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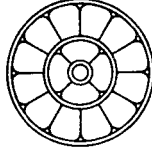
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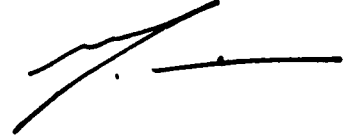
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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## SHE IN HER DREADFUL KNOWLEDGE WAS ALONE

AT first to her beneath the sapphire heavens  
The sylvan solitude was a gorgeous dream,  
An altar of the summer's splendour and fire,  
A sky-topped flower-hung palace of the gods  
And all its scenes a smile on rapture's lips  
And all its voices bards of happiness.  
There was a chanting in the casual wind,  
There was a glory in the least sunbeam,  
Night was a chrysoprase on velvet cloth,  
A nestling darkness or a moonlit deep,  
Day was a purple pageant and a hymn,  
A wave of the laughter of light from morn to eve.  
His absence was a dream of memory,  
His presence was the empire of a god.  
A fusing of the joys of earth and heaven,  
A tremendous blaze of nuptial rapture passed,  
A rushing of two spirits to be one,  
A burning of two bodies in one flame.  
Opened were gates of unforgettable bliss:  
Two lives were locked within an earthly heaven  
And fate and grief fled from that fiery hour.  
But soon now failed the summer's ardent breath  
And throngs of blue-black clouds crept through the sky  
And rain fled sobbing over the dripping leaves  
And storm became the forest's titan voice.  
Then listening to the thunder's fatal crash  
And the fugitive pattering footsteps of the showers  
And the long unsatisfied panting of the wind  
And sorrow muttering in the sound-vexed night,  
The grief of all the world came near to her:  
Night's darkness seemed her future's ominous face.  
The shadow of her lover's doom arose  
And fear laid hands upon her mortal heart  
The moments swift and ruthless raced; alarmed  
Her thoughts, her mind remembered Narad's date  
A trembling moved accountant of her riches,  
She reckoned the insufficient days between:  
A dire expectancy knocked at her breast;

Dreadful to her were the footsteps of the hours:  
 Grief came, a passionate stranger to her gate:  
 Banished when in his arms, out of her sleep  
 It rose at morn to look into her face.  
 Vainly she fled into abysses of bliss  
 From her pursuing foresight of the end.  
 The more she plunged into love that anguish grew;  
 Her deepest grief from sweetest gulfs arose.  
 Remembrance was a poignant pang, she felt  
 Each day a golden leaf torn cruelly out  
 From her too slender book of love and joy.  
 Thus swaying in strong gusts of happiness,  
 And swimming in foreboding's sombre waves,  
 And feeding sorrow and terror with her heart,—  
 For now they sat among her bosom's guests  
 Or in her inner chamber paced apart,—  
 Her eyes stared blind into the future's night.  
 Out of her separate self she looked and saw,  
 Moving amid the unconscious faces loved,  
 In mind a stranger though in heart so near,  
 The ignorant smiling world go happily by  
 Upon its way towards an unknown doom  
 And wondered at the careless lives of men.  
 As if in different worlds they walked, though close,  
 They confident of the returning sun,  
 They wrapped in little hourly hopes and tasks,—  
 She in her dreadful knowledge was alone.  
 The rich and happy secrecy that once  
 Enshrined her as if in a silver bower  
 Apart in a bright nest of thoughts and dreams  
 Made room for tragic hours of solitude  
 And lonely grief that none could share or know,  
 A body seeing the end too soon of joy  
 And the fragile happiness of its mortal love.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL, Vol 29, pp 468-70)

# A FEW ESSAYS ON THE GITA IN BENGALI

*(Continued from the issue of September 1999)*

## SANJAYA'S GIFT OF DIVINE VISION

THE Gita was spoken on the eve of the Great Mahabharata War. Therefore we find in the very first verse of the Gita, King Dhritarashtra seeking information about the War from Sanjaya who had received the gift of divine vision. The two armies are gathered on the battlefield; what are their first moves, this is what the old king is eager to know. In the eyes of the educated man in modern India, educated that is on the English pattern, Sanjaya's gift of divine vision is no more than a poetic fancy. If we had said that such and such a person gifted with clairvoyance and clairaudience was able to present before his senses the frightful scenes and war-cries of the great heroes in a distant battlefield, then perhaps the statement would not have been so unworthy of credence. And one is inclined to dismiss as a still more absurd story that this power had been given to Sanjaya by the great Vyasa. Had we said that a famous European scientist having hypnotised such and such a person came to have some description of that distant event from his mouth, then perhaps those who have studied with care something about hypnotism in the West might have lent some credence. And yet, hypnotism is simply one of those undesirable elements of Yogic power that have to be rejected. There are hidden within man many such powers as were known to civilised peoples in ancient times and developed by them. But that knowledge has been washed away in the flood of ignorance born of Kali, the Age of Darkness; it has been preserved only in part within a limited circle as a secret lore that should be kept a secret.

There is a power of subtle vision beyond the gross physical sense organ, in a subtle organ through which we can bring within our ken objects and knowledge inaccessible to the gross organs of sense, can have vision of subtle things, can listen to subtle sounds, smell imperceptible smells, touch subtle physical objects, and have taste of subtle foods. The utmost development of subtle sight is what is called divine vision; through its power objects that are at a distance, secret objects or those belonging to another world come within the scope of our knowledge. We see no reason to disbelieve that the great sage Vyasa possessing supreme Yogic powers was capable of imparting this divine vision to Sanjaya. If we are not incredulous about the wonderful power of Western hypnosis, why should we be incredulous about the power of the great Vyasa with his incomparable knowledge? In every page of history and in every activity of human life there is available ample evidence that a powerful man can impart his power to another. Heroic men of action like Napoleon and his prepared collaborators in their work by imparting their own power to fit recipients. Even a very ordinary Yogin having obtained some special power can impart his power to another for a little while or for a special purpose, what to speak of the great

Vyasa who was the world's most accomplished genius and a man of extraordinary Yogic realisation.

In fact, the existence of this divine vision far from being an absurdity must be a scientific truth. We know that the eye does not see, it is not the ear that hears nor the nose that smells, the skin does not experience the sense of touch nor the tongue the feeling of taste, it is the mind that sees, the mind that hears, smells, feels the sense of touch or taste. This truth has been accepted by philosophy and psychology for a long time. In hypnotism it has been proved by practical scientific tests that the function of the organ of sight can be performed by any of the sensory nerves even when the eyes are shut. This goes only to prove that the gross organs of sense like the eye are simply convenient means for the acquisition of knowledge. We have become their slaves bound by a long habit of the gross physical body. But in reality we can convey the knowledge to the mind through any of the channels in the body, as the blind can get by the touch an accurate idea of the nature and shape of things.

But this difference may be noticed between the blind man's "sight" and that of a man in a state of dream, namely, that the latter sees an image of the thing in his mind. This precisely is what is called seeing. In actual fact, I do not see the book in front of me, it is on seeing the image of the book reflected within my eyes that the mind says, "I have seen a book". But this too is proved by the seeing and hearing of a distant object or event by one in a dream-state that in order to obtain a knowledge of an object there is no necessity for any of the physical channels in the body; we can see through a subtle power of vision. Every day there are growing in number such examples as seeing mentally from a room in London events taking place at the time in Edinburgh. This is what is called subtle sight.

There is this difference between subtle sight and divine vision that one possessing subtle sight sees the image of things invisible in his mind, whereas in divine vision instead of seeing the things in our mind, we see them in front of the physical eye, instead of hearing the sounds as a current of thought we hear them with the physical ear. A simple instance of this is the seeing of contemporary events in a crystal or ink. But for a Yogi endowed with divine vision there is no need of such material aids, he can on developing this power become aware of events in another time and space by removing the bondage of space and time without any material aid. We have obtained enough evidence of this removal of the barrier of space; numerous and satisfactory proofs that the barrier of time too can be removed, that man can be a seer of the past, present and future have not yet been presented before the world. But if it is possible to remove the space barrier, it cannot be said that to remove the barrier of time is impossible.

In any case, with the divine vision given him by Vyasa, Sanjaya while remaining in Hastinapur saw with his eyes as if he were standing in the battlefield of Kurukshetra where the Dhritarashtrians and the Pandavas gathered, heard with his ears the words of Duryodhana, the fierce battle-cry of grandfather Bhishma, the mighty sound of Panchajanya proclaiming the destruction of the Kurus, and the dialogue between



Krishna and Arjuna bringing out the import of the Gita.

In our opinion, the Mahabharata is not a metaphysical piece nor are Krishna and Arjuna the creations of poetic fancy, the Gita too is not the speculation of a modern logician or philosopher. Therefore we have to prove that anything said in the Gita is not impossible or against reason. It is for this reason that we have discussed at such length the question of possessing the divine vision.

### **The Cunning of Duryodhana's Speech**

Sanjaya began his description of those initial acts of war. Duryodhana on seeing the battle formations of the Pandavas presented himself before Dronacharya. Why he went to Drona needs an explanation. Bhishma was the commander-in-chief, it was he who should have been informed of matters concerning the war. But Duryodhana with his crooked mind had no faith in Bhishma. Bhishma had a fondness for the Pandavas, was the leader of the peace-party in Hastinapur. Had it been only a war between the Pandavas and Dhritarashtra's sons, he would never have taken up arms. But on seeing the Kuru kingdom threatened by the Panchala nation, the old enemy of the Kurus and their equal in the greed for empire, the most outstanding personality, warrior and statesman of the Kuru nation was determined to preserve till the end the glory and the supremacy of his own people by being appointed their commander-in-chief, even as he had guarded them for long with the strength of his arms. Duryodhana on his part was of an Asuric nature, to him the measure and motive of all acts were the feelings of attraction and repulsion, hence he was incapable of understanding the point of view of the great man and his devotion to duty. He could never believe that this man of hard austerity carried in his heart the strength to kill in the battlefield out of a sense of duty even the Pandavas who were to him as if his own self. One who has the good of his country at heart tries his utmost to make his people desist from injustice and evil by expressing his views in council, but once the injustice and the evil are accepted by the people he defends his nation and subdues its enemies even in unrighteous war without caring for his own personal opinions. Bhishma too had taken this line. But this attitude was beyond Duryodhana's comprehension. Therefore instead of approaching Bhishma he thought of Drona.

Drona personally was a staunch enemy of the Panchala king; prince Dhrishtadyumna of the Panchalas was determined to kill his preceptor Drona. In other words, Duryodhana thought that if reminded of this personal enmity the teacher would give up all leanings towards peace and fight with all enthusiasm. He did not say this in so many words. He only mentioned Dhrishtadyumna by name, then in order to please Bhishma as well, he described the latter as the defender of the Kuru kingdom and the hope of their victory. First he mentioned the names of the principal fighters among the enemy, then he uttered the names of some and not all of the commanders in his army, the names of Bhishma and Drona alone were enough for the success of his scheme, but he added four or five other names to hide his true purpose. Then he said,

“My army is enormously big; Bhishma is my commander-in-chief; the Pandava army is comparatively small, their hopes centre round the strength of Bhīma. Therefore why should not victory be ours? But as Bhishma is our mainstay, it devolves on everybody to protect him from enemy assaults. If he is there our victory is inevitable.” Many take the word “*aparyāpta*” in an opposite sense, this does not stand to reason. Duryodhana had a comparatively bigger army, the commanders of his troops were not inferior to any in courage or prowess. Why should the boastful Duryodhana go out of his way to create misgivings by deprecating his own strength?

Bhishma understood the secret motive behind Duryodhana’s words and the ideas he had in his mind, to remove his doubts he uttered the battle-cry and sounded his conch-shell. This gave rise to joy in the heart of Duryodhana. He thought that his object had been met, Drona and Bhishma would give up their hesitation and fight.

*(To be continued)*

SRI AUROBINDO

(Translated by Sanat K. Banerji)

## SRI AUROBINDO'S RENDERINGS OF SOME OF THE VEDIC RIKS

(Continued from the issue of September 1999)

इळा सरस्वती मही तिस्रो देवीर्मयोभुव ।  
बर्हिः सोदन्त्वस्त्रिधः ॥ (Rig Veda, 1.13.9)

May Ila, Saraswati and Mahi, three goddesses who give birth to the bliss, take their place on the sacrificial seat, they who stumble not, who come not to hurt or do not hurt. (SABCL, Vol. 10, p. 89)

आ नो यज्ञं भारती तूयमेत्विळा मनुष्वदिह चेतयन्ती ।  
तिस्रो देवीर्बर्हिरेद स्योनं सरस्वती स्वपसः सदन्तु ॥ (Rig Veda, 10.110.8)<sup>1</sup>

May Bharati come speeding to our sacrifice and Ila hither awakening our consciousness (or, knowledge or perceptions) in human wise, and Saraswati,—three goddesses sit on this blissful seat, doing well the Work. (SABCL, Vol. 10, p. 89)

एवा ह्यस्य सूनता विरप्शी गोमती मही ।  
पक्वा शाखा न दाशुषे ॥ (Rig Veda, 1.8.8)<sup>2</sup>

Thus Mahi for Indra full of the rays, overflowing in her abundance, in her nature a happy truth, becomes as if a ripe branch for the giver of the sacrifice. (SABCL, Vol 10, p. 90)

समुद्रादूर्मिधुमा उदारद् उपांशुना सममृतत्वमानद् ।  
घृतस्य नाम गुह्यं यदस्ति जिह्वा देवानाममृतस्य नाभिः ॥ (Rig Veda, 4.58.1)

...a honeyed wave climbs up from the ocean and by means of this mounting wave which is the Soma (*amśu*) one attains entirely to immortality; that wave or that Soma is the secret name of the clarity (*ghṛtasya*, the symbol of the clarified butter); it is the tongue of the gods; it is the nodus (*nābhi*) of immortality (SABCL, Vol. 10, p. 97)

वयं नाम प्र ब्रवामा घृतस्याऽस्मिन् यज्ञे धारयामा नमोभिः ।  
उप ब्रह्मा शृणवच्छस्यमान चतुःशृङ्गोऽवमीद् गौर एतत् ॥ (Rig Veda, 4.58.2)

Let us give expression to this secret name of the clarity,—that is to say, let us bring

1 May Bharati come swiftly to our sacrifice, Ila awakening to knowledge here like a human thinker, and Saraswati, the three goddesses,—may they sit, perfect in their works, on this sacred seat of happy ease (*Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, SABCL, Vol 11, p 426)

2 Therefore is the soul's brilliant strong-acted laud of truth like a ripe branch to the giver (*The Secret of the Veda*, SABCL, Vol 10, p 505)

out this soma-wine, this hidden delight of existence; let us hold it in this world-sacrifice by our surrenderings or submissions to Agni, the divine Will or Conscious-Power which is the Master of being. He is the four-horned Bull of the worlds and when he listens to the soul-thought of man in its self-expression, he ejects this secret name of delight from its hiding-place. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 98)

कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत् ।  
 सतो बन्धुमसति निरविन्दन् हृदि प्रतीष्या कवयो मनीषा ॥  
 तिरश्चीनो विततो रश्मिरेषाम् अधः स्वदासीदुपरि स्वदासीत् ।  
 रेतोधा आसन् महिमान आसन्त्स्वधा अवस्तात् प्रयतिः परस्तात् ॥ (Rig Veda, 4.58.4)

...the gods sought and found the clarity, the *ghrtam*, triply placed and hidden by the Panis in the cow, *gavi*.... One Indra produced, one Surya, one the gods fashioned by natural development out of Vena... (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 99)

(*To be continued*)

(Compiled by Sampadananda Mishra)

## ACROPOLIS

CEASELESS was the seeking,  
Golden was the light,  
Sullen was the bleaking  
Of encircling Night.

Reason's sigil sealing  
All things from great to least!  
No man to tyrant kneeling,  
No proud usurping priest.

Friendship's bond uniting  
Cities of Man set free;  
Beauty from soul's inviting  
Earthly dungeon's key!

January 17, 1935

ARJAVA

Sri Aurobindo's comment: Good—very terse and vigorous.

## THE SUPERMAN

SRI AUROBINDO has given the metaphysical basis of the modern scientific theory of terrestrial evolution and has thus supplied the missing links. Science says that at a certain stage life appeared on earth and that at a later stage mind appeared ultimately giving rise to man, but it cannot explain how life and mind appeared in inanimate and inconscient matter. Sri Aurobindo, with his yogic vision, has fully developed the ancient account of the graded planes or worlds of existence, each with its own dominating principle. The plane on which we live is the lowest in the hierarchy, with Matter as its dominating principle. Above it, in a serial ascending order, are the planes of Life, Mind, Supermind, Ananda, Chit and Sat. These planes are not isolated but act and react on each other, the higher planes having a tendency to manifest their powers in the lower planes. It is by a pressure from the vital plane above that life first appeared on earth in the same manner, by a pressure from the mental plane, mind appeared: now the supramental plane is pressing upon the earth to evolve out of man a higher species with supramental consciousness. Like Nietzsche, Sri Aurobindo has given the name Superman to this next higher species as it will have a consciousness higher than the mind. But Nietzsche was a prophet who did not understand his own message and created much misunderstanding leading to great havoc in human affairs. Sri Aurobindo, as the true prophet of the Superman, has given this ideal its proper place, explained its true significance and has given a practical path, the integral Yoga, by which man can advance towards this consummation fulfilling his destiny on the earth.

In the following we reproduce a part of the 26th chapter of *The Life Divine* (SABCL, Vol. 18, pp. 255-61).

All who have at all sounded those abysses are agreed and bear witness to this fact that there are a series of subtler and subtler formulations of substance which escape from and go beyond the formula of the material universe. Without going deeply into matters which are too occult and difficult for our present enquiry, we may say, adhering to the system on which we have based ourselves, that these gradations of substance, in one important aspect of their formulation in series, can be seen to correspond to the ascending series of Matter, Life, Mind, Supermind and that other higher triplicity of Sachchidananda. In other words, we find that substance in its ascension bases itself upon each of these principles and makes itself successively a characteristic vehicle for the dominating cosmic self-expression of each in their ascending series.

Here in the material world everything is founded upon the formula of material substance. Sense, Life, Thought found themselves upon what the ancients called the Earth-Power, start from it, obey its laws, accommodate their workings to this fundamental principle, limit themselves by its possibilities and, if they would develop others, have even in that development to take account of the original formula, its purpose and its demand upon the divine evolution. The sense works through physical

instruments, the life through a physical nerve-system and vital organs and the mind has to build its operations on the corporeal basis and even its pure mental workings have to take the data so derived as a field and the stuff upon which it works. There is no necessity in the essential nature of sense, life, mind that they should be so limited: for the physical sense-organs are not the creators of sense-perceptions, but themselves the creations, the instruments and here a necessary convenience of the cosmic sense; the nervous and vital organs are not the creators of life's action and reaction, but themselves the creation, the instruments and here a necessary convenience of the cosmic Life-force, the brain is not the creator of thought, but itself the creation, the instrument and here a necessary convenience of the cosmic Mind. The necessity then is not absolute, but teleological; it is the result of a divine cosmic Will in the material universe which intends to posit here a physical relation between sense and object, establishes here a material formula and law of Conscious-Force and creates by it physical images of Conscious-Being to serve as the initial, dominating and determining fact of the world in which we live. It is not a fundamental law of being, but a constructive principle necessitated by the intention of the Spirit to evolve in a world of Matter

In the next grade of substance the initial, dominating determining fact is no longer substantial form and force, but life and conscious desire. Therefore the world beyond this material plane must be a world based upon a conscious cosmic vital Energy, a force of vital seeking and a force of Desire and their self-expression and not upon an inconscient or subconscient will taking the form of a material force and energy. All the forms, bodies, forces, life-movements, sense-movements, thought-movements, developments, culminations, self-fulfilments of that world must be dominated by this initial fact of Conscious-Life to which Matter and Mind must subject themselves, must start from that, base themselves upon that, be limited or enlarged by its laws, powers, capacities, limitations; and if Mind there seeks to develop yet higher possibilities, still it must then too take account of the original vital formula of desire-force, its purpose and its demand upon the divine manifestation.

