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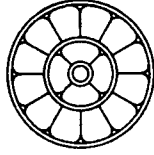
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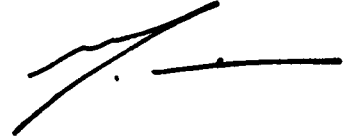


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled



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MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LIII

No. 3

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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A PORTION OF THE MIGHTY MOTHER CAME INTO HER

A CONSCIOUS soul in the Inconscient's world...
Leaves the vicegerent mind a seeming king.. .
He guards the being's covered mysteries
Beneath the threshold, behind shadowy gates
Or shut in vast cellars of inconscient sleep.
The immaculate Divine All-Wonderful
Casts into the argent purity of his soul
His splendour and his greatness and the light
Of self-creation in Time's infinity
As into a sublimely mirroring glass.
Man in the world's life works out the dreams of God
But all is there, even God's opposites;
He is a little front of Nature's works,
A thinking outline of a cryptic Force...
Once quelled or wearing specious names and vests
Infernal elements, demon powers are there.
Man's lower nature hides these awful guests ...
Death and his hunters stalk a victim earth;
The terrible Angel smites at every door. .
All the world's possibilities in man
Are waiting as the tree waits in its seed:
His past lives in him; it drives his future's pace;
His present's acts fashion his coming fate
The unborn gods hide in his house of Life ..
Above us dwells a superconscient God
Hidden in the mystery of his own light:
Around us is a vast of ignorance
Lit by the uncertain ray of human mind,
Below us sleeps the Inconscient dark and mute.

But this is only Matter's first self-view...
Our greater self of knowledge waits for us,
A supreme light in the truth-conscious Vast:
It sees from summits beyond thinking mind,
It moves in a splendid air transcending life
It shall descend and make earth's life divine.
Truth made the world, not a blind Nature-Force. .
Thus man in his little house made of earth's dust

Grew towards an unseen heaven of thought and dream
 Looking into the vast vistas of his mind
 On a small globe dotting infinity.
 At last climbing a long and narrow stair
 He stood alone on a high roof of things
 And saw the light of a spiritual sun....
 A lost end of far lines of divinity,
 He mounts by a frail thread to his high source;
 He reaches his fount of immortality,
 He calls the Godhead into his mortal life.
 All this the spirit concealed had done in her:
 A portion of the mighty Mother came
 Into her as into its own human part:
 Amid the cosmic workings of the Gods
 It marked her the centre of a wide-drawn scheme,
 Dreamed in the passion of her far-seeing spirit
 To mould humanity into God's own shape
 And lead this great blind struggling world to light
 Or a new world discover or create
 Earth must transform herself and equal Heaven
 Or Heaven descend into earth's mortal state
 But for such vast spiritual change to be,
 Out of the mystic cavern in man's heart
 The heavenly Psyche must put off her veil
 And step into common nature's crowded rooms
 And stand uncovered in that nature's front
 And rule its thoughts and fill the body and life.
 Obedient to a high command she sat
 Time, life and death were passing incidents
 Obstructing with their transient view her sight,
 Her sight that must break through and liberate the god
 Imprisoned in the visionless mortal man
 The inferior nature born into ignorance
 Still took too large a place, it veiled her self
 And must be pushed aside to find her soul

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL. Vol 29, pp 478-87)

A FEW ESSAYS ON THE GITA IN BENGALI

(Continued from the issue of February 2000)

CHAPTER TWO

Sanjaya uvāca

*tam tathā kṛpayāviṣṭamaśrupūrṇākuleksanam
viṣḍantamidam vākyamuvāca madhusūdanaḥ* (1)

Sanjaya said:

To him thus besieged with pity and his eyes full bewildered with crowding tears,
to him weak with sorrow, Madhusudana spoke this word

Śrībhagavān uvāca

*kutastvā kaśmalamidaṁ viṣame samupaśthitam
anāryajuṣṭamasvargyamakīrtikaramarjuna* (2)

The Lord said.

Whence has this stain of darkness come upon thee in the very crisis and the stress, O Arjuna, this weakness unheavenly, inglorious, beloved of un-Aryan minds?

*klaibyam mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitat tvayupapadyate
kṣudraṁ hrdayadaurbalyam tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa* (3)

Fall not into coward impotence, O Partha; not on thee does that sit well; fling from thee the miserable weakness of thy heart, O scourge of thy foes.

Sri Krishna's Answer

Sri Krishna saw that Arjuna had been seized with pity, dejection had overcome him. To chase away this tamasic state, He who was aware of the innermost feelings gave His dear friend a rebuke befitting a Kshatriya, that it might awaken the rajasic sentiments and drive away Tamas. He said in effect. ‘‘Look, this is a time of crisis for those who are on your side. If you give up your arms now, there is every possibility of danger and destruction for them. The idea of renouncing your cause in the field of battle should not occur to one like you who is the best among Kshatriyas. Whence this sudden perversion of mind? Your attitude is full of weakness, it is sinful. Un-Aryan men can laud such an attitude, may subject themselves to it. But it is unworthy

of an Aryan It means an end to fame and glory in this world, it stands in the way of heaven in the next ” Thereafter, he administered a still more severe rebuke. “This is an attitude fit for a coward. You are the foremost among courageous men, you are a conqueror, you are the son of Kunti Can such words come from your mouth? Give up this weakness of the vital being, get up. Give yourself to the work to be done ”

Pity and Compassion

Pity and compassion are different kinds of feelings, pity can be a feeling even contrary to compassion. Moved by compassion we do good to the world, remove the sufferings of men, of the nation, of others. If I shrink from doing that good from inability to bear my own sufferings or those of any particular individuals, then I have no compassion, I have only been seized by pity I take upon myself the task of removing the sufferings of my country or of the entire human race: that is the attitude of compassion From fear of bloodshed, from fear of doing violence to living beings, I desist from that sacred task, acquiesce in the permanence of the nation’s sorrows this is the attitude of pity The strong impulse to remove the sufferings of men out of sorrow for their sufferings is called compassion To feel a sense of helpless weakness at the sight or thought of others’ sufferings is known as pity. Weak helplessness is not compassion, it is pity. Compassion is the way of the strong, pity the manner of the weak. Moved by compassion the Lord Buddha left his wife and child, parents and friends and relatives to pine for him in sorrow with everything taken away, and set out to remove the sufferings of the world. Maddened by intense compassion, Kali went about the worlds killing the titans and flooded the earth with their blood in order to free all from sorrow. Arjuna had renounced arms under the influence of pity

This is an attitude lauded by the un-Aryan; the un-Aryan acts accordingly. The Aryan teaching has nobility, it is fit for heroes, it is a divine teaching. The un-Aryan falls into a delusion; he describes ignoble sentiments as the right law and forsakes the noble path. The un-Aryan moved by rajasic feelings considers the good of himself, his dear ones, his family or clan, does not see the larger good He turns his face away from the right law out of pity, boasts of himself as a man of piety, calls the Aryan of austere vows a cruel and impious man Losing his senses under a tamasic delusion, the un-Aryan describes inaction as disinterestedness in works, assigns to the interested pursuit of virtue the highest position among the rules of right living. Compassion is an Aryan attitude, pity an un-Aryan sentiment.

Moved by compassion, man engages heroically in battle with evil in order to destroy the evils and sufferings of others Moved by compassion, woman pours all her heart and energies into the service of loving care and in the attempt to do good to others and lighten their sorrows. One who under the influence of pity gives up his arms, turns away from the right path, starts weeping and thinks he is doing his duty and is virtuous, such a one is an impotent coward This is a mean sentiment, it is an attitude of weakness. Despondency can never be the right law. He who gives shelter

to despair gives shelter to sin. To reject this clouding of the mind, this impure and weak attitude, to join in the fray and carry out one's duty, to save thereby the world, to protect the Law, to lighten the burden of the earth, this is the better way This is the purport of these words of Sri Krishna.

Arjuna uvāca

*katham bhīsmamaham sankhye dronañca madhusūdana
iṣubhih pratiyotsyāmi pūjārḥavarisūdana* (4)

Arjuna said.

How shall I combat Bhīsmā in the fight and Drona, O Madhusudana, how shall I smite with arrows those venerable heads?

*gurūnahatvā hi mahānubhāvān
śreyo bhoktum bhaiṣṣamaṣṭha loke
hatvārthakāmāṁstu gurūnihaiva
bhuñjīya bhogān rudhirapradigdhan* (5)

Better were it, not piercing these great and worshipped hearts, to eat even a beggar's bread on this our earth. I slay our earthly wealth and bliss when I slay these, blood-stained will be the joys I shall taste.

*na caitatadvidmaḥ kataḥ anno garīyo
yadvā jayema yadi vā no jayeyuḥ
vōneva hatvā na jīviṣāma-
ste'vasthūtāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ* (6)

Therefore we know not which of these is better, that we should be victors or that we should be vanquished: for they, slaying whom we should have no heart to live, lo, the Dhritarashtrians face us in the foeman's van.

*kārpaṇyadoṣopahatasvabhābaḥ
prcchāmi tvāṁ dharmasaṁmūdhacetāḥ
yacchreyah syānniścitaṁ brūhi tanme
śiṣyaste'ham śādhi mām tvāṁ prapannam* (7)

Pain and unwillingness have swept me from my natural self, my heart is bewildered as to right and wrong; thee then I question. Tell me what would surely be my good, for I am thy disciple, teach me, for in thee I have sought my refuge.

*na hi prapaśyāmi mamāpanudyād
 yacchokamucchoṣaṇamindriyānām
 avāpya bhūmāvasapatnamṛddham
 rājyaṁ surāṅāmapi cādhipatyam* (8)

I see not what shall banish from me the grief that parcheth up the senses, though I win on earth rich kingship without rival and empire over the very gods in heaven.

(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 February 2000)

बभ्राणः सूनो सहसो व्यद्यौद् दधानः शुक्रा रभसा वपूंषि ।
श्रोतन्ति धारा मधुनो घृतस्य वृषा यत्र वावृधे काव्येन ॥

(Rigveda, 3 1.8)

Borne by them, O child of Force, thou didst blaze out holding thy bright and rapturous embodiments; out flow the streams of the sweetness, the clarity, where the Bull of the abundance has grown by the Wisdom (SABCL Vol 10, p 111)

Upborne, O Son of Force, thou shinest out wide holding thy bright and rapturous bodies, there drip down streams of the light and the sweetness, there where the Bull has grown by the seer-wisdom. (SABCL Vol. 11, p. 106)

पितुश्चिदूर्ध्वर्जनुषा विवेद व्यस्य धारा असृजद् वि धेनाः ।
गुहा चरन्तं सखिभिः शिवेभिर्दिवो यद्दीभिर्न गुहा बभूव ॥

(Rigveda, 3.1.9)

He discovered at his birth the source of the abundance of the Father and he loosed forth wide His streams and wide His rivers. By his helpful comrades and by the Mighty Ones of Heaven he found Him moving in the secret places of existence, yet himself was not lost in their secrecy. (SABCL Vol. 10, p. 111)

At his birth he discovered the teat of abundance of the Father, he loosed forth wide his streams, wide his nourishing rivers; he discovered him moving in the secrecy with his helpful comrades, with the mighty Rivers of Heaven, but himself became not secret in the cave. (SABCL Vol. 11, pp. 106-07)

पितुश्च गर्भं जनितुश्च बभ्रे पूर्वैरिक्तो अधयत् पीप्यानाः ।
वृष्णे सपत्नी शुचये सबन्धू उभे अस्मै मनुष्ये नि पाहि ॥

(Rigveda, 3.1.10)

He bore the child of the Father and of him that begot him; one, he fed upon his many mothers in their increasing. In this pure Male both these powers in man (Earth and Heaven) have their common lord and lover; do thou guard them both. (SABCL Vol. 10, p 111)

He carried the child of the father who begot him; one, he sucked the milk of many

who nourished him with their overflowing. Two who have one lord and kinsman, for this pure male of the herds guard both in the human being. (*SABCL Vol 11, p. 107*)

उरौ महौ अनिबाधे ववर्धापो अग्नि यशसः सं हि पूर्वोः ।
ऋतस्य योनावशयद्दमूना जामीनामग्निरपसि स्वसृणाम् ॥

(Rigveda, 3.1.11)

Great in the unobstructed Vast he increased, yea, many Waters victoriously increased Agni In the source of the Truth he lay down, there he made his home, Agni in the working of the undivided Sisters. (*SABCL Vol 10, p 111*)

Vast was he in the unobstructed wideness and grew, for the waters many and glorious fed the flame; in the native seat of the Truth the Fire lay down and made his home. in the work of the companions, the sisters (*SABCL Vol 11, p. 107*)

अक्रो न बभ्रिः समिथे महीना दिदृक्षेयः सूनवे भाऋजीकः ।
उदुस्त्रिया जनिता यो जजानापां गर्भो नूतमो यद्धो अग्निः ॥

(Rigveda, 3.1.12)

As the mover in things and as their sustainer he in the meeting of the Great Ones, seeking vision, straight in his lustres for the presser-out of the Soma-wine, he who was the father of the Radiances, gave them now their higher birth,—the child of the Waters, the mighty and most strong Agni. (*SABCL Vol. 10, p 111*)

Like a height upbearing all in the meeting of the great waters, eager for vision for the Son, straight in his lustres, he is the Father who begot the shining Ray-herds, the child of the Waters, the most strong and mighty Fire. (*SABCL Vol. 11, p 107*)

अपां गर्भं दर्शतमोषधीना वना जजान सुभगा विरूपम् ।
देवासश्चिन्मनसा सं हि जग्मुः पनिष्ठं जात तवसं दुवस्यन् ॥

(Rigveda, 3.1.13)

To the visible Birth of the waters and of the growths of Earth the goddess of Delight now gave birth in many forms, she of the utter felicity The gods united in him by the mind and they set him to his working who was born full of strength and mighty for the labour. (*SABCL Vol. 10. p. 111-12*)

One desirable and blissful gave birth to him in many forms, a visioned child of the waters and a child of the growths of earth: the gods too met with the Mind the Fire, strong at his birth and powerful to act and set him to his work (*SABCL Vol. 11, p. 107*)

बृहन्त इद् भानवो भाऱ्जकीकमग्निं सचन्त विद्युतो न शुक्राः ।
गुहेव वृद्धं सदसि स्वे अन्तरपार ऊर्वे अमृतं दुहाना ॥

(Rigveda, 3.1.14)

Those vast shinings clove to Agni straight in his lustre and were like bright lightnings, from him increasing in the secret places of existence in his own seat within the shoreless Vast they milked out Immortality. (*SABCL* Vol. 10, p. 112)

Vast sun-blazings cleave like brilliant lightnings to this Fire, straight in his lustres, growing as in a secret cave within in his own home in the shoreless wideness, and they draw the milk of immortality. (*SABCL* Vol. 11, p. 108)

(To be continued)

(Compiled by Sampadananda Mishra)

LIGHT

COME down the level ways
Of nightly dark,
Though Thou bring not all Thy rays,
But one dim spark.

