up his body without completing his work. And it has always been said that the earth was not ready and that men had not fulfilled the conditions necessary for the work to be achieved.

But it is the imperfection of the incarnate god that makes the perfection of those around him indispensable. If the incarnate god embodied the perfection necessary for the required progress, then this progress would not be conditioned by the state of the surrounding material world. And yet without any doubt, interdependence is absolute in this world of extreme objectification, therefore a certain degree of perfection in the manifestation as a whole is indispensable for a higher degree of perfection to be realised in the incarnate divine being. It is the necessity of a certain perfection in the environment that compels human beings to progress; it is the inadequacy of this progress, whatever it may be, that drives the divine being to intensify his endeavour for progress in his body. Thus the two movements of progress are simultaneous and complete each other.

*(Words of the Mother, CWM, Vol 15, pp 299-300)*

## A BENGALI LYRICAL POEM BY JYOTIRMOYEE

### Nirodbaran's Queries and Sri Aurobindo's Answers

Guru,

*I take সুধাপাত্র (sudhapatra) as the vessel of the soul or higher something and জীবন-আসাব (jeevan asar) as something like poison—tears and tears of life (physical) which someone drinks. Then He leaves this poison of মোহিনী (mohini) (as with desires, etc ) in the hem of nectar of the brittle physical.*

All here should be the vessel of nectar, i.e. of Ananda, but the poison of pain and suffering has been poured into it as the জীবন-আসাব (jeevan asar) This is the poison of desire and the lower pleasure.

মোহিনীর অধবেব বিষ (mohinir adharer bish) [one word not distinct]—and the physical which is in its proper right the secret hem of the immortal Ananda has that left upon all its ways to spoil the delight of life It is the drinking of this poison that has left the mark in the throat of the Godhead

*Then what happens? Where is the link? Why the wind, because it carries the sound? Does বজ্রের প্রহর (vajrer prahar) stand for something arduous and fiery for which this earth must do tapasya—no তমস (tamas)?*

The first sound of the flute brought by the wind from above to the shore of birth brought the stern hour of the বজ্র (vajra) from the unknown because the world has to deliver itself from desires by a severe endeavour The world makes the surrender of everything and as a result the Spirit, the Being of the beginningless Creation descends from above with the manifestation and the play of Light. It was always secretly there in the body's dream of the Godhead dwelling in and overshadowing it but now it manifests and brings down its unveiled nature In the power of this descent the Earth [this part of Sri Aurobindo's writing is very obscure] stream inspired knowledge শব্দ (shabda) means expression of the truth, its voice takes up the work of প্রক্ষালন (prakshalan)

*What next? দেবতাব দেহ-স্বপ্ন (devatar deha-swapna) Why দেবতা (devata)? Unless it means that this ধর্মী (dharmi) is dreaming of having bodies with Gods. If so, then because of the surrender, the অনাদি সত্তা (anadi satta) comes over as a response like a কুসুম (kusum)!*

*Now I stumble if I haven't done it so far*

I am afraid you have Your interpretation is rather forced and laboured.

*This শব্দ গঙ্গা (shabda ganga) accepts the bathing of a new life in its ওজস্ (ojas). This*

সহসা (sahasa) *seems rather inappropriate, for the process is not sudden.*

Not at all. What is envisaged is a sudden descent of Light and manifestation and the waters of the Truth washing clean all the beings due to the বজ্রের প্রহর (vajrer prahar) and সর্বস্ব সঁপিল (sarvasya sampilo). That may take long, but the result of the Descent can be rapid and sudden.

*Extremely difficult, sir!*

Yes, unless one catches the clue Very fine indeed—she has got a new inspiration

*Well, “has that left” by whom? The text says নীলকণ্ঠ (neelkantha) has left it from his বক্ষ (vaksha). Why? Why has he drunk the poison and again left it? Because the world may develop itself from these desires by tapasya?*

You don't seem to have at all understood the central idea Existence is in its proper nature a play, an outflow of Nature. What is here in the life is the Godhead দেবতা (devata). But owing to Ignorance and Darkness the wine of life is poisoned; it is not nectar, but poison poured in the nectar cup. The Godhead within drinks that and by his drinking the transformation of the deformed existence becomes (achievable) But it is not done at once The poison spreads from the vital which has drunk it into the ways of life. There is no question of why or of an intention. It is so as a fact

I said spoil the delight of life because life which ought to be delight if all had been in harmony is obviously spoiled by the poison of desire. You suppose that the poison is transformed by the Godhead drinking and is poured as nectar on the path but that is absurd because one would not then speak of poison; it would no longer be poison, it would be nectar and there would be no need of বজ্রের প্রহর (vajrer prahar) or প্রক্ষালন (prakshalan) or anything else. The [ms. illegible] could have been done

*And why proper right? Because the proper right of the world is the right of Ananda and others being admixtures or perversions?*

If we accept the idea on which the joy is founded it is that the Godhead is within and Ananda is the basis of existence and desire and sorrow are a perversion of the Ignorance (that is what the Upanishads say) then obviously Ananda is the proper right of the soul and of life

*I'm afraid I have not yet understood the central idea nor the peripheral How can I if you bring all metaphysics in Poetry?*

It is not metaphysics; it is a fact of existence. If it is not what are we all doing here? It would be better to go to Calcutta after Dilip.

*What I don't understand is that if the Godhead drinks the poison, well, it is finished! How can it spread again into the ways of life? Unless He has vomited or excreted it? By virtue of His drinking the poison the transformation becomes inevitable though it may take time. All this is clear*

The Godhead is the Godhead in life, man—not some immaculate Godhead in heaven; He takes the suffering into himself; it is the stain on his divinity (external mind). It spreads through his বক্ষ (vaksha) (vital emotional)—it emanates out of it into the surroundings. But still, since he has drunk (i.e. accepted it) that fact makes the overcoming of it an inevitable necessity. You seem to be thinking of some high and dry Godhead who is not here. When the Godhead accepts it, life has to accept it too, but for transformation, no longer for indulgence.

*Is it then something like driving from mind, going to the vital→physical→sub-conscious→inconscious?*

Nonsense, sir. That happens when one rejects. The Godhead has drunk it, not thrown it out by rejection. If he had he would have first pushed the cup away and the wine would have spread in that way.

*Once you say the Godhead drinks and then the vital drinks. Puzzling, sir!*

The Godhead has a বক্ষ (vaksha) according to the poem—then he must have a vital

*Is the Godhead in the vital? If you explain this knot, nothing else remains*

The Godhead is everywhere in the mental, vital, physical—wherever there is existence.

সুধাপাত্রে উচ্ছলিত জীবন-আসাব—  
 তাবে পান কবি' তুমি নীলকণ্ঠ হ'লে,  
 বক্ষ হতে বেখে গেলে ভঙ্গুর বেলাব  
 পথে পথে, অমৃতের গোপন অঞ্চলে,  
 মোহিনী'ব অধবেব বিষ। যে প্রথম  
 পবনের বংশীবব—জনমেব তীবে—  
 অজানা জ্যোতির হতে আনিল নির্মম  
 বজ্রের প্রহব, তার লাগি' ধীবে ধীবে  
 সর্বস্ব সঁপিল বিশ্ব হৃদয় উজাড়ি'।

দেবতাব দেহ-স্বপ্নে নিভৃত-বিহাবী  
 অনাদি সৃষ্টিব সত্তা প্রশ্ফুটন-বসে  
 আলোব বিহাবে নামে কুসুমের মত  
 ধবণীৰ শব্দ-গঙ্গা তাহাবি ওজসে  
 সহসা ববিয়া নিল প্রক্ষালন-ব্রত।

28-3-37

29-3-37

Jyotirmoyee

Life's bitter shower brims over the cup of nectar,  
 Drinking that You became Blue-throated  
 And left on the paths of the brittle shore,  
 In the hidden hem of ambrosia,  
 The poison in the lips of the enchantress.  
 To the first note of the flute of wind above  
 That brought from an unknown luminous divine sun  
 The ruthless hour of thunder to the shore of birth,  
 The world offered its all, emptying its heart slowly  
 The solitary Player in the dream of Deity's body,  
 The Being of beginningless creation  
 Descends into the play of Light  
 Like a blossom in flowering sap.  
 Earth's Word-Ganga suddenly chose  
 The rite of purification in its Force.

28-3-98

(Translated by Arabinda Basu)

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It is the higher reality that Mother brings into the world—without it all else is ignorant and false.

3 8.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Mother, SABCL, Vol 25, p 327)

## “INSPIRATIONS FOR PROGRESS”

(Continued from the issue of July 1998)

LOVING surrender to the Mother means total, happy acceptance of Her Will in all things, without any preference, any insistence, and any dissatisfaction

Love for the Mother should never be made a cloak for satisfaction of desires

10-7-67

\*

Do not be affected by what others think or say about you or do to you

Take complete refuge in the Mother's Love, refer everything to Her and leave it to Her to protect and defend you against the bad will or hostility of the others

Do not expect Her to defend and protect you in your own way and your own time—leave it to Her to do or not to do what She wants, as She wants and when She wants

26-7-67

\*

Not to be inquisitive,

Not to gossip,

Not to be over-eager.

Leave all to the Mother with loving trust and rely on Her entirely for everything

29-7-67

\*

This obstinate mechanical recurrence of wrong movements is a characteristic feature of the physical consciousness—mental, vital, material. It becomes specially acute when the pressure of the Force comes upon it for its change.

I must therefore not be disheartened by it but take it as a phase of sadhana which will pass away

The right thing to do is not to identify myself with it, to remain detached and separate from it, and to constantly offer it to the Mother and the Lord for change and transformation

And to endure patiently till the change is done—to *endure with absolute confidence*.

The most essential thing is *loving surrender to Them with absolute reliance*—to depend on Them and not on myself for all things at every moment

That is sure to bring Victory

8-9-67

\*



Be always more and more positive, constructive.  
 Spread always more and more the Mother's light, joy, friendly love to all

Have no personal feelings, do not mind or brood over the faults of others; harbour no grudge or ill-will against anyone.

Look for and stress the positive side in others.

Be always the Mother's true child—full of light and joy and friendly love for all, full of smiles and sweetness and benevolence for all.

10-9-67

\*

Not to be obsessed by difficulties and defects, but to learn to offer them to Him with loving trust in His All-Powerful yet All-Forgiving and All-Tender Love,—

Always to remember that He always loves, understands, forgives, is kind and gentle and sweet, that He never blames or condemns or punishes,—

Always to turn to Him more and more, give all things more and more to Him and leave all things to Him with absolute reliance,—

Not to struggle, not to be anxious or troubled about anything but simply and entirely give everything to Him and to take refuge in His Love with complete trust,—

To remain always quiet, happy, contented and confident—

This is the right attitude and it must now be securely established.

To forget all other things—

Only to think of Him—

Only to love Him—

Only to serve Him—

To give up all other hankerings—

To want only

His Light in the mind—

His Love in the heart—

His Power in the vital—

His Health in the body—

There is nothing else to do—

Only His Will—

Life has no other meaning—

Only to live in, for, by Him—

He is the Supreme Lord—  
I am His portion—  
His Love is All-Victorious—  
His Love is All-Compassionate—

Separation from Him is the cause of all troubles—  
Union with Him in Love’s Truth is the only solution—

Not by my effort can the separation be cured, but by the All-Victorious Power of His Love.

Simply and sincerely I shall keep on asking for His Love to come to my succour and to cure me of all separation and unite me with Him in Love’s eternal Truth.

17-9-67

*(To be continued)*

KISHOR GANDHI

(Compiled by Arvind Akki)

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## KRISHNA

SOMEONE has cried for me,  
Has called my name,  
Shouted quite loud,  
But when I came to see  
Wondering who might it be—  
None was around

For me she could not wait,  
Found me too late.  
What shall I do?  
I for my own delight  
Shall sit and play my flute  
All day and night.

RUTH

Amal’s Comment: Very charming. It makes one eager to hear that flute-playing

## SRI AUROBINDO\*

THE one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's birth happily synchronizes with the fiftieth anniversary of India's attainment of Independence. Sri Aurobindo himself took part in the Freedom-struggle, though for a brief period in the first decade of this century. He was the first political leader who demanded complete independence for India. The majority of his contemporary politicians, called Moderates, were satisfied with making mild protests and petitioning for petty concessions. The political stalwart at the time was Lokamanya Tilak and he was drawn to the young Aurobindo by reading his fiery writings. Sri Aurobindo was associated with Tilak till he left politics. He was with Tilak at the Surat Congress and was directly responsible for the break-up of the Congress Party. How important he was as a political leader is seen in his being discussed time and again in the House of Commons from the 5th of August 1905 to the 28th of April 1910, when Sri Aurobindo had already arrived in Pondicherry, the Cave of his Tapasya, as he called it. The Members of Parliament were worried about the influence he wielded with the youth of India and the threat he posed to the Government. They were eager to get at him and have him deported at the earliest. But there were also great admirers of Sri Aurobindo, like the well-known Ramsay Macdonald, in the Parliament.

In the early days of his struggle, he sought revolutionary methods and planned a National insurrection. Later he found that Passive Resistance was the only feasible means and developed a whole philosophy of Passive Resistance. He was not averse to violence; he was too well-versed in the Gita not to know the place of war for a right cause. It was Gandhi who made the approach ethical if also religious just as it was Nehru who turned the focus to socialism and secularism. Sri Aurobindo's spiritual approach is seen in his very attitude to India - to him it was not the inert soil or even the people. She was his Mother, a living Shakti. The words *Vande Mataram* were a *Mantra* to him and its giver, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, a *rishi*.

It was in the midst of his hectic political activity that he turned to Yoga, first on his own and then under the Maharashtrian Guru, Vishnu Bhaskar Lele. Even before he took to Yoga he had spiritual experiences as at the very moment he landed on Indian soil, at Apollo Bunder in Bombay, when he returned from England, a vast spiritual Calm descended on him and it surrounded him. Before meeting Lele in 1908 he did Pranayama, sometimes for six hours a day. Lele made him get the first basic realisation, that of the Static Brahman. It was at Alipore Jail he had the experience of the Cosmic Consciousness. It was also at Alipore he realised that the Static Brahman and the Cosmic Consciousness were two aspects of the same Reality. At Alipore he realised, too, the different planes of Consciousness leading towards the Supermind.

What Sri Aurobindo called Supermind is not just any state of Consciousness above the mind as is often thought. According to him, between the Mind and the Supermind

\* Talk broadcast by AIR, Bangalore, in connection with Sri Aurobindo's 125th Birth Anniversary on 13 August 1997

there are other realms, the Higher Mind, the Illumined Mind, the Intuitive Mind and the Overmind. The great cartographer of the Inner and Higher realms christened them with familiar names though they refer to what are beyond our knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo, who discovered the Supermind in his own spiritual explorations later, saw there were references to it in the Vedas and the Upanishads. The *Savitri* of the *Gāyatri Mantra*, the Spiritual Sun of the *Maharloka*, are the Supermind to which we have been asked to turn our thoughts, *nah dhuyah*. Above the *Maharloka* are the triune states of *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda* and below are the triple states of the physical, vital and mental, *Bhu*, *Bhuvah* and *Suvah*. The ancient sages and seers and philosophers never dreamt of bringing down the Divine Consciousness to the earth-consciousness as Sri Aurobindo wanted—and he wanted it not only to divinise matter but to make our life spirit-centred instead of being mind-centred as now. The thought of transformation never struck any religious leader or philosopher of the past. The earth was either dismissed as unreal or regarded as a state from which we go to a higher realm individually. Sri Aurobindo saw that Nature was unconsciously doing Yoga to bring about an evolution of consciousness instead of a mere physical evolution as Darwin thought. First, Life descended from above; then the Mind in gradual stages. Man is mind-centred and it is up to him to bring down consciously the Truth-consciousness, the Supermind, instead of bypassing it and seeking *satchidānanda* for individual salvation.

Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, called Integral Yoga because it embraces all parts and planes of being and all aspects of life, is meant to bring about not only individual perfection but a total evolution as intended by Nature from the very beginning. He looked forward to a race which would be to Man what Man is to the animal.

In the course of human history, in social development, in the movement of poetry as in everything else, Sri Aurobindo saw a gradual growth towards the Spirit. He looked forward to a time when the whole human race would unite with the Spirit as its centre.

He has presented his vision in different forms of prose, poetry and drama running to thousands of pages.

When we study his life and work we ask ourselves, "Is it an accident that he who spoke of evolution himself evolved in his own way from Aurobindo Ghose to Sri Aurobindo, a staunch Nationalist with a spiritual bent to the discoverer of the Supermind, who endeavoured along with his Shakti, the Mother, to make it possible for it to descend upon the earth and transform it totally?"

## THE COMING OF THE AVATAR

SRI AUROBINDO'S *Savitri* is at once a legend and a symbol. As a symbol its thematic contents essentially present the problem of the creation arising out of the inconscient Void. Because of such a beginning it has to first overcome the negative pull towards its origin and then become what it really ought to be, it has to face that inconscience's dire antagonism itself. The problem is therefore in the context of the evolutionary possibility of a divine manifestation upon the earth.

In discovering the solution for such a problem we have in the first part of *Savitri* the Triple Yoga of Aswapati. It deals with the occult-spiritual aspects of this creation and arrives at the conclusion that, in order to accomplish the task, the supreme executive Goddess should incarnate herself in it. She has to take birth and vanquish the divine Antagonist standing across the path of this evolutionary manifestation's possibility. Such an action of hers alone can open a way out, a way towards the life of dynamic immortality in this world of dubious fate and darkness and ignorance, a way of truth-conscient happiness for the life that now faces constant death.

Thus the Yogi-Poet of *Savitri* sets himself on a grand heroic Odyssey of the spiritual Yoga of Ascent. In the wake of its Siddhi or Accomplishment the occult Yoga of Transformation is to follow. If the incarnate Goddess is to take up the second Yoga, an enduring base, the needed support, the spiritual *ādhār* for her birth and for her action is to be prepared by him through the first Yoga. In this glorious *devoir* he comes here as Aswapati. For, indeed, it is that incarnate Goddess Savitri's occult work or action, Yoga-Karya, based on Aswapati's spiritual ascesis, Yoga-Tapasya, that alone can fulfil this inconscient creation. If it is so, then, we begin to see that the symbol in the epic is actually a double autobiography, of the One-in-Two, of Aswapati and Savitri, both of them coming directly from the Supreme. Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* thus becomes a triumph-chant of the Yoga-Yajna of the double Avatar's Work in this mortal world.

To handle such a transcendental theme the poetic device is that of a symbolic legend, a legend that has come down partly as a story and partly as some remote prehistory or, more truly, as the unrecorded history of this creation. The recital begins with the death of Satyavan. On the fated day Savitri gets up early in the morning and offers worship to Durga, the Protectress of the Worlds. She is now ready to face the dire God who, at noon, will arrive in the thick dark forest of the Shalwa country. Eventually, Savitri will win back the soul of Satyavan and return to the Earth,—carrying with her a greater dawn, the Dawn of the Everlasting Day. The double Veil that had until then covered it will disappear and the mortal creation step into the ever-growing wideness of a truth-conscient delight.

Such are the revelatory contents held for us in the story of this mortal creation, the great and marvellous Savitri-legend itself. We may as well say that the Savitri-legend is really the Savitri-mantra by which the unmanifest divinity becomes manifest upon the earth.

Satyavan's death thus epitomises the immortal's task in the mortal world, in

*mrtyuloka* It is a task which cannot be carried out from somewhere else, from some far-off trans-mortal world, nor can it be a proxy action. Were it so it would rob the very meaning of *mrtyuloka*. The immortal must handle it in this very mortal world. He must come here and accept the burden of mortality, must labour and toil by identifying himself with it,—in order to change it from within. For this he must harbour in his incarnate person the might of his own transcendental spirit. Therefore, in the face of the divine Antagonist, he makes another sacrifice; he performs another Yajna of Creation and gathers within himself the defeatless strength that immortally he be here. He descends as a triumphant Avatar to prepare the ground for the incarnate Goddess's action.

Thus in the Story of Savitri the purpose of the Avatar, of Aswapati's birth, is to bring down here the supreme Goddess's "radiant power", *daivi śakti*. She as Savitri alone can work out the difficult transformation, change the dark inconscient nature into the higher in her own threefold splendour. The *sine qua non* for this miracle to take place is her avataric arrival here. Savitri's birth was thus a birth prepared and invoked by Aswapati.