So too with the higher gradations. The next in the series must be governed by the dominating and determining factor of Mind. Substance there must be subtle and flexible enough to assume the shapes directly imposed upon it by Mind, to obey its operations, to subordinate itself to its demand for self-expression and self-fulfilment. The relations of sense and substance too must have a corresponding subtlety and flexibility and must be determined, not by the relations of physical organ with physical object, but of Mind with the subtler substance upon which it works. The life of such a world would be the servant of Mind in a sense of which our weak mental operations and our limited, coarse and rebellious vital faculties can have no adequate conception. There Mind dominates as the original formula, its purpose prevails, its demand overrides all others in the law of the divine manifestation. At a yet higher reach Supermind—or, intermediately, principles touched by it—or, still higher, a pure Bliss, a pure Conscious Power or pure Being replace Mind as the dominant principle

and we enter into those ranges of cosmic experience which to the old Vedic seers were the worlds of illuminated divine existence and the foundation of what they termed Immortality and which later Indian religions imaged in figures like the Brahmaloaka or Goloka, some supreme self-expression of the Being as Spirit in which the soul liberated into its highest perfection possesses the infinity and beatitude of the eternal Godhead

The principle which underlies this continually ascending experience and vision uplifted beyond the material formulation of things is that all cosmic existence is a complex harmony and does not finish with the limited range of consciousness in which the ordinary human mind and life is content to be imprisoned. Being, consciousness, force, substance descend and ascend a many-runged ladder on each step of which being has a vaster self-extension, consciousness a wider sense of its own range and largeness and joy, force a greater intensity and a more rapid and blissful capacity, substance gives a more subtle, plastic, buoyant and flexible rendering of its primal reality. For the more subtle is also the more powerful,—one might say, the more truly concrete, it is less bound than the gross, it has a greater permanence in its being along with a greater potentiality, plasticity and range in its becoming. Each plateau of the hill of being gives to our widening experience a higher plane of our consciousness and a richer world for our existence.

But how does this ascending series affect the possibilities of our material existence? It would not affect them at all if each plane of consciousness, each world of existence, each grade of substance, each degree of cosmic force were cut off entirely from that which precedes and that which follows it. But the opposite is the truth, the manifestation of the Spirit is a complex weft and in the design and pattern of one principle all the others enter as elements of the spiritual whole. Our material world is the result of all the others, for the other principles have all descended into Matter to create the physical universe and every particle of what we call Matter contains all of them implicit in itself; their secret action, as we have seen, is involved in every moment of its existence and every movement of its activity. And as Matter is the last word of the descent, so it is also the first word of the ascent; as the powers of all these planes, worlds, grades, degrees are involved in the material existence, so are they all capable of evolution out of it. It is for this reason that material being does not begin and end with gases and chemical compounds and physical forces and movements, with nebulae and suns and earths, but evolves life, evolves mind, must evolve eventually supermind and the highest degrees of the spiritual existence. Evolution comes by the unceasing pressure of the supra-material planes on the material compelling it to deliver out of itself their principles and powers which might conceivably otherwise have slept imprisoned in the rigidity of the material formula. This would even so have been improbable, since their presence there implies a purpose of deliverance, yet the necessity from below is actually aided by a kindred superior pressure.

Nor can this evolution end with the first meagre formulation of life, mind, Supermind, spirit conceded to these higher powers by the reluctant power of Matter.



For as they evolve, as they awake, as they become more active, and avid of their own potentialities, the pressure on them of the superior planes, a pressure involved in the existence and close interdependence of the worlds must also increase in insistence, power and effectiveness. Not only must these principles manifest from below in a qualified and restricted emergence, but also from above they must descend in their characteristic power and full possible efflorescence into the material being. The material creature must open to a wider and wider play of their activities in Matter, and all that is needed is a fit receptacle, medium, instrument. That is provided for in the body, life and consciousness of man

Certainly, if that body, life and consciousness were limited to the possibilities of the gross body which are all that our physical senses and physical mentality accept, there would be a very narrow term for this evolution and the human being could not hope to accomplish anything essentially greater than his present achievement. But this body, as ancient occult science discovered, is not the whole even of our physical being, this gross density is not all our substance. The oldest Vedantic knowledge tells us of five degrees of our being, the material, the vital, the mental, the ideal, the spiritual or beatific and to each of these grades of our soul there corresponds a grade of our substance, a sheath as it was called in the ancient figurative language. A later psychology found that these five sheaths of our substance were the material of three bodies, gross physical, subtle and causal, in all of which the soul actually and simultaneously dwells, although here and now we are superficially conscious only of the material vehicle. But it is possible to become conscious in our other bodies as well and it is in fact the opening up of the veil between them and consequently between our physical, psychical and ideal personalities which is the cause of those "psychic" and "occult" phenomena that are now beginning to be increasingly though yet too little and too clumsily examined, even while they are far too much exploited. The old Hathayogins and Tantriks of India had long ago reduced this matter of the higher human life and body to a science. They had discovered six nervous centres of life in the dense body corresponding to six centres of life and mind faculty in the subtle, and they had found out subtle physical exercises by which these centres, now closed, could be opened up, the higher psychical life proper to our subtle existence entered into by man, and even the physical and vital obstructions to the experience of the ideal and spiritual being could be destroyed. It is significant that one prominent result claimed by the Hathayogins for their practices and verified in many respects was a control of the physical life-force which liberated them from some of the ordinary habits or so-called laws thought by physical science to be inseparable from life and body.

Behind all these terms of ancient psycho-physical science lies the one great fact and law of our being that whatever be its temporary poise of form, consciousness, power in this material evolution, there must be behind it and there is a greater, a truer existence of which this is only the external result and physically sensible aspect. Our substance does not end with the physical body; that is only the earthly pedestal, the

terrestrial base, the material starting-point. As there are behind our waking mentality vaster ranges of consciousness subconscious and superconscious to it of which we become sometimes abnormally aware, so there are behind our gross physical being other and subtler grades of substance with a finer law and a greater power which support the denser body and which can by our entering into the ranges of consciousness belonging to them be made to impose that law and power on our dense matter and substitute their purer, higher, intenser conditions of being for the grossness and limitation of our present physical life and impulses and habits. If that be so, then the evolution of a nobler physical existence not limited by the ordinary conditions of animal birth and life and death, of difficult alimentation and facility of disorder and disease and subjection to poor and unsatisfied vital cravings ceases to have the appearance of a dream and chimera and becomes a possibility founded upon a rational and philosophic truth which is in accordance with all the rest that we have hitherto known, experienced or been able to think out about the overt and secret truth of our existence

So it should rationally be; for the uninterrupted series of the principles of our being and their close mutual connection is too evident for it to be possible that one of them should be condemned and cut off while the others are capable of a divine liberation. The ascent of man from the physical to the supramental must open out the possibility of a corresponding ascent in the grades of substance to that ideal or causal body which is proper to our supramental being, and the conquest of the lower principles by Supermind and its liberation of them into a divine life and a divine mentality must also render possible a conquest of our physical limitation by the power and principle of supramental substance. And this means the evolution not only of an untrammelled consciousness, a mind and sense not shut up in the walls of the physical ego or limited to the poor basis of knowledge given by the physical organs of sense, but a life-power liberated more and more from its mortal limitations, a physical life fit for a divine inhabitant and,—in the sense not of attachment or of restriction to our present corporeal frame but an exceeding of the law of the physical body,—the conquest of death, an earthly immortality. For from the divine Bliss, the original Delight of existence, the Lord of Immortality comes pouring the wine of that Bliss, the mystic Soma, into these jars of mentalised living matter; eternal and beautiful, he enters into these sheaths of substance for the integral transformation of the being and nature

ANILBARAN ROY

[This article is a presentation of the "Ascending Series of Substance" in Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*, it was intended to be a part of the author's proposed book *The Prophet of the New Age* ]

## ALIPORE BOMB CASE TRIAL

### C. R. DAS DEFENDS SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of September 1999)

REFERRING to that part of the letter which says “If a demon sits on the breast of the mother what would the sons do?” Counsel said:—What is the meaning of that? It is only an analogy. He says that he regards his country not as merely a collection of fields, hills, rivers, and so forth but he regards her as his mother; then he says that he is only referring to the fact that the country is under subjection. He has used only a metaphor to show that his countrymen are not to sit idle but to so act as to realise their ideal. The letter was not intended for publication, it was not an open letter to his countrymen; it was to his wife. (Reads) Does it not mean that regarding the fact that their country is in a wretched condition, it is far away from freedom, it is in bondage? So it is the duty of every man in India to stir himself to realise the ideal of freedom. His basis of patriotism is that he regards his country as mother. It is to him not a physical nonentity but is a concrete manifestation of divinity. His central idea is that the country is a concrete manifestation of divinity.

The regeneration of the country has to be brought about by forces of character and intellect and not by physical force. Then the next paragraph makes it clear.

You understand, gentlemen, what he means by saying “wife is the strength of husband.” That attribute in Aravinda by which he realises the divinity is *Sakti*, he brings that into relationship between a husband and wife and says wife is the *Sakti*. It is through her that he realises the higher relation of man and wife.

Referring to the sentence “will you utter the mantra of worshipping the Sahebs like Usha?”, Counsel said he thereby means to say “will you worship Western ideals?” He is disparaging those who follow Western ideals.

“*Ei chila sei gopania kotha.*” He explains the secret in the letter and asks for the co-operation of his wife. He asks his wife to worship God, then she will be able to realise these things. There is nothing in that letter except that it refers to his wife’s vices which he says are vices of the present time. Then he says that every high ideal is now-a-days laughed at.

I refer your honour to the letter, dated the 30th August, 1905. I submit that the letter shows no disposition on the part of Aravinda to use physical force of any description at all. On the contrary what the writer does rely upon is what he calls *ব্রহ্মভেজ* (*Brahmatej*). You will find later on that throughout his activities he merely advocates the application of the force to which the phrase *Brahmatej* refers. Here is a man who regards it as a part of his ideal of religion to bring about the salvation of his country. If at the same time he says “I am not going to fight with swords or guns,” if the man says that it is a part of his religious ideal to bring about the salvation of his country and that by applying *Brahmatej*, it is for you to consider what the man had in

contemplation. It is a truth of political philosophy You remember in this connection that no government, however absolute or representative it may be, can exist except with the consent of the people. It is a maxim which is well recognised by political philosophers, from Hobbes to Spencer downwards When a government exists it shows conclusively that it exists with the consent of the people He preaches that the salvation of the country must be attained by people who possess *Brahmatej*. First of all, I submit that he preaches the ideal of freedom because he thinks that until a transformation in the thought of the people is brought about he cannot accomplish his ideal. He says and says candidly that it cannot be brought about in the life-time of an individual. But before that point is reached he holds that the people must be educated at any rate. And it is when the consent of the people is lost that the government ceases to exist What are the means he adopts when he comes to Calcutta? He takes up the cause of National education Throughout his activities and until the day of his arrest he was always in favour of National education. He sacrificed his worldly prospects in order that he might improve the National education of his country. He joins the National Council of Education and fills an important post there. He engages himself in the swadeshi and boycott movements In this connection his ideal is that when the people have learnt to love the country they must encourage the industries of the country. Arabinda's view with regard to swadeshi is that it is not purely industrial. I do not desire to justify Arabinda's connection with the swadeshi-boycott movement purely on industrial lines His way of thinking is inconsistent. What I do say is that he has got one all-absorbing ideal for the regeneration of his country, and the basis of that ideal is religious. His advocacy of the swadeshi, boycott and national education is not only for the industrial development of the country, not only the development of the education of his country but he thinks that these are means which are conducive to the awakening of the national spirit of this country. This is the line of his activity Before I deal with the various documentary evidence upon this point, you will allow me to place before you two letters which will throw some light. One letter is dated the 30th August, 1905 which will show the thing in its two aspects, and the other letter is dated the 17th February, 1908. I shall also refer to another letter to which my learned friend has not referred It is of the 20th February, 1908 The first letter is marked as 292-4 and the second 292-10 The first letter is set out in the first volume of exhibits page 401 With your permission I will deal with the letter in Bengali

Counsel next read the letter in original Bengali and then the English translation. The letter stated "I have not written to you for a long time. I was to return on the 8th but I could not do so Wherever Providence took me to I went I was not engaged in my work but His "

Commenting on this Counsel said, this letter shows where he did go. Various witnesses also spoke about it in the course of the trial. The contents of the speeches he delivered will show in what way his activities were directed. I submit that whatever activities he was engaged in, were based on religion.

My learned friend seemed to have thought that Arabinda in his statement

dissociated himself from political work. But in his statement he says, "in all my activities, political, religious or otherwise, I followed the principles which are enunciated in my letter of the 30th August." Far from dissociating himself from it, he admits that he was engaged in a political work. My learned friend has a marvellous faculty of misunderstanding Arabinda. Here is an interesting point in my learned friend's address. With reference to the transformation of Arabinda's thought as referred to in the letter my friend was going to suggest something, but all on a sudden he turned away in another direction and suggested that on account of the "sweets letter" there was a transformation in his thought. My learned friend branched it off as it were and said his case was that Arabinda was engaged throughout in the conspiracy. That point he gave up, namely, the suggestion that "sweets letter" had anything to do with this wonderful transformation in Arabinda's activities.

Counsel here read the letter farther on, which says "the condition of mind is different now and I am no longer subject to my own will. I shall have to do whatever He bids me." Your Honour will see how Arabinda's convictions were getting deeper and deeper every day. You are familiar with the Hindu thought on the point. In this connection I may point out to Your Honour the utterances of Ramkrishna Paramhansa and other saints. The man considering himself as the actor is inconsistent with the principles of Hindu religion, the very essence of which is তুমি যন্ত্রী আমি যন্ত্র, *i.e.*, you are the player of the instrument and I am the instrument itself. This thought is referred to in the letter of the 30th August in which Arabinda says to his wife "you may think that I am doing all this of my own accord but these are not my own actions. I am merely an instrument of the divinity within."

Continuing Counsel said: you are also aware of the line in the "Geeta" ত্বয়া হৃষিকেশ হৃদি স্থিতেন যথা নিযুক্তো'স্মি তথা কবোমি, *i.e.*, Thou dwellest inside me and I do whatever Thou dost engage me in.

Mr. Das read the line in the letter which showed that God had shown a specimen of his boundless mercy. Does this—asked Counsel—suggest bombs? It marks the beginning of his religious convictions. Arabinda says further on in the letter that God will show His mercy to her also, He will show her also the way. Does it suggest that his wife is to join the conspiracy and engage in the preparation of bombs to kill Englishmen? It is for the wife to help the husband in the exercise of the religious rites. Arabinda used the word সহধর্মিণী in the letter referred to above. He calls his wife সহধর্মিণী according to Hindu ideal. I suggest that this transformation marks the beginning of Arabinda's religious convictions. The wife is to assist the husband in the exercise of his religious rites. Arabinda writes to his wife "pray to God half-an-hour everyday and He will give you strength. You will be in a position to assist me in my religious practices."

Counsel read that portion of the letter which says বলা নিষিদ্ধ; *i.e.*, what he writes is not allowed to be divulged. Counsel commenting on this said, if a man takes the মন্ত্র [oath] he is not to divulge it to any one, even to his wife unless he gets permission from his *guru*. Arabinda says that the matter is গোপনীয়, *i.e.*, secret. I submit that even

if the language of this letter is strained no other construction could be put upon this. He says তোমাকে ছাড়া কাহাকেও বলি নাই, বলা নিষিদ্ধ, i.e., I have not said it to anybody else except you and I am not allowed to divulge it. Why? If it is a matter of conspiracy, the conspirators know it. Arabinda says বলা নিষিদ্ধ. The Government Translation of this is "I have been specially forbidden to disclose it." I submit that this is not a proper translation. The correct translation would be "it is not allowable." The letter of the 30th August is on a purely religious topic; because he for business matters refers his wife to Sarojini. After his return from the Congress he must have taken the mantra and he was anxious to take his wife along with him.

Barn went to Baroda in the year 1905. My learned friend suggests that it was at this time that the seeds of anarchism were sown. The letter Ex. 286-3 was written before Arabinda came to Calcutta. First of all it shows that at that time he was not interesting himself in Calcutta politics. He did not know anything about Bengal politics at that time excepting the Swadeshi movement which was all over India at that time. The letter states further on "I have had to spend a lot of money on account of the Swadeshi movement. I have another movement in view which requires unlimited money."

But what is this movement? My learned friend suggests that it is the movement that you have got here. But was it started at that time? Was it started as far back as 1905? Arabinda writes "I have had to spend a lot of money on account of the Swadeshi movement. I wish to carry out another movement which requires unlimited money." I submit, observed Counsel, this movement is not the movement of the bomb. Arabinda's idea was to start an extensive movement of Vedantism. He desired to spread it not only all over India but all over the world. He is a Vedantist and he bases all of his activities on Vedantism. He was thinking of starting the movement on the basis of his truest principles. You must not forget that it is not a matter of conjecture that Vedantism may be carried outside India. It has already been carried into America and also into England though not to the same extent into the latter. The movement of bombs according to my learned friend was inaugurated in Calcutta sometime after the time mentioned in the letter. Whenever my learned friend comes across the word "movement" he at once comes to the conclusion that it must be a movement of bombs. I need not trouble Your Honour with anything further about this letter.

*(To be continued)*

## SRI AUROBINDO WAS THE FIRST TO WANT SWARAJ

SIR, This is in connection with an article entitled *Kazi Nazrul: A Tribute* by R. K. Das Gupta (26-27 May). As an admirer of Professor Das Gupta's encyclopaedic knowledge, I would like to draw his attention to a particular point of his informative article. He observed: "Nazrul was the first Indian patriot to declare complete independence as the goal of the Indian movement and he made this declaration in an article published in his *Dhumketu* on 13 October 1922."

Perhaps in his hurry Professor Das Gupta has forgotten to refer to Aurobindo Ghose whose "first occupation" was "to declare openly for complete and absolute independence as the aim of political action in India and to insist on this persistently" in the pages of the journal *Bande Mataram* since its publication on and from 6 August 1906. It is quite well known that Sri Aurobindo began to write editorials for *Bande Mataram*, an English daily started by Bipin Chandra Pal and by the end of 1906 became the paper's chief editor.