But one dim spark suffice
The tindery heart
And all Fire's might entice
And not depart

And not depart but keep
That fiery mesh,
Spun from the Sovran Deep
For this poor flesh'

For this poor flesh who yet
Would change divine,
Be sundered from all fret,
Be wholly Thine;

Be wholly Thine and glow
With limitless Light,
Born from Thy Thought to grow
Truth-meeting sight

February 19, 1936

ARJAVA

Sri Aurobindo's comment: Exceedingly beautiful—perfect in form and feeling.

ALIPORE BOMB CASE TRIAL

C. R. DAS DEFENDS SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of February 2000)

COUNSEL next dealt with the “sweets letter”. He said, “Your Honour will find that having regard to the circumstances is disclosed in the evidence of this case. Your Honour cannot accept the document as being in the handwriting of Barindra Kumar Ghose, or that it was sent to Arabinda Ghose. What does it show? The letter is supposed to have been written by one brother to another at Surat. Therefore if this letter is genuine both the brothers were at Surat at that time. I submit that it is utterly improbable, assuming that both the brothers are conspirators, that one brother should write to another brother in this way. There they could have talked to each other, explained their thoughts—each to the other—without writing at all. The letter states “we must have sweets all over India ready made for emergency. I wait here for your answer.” The case for the prosecution is that Barin used to address Arabinda as “Shejda”. Did Barin forget this when writing this letter? He writes “Dear brother”. In this country no younger brother would write to any elder brother, as “Dear brother” except to the eldest brother.

Judge —What do they write?

Mr. Das:—Mejda, Shejda etc, only the eldest brother is addressed as brother. The fact that both the brothers being at Surat, Barin wrote to Arabinda, is extremely improbable.

I draw Your Honour’s attention to the fact that Barin signs “Barindra Kumar Ghose”. My learned friend says that Arabinda and Barindra are Europeanised. But Barin came to India at the venerable age of one year. I left England 15 years ago, I do not know whether the custom has changed there. But when I was in England I noticed that a brother never set out his full name when writing to another brother.

Judge —I would not put my full name. I would omit my surname.

Mr. Das —Nobody would sign like that. Considering the probabilities I submit that when a brother desires to communicate something to another brother, the proper form of signing his name is not to give the full name like Barindra Kumar Ghose.

Mr. Das continuing said, “This Sweets Letter is taken with Arabinda and treasured down. It is taken to different places in the Bombay Presidency. It is brought to Calcutta back again. It is kept at 23 Scott’s Lane for a couple of months and the police are lucky enough to find the letter at 48, Grey Street. It is grossly improbable. I submit that under the circumstances, Your Honour will hesitate to accept this as evidence and proof against Arabinda Ghose.”

Mr. Das here read from the evidence of Mr. Creagan. Counsel commenting on the evidence said, on the 2nd May, not only 48, Grey Street, was searched, but the other houses were searched as well. All the articles found at the searches were sent to

the Park Street Thana There is no reason why an exception should be made with regard to 48, Grey Street. The documents of 15, Gopi Mohan Datt's Lane, and the garden were both sent to the Park Street Thana.

Mr. Das then referred to the great confusion in the evidence of the police witnesses with regard to the finding and examination of the letter at the Thana

Mr. Das. There is just another point about the "sweets" letter which is this—Your Honour will find that the number of the bundle was subsequently added to it. Mr. Creagan in his cross-examination says "the letters might have come out of the envelopes." I submit that the "sweets letter" could not have been in the bundle The number of the letters in the document must at least be 64. There were 64 letters and 20 envelopes.

Mr. Das referred to the evidence of several other witnesses and commented on them, after which he summed up He said, "I must thank Your Honour and gentlemen assessors for the very kind and patient hearing you have given me throughout this case. My only wish was that the task might have fallen on other hands to place this case before the Court, but as it fell on my hands I did all I possibly could to place the evidence in this case before the Court in a connected form. There is one point which struck me at the outset of this case but I did not refer to it so long, as I thought it could be dealt with more conveniently and appropriately after I had finished dealing with the evidence oral and documentary, on the record. Your Honour will find that my learned friend's case is that Arabinda is the head of this conspiracy. He has credited Arabinda with vast intellectual attainments and with vast powers of organisation and his case was that he was directing the conspiracy and was working from behind. Now it is with reference to this that I make my submission before Your Honour, that having regard to the nature of the conspiracy which has been established by the evidence—if it has been established at all—it is impossible that Arabinda could ever have believed that that conspiracy was likely to succeed If you say that Arabinda is not gifted with the intellectual powers with which you have credited him that is another matter But if you say that he is all that you have been kind enough to say he is and concomittant with that he is the head of the conspiracy and is directing the conspiracy, my answer to that is, the conspiracy is of such a nature that it is impossible to believe that Arabinda could ever have thought in his mind that it could succeed. My learned friend has referred to the thousand and one ramifications of that conspiracy and he has argued that there was a conspiracy from Calcutta to Tuticorin and other places and in order to substantiate this vast conspiracy as it were, he has not hesitated to bring a charge of conspiracy against persons of whom there is not the slightest evidence on record to show that they were in any way connected with it I ask you to disregard all that, the conspiracy is in my learned friend's imagination, I do not for a moment suggest that he does not believe it to be true, I don't suggest that he does not believe every word of what he has said and that he has any misgivings on the point I wholly concede that he fully believed in the conspiracy which he has put forward before the Court and the only way I can explain that and the only suggestion

that I can make is that he has been under the tutelage of the police for a long time and the police have poisoned his mind during the last ten months and no doubt he sincerely believed in it and put it forward before the Court

But the evidence is entirely different. From the evidence as is furnished by the confessions in this Court—confessions upon which the prosecution relies—you will find that it is a childish conspiracy—a toy revolution. It is impossible that Arabinda could ever have believed in his heart of hearts that by bombing one or two Englishmen, or some Englishmen at different places, they would ever have been able to subvert the British Government. If you credit him with intellectual powers and say that he has a brilliant mind, it is not open to you at the same time to say that he was the leader of a childish conspiracy and a toy revolution. That is the difficulty which comes up at the very threshold of this case. Either drop the suggestion that it is because of his intellectual powers, because of his eminent qualities with which he is credited that you want the Court to believe that he was the leader of the conspiracy; or the other theory that he was in fact the leader of this conspiracy and of this alleged revolutionary project. Apart from that suggestion if you turn to the evidence what do you find? It is argued that the confessions are evidence against Arabinda. My answer is that the confessions exonerate him. If it is argued that the watch witnesses and the other witnesses have proved conclusively that there has been association between Arabinda and the conspirators, I submit that that evidence is such that you can't place the slightest reliance upon it: not only that, but that under the circumstances one could only expect the evidence to be of such a character. If the Government takes into its head to believe that there is a vast conspiracy which is threatening the stability of the Government, it is common knowledge that you do come across spies who give false evidence. I shall just read a passage from a book written by an eminent Judge "The Government under those circumstances have spies who wriggle into the case, eavesdrop into families, abstract correspondence and forge letters." Therefore the evidence given before you is evidence that you can expect in a case like this. It seems to me if you consider the evidence carefully and apply the different tests I have suggested and submitted for consideration, I have hardly any doubt that you will reject that evidence as untrustworthy. Is it argued that in the different letters that have been put forward there is a case against Arabinda, that these letters show that Arabinda is implicated in any conspiracy whatsoever? My answer is that the letters themselves don't show anything of the kind. It is my learned friend's interpretation on those letters; and in some cases in regard to Arabinda's connection with certain boys that interpretation has been of such a character that one can hardly resist the temptation of calling it ridiculous, reminding one of the case of Mrs. Bardell against Pickwick. He reads a document and imports into that document things which are not to be found in the four corners of the document, but which have evolved out of my friend's inner consciousness. If you read the documents as they are, having regard to the circumstances under which they were written, I venture to submit before you that there is hardly any doubt, whatever may be the view, that those documents do not bring the guilt home to

Arabinda Ghose with reference to any of the charges brought against him. My farther submission is that my learned friend to a certain extent realised that and he said out of despair as it were, 'never mind the letters, never mind the evidence but look at the probability, look at the man's thought' It was in that view that he put before you the different newspapers and the charge of conspiracy and wholesale conspiracy against many men of light and leading in this country 'Read the "Bande Mataram", read the different speeches and read the other newspapers—my friend says that you must read the other papers because they are all linked together—and you discover what his thoughts were If you analyse those speeches and writings and if you find an indication that the man was putting forward before the country the ideal of freedom, you must take it for granted that he was also in favour of applying bombs, of secret societies and such other means as some of the evidence in this case discloses' My submission to you is—I made it before and I do so again—that those papers and the writings and speeches are not legal evidence in the case at all; but if you do take them you find unmistakable indication that whatever may be Arabinda's views, he is not guilty of the charges brought against him I have placed before Your Honour the letter of the 13th August 1905 I read to you the whole of that letter and commented on it and I explained to you what the different thoughts in that letter are (Reads) 'I say, as I have said in my statement, that ever since I came to Calcutta from Baroda, I never for one single moment deviated from the principles laid down in that letter. I have said I never took any part in politics I have said in my written statement, whatever the nature of my activities, be they political, social or religious, that throughout the whole course of my activities, I never for one single moment deviated from the principle laid down in that letter of 13th August The whole of my case before you is this. If it is suggested that I preached the ideal of freedom to my country which is against the law, I plead guilty to the charge If that is the law here, I say I have done that and I request you to convict me. But do not impute to me crimes that I am not guilty of; deeds against which my whole nature revolts, and which having regard to my mental capacity are something which could never have been perpetrated by me. If it is an offence to preach the ideal of freedom, I admit—having done it—I have never disputed it It is for that that I have given up all the prospects of my life It is for that, that I came to Calcutta to live for it and to labour for it It has been the one thought of my waking hours, the dream of my sleep If that is my offence, there is no necessity to bring witness into the box to depose to different things in connection with that Here am I and I admit it. My whole submission before the Court is this Let not the scene enacted in connection with the sedition trial of the "Bande Mataram" be enacted over again, and let the whole trial go into a side issue If that is my offence let it be so stated and I am cheerful to bear any punishment It pains me to think that crimes I could never have thought of or deeds repellent to me, and against which my whole nature revolts, should be attributed to me and that on the strength, not only of evidence on which the slightest reliance cannot be placed, but on my writings which breathe and breathe only of that high ideal which I felt I was called upon to preach. I

have done that and there is no question that I have ever denied it I have adopted the principles of the political philosophy of the West and I have assimilated that to the immortal teachings of Vedantism. I felt I was called upon to preach to my country to make them realise that India had a mission to perform in the comity of nations. If that is my fault you can chain me, imprison me, but you will never get out of me a denial of that charge. I venture to submit under no section of the law do I come for preaching the ideal of freedom. And with regard to the deeds with which I have been charged I submit there is no evidence on the record and it is absolutely inconsistent with everything that I taught, that I wrote and with every tendency of my mind discovered in the evidence.'

My appeal to you therefore is that a man like this who is being charged with the offences imputed to him stands not only before the bar in this Court but stands before the bar of the High Court of History and my appeal to you is this: That long after this controversy is hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation ceases, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India, but across distant seas and lands. Therefore I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this Court but before the bar of the High Court of History.

The time has come for you, Sir, to consider your judgment and for you, gentlemen, to consider your verdict. I appeal to you, Sir, in the name of all the traditions of the English Bench that forms the most glorious chapter of English history. I appeal to you in the name of all that is noble, of all the thousand principles of law which have emanated from the English Bench, and I appeal to you in the name of the distinguished Judges who have administered the law in such a manner as to compel not only obedience, but the respect of all those in whose cases they had administered the law. I appeal to you in the name of the glorious chapter of English history and let it not be said that an English Judge forgets to vindicate justice. To you gentlemen I appeal in the name of the very ideal that Arabinda preached and in the name of all the traditions of our country; and let it not be said that two of his own countrymen were overcome by passions and prejudices and yielded to the clamour of the moment.

(To be concluded)

PRIÈRE POUR CEUX QUI VEULENT SERVIR LE DIVIN

GLOIRE à Toi, Seigneur, triomphateur de tous les obstacles.

Permits que rien en nous ne fasse obstacle à Ton œuvre.

Permits que rien ne retarde Ta manifestation.

Que Ta volonté soit faite en toute chose et à tout moment.

Nous sommes devant Toi pour que Ta volonté s'accomplisse en nous, dans tous les éléments, toutes les activités de notre être, depuis les hauteurs suprêmes, jusqu'aux moindres cellules de notre corps

Permits que nous Te soyons entièrement et éternellement fidèles.

Nous voulons être complètement sous Ton influence, à l'exclusion de toute autre.

Permits que nous n'oublions jamais de T'être profondément et intensément reconnaissants.

Permits que nous ne gaspillions jamais rien de toutes les choses merveilleuses que Tu nous donnes à chaque instant.

Permits que tout en nous collabore à Ton œuvre, que tout soit prêt pour Ta réalisation

Gloire à Toi, Seigneur, Réalisateur Suprême.

Donne-nous une foi ardente, active, absolue, inébranlable en Ta Victoire.

Le 23 octobre 1937

LA MÈRE

A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO SERVE THE DIVINE

GLORY to Thee, O Lord, who triumphest over every obstacle.

Grant that nothing in us shall be an obstacle in Thy work

Grant that nothing may retard Thy manifestation.