But Aswapati's own birth was in answer to the silent prayer of the Earth, of Prithvi in the distress of its evolutionary march towards deathless immortality in the world. There was always a dumb longing, as ancient as the creation, she ever entreating and appealing to the Supreme to lead her from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth, from a death-bound life to the spirit's multifold freedom of immortal delight. But in a yet deeper sense, and in reality, from age to age, *yuge yuge*, there occurs the Divine Birth, he loosing himself forth in the process of Time to impart to it the dynamism of his active Eternity. It is indeed this Avatar who carries the evolutionary Time forward, he opening for it the newer dimensions of spiritual consciousness in the wideness of Infinity itself.

Is there in their intrinsic character any difference between the birth of Aswapati and the birth of Savitri? Savitri was born in response to the "world's desire", the desire that had passed through the fire-ordeal of Aswapati's own tapasya. But there was, so to say, no such immediate compulsion, no such invitation, for the other's coming. What could have then prompted him to take the labour and toil of the mortal world upon himself? Or else, was an invitation really necessary for him? And was he a welcome guest here?

But then the evolutionary urgencies or contingencies can always be a good provocation for the Avatar's coming. He would come to deal with the crises of evolution. He may come here armed with the defeatless bow and arrow, or, in another age, he may wield the lustrous Wheel of Time; or he may bring with him the golden quill to fix the divine Word in all its expressive power to establish what it luminously obtains. Was there some such deep and universal crisis in the Satyavan-Savitri concern for Aswapati's prior appearance? Can we say that it was so because Death was going to stand in the way?

To understand its imperative we may look into the Gita's relevant verses

propounding the Theory of Avatarhood About his coming from time to time the Teacher of the Gita states

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।  
 तान्यह वेद सर्वाणि न त्व वेत्थ परतप ॥  
 अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।  
 प्रकृति स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥  
 यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य म्लानिर्भवति भारत ।  
 अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥  
 परिमाणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।  
 धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥

(The Gita IV 5-8)

Sri Aurobindo paraphrases these shlokas as follows

Many are my lives that are past, and thine also, O Arjuna, all of them I know, but thou knowest not, O scourge of the foe Though I am the unborn, though I am imperishable in my self-existence, though I am the Lord of all existences, yet I stand upon my own Nature and I come into birth by my self-Maya For whensoever there is the fading of the Dharma and the uprising of unrighteousness, then I loose forth into birth For the deliverance of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the enthroning of the Right I am born from age to age

(Essays on the Gita, SABCL, Vol 13, p 138)

No doubt, and avowedly, the upholding of the Dharma in the world is one great aspect of the descent of the Avatar. but Sri Aurobindo emphasises what the Gita also tells us about the process of the divine birth, *divya janma* He further adds that

there are two aspects of the divine birth, one is a descent, the birth of God in humanity, the Godhead manifesting itself in the human form and nature, the eternal Avatar, the other is an ascent, the birth of man into the Godhead, man rising into the divine nature and consciousness, *madbhāvam āgatah*, it is the being born anew in a second birth of the soul It is that new birth which Avatarhood and the upholding of the Dharma are intended to serve

(Ibid , p 140)

Certainly, to carry out such a double task in this world of death and ignorance the Avatar does not need any formal invitation,—nor does he wait for it If *divya janma*, the Divine Birth, occurs by the inherent potency of his own Yoga-Maya, if he looses himself forth into creation in the efficacy of her power, then *divya karma*, the Divine Action, ensues straight from *divya* or *parama samkalpa*, the Will of the Supreme himself Such is the direct Avowal of his Perhaps it is in that powerful and affirmative

sense that we may understand the Mother's declaration about the coming of Sri Aurobindo as an Avatar

What Sri Aurobindo represents in the world's history is not a teaching, not even a revelation, it is a decisive action direct from the Supreme

(CWM, Vol 13, p 3)

No intermediaries are involved in this incarnation of the Supreme. It will also perhaps be wrong to speak about the world's desire and God's desire in any sense becoming instrumental in this benedictive and gracious birth. But that will not mean that these are altogether irrelevant, in fact, occult-functionally, they have in the entire process their own underlying significance.

Apropos of the Avatar's coming we must recognise that evolution is not just a lateral mirror-image reverse of involution, the left side becoming the right, the process looking back upon itself, the future an inverted shadow of the past. It may be so metaphysically, but in its operational details, in terms of Time's creative dynamism, it is certainly not like that. Evolution is not simply a playing back of the involution's tape-record with the same music, a cinematographic sequence in the opposite direction displaying again those very happenings in the reverse, not the unwinding of a clockwork screwed up into a toy-mechanism; it is not just the backward-forward retracing of events. On the other hand, constantly there are new vistas and new unfoldments; there is throughout an unmistakable onward and upward movement, the superconscient becoming inconscient and, in the multiplicity of the Oneness's splendours, coming out with a richer manifestation. In the Taittiriya Upanishad we have a passage which outlines this birth of peoples resulting from the Tapas of the Brahman

सोऽकामयत । बहु स्या प्रजायेयेति । स तपोऽतप्यत ।  
स तपस्तप्त्वा । इद सर्वमसृजत । यदिद किञ्च ॥

The Spirit desired of old, I would be manifold for the birth of peoples [*bahusyam prajāyeyeti*] Therefore He concentrated all Himself in thought, and by the force of his brooding He created all this universe, yea, all whatsoever exists. Now when He had brought it forth, He entered into that He had created. Yea He became all truth, even whatsoever here exists

(*The Upanishads*, SABCL, Vol 12, p 332)

It is obvious that the Spirit, in the aspect of its creative concern, comes to make his own whatsoever here exists. "I desire to be many, *bahusyām prajāyeyeti*,"—that is what the Rishi spoke about the Divinity's adventure into such a wondrous multiplicity.

In a certain sense this, the entire process in the unfoldment of Time's dynamism, is a continuation of a much longer Sequence, roughly divided into two segments—involution and evolution. There are everywhere new adventures, new internal vistas



opening out, concealed possibilities emerging, and there are in it always, and ever, great new-sprung surprises. This is so because the whole movement of Consciousness, in the sweep and extension of the Truth-Existent, is in total freedom of the Spirit's delight. If involution is a ladder plunging into the Inconscience, evolution is also the same super-Jacobean staircase climbing up to Heaven,—of course, with a desirable and happy difference. The steps could be the same but the details are the creative riches in the amazement of novel Promethean discoveries. How else would new and ever-progressive creations arise? While all the grades of Consciousness are present in the involved state, they cannot emerge unless there enter into it the physical, vital, mental, spiritual and yet higher glories and secrecies of the supporting transcendental Spirit. At every step there is as if in it another kind of involution. There have been many such involutions, as well as incarnations, in the occult history of evolution, making that evolution possible at all. The Upanishads do speak of the vital being or *prāṇamaya puruṣa* and the mental being or *manomaya puruṣa* coming as leaders, *netās*, to lead the evolution onward to greater states of awareness and capabilities. There is no question of such *netās* being present during the sudden and dramatic plunge into the deeps of inconscience, into the all-holding Void.

Indeed, it should be recognised that the originally involved state of total Inconscience is not simply a contentless neutral and passive Nothing, without any potentiality, without any will of its own,—howsoever barren and dark it may seem to be. It is, in reality, the Spirit itself who has become so, a ghastly sombre Infinity, frozen and motionless in its poise, a great solid block as Non-Being, a strange lifelessness negating all urges of a growing happy enterprise. Understandably, therefore, the sombre creative energies of the Inconscience have also a chance to climb up and antagonistically exercise their influences in a more complex operation. We have now other parameters entering into the process. With the coming of Life into the material world, for instance, the appearance of Death, rather unexpected and stunning, was one such spurious event that had taken place. Of it we have in *Savitri* a very vivid and poetic description given by Sri Aurobindo:

In the crude beginnings of this mortal world  
 Life was not nor mind's play nor heart's desire.  
 When earth was built in the unconscious Void..  
 Her young gods yearned for the release of souls  
 Asleep in objects, vague, inanimate  
 They cried to Life to invade the senseless mould  
 And in brute forms awake divinity..  
 Life heard the call and left her native light ..  
 Earth's great brown body smiled towards the skies,  
 Azure replied to azure in the sea's laugh,  
 New sentient creatures filled the unseen depths,  
 Life's glory and swiftness ran in the beauty of beasts,



Man dared and thought and met with his soul the world  
 But while the magic breath was on its way,  
 Before her gifts could reach our prisoned hearts,  
 A dark ambiguous Presence questioned all

(pp 129-30)

This dark ambiguous Presence was nowhere present in the sequence of the original involution, it cropped up at a later stage. It is a product of the inconscient upsurge. Death belongs to the early tentative phase of evolution, making its offensively violent and gory appearance at the stage of the arrival of Life. The dauntless Spirit does indeed allow terrible agencies to reign, as if to produce for itself newer challenges with their own happy and meritorious surprises, as if in the free delight's play the manifestive process had to have some other fresh meaning, because it cannot be simply a repetition in a dull reverse. Certainly none would enjoy a dull and eventless return,—the Divine, the least. For it would simply be going back to the original Unmanifest.

If so, then, we have to also accept the appearance of death, ignorance, falsehood, evil, the shadow Quaternary holding its sway in the mortal world, *mṛtyuloka*. We have to accept, because of the creative nature of the Inconscience, the possibility of Rakshasic and Asuric powers coming into play. Its helpless antagonism is full of such hostility and must be taken note of. With the appearance of Life and Mind these occult beings and forces also come into existence. Whether we like them or not, howsoever undesirable they may seem to be, they are now a part and parcel, though dispensable, of the godhead's unfolding, they are there and their presence cannot be simply wished away. Rather, it is now necessary to admit them and deal with them, take care of all these contingent frustrations. The only way out is to transform them into their truer and diviner counterparts of existence.

We may therefore aver that the Avatar's coming is always to take care of all such serious illegitimacies that surge up from the dark Ocean of Inconscience, *salilam apraketam*. These are the real Crises of Evolution and to handle them does the Avatavic descent take place. Only by handling them divinely can the ancient Path of Evolution be really made free of misadventure, free of even the possibility of a collapse, it is the Avatar who makes it safe for treading. Indeed, it is he who extends it to the ascending glories and marvels of the sun-world, to the realms of luminous whitenesses, *divya loka*, of the creative Truth's ever-widening awareness in the creation. It is always his own work that he is doing and therefore his double concern is always there.

But this evolution,—what does it strive to achieve? If there was the involution, it must have been to get, by the process of evolution, something out of it. Sri Aurobindo states the whole purpose of this creative-manifestive endeavour as follows:

We have the manifestation of the divine Conscious Being in the totality of physical Nature as the foundation of human existence in the material universe. We have the emergence of that Conscious Being in an involved and inevitably

evolving Life. Mind and Supermind as the condition of our activities, for it is this evolution which has enabled man to appear in Matter and it this evolution which will enable him progressively to manifest God in the body,—the universal Incarnation

(*The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol 18, p 59)

As a culmination of, rather as a new opening for, the evolutionary process towards the universal Incarnation we have then a great wonderful prospect prepared and Yogically executed by the one who bears within him the Will of the Supreme, divya or parama samkalpa We have then

the outflowing of the infinite and absolute Existence, Truth, Good and Delight of being on the Many in the world as the divine result towards which the cycles of our evolution move This is the supreme birth which material nature holds in herself, of this she strives to be delivered

(*Ibid*)

Thus the purpose of the Avatar's coming is this incarnation of God in Man, he taking birth in the material Nature with all the Splendour of immortality in Life This has been his long and tireless "immemorial quest", being carried out by himself and for that he doesn't need from anyone a formal proposal or invitation

In the context of that immemorial quest what exactly did Aswapati do?

One in the front of the immemorial quest,  
Protagonist of the mysterious play  
In which the Unknown pursues himself through forms  
And limits his eternity by the hours  
And the blind Void struggles to live and see,  
A thinker and toiler in the ideal's air,  
Brought down to earth's dumb need her radiant power

(*Savitri*, p 22)

That was Aswapati's task, to bring down the presence and power of the Divine Goddess, *davri śakti*, that is the birth of Savitri She cannot come unless this Yogic preparation is made, unless there is the *ādhār*, the support of the necessary consciousness for her to be here Otherwise under the tread of her radiant and powerful personality, the earth would get simply crushed A world's desire, lifted to the transcendent, has to prepare her arrival And in answer to it does she condescend to take "mortal birth"

That is the work of Aswapati when he may be said to have "willed all, attempted all, prepared, achieved all for us"

R Y DESHPANDE

## **C. P. BEACHCROFT'S JUDGMENT IN THE CASE OF ARABINDA GHOSE AT THE ALIPORE BOMB TRIAL, DATED 6.5.1909**

[Typed verbatim from a photocopy of C. P. Beachcroft's handwritten document, held at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives Also printed in *The Alipore Bomb Trial* by Bejoy Krishna Bose, pp. 154-177 + 185-186.]

I NOW come to the case of Arabinda Ghose, the most important accused in the case. He is the accused, whom more than any other the prosecution are anxious to have convicted and but for his presence in the dock there is no doubt that the case would have been finished long ago. It is partly for that reason that I have left his case till last of all and partly because the case against him depends to a very great extent, in fact almost entirely, upon association with other accused persons.

Before dealing with the evidence against him I shall put as shortly as possible the ideal which his Counsel claims that he has always set before himself. It is the case for the prosecution as well as for the defence that he is of a very religious nature, in fact Counsel for the Crown takes the line that his religious ideas combined with a desire for independence for India have turned him into a fanatic.

His Counsel argues that he is a Vedantist and that he has applied the doctrines of Vedantism to mould his political views, that is the doctrine of Vedantism applied to the individual is to look for the Godhead within oneself and so realise what is best within oneself, as in the case of a nation, it can only grow by realising what is best within itself, that no foreigner can give it that salvation, which it can only attain by methods indigenous to the country. His doctrines are not those of passive resistance, but of the realisation of salvation by suffering. If the law is unjust, don't obey it, and take the consequences. Do not be violent, but if the law is unjust you are not bound morally to obey it, refuse to obey it and suffer. He has been saying to the people, you are not cowards, believe in yourselves and attain salvation, not by assistance from outside, but through yourselves. And this Mr. Dass says is the key of his case.

A written statement was put in by the accused to which it is unnecessary here to refer at length, but I shall refer to two points because Counsel for the Crown took up a great deal of time in arguing his case as if the accused had made two statements which in fact he nowhere did make. The first assumption which he made was that Arabinda says that he had nothing to do with politics, the second is that he says that he did not know Abinash before he engaged his services in setting up a house. With regard to the first assumption I need only point out that Arabinda says that while in Baroda he took no part in the politics of Bengal, with regard to the second I need only refer to para 9 of the written statement, which gives no justification at all for the assumption.

In dealing with the case of this accused I propose to take the evidence in seven groups. (1) letters that passed between Arabinda & his wife (2) letters between Arabinda & other persons (3) Arabinda's speeches (4) his writings (5) letters between

other persons (6) entries in documents (7) facts, whether depending on oral evidence or deducible from documents Finally I shall deal with certain important documents which require consideration by themselves.

In the first group there are 3 letters of 1902, none of which is important There are no more letters till 1905 then we have 3. The earliest in date is Ex 286-1 & 2, a long letter from Arabinda to his wife, relied on by the prosecution on account of a few phrases in it and by the defence as a whole, as setting out the principles which govern his life

The points are that his views & mental attitude are different from those of the people of this country and goes on to say that an extraordinary man is generally looked upon as either great or mad and then says that he had got three ideas, which he characterises as mad, in what is doubtless a play on the word used in the earlier part of the letter The first idea is that gifts given by God should be used in the service of God and he refers more particularly to their use in works of charity The second idea is that he is realising the teaching of Hindu religion & feeling God within himself The third idea is the one in which occur the passages in which the prosecution lays stress. ‘I know I have the strength to deliver this fallen nation I may not have bodily strength but I am not going to fight with sword or gun but with the power of knowledge ’ In the last paragraph but one of the letter he speaks of deliverance of the country And in the last paragraph he speaks of all this as a secret

Mr Dass argues that the 3rd idea is drawn from Vedantism The idea is that the whole world is divinity if you can't see that, it is Maya, or illusion The country should not be regarded as so many rivers, fields etc but as a manifestation of the divinity. And if that be the true view of the passage it is only natural that he should speak of removing anything which stands in the way of that ideal

Taking the letter as a whole, it is a discussion with his wife, asking her whether she is going to follow the Hindu religion, which is his religion, or some other He points out that she has been brought up in Brahma schools, but is a Hindu none the less Will she be a help to him in his religion, or will she follow foreign ideas? And as regards keeping the matter a secret, we find a reference to the same idea in the moral precepts in Biren Sen's book, do not disclose the principles of your religious faith

If we start with the knowledge that the writer of this letter is a conspirator we can find passages in it that are suspicious, viewing it in an unprejudiced way there is nothing in it that really calls for explanation

The next letter in date is Ex 286-3 In this occurs the passage ‘I have to keep some money to send to Madhav Rao who has been sent to England for some special work I have had to spend a lot of money on account of the Swadeshi movement, & I wish to carry on another movement which requires unlimited money ’ The prosecution suggests that this refers to revolution, the explanation offered is that Madhav Rao was a pupil of his & he used to help his pupils when they went to England, & that the movement which he contemplated was the one specified in para 2 of his written statement, a large religious movement based on the Vedanta

The next letter is dated 22nd October 1905 & is Ex 286-4 He refers to Baren's ill health & his energy is going not in the service of his country. He says, "don't tell Sarojini (his sister), she will be mad with anxiety" We know in fact what was the nature of the work which Baren was engaged in at this time, from his own confession The question is how far Arabinda was aware of his aims. The reference to Sarojini being anxious may merely mean on account of Baren's health There is again in this letter an indication of Arabinda's religious tendencies, "the time for prayers is coming"

In 1906 there is no letter of much importance Ex 286-6 contains a reference to his religious devotions morning & evening, & to 12 Wellington Square, where he was evidently always welcome Another indication of his religious ideas is shown in his having given up meat & fish

In 1907 there is Ex 1121-1 from his wife to Arabinda on 1st December The prosecution looks on it as important from the reference to "your paper" In view of what I have already said about his connection with the Bande Mataram, nothing more need be said There is also a reference to setting up the rents of the house, which apparently refers to 19-3 Choku Khansama's Lane

Ex 294 is a letter of 6th December from Arabinda explaining why he was not able to send some brandy He says "Abinash is not here, nor is Sudhir & Baren was not here" He also refers to the time as being one of anxiety

This letter is relied on as showing connection with Sudhir & knowledge of Baren's trip to Naraingarh. But there is nothing to show which Sudhir this was,—there are more than one, and because he saw Baren on the 6th it does not follow that he knew what he had been doing

The anxiety is explained as worry in connection with the Congress We know that much correspondence was going on on this subject And again there is a reference that he cannot like ordinary Bengalis consider the happiness of his family the principal aim of his life

Ex 288, dated 20/12/07 is a letter from his wife, in which she shows resentment because he will not provide her with a house to live in and there is a reference to the house, apparently 19-3 Choku Khansama's Lane

Ex 1123-1 dated 3/12 is a letter from his wife saying that if Abinash is married he won't do "your work." If Abinash is a conspirator this may have a sinister meaning if his wife knew that he was engaged in a conspiracy, it may bear the innocent meaning that he would have to look out for some one else to look after his house

Ex 292-4, dated 17th February 1907,—obviously a mistake for 1908,—is relied on as showing that he felt that a crisis was on him If that be a correct view it suggests that he was not at any rate previously a party to the conspiracy & if that be the case all the previous letters must bear an innocent meaning The last words "I have not written or said anything about this to anybody except you mention is forbidden", may refer to the secrecy enjoined as to his religious principles The letter reads like that of a man filled with religious zeal and unless he is deliberately trying to deceive his wife, shows the

connection in his mind between religion & the doctrine of self-education that he was preaching in Bombay.

The result of the letter taken together is to show that he was a man of strong religious convictions and that he wanted his wife to share those convictions. There are some passages which may be suspicious, but which are also capable of an innocent explanation.

With regard to letters passing between Arabinda and others, a large number refer to arrangements for, and questions to be discussed at, the Congress. I do not propose to refer to these in detail as they do not seem to me to carry the case much further. There is evidence of much jealousy between various prominent persons but the main question appears to have been whether the Congress programme for the year was to be on lines advocated by the moderates or not, the so called extremists contending that to do so would be to go back on previous Congress resolutions.

In Ex 293-13 dated 5th September 1906 Deshpande writes that he will be able to push on the movement in Baroda. "I have found two good workers at Godhra." This is capable of an innocent construction.

Ex 293-9 refers to the effect of Arabinda's writings in the *Bande Mataram*. The letter is quite capable of an innocent explanation. As I have pointed out nothing that can be called revolutionary, in the bad sense, has been shown to me from the columns of that paper.