Sri Aurobindo also expressed his ideas in articles contributed to the *Jugantar*, a Bengali weekly, published from Calcutta dated 12 March 1906. He also exercised "general control" over this journal. The goal of this weekly was to realise Swaraj or complete independence by means of armed struggle or violent clashes. In fact, the nationalist revolutionaries led by Sri Aurobindo defined the word "Swaraj" in terms of complete independence.

Sri Aurobindo was the first politician in our country who publicly put forward "absolute independence as the only worthy goal of political action in the country". In the article "Yet there is method in it" (*Bande Mataram*, 25 February 1907), Sri Aurobindo condemned the "Moderate Indian Politician", who aspired to be "an Imperial citizen" achieving "self-government within the Empire". He said that "mendicancy is no longer consistent with the stand-up position the Indians have taken up". He also stated: "To include India in a federation of colonies and the motherland is madness without method... But to talk of absolute independence and autonomy —though this be madness yet there is method in it".

Again, in the article "Legitimate Patriotism", Sri Aurobindo wrote: "Patriotism will never rest satisfied till it has recovered the authority of the country, however much the Anglo-Indians try to twist its meaning and implications. If it is patriotic for an Englishman to say, as their greatest poet has said, that this England never did nor shall lie at the proud feet of a conqueror, why should it be unpatriotic and seditious for an Indian to give expression to a similar sentiment?" (*Bande Mataram*, 27 June 1907).

In July 1909, Sri Aurobindo clearly stated in his *My Last Political Will and Testament*: "Our ideal is that of Swaraj or absolute autonomy free from foreign control."

In the closing week of 1921 a noted Urdu poet Maulana Hasrat Mohani moved a resolution in Urdu at the Ahmedabad session of the Indian National Congress defining Swaraj as “complete independence free from all foreign control”. But this resolution was opposed by Mahatma Gandhi. Hasrat Mohani suffered rigorous imprisonment for two years for this resolution. Even after this incident Nazrul Islam dared to write an article in Bengali in favour of complete independence. This is something to be remembered with great admiration.—Yours, etc.,

AMALENDU DE

(Courtesy *The Statesman*, 15 June 1999)

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## PURUSHA

SPACE is the body of Brahman  
 Time is His walk,  
 Our lives are His breathing shadows,  
 World's music, His talk.

HEMANT KAPOOR



## TWO LETTERS

### 1. ACCESSION OF KASHMIR TO INDIA

SIR,—The concluding paragraph of your Editorial “Unwarranted pressure” (Nov. 1) says it all and says it very well too. While reactions to the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Ms. Robin Raphel’s remarks are on predictable lines, the views expressed by Mr. Karan Singh come as a whiff of fresh air.

There is a persistent but erroneous notion that after the withdrawal of the British the erstwhile princely States were to accede to one or other of the Dominions that came into existence. The correct legal position was put forth on behalf of the Government of India by the late N. Gopaldaswamy Iyengar in his address to the Security Council on Feb. 6, 1948. To quote him: “If I may explain the position a little more in detail, the law bearing on the facts is as follows. Under Section II of the India Act, any Indian State is at liberty to accede to either Dominion or to remain independent.”

In the case of Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh, the then Ruler, did not accede to either of the Dominions. In fact, he proposed standstill agreements with both India and Pakistan. Pakistan concluded such an agreement with the Ruler of Kashmir. No such agreement could be concluded with India as, in the meanwhile, a part of Kashmir was overrun by raiders from across the Pakistan border. Maharaja Hari Singh offered to accede Kashmir to India only because of the overwhelming raids from across the Pakistan border. Here are his own words: “With the conditions obtaining at present in my State and the great emergency of the situation as it exists I have no option but to ask for help from the Indian Dominion. Naturally they cannot send the help asked for by me without my State acceding to the Dominion of India. I have accordingly decided to do so.” (from his letter dated 26-10-47 to Lord Mountbatten)

In regard to this accession the Government of India took the following position: Kashmir offered her accession at a time of peril to her and we shall not hold her to this offer. We shall accept this now but we shall leave it to her and her people to change their minds and ask to withdraw from the accession to India and to accede to Pakistan or remain independent. If Kashmir does change her mind, then we commit ourselves to the position that we shall give our consent to her withdrawal from the accession to India. (Mr. N. G. Iyengar’s speech to the Security Council on 6 February 1948.)

It is a moot point if Hari Singh would have decided to accede Kashmir to India or to Pakistan or choose to keep the State independent if there were no raids and, if the State was allowed normal political life without duress, without pressure from any quarter. Further, the accession of Kashmir to India by Hari Singh would have been final notwithstanding the circumstances that forced the accession to India, had not Lord Mountbatten and Jawaharlal Nehru themselves added the proviso for the acces-

sion to be given the seal of approval by the people of Kashmir. It is no use arguing that since then several elections have been held in Kashmir (even if one were to ignore that rigging took place at least in some of them) because the finality of the accession was not the issue on which any general election had been fought in Kashmir, as pointed out by Jayaprakash Narayan (*The Hindu*, Sept. 17, 1964)

Mr. Karan Singh's warning that there is the danger of another Indo-Pakistan war over Kashmir is too real to be ignored. The Government should cease to be a prisoner of its own past mistakes and take courageous steps to bring peace and stability to Kashmir.

K S RAMAMURTHY

(*The Hindu*, 9 November 1993, p 8)

## 2. ACCESSION ISSUE

Sir,—In the step-by-step account (November 9) of Kashmir's accession to India by Mr. K. S. Ramamurthy there are two historical omissions in the midst of an otherwise admirably balanced view.

He fails to mention that the Kashmiri Maharaja Hari Singh's accession during the Pakistan-organised invasion of the State was not accepted by India until Sheikh Abdullah, leader of Kashmir's National Conference, lent complete support to it. Thus the accession was fully democratic in the essential sense that it represented the mind of the State's Muslim majority whose spokesman the Sheikh was. The second is in regard to the precise nature of the plebiscite proposed by the Indian Government to be held once the peace was restored.

Not only the Indian Government but also the UN, to which Nehru and Mountbatten had taken the issue, stipulated the conditions under which the plebiscite was to be held. It was to be held after the Pakistan-sponsored invading tribes had been cleared out and there was to be no presence of Pakistan at all in any form in Kashmir. These crucial conditions were never fulfilled: Pakistan has continued to occupy about one-third of the State.

After Sheikh Abdullah's support to the Maharaja's accession and in the wake of the atrocities committed by the invaders on Muslims no less than on Hindus, the popular vote would have been overwhelmingly in favour of India which had gone to the rescue of both Muslims and Hindus

Kashmir acceded to India by a democratic decision, even though the strict letter of the law which operated in the case of the other princely States did not demand such a decision.

K D SETHNA

(*The Hindu*, 19 November 1993, p. 8)

## **JAPANESE THINGS\***

### **THE PICTURE**

THE leopard's spots  
have become petals,  
How can it be?  
Flowers blooming  
on the body  
of a savage beast!

### **THE TEAPOT**

Mount Fuji  
the rearing waves—  
very friendly  
with the teapot.

### **THE KOTO**

In the silence  
the koto  
plays itself.

### **THE PAGE**

On the page, black marks  
beautifully traced  
words, beloved nothings.

### **THE MAKERS**

The makers of these things  
all lived in the remote past,  
even their names are lost  
in the things they have made.

MARTA GUHA

\* Written after visiting the Great Japan Exhibition in London

## THE YOGA OF THE CELLS AS DEFINED BY THE MOTHER

THIS morning (1.5.99) I was leafing through the copy of *Mother India* I had received some time ago from a dear friend in the Ashram. I rarely have the opportunity to read *Mother India*, and this was a copy of the Golden Jubilee Special, the February-March 1999 combined issue, so I was doubly interested!... The magazine opened itself at page 179, where began an article entitled *The Yoga of the Cells*. This in itself was a startling ‘‘coincidence’’ enough: this topic has been the main subject of my own research work in Auroville for the last twenty years (I arrived in 1972)

Who was the author of that article? Shyam Kumari, whom I had met in February 99, during a seminar in which we had both been among the presentors. That one-week seminar had been organised by two other long-time disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, who reside in the USA: Ariel Browne and Wayne Bloomquist. They wanted to share with other interested people whatever theoretical or experiential knowledge we might all have of that as yet little-explored field of research: the consciousness of the cells.

Thanks to Shyam Kumari’s help, it had been possible to hold that seminar at the Ashram Theatre, and it was there that I had met her and talked briefly with her

This morning, discovering Shyam Kumari’s name at the end of that article, again on the body-cells, I was glad to see that her interest in the matter had continued, and that now she was bringing out something about it in *Mother India*. As I started reading, though, I realised that the title of the article was not what it should have been, and that Shyam Kumari, in choosing that specific title, had unfortunately made the same mistake that most people make on this topic. The information given by Shyam Kumari is of course true: yes, the Force of Transformation had been at work in the Mother’s cells at least as early as in the *Prayers and Meditations* she quoted from July 10, 1914, and the Mother had been quite aware of it indeed. But what the Mother describes there, is *not* the Yoga of the cells. There lies the usual confusion which I will now try to dispel.

In the course of my own research on the topic, I also discovered that very text as well as the other early ones by the Mother. In these She talks already of Her cells. I have been delighted, but also deeply puzzled, for the Mother has said very clearly, and many times, that what was happening in Her cells since the Supramental Manifestation in 1956 was completely new. Of course, the first thing to remember was that anyway in 1914 the Mother’s own consciousness was not yet actively doing any Yoga at the cellular level, as can be seen in the text quoted by Shyam Kumari and in other texts of the same period as well. She was simply observing what the Force was doing at that level. It was only many years later that the Mother, along with Sri Aurobindo, started doing the Yoga directly ‘‘in the Physical’’,<sup>1</sup> after They had done it in the Mental first, and then in the Vital. And even during the long years

starting from that plunge into the Physical, until the Supramental Manifestation, although the Mother was definitely doing the Yoga at the cellular level, still She didn't yet use the expression "Yoga of the cells". So, in my reasoning as a researcher, I concluded that from 1956 onward there must be something more, something very important, which makes all the difference. And when my whole attention, my whole aspiration to understand focused on this point sharply and intensely enough, then suddenly, in one flash of evidence, I *saw* the answer, and exclaimed. "But of course!", I had "known" it actually from the start, but not really "seen" it until that moment! .. The all-important difference was this: until 1956, it is the Mother who is doing the Yoga of transformation at the cellular level of her body, that is, she is doing the Yoga *in* the cells—but after 1956, what is more, and what is totally *new* indeed, is that *the cells themselves have started their own Yoga...*! and this is precisely why it is only from that time on that the Mother has actually started speaking of the Yoga of the cells—that is, done *by* the cells!

As the Mother Herself pointed out insistently, this makes quite an enormous difference. We shouldn't fail to realize the tremendous importance of this new fact, simply because we tend to shy away from it, as the very idea of microscopic body-cells taking up conscious Yoga is indeed so new that for most of us it is nearly mind-blowing! Still, it was what indeed happened, and *that* was quite a fantastic step in Evolution!

To appreciate fully how new and important that was, we have to realize, first, that to perceive at the cellular level of one's being the effects of one's spiritual development, was not an altogether unknown feat, even before 1956. Sri Aurobindo stated in *Letters on Yoga*: "Very often the sadhak feels a flow of light upon him and around him or a flow of light invading his centres or even his whole being and body, penetrating and illumining every cell ..."<sup>2</sup> and Sri Aurobindo mentioned next as an example the similar experience described by Ramdas; in another passage, Sri Aurobindo explained even why it would be in the interest of the sadhaks in general to learn to be conscious of their cells and of the action of the Force also at that level.<sup>3</sup> The Mother, too, especially after 1956, often advised the disciples to try to become conscious of their cells, in order to help solve health problems or, generally, to awaken and develop their cells' consciousness. So, to be to some extent conscious of one's cells is not in itself such an extraordinary achievement unknown as yet in Earth's evolution, or necessarily linked with the Integral Yoga, or the direct action of the Supramental; even though She had developed that capacity, of course to a much greater degree, the Mother would have had no reason to give special importance to it.

But when the cells themselves started to take some initiative in their own transformation process, then the Mother was rather astonished, and saw immediately the evolutive importance of this new turn of events, the starting-point of which was a direct result of the Supramental Manifestation. For more than a year the Mother had observed what was starting to happen. On 17 October 1957 She described it as follows.<sup>4</sup>

A completely new freedom has become possible with the Supramental Manifestation—it is the freedom of the body. One of the very first results of the Supramental Manifestation was to give the body a freedom and an autonomy it has never before known. . . For the first time, the cells themselves have felt that they are free, that they have the power to decide. When the new vibrations came and combined with the old ones, I felt it at once and it showed me that a new world was really taking birth. In its normal state, the body always feels that it is not its own master: illnesses invade it without its really being able to resist them—a thousand factors impose themselves or exert pressure upon it. Its sole power is the power to defend itself, to react. But this implies only a defensive power, the power to react against an invading enemy—it is not true freedom. But with the Supramental Manifestation, something new has taken place in the body: it feels it is its own master, autonomous, with its two feet solidly on the ground, as it were. This gives a physical impression of the whole being suddenly drawing itself up, with its head lifted high—I am my own master. . . During the flu epidemic, for example, I spent every day in the midst of people who were germ carriers. And one day, I clearly felt that the body had decided not to catch this flu. It asserted its autonomy. It was not a question of the higher Will deciding, no—it didn't take place in the highest consciousness [the Mother's central consciousness]: the body itself decided. When you are above in your consciousness, you see things, you know things; but in actual fact, once you descend again into matter, it is like water running through sand. In this respect, things have changed, the body has a direct power, independent of any outer intervention. Even though it is barely visible, I consider this to be a very important result.

And this new vibration in the body has allowed me to understand the mechanism of the transformation. It is not something that comes from a higher Will, not a higher consciousness that imposes itself on the body: it is the body itself awakening in all its cells, a freedom of the cells themselves, an absolutely new vibration that sets disorders right—even disorders that existed prior to the Supramental Manifestation.

Actually, that whole new development—the awakening of the cells themselves to a higher consciousness, and the beginning of their conscious participation in their own transformation—had been foreseen by Sri Aurobindo and announced in the only writings of his which he worked upon in the very last years, that is, *Savitri* and *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*. In the following passages, for example, Sri Aurobindo says:

Even the body, if it can bear the touch of the Supermind, will become more aware of its own truth,—for there is a body-consciousness that has its own instinctive truth and power of right condition and action, even a kind of unex-

pressed occult knowledge in the constitution of its cells and tissues which may one day become conscious and contribute to the transformation of the physical being.<sup>5</sup>

And again:

In this transformation the body itself can become an agent and a partner. A fully conscious body might even discover and work out the right material method and process of a material transformation. For this, no doubt, the spirit's supreme light and power and creative joy must have manifested on the summit of the individual consciousness and sent down their fiat into the body, but still the body may take in the working out its spontaneous part of self-discovery and achievement. It would be thus a participator and agent in its own transformation and the integral transformation of the whole being...<sup>6</sup>

This is exactly what has started to happen in the Mother's body as soon as the Supramental Manifestation took place, giving to the body that totally new sense of freedom and autonomy which the Mother described in the texts I have quoted above. The new Consciousness-Force, now actively and directly at work in Matter, has apparently seen it fit, in its Supramental Wisdom, to include indeed the goodwill and capacity of conscious participation of the cells, in its overall strategy for gradually conquering the world.

Well and good, we might say, but after all what practical difference does it make for us ordinary human beings? A fundamental difference. It is the entire difference between

1) a process of physical transformation which could have been imposed on the body from above by the Force (as in the case, it seems, of Swamy Ramalingam, as a preliminary experiment) Such a process would have been relatively faster and easier, but then its effects would have been limited to the Mother's individual body;

2) or a process of physical transformation which happens without imposition, but with the increasingly conscious participation of the body-cells. The cells actually learn, however slowly and at times painfully, a new way of functioning, based on the Supramental energy instead of the ordinary vital and mental energies upon which human bodies base their existence.

The fantastic advantage for us all, in this "cellular learning" method, is that, once the difficult learning process has been achieved by some cells, it can then spread much faster, through what the Mother called the "contagion" directly from cells to cells. That means that it can spread also directly from body to body, saving the others a lot of the trouble which the first body has had to go through in the learning process.

To the question: “How can all the work you do on your body have an effect on the corporeal substance outside of you?” the Mother answered:

Always in the same way: because the vibration spreads. It is a question of contagion. Spiritual vibrations are contagious, it's quite obvious. Mental vibrations are contagious. Vital vibrations also are contagious (not always pleasantly, but it's obvious: a man's anger, for instance, spreads very easily). Similarly, the quality of cellular vibrations must be contagious. For example, each time I have been able to overcome something (I mean, find the true solution to what is called an “illness” or a bad functioning—the true solution, that is, the vibration that removes the disorder and sets things straight), I have always found it very easy to cure those who had the same thing, by sending out that vibration. It works that way because the entire substance is one. Everything is one, you know, that's what we keep forgetting! We live constantly with a sense of separation—but that's a complete falsehood! Because we rely on what our eyes see—that's really falsehood. It's like a fake picture plastered over something, you know. But it [that fake picture] isn't true. Even for the most material form of matter, even in a stone, the moment you change your consciousness, that whole sense of separation, all that division, disappears totally. There are only different (what shall I say?) modes of concentration, or modes of vibration, within the same thing. <sup>7</sup>

The Mother insisted quite emphatically on that “contagion effect”, even mentioning sometimes the cases of other people here and there who were already starting to have rather unexpected experiences in their bodies, as a direct result of the new life which Her own body-cells were more and more consciously learning to live:

But once it's done (Sri Aurobindo had said this), once *one* body has done it, it has the capacity to pass it on to others.. all of a sudden one experience or another occurs in people. There are some (the majority) who are afraid, then naturally it goes away—it's because they weren't prepared enough within; if it is not the petty routine of every minute, always they are afraid, so once they are afraid, it's over, that means it will take years of preparation for it to occur again. But anyway there are some who aren't afraid; all of a sudden an experience: “Ah!..” Something quite new, quite unexpected, which they had never thought of. It's contagious. That I know. And it's the only hope, because, if everyone had to go through the same experience again. . Well, now I am 90 years old—at 90, people are tired, they have had enough of life. You have to feel young as a little child to do it. And it takes a long time, I clearly see that it took a long time. And it's not done, you know, it's being done, but it's not done—much is needed. Much is needed. What is the percentage of conscious cells? I don't know <sup>8</sup>



The “cellular learning method” obviously makes an enormous difference for the cells themselves as well: instead of being simply the passive objects of a transformation process which leaves them as unconscious as before, and which amounts to a mere manipulation of Matter by a Consciousness imposing itself from above, the cells play an active role; their own consciousness and their own will develop tremendously,—it is truly an evolutive growth for them and, finally, they too wake up to their own secret Divine Nature, after all these aeons of total self-oblivion. The “cellular learning” procedure is indeed, compared to the “imposition from above” procedure, a much better choice for the evolutionary Force, as it ensures, in Sri Aurobindo’s words “the increasing, enlarging, heightening of the consciousness, which seems to be its central will and aim here .”<sup>9</sup>

So, as we can see, there is truly a vast difference between the Yoga in the cells, which the Mother was doing until 1956, and the actual Yoga of the cells which from that date on, began happening by itself, thanks to the liberating action of the Supramental. It was a direct awakening of the cells themselves to their new Freedom, and to the fantastic New Possibility: the marvel of the New Life they started learning to live for the benefit of us all. How deeply grateful we ought to feel towards those courageous little cells, who had such an endurance. What we witness are difficulties and resistances of all bodies, of “The Body”, of Matter as a whole.