Grant that Thy will may be done in all things and at every moment.

We stand here before Thee that Thy will may be fulfilled in us, in every element, in every activity of our being, from our supreme heights to the smallest cells of the body.

Grant that we may be faithful to Thee utterly and for ever.

We would be completely under Thy influence to the exclusion of every other.

Grant that we may never forget to own towards Thee a deep, an intense gratitude.

Grant that we may never squander any of the marvellous things that are Thy gifts to us at every instant.

Grant that everything in us may collaborate in Thy work and all be ready for Thy realisation.

Glory to Thee, O Lord, Supreme Master of all realisation.

Give us a faith active and ardent, absolute and unshakable in Thy Victory.

23rd October 1937

THE MOTHER

(Translated by Sri Aurobindo)

दैवसेवाभिलाषिणां कृते प्रार्थना

विजयस्व दधन्नाथ विघातानां पराजयम् ।
कार्यस्य ते विघाताय मा भूदस्मासु किञ्चन ।
मा भूद् विलम्बनं किञ्चित् प्रादुर्भावस्य वा तव ॥

अपि सर्वेषु कालेषु तथा सर्वेषु वस्तुषु ।
भूयात् कृतार्थो भगवान् सङ्कल्पो जित्वरस्तव ॥
आदेहसुकुम्हणम् आ समुत्तुङ्गभागतः ।
अस्मदंशेषु सर्वेषु सर्वास्वस्मत्प्रवृत्तिषु ।
इच्छा ते परिता स्यादित्यास्महे सन्निधौ तव ॥

वर्तेमहि समासक्ताः कृत्स्नशो नित्यशस्त्वयि ।
अनन्यवशगाः स्याम त्वत्प्रभावैकवर्तिनः ।
परमादरमत्यन्तं कृतविज्ञतया त्वयि ।
वर्तितुं विस्मृतिर्मा भूदस्माकं भोः कदाचन ॥

अद्भुताननुगृह्णासि यानर्थान् नः क्षणे क्षणे ॥
कदापि मा वृथा कार्ष्णं तान् वयं भगवन् विभो ॥
कार्ये ते सर्वमस्मासु सहकारि त्वयाऽस्तु भोः ।
अस्तु सर्वं च सन्नद्धं साक्षात्कारकृते च ते ॥
वरेण्य सिद्धिकृन्नाथ विजयस्व जयोऽस्तु ते ।
अनन्यवृत्तिमक्षीभ्यामुज्ज्वलां व्यवसायिनीम् ।
प्रतिपादय तां श्रद्धामस्मभ्यं विजये तव ॥

श्रीमाता

२३ अक्टूबर १९३७

(Rendered into Sanskrit by Sri Kapali Sastry)

A NOTE ON THE OBSERVER AND THE OBSERVED IN MODERN SCIENCE

SCIENCE means objectivity, that is to say, elimination of the personal element—truth as pure fact without being distorted or coloured by the feelings and impressions and notions of the observer. It is the very opposite of the philosopher's standpoint who says that a thing exists because (and so long as) it is perceived. The scientist swears that a thing exists whether you perceive it or not, perception is possible because it exists, not the other way round. And yet Descartes is considered not only as the father of modern philosophy, but also as the founder of modern mathematical science. But more of that soon. The scientific observer observes as a witness impartial and aloof; he is nothing more than a recording machine, a sort of passive mirror reflecting accurately and faithfully what is presented to it. This is indeed the great revolution brought about by Science in the world of human inquiry and in human consciousness, viz., the isolation of the observer from the observed.

In the old world, before Science was born, sufficient distinction or discrimination was not made between the observer and the observed. The observer mixed himself up or identified himself with what he observed and the result was not a scientific statement but a poetic description. Personal feelings, ideas, judgments entered into the presentation of facts and the whole mass passed as truth, the process often being given the high-sounding name of Intuition, Vision or Revelation but whose real name is fancy. And if there happened to be truth of fact somewhere, it was almost by chance. Once we thought of the eclipse being due to the greed of a demon, and pestilence due to the evil eye of a wicked goddess. The universe was born out of an egg, the cosmos consisted of concentric circles of worlds that were meant to reward the virtuous and punish the sinner in graded degrees. These are some of the very well-known instances of the pathetic fallacy, that is to say, introducing the element of personal sentiment in our appreciation of events and objects. Even today Nazi race history and Soviet Genetics carry that unscientific prescientific tradition.

Science was born the day the observer cut himself aloof from the observed. Not only so, not only is he to stand aside, outside the field of observation and be a bare recorder; but he must let the observed record itself, that is, be its own observer. Modern Science means not so much the observer narrating the story of the observed but the observed telling its own story. The first step is well exemplified in the narrative of Galileo. When hot discussion was going on and people insisted on saying—as Aristotle decided and common sense declared—that heavier bodies most naturally fall quicker from a height, it was this prince of experimenters who straight-away took two different weights, went up the tower of Pisa and let them drop and astounded the people by showing that both travel with equal speed and fall to the ground at the same time.

Science also declared that it is not the observation of one person, however qualified, that determines the truth or otherwise of a fact, but the observation of many

persons and the possibility of observations of all persons converging, coinciding, corroborating. It is only when observation has thus been tested and checked that one can be sure that the personal element has been eliminated. Indeed the ideal condition would be if the observer, the scientist himself, could act as part of the machine for observation—at the most he should be a mere assembler of the parts of the machine that would record itself, impersonally, automatically. The rocket instruments that are sent high up in the sky that record the temperature, pressure or other weather conditions in the stratosphere or deep-sea recording machines are ingenious inventions in that line. The wizard Jagadish Chandra Bose showed his genius precisely in the way he made the plant itself declare its life-story: it is not what the scientist thinks or feels about the plant, but what the plant has to say of its own accord, as it were—its own tale of growth and decay, of suffering, spasm, swoon, suffocation or death under given conditions. This is the second step that Science took in the direction of impersonal and objective inquiry.

It was thought for long a very easy matter—at least not extraordinarily difficult—to eliminate the observer and keep only to the observed. It was always known how the view of the observer, that is to say, his observation changed in respect of the observed fact with his change of position. The sun rises and sets to the observer on earth: to an observer on Mars, for example, the sun would rise and set, no doubt, but earth too along with it in the same way as Mars and sun appear to us now, while to an observer on the sun, the sun would seem fixed while the planets would be seen moving round. Again, we all know the observer in a moving train sees things outside the train moving past and himself at stand-still; the same observer would see another train moving alongside in the same direction and with the same speed as stuck to it and at stand-still, but as moving with double the speed if going in the contrary direction. and so on.

The method proposed for eliminating the observer was observation, more and more observation, and experiment, testing the observation under given conditions. I observe and record a series of facts and when I have found a sufficient number of them I see I am able to put them all together under a general title, a law of occurrence or pattern of the objects observed. Further, it is not I alone who can do it in any peculiar way personal to me, but everybody else can do the same thing and arrive at the same series of facts leading to the same conclusion. I note, for example, the sun's path from day to day in the sky; soon we find that the curves described by the sun are shifted along the curve of an ellipse (that is to say, their locus is an ellipse). The ecliptic is thus found to be an ellipse which means that the earth moves round the sun in an ellipse.

But in the end a difficulty arose in the operation of observation. It proved to be not a simple process. The scientific observer requires for his observation the yard-stick and the time-piece. Now, we have been pushed to admit a queer phenomenon (partly by observation and partly by a compelling deduction) that these two measuring units are not constant, they change with the change of system, that is to say, accord-

ing to the velocity of the system. In other words, each observer has his own unit of space and time measure. So the elimination of the personal element of the observer has become a complicated mathematical problem, even if one is sure of it finally.

There is still something more. The matter of calculating and measuring objectively was comparatively easy when the object in view was of medium size, neither too big nor too small. But in the field of the infinite and the infinitesimal, when from the domain of mechanical forces we enter into the region of electric and radiant energy, we find our normal measuring apparatus almost breaks down. Here accurate observation cannot be made because of the very presence of the observer, because of the very fact of observation. The ultimates that are observed are trails of light particles: now when the observer directs his eye (or the beam of light replacing the eye) upon the light particles, its direction and velocity are interfered with. The photon is such a tiny infinitesimal that a ray from the observer's eye is sufficient to deflect and modify its movement. And there is no way of determining or eliminating this element of deflection or interference. The old Science knew certainly that a thermometer, dipped in the water whose temperature it is to measure, itself changes the initial temperature. But that was something calculable and objective. Here the position of the observer is something like a "possession", imbedded, ingrained, involved in the observed itself.

The crux of the difficulty is this. We say the observing eye, or whatever mechanism is made to function for it, disturbs the process of observation. Now to calculate that degree or measure of disturbance one has to fall back upon another observing eye, and this again has to depend upon yet another behind. Thus there is an infinite regress and no final solution. So, it has been declared that, in the ultimate analysis, scientific calculation gives us only the average result, and it is only average calculations that are possible.

Now we come to the sanctum, the Shekinah, of the problem. For there is a still deeper mystery. And pre-eminently it is an Einsteinian discovery. It is not merely the measuring ray of light, not merely the beam in the eye of the observer that is the cause of interference. The very mind behind the eye is involved in a strange manner. If the mind is not a *tabula rasa*, it comes into the field with certain presuppositions—axioms and postulates, as it calls them—due to its angle of vision and perhaps to the influence upon it of immediate sense perception. It takes for granted, for example, that light travels in a straight line, that parallels do not meet, indeed all the theorems and deductions of Euclidean geometry. There is a strong inclination in the mind to view things as arranged according to that pattern. Einstein has suggested that the spherical scheme can serve as well or even better our observations. Riemann's non-Euclidean geometry has assumed momentous importance in contemporary scientific enquiry. It is through that scheme that Einstein proposes to find the equation that will subsume the largest number of actual and possible or potential facts and bring about the reconciliation of such irreconcilables as wave and particle, gravitation and electricity.

In any case, at the end of all our peregrinations we seem to circle back to our

original Cartesian-cum-Berkeleyan position; we discover that it is not easy to extricate the observed from the observer: the observer is so deep-set in the observed, part and parcel of it, that there are scientists who consider their whole scientific scheme of the world as only a mental set-up, we may replace it very soon by another scheme equally cogent, subjective all the same. The subject has entered into all objects and any definition of the object must necessarily depend upon the particular poise of the subject. That is the cosmic immanence of the Purusha spoken of in the Upanishads—the one Purusha become many has been installed in the heart of each and every object. There is indeed a status of the subject in which the subject and the object are gathered into or form one reality. The observer and the observed are the two ends, the polarisation of a single entity: and all are reals at that level. But the scientific observer is only the mental purusha and in his observation the absolute objectivisation is not possible. The Einsteinian equations that purport to rule out all local viewpoints can hardly be said to have transcended the co-ordinates of the subject. That is possible only to the consciousness of the cosmic Purusha.

(To be concluded)

AMAL KIRAN
(K D SETHNA)

AT THE HEAD YOU STAND

AT the head you stand of the green winding stair,
 Like an ascetic rooted to his spot,
 Scanning the heaven from morn till night,
 Gazing fervently at the effulgent god
 Acme of devotion to that lord of truth
 You seem to me like the god you love,
 Seeking no fruit—indeed you delight
 In self-giving joy, and get a boon,
 A fire to burn like him forever,
 For others, in each cell of your being's core

V JAYBEE

A POEM BY NIRODBARAN WITH SRI AUROBINDO'S
CORRECTIONS AND COMMENTS

(Original form)

|| Under the white felicitous eye of the moon
 wings drunk with the infinite
|| My heart spreads slowly (the infinite-drunk wings)
 lost
|| In wide, blue spaces of air, (still) in a swoon,
 It floats like a glad song from height to height.
 (From height to height like a lark merrily sings.)

|| Earth's narrow cage dwindles into a dot
 emerald
|| The(se) hills and trees with their cool, (verdant) shade
|| Seem like old memory's fast vanishing spot
|| On life's horizon of dim shadows made

|| Now the stars' fragrant breath runs in the veins
|| And lightning-tremors murmuringly flow
|| One with the astral body's lambent glow
 flaming
|| My (awakened) sight a new world-vision gains

|| Where all creation is (like) a God-ward cry
|| In a vast plenitude of ecstasy.

20.5 37

Sri Aurobindo's comments

A: Exceedingly fine. With the exception of the fourth line all is tiptop—the first line and the last two magnificent; along with the second (after my manipulation) they may be attributed to O P.

Q: In the 2nd line, how about the anapaest?

A: Since you are in for an irregular movement, let's enhance and get something magnificently out of the way.

This lark [4th line] is too trivial and common. Also if as the punctuation suggests, it is the lark who sings and flies upward (or ascends) in a swoon, it is too surrealistic

Q: The poem doesn't seem very successful. Sounds rather big.

A: Marvellously successful, sir, except for one ornithological detail. Not only sounds, but is.

Q: Anapaest of the 1st line can go, but eye of moon rather empty.

A: No, sir. Anapaest here quite effective. Trochee, iamb, iamb, anapaest, anapaest make a magnificently heterodox combination.

Q: Rhythm of the 2nd line?

A: Won't do

Mȳ heart | spreads slowly | wings drunk | with the in|finite

I have improved it by making it worse from the orthodox point of view.

Q: Lightning-tremor can murmur?

A: Yes, if you make it do so. A listener can always murmur.

Q: World-vision not too loud?

A: Good heavens, no!

Q: And couplet?

A: Magnificent.

Q: My awakened sight etc. (12th line) reminds me of your sonnet on 'Other Earths':

“World after world bursts on the awakened sight.”

Does it matter?

A: Yes.

No use cribbing unnecessarily.

Q: Nothing else to make remarks on, unless you find mistakes in grammar, English etc.

A: All A-1.

(Revised form)

Under the white felicitous eye of the moon
My heart spreads slowly wings drunk with the infinite;
In wide, blue spaces of air, lost in a swoon,
It floats like a glad song from height to height.

Earth's narrow cage dwindles into a dot,
The hills and trees with their cool, emerald shade
Seem like old memory's fast vanishing spot
On life's horizon of dim shadows made.