Ex 302-1 is a letter from V B. Lele to Arabinda, dated 10th February 1906. It contains a reference to Sukumar & the prosecution suggests that this is Baren. There is nothing to show that Baren is meant. We have evidence that letters came to the garden to Baren under the name Sukumar, but it is impossible to say that he is referred to in this letter. We do not know that he ever was at Nagpur, on the other hand the witness Sukumar Sen was in Nagpur about that time.

The importance of this letter is that V B. Lele was apparently one of the occupants of Sil's Lodge, a registered parcel came to him there from Baroda & was forwarded to 12 Wellington Square. It is suggested that he was perhaps on a pilgrimage to Baidyanath, but the evidence of the postmaster & the entry in the postal peon's register, "parcel rejes Prokash Babu Si" shows that a parcel came to him c/o Prokash Babu, & this is clearly traced to be a parcel delivered at 12 Wellington Square. "Si" stands for Sil's Lodge. And we have the name V B. Lele, with an address, appearing in both Exs 382 & 667, apparently in Baren's writing.

Arabinda in his statement says he only knew Lele as a member of the Theosophical Society & a deep religious thinker. He does not know anything of his political views. The expression in the letter "with love and peace", rather bears out this suggestion.

The defence does not offer any suggestion for the presence of his name in these two books. The only one that I can think of in favour of the accused is that Baren may have looked on him as a man through whom religious ideas might be spread so as to pave the way for conversion to his propaganda of violence, but it is his presence at Sil's



Lodge which is the damaging point, both in itself & especially when taken in connection with the entries in the two books. Of course it does not necessarily follow that if Lele was a conspirator & a friend of Subodh's & if Subodh was a conspirator, that Arabinda also was because of his acquaintance in friendship with both, but each time contact is proved with a fresh conspirator an additional link is added in the chain of evidence.

Ex 300-2 is relied on as showing connection between Sudhir & Arabinda and also with reference to the rent for 19-3 Choku Khansama's Lane. There is again nothing to show which Sudhir is meant.

Ex 300-29 is a letter to Arabinda from an Abinash, who it is suggested by the prosecution is not Abinash the accused but an Abinash Chakrabarti. It is suggested that Abinash mentioned in the body of the letter is the accused. The letter is not dated & there is nothing to fix who are the persons referred to in it. It may, however, have some reference as I suggested before to Ex 992 the letter from Manik. With regard to Ex 992 it is suggested that reference to Arabinda & Baren may have been proposed as being relations of Satyendra. It is also argued that Manik's denial of the letter is probably true in view of Ex 1030, as it would have been useless to write to Nikhil after the deed was executed. But from Manik's evidence it appears that the trouble was by no means over with the execution of the deed. It is possible, though Manik denies it, that he gave Arabinda's name in the letter as one interested in National Education, the ostensible purpose for which Ex 1030 was executed.

Ex 292-6 is evidently the letter referred to in para 6 of the written statement. Arabinda speaks of Baren as "wilful & erratic, the family failing."

In Arabinda's speeches there is not much of importance. Evidence was given of his itinerary during January and February 1908 in the Bombay Presidency & reports of speeches made there. The whole of this evidence might very well have been omitted as it proved nothing beyond the fact that he was received with acclamation wherever he went, a fact which the defence have never attempted to deny. So far as these speeches went they help the defence more than the prosecution. From them we get an idea of the stress that he laid on national education, on lines other than those laid down in Government schools and this is in accordance with what is claimed as the ruling thought in his policy, that India is to find her salvation from within & not from without. The only passage that can be construed as at all inflammatory is the concluding sentence of one of his speeches, "live for your swadeshi & die for your swadeshi," which may well be excused as a mere piece of hyperbole.

More violent remarks are those which he is said to have used at a meeting on the 3rd April 1908, when he proposed a resolution of sympathy for the Tinnevely rioters. The meeting was as usual attended by volunteers carrying lathis. From the short note made by the police officer who reported the proceedings, he appears to have spoken in support of swadeshi & used the expression, "now is the time when the brain is to be prepared for devising plans, the body for working hard and the hand for fighting the country's cause." The explanation given for this is that what he meant was it was too

late merely to write and speak, the people must now be ready to put their whole heart into the cause. It is pointed out, with truth, that Arabinda constantly uses metaphors and figures of speech.

The speech as reported is compressed into very small compass, in fact except for this phrase the gist of his speech is given in four short sentences. It would not be right to lay too much stress on an isolated phrase in a speech very scantily reported and while it must not be forgotten that the effect on his hearers might not be that which he himself intended, we must also not lose sight of the fact that the words do not accord with the usual tone of the *Bande Mataram*.

His writings are more important. I do not propose to refer to his writings in the *Bande Mataram*. I have already referred to the character of those, but to two documents that were found in his house. They are Exhibits 283 & 299-9. They appear to be articles written for some paper or review. In fact in the latter he speaks of "a former article in this Review", but whether they were ever published or not we don't know. In the absence of evidence of publication & of the intention for which they were written, they can only be treated as showing the trend of his ideas. The first, Ex 283, is headed, "The Morality of Boycott". There are passages in it which taken by themselves certainly indicate support of the use of violent methods & suggest that his line was that revealed by this conspiracy. first inspire your followers with religious enthusiasm and then get them to take up arms. He writes "The Gita is the best answer to those who shrink from battle as a sin & aggression as a lowering of morality" "another question is the use of violence in the furtherance of boycott. This is in our view, purely a matter of policy and expediency. An act of violence brings us into conflict with the law & such a conflict may be inexpedient for a race circumstanced like ours. But the moral question does not arise." Then he points out that law is an interference with personal liberty "The right to prevent such use of personal liberty as will injure the interests of the race, is the fundamental law of society. From this point of view the nation is only using its primary rights when it restrains the individual from buying or selling foreign goods." "The morality of the Kshatriya justifies violence in times of war, & boycott is a war. Nobody blames the Americans for throwing British tea into Boston harbour, nor can anybody blame similar action in India on moral grounds. It is reprehensible from the point of view of law, of social peace & order, not of political morality." But then he says "It (i.e. violence) has been eschewed by us because it is unwise and carried the battle onto a ground where we are comparatively weak, from a ground where we are strong." Again he says "aggression is unjust only when unprovoked, violence unrighteous when used wantonly or for unrighteous ends."

The argument of the whole article shortly is this "To drive out that which is evil violence is justifiable. We don't hate the English, but we object to their exploiting the country, for the interests of the two nations must be different and we can stop that exploitation by boycott. Boycott is not morally wrong for the ends at which it aims are the interests of the people. And that being so we should be morally justified in using force, if we were strong enough to do so."

As a mere piece of philosophic writing there is no special harm in this. The danger is the state of feeling in the country at the time, & the suggestion that violence is justifiable if the nation wishes for a particular thing the fact that in the circumstances the nation should not use violence is relegated to the background, equally so the question who is to decide what are the best interests of the nation It is left for the reader to come to the conclusion that those who can make their voices heard most are to decide what are the interests of the nation and impose on the inarticulate masses a tyranny far worse than that which they themselves condemn

Ex 299-9 is a still more extraordinary article I shall not quote from it, as the omission of any sentences would affect the whole The gist of it is that the object of the nationalist is to build up the nation The nationalist has a deep respect for the law, because without it the nation cannot attain proper development But the law must be in accordance with the wish of the nation If it is not, it is utilitarian & not moral And if immoral it should be broken The nationalist is not afraid of anarchy & suffering He welcomes them if the result is the building up of the nation

Mr Dass argues that the real point of the passage dealing with anarchy & suffering lies in the 3 questions which the nationalist puts to himself with regard to a method, (1) whether it is effective (2) is it commitment with the traditions of the people (3) is it educative of national strength, and he admits that Arabinda's views are that if violence answers those tests, it is a method to be adopted that when strong enough to fight the nationalist will fight, but at present he must merely disobey the law, if he thinks it wrong, and suffer He puts this supposition, suppose the people refused to pay taxes, their lands would be seized & put up to sale, no one would buy, then shooting by the English would begin to compel them to pay taxes & that would be the suffering contemplated We cannot but regret that Mr Dass should attribute such a character to the British race he forgets the intermediate stage & that shooting would not begin till rioting had begun & that rioting would be the inevitable result of fields lying fallow & the means of sustenance gone, and who would be responsible for the intermediate stage?

Mr Dass also argues that the idea is the same that has been elaborated by European philosophers, that a Government cannot exist against the will of the people, and that fact has been the explanation of all revolutions in Europe The difference is that in Europe rulers & ruled have been of the same race, here they are not

As an essay this article is a splendid piece of writing The danger lies in the effect that it might have on ill balanced & impressionable minds. And that it is signed is perhaps the reason why it was not published The fact that neither of these articles was published is again a point in Arabinda's favour. For though philosophic reflections may show the trend of a man's mind, it very much affects the question of whether he is a conspirator or not, if he does not publish writings which doing no harm to a careful reader might be misinterpreted by those of less mature understanding

Mr Norton lays great stress on the passage where he refers to the other papers including the Jugantar & Sandhya Wrongly I think, as the next sentence shows The

writer says the methods advocated are different, though all have the same ideal, & it is conceded that there is no harm in independence as an ideal, the offence lies in the methods by which it is sought to be attained

Ex 292-8 is a violent piece of writing, written apparently on Partition day. It is, however, not Arabinda's, but in a woman's hand, by the same hand apparently as that which wrote the two accounts Ex 287-1 & 292-9 Arabinda's name is on both these accounts, they appear to be for the supply of bazar articles to his mother at Rohini. It would be rather far fetched to say that the contents of every piece of paper kept by Arabinda reflected his own ideas. If this paper was written by his sister, it must be remembered that she was living with him

The next class of evidence is letters passing between other persons. Ex 182 is a letter from Ram Chandra Probhu to Upen. The point about this is that it is addressed to 23 Scott's Lane. In fact there is nothing to show that Upen even lived at No. 23 & the question is why should Ram Chandra address a letter to him there. The letter is in answer to one from Upen, & is with reference to the visit of Sishir & Hemchandra to Bombay. From the letter one can gather that Upen had written about them to Ram Chandra & presumably as the answer is addressed to No. 23, Upen must have written from there. Now with reference to all connection of conspirators with No. 23 we must remember that Abinash also lived there, so the visits of persons there as well as the addressing of letters there are always open to the explanation that Abinash was the attraction or the intermediary. It is quite possible that at the time of writing, some time in April, Upen had given this address not wishing that letters should be brought to the garden. At any rate in Ex CVI, from Ram Chandra to Hrishikesh we have indications that Ram Chandra did not know where Upen was. In this letter there is a reference to Arabinda. Ram Chandra speaks of him as "a simple, childlike, saintly soul yet withal burning with a true patriot's passionate enthusiasm, such as I have rarely seen." Then he speaks of Baren & says, "He asked me to go over to Bengal & join them in their work." The sentence is open to two constructions "Them" might refer to Baren & Arabinda as having a work in which both were interested, it might refer merely to Baren & his party, without having any reference to Arabinda. I have already referred to Ram Chandra & the fact that his name and address is also found in the garden in Ex CXVIIa

Ex 385-2 is a letter on which the prosecution lays much stress. It is the letter from Gobin to "brother doctor", found at No. 15. It is written on 24th April 1908. The writer says "I went to the house No. 23 at 3 p.m. on Wednesday & came to understand from Karta that you had left the place that very day at that very time after taking your meals there. When I asked Karta about Baren he said to me that he is in Calcutta but the address of both him & you were unknown to him. Thank you that you have set up such a Karta" (sarcastic). The prosecution suggests that the house is No. 23 Scott's Lane & that Karta means Arabinda; as I point out before that "brother doctor" means Upen.

For the defence it is suggested that there was a doctor living at No. 15 just before it was taken by the conspirators, (see witness No. 118), & the letter may be one written to

the former tenant. It is also suggested that No. 23 may refer to 23 Sib Narain Dass' Lane.

There can be no certainty as to what are the references in this letter. We don't know who Gobin is, but the fact of the letter being found at No. 15, that Baren is mentioned in it & No. 23,—23 Scott's Lane being a place frequently visited by the conspirators,—suggest that 23 Scott's Lane is meant, & the enquiry for Baren from Karta at 23, suggests Arabinda. It could not be Abinash, for in the scheme of the conspiracy it is hardly likely that Abinash should be at the head.

Ex 1380 is the telegram asking for the key signed Birkumar 23 Scott's Lane. The only point against Arabinda is the address given.

Ex 1381 is a telegram from one Sudhir, 19 Choku Khansama's Lane. The object is to contact Arabinda with accused Sudhir through the house. Sudhir's brother says the name is not written by Sudhir there is no reason to think that he is not correct. No. 19 is not the same as No. 19-3, though premises No. 19-3 is probably a portion of what was at some time or other No. 19. There is nothing in the telegram itself.

These two documents do not properly come under this subdivision of the evidence, they do not mention Arabinda either by name or by implication.

Ex 992 I have already referred to. At the worst it suggests some connection between Arabinda and the Midnapur Chhatten Bhandar.

Ex 774 is the letter by accused Sudhir to Upen at Sil's Lodge, of 11th March. It is short "arrived safe, Sukumar Babu is expected on the 5th or 6th Chaitra. Explained to Bara Karta. According to his order I ask you to come." In the postscript there is the reference to monkeys. It is suggested that Sukumar Babu is Baren & Bara Karta, Arabinda. I have already pointed out in connection with Ex CL & with letters being received at the garden, that there is reason to think that Baren was called Sukumar. If by Sukumar in this letter Baren is meant we have the fact that in two letters, this & Ex 385-2, Karta is mentioned in conjunction with Baren.

It is argued that Bara Karta cannot refer to Arabinda because if Sudhir had seen him the unopened letter Ex 300-21 would have been handed over by Arabinda to Sudhir, instead of being carried about from November to May. But Mr. Dass' own argument in connection with this letter was that Arabinda was absent-minded

*(To be concluded)*

## WHEN DARKNESS LIFTED

A CATAclysm that ultimately swept across the five continents and changed the world for ever is being recalled in memory as the beaches of Normandy in northern France re-enact perhaps the most momentous scenes of those fateful days. Celebrations marking the fiftieth anniversary of Allied landings in Normandy, which signalled the beginning of the end of Hitler's war, climaxed on the beach sands on Monday, June 6, with an estimated 40,000 veterans of the action, bemedalled and beaming, in attendance. What if the landings had failed, the weather on D-Day had not proved a willing ally and the German military leadership had not slumbered momentarily and uncharacteristically instead of confronting the enemy on the sands that midnight hour? One ineradicable result—the world, or most parts of it, would have been shared out between the two dictators, Hitler and his onetime ally to the east, Stalin. Futile thoughts perhaps but they lend perspective to the achievements and meaning to the enormous sacrifices made on the beaches and beyond in those months. By the time the Nazi war ended a year later, more than 50 million people, two-thirds of them civilians, had perished.

Adolf Hitler mesmerised a nation and terrorised a world. Treachery, lies and murder were the hallmark of his campaign and by the time the Allies and Stalin's soldiers tightened the noose round his neck, the Nazi architect of death and destruction had killed or critically wounded many ideas and institutions— isolationism, appeasement, the Third Reich, even the mighty British Empire. From the ashes of that catastrophe also rose the United Nations, an organisation for peace that aimed to keep the Hitlers at bay. Has the world learned the lessons of that brief victory over fascism and totalitarianism?

No, it would seem. The cold war took over where Hitler had left off and held the world in its grip for full four decades, dividing nations, raising impregnable barriers between peoples and driving men to rule by fear. The conflagrations that the world has seen in the last 50 years have negated whatever hope for freedom and peace the beach landings symbolised in that era of darkness. Vietnam, Korea, the Congo are testimony that megalomania is an incurable disease. The end of the cold war was proclaimed four years ago but only the naive will believe there is peace in our time. The past years since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the symbolic collapse of the cold war have witnessed even more mindless slaughterings in the name of race, religion and colour—with the United Nations often a powerless spectator.

Europe which has paid a heavy price for liberty this century is far from being a haven of peace. For all the successes of the European Union, the continent has forgotten one cardinal lesson—that the seeds of World War II were sown at the end of the first by the intolerable terms imposed on the loser, the seeds of hatred that bred the Nazis. If that lesson had been imbibed, Germany and Russia would have marched in step at Normandy and not have been kept out on the periphery. Should the Germans of today suffer for the deeds of Hitler and his Nazi hordes and the Russians pay for their communist past? The rise of neo-Nazis targeting Jewish synagogues and expatriate

workers and the revival of far-right political groups in Germany and the growing popularity of nationalists in Russia should have sent clear signals that Europe can do without further doses of nationalist poison. If there cannot be reconciliation, any victory celebration will prove meaningless. For, like the plague bacillus, the merchants of war never die or disappear for good and bide their time to re-emerge and send forth the innocents to die on the streets. Warmongers are not vanquished.

(Courtesy *The Hindu*, Editorial, 8 June 1994)

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### THREE LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO APROPOS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Some forces are working for the Divine, some are quite anti-divine in their aim and purpose.

If the nations or the governments who are blindly the instruments of the divine forces were perfectly pure and divine in their processes and forms of action as well as in the inspiration they receive so ignorantly they would be invincible, because the divine forces themselves are invincible. It is the mixture in the outward expression that gives to the Asura the right to defeat them.

To be a successful instrument for the Asuric forces is easy, because they take all the movements of your lower nature and make use of them, so that you have no spiritual effort to make. On the contrary, if you are to be a fit instrument of the Divine Force you must make yourself perfectly pure, since it is only in an integrally divinised instrument that the Divine Force will have its full power and effect.<sup>1</sup>

4-7-1940

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We feel that not only is this a battle waged in just self-defence and in defence of the nations threatened with the world-domination of Germany and the Nazi system of life, but that it is a defence of civilisation and its highest attained social, cultural and spiritual values and of the whole future of humanity. To this cause our support and sympathy will be unswerving whatever may happen, we look forward to the victory of Britain and, as the eventual result, an era of peace and union among the nations and a better and more secure world-order.<sup>2</sup>

19-9-1940

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1 From a letter to a disciple.

2 This letter was addressed to the Governor of Madras covering a contribution to the Viceroy's War Purposes Fund, made as a token of a complete adhesion to the Allied cause. It was written at the time of the collapse of France and the threatened collapse of Britain. It was placed at the disposal of the Governor for publicity in case of need.

You have said that you have begun to doubt whether it was the Mother's war and ask me to make you feel again that it is I affirm again to you most strongly that this is the Mother's war. You should not think of it as a fight for certain nations against others or even for India, it is a struggle for an ideal that has to establish itself on earth in the life of humanity, for a Truth that has yet to realise itself fully and against a darkness and falsehood that are trying to overwhelm the earth and mankind in the immediate future. It is the forces behind the battle that have to be seen and not this or that superficial circumstance. It is no use concentrating on the defects or mistakes of nations, all have defects and commit serious mistakes, but what matters is on what side they have ranged themselves in the struggle. It is a struggle for the liberty of mankind to develop, for conditions in which men have freedom and room to think and act according to the light in them and grow in the Truth, grow in the Spirit. There cannot be the slightest doubt that if one side wins, there will be an end of all such freedom and hope of light and truth and the work that has to be done will be subjected to conditions which would make it humanly impossible; there will be a reign of falsehood and darkness, a cruel oppression and degradation for most of the human race such as people in this country do not dream of and cannot yet at all realise. If the other side that has declared itself for the free future of humanity triumphs, this terrible danger will have been averted and conditions will have been created in which there will be a chance for the Ideal to grow, for the Divine Work to be done, for the spiritual Truth for which we stand to establish itself on the earth. Those who fight for this cause are fighting for the Divine and against the threatened reign of the Asura<sup>1</sup>

29-7-1942

(*Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, SABCL, Vol 26, pp 393-94)

<sup>1</sup> This letter was written to a disciple in answer to his doubts about Sri Aurobindo's publicly declared standpoint with regard to the War



## THE NATIONAL ANTHEM OF INDIA

OUT of all the fatuities with which modern India is infested, the most egregious is the long drawn-out discussion on the choice of a national anthem. The two songs that have been pitted against each other are really like two worlds apart and it is supreme lack of insight to set them up as equal candidates for election posing us a most perplexing problem. Once we understand, first, the prerequisites of the ideal national anthem and, secondly, the living associations and potencies of Bankim Chandra's *Vande Mataram* on the one hand and Tagore's *Jana Gana Mana* on the other, there cannot remain the slightest doubt that nothing except *Vande Mataram* can be the creative cry and the sustaining call on the lips of resurgent India.