This is exactly what is shown, by another wonderful “coincidence”, in the text from *Notes on the Way* which is on pages 121 to 124 in the very same issue of *Mother India*, under the title *The Work that Sri Aurobindo had given me*—a text I would have myself had to quote here if it had not been already published there! The most difficult part of the Work has been done for us. It is now mostly a question of receptivity in ourselves, not just at the mental and vital levels—although of course all that needs to be there too, in this Yoga of Integral Transformation—but also at the cellular level of our being. Our cells alone can decide their own opening to the hard-won “golden contagion” which, thanks to the cells of the Mother’s body, is now spreading in Matter.

And then there is that most illuminating experience which the Mother had, which showed Her that it would be the psychic being, the immortal part in us, which would some day materialise itself and become the supramental being. It is quite fortunate again that this precise text has also been put in this same issue of *Mother India* (page 119), for it shows clearly where the two,—psychic being and cells—join in order to make that materialisation possible. True aspiration and true receptivity, in any part of our being, can come only from the influence of the psychic being. Once they are under that influence, our cells, in their candid, childlike simplicity, can very well become the part in ourselves with the most intense aspiration and the most trustful receptivity. Here is the question put to the Mother in 1966 by a sadhika, and the Mother’s answer (from the original note sent by the sadhika, with the Mother’s answer handwritten on it).

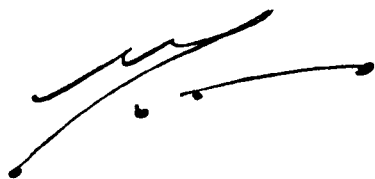
4. A question:

Can the very physical cells of one's body have more aspiration than the rest of the being?

On several occasions, in the meditation room, I have felt Sri. Arambin das presence. I feel the same gust of flame within, as when seeing you; but also what feels like the cells aspiring, moving forward to meet him, and "I" follow behind.

It is quite pokki like as the "Ladhana" is done

now in the body  
itself.



Question: Can the very physical cells of one's body have more aspiration than the rest of the being? On several occasions, in the meditation room, I have felt Sri Aurobindo's presence. I feel the same gust of flame within as when seeing you; but also what feels like the cells aspiring, moving forward to meet Him, and 'I' follow behind.

Answer: It is quite possible as the "sadhana" is done now in the body itself.

As for the other examples of what can be experienced in the humble beginnings of this awakening of the cellular consciousness, and the advice the Mother was giving about it, *En Route* (the published correspondence of Shyam Sunder with the Mother) is quite interesting too. I hope that these few pages, with the quotes extracted from the overall research I have done (which includes, as we have seen, the two texts also published in *Mother India!*), will have fully clarified what exactly the Mother meant by *The Yoga of the Cells*, and that no confusion will be there any more about the truly amazing and wonderful new reality it implies—a great promise for those of us interested enough in it to open ourselves, in all simplicity and gratitude, to its "golden contagion"! Let's all rejoice, for, indeed,

In Matter shall be lit the spirit's glow,  
In body and body kindled the sacred birth...<sup>10</sup>

BHAGA

### References

- 1 *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol 24, pp 1423-37, *On Himself*, SABCL, Vol 26, pp 473-76
- 2 *Ibid*, SABCL, Vol 23, p 798
- 3 *Ibid*, SABCL, Vol 22, p 351
- 4 *The Mother's Agenda*, Vol 1, October 17, 1957
- 5 *The Supramental Manifestation*, SABCL, Vol 16, p 47
- 6 *Ibid*, pp 15-16
- 7 *The Mother's Agenda*, Vol 2, February 11, 1961
- 8 For exact text, see *Notes on the Way*, CWM, Vol 11, p 100
- 9 *The Supramental Manifestation*, SABCL, Vol 16, p 39
- 10 *Savitri*, SABCL, Vol 28, p 55

## OH, WHAT TO DO!

### I

My boat lies still,  
The wind has failed,  
An empty sail my will

Far shines the shore,  
The sun sinks fast.  
I must get home before

The dark with all  
Its drifting stars  
May on my sail-boat fall.

Oh, what to do!  
Reveal Your will,  
O Lord I call on You

### II

My boat became thin silver,  
The sail a veil of gold  
Blown by a wind from elsewhere:  
This is my will, behold!

On blue-green glittering waters  
I, speeded by Your Will,  
To the shining shore that calls me  
Now sail with all my skill

And should a storm assault me  
To break my boat before  
I step on Your Land of Glory,  
I'll swim to reach the Shore.

RUTH

# THE COMPOSITION OF SAVITRI\*

## Introduction

THE STORY of the composition of *Savitri* is almost an epic in itself. Much work will have to be done before this story can be told in detail. Now only a broad overview can be given, tracing the development of a few passages as examples. But even this should enrich our understanding of the poem.

Sri Aurobindo's own statements on how he wrote *Savitri* can be found in *Letters on Savitri*, especially the first section. Another source of information is *Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo*. Certain facts about how the work on the poem proceeded in the later years are known only from Nirodbaran's recollections as recorded in that book. Amal Kiran has also written on the subject and has published Sri Aurobindo's first fair copy of the earliest version (1916), as well as the opening sections of the 1936-37 version<sup>1</sup>. All these are invaluable sources for anyone interested in knowing how *Savitri* took shape.

More recently, work on *Savitri* has been undertaken by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives. At first, the early manuscripts were not the immediate subject of interest. The principal aim was to verify the published text by comparing it line by line with Sri Aurobindo's final manuscripts and dictation. It was discovered that his lines had not always been copied, typed and printed accurately. In 1993, under the editorship of Nirodbaran and Amal Kiran, a new edition was published. Words and lines found to have been accidentally altered were restored to what Sri Aurobindo had written or dictated.

Meanwhile, a study of the history of the composition of *Savitri* was begun. Thousands of pages of manuscripts have now been arranged in a preliminary chronological order and are being systematically transcribed. The *Note on the Text* at the end of Volume 34 of the *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (1997) outlines our knowledge at this initial stage. I will summarise what has already been published, add further details, and give some examples of the changes *Savitri* underwent in the course of Sri Aurobindo's untiring search for the highest inspiration that can be expressed in human speech.

## Three phases

There were three major phases in the composition of *Savitri*. The first was from 1916 to about 1920. During this period, the original narrative poem grew in length and complexity as well as in depth of meaning, but had not yet turned into a full-fledged epic.

The second phase extended from somewhere around 1930 to 1945. Sri Aurobindo

\* This article is an expanded presentation of a talk given at the *Savitri Bhavan*, Auroville, on 15 November 1998.

now considered *Savitri* his major literary work. He concentrated on what became Part One, greatly increasing the role of Aswapati and the element of Yogic experience and spiritual and philosophical vision in the scope of the poem

Then in the last five years, from 1945 or 1946 to 1950, he returned to the later parts. He revised what he had already written and added much new material, including several cantos on Savitri's Yoga

The first phase is clearly distinct from the others. There was a gap of several years in the 1920s when Sri Aurobindo almost stopped all writing, including *Savitri*. He was totally absorbed in his inner work, culminating in his *siddhi* in November 1926. When he returned to *Savitri*, it was in order to express through poetry a higher consciousness than he had realised before 1920

In a letter of 1931, Sri Aurobindo wrote that he had "started recasting" *Savitri*. In this and other letters of the 1930s, he refers to his preoccupation with the "first book". That is also what we see from the manuscripts: that for fifteen years or so he worked mainly on what is now Part One (previously Book One) This is the second major phase, focused on Part One.

At first Sri Aurobindo worked on *Savitri* as a whole, but it was an early version which in many ways was quite different from the poem we know. Later he took the relatively short opening passage of that version and expanded it over a period of about fifteen years into Part One, which now constitutes half of the poem.

Then in the last five years, besides giving the finishing touches to Part One, he went back to the rest of the poem and revised it—largely by dictation, because by that time his eyesight was failing, so that most of the work in the last four or five years, and all of it after 1947, was done by dictation. In this last period he worked extensively on Parts Two and Three. He went through the books of these two parts in an order I will describe, reworking and expanding them. He also added a book on the Yoga of Savitri, which was introduced into the scheme of the poem only in 1947.

The following extract from one of Sri Aurobindo's letters gives an idea of why it took him more than thirty years to finish *Savitri*. It also gives a glimpse of his extraordinary humility:

...if I have not poetical genius, at least I can claim a sufficient, if not an infinite capacity for painstaking. that I have sufficiently shown by my long labour on Savitri. Or rather, since it was not labour in the ordinary sense, not a labour of painstaking construction, I may describe it as an infinite capacity for waiting and listening for the true inspiration and rejecting all that fell short of it, however good it might seem from a lower standard, until I got that which I felt to be absolutely right.<sup>2</sup>

So this is what Sri Aurobindo was doing with *Savitri* during all the time that he worked on it between 1916 and 1950 listening for the true inspiration until every line was absolutely right.

### Dating the versions

Let us go back to the beginning. First of all, I should mention the idea that Sri Aurobindo began *Savitri* in Baroda. This is a widespread impression. It is based on the reminiscences of Dinendra Kumar Roy who, while staying with Sri Aurobindo in Baroda in 1898-99 to help him master Bengali, reportedly saw him writing an English poem based on the legend of Savitri and Satyavan. But no such manuscript from that period has survived. Sri Aurobindo also never gave the impression that he had begun *Savitri* in Baroda. All his references to early versions seem to refer to Pondicherry.\*

It is not impossible that he translated the Savitri episode of the Mahabharata in Baroda, during a period when he did many translations from Sanskrit. If so, the translation was lost. Or Dinendra Kumar Roy may have simply confused *Love and Death*, written in 1899, with *Savitri*. *Love and Death* is based on the Ruru-Pramadvara episode in the Mahabharata, which resembles the better-known story of Savitri and Satyavan.

In any case, if Sri Aurobindo wrote a poem on Savitri in Baroda, it must have been quite different from even the earliest version we have from Pondicherry. The first known manuscript of *Savitri* contains, if only in an embryonic form, most of the main elements of the epic as it later developed. It seems unlikely that anything Sri Aurobindo might have written in Baroda before he took up Yoga could have provided an adequate framework for elaborating throughout the later part of his life as the central vehicle of his spiritual message.

For all practical purposes, then, the composition of *Savitri* begins in 1916. Moreover, this is one of the few places where we can give exact dates. The first manuscript is dated, on the second page, "August 8th 9th / 1916". More dates follow, up to November. After that, Sri Aurobindo stopped dating the manuscripts of *Savitri* for a long time. So it won't be possible to give much of a chronology until the next landmark, which comes in 1936. The passages sent to Amal in 1936 and '37 are dated.

The next dates are in 1942 and 1944, when Sri Aurobindo dated his manuscripts of Part One as it approached completion. Then we have a few dates in 1946 and '47. These are usually not from the manuscripts themselves, but from Sri Aurobindo's letters dictated in those years. From these we can tell where he was in the composition of *Savitri*. Finally, near the end we have some idea of the dating, based largely on Nirod's recollections.

### The first manuscript

Fortunately, the first manuscript is dated near the beginning. The dates given are 8-9 August 1916. Sri Aurobindo apparently started *Savitri* during a break after

\* But Sri Aurobindo also wrote in 1936 that "*Savitri* was originally written many years ago before the Mother came." See *Savitri* p 728 —R Y D

completing an issue of the *Arya*. 15 August 1916 marked the beginning of the third year of the *Arya*. Since 1914, most of Sri Aurobindo's writing had gone into the *Arya*, in which he published his major prose works in monthly instalments, writing several of them at a time. In the August 1916 issue—supposed to come out on the 15th, so it must have gone to press a little earlier—he began two new series, *Essays on the Gita* and *The Psychology of Social Development* (later renamed *The Human Cycle*), besides continuing *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Ideal of Human Unity* and *Hymns of the Atrus*. That was a lot of work since the previous issue, only a month earlier! Anyone else would have collapsed, but Sri Aurobindo relaxed by writing some poetry. He took up the story of Savitri and wrote a few pages of blank verse in a small bound notebook he had last used for an essay in Bengali on the Rigveda.

At first he may have spent only a couple of days on *Savitri*. He wrote three or four pages, a hundred lines or so, with the date August 9th repeated at the end. Then there is a break, followed by a much longer passage. This starts again at the beginning and continues as far as Savitri's debate with Death, telling almost the whole story. At some point—perhaps where there is the break and a new beginning in the manuscript—Sri Aurobindo must have set the poem aside and taken it up again, because the next dates that occur after August 8th-9th are October 17th-18th. They appear at the bottom of the page preceding the death of Satyavan; the pair of dates may mean that the passage was written on the 17th and revised on the 18th. October 17th is repeated a few pages later, October 18th twice further on, and October 18th-19th at the end of the long passage.

On these two or three days Sri Aurobindo wrote over 400 lines, his first draft of much of the present Books Eight and Nine and part of Book Ten. He must have written at least 150 lines a day in an unusual outburst of inspiration. Moreover, when what he wrote on these days is compared with the final version, several passages are found to have remained almost intact through all subsequent revision.

Sri Aurobindo would later refer to "the old insufficient inspiration" of the early versions of *Savitri*, compared with the level he came to insist on maintaining. But exceptions to this general "insufficiency" (judged by his standards) were not infrequent. Perhaps the earlier lines tended to be lacking in what he termed "overhead" inspiration. But they often expressed an intensity of exalted feeling that could hardly be surpassed in its own kind. And in many places—especially some of the speeches in the middle and later parts of the poem—this was exactly what was needed. Sri Aurobindo often left his old lines unchanged when he revised these passages after thirty years.

The first draft stops after Savitri's debate with Death. It is followed by new versions of some passages that had already been written. Near the end of the notebook, there is a passage of about a hundred lines in which the Godhead speaks to Savitri after her victory over Death. It begins.



Because thou hast rejected my great calm  
 I lay upon thy neck my mighty yoke  
 And hold thee without refuge from my will.  
 Now will I do by thee my glorious works  
 Giving thee for reward and punishment  
 Myself in thee a sweetness and a scourge.  
 Unsheltered by dividing walls of mind,  
 Naked of ignorance' protecting veil  
 And without covert from my radiant gods  
 Thou shalt be hunted through the world by love.  
 No form shall screen thee from divine desire,  
 Nowhere shalt thou escape my living eyes.

After this, the line "For ever love, O beautiful slave of God" was written, but crossed out and shifted to the next page.

These remarkable lines are not very different from lines in the present Book Eleven, some are identical. It must have been in November 1916 that Sri Aurobindo, in a flood of inspiration, wrote this passage which foreshadows the powerful climax of the future epic.

*(To be continued)*

RICHARD HARTZ

*References*

- 1 *Mother India*, August 1981 to February 1982 and November 1982 to February 1983
- 2 *Savitri* (1993), p 801

# SHIVA

“Mors Janua Vitae”\*

1

I AM the God of the sensuous fire  
That moulds all Nature in forms divine,  
The symbols of death and of man's desire,  
The springs of change in the world, are mine;  
The organs of birth and the circlet of bones,  
And the light loves carved on the temple stones.

2

I am the lord of delights and pain,  
Of the pest that killeth, of fruitful joys;  
I rule the currents of heart and vein;  
A touch gives passion, a look destroys;  
In the heat and cold of my lightest breath  
Is the might incarnate of Lust and Death.

3

If a thousand altars stream with blood  
Of the victims slain by the chanting priest,  
Is a great God lured by the savoury food?  
I reckon not of worship, or song, or feast;  
But that millions perish, each hour that flies,  
Is the mystic sign of my sacrifice.

4

Ye may plead and pray for the millions born;  
They come like dew on the morning grass;  
Your vows and vigils I hold in scorn,  
The soul stays never, the stages pass;  
All life is the play of the power that stirs  
In the dance of my wanton worshippers.

\* “Death, life's gate”

## 5

And the strong swift river my shrine below  
 It runs, like man, its unending course  
 To the boundless sea from eternal snow;  
 Mine is the Fountain—and mine the Force  
 That spurs all nature to ceaseless strife;  
 And my image is Death at the gates of Life.

## 6

In many a legend and many a shape,  
 In the solemn grove and the crowded street,  
 I am the Slayer, whom none escape;  
 I am Death trod under a fair girl's feet;  
 I govern the tides of the sentient sea  
 That ebbs and flows to eternity

## 7

And the sun of the thought and the knowledge of man  
 Is the secret tale that my emblems tell;  
 Do ye seek God's purpose, or trace his plan?  
 Ye may read your doom in my parable:  
 For the circle of life in its flower and its fall  
 Is the writing that runs on my temple wall.

## 8

O Race that labours, and seeks, and strives,  
 With thy Faith, thy wisdom, thy hopes and fears,  
 Where now is the Future of myriad lives?  
 Where now is the Creed of a thousand years?  
 Far as the Western spirit may range,  
 It finds but the travail of endless change.

## 9

For the earth is fashioned by countless suns,  
 And planets wander, and stars are lost,  
 As the rolling flood of existence runs  
 From light to shadow, from fire to frost.  
 Your search is ended, ye hold the keys  
 Of my inmost ancient mysteries.

## 10

Now that your hands have lifted the veil,  
And the crowd may know what my symbols mean,  
Will not the faces of men turn pale  
At the sentence heard, and the vision seen  
Of strife and sleep, of the soul's brief hour,  
And the careless tread of unyielding Power?

## 11

Though the world repent of its cruel youth,  
And in age grow soft, and its hard law bend,  
Ye may spare or slaughter, by rage or ruth  
All forms speed on to the far still end;  
For the gods who have mercy, who save or bless,  
Are the visions of man in his hopelessness.

## 12

Let my temples fall, they are dark with age,  
Let my idols break, they have stood their day,  
On their deep hewn stones the primeval sage  
Has figured the spells that endure always;  
My presence may vanish from river and grove,  
But I rule for ever in Death and Love

SIR ARTHUR LYALL

## NAGIN-BHAI TELLS ME

*(Continued from the issue of September 1999)*

**23:07:1994**

Things have started happening.

The Mother used to stand while the work was going on. This time she told me that the descent will not do. "I will come myself in you." That was her clear indication.

Instead of the descent she herself will be in me. Descent means a lot of resistance. It means changing the nature. But when she comes she will take care of everything. So not descent, but she herself.

My spirit has become very powerful. I could see that.

I was asking for the supramental peace. But I was told that that is not the way. Supermind cannot come like that. We must recognise that it is an aspect of supermind itself; its coming should mean the coming of other aspects too, though in a subdued way

"What should I do then?" I was told that some part of me must be established in the Overmind. It is through that that the higher will come and operate. At least some part must reach the Overmind.

I was not asking for immortality; I was asking only for immunity from physical disability. Supramental peace I wanted for that purpose.

To receive anything from that, there has to be something in the Overmind and it is through it that it will act.

**25:07:1994**

The Mother has entered in me because, as she had said, the path of the descent will not be the right one for me.

