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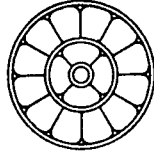
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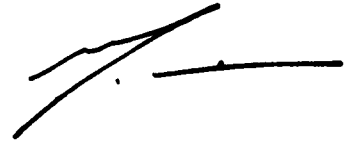


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

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 ABODE WITH SATYAVAN

ALL was fulfilled the heart of Savitri  
Flower-sweet and adamant, passionate and calm,  
Had chosen and on her strength's unbending road  
Forced to its issue the long cosmic curve.  
Once more she sat behind loud hastening hooves;  
A speed of armoured squadrons and a voice  
Far-heard of chariots bore her from her home.  
A couchant earth wakened in its dumb muse  
Looked up at her from a vast indolence...  
Once more was near the fair and fated place,  
The borders gleaming with the groves' delight  
Where first she met the face of Satyavan  
And he saw like one waking into a dream  
Some timeless beauty and reality,  
The moon-gold sweetness of heaven's earth-born child.  
The past receded and the future neared:  
Far now behind lay Madra's spacious halls,  
The white carved pillars, the cool dim alcoves,  
The tinged mosaic of the crystal floors,  
The towered pavilions, the wind-rippled pools  
And gardens humming with the murmur of bees,  
Forgotten soon or a pale memory  
The fountain's plash in the wide stone-bound pool,  
The thoughtful noontide's brooding solemn trance,  
The colonnade's dream grey in the quiet eve,  
The slow moonrise gliding in front of Night.  
Left far behind were now the faces known,  
The happy silken babble on laughter's lips  
And the close-clinging clasp of intimate hands  
And adoration's light in cherished eyes  
Offered to the one sovereign of their life.  
Nature's primeval loneliness was here:  
Here only was the voice of bird and beast,—  
The ascetic's exile in the dim-souled huge  
Inhuman forest far from cheerful sound  
Of man's blithe converse and his crowded days.  
In a broad eve with one red eye of cloud,  
Through a narrow opening, a green flowered cleft,  
Out of the stare of sky and soil they came  
Into a mighty home of emerald dusk.

There onward led by a faint brooding path  
 Which toiled through the shadow of enormous trunks  
 And under arches misers of sunshine,  
 They saw low thatched roofs of a hermitage  
 Huddled beneath a patch of azure hue  
 In a sunlit clearing that seemed the outbreak  
 Of a glad smile in the forest's monstrous heart,  
 A rude refuge of the thought and will of man  
 Watched by the crowding giants of the wood.  
 Arrived in that rough-hewn homestead they gave,  
 Questioning no more the strangeness of her fate,  
 Their pride and loved one to the great blind king,  
 A regal pillar of fallen mightiness  
 And the stately care-worn woman once a queen  
 Who now hoped nothing for herself from life,  
 But all things only hoped for her one child,  
 Calling on that single head from partial Fate  
 All joy of earth, all heaven's beatitude  
 Adoring wisdom and beauty like a young god's,  
 She saw him loved by heaven as by herself,  
 She rejoiced in his brightness and believed in his fate  
 And knew not of the evil drawing near. ..  
 Driven by the singularity of her fate,  
 Helpless against the choice of Savitri's heart  
 They left her to her rapture and her doom  
 In the tremendous forest's savage charge.  
 All put behind her that was once her life,  
 All welcomed that henceforth was his and hers,  
 She abode with Satyavan in the wild woods:  
 Priceless she deemed her joy so close to death;  
 Apart with love she lived for love alone.  
 As if self-poised above the march of days,  
 Her immobile spirit watched the haste of Time,  
 A statue of passion and invincible force,  
 An absolutism of sweet imperious will,  
 A tranquillity and a violence of the gods  
 Indomitable and immutable.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL, Vol 29, pp 465-68)

# A FEW ESSAYS ON THE GITA IN BENGALI

(Continued from the issue of August 1999)

## TEXT—TRANSLATION

### CHAPTER ONE

#### *Sanjaya uvāca*

*evamukto hr̥ṣīkeśo gudākeśena bhārata  
senayorubhayormadhye sthāpaitvā rathottamam* (24)

*bhīṣmadronapramukhataḥ sarveṣāñca mahīkṣitām  
uvāca pārtha paśyaitān samavetān kuruniti* (25)

Sanjaya said,

On hearing these words of Arjuna, Hrishikesha placed that excellent chariot at a mid-point between the two armies, and arriving in front of Bhishma, Drona and all the other princes, said, ‘‘O Partha, watch all the Kurus gathered here.’’

*tatrāpaśyat sthitānpārthaḥ pitṛnatha pitāmahān  
ācāryānmātulānbhrātr̥nputrānpautrānsakhīmstathā  
śvaśūrān suhr̥daścaiva senayorubhayorapi* (26)

In that field of battle, Partha saw standing among the two opposing forces, fathers and grandfathers, teachers, uncles, brothers, sons and grandsons, friends, fathers-in-law and intimate companions, all his kith and kin.

*tānsamīkṣya sa kaunteyaḥ sarvān bandhūnavasthitān  
kr̥payā paryāviṣṭo viṣṭidannidamabravīt* (27)

On seeing all these friends and relations thus standing before him, Kunti’s son was overtaken by an acute sense of pity and said these words, his heart stricken with grief.

#### *Arjuna uvāca*

*dr̥ṣṭvemañ svajānañ kṛṣṇa yuyutsuñ samupasthitam  
sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukhañca pariśuśyati* (28)

*vepathuśca śarīre me romaharṣaśca jāyate  
gāñḍivam̐ srañsate hastāttvak caiva paridahyate* (29)

Arjuna said,

O Krishna, on seeing all these my own people ranged for battle, the limbs of my body are feeling weary, my mouth is getting parched, all over the body there is shivering and the hairs stand on edge, the Gandiva bow is slipping out of my hand without control, my skin is as if burning with fire.

*na ca śaknomyavasthātum bhramatīva ca me manaḥ  
nimuttāni ca paśyāmi viparītāni keśava* (30)

I can no longer keep standing, my mind is beginning as if to whirl, O Keshava, I am seeing evil omens.

*na ca śreyo'nupaśyāmi hatvā svajanamāhave  
na kāṅkse vijayaṁ kṛṣṇa na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca* (31)

I do not see any good from killing my own people in battle. O Krishna, I do not wish for victory, nor do I want a kingdom nor seek happiness either.

*kiṁ no rājyena govinda kiṁ bhogairjīvitena vā  
yeṣāmarthe kāṅksitaṁ no rājyaṁ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca* (32)

*na ime'vasthūtā yuddhe prāṇāṁstyaktvādhanāni ca  
ācāryāḥ putraḥ putrāstathaiva ca pitāmahāḥ* (33)

Tell me, O Govinda, what do we gain from kingdom? what profit is there in enjoyment? of what use is life itself? Those for whom kingdom and enjoyment and life become desirable are themselves present in this battlefield after renouncing their life and wealth—they who are teachers and fathers, sons and grandfathers,

*mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pautrāḥ śyālāḥ sambandhinastathā  
etānna hantumicchāmi ghnato'pi madhusūdana* (34)

*api trailokyarājyasya hetoḥ kiṁ nu mahīkṛte  
nihatya dhārtarastrānnaḥ kā prītuḥ syājjanārdana* (35)

uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives. O Madhusudana, if they kill me, even then I do not wish to kill them, not even for the sake of dominion over the three worlds, what to say of the lordship of earth. What, O Janardana, can be our happiness of mind by killing the sons of Dhritarashtra?

*pāpamevāśrayedasmān hatvautānātātāyinah  
tasmānnārḥā vāyam hantum dhārtaraṣṭrān svabāndhavān  
svajanam hi katham hatvā sukhinaḥ syāma mādḥava* (36)



They are out to kill; nevertheless, to kill them would be to give shelter in our mind to sin. Therefore, since the sons of Dhritarashtra are our kin, we are not the persons fit to destroy them. In what way, O Madhava, shall we be happy by killing our own people?

*yadyapyete na paśyanti lobhopahatacetasah  
kulakṣayakṛtam doṣam mitradrohe ca pātakam* (37)

Under the influence of greed they have lost their understanding, and they do not appreciate the evils arising from a deterioration of the clans and the heinous sin of doing harm to one's friends.

*katham na jñeyamasmābhiḥ pāpādasmanñivartitum  
kulakṣayakṛtam doṣam prapaśyadbhirjanārdana* (38)

But we, O Janardana, realise the harm caused by the deterioration of clans. Why should we not have the knowledge, why should we not desist from this sin?

*kulakṣaye prapaśyanti kuladharmāḥ sanātanaḥ  
dharme naṣṭe kulam kṛtsnamadharmo'bhūbhavatya* (39)

With a deterioration of the clan, all the established laws of right living come to an end, and with that, unrighteousness overtakes the entire clan.

*adharmābhūbhavāt kṛṣṇa praduśyanti kulastriyaḥ  
striṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇasankarāḥ* (40)

Under the influence of unrighteousness, O Krishna, the women of the clan lose their virtue; when the women lose their virtue, there is admixture of castes.

*sankaro narakāyaiva kulaghnānām kulasya ca  
patanti pitaro hyeṣām luptapiṇḍodakakriyāḥ* (41)

The admixture of castes is the cause of the clansmen and the destroyers of clans going to hell, because the ancestors are thereby deprived of the food and water given them as offering and they fall from the world of the fathers.

*doṣairetaḥ kulaghnānām varṇasankarakāraḥ  
utsādyante jātadharmāḥ kuladharmāśca śaśvatāḥ* (42)

As a result of all these evils caused by the destroyers of clans and leading to the admixture of castes, the old established laws of the nation and the clan come to naught.

*utsannakuladharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām janārdana  
narake niyatam vāso bhavaṭītyanuśuśruma* (43)

In hell is assigned the abode of those the laws of whose clans have come to naught; this is what we have heard from of old.

*aho bata mahatpāpam kartum vyavasitā vayam  
yadrājasukhalobhena hantum svajanamudyatāḥ* (44)

Lo! the extremely heinous sin we were determined to commit, that we were making efforts to kill our own people out of greed for the pleasure of dominion.

*yadi māmapratīkāramaśāstram śāstrapāṇayah  
dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyustanme kṣemataram bhavet* (45)

It were better for me if the sons of Dhritarashtra accoutred in arms should kill me when I am without arms and make no effort to resist.

*Sañjaya uvāca*

*evamuktivārjunah saṅkhye rathopastha upāviśat  
viśṛjya saśram cāpam śokasamvignamānasaḥ* (46)

Sanjaya said,

With these words, his mind stained by the upsurge of grief, Arjuna threw away his bow with the arrow fixed on it and sat down in his chariot.

*(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 August 1999)

अथा ह्यग्ने क्रतोर्भद्रस्य दक्षस्य साधोः ।  
रथोऽङ्गितस्य बृहतो बभूथ ॥ (Rig Veda, 4 10.2)

Then indeed, O Agni, thou becomest the charioteer of the happy will, the perfecting discernment, the Truth that is the Vast. (SABCL, Vol. 10, p 73)

अश्विना यज्वरीरिषो द्रवत्पाणी शुभस्पती ।  
पुरुभुजा चनस्यतम् ॥ (Rig Veda, 1 3.1)

O Riders of the Steed, swift-footed, much-enjoying lords of bliss, take delight in the energies of the sacrifice. (SABCL, Vol. 10, p 79)

अश्विना पुरुदंससा नरा शवीरया धिया ।  
धिष्यया वनतं गिरः ॥ (Rig Veda, 1.3.2)

O Riders of the Steed, male souls effecting a manifold action, take joy of the words, O holders in the intellect, by a luminously energetic thought. (SABCL, Vol. 10, p. 79)

दत्ता युवाकव. सुता नासत्या वृक्तबर्हिषः ।  
आ यात रुद्रवर्तनी ॥ (Rig Veda, 1 3.3)

I have piled the seat of sacrifice, I have pressed out the vigorous Soma-juices, fulfillers of action, powers of the movement, come to them with your fierce speed on the path. (SABCL, Vol. 10, p. 79)

पुनाति ते परिस्रुतं सोमं सूर्यस्य दुहिता ॥  
वारेण शश्वता तना ॥ (Rig Veda, 9.1.6)

The daughter of the Sun purifies thy Soma as it flows abroad in her straining-vessel by a continuous extension. (SABCL, Vol. 10, p 80)

तमीमण्वीः समर्य आ गृभ्णन्ति योषणो दश ।  
स्वसारः पार्ये दिवि ॥ (Rig Veda, 9 1.7)

The subtle ones seize it in their labour (or, in the great work, struggle, aspiration, *samarye*), the ten brides, sisters in the heaven that has to be crossed. (SABCL, Vol. 10, p. 80)

एष धिया यात्यण्व्या शूरो रथेभिराशुभिः ।  
 गच्छन्नन्द्रयस्य निष्कृतम् ॥ (Rig Veda, 9.15.1)  
 एष पुरू धियायते बृहते देवतातये ।  
 यत्रामृतास आसते ॥ (Rig Veda, 9.15.2)

Soma advances, heroic with his swift chariots, by the force of the subtle thought, *dhīyā aṇvyā*, to the perfected activity (or perfected field) of Indra and takes many forms of thought to arrive at that vast extension (or, formation) of the godhead where the Immortals are. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 80)

इन्द्रा याहि चित्रभानो सुता इमे त्वायवः ।  
 अण्वीभिस्तना पूतासः ॥ (Rig Veda, 1.3.4)

Come, O Indra, with thy rich lustres, these Soma-juices desire thee; they are purified by the subtle powers and by extension in body. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 81)

इन्द्रा याहि धियेषितो विप्रजूत. सुतावतः ।  
 उपब्रह्माणि वाघतः ॥ (Rig Veda, 1.3.5)

Come, O Indra, impelled by the mind, driven forward by the illumined thinker, to my soul-thoughts, I who have poured out the Soma-juice and seek to express them in speech (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 81)

इन्द्रा याहि त्तुजान उप ब्रह्माणि हरिवः ।  
 सुते दधिष्व नश्चन. ॥ (Rig Veda, 1.3.6)

Come, O Indra, with forceful speed to my soul-thoughts, O lord of the bright horses; hold firm the delight in the Soma-juice. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 81)

ओमासश्चर्षणीधृतो विश्वे देवास आ गत ।  
 दाक्षांसो दाशुषः सुतम् ॥ (Rig Veda, 1.3.7)

O fosterers who uphold the doer in his work, O all-gods, come and divide the Soma-wine that I distribute (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 84)

विश्वे देवासो अप्तुरः सुतमा गन्त तूर्णयः ।  
 उसा इव स्वसराणि ॥ (Rig Veda, 1.3.8)

O all-gods who bring over to us the Waters, come passing through to my Soma-offerings as illumined powers to your places of bliss. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 84)

विश्वे देवासो अस्त्रिध एहि मायासो अद्बुहः ।  
 मेध जुषन्त वह्यय. ॥ (Rig Veda, 1.3.9)

O all-gods, you who are not assailed nor come to hurt, free-moving in your forms of knowledge, cleave to my sacrifice as its upbearers. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, pp. 84-85)

पावका नः सरस्वती वाजेभिर्वाजिनीवती ।  
यज्ञं वष्टु धियावसुः ॥ (Rig Veda, 1.3.10)

May purifying Saraswati with all the plenitude of her forms of plenty, rich in substance by the thought, desire our sacrifice. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 85)

चोदयित्री सूनृतानां चेतन्ती सुमतीनाम् ।  
यज्ञं दधे सरस्वती ॥ (Rig Veda, 1.3.11)

She, the impeller to happy truths, the awakener in consciousness to right mentalisings, Saraswati, upholds the sacrifice. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 85)

महो अर्णः सरस्वती प्र चेतयति केतुना ।  
धियो विश्वा वि राजति ॥ (Rig Veda, 1.3.12)

Saraswati by the perception awakens in consciousness the great flood (the vast movement of the *ṛtam*) and illumines entirely all the thoughts. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 85)

*(To be continued)*

*(Compiled by Sampadananda Mishra)*

# ALIPORE BOMB CASE TRIAL

## C. R. DAS DEFENDS SRI AUROBINDO

*(Continued from the issue of August 1999)*

I NOW deal with the evidence referred to by my learned friend to show the inner work of Arabinda from 1902 down to the day of his arrest. You will find, gentlemen, that up to 1902 or 1903 there was no connection between Barin and Arabinda.