We are often told that the prime consideration is that a national anthem should be suitable for collective singing, that it should have an effective orchestration. But these are, for all their importance, purely technical points. And woe betide the nation which appoints a committee of technicians to decide its anthem! We have to go down to its significance and its emotion, we have to look at its history and its impact on the times.

What should be the ideal national anthem? .. The ideal national anthem must not only express the political and social man or even the complete self of thinking and feeling individuals composing a people, but also bring home to us the reality of national being. What is a nation?... When we speak of India we are alive to the presence and power of a single being whose outermost shell is the territorial expanse indicated on our maps and whose more subtle and plastic body is the collection of human beings living in that expanse and sharing and expressing certain cultural characteristics. But our too intellectual turn leads us to dismiss this awareness as a figurative mode of feeling: we declare that we are only practising patriotic personification and that there is no actual entity beyond the individuals inhabiting the land. But this is a patent self-deception. No patriot has ever fought and died for anything except a vast, moving and mighty supra-individual personality—a hidden Goddess, a gigantic Beloved, a great Mother. Especially as a great Mother this personality inspires him, for a country is felt as either fatherland or motherland and the latter aspect is the more intimately alive and commanding. Not in the cold dissecting rational mind but in the heart with its mysteries and profundities, its intuitions of the beyond, its inexplicable visions of the superhuman and the divine, that the essence of patriotism, as of every other individual-transcending passion, lies

The ideal national anthem, therefore, brings out in full the reality of the single Being whose multiple expression is the myriads living in a country. And, mind you, it is the national Being and not just the Spirit of Man or the universal Spirit that is to be present in it. Nationalism has no meaning without this particularity. We may argue against the power of Nationalism, we may say that modern progressive thought minimises Nationalism in the hope of achieving a world-unity. But the very fact that we are talking of a national anthem implies the importance of the national Being. And the implication is perfectly justified. In point of fact, this Being is so far the only supra-

individual entity that has concretely emerged in human consciousness not only is the national Being an already realised if not always intellectually acknowledged entity, but also is it a valuable, an essential part of the scheme of human evolution. Neither the consciousness of the one Spirit of Man in all countries nor that of the universal Spirit should annul the consciousness of nationhood. Nationalism is vital to the full development of humanity. Consequently, no national anthem can be ideal unless it brings, however subtly and refinedly, to the forefront the typical national Being of a country, even if all humanity or all divinity be hymned, there must be in the face and figure of the invoked Spirit something clearly and fervently national.

When we say ‘national’, we must not mean merely a vague image of the country’s consciousness. There must be a powerful suggestion of the precise colour and shape of the country’s culture. The genius of India is in the first place an intense mysticism deriving from an ineradicable intuition of the Godhead that is the All and even more than the All, a creatively emanating and manifesting Consciousness and Delight, and in the second place a richness of varied, complex, adventurous, even fantastic-seeming forms of existence which yet carries a certain stability and self-balance by being rooted in a spontaneous organic energy. Something quintessential of this genius must pervade any anthem that aims at being ideally national in India. And here a point of considerable moment is the true meaning of Indianness.

When we speak of Indian spiritual culture expressing itself harmoniously with a varied vitality we mean the culture whose initial significances and original splendours are to be found in the Rīg Veda and whose wide and luminous developments are in the Upanishads and the Gīta and the Tantra and whose culmination and complete outburst of light we find today in the poetry and prose of Śrī Aurobindo. This is not a narrow religion that cramps and divides: it is a profound synthesising multi-faceted movement of revelatory and transformative power not only expressed in inspired *sūtra* or *śloka*, penetrating exposition or evocative exegesis, but also in the very stuff of the living consciousness and in the very gesture and action of the living body. Indian spiritual culture, true to the Divinity, at once single and multiple, of its vast intuition and experience and to the *élan* of its audacious, diversely creative life-force, stands like a parliament of all faiths and philosophies, a federation of all ethical and social forms. No doubt, a few lines of growth have become rigidly assertive, but, in their exaggeration of some aspects out of the many that were natural to the Indian genius, they are not fundamental. Not these unplastic survivals of certain necessities called for by particular circumstances are what we mean by cultural Indianness. They conflict with the norms and forms set up by several religions. But the basic soul and shape of cultural Indianness can take into itself the uniqueness, the subtle nuance, of every religion. This remarkable quality of it has been evident to the students, in the West no less than in the East, of its prolific scripture and literature. Hence Indian spiritual culture cannot be objected to as being sectarian. But, on the other hand, we should be de-nationalising it if we refused to admit whatever ideas or terms in it distinguished it from the Islamic, Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Sikh, Jain or even Buddhist culture. It has, for all its

catholicity, characteristics of its own, and these characteristics it must retain in one manner or another if it is to be in any valid sense Indian. Take away these characteristics and it ceases being what the world knows it to be. Expunge them from a national anthem which claims to be Indian and you have a general nondescript religious terminology, lacking in all national savour and drained of all distinguishable and dynamic vitality. The Godhead hailed must bring the light and colour and configuration of what the descendants of the Rishis have felt and seen. The feeling and seeing are, because of their essential catholicity of motive, really acceptable by even a person who though in India does not think and pray with a consciousness in direct tune with the typical Indian spirituality; but if anyone takes objection to them because of their non-Islamic, non-Christian, non-Jewish, non-Zoroastrian, non-Sikh, non-Jain and even non-Buddhist suggestion, then he fails to understand what ultimate India is and he is trying to rob her of all genuine cultural value and to suppress a national genius that is, from the mystical and metaphysical viewpoint, the most wonderful in existence and, from the worldly and pragmatic viewpoint, no less wonderful by its wealth of varied creativeness and its capacity of almost unlimited organic assimilation.

The concept of secularity prominent today in our Constitution must never encourage us to water down this genius. Its function is discharged as soon as it ensures freedom of religious belief and ceremony, absence of bigotry, non-discrimination on communal grounds.. The national anthem of India cannot be ideal without burning with historical India's own distinct beauty of worship together with her broad vision of the universal Divine. If it does not thus burn, the India whose representative utterance it claims to be is just an artificial construct and not a grandly alive entity. She will be just a gilded simulacrum and the sum-total of her history will be a cypher.

A last hint remains now to be given about the ideal national anthem for us. When a country's genius itself is cast in the mystical mould, when to be truly Indian is to be charged with an instinct of the Divine and a presence of the Eternal in a way not common to other nationalities, the ideal national anthem will hardly echo the essential nature if it sings of God as a Power separate from the national Being rather than as having a core of identity with it. To draw everywhere a line, however faint, between the two and to suggest merely that God presides over or guides the Being that is India is to make the song miss the exquisite finishing touch that is the ever-so-little-more without which we are worlds away from truth and perfection. Our national Being, the Mother-Power whose children we are, must itself be visioned and voiced as ultimately the Supreme and the Eternal standing here in the evolving cosmos and in the process of time and with the face and figure of our country's soul but with all the glories of the Infinite Mystery suffusing them and spreading from them to the ends of the earth. Break up the core of direct identity and you at once muffle the master-tone of the anthem. .

The unique union, as Sri Aurobindo puts it, of sweetness, simple directness and high poetic force in *Vande Mataram* is difficult to translate with absolute accuracy into English verse from the original Sanskrit interspersed with a few Bengali words. But the

inspired drive of it is admirably caught in general in Sri Aurobindo's own rendering which is born of his having felt it in his very blood-stream during the days when he led the revolt of Bengal against foreign rule.

Mother, I bow to thee!  
 Rich with thy hurrying streams,  
 Bright with thy orchard gleams,  
 Cool with thy winds of delight,  
 Dark fields waving, Mother of might,  
 Mother free!

Glory of moonlight dreams,  
 Over thy beaches and lordly streams,  
 Clad in thy blossoming trees,  
 Mother, giver of ease,  
 Laughing low and sweet!  
 Mother, I kiss thy feet,  
 Speaker sweet and low!  
 Mother, to thee I bow.

Who hath said thou art weak in thy lands,  
 When the swords flash out in seventy million hands  
 And seventy million voices roar  
 Thy dreadful name from shore to shore?  
 With many strengths who art mighty and stored,  
 To thee I call, Mother and Lord!  
 Thou who savest, arise and save!  
 To her I cry who ever her foemen drave  
 Back from plain and sea  
 And shook herself free

Thou art wisdom, thou art law,  
 Thou our heart, our soul, our breath,  
 Thou the love divine, the awe  
 In our hearts that conquers death.  
 Thine the strength that nerves the arm,  
 Thine the beauty, thine the charm.  
 Every image made divine  
 In our temples is but thine  
 Thou art Durga, Lady and Queen,  
 With her hands that strike and her swords of sheen,  
 Thou art Lakshmi lotus-throned,  
 And the Muse a hundred-toned.

Pure and perfect without peer,  
 Mother, lend thine ear  
 Rich with thy hurrying streams,  
 Bright with thy orchard gleams,  
 Dark of hue, O candid-fair  
 In thy soul, with jewelled hair  
 And thy glorious smile divine,  
 Loveliest of all earthly lands,  
 Showering wealth from well-stored hands!  
 Mother, mother mine!  
 Mother sweet, I bow to thee  
 Mother great and free!\*

Not a single demand in order to get the ideal national anthem for India is left unanswered here by a poetic language and rhythm that come with the mystical inevitability of what is called the *mantra*—the visionary word springing by some identification of the hidden poetic self with the deep heart of the thing to be uttered, and catching in the moment of identification the secret divine truth and reality which has figured forth that thing. Not only is each phrase replete with precise and necessary significance, but the various phrases form an unfolding scheme both artistically and philosophically satisfying, a three-stepped progression which, in a speech delivered thirty-one years ago in the grand square of the National School of Amraoti, Sri Aurobindo is reported to have explained. As with the individual, so with the nation, there are three sheaths or bodies—the gross or outer, the subtle or inner, the causal or higher. The first consists of the physical elements, the shape, the visible organic functioning. In Bankim Chandra's poem it is the rapid rivers and the glimmering orchards, the winds and the harvests waving, the moon-magical nights in forest and on riverside. A transition from the outer body to the inner is through the human populations, the warrior men who are the physical instruments of the fine frenzy of freedom that is hers. Their teeming vitality is the cry of independence she sends forth from the inner to the outer—the inner that is a formation of beautiful disciplined powers, an inspired energy, a pure passion, an illumined thought, a righteous will, an aesthesis enchanting and refining. This subtle sheath of her being bears hints of a still greater mode of her existence and by those hints the supra-individual and national self of her mingles, in our enthusiasms as well as in our meditations, with all the symbols of the Infinite and the Eternal our religious nature instals everywhere in our land. That still greater mode is the prime creative arch-image, at once single and many-aspected, whose evolving expression is the vast world with its nations and peoples. Cause and controller from its transcendental status, it is the Divine Truth of all formulated being, the ever-living supreme Personality whose power and bliss and knowledge are the

\* The original is given on page 559

perfection towards which we aspire in this country of ours when we love so vehemently the soil sanctified by hero and saint and seer and when we fling ourselves so happily into the service of the majestic and maternal Presence that we feel to be the indivisible India stretched in a myriad harmonious moods across space and time

The revelatory vision and the mantric vibration distinguishing *Vande Mataram* throw *Jana Gana Mana* entirely into the shade. And it is no wonder that not Tagore's but Bankim's song has been the motive-force of the whole struggle for India's freedom. Until it burned and quivered in the hearts of our patriots and rose like a prayer and incantation on their lips, the country was striving with an obscure sense of its own greatness: there was a vagueness, a lukewarmness, a fear we were overawed by the material prowess and pomp of our foreign rulers and our efforts to find our true selves were spoiled by either an unthinking imitation of the West or else a defensive anti-Western conservatism. We had not struck upon the master-key to the problem of national existence. Then, from a book that had been neglected when it first appeared, the music of *Vande Mataram* rang out into the ambiguously agitated air of the nation's reawakening consciousness. Sri Aurobindo was at that time the political guru of Bengal. He realised at once the creative energy packed into this poem. With a gesture as of an ultimate world-secret found at last, he scattered the words of Bankim Chandra all over idealistic Bengal from whose "seventy million voices" that are rightly celebrated in the poem they spread to Gujarat and Maharashtra and beyond. In his own life he incarnated the presence of the mighty Mother with her aura of mystical consciousness. Under the spell of this presence a giant determination and zest took birth in the entire land, beginning a movement whose goal was bound to be independence. No sacrifice was too exacting, no suffering too poignant to be endured, not death itself could terrify. Laughing and singing, the patriots fought and served and died. Through all the long years during which the struggle for swaraj went on, *Vande Mataram* stimulated and supported the peoples of India, instilling into them a hope and a strength beyond the human. It is the one cry that has made modern Indian history; not political speeches, but this magical strain breaking through Bankim Chandra from the inmost recesses of resurgent India's heart and interfused by Sri Aurobindo with India's mind and life as the true national anthem, brought us, two years ago, on the fifteenth of August which was also the seventy-fifth birthday of Sri Aurobindo, our political liberation. To put such a saviour-song on any other footing than that of the national anthem is to be disloyal to the Power that has given us a new birth. To overlook the fact that it has been a saviour-song because it is ideally the national anthem of India is to set ourselves out of tune with the glorious future calling to our glorious past.

AMAL KIRAN  
(K D SETHNA)

(Extracts from the author's recently published book, *India and the World Scene*)

## बन्दे मातरम्

बन्दे मातरम् ।

सुजला सुफला मलयज शीतलाम्  
 शस्य श्यामला मातरम् ।  
 शुभ्र ज्योत्स्ना-पुलकित-यामिनोम्  
 फुल्ल-कुसुमित-द्रुमदलशोभिनीम्,  
 सुहासिनी सुमधुरभाषिणीम्,  
 सुखदा बरदा मातरम् ॥

सप्तकोटिकण्ठ-कल-कल-निनादकराले  
 द्विसप्त कोटि भुजैर्धृत खरकरवाले,  
 अबला केन मा एत बले !  
 बहुबलधारिणी नमामि तारिणीम्  
 रिपुदलवारिणी मातरम् ॥

तुमि विद्या तुमि धर्म,  
 तुमि हृदि तुमि मर्म,  
 त्वं हि प्राणाः शरीरे ।  
 बाहुते तुमि मा शक्ति,  
 हृदये तुमि मा भक्ति,  
 तोमारद् प्रतिमा गडि मन्दिरे मन्दिरे ।

त्व हि दुर्गा दशप्रहरणधारिणी,  
 कमला कमल-दलबिहारिणी,  
 बाणी विद्यादायिणी, नमामि त्वा,  
 नमामि कमला अमला अतुलाम्,  
 सुजला सुफला मातरम् ॥

बन्दे मातरम्

श्यामला सरलां सुस्मिता भूषिताम्  
 धरणी भरणी मातरम् ॥

## BANDE MATARAM—OUR NATIONAL SONG

*Bande Mataram* which has played a historic role in the struggle for Indian freedom, “shall be honoured equally with *Jana Gana Mana* and shall have equal status with it” This declaration as made by President Dr Rajendra Prasad in the Constituent Assembly of India on Tuesday, 24 January 1950, while formally adopting *Jana Gana Mana* as our National Anthem <sup>1</sup>

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy and his cabinet colleagues in West Bengal made a vigorous plea to Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to grant official recognition to *Bande Mataram* as our National Anthem He wrote to Pt Nehru on 14 June 1948 “*Bande Mataram* has a much greater claim to be considered as the national anthem *Bande Mataram* has behind it a great historical tradition of suffering and sacrifice ever since 1905 Men have sung it in defiance of Government order and have been punished for it. Men have gone to jail, have faced bullets and have gone to the gallows with this song on their lips”<sup>2</sup> Dr Roy asserted that *Bande Mataram* was ideally suited as a national anthem as “it represents India of the future, India that is to be—a powerful India, a happy India, a smiling India—an India of victory and fulfilment As a matter of fact, in this there is no mention of any past struggle.”<sup>3</sup>

However, *Bande Mataram* was considered to be “completely unsuited as a national anthem” as the rest of India voted in favour of *Jana Gana Mana*, “It is and it will continue to be a national song which is intimately connected with our struggle for freedom and which will be revered accordingly,” Pt Nehru assured Dr Roy <sup>4</sup>

*Bande Mataram* is almost all in Sanskrit though the endings and a couple of lines are in Bengali Its power and spell is felt by everybody in India, whatever be his mother-tongue, without any need for a translation The first two stanzas of the song, which are generally sung at public gatherings, contain little Bengali and, as such, few people have ever thought that the song was originally written in Bengali Pandit Nehru, however, maintained “As for the words, *Bande Mataram* contains language which most people do not understand Certainly I do not understand it” Dr Roy pointed out in this connection “As regards the language of *Bande Mataram* song not being understood by most people, I would point out that the same difficulty also holds good so far as *Jana Gana Mana* is concerned, inasmuch as a person like you, not to speak of others, cannot follow the meaning of all words of the song”<sup>5</sup>

In this connection it is worth recalling what *The Statesman* wrote on 24 September 1905 “The song, part Sanskrit, part Bengali, gave rise to some literary criticism Some of Bankim’s friends objected to the mixed language of the song, but he offered no explanation and made no alteration to the words It was in one of those moods when genius is allied to prophecy that the song was composed, and perhaps the Master knew, with the prophet’s foreknowledge, that the time would come when the words would be on every lip in Bengal The Sanskrit is so simple that it can be easily understood by even those who do not understand a word of Sanskrit, while it is a living link with the past reminiscent of the language which our ancient ancestors spoke which is the richest



and most perfect of all languages in the world. For purity and loftiness of sentiment, and rich cadence of music *Bande Mataram* is inferior to no patriotic song in the world, while the invocation to the Motherland as Mother is in keeping with the traditional sentiment of the country. The very first line conveys a vision of the mother with her sweet water, sweet fruits and broad expanses of waving green corn, and the note rises higher and penetrates deeper with the flowing march and roll of the magnificent verse. Today the words of this glorious song are rising from thousands of throats, old and young, tomorrow they will go up from millions of throats even as the song predicts. Henceforward in all great undertakings let the first word of praise be for the Land of our birth—Hail Mother, Hail—*Bande Mataram*!”

Sri Aurobindo’s words in this connection are also worth quoting. “We needed a language which should combine the strength, dignity or soft beauty of Sanskrit with the verve and the vigour of the vernacular raciness and at the other of the most sonorous gravity. Bankim divined our needs and was inspired to meet it.” What made *Bande Mataram* popular was its stately diction, fine musical rhythm and its earnest patriotism.

Another objection to *Bande Mataram* being selected as our National Anthem was raised by some ‘Muslim friends’ who had misconceived it as a song in praise of the Hindu goddess Durga. This notion was prevalent ever since the song was born and was not confined to this community. Some Englishmen had maintained that the song was an invocation to the terrible goddess Kali.<sup>6</sup> The Indian National Congress could not formally adopt *Bande Mataram* as our national anthem on account of the exception taken by the ‘Muslim friends’. The Congress Working Committee held at Wardha on August 14-17, 1937, issued a lengthy statement<sup>7</sup> in which it was explained: “The first two stanzas of *Bande Mataram* described in tender language the beauty of the motherland and the abundance of her gifts. There was absolutely nothing in them to which objection could be taken from the religious or any other point of view. The song was never sung as a challenge to any group or community in India and was never considered as such or as offending the sentiments of any community. Indeed the reference in it to thirty crores of Indians makes it clear that it was meant to apply to all the people of India. There is nothing in these (first two) stanzas to which anyone can take exception. The other stanzas of the song are little known and hardly ever sung. They contain certain allusions and a religious ideology which may not be in keeping with the ideology of other religious groups in India.

“The Committee recognize the validity of the objection raised by Muslim friends to certain parts of the song. While the Committee have taken note of such objection in so far as it has intrinsic value, the Committee wish to point out that the modern evolution of the use of the song as part of national life is of infinitely greater importance than its setting in a historic novel before the national movement had taken shape. Taking all things into consideration therefore the Committee recommend that wherever the *Bande Mataram* is sung at national gatherings only the first two stanzas should be sung, with perfect freedom to the organizers to sing any other song of an unobjectionable character, in addition to, or in the place of, the *Bande Mataram* song.”

### History of *Bande Mataram*

The great novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (26 June 1836—8 April 1894) was going home on a September evening in 1875 from Calcutta in a train. The train from Sealdah took him to Naihati from where his house at Kantalpara was only a matter of a walk. It was a holiday. The poet in Bankim Chandra was bewitched in the course of the journey by the beauty of the Bengal countryside with its lush green vegetation, colourful flowers swaying in the breeze to the call of gurgling streams and tanks. Nature in its many splendoured-beauty lay before the poet in a vast expanse. He was thrilled by the beauty of Nature, his Motherland. He had the vision of the Mother, the primeval Mother, and made obeisance to Her and sang: “Bande Mataram...” He noted the words on a piece of paper after reaching home.