Now the stars' fragrant breath runs in the veins
And lightning-tremors murmuringly flow:
One with the astral body's lambent glow
My flaming sight a new world-vision gains

Where all creation is a God-ward cry
In a vast plenitude of ecstasy.

20 5 37

NAGIN-BHAI TELLS ME

(Continued from the issue of February 2000)

02:01:1995

Two or three days ago my spirit rose up, all the way up to the Overmind. Then it folded itself from the sides and became a well, a deep well.

From the lower part, from the thigh and above upward like that, it was so, a deep well.

But my physical got affected and now I have loose motions. But then the Mother and Sri Aurobindo know everything! Yes, they know everything.

07:01:1995

Due to the physical weakness I could not do much. I could not stand that long for meditation. Also, I was not able to eat well.

But two or three days ago something else happened. Sri Aurobindo entered directly into my vital-physical. The work was going on. The Mother later told me to absorb whatever was being given. I should absorb.

They are doing whatever is to be done. They know everything; they know how to do the job and with what speed it should be done.

The amount of work they have done is simply tremendous. It is, to give the example of a battle, like amassing troops or forces on the border before the invasion is made. The work is moving very fast.

I am sure something will happen before the Darshan.

09:01:1995

Last few days.

After meditation in the evening, as usual I go to the Samadhi to offer my Pranam. While doing Pranam there is the movement of surrender.

In fact, it is for that that we go to the Samadhi, to surrender ourselves.

But during the last few days something different has been happening. As soon as I lift up my head from the Samadhi,—mind well, I am still sitting there,—there is the ascent of surrender, from my being and rising above. There is the ascent of surrender. There is no mistaking it; I can see it or feel it,—ascent of surrender.

*

Nirod tells me in the evening:

There is good news for you, for all of us. I went to the Mother. She told me “Don’t bother me. I am extremely busy, bringing down the supermind.”

Where?

It must be in the physical,—it is already there in the subtle-physical
That is wonderful indeed. They are really working so much
Supermind in the physical,—that is great.

*

14:01:1995

The work of universalisation is going on, making the consciousness universal

Sri Aurobindo had told me long ago that my ego is small and obscure, small not in the sense of measure but in terms of pettiness. Everyone has ego and it is different for different people. But it is necessary to remove it. Universalisation is possible only when it is removed. That is what it means.

After the meditation as I was coming down, I mean as my spirit was coming down, the Mother descended faster than it and came down into my legs. She is there

Why did she come that way?

Perhaps to take care of the process of universalisation. My small and obscure ego could be an obstacle for what she is presently doing. To remove it she must have come down herself. It must be for that, connected with the universalisation.

They are doing everything,—and yet I must do my part, my bit. If she has come down for this purpose, then it is a great thing; it is a great step.

16:01:1995

There was a severe pain in the back. This is not unusual and it happens to me quite often. I was hesitating to stand near the Samadhi for meditation, as is my practice. But finally I decided to do so, making a firm determination to stand even though the pain was severe.

Yes, it was a good meditation

Sri Aurobindo said: “I am giving you the supramental blessings.” He also put his hand around my waist. The pain disappeared immediately.

This is the first time he told me that he was giving me supramental blessings. I was of course very happy. After my meditation I went to the Samadhi to bow and offer my thanks, to express my gratitude.

As I was standing at the centre of the northern side of the Samadhi, something in me said that it was the physical Prakriti,—yes, physical Prakriti,—who came out to express her gratitude to Sri Aurobindo.

(To be continued)

Here is
Savitri

COMPILED FROM THE WRITINGS OF SRI AUROBINDO
AND THE MOTHER AND OTHER SOURCES

The importance of
Savitri is immense

Its subject is universal
Its revelation is prophetic

The time spent in its
atmosphere is not wasted.

It will be a happy compensation
for the feverish haste men
put now in all they do.

10-2-67.

(Continued from the issue of February 2000)

THE GLORY AND FALL OF LIFE

In a gallop of thunder-hooved vicissitudes
 She swept through the race-fields of Circumstance,
 Or, swaying, she tossed between her heights and deeps,
 Uplifted or broken on Time's incessant wheel.¹

The Mother said while explaining this painting to me:

Life is on top of the wheel and she falls headlong when the wheel turns...

Then she made a face.

The wheel is the sign of an action of Force (whatever force may be indicated by the nature of the symbol) ..

Green is a vital energy of work and action.²

Above him in a new celestial vault
 Other than the heavens beheld by mortal eyes,
 As on a fretted ceiling of the gods,
 An archipelago of laughter and fire,
 Swam stars apart in a rippled sea of sky.³

In a swift eternal moment fixed there live
 Or ever recalled come back to longing eyes
 Calm heavens of imperishable Light,
 Illumined continents of violet peace,
 Oceans and rivers of the mirth of God
 And griefless countries under purple suns.⁴

The vital world itself in its higher regions is very beautiful, dangerously beautiful and attractive...⁵

The violet is the light of Divine Grace and Compassion....

Violet is the colour of the light of Divine Compassion, as also of Krishna's Grace. It is also the radiance of Krishna's protection.⁶

The sun is the symbol of the concentrated light of Truth.

Purple is the colour of vital power.

Purple is the colour of the vital force...⁷

The seven breaths are born from Him and the seven lights and kinds of fuel and the

seven oblations and these seven worlds in which move the life-breaths set within with the secret heart for their dwelling-place, seven and seven ⁸

“And griefless countries under purple suns.”

I don't know [“what plane is spoken of by Virgil”], but purple is a light of the Vital. It may have been one of the vital heavens he was thinking of. The ancients saw the vital heavens as the highest and most of the religions also have done the same. I have used the suggestion of Virgil to insert a needed line.⁹

The nude God-children in their play-fields ran
Smiting the winds with splendour and with speed.. ¹⁰

The Gods are those who are immortal, who are not bound to the vicissitudes of the material life with all that is narrow, mean, unreal and false in them....

In the gods there is no fault, because they live according to their own nature, spontaneously and without restraint: it is their way of godhead. But if you stand on a higher point of view, if you have a higher vision of the whole, you see them lacking certain qualities that are exclusively human. By his capacity of love and self-giving, man can have as much power as the gods and even more, when he is not egoistic, when he has surmounted his selfishness.¹¹

(To be continued)

HUTA

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References

- 1 *Savitri*, p 117
- 2 *Letters on Yoga* SABCL Vol 23, pp 966, 984
- 3 *Savitri*, p 119
- 4 *Ibid* , p 120
- 5 The Mother, *White Roses*, p 78
- 6 *Letters on Yoga* SABCL Vol 23, p 965
- 7 *Ibid* , pp 957 960 965
- 8 Sri Aurobindo (*Mundaka Upanishad*), SABCL Vol 12 p 276
- 9 *Savitri*, p 774
- 10 *Savitri* p 126
- 11 The Mother *Path to Perfection*, p 64

THE COMPOSITION OF SAVITRI

(Continued from the issue of February 2000)

The Two-column Manuscripts

THE manuscripts belonging to the early part of 1944 can easily be distinguished by their physical appearance. In the previous two years, Sri Aurobindo had used thick notebooks for much of his work on the epic. In each of the two most important notebooks of that period, he wrote out a complete version of what later became Part One—in 1942 it was the first book and the next year it was divided into three books. But in the first half of 1944, he was writing *Savitri* in two columns on large loose sheets of paper.

It is in this form that we find the last complete version of Part One written by Sri Aurobindo in his own hand. A close look at it reveals that there has been a dramatic expansion since the previous year, bringing the first three books much closer to their final proportions.

Nevertheless, this will turn out to be far from the end of Sri Aurobindo's work on the first part of the poem. His handwritten recasts of existing passages and drafts of new ones continue in small note-pads until about 1946, becoming less and less legible due to his failing eyesight. Meanwhile the dictated revision begins. But all this belongs to the last phase of the composition of *Savitri*, the period from 1945 to 1950. We are concerned now with the manuscripts of 1944.

At least two versions of most cantos of the first three books are found among the two-column manuscripts. There are often several drafts of the same passage in this form. The last such manuscript encompasses the whole of Part One. It is dated at the end: "May 7, 1944".

This manuscript represents the culmination of the second and longest phase in the composition of *Savitri*, the period from the late 1920s to the mid-1940s when what absorbed Sri Aurobindo's attention was not primarily the story of Savitri and Satyavan, but the Yoga of Aswapati. The manuscript has a length of 105 pages. Since there are two columns per page and usually more than 40 lines in each column, the number of lines may be estimated as between eight and nine thousand. Another three thousand lines or so would be added by 1950, when Part One was published.

The manuscript begins with a detailed contents page for the first three books. A glance at it shows that when Sri Aurobindo began this version, he was still dividing the books of *Savitri* into "sections", not yet into cantos. Book One still had only three sections. But when he revised the manuscript in his own hand, Sri Aurobindo broke the long third section, "The Yoga of the King", into Cantos Three to Five with their present titles. The conversion of the other numbered sections into cantos was implied by this change, though in most cases it was not marked on the manuscript itself.

When we speak of versions of *Savitri* after 1944, the word ‘‘section’’ remains useful for referring to paragraphs separated by blank spaces within a canto.

Facsimile 1 (See page 207)

To give an impression of the progress of the poem during the middle phase of its composition, some stages in this period are illustrated by three facsimiles in the present instalment. These manuscript pages reproduced belong to the early 1930s, 1942 and 1944. The first page shown here contains lines related to passages now spread out over thirty-five pages (pp. 44-79) of the printed poem. The page of the 1942 version corresponds to ten pages (pp. 67-77) and the column of the 1944 manuscript to about two pages (pp. 74-76) of the current edition.

The first facsimile shows how far Sri Aurobindo had come in describing Aswapati’s Yoga by the early 1930s. This manuscript of ‘‘The Book of Birth’’ contains six pages of what would develop into ‘‘The Yoga of the King’’. The six-page passage has no title and is not a distinct formal unit. It is separated only by a blank space from two five-page sections preceding it which are early versions of ‘‘The Symbol Dawn’’ and ‘‘The Issue’’. It continues without break into two pages on Aswapati’s ascent through the worlds, followed by twenty pages corresponding to the present Book of the Divine Mother. It stops before the Divine Mother’s first speech. Much of this version is rewritten later in the same notebook.

What is reproduced here is the third complete page of this early account of Aswapati’s Yoga. In the top part of the page is the end of a passage corresponding to what is now Book One, Canto Three. In the margin we see the first appearance of lines for what would become Canto Four. Lines in the lower half of the page are found in the same or a similar form in Canto Five of the present Book One.

At the top of this page, before adding lines in the margin, Sri Aurobindo wrote:

Fair-peaked he seemed, apart in selfless toil,
A demiurge compassionate to men

In this manuscript, these lines follow ‘‘Lonely his days and splendid like the sun’s’’, the last line on the previous page. In later versions they were shifted to come a little before that line, which now concludes Book One, Canto Three. They were transformed into

Apart he lived in his mind’s solitude.
A demigod shaping the lives of men

If we disregard for the moment the alterations, cancellations, insertions and transpositions made after the first writing—for some of these are tentative or ambiguous and Sri Aurobindo often left choices between alternatives to be made in his next fair copy—the next few lines of this version read:

But even this greatness could not be his aim;
 The Power invisibly drove him higher still
 Always he soared or grew to loftier steps.
 Our largest sweep became for him too small,
 Life's widest buildings could not prison his view,
 Nor hide from him the altitudes unreached
 To which the indwelling Daemon points our flight

These lines disappeared a little later in the development of *Savitri*. Sri Aurobindo evidently found that they were not "of the same mint" as the rest. Yet they express the ascent from plane to plane of consciousness which is a central aspect of his Yoga. It is not surprising that similar ideas reappeared in lines such as

Ever his consciousness and vision grew,
 They took an ampler sweep, a loftier flight

 But still the invisible Magnet drew his soul

In contrast, many of the lines below have remained intact or survived in a recognisable form in the second and third sections of Book One, Canto Five. The remainder of the page was originally written as follows, including the first line on the next page.

Not here he rested in this bargain made
 Between our littleness and cabined hopes
 And the compassionate Infinitudes
 In a vast freedom of broad-winged ascent
 The earth-nature's summits sank below his feet,
 He climbed to meet the endless more above
 Thus more and more into himself he passed
 A portion of the world and yet apart,
 Amid the noise of aimless human toil
 Impassive he lived, immune from earthly hopes,
 A figure in the ineffable Witness' shrine,
 Pacing the vast cathedral of his thoughts
 Under its arches dim with infinity
 Mid heavenward brooding of invisible wings.
 A call was on him from intangible heights,
 Indifferent to the little outpost Mind,
 He dwelt in the wideness of the Eternal's reign

Most of the lines transcribed above relate to the present Book One, Canto Five, others were later rejected and do not form part of the final version at all. But there are

two lines on this page from the 1930s that give it a unique interest. For they mark the first appearance of what would eventually become the fourth and longest canto of Book One of *Savitri*, ‘‘The Secret Knowledge’’.

At the top of the left margin, Sri Aurobindo jotted three new lines

The Light he sometimes glimpsed must be his home,
A Strength not forced to stumble by its speed
A Joy that drags not sorrow as its shade

The first of these lines was later changed into a line that comes near the beginning of the second section of Book One, Canto Five

The glory he had glimpsed must be his home

The other two lines (variants of which can be seen in the margin and between the lines in the middle of the same page) were the starting-point for the evolution of a passage which by 1936 had grown to 32 lines. In 1942 it was more than 200 lines, forming the second of three paragraphs of ‘‘The Yoga of the King’’ By 1944, the paragraph had developed to almost 500 lines and was converted into a canto. The present length of Book One, Canto Four is 966 lines.

In 1942, the two lines that had appeared in the margin in the early 1930s come at the end of a passage about the Earth-goddess which is not very different from the final version:

Outstretching arms to the unanswering Void,
Passionate she prays to invisible forms of Gods
Soliciting from dumb Fate and toiling Time
What most she needs and most exceeds her scope.
This she demands, this feels as destined hers,—
A Will expressive of soul’s deity,
A Mind unvisited by Illusion’s gleams,
A Strength not forced to stumble by its speed,
A Joy that drags not sorrow as its shade.