You will find it is proved by the evidence in this case that Arabinda went away to England. After his return he was posted at Baroda Barin at that time was being educated at Deoghar. From there he went to Dacca to study for the F.A After that he went to Patna and thence he went to Baroda. We find him in Baroda, in 1902 and 1903. My learned friend's argument is that it was during his stay in Baroda in 1902 and 1903 that the seeds of revolution were sown in the hearts of Barindra by Arabinda. Barin says in his statement that he came away from Baroda sometime in 1903 and began to tour round the different parts of the country and preached the cause of independence My learned friend thinks this to be an ideal with which nobody would quarrel and then with regard to this ideal he says that the seeds of discontent were sown at Baroda

First of all you will find, gentlemen, from the evidence of Sukumar Mitter and Padoo Tewari that there was no connection between Barin and Arabinda before their meeting at Baroda in 1902 and 1903. Therefore as long as Barin was at Deoghar you find from the evidence of Sukumar and Padoo that the two brothers did not meet. Barin passed his Entrance Examination from Deoghar. He read F.A at Dacca and then went to Bankipore and then eventually went to Baroda. The two brothers first met at Baroda. After a time Barin left Baroda and engaged himself in preaching the cause of independence of the country. From that my learned friend argues that the poison must have been infused into Barin by Arabinda.

The best way to test that would be from what Arabinda himself says at that time when they were together at Baroda in 1902 and 1903. There are only three letters: exhibits 292-1, 292-3 and 292-5 I am not aware of any other letters of that period. Exhibit 292-1 is a letter dated the 2nd of July 1902 (Reads the letter addressed by Arabinda to his wife.) How do you find sedition or waging of war against the Government in this letter?

With regard to the reference to Jyotindra I shall deal later on. Arabinda wanted the horoscope of his wife to show to Jyotindra who was an astrologer in the Baroda service. I want to deal later on with Jyotindra and see if he was the accused who has since been discharged. It was in 1902 That does not help the case for the prosecution at all. Amongst these letters I have just mentioned there is another letter dated the 20th of August 1902 This letter refers to his promotion and so on. There is nothing important to that letter except that soon before that time Arabinda considered himself

a strict member of the Hindu Society. Those are all the letters which we get and which we preserved to give us an idea as to what the trend of his mind was in 1902. After that as I have told you Barin came away from Baroda and was engaged in preaching the cause of independence. He goes back sometime in 1904 or 1905. It is difficult to find out exactly when. It is at that time that Arabinda complains about Barindra. You will find that from exhibit 286-4.

If you couple exhibit 286-4 with the evidence of Sukumar you will find that Arabinda complained that Barindra would not take service. It is clear that Barin at that time went back. Arabinda asked him to accept service but Barindra refused to work. This letter was written on 22nd October 1905. This is not in order of time. This is the last letter of that period, before Barin goes to Baroda. Arabinda complains, (Reads) "Barin is never quiet, he will not accept any service." Therefore we see, gentlemen, that Barin goes back. It must have been that Barin's people took him to task for doing nothing and asked him to take some post to earn his livelihood. Arabinda complains, "he is not quiet, he wants to go out for the service of the country." That also we find in Sukumar's evidence. That shows clearly the relation between Arabinda and Barindra.

Then, gentlemen, you have got to consider Arabinda's own views during that period. The career which Arabinda sketched out in that letter is that to which he stuck up to the day of his arrest. I refer you to the letter of Arabinda to his wife, dated 30th August 1905. At that time Barin was living at Baroda. I have shown from the letter of 22nd October, 1905, that Arabinda was complaining about Barin. So Barin was at the time at Baroda. The seeds of revolution were again sown. It is better to find out what Arabinda's own views were about the time. These letters are exhibits 286-1 and 286-2. I would prefer to read to you the Bengali letter. You must remember, gentlemen, that at that time Arabinda did not acquire a sufficient knowledge in Bengali. It is written after Sanskrit. (Reads.) You remember, gentlemen, that *Andha Rajar Mahishi*. This allusion refers to queen *Gandhari* who used to blindfold her eyes as her husband *Dhritarastra* was blind. (Reads.) Gentlemen, you see that Arabinda describes himself as *Pagal* (a mad man) and tells his wife to settle as to what path she would follow. He makes the reference to *Gandhari* and expresses his hope that inasmuch as there is Hindu blood in her veins she will follow the course which he has taken up. The life he sketched out here he followed literally. The man has spent all his income for the good of the country, for charity, keeping only that which is necessary for his bare subsistence. (Reads.) The first great idea which he sets out in this letter is that he must regard himself as a trustee of all money that belongs to him. It is his duty to spend as little as possible for himself for the purpose that he may continue to live and to give the rest to God. How? By doing God's work, namely by feeding those who are hungry and by assisting those who are in need. It is then and then only that you can give back what you owe to God. If a man does not do it he is then a thief. It is not for his own selfish end. He is determined to lead that life. He will keep for himself only what is absolutely necessary for bare subsistence and the rest he will

give back to God. The only way you can do that is by way of charity, by feeding the hungry and by rendering assistance to those who are in need of it.

The second great ideal to which he refers is he has got the conviction in his mind that it is possible to see God, not to see God in the objective sense, but according to Hindu religion to see God in his own mind. One can discover the Godhead that is within him. It is easy to scoff at this. But here is a man giving expression to his earnest longing to realise the Godhead himself. This is his second great ideal. There is another point and that is this. There is also in this letter a covered reference to *Guru* (spiritual guide)

Because you know, gentlemen, that when a Hindu brings himself under a spiritual guide, he never discloses the name of his "Guru" nor the fact that he has done it. That is part of the religion. Unless you get the permission of the "Guru" you cannot give it out even to your wife (Reads.) "*Jabar Niyam dekhayache*" that is somebody has pointed out the rules of conduct which will help him to enter that path following which he can realise the God that is within him. Then he began to practise. That is to say he began to shape his life according to those rules.

Then he says "after practising them for one month, and realising the signs which the Hindu religion has said to be the signs of that stage," "everybody is entitled to that path. Unless you desire to enter that line you cannot get it. But it is within the power of every individual to attain that." In this letter he asks his wife to write to him whether she desires to enter this line or not, so that he may further correspond with her on that point. I ask you to remember this because you will find it is fully explained in his subsequent letters to which my learned friend also has referred.

Then he comes to his third ideal. Here he lays down the basis of his patriotism (Reads.) There again the idea is drawn from Vedantism. You know the doctrine according to Vedantism is that the whole world is a manifestation of God. Unless you realise that the world is a manifestation of divinity, as long as you do not realise within yourself that the world you see around you, the country in which you live are manifestations of divinity, then all these are unreal. They are unreal as long as you do not realise the association, the connection, between them and the absolute. But when you realise they are not separated from but are parts and manifestations of divinity, that very moment they cease to be unreal and become real. (Reads) "What do you think of your country? It is not merely forest, river, etc." To Arabinda it is the manifestation of motherhood. That is another aspect of divinity according to Hindu religion. His basis of patriotism is that you must so regard your country that you can discover and realise the motherhood of the country. You must so love your country that you can realise within yourself that it is another aspect of God. A man who believes in Vedanta can see clearly and finds no difficulty at all. That is the basis of his patriotism. You must realise the divinity in the country in which you live. Arabinda feels that nationalism has no place unless it leads to universal humanity. Unless nations develop in that way, the ideal of humanity can never be reached. I shall point out from article after article in the *Bande Mataram* that as the individual



must live in the light of the society so the nation must live in the light of humanity without which the whole philosophy is meaningless absolutely. (Reads.) He looks upon the country as the mother. As I have explained, that is another manifestation of God.

Then he says that his ideal is independence and the last line of this paragraph makes it clear. Some day or other, it will not be in his lifetime, this ideal will be accomplished. (Reads) "When the mother is oppressed what will her sons do? etc." A very curious argument has been based upon that. He says, how can you do that? you have got no guns, no swords "It is my ideal," he says, "that the country should realise freedom some day or other." He explains it by his answer. How can you do it? "I am not referring to *Kshatratej* but I am referring to *Brahmatej*" (Reads.) My learned friend's argument is that so far as Arabinda himself is concerned he will do the advising, but others will be left to bombs. Where do you find this in these letters? My learned friend's argument is on the whole of this sort that you must assume that Arabinda is guilty. That you are to read the letters between the lines. According to my friend's contention, so far as Arabinda is concerned, he will apply the *Brahmatej*, and make others to use the *Kshatratej*. If you read these letters you must come to the conclusion that he deprecates other forces The only force upon which he relies and to which he appeals is the intellectual force It is upon this force, he says, the future welfare of the country rests. He is not going to rely upon guns and swords. With all respect I submit that the suggestion of my learned friend is absurd. Anyone who reads the letters must come to the conclusion that the means which Arabinda suggests is not physical force but the force of character, the force of intellect; upon those forces the future of the country will be based. He says, "Don't you think that physical force is the only force in the world, there is a higher force and that is intellectual force, the force of character. Rely upon that force" That is the means which should be employed for the deliverance of the country It is not possible to put the construction upon the letter as my learned friend has done.

(To be continued)

## TAPASYA

A DISCIPLINE imposed by the will for any spiritual end is tapasya.

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Tapasya: a discipline aiming at the realisation of the Divine.

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Mental tapasya: the process leading to the goal.

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Vital tapasya: the vital undergoes a rigorous discipline in order to transform itself.


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Integral tapasya: the whole being lives only to know and serve the Divine.

\*

Perfect tapasya: that which will reach its goal.

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*No life can be successful  
without self-discipline*  


## THE COSMIC ILLUSION

THE mind of humanity, ever seeking, ever active, never arrives at a firmly settled reality of life's aims and objects or at a settled reality of its own certitudes and convictions, an established foundation or firm formation of its idea of existence. At a certain point of this constant unrest and travail even the physical mind loses its conviction of the objective certitude and enters into an agnosticism which questions all its own standards of life and knowledge, doubts whether all this is real or also whether all, even if real, is not futile. The vital mind baffled by life and frustrated or else dissatisfied with all its satisfactions, overtaken by a deep disgust and disappointment, finds that all is vanity and vexation of spirit and is ready to reject life and existence as an unreality, all that is hunted after as an illusion, Maya, the thinking mind, unbuilding all its affirmations, discovers that all are mere mental constructions and there is no reality in them or else that the only reality is something beyond this existence, something that has not been made or constructed, something Absolute and Eternal,—all that is relative, all that is of time is a dream, a hallucination of the mind or a vast delirium, an immense cosmic illusion, a delusive figure of apparent existence. The principle of negation prevails over the principle of affirmation and becomes universal and absolute. Thence arise the great world-negating religions and philosophies: thence too a recoil of the life-motive from itself and a seeking after a life elsewhere, flawless and eternal or a will to annul life itself in an immobile Reality or an original non-Existence. In India the philosophy of world-negation has been given formulations of supreme power and value by two of the greatest of her thinkers, Buddha and Shankara. There have been, intermediate or later in time, other philosophies of considerable importance, some of them widely accepted, formulated with much acumen of thought by men of genius and spiritual insight, which disputed with more or less force and success the conclusions of these two great metaphysical systems, but none has been put forward with an equal force of presentation or drive of personality or had a similar massive effect. The spirit of these two remarkable spiritual philosophies,—for Shankara in the historical process of India's philosophical mind takes up, completes and replaces Buddha,—has weighed with a tremendous power on her thought, religion and general mentality, everywhere broods its mighty shadow, everywhere is the impress of the three great formulas, the chain of Karma, escape from the wheel of rebirth, Maya. It is necessary therefore to look afresh at the Idea or Truth behind the negation of cosmic existence and to consider however briefly what is the value of its main formulations or suggestions, on what reality they stand, how far they are imperative to the reason or to experience. For the present it will be enough to throw a regard on the principal ideas which are grouped around the conception of the great cosmic Illusion, Maya, and to set against them those that are proper to our own line of thought and vision: for both proceed from the conception of the One Reality but one line leads to a universal Illusionism, the other to a universal Realism,—an unreal or real-unreal universe reposing on a transcendent Reality or a

real universe reposing on a Reality at once universal and transcendent or absolute.

In itself and by itself the vital being's aversion, the life-mind's recoil from life cannot be taken as valid or conclusive. Its strongest motive is a sense of disappointment and an acceptance of frustration which has no greater claim to conclusiveness than the idealist's opposite motive of invariable hope and his faith and will to realise. Nevertheless there is a certain validity in the mental support of this sense of frustration in the perception at which the thinking mind arrives that there is an illusion behind all human effort and terrestrial endeavour, the illusion of the political and social gospels, the illusion of the ethical effort at perfection, the illusion of philanthropy and service, the illusion of works, the illusion of fame, power, success, the illusion of all achievement. Human social and political endeavour turns always in a circle and leads nowhere; man's life and nature always remain the same, always imperfect, and neither laws nor institutions nor education nor philosophy nor morality nor religious teachings have succeeded in producing the perfect man, still less a perfect humanity,—straighten the tail of the dog as you will, it has been said, it always resumes its normal curve of crookedness. Altruism, philanthropy and service, Christian love or Buddhist compassion have not made the world a whit happier, they only give infinitesimal bits of momentary relief here and there, throw drops on the fire of the world's suffering. All aims are in the end transitory and futile, all achievements unsatisfying or evanescent, all works are so much effort of labour and success and failure which consummate nothing definitive. Whatever changes are made in human life are of the form only and these forms pursue each other in a futile circle; for the essence of life, its general character remains the same for ever. This view of things may be exaggerated, but it has an undeniable force: it is supported by experience of man's centuries, and it carries in itself a significance which at one time or another comes upon the mind with an overwhelming air of self-evidence. Not only so, but if it is true that the fundamental laws and values of terrestrial existence are fixed or that it must always turn in repeated circles,—and this has been for long a very prevalent notion,—then this view of things in the end is hardly escapable. For imperfection, ignorance, frustration and suffering are a dominant factor of the existing world-order, the elements contrary to them, knowledge, happiness, success, perfection are constantly found to be deceptive or inconclusive: the two opposites are so inextricably mixed that, if this state of things is not a motion towards a greater fulfilment, if this is the permanent character of the world-order, then it is hard to avoid the conclusion that all here is either the creation of an inconscient Energy, which would account for the incapacity of an apparent consciousness to arrive at anything, or intentionally a world of ordeal and failure, the issue being not here but elsewhere, or even a vast and aimless cosmic Illusion.

Among these alternative conclusions the second, as it is usually put before us, offers no ground for the philosophic reason, since we have no satisfying indication of the connection between the here and the elsewhere which are posited against each other but not explained in the inevitability of their relations, and there is no light cast

on the necessity or fundamental significance of the ordeal and failure. It could only be intelligible,—except as the mysterious will of an arbitrary Creator,—if there was a choice by immortal spirits to try the adventure of the Ignorance and a necessity for them to learn the nature of a world of Ignorance in order that they might reject it. But such a creative motive, necessarily incidental and quite temporary in its incidence, with the earth as its casual field of experience, could hardly by itself account for the immense and enduring phenomenon of this complex universe. It can become an operative part of a satisfactory explanation if this world is the field for the working out of a greater creative motive, if it is a manifestation of a divine Truth or a divine Possibility in which under certain conditions an initiating Ignorance must intervene as a necessary factor, and if the arrangement of this universe contains in it a compulsion of the Ignorance to move towards Knowledge, of the imperfect manifestation to grow into perfection, of the frustration to serve as steps towards a final victory, of the suffering to prepare an emergence of the divine Delight of Being. In that case the sense of disappointment, frustration, illusion and the vanity of all things would not be valid; for the aspects that seem to justify it would be only the natural circumstances of a difficult evolution: all the stress of struggle and effort, success and failure, joy and suffering, the mixture of ignorance and knowledge would be the experience needed for the soul, mind, life and physical part to grow into the full light of a spiritual perfected being. It would reveal itself as the process of an evolutionary manifestation; there would be no need to bring in the fiat of an arbitrary Omnipotence or a cosmic Illusion, a phantasy of meaningless Maya.

But there is too a higher mental and spiritual basis for the philosophy of world-negation and here we are on more solid ground; for it can be contended that the world is in its very nature an illusion and no reasoning from the features and circumstances of an Illusion could justify it or raise it into a Reality,—there is only one Reality, the transcendent, the supracosmic: no divine fulfilment, even if our life were to grow into the life of gods, could nullify or cancel the original unreality which is its fundamental character; for that fulfilment would be only the bright side of an Illusion. Or even if not absolutely an illusion, it would be a reality of an inferior order and must come to an end by the soul's recognition that the Brahman alone is true, that there is nothing but the transcendent and immutable Absolute. If this is the one Truth, then all ground is cut away from under our feet: the divine Manifestation, the victory of the soul in Matter, its mastery over existence, the divine life in Nature would itself be a falsehood or at least something not altogether real imposed for a time on the sole true Reality. But here all turns on the mind's conception or the mental being's experience of Reality and how far that conception is valid or how far that experience is imperative,—even if it is a spiritual experience, how far it is absolutely conclusive, solely imperative.