A few days later Bankim was sitting in his editorial chair at the *Bangadarshan* office. The press-manager wanted some ‘copy’ for composing to fill up two pages. Bankim passed on the sheet of paper on which he had written the *Bande Mataram* song. The press-manager told Bankim: ‘What a hotch-potch you have written, Sir, half in Sanskrit, half in Bengali. It would have been an excellent piece...’. Bankim told him curtly: “You cannot understand the significance of this song now. But if you live 25 years more you will see Bengal in rapture over it.” Sri Aurobindo, to whom we are indebted for this anecdote, added: “Perhaps the vision and the faculty divine made Bankim Chandra make this prophecy. And the manager has lived to see not only all Bengal but all India accept the song as the National Anthem and its opening words engraved on the cenotaph of the great *Shivaji*”<sup>8</sup>

P THANKAPPAN NAIR

### Notes and References

- 1 *Constituent Assembly Debates*, Tuesday, January 24, 1950, Vol XII, No 1 p 7
- 2-5 Chakrabarty, Saroj, *With Dr B C Roy and other Chief Ministers*, Calcutta 1974—(2) pp 101-105 for text of the letters exchanged by Pt Nehru with Dr B C Roy, (3) p 104—Dr Roy to Pt Nehru dt June 24, 1948, (4) p 102—Pt Nehru to Dr Roy, 15th June, 1948, and (5) pp 103, 105
- 6 Anderson, G D, *The Times* (London), September 24, 1906
- 7 Zaidi, A M & S G, *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*, New Delhi, 1980, Vol XI 1936-1938, pp 299-301
- 8 *Bande Mataram*, April 22, 1907—*Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 27, Supplement, Pondicherry, 1972, p 353, ‘Bankim Chandra’

(Extracts from *Indian National Song and Symbols*, 1987)

## CHURCHILL ABOUT INDIA

A SHORT statement of Winston Churchill has appeared under the above caption in *Mother India* (April 98) on p 270, taken from his speech in the House of Commons in the debate on the Indian Independence Bill

He starts with the established dictum, "Liberty is man's birthright," but hastens to add, "However few years."\*

This statement could come only from a stubborn man like Churchill, who was obsessed with the white man's burden, who did not want to be the first Prime Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire, who had the bad taste to contemptuously call Mahatma Gandhi a half-naked fakir, and who had the audacity to equate the then star-studded Congress with "rascals, rogues and freebooters",—a very unparliamentary language and that too in the British Parliament

When Churchill spoke thus, confusing men of character and stature with rascals and rogues, he might have lost his balance of mind at the moment. One wonders, if Churchill were alive today, how would he have described the present Indian scene in which we find the Indian polity held at ransom

Or, did Churchill have the foresight to see the future of the Indian polity and somehow he got confused and mixed up with his contemporaries in his speech under the influence of his personal prejudices and passions?

For, in all fairness, it should be admitted that the disastrous decline of the polity as described by him has, in a way, come out to be true

At least the credit for foresight and forewarning goes to him, though he had no listeners in this country. Truly speaking, even our own leaders were not listened to on this point

A few years before India became independent, Sri Aurobindo privately wrote about his concern more for what would happen after independence than for independence itself which for him was a thing sure to come about. Things looked ominous to him and he indicated the possibility of "goonda raj" and of things getting worse and worse.

Among the intellectuals in the freedom struggle, C Rajagopalachariar had the foresight, way back in 1920, to say, "We all ought to know that Swaraj will not at once, or I think, even for a long time to come, mean better government or greater happiness for the people. Elections and their corruptions, injustice and the power and tyranny of wealth, and inefficiency of administration will make a hell of life as soon as freedom is given to us. Men will regretfully look back to the old regime of comparative justice, and of efficient, more or less honest administration."

\* Liberty is man's birth-right. However, to pass the reins of the Government to the Congress at this juncture is to hand over the destiny of hungry millions into the hands of rascals, rogues and freebooters. Not a bottle of water or a loaf of bread will be free and the blood of hungry millions will be on the head of Mr. Clement Atlee. India will be lost to political squabbles. It will take a thousand years to know the periphery of the philosophy of politics. Today we hand over the Government to men of straw of whom no trace will be found in a few years.

Within a decade of independence C.R. described our legislators and parliamentarians as “persons with no ostensible means of livelihood who could be rounded up easily by a first class Magistrate”

When a suggestion was made to Jaya Prakash Narain in the seventies that Madho Singh, the reformed dacoit, be asked to stand for the Parliament where he might find himself in good company, J.P. said, “No, no, probably he would not be in good company because he would be a reformed dacoit”

Acharya Vinoba Bhave would call the Indian State an “ill-fare State” and not the hoped-for “welfare State”

Mahatma Gandhi thought of the Congress Govt as no better than that of the Moghuls or Rajputs of old

Did they have listeners?

SHYAM SUNDER JHUNJHUNWALA

### LETTER TO A READER

Dear R K

Your Note I am glad the Churchill-statement has prompted an immediate response from the readers of *Mother India*. The purpose was to take care of such utterances in a suitable way based on our foundations.

But what is required is not a reaction; it should be a well-appraised rebuttal. We may have to put everything in a proper context.

The fact that the British Parliament did not go by what Churchill had said was a sufficient rejection of such views of political traders. That however does not mean we should be complacent about it, that we should swallow it.

We should also note that it was Churchill himself who had sent Sir Stafford Cripps with the Mission proposing the Dominion Status of India. Our “worthy” politicians of the day rejected the proposal, saying, “It is a cheque drawn on a bank in the process of liquidation.” What happened to those “great” people in those days, when Sri Aurobindo himself had gone out of his way urging to accept the proposal?

There is a letter by Sri Aurobindo also speaking of the possibility of Goonda Raj after the Independence. For him the country’s independence was a settled fact of the future and the concern was to take care of the mission India was to fulfil in the comity of nations. Was Sri Aurobindo not aware of the “greatness” of these politicians you mention in your note?

My request to you is, to write a full-fledged article on the theme. It is very necessary that we take note of the post-independence scenario in the right manner, with a fuller Aurobindoman perspective. This will be good not only for the benefit of the readers of *Mother India*, but also for the cultured politicians and thinkers who are sensitive to these issues.

Thanks and warmly

R Y DESHPANDE

## AMONG THE NOT SO GREAT—VIII

YOGANANDA\*

### Chasing a Dream—Fulfilling a Destiny

I SPEAK of another Ananda right after the last one, i e., Poornananda. One may begin to have some qualms about this surfeit of ‘Ananda’—but again what’s in a name?

I speak of Yogananda as a close friend, colleague, boss and assistant all bundled into one. He was a close friend and boss of Poornananda too. They had much in common—both were sadhus, short-tempered, hard workers and umbrella wielders (a third Ananda, Dhīrananda, as short-tempered, was their friend, a sadhu like them. We will make acquaintance with him later). As with Poornananda the ‘Ananda’ was not so evident. It was deeply hidden. Perhaps if one lived long and close enough, with sympathy, to feel and go through the heat barriers he wore, one may feel the joy he felt.

Yogananda (né Jotindra) was born in Kargaon village near Kīshoreganj of Mymensingh District, Bengal. He was born on the 17th of August 1898. A sister preceded and four brothers followed him. They lost their mother early. Their father and his mother brought them up. Around 1918 Jotindra came under the influence of one Bharat Brahmachari of Bairati (not to be confused with Birati, another village near Calcutta). The Brahmachari had founded an ashram—the Gauri Ashram. The Brahmachari was an unconventional and not a tradition-adhering sort of guru. He did not mind Jotindra joining his ashram and yet continuing to study in the high school. Jotindra was initiated and he received the name Jogdananda. At about this time news came from home that his grandmother was seriously ill. Jogdananda rushed home, his grandmother saw him and soon after passed away. Within 19 days tragedy struck again. Jogdananda’s father also passed away. Jogdananda was not very willing to take up the family burden. While all this turmoil was going on, one night the police arrested Jogdananda, accusing him of being the leader of a secret society. The police commissioner, a Dick Sahib, asserted that Jogdananda and many of Bharat Brahmachari’s disciples were anarchists. No proof was found nor was it necessary in those days. Jogdananda was put in jail for one and a half months in Mymensingh and then shifted to another jail somewhere in West Bengal. A year passed and he was released in January of 1920. He returned to the ashram. In jail he had ample time to think and ruminate over the same thoughts. There was nothing else to do. He confronted his guru with questions and doubts. He asked: “Baba, you often talk to the Mother. You know everything. Please tell me if all this, our struggle for freedom, is for nothing. All our prominent leaders are arrested. With none to lead, the movement has lost its impetus. What has the Mother said about India’s freedom? You told us that there would be a great upheaval in the

\* A tribute on the occasion of the birth-centenary of the one who chased dreams and fulfilled destiny, lived in the Mother’s Light and Love, did what She willed him to do.

world (First World War) after which India will gain her freedom. The upheaval is over but India's freedom seems to have receded!"

The Brahmachari replied "Aré bētā (O my son), the Mother has with all Her 'Devashakti' manifested Herself to bring peace on earth. You ask about India's freedom. That is assured. All this revolutionary activity is Her will and Her work. Her Shakti is working in you. Yes, this upheaval is over, as you say—but there will be another in 20 years' time, a greater one. India will attain freedom after that. You ask what my *ādes̄h* is. My wish is that you should know the Mother, know Her will and work for Her."

All this was a revelation to the young Yogananda. He decided at that moment he would take sannyas, go and find the Mother and do Her will. (Sri Aurobindo later said that it was a change of consciousness.) He told this to his guru and the guru silently accepted and blessed him—just with a smile.

Jogdananda went on a pilgrimage with his guru's consent. He travelled through Kashi, Haridwar, Hrishikesh, etc. Throughout he was dogged by an oft-recurring dream in which he was holding an infant in his arms. Long ago his guru had told him to get married, but he did not. Was this an indication that he should have? Now his mind was troubled. He wrote to the guru. Bharat Brahmachari asked him to come back. From Hrishikesh he returned to Bairati and went straight to his guru, who assured him that his dream had nothing to do with his refusal to get married. He explained that the infant represents Wisdom and Jogdananda should be like the infant in the Mother's lap, demanding Her love. Maybe, the Mother is pleased with you but wants to hear you call her again, and so keeps silent. You should not then fret, fall off Her lap, and feel sorrow and pain. Rather surrender and call Her patiently, lovingly. Understand you are Her child, in Her lap. Your sorrows will disappear. Jogdananda stayed for some time in Bairati and worked, for now the ashram was developing a few working departments, teaching some young students trades like weaving, stitching, etc. These changes irked Jogdananda and some others. They ran counter to their traditional ways. The last straw was that Bharat Brahmachari had admitted women, to live and work there. Three of the inmates—Mukhananda, Dhirananda and Jogdananda—revolted. They questioned the Baba. He replied: "They (the women) are also the children of the Mother, just like you—so why not?" The three were not satisfied. They left the ashram. But Jogdananda, hardly having gone a small distance, realised his folly. He ran back and apologised to Bharat Brahmachari. He wished to stay back. But it was too late. The guru said: "No. You have given me up; so be it." Jogdananda left with a heavy heart. When Jogdananda left, Bharat Brahmachari remarked: "Koli amar shorbonash korlo" (Koli = Kalyug personified, has dealt me a good blow.) Jogdananda learnt of it much later and, after coming here to Pondicherry, learnt that this 'Koli' was termed 'hostile Forces'. He roamed aimlessly, remorse gnawing into him. He went to Punjab, Kashmir, Haridwar, Hrishikesh—but carried the regret with him. His cup of misery overflowed, as news reached him that Bharat Brahmachari had expired. His guilt, blaming himself as one cause of the guru's departure, increased double-fold. He rushed

back, only to see an empty ashram where he was not welcome. Benumbed, he went to his family. There he stayed quite a few months. His brothers even arranged for his wedding. But that was not to be—a death in the bride-to-be's house put off the event. He continued to stay, helping out the family by doing some clerical job. All was running somewhat smoothly. Then, one of his brothers, sharing the family trait of bad temper, reproached him for misplacing a key. This spark was enough to rouse the latent fire in Jogdananda. Then and there he dropped everything, picked up his *jhoola* and *gerua* (bag and ochre robes) and left determined not to return and to go to the South. He set out in 1928—but went to the east—Rangoon and Chittagong. Back to Bengal, anger subsided, he visited home, and then moved to Calcutta, in June 1932.

In Calcutta he met a young sadhu. They talked and in their conversation the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry was mentioned. They hoped, both of them, to visit the place one day. That young sadhu was none other than Poornananda (ATNSG-VII). Jogdananda knew of one old freedom fighter, Anilbaran Roy, now settled in the Ashram at Pondicherry. He wrote to him about his intention to visit the place and sought permission to stay there for the forthcoming 15th August Darshan. He stayed a few days in Calcutta and then, with two rupees a kind-hearted gentleman had given him, pushed on to Puri. He boarded a train, was detrained by the T.C. (Ticket Checker); but with the help of another more sympathetic T.C. he boarded another train and reached Puri of Lord Jagannatha. There he stayed 10-12 days and moved southward again. T.C.s were a regular nuisance, they detrained him 3-4 times. But Jogdananda's pilgrimage urge was stronger. His inner compass was set South—so South he had to go. There were no strict time-bound schedules to stick to. The journey continued with stops, starts and false starts. Delays and T.C.s were of no great consequence. He crossed the holy rivers Godavari and Krishna spending a day or two at each place, and made it to Madras. He put up at the Ramakrishna Mutt in Mylapore. As there was time, he bypassed Pondicherry and went to Madurai and Rameshwaram with the intention of reaching Kanyakumari to see the beautiful form of the Mother. He could not make it to Kanyakumari. By then 15th August was near and he thought it wise to reach Pondicherry a few days before that date. He turned north and on 11.8.1932 arrived at Pondicherry. But, unfortunately his letter to Anilbaran Roy had not arrived. He could not enter the Ashram as per the rules of those days. He waited on the footpath during the day and took shelter in Hotel Amnivasam during the night. He sent word through Anilbaran Roy to Sri Aurobindo seeking permission for the Darshan. He was allowed.

Jogdananda had the Darshan of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. He was overwhelmed, filled with joy and a sense of fulfilment. He felt that he had at last arrived at the end of his seeking. His guru Bharat Brahmachari's words came flooding back. All indications given to him seemed to fit in. There in front of him sat the universal Mother of Bharat Brahmachari's vision—a vision given to him in Brindavan, in 1926, of a 'white' form of the Mother!

Jogdananda wanted at once to stay as a permanent member, to live with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo as his Gurus, to start a new life here, taking up the path of

this Yoga Sri Aurobindo told Anilbaran to meet Jogdananda and tell him “ this is not an Asram like others—the members are not Sannyasis, nor is the object the same, it is not ‘moksha’ that is the aim of Yoga here What is being done here is a preparation for a work—a work which will be founded on yogic consciousness . Meanwhile every member here is therefore expected to do some work as preparation, work often of the most ordinary and uninteresting kind and they do not spend their time in meditation and speaking about religion or spiritual things ” Jogdananda was told all this. (The above is quoted from Sri Aurobindo’s letter to Anilbaran Roy ) Jogdananda accepted and said “ I throw myself at their feet ” Sri Aurobindo then wrote to Anilbaran. “You will tell Jogdananda that he can remain and we will try whether he can settle down into the atmosphere and life of the Asram and way of this Yoga ” (Letter dated 16 8 1932 ) Sri Aurobindo changed Jogdananda into Yogananda So entered Yogananda into a new Life and Light—a day before his birthday

Yogananda was given work on the second day of his becoming an ‘Ashramite’ Here “Yoga in action is indispensable ” He was given work in B S (Building Service), under Khirod-da, supervising workers and, later, in purchasing and keeping stores

Yogananda was given a room in Budhi House on the sea front (near our Printing Press)

The lunch-break was from 12 noon to 1 p m Lunch itself was served in the Ashram main building His house was too far for Yogananda to rest and return in time He just stood under the Old Balcony (behind the Ashram) This was tiring and affected his work What to do? Whom to tell? Haradhan-da (a veteran) lived on the groundfloor of Budhi House. Yogananda told him and he advised Yogananda to write to the Mother. Yogananda, emboldened, did so The relief came, simple and fast The Mother told K D Sethna (Amal Kiran) who was in charge of the Furniture Service to send an easy chair to B S Khirod-da was told to permit Yogananda to rest there

A friendship developed between Haradhan-da and Yogananda. Yogananda helped him in his garden to grow flowers and vegetables for the Mother Haradhan-da hailed from Chandannagar—a French colony He knew French well enough to think of translating the Mother’s *Prières et Méditations* into Bengali He wanted help and chose Yogananda for it. The Mother agreed on condition that the translation was shown to Her before printing.

Golconde work had started Yogananda was kept busy It was at this time that Poornananda appeared on the scene and joined Yogananda in the stores (B.S ) Yogananda had at times to go to some outlying distant places to purchase lime, bricks, etc He often went to Markanam, some 30 kms north of Pondicherry on the Old Madras Road He was given 2 annas (1 anna = 6 paise) by Amrita-da—Ashram Manager—of course after obtaining the Mother’s sanction. This was towards his day’s expenses Prices were going up even in those days Yogananda requested Amrita-da for 4 annas Amrita-da was shocked by such extravagance and chided Yogananda for it The matter was taken to the Mother She knew and understood, smiled and said “ It is all right. He can be given 4 annas ”



Yogananda worked for a short while in the Reception Service. It was a far cry from what it is today—replete with showcases, full of books and photos for sale, fax machines and phones, etc. It was then quite a simple unobtrusive affair. A chair for the man at the Main Gate or someone who would receive visitors or new sadhaks from the railway station, he would bring them in and maybe show them their place of stay and brief them where to go for meals and what to do. It may be recalled that all had to write in advance and get permission to come here on a visit for Darshan or to stay permanently. It was known who was coming. The Mother told Yogananda once that this sort of work had many pitfalls. One had to be careful and vigilant not to meet one.

Yogananda was a sincere and hard worker (like Poornananda) but, as it was for Poornananda, he too had to contend with a towering temper. Worse, others had to contend with it too and, to further complicate the situation, often an outburst of anger was followed with appropriate action. For that he often earned the Mother's displeasure and maybe it cost him his job. He changed departments often enough.

When I first saw him (1945), I think he had no regular job. That first time was at the Ashram Gate. The image of him that remained stuck is of a middle-aged man, well-built, knee-length khaki shorts (Bermudas of yesteryears) held up by a leather belt. The belt was necessary, for the middle-age paunch was beginning to assert itself. He was of medium height, deep-chested, and stood on two solid legs. The face was remarkable—small eyes, high cheek bones and a slightly Roman nose. He sported long curly hair and a little better than a goatee beard. He held under his arm a pith helmet of British origin. The helmet was atop him whenever in action outdoors or riding his bicycle. He stood there alert, seemed ready for something to happen. Impressed me as a retired soldier good for one more skirmish. I learnt later that he was about to go on an expedition to gather lotus flowers for the Mother. Near him stood an old, much-used bicycle—his transportation for the outing. It served him for decades after that till he could not ride any more, i e., when he was well past 80.

Flower-collecting was one of his passions. He took it very seriously (as do many sadhaks even now). The Mother, for reasons unknown to me, laid importance on the number of flowers offered to Her. On our birthdays we had to count the flowers gathered and arrange them in dishes (Service, Friendship, Aspiration, Patience, etc.—names of the flowers as given by the Mother), write the number on a chit and place it in the dish. During the War the Mother wanted one lakh Transformation flowers! Yogananda managed to gather the number and give them to Her! There were not many of those trees either. He must have searched far and wide to get the needed number. The passion was with him till the end—till he was bed-ridden.

*(To be concluded)*

PRABHAKAR (BATTI)

## SONNET 136

I STAND not as a beggar at Your door  
Begging an alms,—in fact I am a prince  
Who have possessed Your heart forevermore  
For which I have been striving ages since;  
You give because it is Your joy to give,  
And I receive because I can receive.  
We could no more without each other live,  
And this is true—though men may not believe.

Splendid, indeed, our union has been,  
A so-called beggar has become a lord  
And dares to look upon You as his Queen—  
Your love become his shield, Your peace his sword  
Accoutred thus what fear have I of strife?  
What heed of death, O Life within my life!

7-30, morning  
21-12-34

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Sri Aurobindo's Comment: Exceedingly beautiful.