She is in me now and receiving and doing whatever is to be received and whatever is to be done. But I do not see her now.

She used to stand there, fully dressed, in a sari; but now I do not see her. She has entered in me. My spirit has become very powerful.

She has taken up the work, I suppose.

Sri Aurobindo had told me not to touch him or touch Power; now this has happened. I had asked, and I had willed, for supramental peace and strength and purity.

But now I have become very nervous; my external or waking consciousness,—there is nervousness. For some time now I have stopped meditating in the morning.

The Mother has entered in me and I am told that my body is becoming consciousness.

Not that my body is becoming conscious; it is becoming consciousness. It is becoming consciousness.

There is no mistake about it.

At the same time, while in the waking state, I am becoming nervous.

I asked Sri Aurobindo. He told me that this is a transition. He told me: "Your body is becoming consciousness." Yes, he told me that. I used to walk around the Ashram but now I have stopped it.

**27:07:1994**

I should not force the issue. I should simply ask the Mother for peace, without qualifying it in any way.

Yet there is an element of will also. But I will leave it to them. I see Power behind peace; I see it very clearly.

Nobody knows about my experiences. Only to you I have told these things. They have to be always kept secret. I did not publish letters written to me by Sri Aurobindo. It was only long afterwards that I published them. I had to publish them because the handwriting was becoming more and more faint. The writing was getting faded. Most of the letters he had written to me were in pencil and not in ink. Very few were in ink. With pencil he could write fast. The manuscripts were becoming faint. So I had to get them published. This was necessary. Besides, a lot of time was allowed in between, and so it was perfectly all right.

Nirod has told Esha that I see the Mother and Sri Aurobindo in my meditations. How does he know that? Nobody has informed or told him to that effect. But then even if he knows about it, why should he talk about these matters to others? Now she will speak to others and it will spread. It is not good for me. Already Esha has started respecting me so much. You see, the other day she brought so many things for me to eat; she got these for me from Cottage. By the way, Cottage does not charge for whatever she takes from them. She tried to pay the bill, but they refused to accept money from her. But why should Nirod tell it to others? I asked Esha how he had come to know that I see Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Her answer was that he had been with Sri Aurobindo for twelve years and that he must have received something from him, to know about these things, these matters of sadhana. I do not know. Anyway, there is always protection around me. Sri Aurobindo told me about that. Once I was shown concrete pots—flowerpots—around me. So even if people sit close to me when I meditate, nothing really disturbs me. I am quite safe. I am aware of it. Still, I must take precautions. Nirod should not have told anybody.

**30:07:1994**

My nervous being has become very weak. I am practically not doing anything now. But can't the strength I am asking for do something? Of course, to receive that, one has to be ready. There is the aspect of the instrument, *ādhār*

*(To be continued)*

R. Y. DESHPANDE

# THE MYSTERY OF SRI AUROBINDO'S 'DEPARTURE' VIS-À-VIS THE IDEAL OF PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATION

*(Continued from the issue of September 1999)*

*December 5, 1950· 1-26 a.m.*

THE MOTHER was standing near the bed in which Sri Aurobindo was lying. She could not believe that he was on the point of leaving. She applied all her occult-spiritual force in order that Sri Aurobindo might not have to leave his body due to an unwanted severe illness. For she could not even then imagine that he was deliberately preparing to depart.

But to her surprise she noted some great tension building up in Sri Aurobindo's body as if he wanted to leave but could not do so because the Mother was preventing it. While referring to this critical moment the Mother remarked in 1962:

“As long as I was there in Sri Aurobindo's room, he could not leave his body. So there developed a terrible tension in him: there was the inner will to depart and, on the other side, this sort of pull which was holding him bound to his body.”

Faced by this situation the Mother inwardly turned to Sri Aurobindo and appealed to him to give her a sign so that she could know what she should do at that moment.

Sri Aurobindo gave the sign and following the indication the Mother left the vicinity of Sri Aurobindo's body and retired to her own chamber ostensibly for taking some needed rest but in real truth for leaving Sri Aurobindo free to do whatever he wanted.

And immediately afterward Sri Aurobindo left his body. The Mother was called back and stood by the bed where he was lying. Dr. Prabhat Sanyal, the attending physician, declared: “The Master has left.” The Mother could not accept the fact, for to her consciousness Sri Aurobindo was still there living and active. Also, the phenomenon of physical death was totally inconsistent with what she had come to know of her “Lord” during her thirty years' close association with him.

Much later the Mother remarked that she was constrained to admit the veracity of the fact that Sri Aurobindo had definitely left his body, only when she saw with her own eyes on the 9th of December 1950 his material body placed inside a rosewood casket, nails driven into the lid of this casket, the coffin brought down the staircase from his chamber and the body finally laid into the deep Samadhi pit dug in the centre of the Ashram courtyard.

But we shall come to this point at its own appropriate time. First things first. So we revert back to the narration of what happened in Sri Aurobindo's chamber after he had left his body. It was the fateful night of 5 December 1950.

The Mother was standing near Sri Aurobindo's bed looking at him. She saw that

Sri Aurobindo had brought down the supramental Force into the physical before he 'departed' and his body was resplendent with supramental Light. So he had succeeded in accomplishing his principal life-mission which was to bring down the supramental Truth-Consciousness to be directly operative in earth-nature. The Mother announced:

"His body is surcharged with such a concentration of Supramental Light that there is no sign of decomposition and the body will be kept lying on his bed as long as it remains intact."

The Mother has clarified the point of supramental descent in a much more detailed way in one of her explanatory notes. She writes:

"The Supermind had descended long ago—very long ago—into the mind and even into the vital: it was working in the physical also but indirectly through these intermediaries. The question was about the direct action of the Supermind in the physical. Sri Aurobindo said it could be possible only if the physical mind received the supramental light: the physical mind was the instrument for direct action upon the most material."

And this was achieved in the critical days of Sri Aurobindo's illness. But as he had decided one year before that in his physical absence it was the Mother who would have to continue and complete the whole task of supramental transformation, Sri Aurobindo now did something unheard of in human history.

The Mother felt she had been called by Sri Aurobindo. She was standing near where he was lying in his golden radiance, as the *hiranmaya puruṣa*. Soon Sri Aurobindo started passing directly into the Mother's body all the supramental consciousness and force he had concentrated in his own body and this was occurring with such an intensity in a continuous way for many hours after that moment, that the Mother felt almost a frictional sensation all over her body. What was coming out of Sri Aurobindo's body and entering into the Mother's appeared to be mildly luminous.

The physical mind receiving the supramental light,—Sri Aurobindo had called it the Mind of Light. This Mind of Light got established in the Mother through the process of Sri Aurobindo's transferring of the concentrated supramental Light and Force from his own body to the Mother's. And the Mother's body was thus equipped for the Task it was going to undertake in the physical absence of the Avatar of Supermind.

But the situation did not turn out to be as simple as it appears on paper. A very serious crisis loomed before the body-consciousness of the Mother. For thirty long years, from 1920 to 1950, her body was so dependent on Sri Aurobindo's body literally for everything—for its well-being and Sadhana, for all its outer work, even for the proper discharge of its every responsibility—the Mother's body was living with such a sense of security and serenity in the presence of Sri Aurobindo's body, it was so identified with it in a deep intimacy that, with the sudden disappearance of the Mahayogi from the physical scene, the Mother's body felt intensely that it was simply impossible for it to remain viable without the support of Sri Aurobindo's body.

While referring to this very critical situation facing her body on the departure of



Sri Aurobindo, the Mother poignantly remarked on more than one occasion:

“It was truly a miracle that I could survive Sri Aurobindo’s departure. My whole being crumbled and collapsed. Sri Aurobindo’s physical presence was so long a marvellous support and protection and that was gone for ever! . . . My inner being was not affected at all for it could maintain the old nearness and intimacy as before. But the physical being? Well, it’s a miracle that it could survive.” (1971)

“After Sri Aurobindo’s departure it was for my body a feeling of *absolute* uncertainty, uncertainty of every second. It is impossible for an ordinary human being to continue to live with this sense of total and absolute incertitude, of total and absolute impermanence.” (1962)

“How many times did Sri Aurobindo save me from difficult situations! Now I remember the year 1938 when a dark Formation, an adverse Force, turned itself against both of us but more particularly against me—it had tried twice to break my head and Sri Aurobindo had saved me on both the occasions—well, he was rather tense and alert so that the adverse Force would not succeed in affecting my body seriously and in that process he had not taken sufficient precautions for his own self, and the adversary seized that opportunity to break his thigh.” (1962)

“Yes, the sense of absolute serenity that Sri Aurobindo’s physical Presence provided me was so intense that even during his last illness which lasted for many months I felt within myself a sense of absolute security to such a point that the very idea that this malady could at all, even in the least, affect his body could not occur in me. And it is for that reason when the Doctor told me that Sri Aurobindo had left his body, I could not believe it for the very shadow of a thought that Sri Aurobindo would ever pass away was so far from my consciousness.” (1960, 1962)

“So one can easily imagine what a terrible shock it was for me when I finally realised that Sri Aurobindo had in fact passed away for good. In the eternal history of the universe nothing, nothing can be imagined which can compare with the shock I felt. To have lived for thirty long years a perfect divine life in the company of Sri Aurobindo in a most natural and self-evident way, as a matter of constant daily experience, and then one day, hop! that is gone! All of a sudden the entire foundation withdrawn, materially! In that situation could one continue to remain behind? Impossible. One would naturally go away. Yes, with the base gone, oneself goes away. It was as simple as that.” (1962)

Such was the formidable crisis facing the Mother’s physical existence after Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body. She too would have certainly left but for the fact that something unimaginably miraculous happened at that time.

Sri Aurobindo’s conscious Will entered the Mother’s body and addressed it: “It was necessary that one of us should go; it is I who go. You must continue to remain behind to do my Work.” And this settled the question for the Mother and she decided to remain in her physical body.

Long afterwards, about eleven years after Sri Aurobindo’s passing, the Mother revealed why she was still continuing in her body. This is how she explained it:

“Well, I have been sent upon earth to do the work of supramental transformation and the bringing about of a new creation, and I have been trying to do this; that’s all. If it was not for this, I would have surely gone away with Sri Aurobindo. It is for that that I consented to remain behind. This Work had to be done. someone had to do it, and Sri Aurobindo asked me to do it, and I have been doing it. Otherwise, when one has attained to perfect consciousness, one faces much less limitation without a physical body than with one. One can meet at the same time a hundred people at a hundred different places, as Sri Aurobindo has been doing now.”

*(To be continued)*

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJEE

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## WHAT FLAME?

Who mothered your joy,  
In what flame of birth?  
Did it burn in the sky,  
Or in the winter hearth?

Or was it a star  
Who felt it all right  
To step into birth  
And win more light?

R. Y. DESHPANDE

## TO MARTYRS OF KARGIL

SPEAK not, speed not,  
O traveller! softly pass  
On this flower-strewn road,  
For here in repose,  
On his way to an eternal abode,  
Lies the body of a young martyr,  
Ready for the funeral pyre.

Thick is the jasmine odour,  
Red the flame  
Of burning camphor,  
Plaintive the notes  
Of the bard's sad lyre  
As he sings the tale  
Of heroic valour  
Of numerous humiliations  
And unbearable mutilations,  
Inflicted by enemies barbarous  
On this son of India,  
Who traversed a way  
Most arduous.

In a grief-warp,  
The young wife is caught  
From a pain so sharp,  
O how can solace be sought?  
From her stunned heart  
Escapes no sigh,  
As she clings to him  
Who was her life.  
His body now swathed  
By grim doctors  
To hide the wounds, the gaps,  
Stuffed with cotton wads  
And covered by skin flaps,  
Those two empty orbs  
From which his eyes have been  
Inhumanly wrenched  
Forever now denied their right  
Those eyes, which were  
The lamps of love and light

The mother devastated,  
A monument of sorrow  
Who pleads with death  
Alas, in vain,  
To let her borrow  
Just one moment  
Of her son's brief life,  
O let him speak  
Some loving last words  
To his broken mother,  
His shattered father,  
His bereft wife.  
Ah, this sweet boy  
She suckled,  
A toddler, in her arms  
Who nestled,  
With loving care,  
Whom she nurtured  
Her brave son  
So intensely loved

The father proud  
Of his elder son  
Offers to sacrifice  
As well, another,  
And a younger one  
Offers to send  
To Kargil's slopes  
Another life  
For happy sacrifice  
On Mother India's  
Sacred altar.

For the journey's last leg  
On the gun-carriage  
His body draped in a flag  
They reverently lay.  
How cruel this march  
How cruel this way  
Their feet traverse  
As their arms they reverse

The bugles' plaintive notes  
To the heavens form an arch  
The martyr's valiant son,  
All of five years  
Head held high,  
He tries to hold back  
His spilling tears  
As he sets alight  
His father's pyre.

In state after state  
In cities and villages  
Across the land of India  
Thousands keep vigil,  
As burn radiant with valour's  
Eternal light  
The mortal remains  
Of Kargil's martyrs.

Proud is Mother India  
Of its worthy sons,  
Of them she will not  
Forget one.  
Vain is not their sacrifice,  
Vain is not the snuffing  
Of their precious lives  
Their great deeds  
Will steel and light  
Our hearts and minds  
Calling us to play our parts  
As well, to die willingly  
In India's defence,  
To win at whatever cost  
Mother India's battles.

29 June 1999

SHYAM KUMARI

## THE LIGHT OF PANINI

SRI AUROBINDO in his essay on *The Origin of Aryan Speech* pointed out that there must be a missing link between the Vedic and the so-called Dravidian speech, and that there is a great synthesis peeping out of the physiognomy of all Indian people in spite of classification otherwise.

The link and the oneness have at last been found by the Light of Panini, showing through the lens of his magnum opus *Ashtadhyayi*.

### 2. Prithivi, not Bharat or Bharatavarsha

India in Panini's time was one greater India, called—not Bharatavarsha, but—Prithivi. From the root *vrath* to stretch, to extend, Prithivi extended from the Himavan in the North through the Vindhya down to the Indian Ocean, Udanvan in the South, and from the Middle-East in the West up to South-East Asia in the East. The unpartitioned vast Prithivi was ruled by a sovereign called Samrat. It was locally governed by kings throughout the land, and by military republics in the Far North-West.

### 3. Bhasha, the Mother-tongue of Prithivi: Precursor of Sanskrit

All citizens spoke the same standard accented current language, spoken, written and sung by farmers, soldiers, scholars, government servants, poets, littérateurs, artists, artisans, merchants, hawkers, shopkeepers, thieves, from common folk to the monarch, men, women and children alike. The name of the language was—not yet Sanskrit but—Bhasha. The name *Sam-s-krita* as a language was never used from Panini to Kasika. The word only meant 'properly cooked, dressed food'.

### 4. Bhasha and its Accents: No Regional Language

The rules of Bhasha's accentuation were thoroughly pointed out by Panini along with formation of words and sentences. There was no regional language. Only the accent was regional—mainly the Eastern-Southern, called Pracam, and the Northern-Far-Western called Udicam, divided by the river Vipasa. Later, in Kasika's time, the river Saraswati in north-west Karnataka near Joga Falls became the watermark. In vain scholars have sought regional languages in Panini's time. They were nowhere. Bhasha was the only language of the Easterners, Far-Easterners, Southerners, Westerners, Northerners and Far-North-Westerners. The accent is still continuing: East-South generally accents the final syllable in names, North and North-West accents the first or subsequent—not the final—syllable. East says Gobinda ('a' as in 'awe') or Gobindo, South says Govindā; North and North-West says Govind, Punjab says Guru Govind. 'Sikh' is from Panini's 'Sishya' > Sish > Sikh by elision of the final syllable.

## 5. Bhasha and Chandas

Bhasha along with Chandas—the selected compositions of the Rishis prior to Panini—was the subject-matter of Panini's grammar. It was not a 'Sanskrit' grammar. The appellation *Sam-s-krita* (refined) came several centuries later. His was a grammar of the mainstream language called Vak, as it flowed through its archaic recorded forms called Nigama and recorded compositions called Chandas, i.e., the Illumined speech of the Rishis. It was flowing in the current form: Bhasha—everybody's speech. Panini mentioned Bhasha only 7 times in his Sutras and 114 times in Chandas, with the *anuvrittis* or continuations. The rest of his 4000 Sutras were common both to Bhasha and Chandas. The same language was continuing from Vak to Bhasha covering different periods and strata of the language. Thus a comparative study of the old and the current, the sacred and the secular was facilitated by the marvel of his grammar. It was like a computerised grammar without a machine, written in the minutest detail, syllables acting as its unit.

## 6. A Rishi: Illumined Vigorous Speech: Mantra

An individual takes time to become a Rishi and still more to be regarded as a Rishi. Hence Panini's discrimination between a Rishi and a non-Rishi, 'an-rishi'. Even the erudite Sakalya, in spite of being an analyser of the words of Rik-verses, was a non-Rishi, for he had not 'seen' the Word. Rishi comes from the root *rish*, to see, to go, to pierce. Mantra comes from the root 'man' plus affix 'tra', the word which frees the seer from thought, direct vision of Word. A Rishi's words continue to spread even after the Rishi is no more. The hymn to Vak authored by Rishika Vak—known as Devi Sukta—is still continuing as Mantra in our Durga Puja. The Marriage hymn of Rishika Surya is still continuing in our marriage ritual. So between Bhasha and Chandas there must have been a time-gap. There have been Rishis even after Panini. Past, present and future Rishis are covered by his adjective *mantra-krit*, the creator of mantra. The rare flow of Rishis continues up to this day, and is not confined to our country alone.

The inner vast resplendent illumination is the criterion by which Chandas is differentiated from Bhasha—in a wider connotation too. The dimension of the language suddenly changes when a Rishi climbs to the peak of Bhasha. Pedestrian speech begins to fly with wings. Ramprasad's songs to Kali, the Time, Ramakrishna's *Kathamrita*, Bankim's *Vande Mataram*, Rabindranath's gleanings of poetry, symbolic dramas and *Gitan*, Vivekananda's speeches and Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, the Grand Epic of Maha Prithivi, and his other works—are examples of our Rishi-speech, i.e., Chandas. These are spreading all over the world through translations.

## 7. The Extent of Bhasha: The Geography of the Regions of Prithivi: The Citizens

Bhasha was the mother-tongue of the citizens who were Eastern (Prachya), Far-Eastern (Paurastya), Southern (Dakshinatya), Western (Praticya), Northern (Unicya), and Far-Western (Pascatya). They were residents of two-syllabled countries, viz. Anga, Vanga (Kasika adds two more, Suhma and Pundra), Magadha, Kalinga, Suramas—the ‘su-ranya’ picturesque valley of Surama river of ‘A-Sama’ an uneven land of ups and downs. Kamboja (East according to history), Yava, Tri-pura (hinted in Aitareya Brahmana prior to Panini), cities like Varmati (from Burma or Tripura?), Kucavara (Kucavihara?) Dakshina with Kerala and Pandya (Patanjali’s Mahabharata). Maharashtra, Saurashtra, Kuru, Sindhu, Kashmira (Mahabharata), etc. Gandhara, Parsu—asura—Valhika sanghas, etc.