The cosmic Illusion is sometimes envisaged,—though that is not the accepted position,—as something that has the character of an unreal subjective experience, it is then,—or may be,—a figure of forms and movements that arises in some eternal sleep

of things or in a dream-consciousness and is temporarily imposed on a pure and featureless self-aware Existence; it is a dream that takes place in the Infinite. In the philosophies of the Mayavadins,—for there are several systems alike in their basis but not altogether and at every point coincident with each other,—the analogy of dream is given, but as an analogy only, not as the intrinsic character of the world-illusion. It is difficult for the positive physical mind to admit the idea that ourselves, the world and life, the sole thing to which our consciousness bears positive witness, are inexistent, a cheat imposed on us by that consciousness. certain analogies are brought forward, the analogies especially of dream and hallucination, in order to show that it is possible for the experiences of the consciousness to seem to it real and yet prove to be without any basis or without a sufficient basis in reality; as a dream is real to the dreamer so long as he sleeps but waking shows it to be unreal, so our experience of world seems to us positive and real but, when we stand back from the illusion, we shall find that it had no reality.

After giving a profound psychological account of sleep and dreams showing that our dreams are not altogether unfounded or unreal, Sri Aurobindo proceeds:

If this is a true account of dream-experience, dreams can no longer be classed as a mere unreal figure of unreal things temporarily imposed upon our half-consciousness as a reality, the analogy therefore fails even as an illustrative support for the theory of the Cosmic Illusion. It may be said, however, that our dreams are not themselves realities but only a transcript of reality, a system of symbol-images, and our waking experience of the universe is similarly not a reality but only a transcript of reality, a series of collection of symbol-images. It is quite true that primarily we see the physical universe only through a system of images impressed or imposed on our senses and so far the contention is justified: it may also be admitted that in a certain sense and from one view-point our experiences and activities can be considered as symbols of a truth which our lives are trying to express but at present only with a partial success and an imperfect coherence. If that were all, life might be described as a dream-experience of self and things in the consciousness of the Infinite. But although our primary evidence of the objects of the universe consists of a structure of sense-images, these are completed, validated, set in order by an automatic intuition in the consciousness which immediately relates the image with the thing imaged and gets the tangible experience of the object, so that we are not merely regarding or reading a translation or sense-transcript of the reality but looking through the sense-image to the reality. This adequacy is amplified too by the action of a reason which fathoms and understands the law of things sensed and can observe scrupulously the sense-transcript and correct its errors. Therefore we can conclude that we experience a real universe through our imaged sense-transcript by the aid of the intuition and the reason,—an intuition which gives us the touch of things and a reason which investigates their truth by its conceptive knowledge. But we must note also that even if our image view of the universe, our sense-transcript, is a system of symbol-images and not an exact reproduction or transcription, a literal translation, still a symbol is a

notation of something that is, a transcript of realities. Even if our images are incorrect what they endeavour to image are realities, not illusions; when we see a tree or a stone or an animal, it is not a non-existent figure, a hallucination that we are seeing; we may not be sure that the image is exact, we may concede that other-sense might very well see it otherwise, but still there is something there that justifies the image, something with which it has more or less correspondence. But in the theory of Illusion the only reality is an indeterminable featureless pure Existence, Brahman, and there is no possibility of its being translated or mistranslated into a system of symbol-figures, for that could only be if this Existence had some determinate contents or some unmanifested truths of its being which could be transcribed into the forms or names given to them by our consciousness: a pure Indeterminable cannot be rendered by a transcript, a multitude of representative differential, a crowd of symbols or images, for there is in it only a pure Identity, there is nothing to transcribe, nothing to symbolise, nothing to image. Therefore the dream analogy fails us altogether and is better put out of the way; it can always be used as a vivid metaphor of a certain attitude our mind can take towards its experiences, but it has no value for a metaphysical enquiry into the reality and fundamental significance or the origin of existence.

If we take up the analogy of hallucination, we find it hardly more helpful for a true understanding of the theory of cosmic Illusion than the dream-analogy. Hallucinations are of two kinds, mental or ideative and visual or in some way sensory. When we see an image of things where these things are not, it is an erroneous construction of the senses, a visual hallucination; when we take for an objective fact a thing which is a subjective structure of the mind, a constructive mental error or an objectivised imagination or a misplaced mental image, it is a mental hallucination. An example of the first is the mirage, an example of the second is the classic instance of a rope taken for a snake. In passing we may note that there are many things called hallucinations which are not really that but symbol-images sent up from the subliminal or experiences in which the subliminal consciousness or sense comes to the surface and puts us into contact with supraphysical realities; thus the cosmic consciousness which is our entry by a breaking down of our mental limitations into the sense of a vast reality, has been classed, even in admitting it, as a hallucination. But, taking only the common hallucination, mental or visual, we observe that it seems to be at first sight a true example of what is called imposition in the philosophic theory; it is the placement of an unreal figure of things on a reality, of a mirage upon the bare desert air, of the figure of a non-present snake on the present and real rope. The world, we may contend, is such a hallucination, an imposition of a non-existent unreal figure of things on the bare ever-present sole reality of the Brahman. But then we note that in each case the hallucination, the false image is not of something quite non-existent; it is an image of something existent and real but not present in the place on which it has been imposed by the mind's error or by a sense-error. A mirage is the image of a city, an oasis, running water or of other absent things, and if these things did not exist, the

false image of them, whether raised up by the mind or reflected in the desert air, would not be there to delude the mind with a false sense of reality. A snake exists and its existence and form are known to the victim of the momentary hallucination if it had not been so, the delusion would not have been created; for it is a form-resemblance of the seen reality to another reality previously known elsewhere that is the origin of the error. The analogy therefore is unhelpful; it would be valid only if our image of the universe were a falsity reflecting a true universe which is not here but elsewhere or else if it were a false imaged manifestation of the Reality replacing in the mind or covering with its distorted resemblance a true manifestation. But here the world is a non-existent form of things, an illusory construction imposed on the bare Reality, on the sole Existent which is for ever empty of things and formless: there would be a true analogy only if our vision constructed in the void air of the desert a figure of things that exist nowhere, or else if it imposed on a bare ground both rope and snake and other figures that equally existed nowhere.

It is clear that in this analogy two quite different kinds of illusion not illustrative of each other are mistakenly put together as if they were identical in nature. All mental or sense-hallucinations are really misrepresentations or misplacements or impossible combinations or false developments of things that are in themselves existent or possible or in some way within or allied to the province of the real. All mental errors and illusions are the result of an ignorance which miscombines its data or proceeds falsely upon a previous or present or possible content of knowledge. But the cosmic Illusion has no basis of actuality, it is an original and all-originating illusion, it imposes names, figures, happenings that are pure inventions on a Reality in which there never were and never will be any happenings, names or figures. The analogy of mental hallucination would only be applicable if we admit a Brahman without names, forms or relations and a world of names, forms and relations as equal realities imposed one upon the other, the rope in the place of the snake, or the snake in the place of the rope,—an attribution, it might be, of the activities of the Saguna to the quiescence of the Nirguna. But if both are real, both must be either separate aspects of the Reality or co-ordinate aspects, positive and negative poles of the one Existence. Any error or confusion of Mind between them would not be a creative cosmic Illusion, but only a wrong perception of realities, a wrong relation created by the Ignorance.

If we scrutinise other illustrations or analogies that are offered to us for a better understanding of the operation of Maya, we detect in all of them an inapplicability that deprives them of their force and value. The familiar instance of mother-of-pearl and silver turns also, like the rope and snake analogy, upon an error due to a resemblance between a present real and another and absent real; it can have no application to the imposition of a multiple and mutable unreality upon a sole and unique immutable Real. In the example of an optical illusion duplicating or multiplying a single object, as when we see two moons instead of one, there are two or more identical forms of the one object, one real, one—or the rest—an illusion. this



does not illustrate the juxtaposition of world and Brahman, for in the operation of Maya there is a much more complex phenomenon,—there is indeed an illusory multiplication of the Identical imposed upon its one and ever-unalterable Identity, the One appearing as many, but upon that is imposed an immense organised diversity in nature, a diversity of forms and movements which have nothing to do with the original Real. Dreams, visions, the imagination of the artist or poet can present such an organised diversity which is not real; but it is an imitation, a mimesis of a real and already existent organised diversity, or it starts from such a mimesis and even in the richest variation or wildest invention some mimetic element is observable. There is here no such thing as the operation attributed to Maya in which there is no mimesis but a pure and radically original creation of unreal forms and movements that are non-existent anywhere and neither imitate nor reflect nor alter and develop anything discoverable in the Reality. There is nothing in the operations of Mind-illusion that throws light upon this mystery, it is, as a stupendous cosmic Illusion of this kind must be, *sui generis*, without parallel. What we see in the universe is that a diversity of the identical is everywhere the fundamental operation of cosmic Nature; but here it presents itself, not as an illusion, but as a various real formation out of a one original substance. A Reality of Oneness manifesting itself in a reality of numberless forms and powers of its being is what we confront everywhere. There is no doubt in its process a mystery, even a magic, but there is nothing to show that it is a magic of the unreal and not a working of a Consciousness and Force of being of the omnipotent Real, a self-creation operated by an eternal self-knowledge.

ANILBARAN ROY

[This article is a presentation of the theme of the Cosmic Illusion as given by Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine* (SABCL, Vol 18, pp 412-438) It was intended to be a part of the author's unpublished book, *The Prophet of the New Age* —Editor]

## VITA SUB SPECIE AMORIS

No, do not seal my eyes,  
Death, do not come;  
Some voice your power denies—  
Beat not your drum;  
These victor thoughts arise,  
“Amabo, ergo sum.”

Here is no love that dies,  
Though for aeons dumb;  
Not Lethewards it flies,  
Not do its wings grow numb  
But spurn your nether skies:  
“Amabo, ergo sum.”

February 15, 1934

ARJAVA

Sri Aurobindo's comment: The lyric quality of the poem is very good; behind its modern turn it has a touch of something the Elizabethan lyrics had which made them so genuine and beautiful.

## THIS ERRANT LIFE

THIS errant life is dear although it dies;  
And human lips are sweet though they but sing  
Of stars estranged from us; and youth's emprise  
Is wondrous yet, although an unsure thing.

Sky-lucent Bliss untouched by earthiness!  
I fear to soar lest tender bonds decrease.  
If Thou desirest my weak self to outgrow  
Its mortal longings, lean down from above,  
Temper the unborn light no thought can trace,  
Suffuse my mood with a familiar glow.  
For 'tis with mouth of clay I supplicate:  
Speak to me heart to heart words intimate,  
And all Thy formless glory turn to love  
And mould Thy love into a human face.

AMAL KIRAN  
(K D SETHNA)

### Sri Aurobindo's Comments

To Amal: "A very beautiful poem, one of the very best you have written. The last six lines, one may say even the last eight, are absolutely perfect. If you could always write like that, you would take your place among English poets and no low place either. I consider they can rank—these eight lines—with the very best in English poetry."

To Dilip Kumar Roy: "Amal's lines are not easily translatable, least of all into Bengali. There is in them a union or rather fusion of high severity of speech with exaltation and both with a pervading intense sweetness which it is almost impossible to transfer bodily without loss into another language. There is no word in excess, none that could have been added or changed without spoiling the expression, every word just the right revelatory one—no colour, no ornamentation, but a sort of suppressed burning glow, no similes, but images which have been fused inseparably into the substance of the thought and feeling—the thought itself perfectly developed, not idea added to idea at the will of the fancy, but perfectly interrelated and linked together like the limbs of an organic body. It is high poetic style in its full perfection and nothing at all that is transferable. You have taken his last line and put in a lotus-face and made divine love bloom in it,—a pretty image, but how far from the glowing impassioned severity of the phrase: 'And mould Thy love into a human face!'"

To the poet himself: “The quotations he [AE] makes from your [poems]—

The song-impetuous mind...<sup>1</sup>

The Eternal Beauty is a wanderer  
Hungry for lips of clay—<sup>2</sup>

certainly deserve the praise he gives them and they are moreover of the kind AE and Yeats also, I think, would naturally like. But the poem [*This Errant Life*] I selected for special praise had no striking expressions like these standing out from the rest, just as in a Greek statue there would be no single feature standing out in a special beauty (eyes, lips, head or hands), but the whole has a harmoniously modelled grace of equal perfection everywhere as, let us say, in the perfect charm of a statue by Praxiteles. This apart from the idea and feeling, which goes psychically and emotionally much deeper than the ideas in the lines quoted by AE, which are poetically striking but have not the same subtle spiritual appeal; they touch the mind and vital strongly, but the other goes home into the soul.

“At present you write, as you do other things, too much from the brain, the mere human intelligence. To get back from the surface vital into the psychic and psychic vital, to raise the level of your mental from the intellect to the Illumined Mind is your need both in poetry and in Yoga. I have told you already that your best poetry comes from the Illumined Mind, but as a rule it either comes from there with too much of the transcription diminished in its passage through the intellect or else is generated only in the creative poetic intelligence. But so many poets have written from that intelligence. If you could always write direct from the Illumined Mind—finding there not only the substance, as you often do, but the rhythm and language, that indeed would be a poetry exquisite, original and unique. The intellect produces the idea, even the poetic idea, too much for the sake of the idea alone, coming from the Illumined Mind the idea in a form of light and music is itself but the shining body of the Light Divine.”

1 From *Ne Plus Ultra*

2 From *Sages*

## “WHO IS SRI AUROBINDO?”

ONCE in the early years of my life in the Ashram I wrote to Sri Aurobindo, “How people calling to Shiva or Krishna or their Ishta Devata get responses from you I don’t understand.” He replied, “Who is Shiva? and also who is Krishna? and what is an Ishta Devata? There is only one Divine, not a thousand Divines.” Myself “It would mean that wherever a sincere heart is aspiring for the Divine, his aspiration reaches your ears.” Sri Aurobindo “Why my ears? Ears are not necessary for the purpose. You might as well say, reaches me by the post.” I then protested, “No, Sir, I am satisfied with you as Sri Aurobindo pure and simple. I don’t need anybody else.” He wrote back, “No objection. I only suggested that I don’t know who this Sri Aurobindo pure and simple is. If you do, I congratulate you.” Since then, my relation with him had become very intimate. I gradually came to know many aspects of his personality, but never who he really was. My correspondence with him has shown that I dared to take liberties with him (which was considered unthinkable by other sadhaks). Once I wrote to him “Cut me or beat me, Sir, but don’t forsake me.” And the answer he wrote back startled me and filled me with a sudden delight and assurance beyond measure. He wrote, “Never. But beat you, a lot.” This assurance has sustained and will sustain me even in my future life, if I may say so. Once I dared to ask him, “Where do you get so much sense of humour?” His cryptic reply: “‘fl < fl:’ (*raso vai sah*—verily He is Delight.) Then one day when I asked him: “Why are you so soft and free as if I’m your comrade?” He gave an enigmatic answer: “Find out for yourself.” When I failed to find out, he wrote. “It is not by the mind that you can find out.” Till now I have failed to discover why. The enigma remains unsolved and I live with the hope that perhaps he will divulge the secret as he has divulged to Dilip the cause of his intimacy with him. But he has made me stick to him till now and perhaps forever.

But my knowledge of him has grown as far as my small human understanding can allow. And I have come to this conclusion that what he has written about Sri Krishna in fact applies to him too. In his estimation Sri Krishna had an unfathomable mind of knowledge. Sri Aurobindo remains an enigma to the world. The Mother herself has admitted that she had failed to know him though she had lived with him for more than 30 years. To a disciple who wished to write his biography, he remarked that his life has not been on the surface for people to see.

The vast world of knowledge he possessed remains unparalleled. He has himself admitted to us that what he knows will remain untold even if he goes on writing for twelve years. We asked him, “Will all that knowledge remain unknown to us and posterity?” “Learn first of all what I have written,” he replied with a sweet smile, and added, “I am afraid I have come perhaps before my time.” Comes to mind a mighty line from one of his poems. “I have drunk the Infinite like a giant’s wine.” Only with the help of such a Wine could he have given to India and the world his four major contributions: a national awakening and fiery thirst for total independence,

a new and deeper interpretation of the Vedas, the rediscovery of the Supermind, and a life-embracing system of Integral Yoga.

The question that makes us marvel with wonder is how within a short span of years he could gather so vast a knowledge, and even record it, which would need at least a hundred years. The Mother holds an answer to that enigma. She said that he had only to sit before the typewriter and knowledge would pour down like a stream from above.

And is it only knowledge? What about the beauty of expression, perfection of style and masterly composition? We remember that when his immortal book *The Life Divine* had been published, *The Times Literary Supplement's* front page article described Sri Aurobindo as "an author who writes with the sky for page and the constellations as his company," and as "a new kind of thinker who combines the serenity of the East and the alacrity of the West." Romain Rolland, a great French savant, said about Sri Aurobindo, "The old leader of the Bengal revolt, who is now one of the greatest thinkers of modern India, has realised the most complete synthesis achieved up to the present between the genius of the West and that of the East." He also said that Sri Aurobindo is the last of the great Rishis who holds the creative bow in his hand.