### Editor's Note

The poem has been taken from the author's typescript book entitled *The Fountain* (Vol 2)  
Sonnets 136-140 were written on the same day and all have, on each one of them in pencil, in the middle of the left margin, Sri Aurobindo's comment "Exceedingly beautiful"

## BUDDHA'S FACE

A FACE of light immobilised with love  
But mobilising scattered rays of soul..  
A mountain-poise no earthquakes ever move ..  
A drop merged in the deep beyond recall!

The soul reposes nor in words nor songs.  
For these can never cross the boundary  
Of loneliness. no art can mend the wrongs  
And greeds and wars of dark disharmony,

Nor heal with balms what lusts bring in their train,  
(For Beauty, wafting echoes of Light's thrill,  
Cannot redeem what life must mar and stain)  
And so 'tis not to sound the soul would kneel,

But to a silence fecund with compassion,  
Unique yet peopled with creative fires,  
The Sleep beyond life's slumbers—stars' invasion  
In phantom haunts of glittering masked desires

Thou art a symbol of that voiceless Grace,  
A living paradox no mind shall name  
In the world a call to what no world can guess,  
In love a call to what no love may claim!

And yet the heart acclaim thee, thrilled, O Friend,  
As a deep avatar of life and love.  
Who shall appraise thy Face and will not bend  
In awe to what no other face can prove?

## I DO NOT KNOW

I DO not know Thy Name, O Thou who art,  
When Thy armour of death and these dreadful feet  
Trample the white calm of my praying heart. .  
I do not know.  
But I am the bleeding hill of Thy defeat,  
O Mask, of all Thy doom

I do not know, O One, Thy Name of Light  
When Thy swift little feet, touches of the Sun,  
Fall on me chasing the retreating night. .  
I do not know.  
But I am Thy path of this victorious run  
And of triumphs that loom.

I do not know these, Lord, but I am Thou,  
O Giant Warrior behind the death-black shield,  
O Radiant One to whom all meadows bow!  
I do not know  
I am the mystery on Thy Battlefield ..  
I only bloom

July 1964

JANINA STROKA

(From the author's book *A Captive of Her Love* published posthumously  
by Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, 1998 )

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## IN SRI AUROBINDO'S ROOM

You touched me with your secret hand of peace;  
You touched me with your flame and vastness immune  
And drowned my unconscious earth in the flood of your ray.  
Light and ecstasy looked me in the face.  
Sovereign silence encrowned my nascent birth;  
A high imperial wind of grace came down  
Supreme with felicity, supreme with love  
And changed the fallen dust to an altar of God  
All things here changed its substance and its seed  
The blind journey of life became the march,  
The pilgrim-course bound for your endless shores,  
Something total was reached in this day of blaze.  
Something unnameable opened its core  
To your far summit and all the leaning Noon.  
Imperishable you conquered for my fate,  
I am bound for your everlasting plenitude

15-8-1959

ROMEN

(From the late poet's unpublished diaries)

### I

I SHOUT to hear the distant echo of silence  
I dance with the fury of delight  
I can touch the sky, I can race the panther  
I breathe the storm and swallow the sun  
The mustang I ride, the golden steed  
My spirit is a lion with a mane of fire  
And my roar an eagle soaring in heaven

AKASH DESHPANDE

## KALKI

I AWAIT day and night  
the triumphant sound  
of the galloping hoofs  
of thy horse, radiant white  
with its golden mane  
dancing in the supernal air,  
Thou ridest in the silent vasts  
of my longing soul

Thou comest without fail  
to delight my heart  
and enticing me sweetly  
with thy magic call  
lurest me to sit by thy side

My soul enraptured,  
heart enamoured,  
eyes adoring and  
mind silent at thy feet  
I forget all rites of worship  
and glide softly by thy side

So drunk are my senses  
with the elixir of thy exalted presence,  
I am soaked in the perfume  
of thy entrancing Beauty,  
thrilling with its transmuting touch  
every limb, tissue, nerve and cell,  
and its luminous peace descending

What heavens of Light,  
Beauty and Bliss ineffable  
I visit with you by my side  
over the rainbow bridge,  
of magnificent hues—  
day after day of sunlit effulgence  
night after night of starlit splendour

For, when I am with you  
I see only you,  
everywhere only you  
in your majesty  
of miraculous Power  
which reigns supreme  
creating realms of Beauty  
and immaculate Bliss  
with its love, many-splendoured  
transforming all  
into the light of Thy glory

KAILAS JHAVERI

## **TWO POEMS**

### **THE SUMMER SERMON**

THE simple sermon of the summer day  
wafted by the languid sea-breeze  
broken sometimes by an unobtrusive cry  
glided through memory's glades.

Will there ever be a wonder song  
whose beauty I may live to catch?  
Strange forms glow in the darkness  
of my unfurnished mind

Perhaps the summer will always be  
a naked bay seen in a dream-show  
when I will drink the growing fever  
with the sulky siphons of language

### **THE BROADDAY VALLEY**

In the broadday valley the river rushes  
through the palm-grove and the shady thoughts.  
I did not know what all this meant  
because I lay wrapped in night's comfort

But a bird came and sang to me  
of past angers and unbreathed emotions  
The sand in my groin began to glow  
like stars from childish illustrations

The waking rage of the broadday valley  
drew with red light hungry features  
of a giant mood that I had once known  
without knowing its nomenclature

RANAJIT SARI<sup>rk</sup>

## THE MOTHER

You are  
The smiling golden Champa  
And that fragrant crimson rose,  
You are the white lotus in blue waters  
Also you are  
Those trampled jasmine petals  
In the temple courtyard,  
And the withered marigold  
On that garbage dump

You are  
All that is young and growing  
And all that is old and dying,  
The loyal and the faithless,  
The ugly and the vicious,  
And the most beautiful

O beautiful, You are  
What I see in this mirror,  
This mirror that separates  
And confuses is also You  
Laughing and waiting—like the lungs  
For the return of the lost breath,  
The return of my awakened self

O Mother Divine,  
O my beloved in life and death,  
Let me see You  
In everything that exists, wrapped  
In dawn and eve and noon and night

DINKAR PALANDE



## FROM A BHAKTA

AUROBINDO AUROBINDO, you are my Lord,  
you are my life.  
I offer up my daily work and offer up  
my strife.

You have made me strong in many ways, you  
have made me see my soul  
I have a lot of love to give while  
following my goal.

In days to come I will try my best to  
keep you in my mind  
The path is hard sometimes in life, but  
oh you are so kind

So as I follow you, my Lord, in spirit  
and with pride,  
I will love you and I hope to be forever  
at your side

MARY (ANGEL) FINN

## HAIKUS

SUNSET over the ocean, silent pink clouds:  
— The Divine's signature.  
— How beautiful  
Thy world!  
— Yes, the City of the Sun.  
— The true Ashram?  
— The Mother's Consciousness  
anywhere on earth.  
— MA.. through Thine eyes  
and smile  
the New Being

Motionless and still  
Many travel  
within the Light  
— Is there an end  
to our journey?  
— No beginning!  
A cherry-tree in bloom—  
the child-soul  
clothed in delight  
Birds across the sky  
out of nowhere—  
mysterious contemplations

JYOTI SOBEL

## LAUGHTER FOR SADHANA

THERE IS a saying that heaven doesn't help fools. In my case it must have made an exception. Not only that, but it may have had an accident when I was put together, and it dropped a screw and could not retrieve it. As a consequence, I cannot remember people's names, I am not all that good with numbers and even forget the dates of the days.

They say here not to worry because this is a common malady in the Ashram and others have it too.

Oh, what a relief to know that I am not alone in this predicament!

In fact, the other day, as I sat down at the Dining Room table, my neighbour eagerly asked me if I knew what day it was.

Yes, I knew it and I gave him the correct answer. "Well," he said, "then you are lucky, at least, you know this much." "Oh," I replied, "but I only knew it because I just asked someone before I came in!"

Laughter all around, and what is sweeter than laughing at your own self?

Sweet Mother, this jollity lights up your heart, I am sure. May we offer it to you?

I have the habit of smiling at people when I pass them by. I even drop a humorous remark or two. No response, as if they wore a grim mask left over from some Greek tragedy. They have a worse malady than mine, I thought. They may be constipated,—inside that is. The Mother is sure to have a remedy for it. Yes, an ultimate remedy for every created thing.

But what about this poor body with all its aches and pains? I sometimes quarrel with you, my Mother. Why did you create such a regrettable law as this? Vigorous youth and labour—decline as a reward in the end? When will you change this?

She gives a stern answer, yet so sweet it would melt a stone.

"Bear everything with patience and in silence. I placed inside you my flame, it has enough fuel until the Lord's New Creation brings down the New Law and the New Light.

"Keep smiling, keep laughing—it gives my heart delight. Pure joy brings down my Grace."

GEORGETTE COTY

## K. D. SETHNA: THE PROSE WRITER

### THE RESEARCHER AS A CREATIVE WRITER (1)

(Continued from the issue of June 1998)

RESEARCHERS of Critical theories must remember that Sri Aurobindo has touched virtually on every critical issue. Because he has condensed his material, the purpose of the researcher would be to pick up the clues for detailed explanation of it. Unfortunately, most of the academic projects on Sri Aurobindo have ended up with long passages from him with insufficient and often very haphazard commentaries on them. Some of the recent critical works of K. D. Sethna will teach us how we should go about investigating the Master's work in an academic way, which may also be an original way of expanding the condensed text of a fast writer.

If we look back at the earlier prose of K. D. Sethna, this quality does not seem very obvious. There was of course a very strong original note even when Sethna was explaining the overhead aesthetics. In his explanations or additional commentaries on mantric poetry or overhead aesthetics, Sethna was quoting mostly from Sri Aurobindo whenever he needed those citations. But because that was not quite traditional criticism, the essays did not abound in references to Western writers. They were spontaneous, inspired, often revelatory essays.

The recently published critical prose of Sethna may be called the new critical style of K. D. Sethna, where a modern academic style has been assorted with a perceptive voice, which seeks to relate Sri Aurobindo with the major modern critical tradition of the West. After Blake's *Tyger*, he has taken up Wordsworth's *A Slumber* and here too he shows how a single-poem survey may lead up to a book-length study. *A Slumber* turns K. D. Sethna into a literary detective, who coolly moves on his search for the exact girl from Wordsworth's neighbourhood. He seems as free with Robin Skelton as with Sri Aurobindo. He examines the biographical details from all major interpreters of the *Lucy*-poems and uses his own eyes and brain to know whether the poem was inside the cluster or outside it. The eyes of a detective never miss a small thing. The mystic as detective may suddenly start concentrating on an apparently unimportant verb. Who knows what cosmic mystery remains hidden in that bare lone verb or a pronoun? The mystic researcher becomes a laborious linguist. If you wish to see this strange combination in a literary critic, you have to read the latest critical works of Sethna.

The one-poem-analysis scheme of Sethna has never been the touch-and-go gesture of a casual writer who has read or taught just one poem from a writer. Notice how this scheme shows us the author's acquaintance with the major works of the writer concerned. This indicates how a modern Ph.D. student will have to tackle a single poem if he or she takes that up for the field of research.

However, the most important lesson that a modern Ph.D. student may learn from Sethna is the art of expanding the concealed critical principles of Sri Aurobindo. On

reading Sethna's explanations, I understand how Sri Aurobindo's art of criticism has remained a closed book for many of us who have struggled with him over the years. *Classical and Romantic*, which came out in 1997, is such a bright book of research. In his *Foreword*, Sethna briefly indicates that the book is a search for Sri Aurobindo's credo, which still remains unclarified for the literary audience. Since it is an "expanded version" of Sethna's earlier prose, the later prose style has coloured the book. And this later prose style of Sethna has little resemblance with the style of his *Talks on Poetry*.

*(To be continued)*

GOUTAM GHOSAL

# A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO SPIRITUALITY

(Continued from the issue of July 1998)

## Intellectual and Perceptual Objectivity

NATURE'S laws do not respect our likes and dislikes. Hence, any biased view or any personal interest in the result of an enquiry vitiates the process of enquiry itself. The problem is somewhat similar to what is faced by a physician while diagnosing or treating one of his affectionate ones. Unless personal preferences (immaterial, whether benevolent or not) centering on the ego and emotion are effectively subordinated, it is impossible to make any headway in the path of scientific research. In other words, an objective attitude, some sort of detached and dispassionate approach, is an integral part of the scientific culture. This is not merely a superficial academic point of view, but has to become part and parcel of the personality of a true scientist.

In this context, let us quote a well-known passage from the Bhagavad Gita (Chap. II, verse 47) *karmanyevādhikāraste mā phaleshu kadāchana*—You have control (*Adhikāra*)\* over the work only but never over the results. Thus objectivity characterises not only the modern scientific community, but also those who are rooted properly in Indian culture and tradition.

## Modern Technology

Scientific quests lead to the revelation of several secrets of Nature. The practical applications of such knowledge are known as 'applied sciences' or 'technology'. Also note that the progress in basic sciences is dependent to a great extent on the technological advancements. For example, much of the spectacular progress in modern physics has been possible only with the help of costly sophisticated machines, e.g., cyclotrons, particle accelerators, etc. Moreover, since technology by itself cannot be made living and dynamic without the backing of basic sciences, the latter occupy a vital position in all technologically advanced countries of the West. That is perhaps the reason why there is a common tendency of clubbing together science with technology.<sup>12</sup> Even some 'scientists' in India use the term 'science' when they really mean technology. Such an improper usage obviously creates a good deal of confusion in the minds of the lay people. It is always to be borne in mind that science and technology, though closely related, are yet not the same. While science, being primarily concerned with an intellectual exercise, cannot do any harm to mankind, technology can do not only good but also great harm,—the threat of nuclear weapons, the rapid depletion of

\* This Sanskrit word is often improperly translated as 'right' (as in rightful claim). The more appropriate rendering would be 'control' or 'mastery'. Note that the word *Adhikāri* is used in Hindi in the sense of 'Officer in Charge' or 'Controller'.

non-renewable minerals, environmental pollution and ecological disequilibrium being typical examples

### **Limitations of Modern Science and Technology**

The achievements of modern science and technology are unique indeed, yet, they are limited to the physical plane. They are concerned only with matter, physical energy, applications of physical laws and principles. Modern science is based on experimental facts, and even that limited only to the physical world. It, therefore, takes into account only a part of the human experience, and not the totality of human experience, which extends to the vital, mental (inclusive of emotional) and intellectual and other subtle planes of human consciousness.

### **Spirituality**

Bearing in mind the foregoing, let us now turn to the question as to what spirituality stands for. Note that it is on the foundation of spiritual values that the whole edifice of the ancient Indian wisdom, traditional culture and civilisation rests. The quintessence of this wisdom is recorded for posterity in the sacred Vedic literature, including the Upanishads. The Bhagavad Gita contains the gist of the Upanishadic teachings. These teachings contain the core of the Vedantic philosophy, which goes to establish the inherent unity behind all the diverse manifestations of this universe. Vedanta asserts, based on the direct supra-intellectual experiences of the sages and seers, that there exists One Unifying and Immutable Essence, though not readily visible to us. As the water in the ocean gives rise to waves of changing shapes and sizes, so the Unchangeable One, who is birthless and deathless, manifests Himself as Nature full of diversity and changeability. Thus we have Nature and Spirit. The following famous passage of the Rig Veda (I 164 46) pithily summarises the point: *ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*—Truth is one, the learned call it differently. The close harmony between modern science (as distinct from technology) and spirituality thus becomes obvious.

Pure science cannot be anti-spiritual, nor spirituality anti-science. As a matter of fact, the Sanskrit word Veda (derived from *vid.* to know) literally means 'science' (derived from the Latin *scio* meaning 'I know'). The close harmony between the prestigious Western science—as represented by Modern Physics—and the Vedanta, the quintessence of the ancient Indian Spiritual Wisdom, can be an interesting study (See, for example, ref. 13.) Let it be underscored again that spirituality is different from modern science, at least insofar as the latter's present state of development is concerned, in that the former is involved with the totality of human experience, whereas science is concerned with a partial one, the outer physical world only. In other words, spirituality stands for the human quest for the Infinite and Immutable One beyond the phenomenal world of plurality,—*i e.*, in a world not only of matter, but also

of life, of feeling, of intellect, and of deeper psychic planes Spirituality thus takes a truly comprehensive world-view

### **Jñānam and Vijñānam**

To bring out the difference in the levels of perception or knowledge, our scriptures usually make use of different terms For example, the Sanskrit word *Jñānam* (knowledge) generally refers to the theoretical teachings confined to the intellect only, whereas the term *Vijñānam* (supra-intellectual awareness) signifies a kind of revelation or realization of the ultimate Reality through direct intuitive perception (*Anubhava*). Note, however, that one may sometimes come across the term *Jñānam* being used in the sense of 'direct perception' as well Further, note that the aforesaid meaning of the term *Vijñānam* is completely different from the connotation implied by the English word 'science' Thus, the context in the literature, the author and so on are to be taken into account for a proper understanding of these terms. Therefore, whenever in doubt, one should seek the guidance of the *Guru* who alone can throw light on what the scriptural literature teaches

### **Inadequacy of Ordinary Language**

Since the ancient spiritual wisdom is founded on supra-intellectual awareness, it cannot be comprehended readily by our ordinary intellect alone, or be described in ordinary language Hence, when the ancient sages speak about *Vijñānam*, they cannot, for obvious reasons, do it without taking recourse to analogies, allegories, parables, that is to say, to some sort of symbolic way of expression And then the listeners get what is known as 'indirect perception' which is suggestive only, and, of course, can eventually be transcended through *Sādhana* to *Aparoksha Anubhuti* (direct perception), i.e., *Vijñānam*. In the language of Aldous Huxley<sup>14</sup>. "So far, then, as a fully adequate expression of the Perennial Philosophy is concerned, there exists a problem in semantics that is finally insoluble The fact is one which must be strictly borne in mind by all who read its formulations Only in this way shall we be able to understand even remotely what is being talked about."

### **Scientific Temper and Spiritual Pursuit**

'Scientific temper' should express itself in (a) genuine respect for truth, (b) sincere quest for unifying ideas behind the apparent diversity of the universe, through experiments and theories, and (c) intellectual objectivity Only when these aspects are properly grasped, then the principles, on which different methods of spiritual pursuit are formulated, may hopefully be understandable

It is rather unfortunate that expressions like 'scientific temper', 'scientific method', 'scientific approach' and 'scientific attitude' are commonly used in today's

academic circles, but not always with precision. The Scientific Policy Resolution (1958) of the Government of India, for example, contains the expression, 'scientific approach and method', but without any definition or explanation.<sup>12a</sup>

Then, again, quite a large number of educated people erroneously suppose that the 'scientific temper' is identical with the so-called rational approach. But, rationality is nothing peculiar to science alone. It is an important element in all our human activities, good and bad, since man cannot live without it, just as he cannot do without eyesight, despite all the limitations thereof. As a matter of fact, scientific progress can be traced more to scientists' respect for truth and to their quest for unification, than to their ability to ratiocinate. Outstanding discoveries of modern science seem mostly to be the result of the operation of the faculty of intuition, rather than that of rationality.<sup>1</sup>

The true 'scientific temper', inclusive of 'intellectual objectivity' as explained before, cannot evidently grow merely by installing sophisticated apparatus and through a limiting mechanical approach. It has to be fostered and nurtured as a living plant or a growing child with all the emotions of life. Today in India, the highly educated class appears to be more attracted by the glamour of alien Western technology than by the inherent spirit of science. This lack (statistically speaking) of a genuine scientific temper explains to a large extent the low output of Indian research laboratories, despite a huge financial investment after Independence. (For information regarding the performance of scientists in India, *vide* for example, Ranga Rao<sup>15</sup>) Dharampal<sup>16</sup> rightly says, "Unthinking transplanting of European science and technology in India has mainly resulted in retarding and blunting of indigenous innovation and creativity." As a result, it is mostly imitation today rather than innovation in the real sense of the term.

So far as the spiritual pursuit is concerned, the seeker tries to have the direct experience of the Truth which is ONE. As regards 'objectivity', a spiritual seeker is required to develop an objective attitude not only towards the outer material world, but additionally towards the inner world of emotion and intellect, a difficult task no doubt. In other words, in scientific pursuit, it may be adequate for a researcher to identify himself with his intellectual personality by taking an objective view of sense-perception. In spiritual pursuits on the other hand, where the aim is to be aware of a total spectrum of knowledge, including emotional and intellectual, the requirement is much more exacting. And the seeker is asked to develop detached awareness and objectivity even of his intellectual personality, that is to say, to transcend his intellect for reaching the deep and the real core of reality. Spiritual experience cannot thus be designated as 'objective knowledge' only in the sense the scientists use the expression, but includes an awareness or knowledge of the subjective process also that the seeker undergoes along with it.