As if the present Bengalees-Bangladeshis, North and South Biharis, Oriyas, Assamese; the Cambodians, Yavanese, Tripuris, Burmese, Southerners including Keralites; Maharashtrians, Saurashtrians and Gujaratis, Rajasthanis, Punjabis, Uttarpradeshis, Sindhis, Kashmiris, Afghans, Parsis-Iranis (Persians), Iraqis, etc., are speaking their ancient Mother tongue, Bhasha, in a dream-reunion of Greater India!

Panini did not compose a geographical index of place-names, river-names, mountain-names, etc. Nor did Katyayana, Patanjali nor Vamana-Jayaditya the joint authors of Kasika-vritti. The names came by the way of words to be explained by the sutras and the commentaries.

Katyayana says the self-same Bhasha was current in countries other than Prithivi. Patanjali says, the same Bhasha was current in Sapta-dvipa Vasumati—seven islands full of riches. Is it the same term we find much later in Kalidasa’s *Shakuntala*, meaning Srilanka, Brahma, Siam, Kamboja, Sumatra, Yava, Vali? This suggests that the Prithivi-empire of Panini’s sovereign was curtailed with the passage of time. But Bhasha was still going strong.

## 8. Loka and Veda

Bhasha crowned with Chandas was the mother tongue of our land up to Patanjali and even up to Kasika times. Common people spoke accented Bhasha, and the Yajnikas in rituals spoke accented Veda. The *anudatta*, *udatta* and *svarita* in undulating accents were common both to Loka and Veda. The latter terms replaced Panini’s Bhasha and Chandas. Panini did not know the term Veda in the sense in which we use it. From Katyayana we find Laukika speech meaning Bhasha and Vaidika speech, meaning Veda,—the old and the current languages. The gap was widening between the two. The Vedic was sounding more archaic to the common ear, so much so that Patanjali’s students were grumbling. ‘‘What is the use of studying grammar at all?’’ they thought. The Laukika speech we learn by using it, because it is our mother tongue. And the Vaidika speech we can learn just by memorising. This

comment shows that sacrifice was the order of the day. The Vedic society was revolving round the idea and custom of sacrifice. Image-worship was also going at par

Gradually both Chandas and Brahmanas—exposition of Chandas by the ancient Arya sadhakas who knew what Vak of the Rishis means—started to mean Veda in Kasika's time. The Brahmana treatises also became too ancient for the current language. So Apastamba's definition of Veda as 'Mantra and Brahmana together' became standard. This is a key to the respective dates of Panini, Katyayana, Patanjali and Kasika. All of them have to be revised.

### 9. Panini: Language and Literature: the Mahabharata

Panini mentions nine strata of language and literature, not always serially—1) Nigama, 2) Chandas, 3) Older Brahmanas, 4) Later Brahmanas, 5) Older Kalpas, 6) Later Kalpas, 7) Older Sutras, 8) Later Sutras, and 9) Bhasha with sloka, grantha. Akhyanas, Natyas, books like Shishu-Kranda—Medical? Relating to the cries of babies? Or, drama or story relating to Kamsa's killing of infants?

Panini examines Nigama and Chandas and reaps its rich harvest. He stands in the age of the later Brahmanas and later Kalpas and Sutras, as well as Bhasha in its full swing. Kavi, Kavya, Mahakavi, Mahakavya, etc. are familiar in the Veda. Vedic poetry is replete with these words and their connotations. Panini mentions Bharata and probably the first version of the Mahabharata, senior contemporaries like Vaisampayana, Taittiriya and others as famous old professors. He does not refer to Vyasa by name because the formation like Vyasa to Vayasa has been explained by him. As a supplementary Varttika, Katyayana mentions the poet 'Vyasa-garuda', etc. Patanjali adds Vyasa and Suka. Moreover, Kasika comments in a sutra that the heroes of Kuru were alive in Panini's 'memory'. We presume that, either while a child he saw for himself a few of the old war-heroes like Kripa, Asvatthama, or heard of the Bharata war from his mother, Dakshi, grandmother, etc. Kasika is also full of references to place-names like Eka-cakra and names of the Pandu-family. Panini's mention of Vasudeva and Arjuna makes the connection closer. The followers of Vasudeva and Arjuna were called Vāsudevakā and Arjunakā. The Vedic culture of harmony between Man and God was later continuing in the pauranic Nara-Narayana. Too much ritualism and Empire-building were being gradually replaced by harmony in society.

Bankim in his *Krishna-Charitra* (Krishna—the man and his deeds) includes a study of Panini as well, and mentions Kunti and Gandhari, referred to by Panini as people of the respective regions. So the Mahabharata tradition sustains the three Munis and Kasika.

(To be continued)



## PEACE IS A BLOSSOM

PEACE is a flower  
That grows on a bower,  
Peace is a seed,  
Peace is a need,  
Peace is a deed  
Whether in a clover  
Or in a tower  
Peace is a flower

Peace is being,  
Peace is becoming;  
Peace is a condition,  
A conation and cognition;  
Peace is realization,  
A contentment,  
A fulfilment,—  
Of transformation.

Peace is its own witness  
And a calm and a repose,  
An intuitive understanding  
Born of the profound,—  
Peace unites contraries  
Into a harmony, muse  
Of silence, the sound  
Of all sounds, hue of hues,  
And tunes without singing,  
Words without speaking,  
And is, without doing.

Peace is unalloyed Bliss,  
Peace is Love and Faith,  
And righteousness' kiss  
That transcends Death.

Peace is wholesome,  
Peace is a Blossom  
In a bright clover,  
Peace is a Flower.

VASANT V MERCHANT

## FROM MEMORY'S PALIMPSEST

It was a very peaceful early morning of August 12th, 1949. I, along with two fellow-pilgrims, reached the *summum bonum* of our destination,—Pondicherry. At the Railway station, an ashramite friend of mine was waiting with a jeep. We boarded the jeep and came to the Ashram. From the Ashram we went to our allotted guest-house quarters.

That day being a Pranam-day, we came back to the Ashram soon. Before the Pranam started, I saw Nolini-da who introduced me to an elderly sadhak. He is now no longer in the land of the living. He requested me to see him that afternoon. I went to his place at the appointed hour. He had already learnt all about me from another senior sadhak, whom I used to call "Uncle" since my infancy. He was from our home-district. After customary greetings, he asked me why I had come to the Ashram. Emboldened by his politeness and sympathy, I revealed that I wished to be a *servus servorum Dei*—a servant of the servants of God. He was very pleased and advised me to take up work immediately. Accordingly I reported to Ravindra-ji and was given work in the Book Publication Department.

While carrying on my work in the Publication Department, one day, during the Pranam-time, I was commanded by the Mother to look after Her rose plants at Cazanove garden. So, I packed my bag and baggage and went to Cazanove that very afternoon.

Every morning I used to walk the distance from Cazanove to the Ashram, to receive the Mother's blessings. One day, as was the wont, I joined the moving queue for Pranam. After I had reached the place where formerly there had stood a Champak tree, suddenly my Uncle accosted me saying, "Kamal, have you sought the Mother's permission to stay here permanently?" I knew how much that gentleman loved me! I politely said, "No.. since I wrote so many letters and the Mother had not spoken a word about my admission into the Ashram, I feel very hesitant. Moreover, She knows my heart, and one day, when I am worthy of it, She might call me." He looked at me sceptically and left the place. I too briskly moved in the line, till I reached the Mother. I spread out my hands to the Mother to receive Her blessing flowers; She glanced at me and sweetly said, "My child, you wanted to stay with the Mother.... Now you can." Oh! a miracle had happened,—fulfilment stared me in the face! With tears flowing from my eyes I touched Her Feet twice and muttered somehow, "Let Thy Will be done in my life, Maa. . ." With misty eyes I fumbled out of the Meditation Hall, much to the bewilderment of the onlookers. All of them thought that it was my birthday; so all showered their good wishes on me. Truly, it was my real birthday! For, at last I had been given the opportunity to work and pray—*laborare est orare*.

That afternoon I was sought out by a sadhak and told that the Mother wanted me to immediately join one of Her departments, then engaged in the renovation of the Tennis Ground and the school playground. I met the in-charge and learnt from him the nature of my assignment. After a couple of days, I was brought to Pondicherry

and was allotted accommodation with a young sadhak. In 1950 Sri Aurobindo passed away into Mahasamadhi. We along with the office paraphernalia moved into big residential quarters. Our department was engaged in various kinds of construction work. In those days, certain things were not available here in Pondicherry. These things had to be brought from Madras. In the beginning of 1951, I had to go to Madras to make some purchases. It was settled that I should stay in Madras for a day and come back as quickly as possible.

On my arrival at Madras, I was met by a loving devotee of the Mother, the late Mahadeo Lal Dalmia. He had arranged everything for me. He only requested me, that before I started for Pondicherry, I should see the Deputy Trade Commissioner of Australia, who had promised to lend us some educational films. Though it would upset my programme at Pondicherry, yet I readily assented. Next morning, after completing my mission, I went to bid good-bye to Dalmia-ji. But that gentleman would not allow me to start for Pondicherry then and there. He entreated me to have lunch with him. I had to obey.

I reached Pondicherry late in the evening and dashed to the residence of our departmental head. There, point-blank, I was told that the Mother was angry and disappointed with me. Perhaps She might ask me to leave the Ashram. I received the shock like a sudden blow of a hammer on my poor head. I retired to my resting place and after some calmer moments, drafted a letter to the Mother and came to the Ashram. I prevailed upon a sadhika to carry that letter to the Mother on it depended my life and death. Next morning, after I had my Balcony Darshan, Nolimi-da informed me that the Mother would see me on the staircase. I was by then a complete nervous wreck. However, with trepidation, I waited. When my turn came, I mounted the steps uneasily, and with my head bent low in shame and sorrow, approached the Mother. At once I touched Her Feet. In a sweet voice She said, "My child, did you write this letter? How could you write such a letter, and how could you believe that I am angry with you? I am never angry with any of my children. Moreover, you have done nothing wrong." With a lump in my throat I blurted out, "My Mother Divine, they told me and I foolishly believed." She raised Her eyebrows and said, "Never listen to or believe what others say. Always keep open to me. I am your Mother." I could not restrain my tears any longer, I wept and She patted me on the hand. I climbed down the steps calmly and no longer was I depressed. After this incident, everybody treated me with kindness and affection, as if nothing had happened.

During our stay at the big residential quarters, two incidents took place which need recounting here. It was in the early part of 1955, one Sunday evening, I was tending to some brinjal plants, when suddenly somebody called me from behind my back. As soon as I turned, I saw Pavitra-da and a little away from him was the Mother. I at once darted to Her Feet. She said, "My child, I have come to have a look at the place." She moved on briskly, I and Pavitra-da followed Her. At last She came to the southern part and began to climb a little earthen mound. Over it tall weeds had grown. I, in my anxiety, rushed to the place, and with both hands tried to bend low

the plants. The Mother patted me on the back and said, "My child, nothing will hurt the Mother. Do not soil your hands,—and it is not good to disturb plants after sunset."

A few months later, a young man committed a very foolish act. In consequence he was hospitalised. All sorts of rumours began to float round the Ashram about that man. I was summoned to the Mother's presence in the playground. She said, "My child, every evening you are to give me all the details of this man's progress. When he has sufficiently recovered and rested, ask him to go back. See that nobody treats him unkindly." And this was spoken in favour of a man who had deliberately flouted Her commands. He recovered and went away with the Mother's forgiveness, blessings and Light.

My uncle and another elderly sadhak persuaded me to join the Ashram literary society. I was privileged to go to the Mother on the foundation-day and offer our Pranams to Her. She would rain Her Grace on me with books and blessings. Once She told me, "Read these books in silence, and pray to me and to Sri Aurobindo for understanding." I have always followed that commandment *in toto*.

These are some of the golden impressions, cast by Her Grace on my memory's palimpsest and I cannot, even for a single moment, forget them. For, I believe, with all our imperfections, one day, the "White purity of heaven's cleansing flame," will make us worthy of Her Love and Grace and lead us nearer and nearer to our goal!

KAMALAKANTO

## SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

*(Continued from the issue of September 1999)*

SRI AUROBINDO was ANXIOUS to get under the skin of the stupidity and perversity of Archer and discovered his invective against Indian Culture as completely asinine. But, quite simply, Indian spirituality—the surge and rise of the soul in man to the Truth, the Right, the Vast (*satyam-ritam-brihat*) at the heart of all existence—is the red rag to Archer's bullish "rationality". The only brand of "spirituality" that Archer can recognise is a high Rajasic activity or the Homeric type of heroism and noble endurance, and hence he needs must belittle Indian life and literature. Sri Aurobindo has said: "The calm and compassion of Buddha victorious over ignorance and suffering, the meditation of the thinker tranced in communion with the Eternal, lifted above the seekings of thought into identity with a supreme Light, the rapture of the saint made one by love in the pure heart with the transcendent and universal Love, the will of the Karmayogin raised above egoistic desire and passion into the impersonality of the divine and universal Will, these things on which India has set the highest value and which have been the supreme endeavour of her greatest spirits, are not sane, not virile. This, one may be allowed to say, is a very occidental and up-to-date idea of spirituality. Homer, Shakespeare, Raphael, Spinoza, Kant, Charlemagne, Abraham Lincoln, Lenin, Mussolini, these, shall we suggest, are to figure henceforth not only as great poets and artists or heroes of thought and action, but as our typical heroes and exemplars of spirituality. Not Buddha, not Christ, Chaitanya, St. Francis, Ramakrishna; these are either semi-barbaric Orientals or touched by the feminine insanity of an Oriental religion. The impression made on an Indian mind resembles the reaction that a cultured intellectual might feel if he were told that good cooking, good dressing, good engineering, good schoolmastering are the true beauty and their pursuit the right, sane, virile aesthetic cult, and literature, architecture, sculpture and painting are only a useless scribbling on paper, an insane hacking of stone and an effeminate daubing of canvas; Vauban, Pestalozzi, Dr. Parr, Vatal and Beau Brummel are then the true heroes of artistic creation and not da Vinci, Angelo, Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare or Rodin. Whether Mr. Archer's epithets and his accusations against Indian spirituality stand in the comparison, let the judicious determine. But meanwhile we see the opposition of the standpoints and begin to understand the inwardness of the difference between the West and India."<sup>1</sup>

Archer is allergic to philosophy and particularly to Indian's inward-looking spiritual philosophy. Measuring the creations of Indian art and literature with a yardstick fashioned by mammon in Science's forge and on Moloch's anvil. Archer finds everything in India a negation of culture and a denial of life. An excessive emphasis on the elusive claims on the spirit, a religion that sports polytheism with a reckless extravagance and permits too great a chasm to divide the ethical percepts from actual practice, a ruling attitude that is pessimistic, obscurantist and riddled with

superstitions, an addiction to the theories of Karma and Reincarnation that minimise the importance of the present life and encourage an extreme inertia and enervating other-worldliness—these are among the major counts in the “self-constituted prosecuting judge”. Sri Aurobindo’s words further follow:

“To say that Indian philosophy has led away from the study of nature is to state a gross unfact and to ignore the magnificent history of Indian civilisation. If by nature is meant physical Nature, the plain truth is that no nation before the modern epoch carried scientific research so far and with such signal success as India of ancient times. That is a truth which lies on the face of history for all to read, it has been brought forward with great force and much wealth of detail by Indian scholars and scientists of high eminence, but it was already known and acknowledged by European savants who had taken the trouble to make a comparative study in the subject. Not only was India in the first rank in mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, surgery, all the branches of physical knowledge which were practised in ancient times, but she was, along with the Greeks, the teacher of the Arabs from whom Europe recovered the lost habit of scientific enquiry and got the basis from which modern science started. In many directions India had the priority of discovery,—to take only two striking examples among a multitude, the decimal notation in mathematics or the perception that the earth is a moving body in astronomy,—*calā pṛthvī sthūrā bhātu*, the earth moves and only appears to be still, said the Indian astronomer many centuries before Galileo. This great development would hardly have been possible in a nation whose thinkers and men of learning were led by its metaphysical tendencies to turn away from the study of nature. A remarkable feature of the Indian mind was a close attention to the things of life, a disposition to observe minutely its salient facts, to systematise and to found in each department of it a science, Shastra, well-founded scheme and rule. That is at least a good beginning of the scientific tendency and not the sign of a culture capable only of unsubstantial metaphysics.

“It is perfectly true that Indian science came abruptly to a halt somewhere about the thirteenth century and a period of darkness and inactivity prevented it from proceeding forward or sharing at once in the vast modern development of scientific knowledge. But this was not due to any increase or intolerance of the metaphysical tendency calling the national mind away from physical nature. It was part of a general cessation of new intellectual activity, for philosophy too ceased to develop almost at the same time. The last great original attempts at spiritual philosophy are dated only a century or two later than the names of the last great original scientists. It is true also that Indian metaphysics did not attempt, as modern philosophy has attempted without success, to read the truth of existence principally by the light of the truths of physical Nature. This ancient wisdom founded itself rather upon an inner experimental psychology and a profound psychic science, India’s special strength,—but study of mind too and of our inner forces is surely study of nature,—in which her success was greater than in physical knowledge. This she could not but do, since it was the spiritual truth of existence for which she was seeking, nor is any really great and enduring philo-

sophy possible except on this basis. It is true also that the harmony she established in her culture between philosophical truth and truth of psychology and religion was not extended in the same degree to the truth of physical Nature; physical Science had not then arrived at the great universal generalisations which would have made and are now making that synthesis entirely possible. Nevertheless from the beginning, from as early as the thought of the Vedas, the Indian mind had recognised that the same general laws and powers hold in the spiritual, the psychological and the physical existence. It discovered too the omnipresence of life, affirmed the evolution of the soul in Nature from the vegetable and the animal to the human form, asserted on the basis of philosophic intuition and spiritual and psychological experience many of the truths which modern science is reaffirming from its own side of the approach to knowledge. These things too were not the results of a barren and empty metaphysics, not the inventions of bovine navel-gazing dreamers

“Equally is it a misrepresentation to say that Indian culture denies all value to life, detaches from terrestrial interests and insists on the unimportance of the life of the moment. To read these European comments one would imagine that in all Indian thought there was nothing but the nihilistic school of Buddhism and the monistic illusionism of Shankara and that all Indian art, literature and social thinking were nothing but the statement of their recoil from the falsehood and vanity of things. It does not follow that because these things are what the average European has heard about India or what most interests or strikes the European scholar in her thought, therefore they are, however great may have been their influence, the whole of Indian thinking. The ancient civilisation of India founded itself very expressly upon four human interests, first, desire and enjoyment, next, material, economic and other aims and needs of the mind and body, thirdly, ethical conduct and the right law of individual and social life, and, lastly spiritual liberation, *kāma*, *artha*, *dharma*, *mokṣa*. The business of culture and social organisation was to lead, to satisfy, to support these things in man and to build some harmony of the forms and motives. Except in very rare cases the satisfaction of the three mundane objects must run before the other, fullness of life must precede the surpassing of life. The debt to the family, the community and the gods could not be scamped; earth must have her due and the relative its play, even if beyond it there was the glory of heaven or the peace of the Absolute. There was no preaching of a general rush to the cave and the hermitage.