If this is about the man of Knowledge, what about the human being he was? What has he not done for the human race? We know he sacrificed his inestimable life for the incalculable benefit of man. In the Mother's revelation to Dr. Sanyal, a famous surgeon who was called to treat Sri Aurobindo: "People do not know what a tremendous sacrifice he has made for the world. About a year ago, while I was discussing things I remarked that I felt like leaving the body. He spoke out in a firm tone, 'No, this can never be. If necessary for the transformation I might go, you will have to fulfil our yoga of supramental descent and transformation'." She also said: "As soon as Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body, what he called the Mind of Light got realised in me." And his human body as we would say turned a golden colour for five days to the surprise of the public. But his immortal consciousness is ever with us guiding the destiny of the world, remaining with us in all our trials and tribulations and leading this woe-begotten race to its divine destiny for which he came to the world—a colonist from Immortality!

What shall we then think of him? That he is as God himself is? Have we got the answer to his question "Who is Sri Aurobindo?" Or will he remain a marvellous enigma forever?

NIRODBARAN

## NAGIN-BHAI TELLS ME

*(Continued from the issue of August 1999)*

**27:06:1994**

I SUSPECT that the Power is stuck at the vital-physical. Nothing is happening. I thought that the work was in the physical. But it is not quite so, it is still in the vital-physical. I prayed for the Grace. My consciousness rose very high, very high, and saw the supreme Mother seated on a mountain top. I could see her there, but then I could not go up there. I asked for Grace and it came down.

But how to know Grace? We can know about it only by the results or by the effects it produces,—by the results.

But Grace can have form and it can also be without form. Only by recognising it can we perhaps know Grace when it is actually descending. Only Supermind can know the supreme Grace; intuition may see some reflection of it, but it can get misled. I am praying for Grace. It is only then my sadhana may proceed further. Of course, they must be already working, they always do that; yes, they do it. But then I too have to do my bit; it is necessary. But I do not know, I do not know.

**29:06:1994**

The process seems to be very difficult. I do not know what is happening. Neither do I know the sequence of operation, nothing. What I think is that something was taken up and then again left.

The last three days I see the Mother standing very close, in her full form. Perhaps she wants to come into me, in my heart or my psychic being. I do not know. She is simply standing there, in full form.

But the Being of Ananda came and from the Square Sri Aurobindo came to receive her. I could see all that.

My being was not there; only the psychic being and the spirit were there. She is standing there for a long time, for the last three days, and I have to go out after the meditation, and go out with all that. Very difficult. Don't know what all that means.

Sri Aurobindo had told me once: "Don't bring in your imagination." He had spoken very strongly. "Look at me," he had told me. Something was there visibly on my forehead also. People could have noticed it, something very physical, reflected from him.

You see, the last 30-40 years there was really no sadhana. The work is going on now. But very difficult. He has not described it anywhere in his writings.

The last three days she has been coming and standing there for a long time, but not entering in me. The Power seems to have got stuck somewhere, at the vital-physical.

I have asked for supramental peace and strength. And she is standing there. She wants to enter in me

**02:07:1994**

Is there Ananda in the supramental peace?

There could be. It is there everywhere. It depends upon what it wants to project I feel something like that. But the sadhana is stuck. Nothing seems to be happening. The Square is there; the Being of Ananda is behind; the Mother is behind the veil. I saw her standing there, for 3 or 4 days now Power got stuck at the vital-physical. It cannot be the supramental Power. It got stuck. I do not know what to do. I am asking for supramental Peace.

In the night I have to take sleeping tablets 2 or 3 times. The work is very difficult. The entire nervous system gets affected. I am physically weak

I think my psychic being should take the lead It must be my guide The effort must be in that direction. But to bring out the psychic being is not easy. It seems, for 50-60 years I have not done anything And if it should go on like this nothing will be achieved.

Yes, the psychic being should be the leader of the sadhana.

**09:07:1994**

There is nothing to tell. During the last few days nothing has happened. I do not want to strain myself in any way Nervous being is very weak Let us see

**13:07:1994**

What I have been telling you the last few months,—they are states of consciousness. They are not experiences, or even realisations, they are the states of consciousness. The Being of Ananda is there, and the Mother standing And the working of Power,—they are all states of consciousness

Long back I had the experience of the Self Sri Aurobindo had written about it to me But now it is more than that. This is permanent, the states of consciousness

**16:07:1994**

I think, things have started happening again. The vital is definitely taken care of, it is now over The difficulty is the physical. There is a lot of resistance.

But I am asking for supramental peace, strength and purity

The Mother is standing there, Sri Aurobindo is there, my spirit and my psychic being too; the Being of Ananda and Power are there But the physical is very difficult, very obdurate.

But they want to achieve something now. Today the work started as soon as I came to the Ashram, at 8 00 am. During my duty hours itself the work was going on They want to achieve something by the end of this month.

I feel the work is going on in me. For the work that is going on in me, I am going to be not only their instrument but their collaborator.

**20:07:1994**

The Mother was there. Sri Aurobindo was there He was very powerful, very powerful



He told me not to touch him, nor to touch Power. "Do not try to touch me," was his clear instruction.

What does that mean? Why was he telling me that?

Perhaps it means that the issue should not be forced. Things should be allowed to go on without any insistence of any kind

I was asking for supramental peace and strength and purity, I even willed for them. But it seems I should not exercise my will I should aspire, but not will. The sadhana should be left in their hands. They know what is needed for me. I should leave it to them. They will do whatever is to be done. After all, supramental peace is also supramental and I should be able to bear it How can I ask for it? Am I really ready to receive it?

Aspire, but not will.

*(To be continued)*

R. Y. DESHPANDE

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## HOW MANY LIVES?

How many lives has death granted to me?  
 Nine lives, they say, a cat has—nine to die;  
 In the deeps of silence deeper than night  
 Nine dreams of loneliness nine times cry.

A sudden hue spreads goldening the morn,  
 And its joy weaves a white jasminean garland;  
 A sweet scented wind lifts up the early birds,  
 As if life has come a newness to understand

Now from the alert edge of the sky arrives  
 Swift-footed destiny to prepare a bright day;  
 And all the sorrows that had filled the past  
 Like mist just uncomplainingly fade away.

But then in gorgeousness of time to be born  
 The deepening depth of eternity awaits.  
 And so birth is escorted by death's shadow,  
 Death who has nine lives, to cross nine gates.

But death can cross the ninth gate only if  
 A sacrificial fire is kindled in the heart;  
 Then will the being be carried in a surge,  
 A great surge new divinity to body impart.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

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

(Continued from the issue of August 1999)

WITH this introduction, essential for the right comprehension of what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have to say in the pages to follow—for, as we have stated at the very beginning of our essay, the entire content of this article will be derived from the statements of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, either written or oral—let us now proceed to the outlining of some significant steps in the unfolding of the process of supramental descent during the period 1920-1950. But before we do that let us look at one important aspect

M Théon, the experienced Polish adept under whom the Mother learnt occultism in the early years of this century, used to say, according to the Mother, that this is the seventh creation we have been living in now and it has therefore the potentiality of continuing with eternal progression without having to undergo Pralaya or re-absorption into the Transcendent, which fate has overtaken all the six worlds that have preceded. What has happened so far is this. A world came into being, flourished for a period of time, and then collapsed into *pralaya* or utter nullification. After some intervening time, another world appeared and after passing through the same process of growth and decay vanished into the néant of *pralaya*. And this process of rising and falling has been repeated many a time

But, according to Théon's teaching, the present creation has the chance of escaping that inexorable fate and continuing to progress for ever. For it will get divinely transformed, re-become the Supreme and fully manifest him. Not a *pralaya* but a transformation is its destined future

Now, when the Mother met Sri Aurobindo for the first time in 1914, she asked him about Théon's prediction. She also remarked at the same time. "In the symbolic history of Christ it is said that he died on the Cross in order to bring redemption to men, thus, death seems to be essential to scoring a victory." Sri Aurobindo listened to her and then remarked.

"That was at a certain stage of development but we have to go beyond that. We are no longer at the time of Christ when one had to die to become victorious. Other Yogis and Avatars of the past came to prepare the Way and they have departed, but this time it is for us to achieve and gain the Victory."

Let us keep in our mind these words of Sri Aurobindo; for, we shall have occasion to refer to them again in the course of our essay.

1926

On 24 November 1926 there was the descent of the Overmind Godhead into the

physical, preparatory to the descent of Supermind and Ananda. A wonderful creation was the result; extraordinarily marvellous experiences followed in mass. The Mother could bring out the Divine Personalities and Powers into her body and physical being. The Power used, as Sri Aurobindo pointed out in a letter, was not that of the Supermind, but of the Overmind but it was sufficient for what was being done at that time. And this is what Sri Aurobindo said to the Mother

“Yes, this is an Overmind creation. It is very interesting, very well done. You will perform miracles which will make you famous throughout the world, you will be able to turn all events on earth topsy-turvy, indeed, it will be a great success. But it is an Overmind creation. And it is not success that we want; we want to establish the Supermind on earth. One must know how to renounce immediate success in order to create the new world, the supramental world in its integrality.”

And, as we have mentioned before, after 1926 Sri Aurobindo withdrew into concentration in order to hasten the manifestation of the supramental consciousness.

1932.

In this year Sri Aurobindo made a few statements of which the representative ones are as follows

(i) “If I believe in the probability and not only possibility, if I feel practically certain of the supramental Descent (I do not fix a date), it is because I have my grounds for the belief, not a faith in the air. I know that the supramental Descent is inevitable—I have faith in view of my experience that the time can be and should be now and not in a later age.” (*On Himself*, p. 469)

(ii) “When one is sure of the Truth, or even when one believes the thing one pursues to be the only possible solution, one does not stipulate for an immediate success, one travels towards the Light taking as well worth while and facing every risk of the adventure. Still...it is now, in this life that I insist on it and not in another or in the hereafter.” (*Ibid.*, p. 469)

(iii) “. I am putting forth all my efforts to bring down the supramental Force within a measurable time. I know that it will descend but I am seeking its near descent and, with whatever dark obstruction of the earth-nature or furious inroads of the Asuric forces seeking to prevent it, it is approaching the terrestrial soil.” (*Ibid.*, p. 465)

1933:

In this year Sri Aurobindo revealed. “No, the supramental has not descended into the body or into Matter—it is only at the point where such a descent has become not only possible but inevitable.” (*Ibid.*, p. 147)

1934.

Towards the end of this year, in the months of September, October and December, Sri Aurobindo made three observations which are quite significant:

(i) “The supramental Force is descending, but it has not yet taken possession of the body or of matter—there is still much resistance to that. It is supramentalised Overmind Force that has already touched, and this may at any time change into or give place to the supramental in its own native power.” (*Ibid.*, p. 470)

(ii) “The descent of the Supermind is a long process, or at least a process with a long preparation, and one can only say that the work is going on sometimes with a strong pressure for completion, sometimes retarded by the things that rise from below and have to be dealt with before further progress can be made. The process is a spiritual evolutionary process, concentrated into a brief period ..” (*Ibid.*, pp 470-71)

(iii) “As to whether the Divine seriously means something to happen, I believe it is intended. I know with absolute certitude that the supramental is a truth and that its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable. The question is as to the when and the how.... My faith and will are for the now.” (*Ibid.*, p. 167)

1935.

Now we are entering a critical period As the lower vital and the physical of the Sadhaks residing in the Ashram and surrounding Sri Aurobindo and the Mother could not keep pace, the Mother had to push the Divine Personalities and Powers, through which she was doing the action, behind a veil and come down into the physical human level and act according to its conditions, and that meant difficulty, struggle, illness, ignorance and inertia Sri Aurobindo indicated it around this time:

“I have not told X that I have been scaling and winging—on the contrary, I have been dealing with very hard practical facts. ”

“I am myself living in the physical consciousness.. At first it was a plunge into the physical—into all its obscurity and inertia, afterwards it was a station in the physical open to the higher and higher consciousness and slowly having fought out in it the struggle of transformation of the physical consciousness with a view to prepare it for the supramental change ” (*Ibid.*, p. 159)

*An unspecified year somewhere in the middle of the period 1926-1938:*

Now with a sense of trepidant awe we are going to refer to something which the Mother revealed for the first time in the year 1969.

After November 1926, sometime in the early part of 1927, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother moved from the ‘Library House’ (located in the western part of the present Ashram building) to live in the ‘Meditation House’ in the north-eastern portion of the premises. It was here in the ‘Meditation House’ that Sri Aurobindo got involved in an accident in his room and broke his right thigh-bone.

Now, according to the Mother’s account, some time during this period of 1926 to 1938, one day in course of a discussion the details of which the Mother could not recall, Sri Aurobindo said to the Mother. “We can’t both remain upon earth, one must go.” The Mother immediately replied. “I am ready. I’ll go.” Sri Aurobindo forcefully intervened and said: “No, you can’t go, your body is better than mine, you

can undergo the transformation better than I can do.’’

Later on, the Mother has said, she completely forgot about this particular conversation and remembered it with surprise only after Sri Aurobindo had actually left his body in December 1950.

1936:

The tone of Sri Aurobindo's utterances is now somewhat different. Here are three representative pieces:

(i) ‘‘. it is not with the Empyrean that I am busy. I wish it were. It is rather with the opposite end of things; it is in the Abyss that I have to plunge to build a bridge between the two. But that too is necessary for my work and one has to face it.’’ (*Ibid.*, p. 153)

(ii) ‘‘But, of course, anyone who wants to change earth-nature must first accept it in order to change it. To quote from an unpublished poem of my own:

He who would bring the heavens here,  
Must descend himself into clay  
And the burden of earthly nature bear  
And tread the dolorous way

(*Ibid.*, p. 153)

(iii) ‘‘I am not now trying to bring anything sensational down...but I am watching the progress in the action of the Force and Consciousness that are already there, the infiltration of a greater Light and Power from above, and there was [on the last Darshan Day, 15th August 1936] a very satisfactory crossing of a difficult border which promises well for the near future. A thing has been done which had long failed to accomplish itself and which is of great importance. I don't explain now, because it forms part of an arranged whole which is explicable only when it is complete. But it gives a sort of strong practical assurance that the thing will be done.’’ (*Ibid.*, p. 161)

1938:

This year came with an eager expectation among Sri Aurobindo's disciples, whether residing in the Ashram in Pondicherry or outside, that the supramental Truth-Consciousness was going to descend in this blessed year. It will be interesting to recall in this connection what Amal Kiran (otherwise known as K D Sethna) wrote to Sri Aurobindo from Bombay and how the Master reacted to it.

*Part of Amal Kiran's letter to Sri Aurobindo*

‘‘I am all agog to know whether I should pack up for Pondicherry Should I come away with my heart still below normal by medical standards?... This is a year in which, I believe, the Truth-Consciousness may make up its mind, or rather its

Supermind, to descend I was expecting a wire from Mother in May, it's almost the end of July now—but the year is not out yet, and August 15 is pretty close Won't I be losing something great if I don't throw all caution to the winds?" (July, 1938)

*Portion of Sri Aurobindo's reply*

"You must on no account return here before your heart has recovered . You need not be afraid of losing anything great by postponing your return to Pondicherry A general descent of the kind you speak of is not in view at the moment So there is no reason why you should not in this matter cleave to common sense and the sage advice of the doctors " (1-8-1938)

1945.

Seven more years pass and we come to the year 1945 when in the month of September Sri Aurobindo writes in another context.

"Let us then, without either excessive optimism or excessive pessimism, 'wait and see'." (*On Himself*, p 168)

1946

Now comes a very significant year with its most momentous event We are of course referring to the advent of Anandamayee in the earth-atmosphere

We all know that Sri Aurobindo in his book *The Mother* has mentioned four great aspects of the supreme Mother. Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati Towards the end of the book he writes

"There are other great Personalities of the Divine Mother, but they were more difficult to bring down and have not stood out in front with so much prominence in the evolution of the earth-spirit There are among them Presences indispensable for the supramental realisation,—most of all one who is her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flows from a supreme divine Love, the Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter " (*The Mother*, pp 35-36)

Now, on Mother's revelation, this Anandamayee, the Mother of Delight, came down in the earth-atmosphere in 1946, bringing with her a splendour of power and love, an intensity of divine joy unknown to the earth till then. The physical atmosphere was completely changed by her advent, saturated with new and marvellous possibilities. But there was a serious hitch As the Mother herself has explained.