Facsimile 2 (See page 212)

The next facsimile is a sample of the 1942 manuscript. It shows the end of the second paragraph of ‘‘The Yoga of the King’’ and the beginning of the third paragraph. The passage on the Earth-goddess, quoted above, is found two pages earlier in the same manuscript. The fourth line on the page after this is:

The Glory he had seen must be his home

Thus this page comes near the end of a long and still rapidly growing passage that had begun to take shape when three lines were jotted in the margin of another notebook some ten years earlier.

The top half of the page is related to distinct passages in the last three sections of the present Book One, Canto Four. Only the first three lines, along with the last line on the previous page, have stayed together in the final text, almost unchanged from what they were in 1942:

The All-Conscient ventured into Ignorance,
 The All-Blissful bore to be insensible.
 Incarnate in a world of strife and pain
 He puts on joy and sorrow like a robe

The next few lines were written as follows, before revision:

In a body obscuring the eternal spirit
 He moves in a chiaroscuro of error and truth,
 As one forgetting who searches for himself
 And seeks an inner light that he has lost
 Or journeys to a home he knows no more.

After 1944, the paragraph that begins “The Absolute, the Perfect, the Alone” was introduced before these lines, which were changed slightly and separated by other lines; the process has already begun on this page, where Sri Aurobindo has written a new line in the margin,

And wanders in a world his thoughts have made

to be inserted after “a chiaroscuro of error and truth” (“And wanders” was later changed to “A wanderer” and these two lines were transposed.)

The rest of this paragraph, transcribed in the same manner, reads:

Over the rails of limiting mind and sense
 He looks out on the magic waves of Time
 Steering past the trade-routes of Ignorance
 Till the nescient dusk is lifted from man’s soul
 And the morns of God have overtaken his night,
 A sailor on the Inconscient’s fathomless seas
 Voyaging through a starry world of thought
 On Matter’s deck to a spiritual sun.
 For this he screened his white infinity
 And laid on his spirit the burden of the flesh
 That Godhead’s seed might flower in mindless Space.

The revision of some of these lines to their present form can be seen on this page itself, e.g , the alteration of the first line to ‘‘Over the narrow rails of limiting sense’’.

As Sri Aurobindo went on developing the symbolism of ‘‘the sailor on the flow of Time’’, these lines came to be scattered over three or four pages at the end of Book One, Canto Four. Groups of two or three lines stayed together, but were shifted into a different order, with many new lines coming between them.

Several lines in the margins of this page, and the numbers revising the order of the lines, illustrate a remark made by Sri Aurobindo in a letter of 1936.

I can never be certain of newly written stuff (I mean in this *Savitri*) until I have looked at it again after an interval. Apart from the quality of new lines, there is the combination with others in the whole which I have modified more than anything else in my past revisions.

Of the lines on the ‘‘sailor’’ found in the margins or between the lines of this passage, only one proved durable, with some change in its wording.

Sees mind like a moon illumining the world’s dark ...

Other lines added in the revision of this page, like some seen in the first facsimile, proved to be ephemeral. The following lines, for example, were not retained by Sri Aurobindo in his next version:

And charts the reefs it shows and dangerous isles

Self-doomed to journey without anchor or port

In leaping foam and under drifting skies
To a longitude where never set the dawns

In the lower half of the page, Sri Aurobindo wrote the beginning of the last paragraph of ‘‘The Yoga of the King’’ as it was in 1942. Alterations, additions written in the margin or between the lines, and numbers indicating rearrangements are disregarded in this transcription:

This knowledge first he had of Time-born men.
Admitted through a curtain of bright thought,
He dared to live when thought and breath were still
And shore the cord of mind that ties the earth-heart,
And found the occult cave. the mystic door
Near to the Well of Vision in the soul
And entered where the Wings of Glory brood:

(41) "Herflesh-Blissful love be unrescuable."

(1) { Dreamate in a world of forms and pain
Her spirits enjoy and sorrow like a rose.

In the body obscuring the eternal spirit
She made through the shadows of sorrow and truth;

And wonder was
Should be thought
her world

she was forgetting her
And of accents an inner light that he had lost
In the journey to a home he knew no more
Over the trails of limiting mind and sense.

And she followed
the path of light
And in darkness
abandoned
me

And with the
nets of sorrow
The stars
Self-denial
of
darkness

She looks out from the magic towers of Time
In the night of the world's dark;

By the leaping
from the
dark
The light
The
The

And the moon of God have overtaken his night;
A sailor on the Immortal's fatherless sea

He brought through a stormy world of thought
On Ruler's deck to a spiritual sun.

For thus he screened his white imperity
And laid on his spirit the burden of the flesh
That Godhead's seed might flower in mindless space.

This knowledge found behind of Time's oblivion.

(2) I admitted through a curtain of light
(3) I admitted to give breath thought and breath was still.

(4) I found the cord of truth that ties the earth-heart,

(5) I found the occult cave, the mystic door
(6) I found the Wall of Vision in the soul

(7) I found where the Wings of Glory brood;

(8) I found the silent space where all is felt and known
(9) I found the original grasp of the cosmic journey.

(10) I found the Book of Beginnings when I began
He read the original whose held back

Remember the secret
of the spirit
I found the spirit
I found the spirit
I found the spirit

And he looked on his of the spirit's crypt,
And saw the signature and fiery seal

And heard repeating
the
eternity

Of Wisdom unto the dear Power's hidden source
Who builds in Time the steps of light

The world's million paths that lead to dawn and dawn;
A meaning that the flame of ether

And fate revealed the law of passion's Will;

And
A conscious
rejoiced
worldly

For the Word he saw beyond the Omnipresent surface
That fell like a deep thought in sullen forms;

Off the
the
the
the
the
the

That Ruler's presence in the spiritual sense,
Life its gratification of the Golden Child.

His being prophetic grew of Godhead's word,
The gemman of the eternal spirit appeared,

The
the
the
the
the
the

(3)

In a silent space where all is for ever known
 Amid the record graphs of the cosmic Scribe,
 Opening the Book of Being's index page,
 He read the original ukase held back
 In the locked archives of the spirit's crypt,
 And saw the signature and fiery seal
 Of Wisdom on the dim Power's hooded works
 Who builds in Ignorance the steps of Light
 A meaning met the stumbling pace of Chance
 And Fate revealed its chain of unseen Will
 In the Void he saw tranced the Omniscience supreme
 And felt the unshaped Thought in soulless forms,
 Saw Matter pregnant with spiritual sense,
 Life its gestation of the Golden Child.
 His being prophetic grew of godhead won,
 The greatness of the eternal Spirit appeared .

All these lines except for the last two are now found in some form in the first section of Book One, Canto Five. where this passage has increased fourfold in length

Facsimile 3 (See page 214)

A stage in this expansion is shown in the last facsimile, where a column of a page of the last two-column manuscript of 1944 is reproduced Unlike the previous examples, this is a fair copy without complicated revision. So the text will be transcribed below with the few changes Sri Aurobindo marked.

The first line is a new one that will be dropped in later versions:

Into this inner library he could delve.

But the next two lines appear according to the revision marked on the 1942 manuscript.

Opened was the Book of Being's index page,
 Perused the record graphs of the cosmic scribe;

Sri Aurobindo later elaborated upon this imagery in a sentence that begins:

There in a hidden chamber closed and mute
 Are kept the record graphs of the cosmic scribe,
 And there the tables of the sacred Law,
 There is the Book of Being's index page.. .

188 In the inner library he could delve.
 Of the Book of Being's index page,
 Demanded the record graphs of the comic scab;
 He read the original Ukase held back
 In the locked archives of the spirit's craft
 And saw the signature and fiery seal
 Of wisdom on the den' Over's blooded work
 Who builds in ignorance the steps of flight,
 Infinity's sanctum to the bank of form
 In the live stream of the comic Self
 Take place; on more in hand all still stand
 He ever said (and said all round here)
 That's the essence trilled and ruffled into fantasy;
 And the answering echo of the first Idea
 Concerning the power of being full.
 Proclaimed to the slumber of the ashling soul
 The conditions of good's concentration's light,
 And there rang out over the husk of spirit
 The eternal promise to some being - that
 And in the world promise to begin
 And the preceding sense of the lingers of Time -
 A sleeping deity opened deathless eyes.
 Dislodging earth's brute muscle of mere science;
 He felt the unshaped thought in sorrow forms,
 Grew with the program of spiritual sense,
 With life its gestation of the Golden Child;
 In the light flooding thought, still one way
 As he read from within the text of the without
 In the perfect the univernally sorrowful,
 The noble gear plan and lost its aching desire,
 A love which he let the night pass;
 All things signed and sealed with a hard to bear
 A purpose mingled with the fiercest spirit
 Concerning with the stumbling feet of those
 And soul revealed a chain of prayer, Will;
 In the perfect the univernally sorrowful
 A conscious will was filled the old dark space;
 In the third he saw the end the Omnipotence supreme -
 In hope to do the superhuman's form
 He raised his eyes to unseen spirit heights
 Aspiring to the solar a greater world.
 When he was read in the to grow and pass.

A comparison of the facsimile with the printed text of this passage will reveal that more than two dozen lines have been added at this point before "Infinity's sanction to the birth of form", a line that appeared in the margin in 1942 and now precedes "the original ukase". The origin of these new lines will be discussed in the next instalment.

The manuscript continues with a sentence in which not a word has changed since 1942. The final text, also, will be almost identical to this:

He read the original ukase held back
 In the locked archives of the spirit's crypt
 And saw the signature and fiery seal
 Of Wisdom on the dim Power's hooded works
 Who builds in ignorance the steps of Light.

The next group of lines, on the other hand, has grown out of three or four lines written in the margin in 1942. In the subsequent phase, besides "sanction to the birth of form", a line appeared in the margin in 1942 that now precedes "the original ukase". In the shifted passage before the above sentence, it will be drastically reworked. Only two lines will remain unchanged. Several will disappear entirely and be replaced by new ones:

Infinity's sanction to the birth of form
 In the bare vastness of the cosmic Self
 Took place; once more was heard in the still Mind
 The ocean sound from which all sounds arose,
 And Nescience thrilled and rippled with the first ray:
 The answering echo of the first Idea
 Commencing the process of evolving Truth
 Proclaimed to the slumber of the assenting Soul
 The conditions of God's covenant with Night,
 And there rang out over the hush of Space
 The Eternal's promise to some toiling Heart
 Inducing the world-passion to begin
 And the prelude verse of the tragedy of Time.

The rest of what is now the first section of Book One, Canto Five, follows the 1944 version rather closely except for the omission of two lines, the addition of one, a transposition and some changes in wording. In 1944 it ran:

A sleeping deity opened deathless eyes
 Dislodging earth's brute mask of inconscience;
 He felt the unshaped thought in soulless forms,

Knew Matter pregnant with spiritual sense,
 Life its gestation of the Golden Child.
 In the light flooding thought's still vacancy
 As he read from within the text of the without
 Interpreting the universe by soul-signs,
 The riddle grew plain and lost its catch obscure,
 A larger lustre lit the mighty page
 All now seemed just that was so hard to bear
 A purpose mingled with the pain of birth,
 A meaning met the stumbling pace of Chance
 And Fate revealed a chain of seeing Will;
 A conscious wideness filled the old dumb Space,
 In the Void he saw throned the Omniscience supreme

Finally, at the bottom of the column is the beginning of what will become the second section of Book One, Canto Five. The line at the top of the second column must also be included for completeness, it has a longer history than anything in the first column, since it can be traced, as we have seen, to a line that Sri Aurobindo jotted in the margin of a notebook in the early 1930s

In hope to descry the superhuman's form
 He raised his eyes to unseen spiritual heights
 Aspiring to bring down a greater world.
 What now we see is here to grow and pass:
 The glory he had glimpsed must be his home

(To be continued)

RICHARD HARTZ

NISHTHA: ADDENDA

(Continued from the issue of February 2000)

A LETTER BY RISHABHCHAND TO THE MOTHER

Mother,

I offer at Thy Lotus Feet these pages written by me in memory of Nishtha whom I had occasions to know ~~somewhat~~ intimately.

On page 13 I have described her last meeting with Thee. I pray to Thee to correct if any misrepresentations have crept in there.

May I pray to Sri Anubindo to correct the article?

I bow down to Thee & Sri Anubindo! Thy child,

21.5.74 P.S. The article has been typed on both sides of the paper. Rishabhchand

A REPORT FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 1943

Margaret Woodrow Wilson Finds Peace as Disciple of Yoga in India

Daughter of Late President Has Spent Four Years at Asram in Pondicherry—Has No Desire to Return to United States

By HERBERT L. MATTHEWS

Wireless to *The New York Times*

PONDICHERRY, French India, Jan. 21 (Delayed)—Miss Margaret Woodrow Wilson, daughter of the late President, told this correspondent today that she was happier than

ever before and did not want to return to the United States. For four years she had been a sadhak or follower of Sri Aurobindo, India's most prominent mystic, in his asram here. An asram is where the teacher receives and lodges those who go to him for teaching and practice

Her name at this asram is Nishtha, a Sanskrit word whose meaning Sri Aurobindo explained to her in mystical terminology as leading to the discovery of the divine self in every human being.

Little Changed Outwardly

In a sense it is renunciation of the world. But Miss Wilson's many friends in the United States who have pictured her as a recluse in a cell wearing Hindu garb and lost to the world, may stop worrying. She is just the same Miss Wilson they knew, in the same type of dress and with that same smile that gives her such a startling resemblance to her father. She reads newspapers and magazines and is keenly interested in the war and politics. Once she was a pacifist, she said, but the yoga helped confirm her natural instincts in another direction.

Before and during luncheon and later at the asram Miss Wilson told your correspondent about her "experience", as it is called.

She had never been religious. Indeed she had left church in the midst of communion one day in her girlhood and never returned. However, Indian religious classics and the writings of mystics began to interest her some ten years back.

Purely by chance, for she had never heard of him, she selected a book entitled *Essays on the Gita* by Sri Aurobindo from the card catalogue in the New York Public Library and began to read it in the main reading room. That evening at closing time attendants almost had to put her out. She returned daily until she finished the book. It made such an impression that she resolved to join Sri Aurobindo's asram.