### Concluding Remarks

So we see, in conclusion, that pure science is not the antithesis of spirituality. In the quest for truth, science and spirituality go together, howsoever they may differ.



otherwise. While the scientific quest is confined to the physical plane, the spiritual pursuit explores levels of human consciousness beyond the mere physical

Since today's scientific activity is circumscribed by the limited human intellect, it seems clear why today's science can never lead to the ultimate reality, howsoever one may try to reach it. Nevertheless, it is heartening to see that scientific researches have of late been taking important strides into the living (biological) world. It would, therefore, be not surprising to see the leading scientists one day actively concerning themselves with the problem of unifying the phenomena of the physical and living worlds with those of emotion, intellect and supra-intellectual perceptions also. The process of spiritualisation of science would surely then begin.<sup>17</sup>

It is indeed true that human intellect has its own limitations, by virtue of its strong knot of association with the limited ego-sense. It is, therefore, not possible for a spiritual seeker to have anything more than what is known as "indirect perception", through intellectual efforts. But the scriptures can provide nothing more than that.

A scientist, after getting spiritual experiences and realisations, does not cease to be a scientist, but becomes a better scientist.

(Concluded)

ARDHENDU SEKHAR GHOSH

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## SOME ASPECTS OF THE PEACEFUL USES OF ATOMIC ENERGY\*



Dr Kundu, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When Dr Kundu asked me to give a lecture at very short notice by telex, it was my intention to speak to the members of the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics in the same manner I spoke to the members of BARC and later BEL, Bangalore, and RRC, Kalpakkam, immediately after I returned from the desert, to keep my colleagues as up-to-date as possible. It is my special pleasure to speak to my colleagues in the Saha Institute, on whose Governing Body I have been for the past 14 years or so. I wanted to share our experience and excitement with all of you as quickly as possible. Looking at the size of the crowd present here, it seems to me that this private chat which I had proposed to give will become very much of a public affair and from the size of the audience I have to conclude that the Saha Institute has expanded enormously since I was here last! I, therefore, have to make a change in the nature of my presentation.

There has been some confusion both in India and other places about what is meant

\* Reproduced from the tape recording of a talk delivered at the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Calcutta, on 7 June 1974. The talk vividly describes the Pokhran experiment of 18 May 1974. It has been deliberately left as it is so that the readers can capture the atmosphere of the landmark event and share the feelings of its prime architect —Editor

by peaceful uses of atomic energy, in the sense that one does not know where to draw the line about peaceful uses. The programme of utilising atomic energy for peaceful purposes in India was drawn up 25 years ago. In fact, the Prime Minister has referred to it as a 25-year-old effort because the Atomic Energy Commission was started in 1948 and our programme included all aspects of the peaceful uses of atomic energy

There have been various stages in the development of our programme. But this is the time to bring to your notice that whatever we undertook to do and fulfil, there was always a feeling that it was never completely an Indian project. Take even the APSARA reactor which went critical in 1956 and which was our first big event. Though we made it quite clear and explained to the people that it was an all-Indian effort, there were many who doubted whether it was actually so. When APSARA went critical, though we used to tell those who visited us that it was designed by Indian engineers and scientists, we still got the feeling that many just did not believe us. The same sort of reaction could be observed for all the other projects, e.g. ZERLINA, Plutonium Plant, etc. Even when people are told that a certain project is entirely an Indian effort, the reaction is "Oh! there must be some hidden French support, Canadian support, German support, American support, etc." The suspicion was, and still is, that anything worthwhile in India must have a foreign component of some sort. Now, this particular experiment of May 18 that has been carried out, fortunately for us and for our psychology, is something which no country is going to help us with. In fact, they always dissuade you and tell you how difficult and expensive an operation it is. If, however, you accept the situation that, however complicated things are, they can be designed and made by our own scientists and by our own engineers and in our own country—then I think one can look at our atomic energy programme in a slightly different perspective.

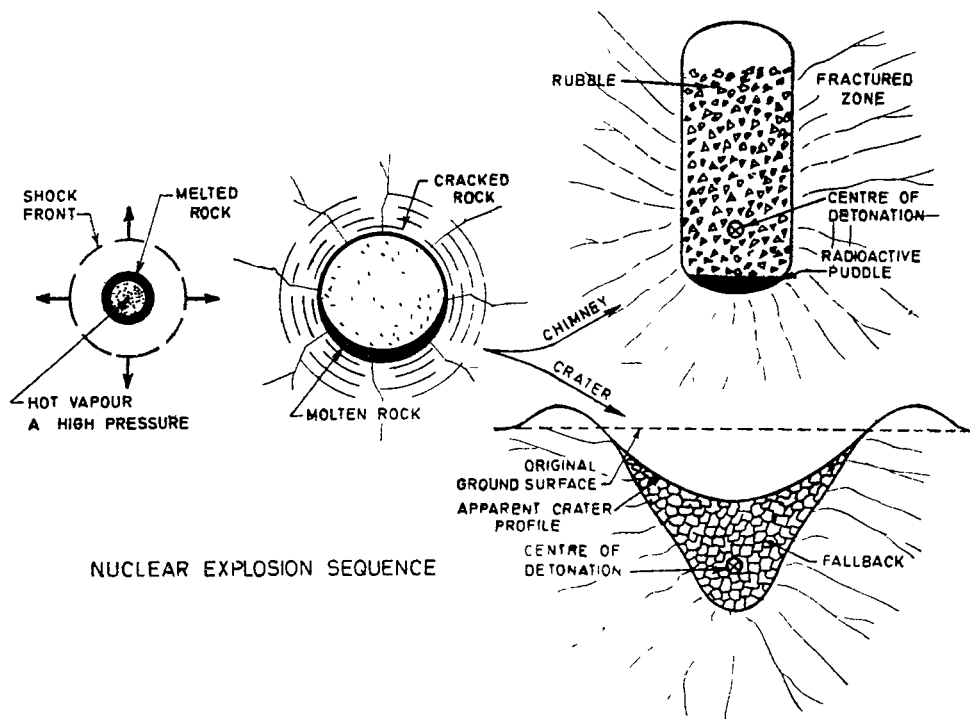
My own connection with atomic energy which also goes back practically 25 years now, has been a series of projects, one after another, and I would like to recall the feelings and sensations when APSARA went critical, and compare it with something which happened a few days ago. Of course, at that time Dr. Bhabha was alive and he was directing the whole operation. I recall that the reactor was supposed to go critical on the second of August, but it did not go critical on that day. If Dr. Bhabha had not been directing it, and a lesser personality had, people would have started accusing us of mismanagement, thereby distorting our team effort. But in fact all that happened was that we were learning very much more about reactor systems. The same thing was being done in England with whom we were in competition. They were at the same time building a similar reactor called LIDO reactor and, on occasion, facing the same problem. I say all this because when we take up some jobs for other organisations not in the Atomic Energy family and if we run into some problems, immediately they all say "Ah! you are no good, we should have gone to a foreign firm." One does not realise that if you do things by yourself you are learning very much more and, in the process of learning, you will be able to plan and design bigger and better things. This is never appreciated by a man who goes to foreign firms on foreign license basis. I sincerely

hope that if May 18 is to have any impact, we have to shed this feeling of incapacity to do things for ourselves once for all. Now APSARA was to go critical on the second of August and if it didn't go critical on that day, it was only because we had left a water gap in the centre of the core. We thought that there was enough uranium to make it go critical, but if you have a gap in the centre of the core however much uranium you put outside, it could never go critical.

If you ask in what way our atomic energy programme is self-sufficient, well, I can start by speaking about our research reactors. In Trombay itself there are four reactors working and the fifth one is about to be built, the construction of which has already started. Besides the APSARA, we have the CIRUS reactor of which for those of you who have been to Trombay no description is necessary. It has been a most important facility and has had a big impact on our atomic energy programme—be it in isotope production, medical uses, agricultural uses, neutron physics, fission physics, etc. Besides this we set up the ZERLINA reactor as a first step to go towards heavy water reactors—it was a courageous decision because at that time, in the world, reactors were being developed with light water and enriched uranium and though such systems were cheaper we took a deliberate decision at that time (and this is quite a long time ago) to go in for heavy water natural uranium reactors mainly because we wanted to be self-sufficient. Well, natural uranium is available in the country and we have very good scientists and then why do we not make natural uranium fuel elements ourselves? Heavy water is something which can also be made by ourselves. In fact as early as the sixties at the Bhakra Nangal unit, 10 tons of heavy water was being made every year. Now we have planned to make about 300 tons for our power reactors and we will achieve this target. No problem about that. Thus, this deliberate decision to go in for heavy water natural system automatically meant a study of such lattice structures and the ZERLINA reactor was built. This was a step not simply of just putting up a reactor and forgetting about it, but it was a policy decision on a programme of heavy water natural uranium reactors and this policy decision is still being carried out, for even the power reactor to be built at Narora will still be a natural uranium heavy water reactor. Now, after this, we have taken a deliberate step of going in for fast reactors, eventually to test possibilities of breeding fissile material. A Fast Breeder involves very difficult technology, the technology of cooling by liquid sodium is involved. At the time the decision was made we had no experience of making plutonium fuel elements, as it is a complicated operation. But at Trombay we decided irrespective of whatever help we are going to get from outside, we on our part will put up a fast research reactor entirely on our own. Again in the spirit of doing things ourselves, the PURNIMA reactor was set up. The PURNIMA reactor is a plutonium oxide fast reactor—built with  $PuO_2$  fuel made in Trombay. The design of the reactor and the electronics control was all made at Trombay. At that time people thought that a fast reactor is a very dangerous system and so beyond us. Anyway, it is good to see that the man who led the team of scientists and engineers responsible for building the reactor is sitting in front of me, Dr P. K. Iyengar. Now the very act of bringing into operation the fast reactor gave us at the Trombay

Establishment tremendous confidence. It is in fact the PURNIMA reactor which gave us all the confidence we required in predicting the behaviour of fast neutron-multiplying systems. Now what did the PURNIMA reactor tell us besides all about neutron physics? (In Trombay, there has been, I think, a domination of physics for quite some time.) Besides physics, the importance of other disciplines was clearly demonstrated in the project and among the most important is metallurgy. Even from earlier days, in order to become self-sufficient, i.e., to make our own uranium fuel elements, the importance of metallurgy was realised. The uranium fuel elements turned out to be better than the ones bought outside, and it followed that from these fuel elements plutonium could be extracted and this led automatically to the plutonium plant set up in Trombay as early as the sixties. Once you have a set-up like this and you have enough plutonium, the next step is that you can make plutonium fuel for the reactors, either for the PURNIMA type or for breeders. PURNIMA was a challenge and we asked the metallurgists, can you make the fuel elements for this reactor? You will remember that plutonium is a very hazardous material, an alpha emitter which if you inhale a few micrograms of, it is a lethal dose and therefore must be carefully handled. You must have glove boxes, proper ventilation systems, back pressure to suck up any leak, etc. Now all this was set up. Nobody from outside will help you with these things. One may get a little information by visiting a few laboratories or by talking to people but nobody is going to come and set up the system for you and even if they are, one would have to buy it at exorbitant costs. Anyway, the job was done and we were in a position to make a fast reactor. Hence the question, how is it that a poor backward country like ours was able to make a nuclear device, does not arise at all. The fact is, it is all there. It is a matter of taking a decision whether it is of value to the country or not. If you ask me, which is the biggest contribution psychologically or otherwise which geared us to do all these things, it is the fact that right decisions were taken at the right time. In this case the organisation and infrastructure was set up at the right time and teamwork was constantly encouraged. The credit essentially goes to Dr Bhabha himself. By teamwork, it is not getting five or six people together and getting them to work, but it must be that people are ready to realise the capacity of the other man, appreciate his qualities and also interplay with one another sufficiently closely to the extent that one knows what the other is thinking of without any words being spoken. I know, I am sounding mystical and using telepathic jargon but by close association and appreciation of one another, it is possible to gauge what another man's reactions would be. I may add here that it was this kind of teamwork and understanding that was entirely responsible for the very quick work on the device.

Now I have some slides here and I would like to bring to your attention the importance of peaceful nuclear explosions—their economic value if not now but certainly in the future. When I spoke at the BARC on the 20th May 1974 about our experiment, I did not have any facts at all except what we had seen with the eye, the impressions of our own eyes. A little later, some information began to trickle in and photographs started coming in. Some people had explored the crater and that

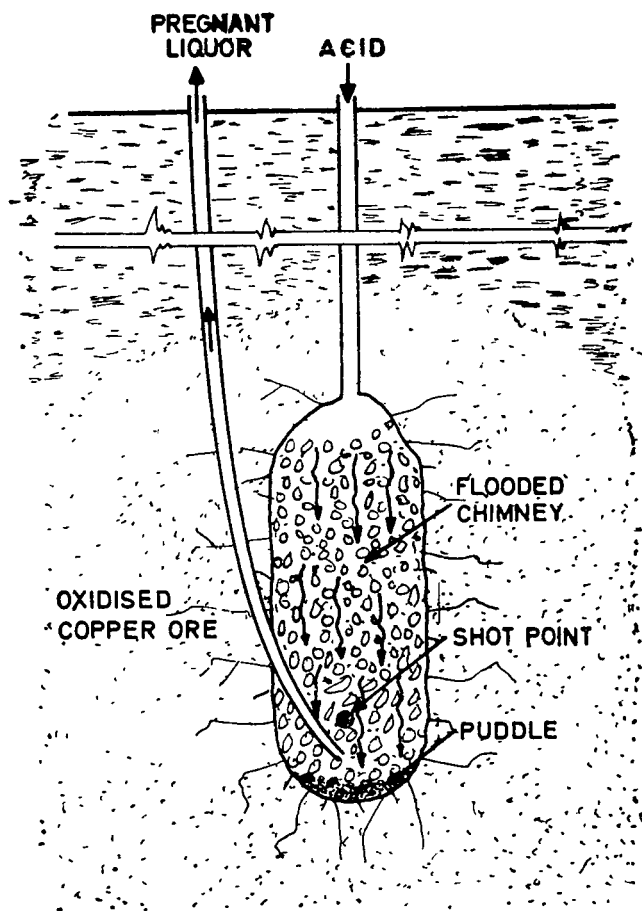


Pictorial sequence of events for contained and cratering type underground explosions. The figure on left shows the spherical cavity at very early times after detonation. The shock front is moving away from the cavity. This crushes and cracks the surrounding rock. If the device is buried deep underground, the cavity continues to grow till equilibrium is established between the cavity pressure and the overburden rock pressure. A chimney is then formed when the material above the cavity falls into it (Figure on top right). For a shallow burial the shock-wave on reaching the ground surface is reflected back as a rarefaction. The rock then breaks in tension and flies upward. The cavity grows asymmetrically. The flying rocks are also ejected sideways and after fall-back a crater is formed as shown in the bottom figure on the right.

information became available. Since the experiment, I was away from Bombay for quite some time and Dr Kundu's telegram came only two days ago. I have not made any special preparation and nor do I report any special results, because an experiment like this involves detailed analysis of all facts and observations of the event. So you will forgive me if my talk stays at a very general level and does not cover the physics of the whole event. But just to bring you into focus, I have a few slides here, based on work published by the IAEA, and other studies mostly by the Americans and Russians to show you how much work has in fact been done about the peaceful uses of nuclear explosions. The studies essentially concern the size of the cavity, the chimney, the crater information, etc. These have been studied abroad and I don't know why people hesitate to concede us also the freedom to study these aspects. But freedom or no freedom, we are going to study it. I project the slides of some foreign work, but will not be able to give you all the details of it.

Here is the history of the cavity and chimney formation for a completely contained explosion. You would recall that a contained explosion is one in which, all the radioactivity never gets out of the ground and even the crater is not formed. Now this is the cavity and chimney formation for a 5 kiloton explosion in granite after one millisecond, three milliseconds and fifty milliseconds. These are obviously pictorial representations, as nobody can get these pictures right underground. But you see how the fractures begin to form and how the shockwave spreads upwards. The broken rock above the cavity finally collapses into the cavity and forms the chimney.

Next slide please: Now this is the first application of a completely contained explosion for in-situ leaching of copper ores. Now in many places, there are low-grade copper ores. To excavate them and then to recover the copper above ground you will have to put up a tremendous amount of capital investment. But if the copper ores are



IN-SITU ORE LEACHING

available in large quantities under the earth, you can have an explosion to fracture the ore body, then allow some acids to go in and you leach the ore and take out the pregnant liquor. This is something which we have been looking at for some time to see whether we have suitable copper ore bodies for this application because copper is now going to be as expensive as gold and its price is increasing all the time and it is also getting in short supply. So this is one of the ways of handling large quantities of ores and a nuclear explosion is a possibility to assist in this process.

Next one please. Now this is the history of crater formation. The first slide I showed you was one in which an explosion was deep underground, now this one is not so deeply done. In this case you get a spherical cavity growth to start with, then you get the shockwave going out and getting reflected at the ground surface, the rarefaction wave returns to the cavity and an asymmetric growth of the cavity follows, then you get the first major venting of radioactivity and finally you get the air blast and the ejection and fallback of the uplifted material to get the final crater. Now this is somewhat close to our event except that our depth was neither too deep down nor too shallow so that you don't get the unwanted things. But all this is sufficiently well understood from the purely hydrodynamic point of view. Knowing the nature of the rocks and the yield of explosion, I believe now they can even induce the cavity growth to take on various shapes.

Can I have the next slide please? These are the projected costs. For a long time when people were advocating the uses of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, the question used to be asked what is the cost. If we go on using an ordinary explosive like TNT, well, the cost is simply linearly related to the quantity. On the other hand in the case of nuclear explosions, the USAEC projects the charge for a 10 kiloton explosive to be \$350,000 while that for a 2 megaton explosive is less than twice at \$600,000. This is a linear scale on the cost axis and a log scale on the explosive yield axis, so you see how non-linear it is. The basis that nuclear explosions are cheaper than chemical explosions after a certain yield has been known for a long time and I recall Dr. Bhabha bringing this to the attention of the public as early as 1963-64. There was much ballyhoo in the press misinterpreting him to say that he is going to make the atom bomb and all that. But all he was showing was its economic value. I remember the furore that was created by a statesman in a United Nations radio interview.

Can I have the next slide please? Now, this is the typical crater from one of the American experiments—the Sedan experiment. It consisted of a nuclear explosion of 100 kilotons at a depth of 193 metres. You probably recall that in one of the newspapers this morning, there came pictures of our crater. I think it is most beautiful and artistic. Our crater is much nicer than this one.

I will now show a series of three slides to indicate various cratering applications. The first one shows an ejecta dam on Vakhsh river in U S S R built using chemical explosives. The next is the concept of a harbour in Australia using a row-charge of 5 nuclear explosives. The third one shows a water reservoir produced by a 1.1 kiloton nuclear explosive in U S S R.



Next one please. Another experiment which our scientists actually went to see in 1967 is the Gasbuggy experiment in New Mexico, U S A. Here you have a nuclear explosion in a gas-bearing area. The gas flow from some fields is too slow and the ultimate recovery too small to be commercially viable because of the low permeability of the rock in the gas reservoir. The nuclear explosion fractures the rock and increases its permeability. The next slide is the actual nuclear device used in another U S gas-stimulation experiment, Rulison, the device is a long thin one that looks like a tube. They have done it like that. We have done it our way.

Next one please. This compares the calculated cumulative production from conventional wells and from nuclear-stimulated wells. The main thing is that you can increase the ultimate possible recovery from a low-permeability gas reservoir by factors of 4-5, using nuclear stimulation.

Can I have the next slide please? Our own experiment which has been explained at various press conferences by our Chairman, was for the purpose of understanding nuclear explosion phenomenology mainly for the purpose of seeing whether it could be used in any of the peaceful applications which I have just described. Now what the actual status of the technology is, it is difficult to say because these experiments continue in many foreign countries and the field is only in the R & D stage. One fears the dangers from venting fission product, radioactivity and, in thermonuclear devices you get a lot of tritium production. Tritium gets into organic matter and water easily and therefore becomes dangerous. So one has to choose the device carefully, taking into account all safety aspects, e.g. you would prefer to use only a pure fission device for petroleum-recovery experiment to avoid tritium contamination problems. But you notice that in the modern world, you get periodic scares even about reactors. Before the oil crisis, some people had taken a strong stand against nuclear power saying that it is bad for the ecology. Now, suddenly when the oil crisis came, all that has dropped out. Of course, it doesn't mean we should forget about a clean environment, but economics has proved so strong that many people believe that the only go for the world is nuclear power. So, you see that as time goes on things change and it may be that the problems of radioactivity involved in peaceful nuclear explosions may be brought under control. Please don't go with the feeling that nuclear explosions are there now to solve all India's problems. They will do nothing of that sort. But one has to study these things. In fact in one of the papers this morning a line was attributed to me saying that it is worthwhile continuing our explosions for peaceful purposes for the benefit of the people or something. I don't know where this sentence came from. We cannot take any decision about how things are going to be later, unless we clearly examine what we have done. It takes a long time to study the effects in detail and it may be several months before we get all the data. The fieldwork in the desert consisted essentially of making a vertical hole, the hole diameter being sufficient to take the device. The device was located in a chamber at the end of a horizontal cross-cut from the bottom of the vertical shaft which was at a depth of a little more than 100 metres. The hole was then stemmed with sandbags and sand.