"But for her to be able to settle and act down here, she needed to meet with at least a minimum of receptivity, to find at least one human being having the requisite qualities in the vital and physical nature, a kind of super-Parsifal endowed with a spontaneous and integral purity, but at the same time having a strong and balanced body in order to bear the intensity of the Ananda she had brought without giving way. Till now she has not obtained what was necessary So, at times, she thinks of withdrawing, finding that the world is not ready to receive her. And this would be a

cruel loss.... For, of all the aspects of the Mother, this is the one which has the greatest power for the transformation of the body." (*Questions and Answers, 1954*, p. 292)

So, it was a very critical situation brought about by the general lack of receptivity on the part of men. The Mother put the responsibility for it on the Inconscient and it was there that she tried to give battle. There was a terrible fight with the Inconscient and the Mother remarked on 25 August 1954:

"I don't say that this had no result, but between the result obtained and the result hoped for, there was a great difference." (*Ibid*, p. 294)

The question was where to go from there. When we seek for an answer to this most serious situation we are led to the most critical year 1949 when a profound drama would be unfolded. But before we proceed to that, let us look at the state of affairs in the two intervening years 1947 and 1948.

1947:

We have seen above that the Mother referred to her fight with the Inconscient. Now it was Sri Aurobindo's turn to speak of the resistance he was encountering from the same Inconscient and this is how he summed up the situation at that stage. He wrote on 7 July 1947:

"My present effort is not to stand up on a high and distant Supermind level and change the world from there, but to bring something of it down here and to stand on that and act by that; but at the present stage the progressive supramentalisation of the Overmind is the first immediate preoccupation and a second is the lightening of the heavy resistance of the Inconscient and the support it gives to human ignorance which is always the main obstacle in any attempt to change the world or even to change oneself" (*On Himself*, p. 170)

1948:

Sri Aurobindo ominously hinted on 18 July 1948: "Things are bad, are growing worse and may at any time grow worst or worse than worst if that is possible —and anything however paradoxical seems possible in the present perturbed world" (*Ibid.*, p. 171)

What could be, we wonder, 'worse than worst' than the sudden 'departure' of Sri Aurobindo in a couple of years' time? And 'paradoxical'? Was it not absolutely paradoxical for Sri Aurobindo to leave his body leaving his constantly affirmed life-mission apparently unfulfilled?

But nothing came as a surprise to Sri Aurobindo himself. He as the Avatar and the Mahayogi was exercising the ultimate control over the whole course of development and declared:

"I have never had any illusions about the path being comfortable and easy; I knew all along that the work could only be done if all the essential difficulties rose and were faced, so their rising cannot tire or dishearten me, whatever obstinacy there

may be in the difficulties, whether our own or in the Sadhaks or in Nature ” . “ . it would not have done to postpone them for a later time.” (*Ibid* , pp 469-70, 171)

But at the same time he could not but point out. “ . it could be done otherwise (by what men would regard as a miraculous intervention) only if the human mind were more flexible and less attached to its ignorance than it is.” (*Ibid.*, p. 471)

But supposing that the human mind failed to do so, what would happen in that case? Would the attempt at bringing down the supermind be given up as something intrinsically unrealisable? Surely not; for, Sri Aurobindo resolved that in that eventuality “we [Mother and Sri Aurobindo] had of course to go on anyhow until the supramental descent came down to the material level ” (*Ibid* , p. 473)

For he was absolutely sure of the Truth of his mission and of the inevitability of its accomplishment Did he not declare with the commanding tone of the Supreme only a couple of years before in 1946?—

“I have never had a strong and persistent will for anything to happen in the world—I am not speaking of personal things—which did not eventually happen even after delay, defeat or even disaster.” (*Ibid.*, p 169)

So, Sri Aurobindo was determined that his mission of supramental transformation should succeed. But the human receptivity was not there, the earth-conditions were not ready; and the dark Inconscient was offering all its stark Denial Confronted with this situation Sri Aurobindo, let us timidly suggest, changed his course of action and decided to score victory through the door of apparent ‘defeat’. What followed then is as thrilling as it is mysterious The Mother has revealed to us what happened behind the scene, and behind the knowledge of their disciples, in the closing period of the year 1949, just a little more than a year before Sri Aurobindo passed away

1949:

Twelve swift-winged months are given to him and her,  
This day returning Satyavan must die.

*Savitri* (cent ed ), p. 431

All that follows now is entirely based on the Mother’s narration. One day towards the end of the year 1949 the Mother and Sri Aurobindo were discussing the situation prevailing at that time. They faced certain conditions in their Work which the Mother has never revealed to others for she felt the time for that had not yet come.

Anyway, the basic situation was like this either of them would have to sacrifice his or her body for the furtherance of their Work Now, the identification of the two great beings was so complete that it would have been child’s play for the Mother to drop her physical body and merge in Sri Aurobindo. And in the reverse way it was so with Sri Aurobindo. at a moment’s notice he could quit his body and completely merge in the Mother

Faced with this situation the Mother suggested to Sri Aurobindo, not in an inner



communication but in actually pronounced words, that absolutely without any regret or difficulty she was ready to give up her body and melt in him.

Sri Aurobindo immediately intervened and replied to the Mother, again not in an inner communication but in actually pronounced words. "Your body is indispensable for the Work; without your body the Work cannot be done"

The Mother did not say anything more; for, she felt, it was not her affair, it was Sri Aurobindo's, and the discussion was closed at that. But what followed then passes our imagination

After Sri Aurobindo had said to the Mother in a very firm tone, "If necessary for the transformation, I might go, but you will have to fulfil our Yoga of supramental descent and transformation"—and it was towards the end of the year 1949 or the very early part of 1950—the Mahayogi allowed—yes, deliberately allowed—a disease to invade and settle down in his body by slow degrees. For he knew, as the Mother has revealed, that she had the power to leave her body whenever she wanted and that if she ever came to know that Sri Aurobindo was preparing to go, she would disobey him and leave her body even before he could leave his own. Therefore he made the Mother, we may say, forget all about the aforementioned discussion and did not touch the topic any more even once till the last minute of his life. Instead, he allowed his body to be stricken by the onset of the disease as if it were quite a normal and innocuous one and could be tackled in the routine way. He kept his divine plan completely hidden from the physical consciousness of the Mother

Yet it is a fact that in course of the coming twelve months once or twice the Mother in her occult audition 'heard' certain ominous things concerning Sri Aurobindo and she immediately brought this to the Master's notice. She added that she felt these were suggestions coming from the Adversary and that she fought against them with all her power.

At this Sri Aurobindo looked at the Mother twice, mildly shook his head and just smiled. He did not utter a single word nor did he allow the discussion to continue. And the Mother on her part went back to a state of oblivious unmindfulness. Because, as the Mother has insisted, such was the will of Sri Aurobindo

In one of the just preceding paragraphs we have had the occasion to employ a somewhat strange phraseology, 'Sri Aurobindo *deliberately* accepting illness in his body', and this surely must have intrigued our readers. But such was indeed the case. For Sri Aurobindo had a perfect mastery over his body and over all the forces of illness. On innumerable occasions the Mother had watched Sri Aurobindo removing in a trice pain and disease from others' bodies without the slightest physical intervention, merely by extending his subtle physical hand onto and into the sick man's physical frame, plucking out the particular illness and throwing it out. The Mother has said that it was so wonderful to look at this occult action of Sri Aurobindo.

She has in this connection referred to one of her own illnesses. She had contracted a very grave disease while in Japan. The specialist physician trained in Germany cautioned her about its serious consequences in a future period of her life

and advised her to adopt all sorts of specified measures.

When she came to Pondicherry in April 1920, one day she spoke to Sri Aurobindo about her malady. He merely looked at the Mother and then smiled. And the disease was gone, completely gone, without leaving any trace behind for it to recur. And the Mother specified. "I had not done anything, not taken any medicine, nor taken any precautions. I merely spoke to Sri Aurobindo and he looked at me and then smiled. I never again spoke about my illness nor did he inquire. And the disease was gone for good."

While speaking about this Yogic power of Sri Aurobindo the Mother once remarked: "It was absolutely superhuman. There is not a single human being who would be able to do a similar thing. And what mastery over his body! Absolute, absolute!"

Such being the case it seemed strange that Sri Aurobindo himself fell a victim to a serious type of illness in the year 1950. In the very critical days before he actually passed away, Champaklal and Nirodbaran, the two most devoted disciple-attendants of Sri Aurobindo for many years, once ventured to ask him to act on his own ailing body and cure himself of the disease that had set in. But the Master answered that he was not acting on his body and would not. Terribly puzzled and disappointed the disciples asked again "But why not?" Sri Aurobindo's cryptic reply was. "Can't explain. You won't understand." Indeed, how could he act yogically to remove his illness when he had himself *deliberately* accepted it as a sort of alibi for passing away?

Anyway, after the significant 1949-discussion with the Mother and after she had completely forgotten everything about it, Sri Aurobindo's voluntarily admitted disease went slowly on in its imperceptible and at times perceptible course till it reached its acme in the first week of December, 1950.

At last the Day of days arrived and "this was the day when Satyavan must die." for, as the Mother pointed out at a later date, "Sri Aurobindo passed away when he had to pass away, when he had decided to pass away."

*(To be continued)*

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJEE

## TRYST

At the zenith of a night when the world had slept  
We felt blest to have fulfilled our tryst with destiny  
Ploughing through holocaust of fire to the glory we dreamt  
And got back our homes and the soul we had lost by our folly  
We fixed this euphoria in covenant of wisdom by the best of us  
And the tallest of the World so fond of the good of all of us  
We did it in Frames of steel we hoped to last for ever to bear us.  
But somewhere we tripped then on and the soul seems slipping again  
At the first tryst now, forgotten and the gropings resumed.

For, we have now perfected the art of proving our ambitions as achievements  
Plans as progress and explaining our blunders as inevitable accidents  
But can show how the other man should work to our perfection but fails us  
And as this Nation belongs to us and not we to it, we better take back its reins  
As it ought to serve us to the limits of our greed till someone can bridle us  
But, dear, this Nation of lovable humanity in opulence of variety and serenity  
A garland of rainbow colours that had resisted all ravages in ageless unity  
Deserves much better than our divisive rule where we play now deeper  
than before  
To snap its thread and shred its flowers in fond abandon that the Frame would  
shield us  
Shouldn't we again become the tallest and the wisest at least in some amongst us  
At this tryst after independence to which we have progressed?

At the dawn of mankind when none else had awoken  
We had made a tryst with eternity that we belonged to the World  
Not one but three, the here, the nether and the beyond  
And nothing belonged to us, as we were of this ocean cradled in its  
dancing waves  
For, we had sensed an order, a truth, a beauty, a goodness to bewitch us  
We called this *dharma* and concurred with Vyasa that it is this that is eternal  
The garland is deathless and the flowers fleet on as we alone are ephemeral  
And this *dharma* will bear us till we desert, showering peace and progress  
Blending in skilful yoga a renouncing saint and a warring hero  
It is this tryst eternal that we shall ever keep and cherish

K H KRISHNAMURTHY

## PERSPECTIVES ON MODERN GLOBALISM

In each phase or cycle of human evolution we can find a single master-idea or a few ideas shaping the course of events or the civilisation of that period. The master-ideas of the pre-rational cycles of evolution were God, immortality and spiritual salvation. The advent of the rational age gave birth to the ideals of science, humanism, evolution and the triple ideals of the French revolution: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The advent of the industrial revolution brought the ideal of socio-economic development or “progress” through the application of Science and Technology. The ideas which are in the boiling-pot of the contemporary world are those of ecology and environment, sustainable development, spiritual evolution of mankind, globalism and holism. Among these new ideas that which is much discussed and talked about is “Globalism”. This article examines this idea in the light of Sri Aurobindo’s thought.

### Globalism and Holism

The concept of globalism is now trumpeted by everyone as the master-idea of the future. But the question is: “What is the type of globalism which can bring a lasting solution to the problem of humanity and fulfill the higher evolutionary destiny of Man?” The present brand of globalism is primarily an economic, commercial and scientific globalism which is the result of two modern perceptions. First is the pragmatic perception of the economic and commercial interdependence of nations and second is the insight of modern science—especially modern physics, biology and system science—into the truth of Unity of Man and Nature in the physical and biological dimension.

But the most interesting feature of the present globalism is that the concern for the preservation of Nature has relegated even humanism into the background. The modern ecologist argues that if Man is an integral part of Nature and his well-being is inseparably interwoven with the ecological condition of Nature then an exclusive Humanism which aims at the well-being and development of humanity at the expense of or apart from the well-being of other living organisms in the biological and animal kingdom is from the longterm point of view not a viable philosophy. So the new and emerging philosophy is “holism” which argues that Man and Nature form an integral whole and have to grow in symbiotic harmony with each other. This is the modern synthesis of humanism, ecology and globalism. Here again the crucial question is whether this is the best possible synthesis. To answer this question we have to first examine what are the contributions and shortcomings of the present globalism and the preceding movement of pure humanism, and the modern synthesis and their longterm viability. For the values and ideals released by these modern movements belong to the idea-forces of the future, the highest truth, significance and purpose of which are not yet fully understood by the modern mind.

## Religion of Humanity and Globalism

But to understand the significance and impact of globalism we should have some understanding of the significance and impact of humanism in the evolution of humanity. For, the Indian spiritual thought moves towards some form of a spiritual Humanism as the collective ideal of the future.

Humanism is the result of the eighteenth century philosophical movement which gave birth to the triple values of the French Revolution Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The fundamental tenet of Humanism is that Man and not God should be the object to be worshipped and should be the focus of all development. The highest well-being, progress and development of the individual and collective life of man in his present terrestrial existence and not some postmortem heavenly salvation, asserts the humanistic thinker, should be the goal of human life. The philosophy of humanism is one of the most influential movements of thought in the history of civilisation. Its action was subtle and silent without the noise and pomp and fury of organised religions, but effected a profound revolution in the thought and sentiment of the race. Sri Aurobindo sums up the contributions of humanism for human progress.

It, to some degree, humanised society, humanised law and punishment, humanised the outlook of man on man, abolished legalised torture and the cruder forms of slavery, raised those who were depressed and fallen, gave large hopes to humanity, stimulated philanthropy and charity and the service of mankind, encouraged everywhere the desire of freedom, put a curb on oppression and greatly minimised its more brutal expressions. It had almost succeeded in humanising war and would perhaps have succeeded entirely but for the contrary trend of modern Science. It made it possible for man to conceive of a world free from war as imaginable even without waiting for the Christian millennium. At any rate, this much change came about that, while peace was formerly a rare interlude of constant war, war became an interlude, if a much too frequent interlude of peace, though as yet only of an armed peace. That may not be a great step, but still it was a step forward. It gave new conceptions of the dignity of the human being and opened new ideas and new vistas of his education, self-development and potentiality. It spread enlightenment; it made man feel more his responsibility for the progress and happiness of the race; it raised the average self-respect and capacity of mankind; it gave hope to the serf, self-assertion to the down-trodden and made the labourer in his manhood the potential equal of the rich and powerful. True, if we compare what is with what should be, the actual achievement with the ideal, all this will seem only a scanty work of preparation. But it was a remarkable record for a century and a half or a little more and for an unembodied spirit which had to work through what instruments it could find and had as yet no form, habitation or visible engine of its own concentrated workings. But perhaps it was in this that lay its power and

advantage, since that saved it from crystallising into a form and getting petrified or at least losing its more free and subtle action<sup>1</sup>

Thus we can see that this Religion of Humanity had triggered a silent moral revolution in the thoughts and sentiments of the race with a positive effect on the social and political life of humanity. This is the positive contribution of Humanism to human evolution. Now let us look at the contributions of globalism.

Globalism is now emerging as a pragmatic necessity for the very economic survival of groups and nations and for solving national problems. Human life, especially the economic and commercial life, has become so closely interdependent that even the problems of individual nations cannot be solved without help and co-operation from other groups and nations outside their territorial boundaries. "To solve local problems with a global outlook" is now becoming the practical motto of modern development strategy. This means that mutual interdependence, if not yet unity, has now become a vital need of the race. Evolutionary nature has driven the vital ego of Man to the corner and has compelled it towards acceptance of the Law of Mutuality. On the other side, discoveries of modern science in physics, ecology and systems theory have led to a reasoned acceptance of the truth of Unity of Man and Nature by the higher mind of humanity and a practical acceptance of the truth by the pragmatic mind of Man. Just as the eighteenth-century Humanism implanted a positive mental idea and sentiments for humanity and the Unity of Mankind in the consciousness of the race, the present ecological globalism has implanted a positive mental idea and sentiment for Nature and the Unity of Man and Nature in human consciousness. Just as the earlier Religion of Humanity had a positive effect on the political life of humanity, the present ecological globalism is bound to have a positive effect on society towards a practical recognition of the unity and interdependence of Man and Nature. Both these religions of the modern age are able to compel the pragmatic vital mind of humanity to accept and recognise some higher human and ecological values.

But none of these modern religions was able to change the essential motives of the vital ego in man. They are able to enlighten the pragmatic mind of man to make it a little bit more accommodative and receptive to higher values—this itself is of course a considerable achievement—but not able to persuade the vital being to renounce its ego and self-interest. This means acceptance of these higher values is not real but only practical, a matter of long-term "strategy". Here we bump again into some of the bedrock limitations of the human mind. The mental idea and sentiments can only modify the outer mind of man but cannot change the roots of his life and action.