In speaking about "experience" today and her happiness at the asram, Miss Wilson said she had often tried to think how a person like herself could have been so drawn to mysticism and developed such a capacity for it. One explanation, she thought, lay in her Irish blood. She said her father often remarked he was of half Irish extraction and half Scottish.

At any rate, on arriving in Bombay, she continued, she immediately felt at home and wanted to say to people on the street, "Don't you realize I am one of you?"

Once a Political Leader

Sri Aurobindo's asram is in this remote, peaceful, excessively hot little corner of the Coromandel coast, so famous in India's history but now removed from the world. The seer, who is now 73 years old, was leader of the left wing of the Congress party in the first decade of the century and was jailed several times by the British. In 1910 he left his native Bengal, settled in Pondicherry, withdrew from the political field and

Margaret Woodrow Wilson Finds Peace as Disciple of Yoga in India

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By HERBERT L. MATTHEWS

Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PONDICHERRY, French India, Jan. 21 (Delayed)—Miss Margaret Woodrow Wilson, daughter of the late President, told this correspondent today that she was happier than ever before and did not want to return to the United States. For four years she had been a sadhak or follower of Sri Aurobindo, India's most prominent mystic, in his asram here. An asram is where the teacher receives and lodges those who go to him for teaching and practice.

Her name at this asram is Dish-ta, a Sanskrit word whose meaning Aurobindo explained to her in mystical terminology as leading to the discovery of the divine self in every human being.

Little Changed Outwardly

In a sense it is renunciation of the world. But Miss Wilson's many friends in the United States who have pictured her as a recluse in a cell wearing Hindu garb and lost to the world, may stop worrying. She is just the same Miss Wilson they knew, in the same type of dress and with that same smile that gives her such a startling resemblance to her father. She reads newspapers and magazines and is keenly interested in the war and politics. Once she was a pacifist, she said, but the yoga helped confirm her natural instincts in another direction.

Before and during luncheon and later at the asram Miss Wilson told your correspondent about her "experience," as it is called.

She had never been religious. Indeed she had left church in the

a Hindu sari that frames her carefully made-up face and forms a background for her beautiful jewelry. Every morning at 6:30 she appears on a balcony before all the nearly 3,000 sadhaks and salutes them in Hindu style with palms together.

Shows Himself Thrice a Year

Aurobindo shows himself only three times a year to devotees, who come from all over India and even abroad. One other time he shows himself to members of his asram, but he never speaks to any of them. The rest of the year he lives shut up in his room. Sadhaks may submit questions in writing, which he answers if he considers it worth while.

Otherwise every one lives his own life. There are no monastic rules. Every evening the disciples gather for half an hour's meditation, but for the rest of the day they may do what they please.

Miss Wilson mentioned her difficulties in preparing for that meditation, which should be accomplished with a serene mind. She described herself as only in the kindergarten of yoga, which every one at the asram must practice. Aurobindo's yoga, as he has written, "is more difficult than any other."

"For my restless Western mind," as she put it, to attain the necessary state of serenity "is extremely hard."

Miss Wilson lives outside the asram, which is too small to hold all the disciples. She has a simple, spacious suite with a great balcony overlooking the garden of an

her girlhood and never returned. However, Indian religious classics and the writings of mystics began to interest her some ten years back.

Purely by chance, for she had never heard of him, she selected a book entitled *Essays on the Gita* by Sri Aurobindo from the card catalogue in the New York Public Library and began to read it in the main reading room. That evening at closing time attendants almost had to put her out. She returned daily until she finished the book. It made such an impression that she resolved to join Sri Aurobindo's asram.

In speaking about "experience" today and her happiness at the asram, Miss Wilson said she had often tried to think how a person like herself could have been so drawn to mysticism and developed such a capacity for it. One explanation, she thought, lay in her Irish blood. She said her father often remarked he was of half Irish extraction and half Scottish.

At any rate, on arriving in Bombay, she continued, she immediately felt at home and wanted to say to people on the street, "Don't you realize I am one of you?"

Once a Political Leader

Aurobindo's asram is in this remote, peaceful, excessively hot little corner of the Coromandel coast, so famous in India's history but now removed from the world. The seer, who is now 73 years old, was leader of the left wing of the Congress party in the first decade of the century and was jailed several times by the British. In 1910 he left his native Bengal, settled in Pondicherry, withdrew from the political field and devoted himself to spiritual work. He evolved a new way of yoga, different from the old Vedantic philosophy of renouncing all material things and considering only the spirit as reality. Aurobindo's yoga aims at bringing the spirit into life and transforming it. That is one reason why his yoga can appeal to a Westerner like Miss Wilson, for it does not demand too radical a break with life as she has known it.

In 1920 a remarkable French woman joined the asram. She is now known to all the devotees as "Mother"; her full title is "Mother of the Universe." She rules the asram with organizing ability and a flair for drama that keeps everything running smoothly.

Now 66 years old, she dresses in

tion. The bedroom is comfortable, with nothing different from the typical Indian room fixed up for a Westerner except for a low table like an altar with photographs of Aurobindo and Mother, surrounded by flowers. Aurobindo has flowing hair, and all men at the asram, many of whom are quite young, have copied that style.

No Caste or Creed Schisms

There is a community kitchen, for Aurobindo does not permit caste or creed differences. Miss Wilson began as a vegetarian, like the Hindus, when she first arrived, but fell ill and lost much weight, so Mother put her back on a meat diet. She now weighs about thirty pounds less than when she arrived, but is quite well.

She retains American citizenship. The only time she has left Pondicherry in four years was to go to Madras to renew her passport.

She does not have to give up any personal habits. Smoking and drinking are not done at the asram, but she has no objection to accepting a cigarette over the luncheon table outside.

However, it is a life apart. According to Aurobindo's own writings, "sadhaks have no claim, right or voice in any matter." They remain or go, according to the teacher's will. Whatever money he receives is his property.

Such asrams have existed in India since many centuries before Christ and still exist in large numbers. All depends on the teacher and ends with his lifetime, unless there is another teacher who can take his place.

So, unless Aurobindo or Mother tells Miss Wilson to go away, she is going to remain. She seemed so happy to see an American that the visitor interpreted it as nostalgia and asked if she did not have longings for her native land.

"No," she replied. "I don't want to return to the United States. I am not homesick. In fact I never felt more at home anywhere any time in my life."

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"For my restless Western mind," as she put it, to attain the necessary state of serenity "is extremely hard."

Miss Wilson lives outside the asram, which is too small to hold all the disciples. She has a simple, spacious suite with a great balcony overlooking the garden of an eighteenth-century colonial mansion. The bedroom is comfortable, with nothing different from the typical Indian room fixed up for a Westerner except for a low table like an altar with photographs of Sri Aurobindo and Mother, surrounded by flowers. Sri Aurobindo has flowing hair, and all men at the asram, many of whom are quite young, have copied that style.

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A Note In printing the facsimile of *The New York Times* we had to break the lengths of columns and spread over 2 pages to fit the size of *Mother India*. So one is to read left columns first and then go over to the right ones.

In this report some flaws and inaccuracies are noticed, specially some remarks about the Mother as a result of wrong observations and misinterpretations. The quoted text from Sri Aurobindo has been corrected in the transcription.

— R Y.D.

THE MYSTERIOUS MYSTERY

AN ethereal staircase:
Hanging and seemingly feeble,
At times visible—
When everything fails,
When I betray myself,
When everything is in chaos
And nothing more to boast of.

Not knowing where I am,
I kiss the azure sky,
Lean to hug the green grass
And listen in silence
To the secretmost symphony

Who is this wonder-worker?
I am lured and I search;
But as I seek, it slides away,
Plunging me
In perpetual hide-and-seek;
Yet inspiring me
And unfolding
The marvels unknown.

ASHALATA DASH

JAYANTILAL-MAMA

I HAVE known him all my life. To me he was both uncle and friend, the man with a very sweet smile and gentle wit, who would smooth out difficulties almost effortlessly. Whenever there was a problem, it was to Jayantilal-mama one turned, knowing that if he undertook to resolve it, it would be done. Whether it was an eye-examination in Madras—in an age when going to Madras was for us children almost like going to a foreign country—or getting an outdated Sanskrit grammar that no bookshop in the South seemed to have, he was the person whom we turned to. In fact, this was one of the many roles he played in the Ashram because the Mother too would ask for her Jayanti whenever the Ashram community faced seemingly unsurmountable difficulties. He always handled them with the delicate touch of the artist that he was, quickly but firmly. But he never spoke of all this, for modesty was his second nature. If anyone asked him about what he had done, he would smile his gentle smile, raise his hand or nod and shake his head in a non-committal way and sometimes make a quietly witty comment. Things usually seemed simpler after one had spent some time talking to him.

He loved all that was beautiful, he always had. Indeed, Beauty was his first love. It was this love of beauty that took him to Shantiniketan in his youth where, under Nandalal Bose, his hand learnt to translate what had enraptured his heart and mind and eye. The same quest for beauty took him to the coasts of Malabar and the island of Sri Lanka. When he finally settled in the Ashram, captivated by the Mother's Grace and Beauty and Sri Aurobindo's luminous Presence, he still continued to paint the land and seascapes of Pondicherry, its mother-of-pearl skies, its quiet afternoon streets, its green palms that shoot out of the rich red earth. All these were offered to the Mother of his heart and soul to whom he had given his all. One of his most memorable works of art are the panels that he, along with his friend Krishnalal, painted in the Mother's rooms, on the first floor of the Ashram building. Representing scenes of the Pondicherry sea-front and of the underwater life, they lend to Her rooms a very special mood of cool colour and restfulness to which She added Her own spiritual sweetness. This achievement alone makes him the Mother's artist. He drew from Her all his inspiration, he offered to Her all he did. Even his other pictures were always given to Her which She, consummate artist Herself, commented on and, if necessary, corrected. There was a time when She guided some of the Ashram artists, Jayantilal-mama included, in the art of portrait drawing. Thus there came about, in his life, a rich period of doing portraits. I remember as a child spending warm afternoons 'sitting' for him on a low branch of a tree in the courtyard of the Guest House where he then lived, while he sat hunched over a sketch pad, bare-chested and clad in a white dhoti.

When he was not drawing, he was teaching us to draw. He was one of the drawing teachers in our School. Mother had decided in those early years that drawing should be taught to one and all, since it refines and trains the mind, the eye as well as

the hand As a teacher, he showed the same gentleness and quietness that were part of his nature; but behind the gentleness there was the firmness and the sureness of one who knew his subject well, and behind the quietness there was love. He gifted to us that love of beauty, the joy the eye takes in recognising the harmonies of line and shape and that of the hand that recreates them.

These were only some of his gifts to us, for his gifts were many. Some were of the most material kind, others belonged to the worlds of thought and of the spirit. Particularly of late, he had begun to publish some of his writings, poems and prose pieces that expressed his perceptions about life and its truths. This was an aspect of his personality that few had known until recently as was his love of music, particularly of classical music. He used to say that in his youth he had learnt to play the Esraj. But one need not be surprised by these revelations, since the lover of Beauty would naturally thrill to the joy of the eye as well as that of the ear, of the mind and of the soul.

But beyond all his personal qualities, his greatest contribution to the life of the Ashram and to all the followers of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother was the setting up of the Archives and Research Library of their works. This was an undertaking born of great courage and perseverance, to gather all Their writings, to collate and publish them as Collected Works during the Centenary Year. It was an uphill task in which he was assisted by a band of dedicated disciples without whose help the work would hardly have been possible. But Jayantilal-mama supervised the work in all its minutest details, starting from gathering the necessary funds and acquiring the material to the overseeing of the final printing of the volumes in the Press. The eye of the artist decided on the layout and the presentation. Everything had to be perfect, because every step of the way, every aspect of the work was an expression of that one sentence by his Guru which he had lived out to the full: "ALL LIFE IS YOGA "

JHUMUR

BRIDGING THE GULF

O, LET me build a bridge over the gulf
 With the bricks of love and ruth's cement
 Over the pillars of truth to reach the Self
 To cross myness, the intervening veil to rend

And then! the gulf between You and me
 Will verily get dissolved, vanish for ever,
 In You this seeming individuality,
 Making me calm and free like You, Dear!

M P JAIN

THE COMING OF THE DAWN

OH, so infectious is the Calm!
When the thoughts like monks
After long wandering
Choose to settle on the bare hill
Of aspiration, when the silver moon
That seems to be rising from
The soft bed of heart
Sings the litany of quiet adoration,
A marvel of dreams,
Mute and gladdened,
Flies over the green dense forest
Of accumulated seekings for light!
After a while melt away
The distances as dreams return not;
Only the figures of fulfilment
Are painted on the horizon,
The rich canopy of clouds
Is withdrawn, no more needed
The pompous reception.
Straight and direct must be
The coming of the dawn
Soft and silent
The unfailing communion

SEIKH ABDUL KASAM

THE ODYSSEY — AN ADAPTATION

(Continued from the issue of February 2000)

Scene 8

[They landed on an island that seemed strangely peaceful. Some men went ashore, but didn't come back. (Pause while we see them greeted by lotus-eaters, offered lotus berries and sinking into lethargy) Odysseus went looking and found them blissfully resting with no thought of their home or their kin. They offered him lotuses He refused He encouraged them to rouse themselves—then pleaded—then demanded, but only by force could he move them at all. (Other sailors go help carry them off Music—sea voyage. They land.)]

Scene 9

Elpenor. Each landing brings us a danger. What will we meet on this shore?

Odysseus. Elpenor, my boy, who live deep in my heart, you I would protect from all troubles if that is possible for man But men must eat, so sailors must land to gather provisions. What dangers there are we must meet and strive to do so with courage. This time you stay on the ship, and let others face what they must

Elpenor. Great Odysseus, where you go I will follow. To me you are more than a god The gods may be mighty, but they are distant. Your hand on my shoulder is more to me than their grace.

Odysseus. My son, Telemachus, is in Ithaca and holds a place no other can take, but you, Elpenor, I have loved and have nurtured and I take pride in the way you have grown. Watching you gather the force of your manhood brings the silence of wonder as when watching the dawn. But divine I am not. I am subject to passions. It is true you must follow me, but as your captain and friend, not as your god.