In the region around, there were hardly any people living and this suited us very well. About activity coming out and affecting the villagers, we had taken all sorts of precautions. In fact our health physicists were spread miles around with dosimeters, prepared to do everything in an emergency, almost like a military operation. They were all over the place and they talked about how they would be able to write papers for another three years and about their plans for Ph D's and so forth but it turned out that when the actual experiment took place no activity came out.

Can I have the next slide please? This is a helicopter shot of the crater taken within an hour of the experiment. You can't get the sense of the depth of the crater because the picture was taken from the top but you can see a profile of our crater and the fissures in the earth surrounding the area. People went later into the crater with monitors and saw the A-frames and other structures we had left behind at Ground Zero completely destroyed.

Before I proceed further, I must tell you what actually happened, a little before the experiment. On May 17 the hole was closed and we had some people watching the device chamber on closed circuit TV in order to keep an eye on the temperature and the humidity inside, etc. The temperature outside the hole was 42-44°C. For some reason, the humidity inside the chamber reached 100% which was worrying us all the time but our connections and circuit performance had also been tested many times. I doubt that anybody slept properly that night. The next day early morning, by 6 o'clock we were all there and we planned the start of the countdown for 8 o'clock and everything went according to schedule. Some papers said that some telephones didn't work and some jeeps failed or something but I never knew of any jeeps failing or telephones not working. A little before 8 o'clock we decided to reduce the countdown from 15 minutes to 5 minutes as the weather was good enough. Exactly at 8 o'clock the countdown started at the Control Point which was 4 kilometres away from Ground Zero. I jumped onto a structure which was really a meteorological tower. The actual person who decided when and at what time the device should go off was not the Prime Minister but the meteorologist who told us which way the wind was blowing and whether the wind was in the right direction so that activities in the case of accidental venting would not go towards nearby villages. When he gave the clearance, the thing was switched on.

I could focus my binoculars on the Ground Zero mainly because I was sitting on the tower; within less than a second after the detonation one could see clearly the sand and everything being thrown up and a mound with a base diameter of about 200 metres and a peak height of about 30-40 metres was created; all this happened very fast. Then the mound settled down and when we looked again the crater had already formed. Now this is published in the press. The mound was there for hardly a few seconds. Of course we all jumped and there was the usual jubilation that the things which had been worrying us somewhat went off so easily. But I must say that prior to this, I used to go to my distinguished colleagues, and say "Well, you think this will go off?" I think Dr Iyengar said: "Well if this thing won't go off, I will not believe anything in physics." And then you go to the next man and to this question he says: "Absolutely. There is no

doubt that it will go off'' So many others, one after another, all who made basic contributions in the field said it would go off Then the man who had the overall charge said it must go off Of course everybody said so and so it went off. Now it is my personal reaction that if there is any doubt of success, one starts breaking coconuts, looking at the right auspicious moment and all that Because of so much confidence in physics, there was no need for this, no Babas, no Poojas, no nothing It went off very well. So by the time we got down and shook hands with each other, I saw the wearied-looking health physicist saying: ''No activity, don't know what has happened. The crater is there but no activity'' Then he said it looks like a radioactivity-wise contained explosion had taken place; I had however been shaken up very much by the ground shock following the detonation This shock was also recorded in seismic stations all over the world and the results are just coming in Our own seismic station at Gauribidanur recorded a signal of magnitude 4.6 on the Richter scale. Canada recorded 5.2, Sweden recorded 5.4, and so on Determination of the yield of nuclear explosion is not very easy But our first estimate is between 10 and 15 kilotons. Many other measurements are yet to be made and the final value we will get only after radiochemical measurements We have to dig at various points in the crater and get active samples and examine the various isotopes, fission products, and it will tell you exactly what the yield has been

Our health physicists went within an hour after the explosion to the crater, they took radiation monitors and gradually walked step by step to within 250 metres of Ground Zero Some of you here know Dr Ganguly who headed the Health Physics operations at site, he and his army went along and then they came back telling us that they hardly saw any activity near the surface Then we all took courage and started walking. near the crater we saw very deep fissures but there was no activity We at last got to within 250 metres, I was getting worried that due to instability something may open up, so we asked everybody to come back to look at it later Obviously the region around the shotpoint must be very very hot because it should have reached close to several tens of million degrees inside and the rocks must have been subjected to tremendous pressure People are now working in the area, looking at the rock samples and we will soon organise teams to drill for core samples from near the hot point It is not like working in Calcutta city It is a desert, so you have to get water from miles away and for food, you have to eat whatever is available. If one is keen to go into that area and do experiments, he must be warned that he is not going to paradise.

Our general impression is, our device must have been very good because the experiment went so much according to plan The Plutonium, as you know, was imploded, pressed from all directions in a very short time to get the shock wave to produce the maximum compression of the metal in order to release tremendous amounts of energy As is already known in the literature, Plutonium has to be imploded because there is the problem of predetonation. When Plutonium is produced in the reactor, besides  $\text{Pu}^{239}$  being produced,  $\text{Pu}^{240}$  is also produced, and  $\text{Pu}^{240}$  undergoes spontaneous fission, so it is a built-in neutron source If the chain reaction is initiated by

the latter before the Plutonium-compression is complete you get a predetonation, the yield being only one kiloton, half a kiloton or some such value. So you have to push the thing through sufficiently fast by means of chemical explosives and this has to be done with microsecond simultaneity. I think our boys have done a wonderful job and if you, Dr. Kundu, say nice things to me on this occasion, it is essentially congratulating my colleagues from BARC and sister institutions. But before I end, I must say that while this project is one of the projects that have come and have gone, we are looking to the next big event, which is the VEC Project. I notice that somebody in newspapers is already getting a little impatient without realizing that the components for these are being made at various places and you see the assembly and the final build-up only in the last few months. He predicts that the cyclotron will not be seen for years to come. But it is going to come as a rude shock to him just in the same manner as this explosion came as a shock, not necessarily rude, to many people. With the VEC going and the FBTR going, probably my first set of ambitions to see these things through will come to an end and Dr. Kundu will tell me: "Dr. Ramanna, it is now time for you to retire." Thank you.

R. RAMANNA

## VIMALA SHARMA: A TRIBUTE

VIMALA Sharma, our loving history teacher, was born on 16 January 1928, and, after having beautifully dedicated her life at the Mother's feet, passed away on 16 April 1998.

She won over history students with interesting stories; but few of us really know her own story.

She was born Vimala Zadu in a Kashmiri Brahmin family and later called herself Sharma. Her father was a judge at Dehradun. She was highly educated and afterwards in service rose to be the principal of a girls' college there. Her two brothers served in the Defence Service, one in the Army and the other in the Navy, her elder sister was a lecturer at Aligarh University.

One fine December day, years after her father passed away, she sent her mother to stay with one of her brothers in Pune and she herself resigned from her job. She locked her huge mansion (which was not only her house but a way of life) and caught the train for Delhi—in quest of a new path.

Believe it or not, Vimala-ben saw in the waiting-room of the station a copy of the *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*. It was an unusual coincidence. The subscriber must have left it there in a hurry. In this strange way she came to know that a place like this Ashram does exist in Pondicherry. Well, she was looking for an ashram, then why not this one? When she enquired how to reach this place, she was informed that the train at the platform would be going to Madras, from where she could go to Pondicherry. She boarded the train and, exhausted from work, and maybe also from life, just slept throughout the long journey. Her whole being reposed in sleep, like a babe, the moment she heard about the Mother. She seemed to be free from all worries of the world.

At Madras station she met some nuns and was about to join them in their service to the Lord. They too agreed to take her. As she was still wrapped in warm clothing needed for winter in the north, but most inappropriate for the southern climate, she went to change. When she came out, ready to continue her new journey, she found the nuns had disappeared. No outer circumstances could draw her away from her destiny.

She reached the Ashram on 3 December 1966 and was taken to Kireet-bhai, then the Registrar of our Centre of Education. The same evening at the theatre she attended the repeat programme of the 1st December. In those days it was done so for the sake of the visitors. The programme left a powerful impact on her and she spoke of it very often, as if she had been carried into a different world.

She met our sweet Mother for the first time on the 9th of December. Ten days later, as though she had been made to come for this very purpose, she joined the School Staff in the new term beginning from the 16th December. Her special subject was Indian History, but with History she was asked to teach English also. What perfect timing! The Mother plans everything fitting the scattered pieces of our lives, like those of a jigsaw puzzle, into Her perfect whole.

The rest of the story is known to many of us, for we had the privilege of receiving endless affection and understanding from her. Everyone (whether her student or not) was her dear *bētā*, her *rājā bētā*.

During her terminal illness she was a “hero warrior” just as described in our school prayer, fighting and bearing with cheerfulness, love and trust physical suffering and pain. She never complained. During the last eleven months she spent in the Nursing Home she endured the battle of the physical body with a peaceful surrender, not disturbing anyone. It is difficult to gauge the depth of endurance she had. She was only smiles.

The following letters by ex-students and admirers of Vimala-ben express the feelings of many others.

(1)

Bonjour, Vimala-ben,

Our adorable teacher who put smiles and tenderness in many, many hearts, whether they needed them or not. You were always your loving self. You have stamped your sweetness and strength on us. We remember you not only as a History teacher, but as a loving motherly friend. You have been the most important example a teacher can be, A LOVING GUIDE. Whether one was timid or mischievous, outspoken or grumpy, you had sympathy and encouragement for all. Anyone could make you his *confidante*. May we learn from you. May I be able to instil in others even a little of that gentleness received from you. I remember you and owe a lot of gratitude to Her, for bestowing on us, the children of this Institution, a living example of love and smiles. May Her Grace always be felt through you. We pray that you get what you want.

As for the strength your fragile body enveloped, that is beyond my dreams. I feel it is difficult for me to even imagine that I can imitate it in any way. You have let Her work in the very cells of your body, letting the light stand up to confront the darkness. It is apt that someone should have felt you lived what the Mother speaks of in *Radha's Prayer*: “Whether Thou chooseth for me life or death, happiness or sorrow, pleasure or suffering, all that comes to me from Thee will be always welcome.”

Pray that we too have the strength to do Her work, as many of you have done it, with that intense self-giving. We ever need your help, we are far from what so many of you have achieved in that domain. We are too self-centred and satisfied, too lazy and distracted.

I did not come to see you in person, for I am weak. Teach me to be strong like you. You have made a strong impact on me by your example. Yes, as the Mother says, “Example is the best teacher.” May we be your good students.

We all love you and owe a lot to you.

One who has drunk from your ocean of kindness and love.

(2)

Dearest Vimala-ben,

Daydreaming on these heavy overcast afternoons. I often weave my way back to a particularly golden afternoon of 1992 in Pondy when I sat next to you, listening to a history lesson on South India. Although I cannot remember the name and deeds of the king nor the nature of his kingdom, what I do remember I hold very dear to me. A group of chirpy but attentive children, giggling now and again sitting cross-legged on the floor and listening to your lesson. Your face was beaming and your voice, though continually being interrupted by a deeply curious child, was so relaxed and full of joy, as you taught the children by sharing knowledge, anecdotes and readings. Such a pleasant contrast to the manner of my education. Barriers, strict detachment and forced learning through evoking fear—continual pounding of pressure. From you, I learnt that to teach is to share and to be taught is to have been shared with. A healthy balanced two-way process.

That afternoon, I was given a compelling glimpse of a beautiful interaction you had with the children,—actually they were young adults. So rare and yet so natural! Thank you, dear Vimala-ben, for giving me this memory.

Daydreaming on an overcast afternoon, you are in my thoughts.

(3)

..Vimala-ben was undoubtedly a teacher whose class I enjoyed and I can say with much certainty, even without asking my classmates, that they too enjoyed it. In name she was our history teacher. I say in name because we did a lot of other things in her class than history—current affairs, politics and hearing interesting stories—just to name a few.

A peculiarity of hers was that in every class she would wittingly or unwittingly pass a remark that would make the class roar with laughter. I recall an incident. Once Vimala-ben was showing us some pictures of the instruments used by the ancient Indian surgeon Suśruta during his operations. One instrument in particular looked quite similar to a pen and, on seeing it, a student remarked “Look, Vimala-ben, they even had fountain-pens at that time.” Vimala-ben accepted it in a most casual manner and replied “Yes, yes, sure enough they had them. Otherwise how would they write? If you look closely you might even find sketch-pens, ball-points and even micro-tips in the picture.” I remember how we all laughed and laughed at this joke. Those moments of whole-hearted laughter I will always cherish.

But what really made Vimala-ben special to us was that she loved our class much more than we could ever possibly love her.

Submitted by U D

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Musings on the Mother's Prayers and Meditations, Vol I, by Shyam Kumari, pp 200 Price Rs 200.\***

OUR religious books, epics and scriptures contain a variety of prayers, earnest entreaties, hymns and songs in praise addressed to the Lord and represent the highest concept of Bhakti or that form of love unaltered and unalterable which is absolutely free from all blemishes, desires and craze and seeks nothing in return except still more love and devotion and total surrender of the self. Sri Madhwacharya, the exponent of Dwaita philosophy in his work *Mahabharat Tatparya Nirnaya* says

महात्म्य ज्ञान श्वस्तु सुदृढः सर्वतोऽधिकः ।  
स्नेहो भक्तिरिति प्रोक्तस्तया मुक्तिर्नचान्यथा ॥

Bhakti is that form of love which is of the highest order, which is strong, firm and stable and which is preceded by perfect knowledge of the greatness of the Lord. It is only through such devotion that one can achieve salvation and not at all otherwise.

The Mother's *Prayers and Meditations* stands on a very different footing. About it it has been rightly said that these prayers and meditations are spontaneous foundations of a living experience, an aspiration not for a person but for a state of consciousness, knowledge, realisation; these formulations themselves make what her prayers are. An aspiration can be transcribed into a prayer, but the aspiration itself always exceeds the prayer.

In her *Musings on the Mother's Prayers and Meditations* Shyam Kumari with great faith, a great fervour, a great sincerity and also a great simplicity of heart has beautifully captured and summed up the Mother's inmost consciousness, all with touches and expressions of thankfulness and gratefulness for what the Divine has done or is doing for all of us. The *Musings* are not something which a person attempts or struggles for. They have come like a flaming aspiration that seeks to realise, organising the thoughts and the words much more clearly and infinitely more consciously. It is evident that a kind of luminous enthusiasm has possessed the writer and an irresistible necessity to dissolve in the Mother's being and not to be separate enabled her to go on recording the *Musings* in an extremely simple and supremely spontaneous style. Obviously this state of fusion and mingling has brought about a systematic concentration of forces, a state which has led to a unique kind of vibration in her words. It can therefore be easily said that lightness and luminosity are the hallmarks of Shyam Kumari's writing. One or two examples will be sufficient to elucidate the above points.

On December 10, 1912 the Mother said

\* Available with Shyam Kumari c/o Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry 605002. Also at SABDA and VAK.



Supreme Master, Eternal Teacher, it has been once more granted me to verify the unequalled effectivity of a full confidence in Thy leading. The light was manifested through my mouth yesterday and it met no resistance in me—the instrument was willing, supple, keen of edge. It is Thou who art the doer in each thing and he who is near enough to Thee to see Thee in all actions without any exception will know how to transfer each act into a benediction.

Shyam Kumari explains: “The Mother postulates that there is an ‘unequalled effectivity’ in full confidence in the guidance of the Lord. If we could accept with all our being that the Lord is leading us then our outlook on things would radically change and we would be able to seize the true significance of things and events and would have a much better chance of taking the correct route with an understanding of the Divine purpose in things and events. And in such a beatific atmosphere sweet with the presence of the Lord, the inevitable thorns would lacerate less, hurt less.”

On February 17, 1914 the Mother wrote:

O Lord, how ardently my aspiration rises to Thee: give us the full consciousness of Thy law, the constant perception of Thy will, so that our decision may be Thy decision and our life solely consecrated to Thy service and as perfect an expression as possible of Thy inspiration.

Shyam Kumari adds: “We err because we do not perceive, because we are not conscious of the Divine law—of the Lord’s Will. Surely our ignorance is not due to any ill-will or lack in our Sadhana—it is due to the old habit of following the mental and vital instincts.”

And then see the Mother’s further words:

O Lord dispel all darkness, all blindness, may every one enjoy the calm certitude Thy divine illumination brings.

There are 93 essays in this volume leading us towards “Light-clad Summits of Spirituality” revealed by the Divine Mother.

Shyam Kumari has already authored 4 volumes entitled *How They Came to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*, 3 Volumes of *Vignettes of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*, compiled *Lights from Nolini Kanta Gupta*, *Sunlit Days*, *Sweet Steps, Towards Light*,—and has also written numerous books in Hindi for small children, three poetry books for children,—some of these books have been translated into Oriya. These essays, *Musings on Prayers and Meditations*, began to appear in *Mother India* from the November 1994 issue and were greatly appreciated. Many more have been added in the book. At that time also it had been rightly pointed out that in these essays Shyam Kumari’s own intense aspiration was clearly discernible and we owe a great debt of gratitude to her for bringing forth this wonderful volume now.

The typeset and printing are excellent. The book is recommended to all those who believe in true sincerity in living in and through the Divine.

‘Pierce the veil above, the consciousness will rise into the Superconscious and also attempt at rending the lower veil and ensure descent of the Divine Consciousness into the most material, the subconscious and the unconscious and so help in realising the Divine Life on Earth.’

G N CHATURVEDI

**Aghora—At the Left Hand of God**, by Robert E Svoboda. Publishers Rupa & Co., Delhi. Price Rs 95

By any account this is a very interesting and remarkable book, written actually from notes compiled by Svoboda from conversations with his guru who has been named Vimalananda. In his preface the compiler writes about Aghori Vimalananda, who was an accomplished Tantric and Aghori. Vimalananda worshipped the Divine Mother in her form as Smashan Tara by actually invoking and receiving her blessings doing Aghori Tantra rituals on a corpse. Subsequently he came to know all other forms of the Mother in her Kali aspect. The book is actually written as if Vimalananda were speaking. It deals extensively with the Shiva and Shakti aspects of sadhana, which this Aghori practised. The chapter on *Rnānubandhana* deals extensively with living examples of the Laws of Karma and the payment of Karmic debts. Vimalananda then reveals his relations with three of his mentors: Senior Guru Maharaj and Junior Guru Maharaj and how the Senior Guru Maharaj was fond of playing pranks on his disciples. The actual Guru of Vimalananda was Mahapurusha, a figure 30 feet tall, in whose palm Vimalananda could sit as if he were a pygmy. Some of the incidents with this Mahapurusha border on the incredible but Vimalananda has not revealed who this being is. Cryptically he makes the remark, ‘My senior Guru Maharaj would call Mahapurusha ‘God Himself.’’

In chapter six Vimalananda deals with the restrictions, the use of intoxicants and other details of the left-hand path of Tantra. He adds that ‘the true test of an Aghori is from full-blown *tamas* to pure *sattva* and love for all.’ There is a chapter on spirits, another on *Avishkara*—a stage where the Deity or some spirit or a saint is consciously invited into the body of the Aghori. Vimalananda himself did the *Avishkara* of Akbar the Emperor of India. There is a long chapter on sex which includes the theories on creation and procreation, *Ojas* and conservation, and what is known as the *Siddhi* of *Swapneshwari* and *Shiva Lata Mudra*—two methods by which the Aghori guru trains his disciple to gain total control over the sex impulse. The paragraphs on *Vajroli* and the initiation by *Bhairavi* make fascinating reading. The last chapter deals with the traditional ways and the highest place where Aghoris, Tantriks and other sects are known to do intense and often dangerous practices. Svoboda, in talking about his guru,

reveals that Vimalananda lived in Bombay and often led a double life. One aspect of his was a race-goer and family man. The Aghori aspect was known only to a few of his disciples whom he called his children. Vimalananda passed away sometime in 1980-90. The exact date is not revealed. By all accounts this is an extremely interesting book to read.

ANONYMOUS

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