The idea of the intellect and the sentiments are not able to transform the vital being in man which is the source of his life and action. The mental idea, if it is powerful, can compel the vital mind towards its theoretical acceptance and if it supports itself with some irrefutable scientific and practical evidence, can force the vital will towards a practical recognition of the idea. Ultimately, however, the primi-

tive but more powerful feelings, instincts and impulses of the vital being of man overwhelm the idea and sentiment. This is because for the vital being these feelings, instincts and impulses are much more concretely real and compelling than the abstract mental ideas and sentiments. The other defect of the mind is in its approach and attitude towards the realisation of the ideal. The pragmatic vital mind of man, the moment it gets excited over an idea, plunges headlong into action in creating an outer machinery for realising the ideal in society. In the case of Religion of Humanity Sri Aurobindo points out. "It has laboured to establish a political, social and legal liberty, equality and mutual help in an equal association."<sup>2</sup> In the case of the present economic and ecological globalism, the attempt to realise the ideal is taking the same course. towards the creation of an outer international economic, political and legal machinery for a more balanced and enlightened exploitation of Nature with a more mutually accommodative association of group self-interests. The pragmatic vital mind, finding that interdependence has become an imperative law of the contemporary society, is ready to sacrifice a little bit of its self-interest and become a little bit more generous in order to survive and prosper in an increasingly interwoven "global village", finding that physical Nature can no longer support its aggressive and ruthless exploitation of her resources, it is ready to enlarge its vision to include "environment" and that too to safeguard its long-term self-interest. We must remember here that it is not the love of Nature or the scientific discoveries of ecology which led to a rapid diffusion of the environmental movement but the vital motives of fear of survival, mounting pressure of public opinion supported by irrefutable scientific evidence and actual facts of environmental damage, long-term commercial interest and recently a much more positive and refined motive of "sustainable development". Here we must distinguish clearly between the "environmental" motives of a cultured aesthetic and poetic mind which loves and adores the beauty of Nature, the pure truth-seeking scientific mind which on the basis of a clear insight into the laws of ecology counsels environmental preservation as the only logical policy and the pragmatic vital mind which opts for "environment" as a long-term "strategy".

But "globalism" is incompatible with self-assertive egoism. Globalism is not likely to solve human problems if it is based on the same old motives of competitive self-interest, expansion and development of the individual and collective ego, especially the vital ego. The globalism which is so much bandied about in the contemporary commercial world is of the dubious kind based on the expansive ambitions of corporate egos. Previously the political ambitions of Nations gave birth to the game of empire-building and the phenomenon of colonialism. Now the same phenomenon is happening on the economic and commercial plane. In fact the same old process has been transferred from the political to the economic level. In our modern commercial world "globalism" is only a modern euphemism for building huge world-wide industrial and commercial empires. The same old game of domination, war, conquest, colonialism is played with the same old motives but in a different arena with more subtle and sophisticated methods and weapons.

### Towards a Global Consciousness

So the present form of globalism is not likely to solve the problems of humanity. It has only “globalised” the unchanged motives of the vital corporate ego without creating any sincere aspiration in human consciousness for unity and harmony. But a global society can be realised only on the basis of a global consciousness. This requires a compromising renunciation of the ego and its motives. To talk about globalism keeping the competitive self-interest of the ego intact is to indulge in glaring contradiction bordering on insincerity and hypocrisy. As long as the self-interest and self-assertion of the individual and collective ego remain the central motive of human and social development, globalism will also remain a concept in the mind of the thinkers and an empty word and pretence on the lips of the politicians. The dream of a global society begins to become a possibility only when the present practical acceptance of the mutual interdependence of the world—and the mental acceptance of the ideal of the Unity of Mankind and the Unity of Man and Nature—grows and deepens into a living vision and a real acceptance of the ideal of unity and, as a consequence, harmony and integration as the basic motives of social organisation.

We would like to re-emphasise here that it is not enough that this ideal of unity remains as a shining ideal in the higher mind of humanity, it has to move the policy and decision levers in every level of the economic, social and political life of humanity. This can happen only when the vital consciousness and will in man consents to the ideal, not out of practical necessity or forced by circumstances, but as the result of a sincere and enlightened perception of the truth of unity. This requires a radical change in this part of human nature which is possible only through a spiritual transformation. For unity exists as a living, concrete and experiential reality only in the consciousness of the soul or in the spiritual dimension of Man. Mind can conceive this truth of unity only as an ideal abstraction or feel it as a sentiment or at best perceive it as an intellectual insight. But, as we have said, these mental verities do not have the power to transform the vital instincts and impulses. The idealistic, intellectual and rational mind is not able to gain a sincere acceptance of the ideal from the vital being in man because it is not able to make the vital being *feel* the truth of the ideal. This is again due to the fact that the idealistic rational mind itself is not able to feel and experience the truth of the ideal as a concrete reality. Only the Soul and Spirit in man can see, feel, live and experience the truth of unity as a concrete self-evident reality and therefore can make the mind and vital—if and when they become receptive to it—share in its own experience and transform them in its higher light and power. So a global society can become a reality only when humanity as a whole—not perhaps *en masse* and in a single block but gradually through various stages—is able to rise beyond mind and live in the consciousness of the Spirit and impose the harmonious mastery of the light and power and unity of the Spirit on the diversity of life.



The human mind was able to catch rightly the basic principles of a global society. The Unity of Man and Nature which is the ideal of modern ecology; the interdependence of human life which is now being felt with an increasing concreteness in the economic, industrial and commercial life as the result of a rapidly expanding "global" commercial life; the unity, well-being and progress of Mankind—along with the great values of the French Revolution—Liberty, Equality and Fraternity—which is the ideal of the Religion of Humanity; these are and must be the principles of a global society. But the mind was not able to perceive the deeper truth behind these ideals in all its integrality and comprehensiveness. So there was a faulty misapplication in the approach and the method for realising the ideal in life. Instead of first trying to make the ideal real to the consciousness of the people and allowing it to take an outward form in life as a spontaneous movement from within outwards, a gigantic effort was made to give an outer social form to the ideal through the external organisation and machinery.

But the inward or psychological approach to globalism is not totally against or opposed to the outer approach through organisation; it only calls for a shift in emphasis from the outer to the inner because it believes that outer unity can be stable and secure only when it is based on an inner unity of consciousness; so its emphasis will not be on building a global organisation but on creating a global consciousness in the mind and heart and soul of the human race.

M S SRINIVASAN

### *References*

- 1 *SABCL*, Vol 15, pp 543-44
- 2 *Ibid*, p 546

## SHIVA THE LORD

O MIGHTY destroyer  
of evil  
that menaces creation—

O tremendous might  
creating, sustaining  
what is to come.

From your Himalayan summit  
You came  
to take possession of my heart.

At the thought of you  
my heart trembles in delight  
prostrate I lie before you

Rays of splendour  
surround you, as  
with mighty feet  
you trample down  
the evil-doer—  
whilst your heart, ever  
in love with your splendid  
Shakti—  
testifies your creative urge.

Your arms uplift those who  
worship you, O Lord—  
Greatest among the Great!  
Their hearts ever sing. .  
Satyam. Shivam, Sundaram!

I pray, destroy in me  
—who loves you—  
that which is dark,  
uplift the small light  
in my heart  
to your higher Light

## SHIVA'S PLAY WITH THE SHADOW

LORD Shiva was seated in meditation on the highest summit of the world, Mount Kailash. The day passed, night came, and then another day and another night. Then early one morning when the sun had risen above the horizon he opened his eyes and saw his shadow on the ground to his left.

The shadow spoke to him "Lord Shiva, I pray give me true being." Shiva smiled, took a golden leaf from the aswattha, the holy tree of being, and gave it to the shadow "Seven times nine," he said to the shadow, "you may toss the leaf into the air between us. If it alights only once with its point towards you, you will have true being."

Seven times nine times the shadow tossed up the golden leaf, and seven times nine times the leaf fell with its point towards Shiva, but not once towards the shadow, because only Shiva is true being.

When evening came, the disappointed shadow took the golden leaf with him into the underworld, the world of shadows. There he showed it to the demon kings who dwell there, and told them of his game with Shiva. The demon kings made fun of him. They considered nobody and nothing to be more real than themselves, and they were so sure of themselves that they were ready to wager their most precious treasures, saying that they would win the game if the shadow would only play it with them. He agreed to do so.

Now in the underworld the leaf had become black, and so when they played, it always pointed towards the blackest, towards the shadow, who even as the mere shadow of Shiva had more being than the demon kings. So the shadow won every time, and won all the beautiful treasures the demon kings had staked.

The next morning, loaded with all the riches he had won, the shadow returned to Shiva. "I will give you all I have," he said, "only give me true being." From the tree of love Shiva took a coral-coloured leaf which had the shape of a heart. "Let us play," he said to the shadow. "If you lose, you will give me the riches of the demon kings, and if you win, you shall have true being." "All right," the shadow answered cunningly, "if the tip of the leaf points to you, you lose." The shadow did not know that the leaf of love always shows its opening to Shiva, because Shiva is God also in the kingdom of love. So the shadow lost again. In the evening he slunk away with the coral-coloured leaf into the underworld.

There this leaf too became black, and again the shadow won all the games. In the morning he returned to Shiva, put all his treasures at his feet and begged him to play once more. From the tree of life Shiva plucked a green leaf with the shape of a four-leaved clover. The shadow plucked out one of the four leaves, the leaf of consciousness, so that only three remained. Confidently he announced, "If one of the three leaves points to you, I win." The shadow thought he had three chances to one, and since he believed in chance he thought he was bound to win. But the green leaf always turned its empty space to Shiva, so that he might refill it, for Shiva is also pure consciousness.

Again the shadow lost, and in the evening disappeared into the underworld where he told everything to the demon kings, played his game with them, and won as before.

The next morning he again offered Shiva the treasures of the demon kings, and asked for another game. This time Shiva plucked a leaf from the tree of wisdom, a blue diamond-shaped leaf. Still believing in chance the shadow asked, "If one of these four points turns only once to me, will I then have true being?" Shiva smiled and agreed. Seven times nine times the leaf fell in such a way that not once did it point to the shadow. Each time it pointed to Shiva, because Shiva is also the fount of wisdom. In the evening the shadow took the blue leaf and retreated into the shadow world.

There he played again with the demons, and the next morning he laid all his treasures at the feet of Shiva, asking him for a last game. Shiva plucked a leaf from the fifth tree of paradise, the tree of bliss. This leaf was of pure light, and round like a little sun. To be quite sure that he would win now, the shadow said, "Only when the little stem of this leaf points directly to you, have you won. If it does not point to you, I have won." Shiva smiled. Seven times nine times the leaf fell between them and seven times nine times its stem pointed to Shiva, because Shiva is the origin of all bliss.

Then the shadow understood that there is no such thing as chance, and that only as Shiva's shadow could he participate in Shiva's being—the sole being. Only through Shiva, as an obedient shadow, could he participate in the love, the consciousness, the wisdom and the bliss of true being. So he begged for permission to remain during the night also at Shiva's feet, and the God granted his prayer. Sixty-four mega-years the shadow sat immobile at the feet of the blissful consciousness, and each mega-year he imprinted a leaf with the truth and the power that came to him from Shiva, and sixty-four times Shiva gave his blessing, touching each leaf.

The demon kings continued to play with the four shadow leaves, which in their ignorance of paradise they called spade, heart, diamond and club. They played with these leaves for the shadowy treasures of the shadow worlds.

But the sun, who had seen the true game, taught his son Ikshwaku, the first king of Earth's Solar dynasty, the secrets of all the symbols of truth and power, and also how to play with them. Ikshwaku taught the game to his son, who did likewise, so that it was passed down from generation to generation. It remained one of the treasures of the Solar dynasty, and thus it came about that the rishis and the seers, the gods and the yogis were able to play with the true leaves, the symbols of transformation, which show the way to the eternal seat of being and consciousness and bliss.

MEDHANANDA

(From Medhananda's *The Eternity Game*, as reported by Sibylle Hablik-Sharma)

## **JAPANESE THINGS\***

### **THE SCREEN**

ON the great imperial screen  
scenes of seasonal labour:  
in this way the Emperor  
is acquainted with the people

### **THE COMBS**

A lover of small things  
and peculiar detail  
told me to look out  
for the combs, painted,  
enamelled, and inlaid  
with mother-of-pearl.  
He was right. the combs  
lead the imagination  
to black hair, framing  
faces in various moods.

### **THE ARMOUR**

The warrior's pride:  
a black head-dress  
crowned by a pair  
of pure gold horns.  
It weighs me down.

MARTA GUHA

\* Written after visiting the Great Japan Exhibition in London

## SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

*(Continued from the issue of July 1999)*

THE present contrast, then, is between the Western science-based materialist civilisation and India's "still persistent" spiritual culture. Before we venture to decide which is the better of the two, we should begin by acknowledging their honourable separate existence without summarily damning one as barbarous and extolling the other as the only possible civilisation. Unfortunately in a discussion like this, which should be conducted on an informed intellectual level, politics often romps in to confuse the issue. That the British (a Western power) happened to rule at the time didn't by itself prove that Western civilisation was superior at all points to India's, but not only imperialist spokesmen intoxicated by the sense of power, even many Indians too felt hypnotised by the West's political ascendancy and castigated unreservedly India's "decadent" civilisation. On the other hand, the reform movements of the nineteenth century and the spiritual phenomenon of Ramakrishna and his disciple Vivekananda's sensational appearance at Chicago gave the needed break, opened the world's eyes to the persisting vitality of India's spiritual culture, and there was no reason to be apologetic of being defeated as before. Sri Aurobindo thought that the time had come to ask the right questions about culture and to formulate answers in a spirit of "aggressive defence".

Sri Aurobindo points out "This question of Indian civilisation, once it has raised this greater issue, shifts from its narrow meaning and disappears into a much larger problem. Does the future of humanity lie in a culture founded solely upon reason and science? Is the progress of human life the effort of a mind, a continuous collective mind constituted by an ever changing sum of transient individuals, that has emerged from the darkness of the inconscient material universe and is stumbling about in it in search of some clear light and some sure support amid its difficulties and problems? And does civilisation consist in man's endeavour to find that light and support in a rationalised knowledge and a rationalised way of life? An ordered knowledge of the powers, forces, possibilities of physical Nature and of the psychology of man as a mental and physical being is then the only true science. An ordered use of that knowledge for a progressive social efficiency and well-being, which will make his brief existence more efficient, more tolerable, more comfortable, happier, better appointed, more luxuriously enriched with the pleasures of the mind, life and body, is the only true art of life. All our philosophy, all our religion,—supposing religion has not been outgrown and rejected,—all our science, thought, art, social structure, law and institution must found itself upon this idea of existence and must serve this one aim and endeavour. This is the formula which European civilisation has accepted and is still labouring to bring into some kind of realisation. It is the formula of an intelligently mechanised civilisation supporting a rational and utilitarian culture.

"Or is not the truth of our being rather that of a Soul embodied in Nature which

is seeking to know itself, to find itself to enlarge its consciousness, to arrive at a greater way of existence, to progress in the spirit and grow into the full light of self-knowledge and some divine inner perfection”<sup>1</sup>

Whatever had been the petrified attitudes of the past on the West-question, in the twentieth century the world was awakening at last, both to the insufficiency of reason and science and technology and to the possibilities promised by the integral Indian view that made spirituality the basis of the whole music of existence. And the very necessity for an “aggressive defence” of the Indian view would make it incumbent on the advocate to take a larger perspective as well

Sri Aurobindo says: “Certainly we must repel with vigour every disintegrating or injurious attack; but it is much more important to form our own true and independent view of our own past achievement, present position and future possibilities,— what we were, what we are and what we may be. In our past we must distinguish all that was great, essential, elevating, vitalising, illuminating, victorious, effective. And in that again we must distinguish what was close to the permanent essential spirit and the persistent law of our cultural being and separate from it what was temporary and transiently formulated. For all that was great in the past cannot be preserved as it was or repeated for ever, there are new needs, there are other vistas before us. But we have to distinguish too what was deficient, ill-grasped, imperfectly formulated or only suited to the limiting needs of the age or unfavourable circumstances. For it is quite idle to pretend that all in the past, even at its greatest, was entirely admirable and in its kind the highest consummate achievement of the human mind and spirit. Afterwards we have to make a comparison of this past with our present and to understand the causes of our decline and seek the remedy of our shortcomings and ailments. Our sense of the greatness of our past must not be made a fatally hypnotising lure to inertia, it should be rather an inspiration to renewed and greater achievement. But in our criticism of the present we must not be one-sided or condemn with a foolish impartiality all that we are or have done. Neither flattering or glossing over our downfall nor fouling our nest to win the applause of the stranger, we have to note our actual weakness and its roots, but to fix too our eyes with a still firmer attention on our elements of strength, our abiding potentialities, our dynamic impulses of self-renewal.”<sup>2</sup>

If there had been triumphs, there had been failures too, even catastrophic reverses, and a critical review of both must help us to draw the right lessons so that we may be in a position, from a sure ground of self-knowledge, to take a leap into the future.