Scene 10

Demodocus. So they disembarked and came upon the mouth of a cave When their eyes were accustomed to its dimness, the size of its owner was gradually revealed.

Sailor. Odysseus, we must make haste; we must leave!

Sailor. Atlas himself could live in this cave

Odysseus. If that is so, then our stranger's gift must be of a similar stature. We must wait and receive what we can. I've brought an offering matching his grandeur, a wine from a priest of Apollo, a wine like no other on earth. It is shot through with the shafts of Phoebus's sunbeams and has the strength and force of the noonday sun.

Polyphemus. Who is in my cave?

Odysseus: Strangers seeking your welcome.

Polyphemus: And why would strangers expect to be welcomed?

Odysseus: Strangers and suppliants have their guardians. Gods walk with them to see that they are protected if they follow a path not forbidden.

Polyphemus: Bah! the gods. What do I care for them? I come from a race they have not blessed. We cyclops have our own ways of living, even Poseidon, my father, does not bother us much. [*Sounds of a boulder being moved.*]

Sailor: Odysseus, he has blocked the opening with a boulder! Fifty men could not move it the width of a hand.

Odysseus: Kind host! I see from your sheep you are a shepherd. I know that in the fields the shepherds often keep music as their companion. There is one among us who plays the pan pipes. Perhaps you'll listen and accept this small gift?

Polyphemus: The pipes!

[*Sailor plays a wistful tune.*]

Aaaah! [*the sound moves from sorrow to a deepening anger*] You speak of the gods in your ignorance! They protect their supplicants; you believe it. I once prayed to them meekly. I wanted only a slight water nymph. To Galatea I played on such pipes as you play. She scorned me and laughed in my face. But her laugh was as light as the sea foam and she moved with such fluid grace that I prayed and I pleaded. I promised anything, if only she'd come lighten my cave. The gods, do you think that they heard me? Only my father came to teach me my place. He showed me where to find Galatea, in the embrace of her lover, Acis. I squashed him. With a boulder I crushed him. She slipped crying into the water. But her tears were for him, not for me. Now I stick to my own kind. The Cyclops are my companions and only the sheep and the goats I count as my friends. As for men, I find them quite tasty, more refined than my usual fare. You think to walk with the gods, but my hunger will make short work of that. [*He swallows two men. Cries of horror from the other men. Elpenor tries to run. Odysseus pulls him away and puts him safely behind him.*]

Odysseus: How did they taste?

Polyphemus: [*belching*] A bit salty, and a little too stringy; perhaps I should make you more fat

Odysseus: I have a drink that will add to their flavour, a ruby wine to complement man

Polyphemus. A gift for your host! How kind of you!

Odysseus: Whatever your treatment of us, I must do as nobility demands. My gift to the host of our stay. [*He offers wine.*]

Polyphemus: [*Takes it and drinks*] Aaah! It goes down with a fiery sweetness [*drinks*] Aaah! It awakes memories of something within. What was it...? [*drinks again*] There was something.. I must know who has given this gift. Who are you? Your name shall long be remembered.

Odysseus: [*hesitates*] My name is Noman.

Polyphemus: Noman! Then this is my gift in return. You shall outlive your companions. I will eat the greatest of all in the end.

Odysseus: No man is grateful for such a boon. Drink up! There is more where that came from. The last drop can go down your gullet with me.

Polyphemus: Aaah! It's good. Aaah. [*Drinks himself to sleep.*]

Sailor: Is there some way to kill him while he's asleep?

Elpenor: Our swords couldn't strike nearly that deep.

Odysseus: There are ways we could kill him. We could let out his blood, but then our lives would drain out with his. Unless one of you can roll back this stone?

Sailor: We're doomed!

Odysseus. [*ironically*] Poor us!

Sailor: He'll eat us one by one.

Odysseus: Are you men and you give up so easily?

Elpenor: Odysseus, they say you are never at a loss and I've seen that it ever seems so. I know you are crafty, I know you are wise, but can even you get us out of this cave?

Odysseus: Ah! Elpenor, where is your faith in me? So soon it is lost? Listen, [*pauses while he thinks it through*] we'll put out his eye. With a stake from the fire it will take only one stroke, and it is done, irrevocable.

Sailor: We put out his eye. That won't stop his hunger. Indeed in his anger he'll dash out our brains

Sailor: He won't see, but this cave isn't large enough. There is nowhere to hide.

Odysseus: His sheep [*He's working this out as he goes.*] His sheep. He loves them dearly. Tomorrow he'll send them all out. When that happens they might walk somewhat awkwardly, for they will be carrying us, his breakfast and lunch.

Demodocus: That night was as long as a lifetime They had to wait till quite near the dawn They sharpened a stake, then placed themselves near Polyphemus's head With one thrust they darkened his world, pierced through the source of his light, and took from him the control of their lives.

Polyphemus: [*Great shout—Odysseus and his men scatter.*] My eye! The light! Aaah! I die and Noman has killed me.

Polyphemus: Noman, where are you? you hide behind my flock. Very well, they will leave, but slowly. No sailor will escape while they go [*They escape*]

Odysseus: [*halfway to the boat*] O great Polyphemus, you must hear me. While you're in the dark we've escaped to the light. We are out of your cave; now we are free men. Your entrapment was strong, but our wits were yet stronger.

Polyphemus: You call yourself Noman and you've put out my eye. Do you think you can extinguish my passion as well? You've escaped from the cave, but the whole ocean will rise up. Your troubles now will encompass the world. Poseidon my father will stir up the deeps You've called up his monsters and no man can escape their infinite snares.

Odysseus: No man? Or Odysseus, the hero of Troya? A thousand spear points I have brushed to my side. Your father has monsters? Let me call on my powers. I have outwitted even a monster like you! I, Odysseus, son of Laertes, Ithaca's king!

Polyphemus: O blue-crested Poseidon, hear me now. You engendered me, you made me what I am. Do not let your work be so reviled. Rise up! Avenge me. Odysseus, son of Laertes, Ithaca's king must wander as if sightless like me.

(To be continued)

NANCY WHITLOW

INTIMATIONS

THE dark caverns of my mind
 Permeated by a blue white shaft of light!
 Illumining the grey unlit spaces—
 Ordering the chaos all right!

Amid the noisy clutter of the daily din,
 A small voice makes itself heard
 Emanating from the heart's recess
 Quietly insistent, unrelenting

Among the network of conflicting forces
 A pure will asserts itself through
 Unshaken by gusts of earthly desire,
 Implacable to the Titan's charlatan snare.

These are messages from my infinite self
 Upward seated, musing on foibles of ego's elf.

HEMANT KAPOOR

THE WIND BLEW FROM THE SOUTH

THE wind blew from the South
And carried soft fragrance of a dream;
And my wise heart fell asleep
Forgetting pride, forgetting self-esteem.

Grapes hung from the vines
And a sweetness dripped in earth's mouth;
Love was the love of God
Who came out from a shrine in the South.

The trees grieved no more
And flowering songs the birds gave to earth,
And in the suddenness
Of love came my soul to the world of birth

The suns that long waited
Rode the chariots drawn by white horses;
Through bodies of truth
Immortal breath of life's joy now courses

R. Y. Deshpande

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of February 2000)

IN four self-contained chapters of *A Defence of Indian Culture*—now also separately issued as *The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity* (1947)—Sri Aurobindo examines the question whether, for all her manifold achievement in the things of the mind and spirit, in art, in literature, in philosophy and religion, achievements that give us the image of a great civilisation, “one of the half dozen greatest of which we have a still existing record”¹, India hasn’t really failed in life, failed in her attempts to forge efficiency on the social, economic and political levels. Sri Aurobindo finds himself in a position to counter the persistent “legend of Indian political incompetence”. In the remote past, Indian polity—as elsewhere in other early Aryan settlements—was a tribal system founded upon “the equality of all the freemen of the clan or race”². In course of time, the freely chosen leader became the hereditary king, but his authority still flowed from the collective consent of his people. More than a king, it was the Rishi—who might come from any class—that wielded real authority, and this he did on account of his spiritual personality. Sri Aurobindo has said:

“A peculiar figure for some time was the Rishi, the man of a higher spiritual experience and knowledge, born in any of the classes, but exercising an authority by his spiritual personality over all, revered and consulted by the king of whom he was sometimes the religious preceptor, and in the then fluid state of social evolution able alone to exercise an important role in evolving new basic ideas and effecting direct and immediate changes of the socio-religious ideas and customs of the people. It was a marked feature of the Indian mind that it sought to attach a spiritual meaning and a religious sanction to all, even to the most external social and political circumstances of its life imposing on all classes and functions an ideal, not except incidentally of rights and powers, but of duties, a rule of their action and an ideal way and temperament, character, spirit in the action, a Dharma with a spiritual significance. It was the work of the Rishi to put this stamp enduringly on the national mind, to prolong and perpetuate it, to discover and interpret the ideal law and its practical meaning, to cast the life of the people into the well-shaped ideals and significant forms of a civilisation founded on the spiritual and religious sense. And in later ages we find the Brahmnic schools of legists attributing their codes, though in themselves only formulations of existing rule and custom, to the ancient Rishis. Whatever the developments of the Indian socio-political body in later days, this original character still exercised its influence, even when all tended at last to become traditionalised and conventionalised instead of moving forward constantly in the steps of a free and living practice.

“The political evolution of this early system varied in different parts of India. The ordinary development, as in most other countries, was in the direction of an increasing emphasis on the control of the king as the centre, head and unifying factor

of a more and more complex system of rule and administration and this prevailed eventually and became the universal type. But for a long time it was combated and held in check by a contrary tendency that resulted in the appearance and the strong and enduring vitality of city or regional or confederated republics. The king became either a hereditary or elected executive head of the republic or an archon administering for a brief and fixed period or else he altogether disappeared from the polity of the state. This turn must have come about in many cases by a natural evolution of the power of the assemblies, but in others it seems to have been secured by some kind of revolution and there appear to have been vicissitudes, alternations between periods of monarchical and periods of republican government. Among a certain number of the Indian peoples the republican form finally asserted its hold and proved itself capable of a strong and settled organisation and a long duration lasting over many centuries. In some cases they were governed by a democratic assembly, in more by an oligarchical senate. It is unfortunate that we know little of the details of the constitution and nothing of the inner history of these Indian republics, but the evidence is clear of the high reputation they enjoyed throughout India for the excellence of their civil and the formidable efficiency of their military organisation. There is an interesting dictum of Buddha that so long as the republican institutions were maintained in their purity and vigour, a small state of this kind would remain invincible even by the arms of the powerful and ambitious Magadhan monarchy, and this opinion is amply confirmed by the political writers who consider the alliance of the republics the most solid and valuable political and military support a king could have, and advise their reduction not so much by the force of arms, as that would have a very precarious chance of success, but by Machiavellian means,—similar to those actually employed in Greece by Philip of Macedon,—aimed at undermining their internal unity and the efficiency of their constitution’’³

Sri Aurobindo has stated.

“The true nature of the Indian polity can only be realised if we look at it not as a separate thing, a machinery independent of the rest of the mind and life of the people, but as a part of and in its relation to the organic totality of the social existence.

“A people, a great human collectivity, is in fact an organic living being with a collective or rather—for the word collective is too mechanical to be true to the inner reality—a common or communal soul, mind and body. The life of the society like the physical life of the individual human being passes through a cycle of birth, growth, youth, ripeness and decline, and if this last stage goes far enough without any arrest of its course towards decadence, it may perish,—even so all the older peoples and nations except India and China perished,—as a man dies of old age. But the collective being has too the capacity of renewing itself, of a recovery and a new cycle. For in each people there is a soul idea or life idea at work, less mortal than its body, and if this idea is itself sufficiently powerful, large and force-giving and the people sufficiently strong, vital and plastic in mind and temperament to combine stability with a constant enlargement or new application of the power of the soul idea or life idea in

its being, it may pass through many such cycles before it comes to a final exhaustion. Moreover, the idea is itself only the principle of soul manifestation of the communal being and each communal soul again a manifestation and vehicle of the greater eternal spirit that expresses itself in Time and on earth is seeking, as it were, its own fullness in humanity through the vicissitudes of the human cycles. A people then which learns to live consciously not solely in its physical and outward life, not even only in that and the power of the life idea or soul idea that governs the changes of its development and is the key to its psychology and temperament, but in the soul and spirit behind, may not at all exhaust itself, may not end by disappearance or a dissolution or a fusion into others or have to give place to a new race and people, but having itself fused into its life many original smaller societies and attained to its maximum natural growth pass without death through many renaissances. And even if at any time it appears to be on the point of absolute exhaustion and dissolution, it may recover by the force of the spirit and begin another and perhaps a more glorious cycle. The history of India has been that of the life of such a people.