“The symmetric character of ancient Indian life and the vivid variety of its literature were inconsistent with any exclusive other-worldly direction. The great mass of Sanskrit literature is a literature of human life; certain philosophic and religious writings are devoted to the withdrawal from it, but even these are not as a rule contemptuous of its value. If the Indian mind gave the highest importance to a spiritual release,—and whatever the positivist mood may say, a spiritual liberation of some kind is the highest possibility of the human spirit,—it was not interested in that alone. It looked equally at ethics, law, politics, society, the sciences, the arts and crafts, everything that appertains to human life. It thought on these things deeply and

scrutinisingly and it wrote of them with power and knowledge. What a fine monument of political and administrative genius is the *śukra-nīti*, to take one example only, and what a mirror of the practical organisation of a great civilised people! Indian art was not always solely hieratic,—it seemed so only because it is in the temples and cave cathedrals that its greatest work survived; as the old literature testifies, as we see from the Rajput and Mogul paintings, it was devoted as much to the court and the city and to cultural ideas and the life of the people as to the temple and monastery and their motives. Indian education of women as well as of men was more rich and comprehensive and many-sided than any system of education before modern times. The documents which prove these things are now available to anyone who cares to study. It is time that this parrot talk about the unpractical, metaphysical, quietistic, anti-vital character of Indian civilisation should cease and give place to a true and understanding estimate.

“But it is perfectly true that Indian culture has always set the highest value on that in man which rises beyond the terrestrial preoccupation, it has held up the goal of a supreme and arduous self-exceeding as the summit of human endeavour. The spiritual life was to its view a nobler thing than the life of external power and enjoyment, the thinker greater than the man of action, the spiritual man greater than the thinker. The soul that lives in God is more perfect than the soul that lives only in outward mind or only for the claims and joys of thinking and living matter. It is here that the difference comes in between the typical Western and the typical Indian mentality. The West has acquired the religious mind rather than possessed it by nature and it has always worn its acquisition with a certain looseness. India has constantly believed in worlds behind of which the material world is only the ante-chamber. Always she has seen a self within us greater than the mental and vital self, greater than the ego. Always she has bowed her intellect and heart before a near and present Eternal in which the temporal being exists and to which in man it increasingly turns for transcendence. The sentiment of the Bengali poet, the wonderful singer and rapt devotee of the Divine Mother,—

How rich an estate man lies fallow here!  
If this were tilled, a golden crop would spring,

—expresses the real Indian feeling about human life. But it is most attracted by the greater spiritual possibilities man alone of terrestrial beings possesses. The ancient Aryan culture recognised all human possibilities, but put this highest of all and graded life according to a transitional scale in its system of the four classes and the four orders. Buddhism first gave an exaggerated and enormous extension to the ascetic ideal and the monastic impulse, erased the transition and upset the balance. Its victorious system left only two orders, the householder and the ascetic, the monk and the layman, an effect which subsists to the present day. It is this upsetting of the Dharma for which we find it fiercely attacked in the Vishnu Purana under the veil of



an apologue, for it weakened in the end the life of society by its tense exaggeration and its hard system of opposites. But Buddhism too had another side, a side turned towards action and creation, and gave a new light, a new meaning and a new moral and ideal power to life. Afterwards there came the lofty illusionism of Shankara at the close of the two greatest known millenniums of Indian culture. Life thenceforward was too much depreciated as an unreality or a relative phenomenon, in the end not worth living, not worth our assent to it and persistence in its motives. But this dogma was not universally accepted, nor admitted without a struggle, Shankara was even denounced by his adversaries as a masked Buddhist. The later Indian mind has been powerfully impressed by his idea of Maya; but popular thought and sentiment was never wholly shaped by it. The religions of devotion which see in life a play or Lila of God and not a half-sombre, half-glaring illusion defacing the white silence of eternity had a closer growing influence.’’<sup>2</sup>

*(To be continued)*

NILIMA DAS

*References*

- 1 *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, SABCL, Vol 14, pp 65-66
- 2 *Ibid*, pp 67-71

## THE TRAGIC HERO OF THE MAHABHARATA

THE BASIS of Indian life and culture, and the main forces that moulded the national character of India, are (1) The Ramayana and (2) The Mahabharata. They are the immortal productions of the Indian genius, apart from the Veda (the book of knowledge) and the Upanishads (records of spiritual realisations). Sri Aurobindo says that the Veda was the record of the radiant visions of Supernature by seers and sages, while the Upanishads communicate the spiritual experiences of intuitive individuals of one or more aspects of truth

Out of this core of Indian culture, the above two Itihasas (Histories) were composed by the Seer-Poets Valmiki and Vyasa. Whether they are books reporting actual ancient events or weaving significant fictions is of little importance, as long as the life-values they contain guide and help the human race. Their value is immense and perennial.

Vyasa, a sage of the highest illumination, who organised the Veda into four sections, is traditionally the author of the Mahabharata. A master-artist of literary form and profuse literary production, he delineated Karna as a tragic hero in his poem.

Karna, in his very birth, was an unwanted and an unwelcome child. Kunti the young princess was granted a mantric power as a reward for her selfless and devoted services to Durvasa, the great Rishi who was well-known for his easy irritability. Durvasa gave her the boon out of affection. But the foolish girl, prompted by a thoughtless curiosity to test the efficacy of the Mantra, made use of it to invoke the Sun-god *Lo!* to her extreme consternation and surprise, the solar deity appeared before her, blessed her with a son and disappeared. Kunti who was an unmarried princess got confused and terribly afraid of her elders and her own future. She put the baby in a floating basket and left it in a river. Karna as a child was denied motherly affection and was left to nature to nurture him.

Misfortune further dogged his steps. He could have been picked up by any childless king or queen, or at least handed over to a royal family saying that he was found unclaimed. But his ill-luck was that he was picked up by a childless low-class man. He was brought up as the son of a charioteer, Suta-Putra.

But being the offspring of the Sun-god he was a born hero; he carried with him from birth the protective Kavacha-Kundalam, which are divinely bestowed with qualities of victory and protection. He learnt the art of archery and desired to perfect it under Dronacharya, the guru of the Royal Princes of Hastinapura. But he was refused by Dronacharya on the ground that he did not belong to the ruling or the upper class, *i.e.*, the Kshatriya or the Brahmin community. Smarting under the insulting rejection, he went to Parasurama, and took him as his Guru to acquire perfection in archery, which was a compulsory accomplishment for any youth in those days.

Knowing that Parasurama would not receive him as his pupil to teach the skill of archery, he deliberately lied that he was a Brahmin boy and thus obtained his consent

to be his pupil. The Guru taught him the whole of the *Vilū-Vīdyā*, skill in archery, how to use the highest *Astra* (weapon), the *Brahmastra*.

Again ill-luck haunted him. One afternoon *Parasurama* chanced to take rest putting his head on *Karna's* thigh as a pillow. *Indra*, the Divine Parent of *Arjuna*, took into his head to deprive *Karna* of the benefit of the archery he had learnt, perhaps knowing that he would be the most potent opponent of *Arjuna* in the future. *Indra* turned himself into a worm and began to bite into the thigh of *Karna*. Blood began to come out from his thigh. But *Karna* for fear that his Guru might be disturbed in his sleep bore the pain without moving his thigh. The blood flowed out profusely and touched the body of *Parasurama* who immediately woke up and asked him what the matter was. *Karna* said that a worm was making its way into his thigh and for fear of disturbing his Guru's rest and sleep he had borne the pain. Then the sage realised that a Brahmin is not capable of such a power of endurance and asked him to tell the truth, on pain of being cursed. *Karna* revealed the truth of his parentage. Then the sage cursed him saying that at the time of war the highest *Mantras* of archery would fail to obey or answer his invocation. Here again destiny worked against him.

His spirit was not to be curbed by these adverse circumstances. In *Hastinapura*, an open exhibition of the skill of the princes in the various arts of warfare was arranged. *Arjuna* displayed his skill wonderfully and was applauded by one and all. Then *Karna* the bubbling hero who could not restrain himself desired to display his valour, which he believed was greater than that of *Arjuna*. He butted into the arena seeking for permission to exhibit his skill and calling *Arjuna* to a duel in archery. But the elders of the assembly disqualified him and refused his entry.

We have to imagine the frustration under which a young man of superlative courage would be smarting on that occasion. He was crestfallen and felt highly humiliated. Then *Duryodhana*, who was envy, jealousy and hatred incarnate against the *Pandavas*, found in him a good ally and at once came forward to make him the king of *Anga*, enhancing in this way his status to that of a ruling prince. Thus *Karna* became the *Raja* of *Anga-Desa*. This was the bane of his life. He was so elated by the spontaneous magnanimity of *Duryodhana*, that he vowed to stake his life with *Duryodhana's* through thick and thin. Overwhelmed and unbalanced, he could not gauge the motive behind the apparent generosity. We may well say that this sealed the tragedy of his life. One may have a hundred good qualities but one false step is enough to take one down to the bottom.

*Karna* became the right-hand man of *Duryodhana* and a member of the *Dusta-Chatustaya*, the group of four conspirators in the camp of the *Kauravas*.

Though by nature magnanimous, generous to a fault, most considerate to others, he was turned by his association with *Duryodhana* into the very opposite: a despicable person. He identified himself completely with the life, thought and action of *Duryodhana*. In a word, he sold away his soul, mind and body to his patron.

The *Pandavas* were defeated in gambling by the fraud of *Shakuni*, the maternal uncle of *Duryodhana*, and the villain of the piece. In the august assembly of the

Kauravas, where all the elders were present, Karna displayed the beast that had grown in his nature from his association with Duryodhana and his gang. The venomous Duryodhana ordered his brother Duhsasana to drag Draupadī by her hair into the open assembly, saying that she was no longer a royal princess because her husband Yudhishthira, the eldest of the Pandavas, had lost the gambling game. On being dragged in spite of her protest, she appealed to the elders and everybody else in the assembly to judge if it was proper for Duhsasana to drag her thus and she confronted the assembly with the riddle, whether her husband Yudhishthira had lost himself in the gamble and then lost her also or lost her first and then lost himself.

The elders kept silent, even Bhishma hung his head and mumbled that Dharma is very subtle and complex. Bhishma failed to rise to the occasion, with all his wisdom and knowledge weighed down under the small consideration of his personal vows and promises. That is why he was killed in the war. It was only a young man Vikarna who dared to pronounce the judgment that she could not be said to have been lost in the gambling,—for reasons, the intricacies of which are out of place for our purpose.

Duryodhana, saying that her husband had been defeated and she had none to protect her, showed her his lap. Karna, to please Duryodhana, his master and evil genius, insulted Draupadī, asking her to choose another husband. Karna could have kept quiet and stayed his hand if he felt that he could not advise his friend better manners and better culture. But we see him fallen very low for the petty benefit of a small kingdom that had been given him, with which his ego was so much satisfied that he lost all good sense.

In Arjuna, the hero of the Mahabharata, we see just the opposite, *i.e.*, honouring women and not taking undue advantage of the fallen condition of the enemy. In the assembly of Indra, Arjuna was invited to sit along with Indra on his throne for his valour and heroism. Urvashi saw him and fell in love and met him when alone and offered herself. He refused saying that she stood in the place of a mother for him, and he did not fall a prey to her thoughtless gesture. He married several princesses and women at different places, but never in violation of the due respect that had to be shown them for their status.

Again, in *uttaragrahana*, *i.e.*, at the end of the 13th year of their exile, Arjuna defeated the whole of the Kaurava army. Bhishma, Drona, Karna, everybody including Duryodhana. But he did not take advantage of his enemies' helplessness. He simply returned with the cows after defeating them. We see at every stage the high and noble qualities of a hero in Arjuna. While we see that where Karna should have exhibited the high qualities of a hero, he failed to do so, because he had sold his soul to Satan. By way of illustration we may mention the massacre of Abhimanyu by all at one time, giving an absolute and clear go-by to all the rules of warfare.

Vyasa, the psychologist, artist, poet, painting the tragedy of the fall of Karna who was really a great hero, evokes our sympathy for him, by exhibiting his qualities of magnanimity and nobility in giving whatever was asked, to whomsoever it be, without any further consideration. He peeled his armour from his body, along with his

ear-rings, and gave them to Indra. He promised Kuntı not to harm any of the other brothers except Arjuna. The greatest act of his was when Sri Krishna revealed the truth of his birth and offered him a place with all the five Pandavas he refused the offer for his own reasons both good and bad.

Though Vyasa depicts him as a tragic hero, he also throws out flashes of his nature still revelatory of a great warrior. Karna tells Krishna that Dharma is on the side of the Pandavas and that they are going to win in the war, but he still fights sincerely on the side of Duryodhana. This is a quality which we do not find in either Bhishma or Drona. They are oppressed and obsessed by the bad behaviour of Duryodhana and were from time to time even during the War advising him to compromise with the Pandavas or heckling him for his stubbornness and refusal of good and sane advice. But we do not see at any stage Karna advising his friend to compromise with the enemy.

Vyasa has wonderfully depicted how Karna, whose valour and skill in archery were equal to or perhaps greater than that of Arjuna, gradually fell from that high pedestal to the lowest depths of a tragic hero. Vyasa clearly indicates that it was the ego, the ambition in Karna, that made him blind to the truth of things and inevitably worked his tragedy.

The world of men and matters created by the world's greatest literary artist, Vyasa, is perhaps more living, real and permanent than the world created by the great dramatist Shakespeare of the West. The more we ponder on the characters and the situations in which they acted we feel that new vistas of knowledge open before our mental eye. And the story of Karna is one of the masterpieces of the creative poetic spirit.

M SHRIRAMULU

## REMEMBERING GOPAL DASS GUPTA (1912-1998)

(5)

(Continued from the issue of September 1999)

### THAT UNASSUMING MAN\*

ON 5 June 1993 Gopal Dass Gupta gave this note to Dr. Dutta who was treating him for severe pneumonial tuberculosis. “Somehow I have grown a strong inner feeling that my soul has decided to quit this body. But still, it ultimately depends on the Divine whose Will is Supreme I seek to unite my will with the Divine Will<sup>1</sup>, but do not succeed. My wish not to live longer keeps lingering secretly and urges me to pray for it to the Mother My earnest appeal to all of you, accordingly, is not to try to make this body live for a few more weeks or even months by taking recourse to the so many available means, including medical and others. (I may be given only ordinary medicines, harmless palliatives to relieve acute suffering and something to keep up bodily strength as far as possible ) If, however, it (my being able to live longer) comes about in a natural way by Divine Grace, it is a different matter.”

Gopal Dass had decided to make that day the first in his withdrawal from a body too worn-out for his karmayoga<sup>2</sup> but the Grace turned it into the first step of his steepest ascent of the Mountain on whose peak the World Mother awaits her hero warriors.

Dr Dutta politely refused to give up and returned the note. I don’t know when or how it ended up in my copy of *Prayers and Meditations*, between the pages of the Mother’s meditation written on 30 March 1917: “ Thou hast willed that for me the future should be uncertain and that I should go forward with confidence without even knowing where the road would lead.. that I should put the care of my destiny utterly in Thy hands, and abdicate altogether all personal preoccupation. .”

I had informed Gopal Dass’s brother and daughter, against his express wishes, of his deteriorating condition Their reactions were understandable yet embarrassing and I had to force him to add a note to my lengthy reply He was pained, he wrote, to learn that they had contacted Dr. Dutta directly; any action they undertook—even one conceded by Dr. Dutta—was an inappropriate interference in the Ashram’s arrangements; he had surrendered himself to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and, unlike in ordinary society, everything done in the Ashram had a spiritual, not a material basis—they ought to remember this; he belonged entirely to the Ashram and was subject to its decisions; if they had any responsibility at all it was to pray to the Divine for his well-being; and finally, they had no idea how sincerely Dr. Dutta was treating him or of the expense the Ashram was incurring.

\* ‘What an unassuming man!’ remarked Dr. Dutta several times after Gopal Dass had passed away

Not until 29 July 1998 did I hear Dr Dutta admit how right his patient's "strong inner feeling" had been. He was telling Gopal Dass's son-in-law that in 1993 his body had not responded to proven treatments and the success of the "rather risky drug" that was then tried was "nothing short of Divine Grace" That same evening, aware of Gopal Dass's condition, Dr. Dutta immediately acted on his request to "stop all medicines" by writing it down on the case-sheet hung on his cot Later, Gopal Dass, who had not seen the doctor grant his request, gave me his watch and the torch that he used at night since the day he had been chided by a night-nurse for disturbing her sleep. He kept forgetting where he had put them, he said, and his eyesight and strength to walk on his own were failing Next afternoon, when his son-in-law went to bid him goodbye, he was gasping Oxygen cylinder, suction pump and medication pulled back this "crisis" into a "who knows?" situation. But he never opened his eyes again. "It is involuntary," he mollified his daughter on the night of the 31st And after an affectionate conversation he told his colleague Peter "When I come out of this disease, I will join you at work." That night I too had my last chat with him during which, in response to my habitual quip *koi kisikā nahin!*<sup>1</sup> he gave me an indelible gift—a full-hearted smile A few days later, in my dream, a palpable aura of bliss enveloped him.

During the last year, several times a week, as soon as I came in with his breakfast he would exclaim, "I pass such strange nights! The places I visit, the things that happen!" "Like when you shifted here from Colombani House, you must be preparing your next home!" I'd jest Since 15 July, when he was admitted to the Nursing Home, I had felt he would depart on 4 or 5 August; it was the 3rd, a fortnight before his 86th birthday Parasnath, one of his colleagues who spent the evening in vigil over his body, was struck by the concentrated peace surrounding it and said. "He must have unified his being around the psychic" As he would have himself put it. Her Grace had carried him up that steep ascent.

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At the time he was born his father was chanting from a scripture, this led to his being named "Gopal". But, in keeping with the *yugaic* change, our *bālgopāl* hated milk and never overcame his disgust for cream. He would toddle off to a neighbour's to share his tea. His father once forced a cup of milk down the frightened child's throat—out it all came into the stunned man's lap! Nor was he fond of speech. when he was four, he once cantered off after something without his grandmother working nearby realising it A kindly policeman who finally took charge of him decided, after vain efforts to make him talk, that he was dumb and lugged him around in search of his parents Suddenly the boy began pointing to his mouth without uttering a word Getting him something to eat, the poor man continued his search until he encountered the harried grandmother Love of tea, economy of speech and a dogged determination to do his own will became Gopal Dass's life-long characteristics.

His achievements began with a *serious* education acquired largely on his own (chatting on street corners, more extra-curricular than prescribed reading, dating, cinema etc were not yet indispensable limbs of education; classical music did interest him and he attended, even helped organise, concerts). He obtained a government job when merit, not socialist India's psychosis, was the criterion. From his income as a teacher and extra work (tuitions, running a college canteen, selling kerosene) he paid off his father's debts and supported the entire family. With his knowledge of homeopathy he cured his infant daughter of asthma and relieved his favourite brother of an illness, that would have entailed expensive allopathic treatment, with just one dose on the basis of a single symptom. But the skin and respiratory ailments he had inherited brought long periods of suffering.

His responsibilities and religious-mindedness kept him undisturbed by the short-sighted political and social movements of the day. However, in a propagandist opera with the chorus *chal-chal re navjavān...*: Keep advancing young man..., he played Gandhi marching in the background. The spirit of that song and admiration for Gandhi's work never left him but when, in the mid-nineties, he read Godse's courtroom speech given in 1948, his mind was clear enough to accept the cause underlying Godse's action.