Sri Aurobindo stated: “The spirit and ideals of our civilisation need no defence for in their best parts and in their essence they were of eternal value. India’s internal and individual seeking of them was earnest, powerful, effective”<sup>3</sup>

Sri Aurobindo has mentioned “If we are to live at all, we must resume India’s great interrupted endeavour, we must take up boldly and execute thoroughly in the individual and in the society, in the spiritual and in the mundane life, in philosophy

and religion, in art and literature, in thought, in political and economic and social formulation the full and unlimited sense of her highest spirit and knowledge. And if we do that, we shall find that the best of what comes to us draped in Occidental forms, is already implied in our own ancient wisdom and has there a greater spirit behind it, a profounder truth and self-knowledge and the capacity of a will to nobler and more ideal formations. Only we need to work out thoroughly in life what we have always known in the spirit. There and nowhere else lies the secret of the needed harmony between the essential meaning of our past culture and the environmental requirements of our future''<sup>4</sup>

It was with these large aims, and not in any narrow spirit of disputation, that Sri Aurobindo launched upon this "aggressive defence", that is, perhaps more correctly described as an impassioned exercise in global comprehension

*(To be continued)*

NILIMA DAS

#### *References*

- 1 *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, SABCL, Vol 14, p 13
- 2 *Ibid*, p 33
- 3 *Ibid*, p 36
- 4 *Ibid*, p 37

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## BHAVANI

I SEARCHED for her  
On the mountains and rivers  
In the forests and deserts  
Of the Indian mind.

And then one evening  
In the light of the setting sun  
I met her upon a lonely hill  
Amidst the mountains of Vindhyachal.

She fixed her silent gaze  
Upon my inner eye  
And blessed me with a smile.  
Thereafter, there was nothing more  
To ask or see or say.

SURESH THADANI



## K. D. SETHNA: THE PROSE WRITER

### THE MASTERFUL EASE

*(Continued from the issue of May 1999)*

READERS of Sethna's prose tend to overlook an element of clarity, which suddenly lights up the densely argumentative texture of his prose. A sudden rush of eloquence comes from somewhere and shapes itself into a very well-balanced exposition of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. Listen to the following passage where he explains the modern variety of mysticism, which is solidly grounded on Matter:

We who live in the age of Sri Aurobindo cannot be escapists. There is nothing in mysticism to compel us to renounce earth and not attempt a radical reshaping of it. For, between Spirit and Matter no gulf yawns as between abstract and concrete. The Spirit is described by all who have realised it as more dense, more powerful, more actual to all our faculties than the table at which I am sitting and the typewriter at which I am banging away (*The Thinking Corner*, p. 51)

But Sethna never leaves it there by just smart superficialities. His clearer mode goes on to explain the details which he has learnt by experience, with the help of yoga:

What we call the world of sense is not foreign to the Spirit. Doubtless, the senses are given a new mode of action, a hidden Godhead becomes real to them in every cosmic phenomenon even as to our ideative and emotional nature. This recasts our habitual desires and activities—we have no longer the narrow selfish grab, the small jealous clutch; our greediness and our grossness are lost, but we are not "sicklied o'er" with an impoverishment of the essence of sensuous rapture. (*Ibid.*, p. 51)

This prose has not been assisted by a random reference from books. Experience is the authentic smell behind it, an experience which enlightens the yoga of Sri Aurobindo who has repeatedly told us that to erase the individual consciousness is not the aim of his yoga.

Quite often in Sethna's prose we see this masterful ease, growing out of experience, of a very certain wisdom which he has acquired by great "labour". But his output is so smooth that it is hard to feel the "labour" which has given him that rare intellectual status. Listen again to his masterful clarification:

Sri Aurobindo thinks at the same time of our being's ascent into that plane and of the descent of that plane into our being. By the confluence, as it were, of our being and the "ideality" which is Supermind, there would be a recovery here

and now of what we really are in our ultimate selfhood, a divine perfection. But the recovery is made through a long process of yoga, through a protracted practice of concentration on the Divine Reality and of self-consecration to it in all our movements inner and outer. It is not an ‘‘instantaneous’’ achievement, a change accomplished ‘‘in the twinkling of an eye’’ (*Problems of Early Christianity*, p. 248)

This is the masterful ease with which Sethna explains the yoga of Sri Aurobindo in terms of the intellect. Certainly, this is not biblical clarity. But for those who are interested in knowing the finer points of the new yoga, this prose is certainly illuminating.

*(To be continued)*

GOUTAM GHOSAL

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## UTTERLY I GAVE

I AM an equilibrium of neutral assent,  
 An awareness gazing with steady eyes of calm  
 In tranquil bliss at a wide light lovingly bent  
 To soothe and caress the sprig of my soul in a springtide balm

I am a point of concentration of the boundless world,  
 An infinite love and indulgence gathers me in its arms;  
 I am in distant space far-flung, in time serialed,  
 Each atom in the cosmos yields to me its causeless charms

I am the ocean wide, the tidal wave, the fountain of spray,  
 All three am I, in each the other forever forget;  
 In the spray myriad, in the wave of sweeping storm, in the play  
 Of quiescent waters deep resides the eremite.

My oblation awaits an ancient recluse in the cave,  
 All that I was, all that I could grasp, utterly I gave.

AKASH DESHPANDE

## REMEMBERING GOPAL DASS GUPTA (1912-1998)

(4)

(Continued from the issue of August 1999)

In 1985, shortly after I started working in the Archives, one day Gopal Dassji asked me my name. My response in Hindi “*Is sevak ko Ganapati kahte hain*” [This servitor is called Ganapati] must have surprised and pleased him. Surprised because such a statement is not common; pleased because he found in me a kindred soul. That was the beginning of a close association which lasted till he closed his earthly chapter on 3 August 1998.

Gopal Dassji, as a sincere and serious sadhak, had surrendered all of himself and all he had to the Mother. All circumstances, situations and events, pleasant or unpleasant, he calmly accepted as the Divine’s Will. In keeping with the ideal of a sadhak, he had very few possessions and kept his personal needs to the barest minimum. His only source of funds was his meagre pension. Considering it as the Mother’s, he religiously offered practically the entire sum to the Ashram every time he received it from the Government Treasury. Expenditure on any perceived need, particularly where it personally concerned himself, he deemed a misuse of the Mother’s money. On his birthday he distributed sweets to friends, if only to keep up the prevailing practice in the Ashram, but in order to minimise *misuse* of the Mother’s money, the sweets would be tiny *pedas* of the same standard size year after year. For his personal needs he received only whatever was given by “Prosperity” and that too only to the extent of his needs, anything in excess was dutifully returned to the Ashram. He used very carefully everything he accepted and to the fullest extent. For example, if any of his clothing got damaged or torn he got it mended and remended until Albert-da refused to do it any longer. Then it was used for wiping washed utensils or the floor until the servant refused to use it any more!

Once “Prosperity” distributed table-mats made from the Mother’s collection of handmade papers. Regardless of all persuasion or arguments by his friends, Gopal Dassji could not bring himself to use something sanctified by the Mother’s touch. Instead he used as table-mats pieces of old newspapers, carefully cut to size and kept in a neat pile.

His commitment to Sri Aurobindo’s yoga was whole-hearted and total. Once I entered his room singing a line from a Hindi bhajan: *Tere janam maran mit jāye re, tu Hari kā nām sumār pyāre* [O dear, take thou the name of Lord Hari, thy cycle of births and deaths will cease.] He objected, saying that ending life-cycles is not the aim of Sri Aurobindo’s yoga. Years before he chose to make Pondicherry his spiritual sanctuary, during one of his periodical retreats, he had taken *mantra dikshā* from Swami Shivananda of Rishikesh. He knew that on the spiritual path, it is not considered good to mix the influences of more than one guru. Even the Mother has said

this. So, though he maintained a sense of loyalty to his *dikshā guru* by carefully preserving the slip of paper on which he had written the *dikshā mantra* in his own hand, his acceptance of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother was absolute. In the Ashram itself there have been great examples of spiritual luminaries like Kapali Shastriar changing their allegiance from one guru to another without any kind of conflict.

Gopal Dassji's spirit of self-reliance, self-containment and self-contentment are best highlighted in the fact of his not allowing his wife to wash his clothes, a service traditionally considered part of wifely duty in India. He never sought any favour or service from anybody, never visited anybody's house, even when he was ill, he found it very difficult to accept a cup of tea or the day's newspaper sent or brought by friends. Perhaps he believed that they would have to be suitably repaid in this life itself, failing which he was bound to be reborn if only to repay this debt.

While he was in Colombani House, he dutifully went about his work and visits to the Samadhi and the Dining Room on his bicycle. Even his ageing body, failing eyesight and impaired hearing did not deter him from the increasingly chaotic traffic of Pondicherry. One night on his way to the Dining Room he was knocked down by a cycle-rickshaw and, giving up his dinner, he had to go to the Nursing Home for immediate medical assistance. Soon it became difficult to continue cycling; but then walking everywhere was also time-consuming and far from easy. At this time, two fortunate developments took place. One, he was relieved of his work of keeping stationery stocks for the Publication Department, thanks to a tiff he had with Jaleshwar-ji for no fault of his own. (It might be mentioned that he quietly listened to all of Jaleshwar-ji's long and harsh harangue, unmoved and without the least trace of resentment. Thereafter for several months the two were not on talking terms. Finally, realising that he was in the wrong, Jaleshwar-ji himself resumed cordial relations.) The other fortunate development was that Gopal Dassji was allotted a room in Tripura House which had been specially constructed for aged sadhaks and located much nearer the Ashram. Even after shifting to his new abode, he dismissed the requests of his friends and insisted on cycling everywhere on the plea that it was easier to keep his balance on it than while walking! Only after the doctor advised him against it did he stop using his cycle.

His spirit of independence suffered a setback when failing health forced him to depend on an escort even on his brief daily visit to the Samadhi. Workaholic that he was, he kept collecting information for and preparing the manuscript of the Supplement to his famous *Glossary and Index* and making Blessings Packets. He even thought of taking up the massive labour of revising the many bundles of index cards that he had earlier prepared to make them accord with the new 35-volume set of Complete Works being brought out to commemorate Sri Aurobindo's 125th birth anniversary. Only after he had realised the magnitude of the work involved did he give it up.

But the greatest psychological blow came when he had to give up that brief daily outing. He just could not reconcile himself to it. Gopal Dassji had truly transcended

all desire, but once he became dependent on others a very strong desire arose in him to shed his mortal coil. He constantly prayed to the Mother for his ultimate release. For some unknown reason, he had decided that he would not live beyond his eighty-fourth birthday, without realising that Lord Yama does not oblige either by accepting anybody's invitation or by prior appointment. That birthday, 17 September 1996, was something special: he decided he would personally meet his erstwhile colleagues at the Archives Office. He was brought in a wheel-chair and from the foot of the staircase carried up the stairs in a chair. Once among his friends he insisted on putting his birthday *pedas* into the mouth of everyone present with his own hands!

An ordained ascetic is supposed to be reborn following the performance of the *virāja homa*, taking on a new name and severing himself in all respects from his earlier life. Gopal Dassji was no less in the strong sense of detachment that he had attained. But his unilateral decision to stop all correspondence with his relatives was only the dictate of his head; his heart refused to fall in line. The relatives fortunately found in his conscience-keeper, Sunjoy, a convenient intermediary. Whenever a missive from any of them arrived, the inner fondness of family-ties surfaced and he read and reread the epistle and at times even prodded Sunjoy to answer them.

This strong inner bond with his family (particularly his daughter) was readily apparent during his last days. The happiness and satisfaction that he derived from the presence of his daughter near him during his last ten days were indeed writ large on his face. He suffered pain, but always with a smile. Whoever visited him was met with a smile of benediction.

The long-awaited moment of release came finally on 3 August 1998

Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih!

*(To be continued)*

GANAPATI PATTEGAR

## TRANSMUTATION

It was black, leaden  
And empty—  
An ordinary begging bowl.  
But hands of love  
That stood the test of fire  
Filled it to the brim  
It was a benediction

The hungry came in thousands  
With outstretched bowls  
And went away filled  
The supply never ran out

Love kindled love  
Springs inexhaustible  
Welled up from within  
In an abundance  
That replenished itself  
Without end.  
The leaden pettiness  
Vanished  
The bowl was golden now  
And fit to hold  
Ambrosia

M L THANGAPPA

## WHEN THE SOUL CALLS

LIFE IS full of events small and big, which are apparently meaningful only to those close to them. However, every event has an element of eternal truth embedded in it, which, when even faintly perceived, makes the event relevant to all. Such has been the passing away of my eldest brother Srikumar. When taken out of its personal context, it speaks to all.

Prof K. B. Sitaramayya sent me a beautiful poem<sup>1</sup> on the passing away of my brother. That set me thinking. A life, begun so ordinarily, ends so extraordinarily. He had a significant and symbolic end.

Srikumar was exceptionally fortunate to have had Darshan of Sri Aurobindo.

He joined the Air Force and served actively during the Indo-Pak and Indo-China wars in the early sixties. He was known among his colleagues as "the cheerful one with a brave heart". His annual leave and birthday, whenever possible, were invariably spent in the Ashram, during which time he would help Shri Prithvi Singh Nahar with typing and reading. On one of his birthdays the Mother gave him a gold ring with her symbol. He told us how the Mother had to push the ring on his finger with some effort, it being tight, and finally exclaimed, smilingly: "There, now it will never come off."

In the last few years of his life, Srikumar, who lived in Bangalore, was completely immersed in the reading of Sri Aurobindo's works, specially *Savitri*.

In his personal life he had numerous difficulties which he bravely faced and endured with the faith that all would ultimately bring him inner progress. His faith was growing by the day. He was planning to come and live in the Ashram, trying for some accommodation through Robi-da. But somehow circumstances were not favouring him.

Then I received the shocking news that Amal Kiran had landed in the Nursing Home, having fractured his hip bone.

During a week-end visit of mine to the Ashram, Srikumar joined me. He was naturally elated, as he was coming to the Ashram after two years.

He took leave of our mother and others in the family with long affectionate embraces which was a little unusual. On the way he continuously listened to the Mother's music and bhajans sung by Mohan Mistry. For three days in Pondicherry he went out of his way to meet all his old friends and hugged them with the joy that comes when meeting after a long time. To Behram, in the Sportsground, he said something to the effect: "Now, you have to take care of me." On Sunday evening he attended a talk by Shraddhalu. At the Park Guest House he insisted on paying his bills in advance. (Did he know he was going to die the following day?) He made a long distance call to his son Arvindkumar, saying "Hello" even to his dogs. Asked when he would return, he replied: "As Mother wishes."

<sup>1</sup> It follows this article —Editor

On Monday morning, 24th May, he went to the Samadhī. After pranam he sat down for meditation on the steps nearby that come down from Pavitra-da's room. And here Srikumar's soul decided to leave. Dr. Dilip Dutta and his team tried their best to help his body revive at the Ashram dispensary, but the call of the soul was strong and final. With a faint smile on his lips, the body lay to be subsequently taken care of by Behram, who attends to the last rites, the most beautiful, noble and peaceful I have seen. Before lighting the pyre, "Immortality" flowers were strewn and the Mother and Sri Aurobindo's Mantras chanted.

When I met Nirod-da in his room facing the Samadhī, he said: "Your brother is very lucky."

Amal Kiran, from his bed in the Nursing Home, had this to say. "I have got the news. It was clearly the call of his soul."

ADITI VASISHTHA

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## THE PASSING OF SRIKUMAR

No,  
 it is no end  
 but the beginning  
 of a journey without an end  
 in the realms  
 of radiance  
 to "die"  
 on the flight of steps  
 near the seat of Grace,—  
 (was he not the son of Grace?)—  
 where is the presence  
 of the bringers  
 of the higher Love and Light,  
 the sources of the Supreme Might?

K B SITARAMAYYA



## HOW MANY GALAXIES UP THERE? NEW CENSUS FINDS 125 BILLION

AUSTIN, Texas—Taking a census of the galaxies in the universe is like counting the grains of sand on a beach. Even with leaping extrapolations, the task is probably impossible, and the numbers become, well, astronomical

Undaunted, astronomers studying new pictures taken by the Hubble Space Telescope announced at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society here an updated estimate of the number of galaxies in the observable universe. 125 billion. As recently as three years ago, the count was only 50 billion, which was subsequently raised to 80 billion

The new figure reflects not a spurt in galactic births, of course, but instead an improvement in the Hubble telescope's ability to peer deep into the universe, back closer to the first epoch in which matter coalesced into stars and stars congregated in vast galaxies. The new observations have detected some faint galaxies so far away that they were probably formed when the universe was no more than 1 billion years old.