“The master idea that has governed the life, culture, social ideals of the Indian people has been the seeking of man for his true spiritual self and the use of life—subject to a necessary evolution first of his lower physical, vital and mental nature—as a frame and means for that discovery and for man's ascent from the ignorant natural into the spiritual existence. This dominant idea India has never quite forgotten even under the stress and material exigencies and the externalities of political and social construction. But the difficulty of making the social life an expression of man's true self and some highest realisation of the spirit within him is immensely greater than that which attends a spiritual self-expression through the things of the mind, religion, thought, art, literature, and while in these India reached extraordinary heights and largenesses, she could not in the outward life go beyond certain very partial realisations and very imperfect tentatives,—a general spiritualising symbolism, an infiltration of the greater aspiration, a certain cast given to the communal life, the creation of institutions favourable to the spiritual idea. Politics, society, economics are the natural field of the two first and grosser parts of human aim and conduct recognised in the Indian system, interest and hedonistic desire: Dharma, the higher law, has nowhere been brought more than partially into this outer side of life, and in politics to a very minimum extent, for the effort at governing political action by ethics is usually little more than a pretence. The coordination or true union of the collective outward life with *mokṣa*, the liberated spiritual existence, has hardly even been conceived or attempted, much less anywhere succeeded in the past history of the yet hardly adult human race.”⁴

When the inner spark is extinguished, there is no art, no science, that can renew that spark, and give life back to the inert body. In the past, India mastered the arts of peace no less than the arts of war—the technique of good government and technique of wise and happy living as well. There was a self-poised and balanced polity, in which the urges of self-interest and hedonistic desire were effectively held in check

by the categorical imperatives of Dharma. The political and economic structure was supported by the social compact, which in its turn was reared on immaculate spiritual foundations Says Sri Aurobindo

“The Indian mind has always been profoundly intuitive in habit even when it was the most occupied with the development of the reasoning intelligence, and its political and social thought has therefore been always an attempt to combine the intuitions of life and the intuitions of the spirit with the light of the reason acting as an intermediary and an ordering and regulating factor It has tried to base itself strongly on the established and persistent actualities of life and to depend for its idealism not on the intellect but on the illuminations, inspirations, higher experiences of the spirit, and it has used the reason as a critical power testing and assuring the steps and aiding but not replacing the life and the spirit—always the true and sound constructors The spiritual mind of India regarded life as a manifestation of the Self: the community was the body of the creator Brahma, the people was a life body of Brahman in the *samaṣṭi*, the collectivity, it was the collective Narayana, as the individual was Brahman in the *vyasṭi*, the separate Jiva, the individual Narayana; the king was the living representative of the Divine and the other orders of the community the natural powers of the collective self, *prakṛtayah*. The agreed conventions, institutes, customs, constitution of the body social and politic in all its parts had therefore not only a binding authority but a certain sacrosanct character

“The right order of human life as of the universe is preserved according to the ancient Indian idea by each individual being following faithfully his *svadharma*, the true law and norm of his nature and the nature of his kind and by the group being, the organic collective life, doing likewise The family, clan, caste, class, social, religious, industrial or other community, nation, people are all organic group beings that evolve their own Dharma and to follow it is the condition of their preservation, healthy continuity, sound action. There is also the Dharma of the position, the function, the particular relation with others, as there is too the Dharma imposed by the condition, environment, age, *yugadharmā*, the universal religious or ethical Dharma, and all these acting on the natural Dharma, the action according to the *svabhāva*, create the body of the Law The ancient theory supposed that in an entirely right and sound condition of man, individual and collective,—a condition typified by the legendary Golden Age, Satya Yuga, Age of Truth,—there is no need of any political government or State or artificial construction of society, because all then live freely according to the truth of their enlightened self and God-inhabited being and therefore spontaneously according to the inner divine Dharma The self-determining individual and self-determining community living according to the right and free law of his and its being is therefore the ideal But in the actual condition of humanity, its ignorant and devious nature subject to perversions and violations of the true individual and the true social Dharma, there has to be superimposed on the natural life of society a State, a sovereign power, a king or governing body, whose business is not to interfere unduly with the life of the society, which must be allowed to function for the most

part according to its natural law and custom and spontaneous development. but to superintend and assist its right process and see that the Dharma is observed and in vigour and, negatively, to punish and repress and, as far as may be, prevent offences against the Dharma’’⁵

Ancient Indian polity knew neither industrialism nor parliamentary democracy of the kind that we associate with modern England or America (or for that matter, post-Independence India). Indian civilisation passed from the simple Aryan community of pre-history, through many transitionary experimental formations in political structure and synthesis, to the complicated state Sri Aurobindo has said “. a complex of communal freedom and self-determination with a supreme co-ordinating authority. a sovereign person and body, armed with efficient powers, position and prestige, but limited to its proper rights and functions, at once controlling and controlled by the rest, admitting them as its active co-partners in all branches, sharing the regulation and administration of the communal existence, and all alike, the sovereign, the people and all its constituent communities, bound to the maintenance and restrained by the yoke of the Dharma.”⁶

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

References

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| 1 <i>SABCL</i> , Vol 14, p 322 | 4 <i>Ibid</i> , pp 334-335 |
| 2 <i>Ibid</i> pp 324, 325 | 5 <i>Ibid</i> pp 340-341 |
| 3 <i>Ibid</i> , pp 326-328 | 6 <i>Ibid</i> , p 343 |

TRANSFORMATION

His clarion-call now tears apart the webs
Of worldly vain illusion in the minds
Of thousands I follow in the footsteps,
My heart, a pulsing torch, repels dark Time.

I stand upon the battlefield of earth
And sound my bugle, calling all to fight
The chimera of despair and grim death
Inspired by his deathless message bright.

I know his wish and aim will be fulfilled
By bringing to an end the night of darkness
Of present times, and dawn of calm succeed.
Then Time, that chains down all consciousness

To toss upon the waves of Self darksome
Will cease to be, and Transformation come.

RATRI RAY

(Rendering of *Rupantar* in Nishikanto's *Vaijayanti*)

NO LONGER INSIDE LINEARITY

“CAN we not,” asks Ken Wilber, the student of consciousness, “find spiritual liberalism? spiritual humanism? orientation that sets the rights of the individual in deeper spiritual contexts that do not deny those rights but ground them? Can a new conception of God, of Spirit, find resonance with the noblest aims of liberalism? Can these two modern enemies—God and liberalism—in any way find a common ground?”¹

Those who are fortunate to experience the perennial springs of Indian spirituality find no difficulty in recognising the implications of the question and the affirmative nature of the answer. Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo, Ramana Maharshi combined in their lives what Wilber asks for. Spirituality as an open system accommodating all experiences but not forfeiting its perennial, primal place has been their primary concern.

“Integral” has been the key perception affirmed by Sri Aurobindo. It is the magic clue, the all-embracing paradigm assigning the different facets of human consciousness their proper functional space. He luminously puts it: “The Brahman is here as well as in the supracosmic Absolute. The thing to be overcome is the Ignorance which makes us blind and prevents us from realising Brahman in the world as well as beyond it and the true nature of existence.”²

If the sceptic thinks that this is the naive idealism of traditional faith, look at what a representative of the generation that grew up after *God is Dead* says. “The time is coming. . . You will not have to live inside linear time anymore; the concept of infinity will cease to be frightening. All secrets will be revealed.”³

That exactly is what the Great Mothers and the Great Masters have always made the Earth unendingly conscious of.

SHIVA RAMA KRISHNA

References

- 1 *The Eye of Spirit*, Shambhala, 1997, p. xvi
- 2 *Letters on Yoga*, Part I, p. 39. Sri Ramakrishna himself declared that “the *nyaya* and *leela* are both necessary for the Mother’s play.”
- 3 Douglas Coupland, *Life after God*, p. 298

POLITICS AND POLITICIANS

Politics is the last refuge of a scoundrel.

—Johnson

DOES this mean that politics has no morals, no ethics, no love and no scruples? Sri Aurobindo, a staunch revolutionary of his time, observes at one place: ‘‘I have done politics and the most violent kind of revolutionary politics, *ghoram karma*, and I have supported war and sent men to it, even though politics is not always or often a very clean occupation nor can war be called a spiritual line of action. But Krishna calls upon Arjuna to carry on war of the most terrible kind and by his example encourage men to do every kind of human work, *sarvakarmāni*. Do you contend that Krishna was an unspiritual man and that his advice to Arjuna was mistaken or wrong in principle?... All depends on the spirit in which a thing is done, the principles on which it is built and the use to which it is turned.’’¹

India today is faced with a war of nerves in politics and personalities, a clash of reactions and repartees and aspersions and a regression of ideas, thoughts and values. The immaturity of politicians is eminently visible in their behaviour all over the country. It is worthwhile, therefore, to reproduce hereunder the words of Sri Aurobindo on modern politics and politicians. These observations had been made at the beginning of the century, yet, how appropriate and instructive are they towards the end of the century!

. . . We must remember that we are a nation not yet trained in the vaster movements of modern politics. Not only our rank and file, but our captains and our strategists need the training of events, the wisdom of experience to make them perfect. Fire, impetuosity, self-sacrifice, intellectual vigour, subtlety, wealth of idea, fertility of resource to meet unexpected happenings, these have been given to us in abundance. But the perfect experience of the veteran in great battles, the acute political intelligence which comes of long familiarity with the handling of high affairs and national destinies, these are yet in us immature and in a state of pupillage. But God Himself is our master and teacher, for He would give to His chosen nation a faultless training and a perfect capacity. Only we must be ready to acknowledge our mistakes, to change our path, to learn. Then only shall we victoriously surmount all obstacles and move steadily, impetuously, but without stumbling or swerving, to our goal.

Moreover, we have weaknesses that are still rampant and uncorrected in our midst. It is our first duty to purge these out of our hearts with a merciless surgery. If the intellectual equipment is deficient, the spiritual equipment is also far from perfect. Our leaders and our followers both require a deeper Sadhana, a more direct communion with the Divine Guru and Captain of our movement, an inward uplifting, a grander and more impetuous force behind thought and deed. It has been driven home

to us by experience after experience that not in the strength of a raw unmoralised European enthusiasm shall we conquer. Indians! it is the spirituality of India, the Sadhana of India, *tapasyā*, *jñānam*, *śakti* that must make us free and great. And these great things of the East are ill-rendered by their inferior English equivalents, discipline, philosophy, strength. *Tapasyā* is more than discipline; it is the materialisation in ourselves by spiritual means of the divine energy creative, preservative and destructive. *Jñānam* is more than philosophy, it is the inspired and direct knowledge which comes of what our ancients called *dr̥ṣṭi*, spiritual sight. *Śakti* is more than strength, it is the universal energy which moves the stars, made individual. It is the East that must conquer in India's uprising. It is the Yogin who must stand behind the political leader or manifest within him; Ramdas must be born in one body with Shivaji, Mazzini mingle with Cavour. The divorce of intellect and spirit, strength and purity may help a European revolution, but by a European strength we shall not conquer.

The movements of the last century failed because they were too purely intellectual and had not an enlightened heart behind them. Nationalism has striven to supply the deficiency; it has poured the inspirations of the heart into a swifter and more discerning intellectual activity. But Nationalism also has been defective; it has been Indian in sentiment and aspiration, European in practice and actuality. It has helped itself with the intellect, rejoicing in its own lightness, clearness, accuracy, shrewd insight, but it has not been sufficiently supported by inspired wisdom. It has attached itself to imaginations and idealisms, but has not learned to discern the deeper Truth and study the will of God. It has been driven by ardent and vehement emotions, but was defective in clear will-power and the pure energy that is greater and more impetuous than any passionate feeling. Either Nationalism will purify itself, learn a more sacred truth and command a diviner impulse, or it will have to abandon utterly its old body and get itself a new. The pressure of events seems to be pointing in the latter direction. But in either case, defeat cannot be the end, victory must be the end.²

....Justice and righteousness are the atmosphere of political morality, but the justice and righteousness of a fighter, not of the priest. Aggression is unjust only when unprovoked, violence, unrighteous when used wantonly or for unrighteous ends. It is a barren philosophy which applies a mechanical rule to all actions, or takes a word and tries to fit all human life into it.

The sword of the warrior is as necessary to the fulfilment of justice and righteousness as the holiness of the saint. Ramdas is not complete without Shivaji. To maintain justice and prevent the strong from despoiling, and the weak from being oppressed, is the function for which the Kshatriya was created. 'Therefore,' says Sri Krishna in the Mahabharata, 'God created battle and armour, the sword, the bow and the dagger.'

Man is of a less terrestrial mould than some would have him to be. He has an element of the divine which the politician ignores. The practical politician looks to the position at the moment and imagines that he has taken everything into considera-

tion. He has, indeed, studied the surface and the immediate surroundings, but he has missed what lies beyond material vision. He has left out of account the divine, the incalculable in man, that element which upsets the calculations of the schemer and disconcerts the wisdom of the diplomat.³

.... Nothing of the kind can be asserted of the modern politician in any part of the world; he does not represent the soul of a people or its aspirations. What he does usually represent is all the average pettiness, selfishness, egoism, self-deception that is about him and these he represents well enough as well as a great deal of mental incompetence and moral conventionality, timidity and pretence. Great issues often come to him for decision, but he does not deal with them greatly; high words and noble ideas are on his lips, but they become rapidly the claptrap of a party. The disease and falsehood of modern political life is patent in every country of the world and only the hypnotised acquiescence of all, even of the intellectual classes, in the great organised sham, cloaks and prolongs the malady, the acquiescence that men yield to everything that is habitual and makes the present atmosphere of their lives. Yet it is by such minds that the good of all has to be decided, to such hands that it has to be entrusted, to such an agency calling itself the State that the individual is being more and more called upon to give up the government of his activities.⁴

Compiled by G P GUPTA

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- 1 *SABCL*, Vol 23, p 675
- 2 *Ibid*, Vol 2, pp 410-12
- 3 *Ibid*, Vol 1, pp 127-28
- 4 *Ibid*, Vol 15, pp 278-79

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Thirty Years in India: Events, Experiences and Legends. Recollections of a Handloom Weaver. By *Sibylle Sharma-Hablik*. Price: Rs. 400.

THIS IS the fascinating second volume written by the author. She is a German national who established, together with her husband S. D. Sharma, a handloom unit in Pondicherry more than thirty years ago. "From Fatherland to Motherland," that is the heading printed on the frontispiece of the book. From the German original it was translated into English by Shraddhavan who runs the Translator's Guild in Auroville.

Sibylle Sharma-Hablik was born in 1923 in Holstein, Northern Germany. Her mother, known in artisan circles as "The Mother of the Handloom Craft" had revived this almost forgotten tradition in the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1917 the Habliks established in Itzehoo in Holstein one of the first modern handloom units which became the most esteemed workshop of its kind in Europe. Sibylle Sharma-Hablik obtained a master's diploma in weaving.

After she inherited her parent's firm in 1961 circumstances made it very difficult to continue running the unit. Several workshops of a similar kind were obliged to close down at that time.

With the help of S. D. Sharma, an Indian engineer, a whole set of handlooms and equipment was shipped to India where a new beginning was made when both became the members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry.

This book tells about thirty years in India, their life and work under the guidance of the Mother, their experiences and pilgrimages and meetings with saints and spiritual teachers.

The writing is done in a style that describes things in a way that brings living images before your inner eye when reading. With a good pinch of humour the author has succeeded in bringing out a book that is especially useful and entertaining to those who want to know more than what is printed in the travel-guide book when they visit India. Her keen observation and vast knowledge in many fields make the chapters very interesting to the younger generation too. On perseverance, courage and hard work is the author's life based. But it is the grace and the unexpected guidance on which she depends.

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