Due to his degree in physical training he was among the first batch of teachers trained as instructors for the newly formed National Cadet Corps. He stunned the Army sergeant, who was ridiculing the nervous trainees lined up for shooting practice, by hitting the bull's eye at his first attempt. But in the classroom he committed the crime of pointing out errors in the British major's lecture. The arrogant Brit, who had openly vowed to hang Gupta, failed him but was overruled by higher authorities. Later, when the N.C.C. opened its Air Wing, Gopal Dass was sent for training at an Air Force station still under British officers. This time he kept his mouth shut in the classroom and, unlike many fellow trainees, he stayed in the co-pilot's seat without vomiting when the instructor put the machine into loops. At these camps he picked up a life-long insistence on being well-dressed but resisted such "gentlemanly musts" as alcohol and meat. (In later years, if the laundry failed to iron his Prosperity-given cloth cap *in the right way* I was sent on the mission to get it redone, then there was the right way to wear it with a mirror as judge—my sharp asides about inspections and parade grounds failed to draw blood.)

Long back, as an admirer of Tilak's *Gita Rahasya*, he had been introduced by his college professor to Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*. This contact ultimately led him to the small community in Charthaval under the guidance of Swami Abhayadev. Later he joined Dr Indra Sen at Jwalapur. He made several visits to Pondicherry and found help and guidance from Amrita and Ravindra. Finally in 1969 the Mother granted him permission to settle in the Ashram.

It did not take him long to find his niche in the Ashram's inscrutable organisation—as Jayantilal's assistant at the Press and the Archives. He moved into a room in Colombani House whose ground floor was used by the Press and the Publication



Department as a paper godown. In the mid-seventies Gopal Dass was given a casual task that over fifteen years grew into *Glossary and Index of Proper Names in Sri Aurobindo's Works*. Right up to the time it came out of the press he faced obstacles that 99% of the Ashramites would have decided were insurmountable: problems in procuring reliable information from printed sources, suspicions and fads of some of the senior Ashramites whom he approached for help, and summarising and typing the results of his research, all the while, the project kept undergoing transformations every time its managers' notions of its scope, nature and purpose changed. He kept an unquestioning attitude, until the day he realised his labour was destined to remain imprisoned in a couple of typed copies, bound by hand and interred in a couple of dungeons. And since it would have been unadvertised, only those with enough intelligence to guess its existence and enough persistence to dig it out would benefit! After much inner turmoil, he approached Harikant-bhai who decided to publish it in spite of opposition by SABDA and the Ashram Press. Then came the unexpected but crucial contribution of David Hopkins, an American who had recently joined the Press. Realising the value of the book, he gave it all his time in type-setting and even improving the text. To Gopal Dass he was divinely missioned, for soon after finishing this work David left the Ashram.

Meanwhile, worsening bronchitis and glaucoma, atrophying auditory nerves and chronic constipation, added to the usual ravages of age. Also, a premonition had clung to him for decades—he would die around 1996. So in the mid-eighties, this deliberate and meticulous man initiated me into the order in which he had kept his office and personal papers and what I was to do with them, thereafter followed regular memory tests. In December 1992 he put Rs. 500 in my bank account for the last rites and to send his personal papers to his relatives. But after the Grace laughed away this ‘intuition’, he gave up all thoughts of death and taught himself to accept all circumstances with equality. It made him discern the Mother's hand preventing accidents and dissolving difficulties.

Gopal Dass had always found most social customs motivated affairs and avoided them. He could never accept the smallest help from anyone—he would rather exterminate that need. Not knowing this, his Ashram friends were nonplussed when he refused their gifts or services. Maybe this was his way to practise the Isha's *..mā gridha kasya swiddhanam. do not covet others' possessions?* But to sacrifice for others was his inviolable duty. Once when he was sick, his favourite brother rushed down from Hardwar. The moment he entered the room, Gopal Dass sprang out of his bed, set up the easy chair—which he himself never used—and brought a glass of water. When he was forced to eat at home, he placed his tiny dining table where it made the server's work easiest—though he sat facing the shoe rack. He would do any work in his room, even menial, by himself rather than ask the servant or me to do it on the plea that his body must work as long as it could.

He seems to have made only two close friends here. B D Pandey, who settled here in the mid-fifties, is a scholar of English, Urdu and Hindi: the two were regular

companions in the Dining Room Gopal Dass's Archives' colleague Ganapatibhai Pattegar, gifted with a phenomenal memory and enthusiasm, became his mainstay in proof-reading the *Glossary* and its *Supplement*. After Gopal Dass stopped going to the Dining Room and the office, these two visited him regularly. Pandeyji, a trusting bachelor who zealously guards his seclusion, even ran errands for him. And every Sunday morning at eight Ganapatibhai, his "ideal in punctuality, humility, cheerfulness and selfless service", arrived reciting some shloka or the other. As soon as he stepped in the room Gopal Dass would ask: "What is the news?" Often both would chorus an Urdu couplet they delighted in: *Subah hoti hai, shām hoti hai, umra yonhin tamām hoti hai*. Morning comes, evening comes; life thus comes to an end. Always the crucial headline!

Gopal Dass had wanted to continue to practise homeopathy here but found no opportunity to ask Mother's sanction. For his own ailments he stuck to Ashram homeopaths. But during sudden illnesses and injuries that age inflicts he was forced to turn to allopaths for—say what you will—they alone are authorised to use the Nursing Home facilities. So when his bronchitis threatened to turn into tuberculosis and constant nursing became indispensable his homeopath was obliged to abandon him. Gopal Dass accepted it without carping. Dr. Dutta's decisions became Mother's and even the most innocent non-allopathic tonic became taboo.

(To be concluded)

SUNJOY

#### Notes

1 "Sincerity exacts the unification and harmonisation of the whole being in all its parts and movements around the central Divine Will"—*Collected Works of The Mother*, 14 67

2 *Vāsamsi jīrnāni vathā vihāva, navāni ghrnāti nara'aparāni, tathā sharīrāni vihāva jīrnāni anvāni samyāti navāni dehī*. Just as a man casting away his worn-out garbs, puts on new ones, so too the embodied Spirit casting away old and worn-out bodies, goes over to other new ones—*Gita*, 2 22

3 Literally, Nobody is for anybody Cf

Men live like stars that see each other in heaven,  
But one knows not the pleasure and the grief  
The others feel he lonely rapture has  
Or bears his incommunicable pain

(*Collected Poems*, SABCI. Vol 5 p 244)

## SOME ANECDOTES ABOUT ALBERT EINSTEIN

### PRICE OF EINSTEIN'S MANUSCRIPTS

A MANUSCRIPT giving a detailed statement of Albert Einstein's theory of Special Relativity in Einstein's own hand was auctioned in the USA to an anonymous collector, for a fabulous sum of 6,555,000 dollars. The 72-page document was written partly in pencil and partly in ink with extensive corrections. It is the manuscript of an early Einstein paper.

It was the great physicist's practice to discard his manuscripts, once they were in print. This particular manuscript escaped the fate of other manuscripts and thus was saved for posterity (Some points presented here by me are taken from the magazine *Popular Science*, March 1988, page 9.)

In the fall of 1943, Einstein received a phone call from Julian Boyd, the then Librarian of the Princeton University Library. The purpose of Boyd's call was to ask Einstein to give the manuscript of the June Paper to the "Book and Authors War Bond Committee" as a contribution to the sale of war bonds. Einstein replied that he had discarded the original manuscript after its publication but added that he was prepared to write out a copy of its text in his own hand. The offer was gladly accepted. Einstein completed his task on November 21, 1943. Under the auspices of the committee the manuscript was auctioned at a sale in Kansas City on February 3, 1944, sponsored by the Kansas City War Finance Committee. The winning bid of six and half million dollars was made by the Kansas City Life Insurance Company. On that same occasion, an original manuscript by Einstein and Bergmann was auctioned for a million dollars.

(This has been quoted from the book *Einstein Lived Here* written by Abraham Pais, page 147.)

### EINSTEIN AND MAHATMA GANDHI

A German poet, Martin Kämpchan (who stays at Shantiniketan), has written a book, *Rabindranath Tagore and Germany*. It has been published by the Rupa Company, Calcutta. On the cover page, there is a picture of Rabindranath Tagore and Albert Einstein. The same picture has been printed in the book entitled *Einstein Lived Here* written by Abraham Pais. Rabindranath Tagore met Albert Einstein in Germany in the early thirties. In the book entitled *Einstein Lived Here*, there is a chapter entitled "Einstein and Gandhi". Pais writes, "The Mahatma clearly had made a much deeper impression on Einstein than had Tagore." In this chapter, many remarks of Einstein on the Mahatma are recorded. The Mahatma and Einstein never met. (The Mahatma's picture hung in Einstein's library room.)

I quote the tribute of Einstein to the Mahatma

“Gandhi, the greatest political genius of our time, indicated the path to be taken. He gave proof of what sacrifice man is capable once he has discovered the right path. His work on behalf of India’s liberation is a living testimony to the fact that man’s will, sustained by an indomitable conviction, is more powerful than material forces that seem insurmountable.”

(The writer took this quotation from a book, which was published many more years earlier than the book written by Pais )

### **SATYENDRANATH BOSE AND EINSTEIN**

Among the Indian scientists, Bose impressed Einstein the most. As a matter of fact, starting from Newton, the work of fifteen scientists had influenced Einstein, Bose was one of them. Their joint work led to the Bose-Einstein statistics. In short, those fundamental particles which obey the Bose-Einstein statistics are termed bosons. Their spin quantum number is either zero, or integers 1, 2, 3, etc.

### **ARTHUR EDDINGTON**

Einstein, in his general Theory of Relativity enunciated in 1915, stated that light from a star while reaching the surface of the earth, if it came in the proximity of the Sun, which because of its massive body has an extremely high gravitational force, and since light also possesses a corpuscular property, would be attracted by the Sun, and the path of the light would be bent before reaching the surface of the earth. Arthur Eddington was a famous British astrophysicist. He could grasp the implication of this new idea. This can be verified only during a total solar eclipse. The next total solar surface eclipse would take place in 1919, and be visible from West Africa and Brazil. Eddington himself went to West Africa as the leader of a scientific team. The photographic results showed that what Einstein had predicted was true and is true still. Einstein became famous overnight.

Quite contrary to popular belief, Einstein got a Nobel Prize for his contribution to the photoelectric effect. But this was somewhat eclipsed by his own discovery of the Theory of Relativity. It is not an exaggeration that but for Eddington’s initiative, Einstein would not have been such a famous scientist.

### **SOME UTTERANCES OF EINSTEIN**

- 1) One of his collaborators asked Einstein, how he would have reacted if Eddington’s findings showed a negative result on the bending of light, as predicted by the General Theory of Relativity. Einstein calmly replied, “Then I would have been sorry for the dear Lord.”
- 2) On another occasion he said, “God does not play dice.”

- 3) Somebody asked him, “Do you believe in God?” Einstein replied, “Yes, I believe only in Spinoza’s God.”
- 4) “Anyone who has fully understood the theory cannot escape from its magic.”

### **SOME FINDINGS CONNECTED WITH THE RELATIVITY THEORY**

The findings of the Theory of Relativity are stated briefly and in a very elementary manner. There are other highly complicated mathematical findings, which are beyond the scope of this article.

- 1) Space is not absolute
- 2) Time is not absolute.
- 3) Length is not absolute.
- 4) Mass is not absolute
- 5) The only absolute is the velocity of light, given by the symbol ‘c’ and nothing can exceed the velocity of light in free space.
- 6) The quantum of light, named photon, always moves with constant velocity in free space.
- 7) Energy and mass are identical  
Energy E concentrated is mass and mass annihilated is energy, their relation is  $E = mc^2$ , where c is the velocity of light.
- 8) The rest-mass of the photon is zero. The photon has no anti-photon.
- 9) Ether does not exist.

N K MAITRA

(Courtesy *Indian Science Cruiser*, 1998)

## COPERNICUS'S LETTER AWAITS REPLY

**TORUN (POLAND):** Pope John Paul II has declined an invitation to reply to a letter sent by astronomer Nicolas Copernicus in the 16th Century asking for papal approval of his revolutionary discovery that the earth circles the sun. Copernicus, born in the central Polish town of Torun, now a seat of learning, sent a letter to Pope Paul III in 1543 asking for his blessing, but received no reply. Copernicus's treatise "De revolutionibus orbium coelestium" (on the movement of heavenly bodies) was banned by the Vatican in 1616, 73 years after his death, and remained on the official prohibited list until 1822. The Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei suffered more directly for popularising the discovery of Copernicus, which flew in the face of conventional wisdom that the earth was the centre of the universe. While the Pope did not explicitly exonerate Copernicus for teachings that the church for many centuries considered wrong, he spoke of how the astronomer's discovery had been misunderstood. "Many people took it as a means of setting reason against faith," the 79-year-old pontiff told an audience of Polish professors gathered at Nicolas Copernicus University. "Splitting the two was a great human tragedy," he said.

(Courtesy Reuters)

## *Students' Section*

### CONDEMNED TO IMMORTALITY

It stood there, morbid and sinister in that abandoned corner of the library. Its leather-bound cover, once red, was now completely hidden by a thick layer of dust. Cobwebs hung all over, and a musty smell lingered in the air. No one ever approached that old volume, for they were all afraid to unclasp and open it, because it was said to be a book of magic. This book of occult powers was brought here during Alexander's time from the far-off country of ancient Egypt. It was said that many civilizations were destroyed because of the misuse of the magical powers of this book and whoever tried to destroy it for good perished in the attempt along with his nation.

Hundreds of years passed and that book was forgotten until 1890 when Philip Castallack while shifting some books stumbled upon it by chance. A young man of twenty, born and bred in the gentle mildness of South Cornwall,—with its trees and estuaries, windswept moors and rolling hills,—he knew nothing about this mysterious book.

As he approached it, he was aware of a sudden stillness, a poise as though time itself was motionless, immobile. . . He was overwhelmed with a strange feeling of expectancy, as though he had been waiting for lives for this day to arrive. He was mesmerized by the air of calm oppressiveness. The dust-covered book looked menacing, he felt like running away but something kept urging him, pushing him forward. And before he realized it, he had blown away the dust and was staring, bewildered, at the strange scripture written in gold. The more he stared, the more he seemed to be drawn into a trance. Suddenly he jerked himself and with great effort broke away from that strange delirium.

When he recounted this experience to the librarian, the latter was both baffled and horrified. None in that town knew of the existence of that book on mysticism. For it was something vague and forgotten. The librarian had heard of it when he was a little boy but never really paid any attention. And now comes along this young man who happens to have rediscovered it.

The librarian tried to discourage and frighten away Philip; but Philip was adamant and even more curious. He asked the librarian if anyone in Cornwall could tell him more about this old volume. The librarian finally gave in and told him about the old hermit who lived in the dilapidated parish.

Philip stood there, knocking several times at the wooden door of the old parish. Then after a long moment the door opened and Philip saw an old man with a flowing white beard and hair down to his shoulders, with a golden countenance. He had an impassive face, that of a sage, but something about him was repulsive and forbidding. Philip approached him with trepidation and told him about that book. For an instant the old hermit, Artayan, for that was his name, pondered. Then he began recounting his tale. He told about the mysterious powers of the book and how anyone who

opened it died Philip was thrilled by the second part of the statement He asked Artayan if he could decipher the script “No,” barked Artayan, fear gleaming in his eyes. “That was not necessary, for the magic would enable anyone to read it. ”

That’s him, thought Artayan. At last he has come Two thousand years I’ve waited for this day Now He then smiled, a cunning smile, for the first time in two thousand years.

As Philip neared the book, he felt the same magnetic pull but stronger this time And strangely enough he felt as though he had known this script all his life Gingerly he flipped open the dusty hard cover Inside, on torn papyrus reeds was written something in gold, in a similar script. Philip unhesitatingly began to read:

“You are opening this book; but if you are not dead yet by the poisoned shaft of Isis, then you are the one for whom this book was written and are its rightful owner This book is the story of your past life, when you were the mightiest pharaoh of Egypt, Osiris You were treacherously killed by your step-brother Icarus. He usurped your throne and forced your wife to submission But Isis, who was more faithful than the gods themselves, made you a tomb and herself lay beside your mummy and buried herself alive. For two thousand years she has been waiting for you in that pyramid. Her soul can’t be liberated unless you avenge the wrong done to you and her You must fight your brother, who will be reborn in the same land as you. You will recognize him, for he will be the only one to know about the existence of this book but he will not know its contents. He will recognize you with great occult powers and black magic You will have found him before reading this. But before you challenge him you must master all magic and occultism. Then will you be ready to face him, the greatest wizard of all. Here are the following instructions that will help you master both these arts. This is all that this book, the spirit of Isis, can offer you. The rest is up to you. The future and destiny of her soul lies in your hands ”

In the years that followed Philip began to see in his dreams glimpses of his past life. And the call of manhood within him stirred and, smitten with the sword of hatred and vendetta, he remoulded himself, body and soul

Three years passed. Philip was no more the vulnerable youth of twenty, but the living spirit of Osiris. He was now undaunted, virile and a fearless young man of great powers He dreamt he was born the mighty monarch with all the powers of heaven and earth. Now he was ready to meet Artayan.

“Artayan,” spoke Philip with burning eyes. “Let us not pretend anymore. You must have realized by now who I am as did I Our future and destiny lie in that forsaken land of ours So let us then sail there where our fate and goal await us.”

“Ah! You challenge me?” scorned Artayan “You were killed once before by me and so will be again Yes; but not here, as you willed. I shall kill you in your land, brother. And this time your soul will never return. You will stay eternally in the infernal!”

With hatred burning in their hearts they sailed together to Egypt, the land which held the secret of their past. On the west of the river Nile, in the jungles of Urucln,



the pyramid, the tomb of Isis and Osiris, loomed overhead like an ancient sentinel guarding the spirits of the dead.

“Ah! So here we are at last, on the threshold of our future destiny. Time alone will foretell our fate,” spoke Artayan

Then they crossed swords, not of mere steel, but swords of occult powers. As the two great powers clashed, the whole earth trembled and the skies quaked. Deep down in the shadowy abyss of the tomb, the spirit of Isis awakened from her dead slumber and her soul was at last emancipated.

The two wizards fought in the occult plane. They hurled balls of fire and shafts of light at each other. Beams of hatred and anger shot out through their eyes and fingers. Each displayed his greatness and knowledge. Artayan knew that there was just one power which Philip possessed which he didn't command. But the cunning Artayan soon realized that in that power lay Philip's weakness and downfall. His faith was imperfect and faltering in the power of love. He did not believe that love was the greatest of all powers, and that he himself held it. Artayan knowing this weakness struck him with a spear of hatred at the apex of his heart. Philip was wounded and lost the battle. Slowly his soul left his body.

But the spirit of Isis, anger blazing in her bosom, cursed Artayan.

“I curse you with immortality that you may remember that love can't be destroyed with death. It lives on... Never challenge the power of love.” Thus saying her soul escaped from the earth and united with Osiris's in heaven, the heaven of a fathomless ocean of love.

CHANDRABALI GUHA