Henry Ferguson, an astronomer at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, said the new galaxy estimate was derived from the Hubble telescope's observations of a small patch of southern sky taken over a 10-day period in October. The pictures, called the Hubble Deep Field South, were a sequel to a similar survey of a part of the northern sky made in late 1995.

The southern survey was able to get a deeper cosmic view because of two new instruments on the Hubble telescope. One is a camera for recording objects seen in near-infrared light; it can detect galaxies otherwise obscured by dust. The other instrument was an imaging spectrograph that produced some of the deepest optical pictures ever taken.

JOHN NOBLE WILFORD

(Courtesy *New York Times Service*)

## *Students' Section*

### **THE HIDDEN CHAMBER OF THE VEDIC TRUTH**

*(Continued from the issue of August 1999)*

TO SUMMARIZE the three principal doctrines of the Veda we have to get in touch with the higher and deeper truth behind the external appearances, to find the path of truth leading to the great Heaven *swar*, man's life being a battlefield between good and evil forces, to invoke the help of the Gods for the ultimate conquest over darkness.

These are some of the prime goals of the Sanatana Dharma. In one of his early letters Sri Aurobindo writes about his mission in life "To re-explain the Sanatana Dharma to the human intellect in all its parts, from a new standpoint.... Sri Krishna has shown me the true meaning of the Vedas.. I have therefore to re-explain the whole of the Vedanta and the Vedas in such a way that it will be seen how all religion arises out of it and is one everywhere In this way it will be proved that India is the centre of the religious life of the world and its destined saviour through the Sanatana Dharma" About his second mission he writes: "On the basis of the Vedic knowledge, to establish a Yogic Sadhana which will not only liberate the soul, but prepare a perfect humanity and help in the restoration of the Satya Yuga."

You will all be surprised to learn that about eighty percent of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is there in the Vedas, as interpreted by him. One cannot fully understand *Savitri* or several terminologies in *The Synthesis of Yoga* if one is not familiar with the Vedic allusions. For example we have in the following lines of *Savitri* the Vedic image.

In him shadows his form the Golden Child  
Who in the Sun-capped Vast cradled his birth.  
Hiranyagarbha, author of thoughts and dream,  
Who sees the invisible and hears the sounds  
That never visited a mortal ear,  
Discoverer of unthought realities,  
Truer to Truth than all we have ever known,  
He is the leader on the inner roads.

or,

Ascending out of the limiting breadths of mind,  
They shall discover the world's huge design  
And step into the Truth, the Right, the Vast.

The key concept that relates Sri Aurobindo's Yoga with the Vedas is the harmonious blending of "Heaven and Earth", the higher and the lower. The Rishis termed them as Father and Mother, *dyaaur me pitā, mātā prithvi iyam*. Unlike the traditional yogic

schools which created a divorce between Spirit and Matter, the Vedic Rishis gave as much importance to Matter as to the Spirit.\* The only difference was that they were not limited by Matter. They had the faculty of two visions—*parāk dr̥ṣṭi*, the outward look, and *pratyak dr̥ṣṭi*, the inward look. For example, when the Rishi looked at the storm, he simultaneously saw the whirling winds and the spirit of the storm. When he looked at the sun, it was also the consciousness of the sun that he witnessed.

Moreover, the Rishis had discovered four basic aspects of Reality: 1) Adhibhautika, 2) Adhidaivika, 3) Adhyatmika, and 4) Adhiloka. With every physical phenomenon, Adhibhautika, the Rishis could contact the divine emanation, Deva, behind that phenomenon: this was called Adhidaivata vision. At the same time they discovered a corresponding experience in their inner consciousness what they termed as the Adhyatmika vision. Finally, to every plane of their inner consciousness the Rishis could allocate a separate world or Loka, of Reality. This vision of corresponding worlds they called the Adhiloka vision.

Let me illustrate this point with one specific instance. When the Rishi looked at the sun in the sky, he saw a small star in the physical universe (Adhibhauta). Immediately the Rishi contacted the presiding deity behind the sun who is the great Godhead, Surya (Adhidaivata). But, at the same time, the sun in the sky brought to the Rishi's vision the objectively existent world of the Supermind (Adhiloka). Finally, plunging his gaze inwards to the profundities of his consciousness, the Rishi could subjectively contact the Supramental planes of consciousness within his own being (Adhyatma).

They had also chalked out a ladder of self transcendence from the lower existence to the higher. It has a very close correspondence with Sri Aurobindo's ordering of the worlds.

<i>Principle</i>	<i>World</i>
(1) Pure Existence—Sat	World of the highest truth of being (Satyaloka)
(2) Pure Consciousness—Chit	World of infinite will or conscious force (Tapoloka)
(3) Pure Bliss—Ananda	World of creative delight of existence (Janaloka)
(4) Knowledge or Truth—Vijnana, Supermind	World of vastness (Maharloka)
(5) Mind	World of light (Swar)
(6) Life (nervous being)	World of various becoming (Bhuvar)
(7) Matter	The material world (Bhur)

\* Compare *Savitri*

And when I found the Self, I lost the world,  
or,  
I looked upon the world and missed the Self

Sri Aurobindo found that even the concept and experience of the Supermind was there in the Vedas. The Rishis termed it—*mahas*, the junction point of Earth and Heaven. They characterized it as *ṛta-cit*, *Truth-Consciousness*, having the properties of *satyam*, *ṛtam*, *brhat*—*the Truth, the Right, the Vast*. The Vedic Rishis even spoke of *surya-tvak*—meaning the divinised skin

In one of the Riks there is the story of Vamadeva who prophesied that he would live for a hundred years and then have sixteen more years of divine life. It is said at the age of eighty when a *Paritapa*, or illness, approached him, he spoke to the spirit behind the infliction and informed it of his decision of a life span of one hundred and sixteen years. The *Paritapa* left him untouched and Vamadeva, after completing his sixteen years of divine life dropped his physical body at will.

Although the Vedic Rishis envisaged a divinised skin, they conceived it possible only till the subtle physical. It is here that lie the uniqueness and greatness of Sri Aurobindo's integral Yoga. Sri Aurobindo categorically states in his magnum opus *The Life Divine* that a Supramental Being is necessarily the next rung in the evolutionary scale. Even the gross physical matter, that the Rishis called *jada*, will eventually be transformed to supramental stuff.

Sri Aurobindo beautifully presents the crux of his Yoga in these few lines of *Savitri*:

On Nature's luminous tops, on the Spirit's ground,  
The superman shall reign as king of life,  
Make earth almost the mate and peer of heaven  
And lead towards God and truth man's ignorant earth  
And lift towards godhead his mortality  
A power released from circumscribing bounds,  
Its height pushed up beyond death's hungry reach,  
Life's tops shall flame with the Immortal's thoughts,  
Light shall invade the darkness of its base  
Then in the process of evolving Time  
All shall be drawn into a single plan,  
A divine harmony shall be earth's law,  
Beauty and Joy remould her way to live  
Even the body shall remember God

### Conclusion

It is sad that the so-called intellectuals of our country today are so thoroughly brainwashed by the western opinion of India that they literally laugh when they hear that India had a glorious past. Typical of the western point of view, they believe that India has become civilized only after the British blessed us with their reign. They

could not be more sadly mistaken. These people have a blind of mental slavery pulled over their eyes. They have perhaps to help themselves to understand India

Today as you all know India's status is that of a third world country. It is true that we are a poor nation. Wherever we look our poverty slaps us in the face. It is also true that in modern terms "materially we are nothing". But as Sri Aurobindo emphatically said and I hope that I have made you aware of a fragment of this truth, "spiritually we are everything"

We should feel proud of our country which has the key to the world's salvation. Regarding the Veda, Sri Aurobindo says: "The recovery of the Veda is therefore not merely a desideratum for our modern intellectual curiosity, but a practical necessity for the future of the human race" "I believe the future of India and the world to depend on its discovery and on its application "

We of the modern generation are so taken up by the glamour of material success that we fail to open our eyes wide and see that material gains are a very temporary phenomenon. We fail to realize that when the time comes and we are accountable for our life on earth it is not the weight of the purse that will count but the power of the spirit. The Ancients knew of this fundamental truth in the Vedas. They had the secret of life's true treasure-trove and spent their lives amassing the inexhaustible wealth of the spirit. Our master Sri Aurobindo is the modern propounder of that same gospel. But the riches he offers us are more than the Vedic Rishis believed possible. All of us have the immense privilege of belonging to an institution which constantly makes us aware of the true priorities of human life

*(Concluded)*

ANURADHA CHOUDRY

# ORIGIN AND FATE OF THE UNIVERSE

*(Continued from the issue of August 1999)*

UPTO 1956 it was believed that the laws of physics obeyed the three separate symmetries C, P and T: C is the charged symmetry which means that the laws of physics are the same for the particle and the antiparticle, P is the parity symmetry which says that the laws are the same for the particle and its mirror image; the symmetry T means that the laws are the same in the forward and the backward directions of time.

There is a mathematical theorem that says that any theory that obeys quantum mechanics and relativity must always obey the combined symmetry CPT. In other words the universe would behave in the same way if one swapped particles with their antiparticles, took their mirror image and reversed the direction of time. But two American physicists Cronin and Fitch showed that the universe does not obey just the CP symmetry if time is not reversed. The laws must change therefore if one reverses the direction of time. Laws of physics can therefore be seen not obeying the symmetry T

Since there are forces that do not obey the symmetry T, it follows that as the universe expands these forces would cause more anti-electrons to turn into quarks than electrons into antiquarks. Therefore, as the universe would cool and expand, quarks and antiquarks would annihilate each other but an excess of quarks would remain from which would be created all the matter that we see around us today. Thus our very existence should be regarded as a confirmation of the grand unified theory.

We now come to the second question. From where did the universe get the impulse to expand so rapidly that it is still expanding so close to the critical rate? Allan Guth at M.I.T. showed that the universe once went through a phase of very rapid expansion. This expansion is called 'inflationary', meaning that at one time the universe expanded at an increasing rate rather than at a decreasing rate as it does today. According to Guth the universe expanded by  $10^{30}$  times between  $10^{-28}$  and  $10^{-25}$  seconds after the Big Bang!

As we have seen, a little earlier than this time the temperature of the universe was high enough so that the strong and electroweak forces were all united into a single force. Now, at approximately  $10^{-28}$  seconds after the Big Bang the temperature of the universe fell to the grand unification energy and the time for the forces to separate out arrived. Yet the symmetry between the forces did not break or, in other words, the phase transition did not take place.

One common example of phase transition not taking place is water. Under controlled conditions the temperature of water can be reduced to much below  $0^{\circ}\text{C}$  without water turning into ice.  $0^{\circ}\text{C}$  under normal conditions is the phase transition temperature of water. In this 'supercooled' state water will have more energy than if it had turned into ice. But this state is very unstable and any slight disturbance will turn the water into ice.

Guth showed that something similar happened in the case of our universe when the temperature dropped below its phase transition temperature and the forces did not separate out. The supercooled universe therefore in this unstable state had more energy than what it would have had if the symmetry between the forces had been broken. Guth showed that this special extra energy had an antigravitational effect; that is, it would behave like Einstein's cosmological constant corresponding to the repulsive force. It is this antigravitational force that provided the universe with the impulse to expand at the rate that helped it to avoid collapse. But very quickly the symmetries would have broken and the forces would have separated out and the expansion of the universe would begin to slow down. This is the reason why the universe, although it has avoided collapse, is expanding today at an ever decreasing rate.

The idea of 'inflation' could explain why there is so much matter in the universe, about  $10^{80}$  particles. In quantum mechanics particles are created out of energy in the form of particle antiparticle pairs. But that raises the question: from where did the energy come from? The answer is that the total energy of the universe is zero. The matter in the universe is made up of positive energy. The matter is all attracting itself by gravity. Two pieces of matter that are close to each other have less energy than two pieces of matter far apart because we have to spend energy to separate them against the attractive gravitational force. Thus, in a sense the gravitational field has negative energy. Therefore in the case of a uniform universe positive matter energy exactly cancels out the negative gravitational energy. So the total energy of the universe is zero!

As twice zero is also zero, the universe can double the positive matter energy and the negative gravitational energy without violating the law of conservation of energy. This does not happen however during the normal expansion, in which matter energy goes down as the universe gets bigger. However during the inflationary state, as energy density stays constant, when the universe doubles its size it doubles the positive matter energy and the negative gravitational energy. So the total energy remains zero. During the inflationary phase, as the universe increases its size by a very large amount the total energy available to make particles becomes very large and therefore a huge number of particles is created. Guth had once jokingly remarked: "It is said that there is no such thing as a free lunch but the universe is the ultimate free lunch!"

Now, having explored the universe through the ages I have come to the end of my talk. In 45 minutes or so we have seen how our universe began and how it might end. But we still haven't found out why it began the way it did. We have seen that general relativity breaks down at singularity and with that our capacity to predict. As I have mentioned before, space-time would have a boundary and a beginning at the Big Bang.

Over the years science has discovered laws that tell us how the universe will develop with time. If we know the conditions at a given moment, the initial conditions, then we can predict what events might occur in the course of time. These laws

might have been originally decreed by God but it seems to me that He has since then left the universe to evolve according to them and does not interfere in it anymore. But the question still remains: why did God choose the initial state or configuration of the universe in one way rather than another? What were the conditions at the beginning of time?

One possible answer to these questions is that an omnipotent God chose the initial conditions for reasons that we cannot hope to comprehend. This would certainly be within the powers of an omnipotent Being. But the question that immediately arises in my mind is, if God started the universe off in such an incomprehensible way then why did He allow it to evolve according to laws that we can understand? The whole history of science has been the gradual realisation that events do not occur in an arbitrary manner but reflect an underlying order. As Einstein put it very epigrammatically: "God does not play dice with the universe!"

There are people who believe that science by formulating laws is restricting a Timeless God from actively intervening in His own creation. They say that scientific laws forbid God from changing his mind and as this is something man hasn't the right to do, scientific laws do not reflect any portion of the Truth of things.

But I think that the logic of these people is erroneous,—simply because the question of changing our mind arises only for the reason that we are bound by time and causality. A person changes his mind basing himself on events in the past. But as God by the very definition is beyond time and has no impulse to change his mind, all events that occur in the framework of time have already been decreed by God in the beginning of His act of creation and also with the events that shall take place by the laws governing them. Therefore even an event which is most unexpected, which has not been predicted by the existing laws, does not yet mean that God has decided to change His mind and He has intervened actively in His creation. It only implies that there are still more laws that we need to discover.

And the goal of science today is therefore to discover those as yet undiscovered laws so that we can marvel and appreciate a little more this wonderful creation that we see around us. This is the reason why scientists spend endless hours in carrying out observations and, in front of their computers, try to probe into the mystery of the universe. And I believe it is this quest for knowledge that raises human life beyond mere farce and gives it some of the dignity that God's highest creation here deserves.

*(Concluded)*

JAPA GHOSH



## LIFE AND DEATH

LIFE and death, life and death  
It is like a wheel in infinite motion  
Life and death, life and death,  
The final mystery, teases my imagination  
As cunning as ever, as attractive as ever,  
Death's a beautiful lady, or a nightly beast;  
Death's a sharp sickle with golden shimmer,  
Death's a sweet wine after life's bitter feast

Life and death go on in this world  
Continuous, unending, it is a circle,  
For many years, for centuries it has been twirled  
Into a spiral with mind and strength of muscle  
Death is nothing but another adventure,  
Another form of life in another place,  
Death is nothing but a mere venture  
Into another world with a different face

Afraid of death, which is another adventure?  
Afraid of the end of our human ecstasy?  
Afraid of the end to the dream of a treasure  
If it is written in one's destiny?  
Afraid of death, which is another adventure?  
Afraid to be lured by its rapturous hands?  
Are we cowards to fear the end of summer  
And to march onto death's desert sands?

Brave are those and brave are all,  
Who laugh in the face of their last winter  
Brave are those whose fear is small,  
Who have courage enough to trust and surrender;  
To trust and surrender unto God,  
After all death is an adventure, the last,  
The last one created by our mighty Lord;  
The last curse or blessing upon us cast?

Who would deny a beautiful being there,  
Waiting with arms outstretched so soft?  
Death is sweet sleep, Death is so fair,  
Death is a tender and beautiful thought.

Want it or want it not—it is there,  
Victorious and vanquished, it is both,  
Humbled and boastful no life it spares,  
A character of responsibility, a person of worth

Sweet, charming, clever, yet menacing,  
Taunting, an angel in the rain,  
The rain which cools life's scorching heat, so chilling,  
As to bring us a momentary pain  
Death to hate or to love as one's dear,  
It is all upon an individual's choice,  
Do you think we all ought to fear  
When death is nothing but a heavenly voice?

PAVAK K MITRA