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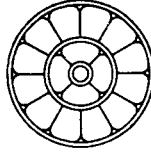
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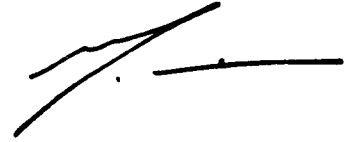
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LIII

No. 4

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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A SUMMONS: WHY CAMEST THOU?

As in the vigilance of the sleepless night
Through the slow heavy-footed silent hours,
Repressing in her bosom its load of grief,
She sat staring at the dumb tread of Time
And the approach of ever-nearing Fate,
A summons from her being's summit came,
A sound, a call that broke the seals of Night.
Above her brows where will and knowledge meet
A mighty Voice invaded mortal space.
It seemed to come from inaccessible heights
And yet was intimate with all the world
And knew the meaning of the steps of Time
And saw eternal destiny's changeless scene
Filling the far prospect of the cosmic gaze.
As the Voice touched, her body became a stark
And rigid golden statue of motionless trance,
A stone of God lit by an amethyst soul.
Around her body's stillness all grew still:
Her heart listened to its slow measured beats,
Her mind renouncing thought heard and was mute:
"Why camest thou to this dumb deathbound earth,
This ignorant life beneath indifferent skies
Tied like a sacrifice on the altar of Time,
O spirit, O immortal energy,
If 'twas to nurse grief in a helpless heart
Or with hard tearless eyes await thy doom?
Arise, O soul, and vanquish Time and Death."
But Savitri's heart replied in the dim night:
"My strength is taken from me and given to Death,
Why should I lift my hands to the shut heavens
Or struggle with mute inevitable Fate
Or hope in vain to uplift an ignorant race
Who hug their lot and mock the saviour Light
And see in Mind Wisdom's sole tabernacle,
In its harsh peak and its inconscient base
A rock of safety and an anchor of sleep?
Is there a God whom any cry can move?
He sits in peace and leaves the mortal's strength
Impotent against his calm omnipotent Law
And Inconscience and the almighty hands of Death

What need have I, what need has Satyavan
 To avoid the black-meshed net, the dismal door,
 Or call a mightier Light into life's closed room,
 A greater Law into man's little world?
 Why should I strive with earth's unyielding laws
 Or stave off death's inevitable hour?
 This surely is best to pactise with my fate
 And follow close behind my lover's steps
 And pass through night from twilight to the sun
 Across the tenebrous river that divides
 The adjoining parishes of earth and heaven.
 Then could we lie inarmed breast upon breast,
 Untroubled by thought, untroubled by our hearts,
 Forgetting man and life and time and its hours,
 Forgetting eternity's call, forgetting God.''
 The Voice replied: 'Is this enough, O spirit?
 And what shall thy soul say when it wakes and knows
 The work was left undone for which it came?
 Or is this all for thy being born on earth
 Charged with a mandate from eternity,
 A listener to the voices of the years,
 A follower of the footprints of the gods,
 To pass and leave unchanged the old dusty laws?
 Shall there be no new tables, no new Word,
 No greater light come down upon the earth
 Delivering her from her unconsciousness,
 Man's spirit from unalterable Fate?
 Can'st thou not down to open the doors of Fate,
 The iron doors that seemed for ever closed,
 And lead man to Truth's wide and golden road
 That runs through finite things to eternity?
 Is this then the report that I must make,
 My head bowed with shame before the Eternal's seat,—
 His power he kindled in thy body has failed,
 His labourer returns, her task undone?''

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL, Vol 29, pp 474-76)

A FEW ESSAYS ON THE GITA IN BENGALI

(Continued from the issue of March 2000)

ARJUNA'S PRAYER TO BE TAUGHT

ARJUNA understood the purpose behind Sri Krishna's words. He refrained from raising the objection on political grounds, but on receiving no answer to his other objections, he took refuge with Sri Krishna for being instructed. He said, "I admit I am a Kshatriya, to desist from this great work under the influence of pity is for me an act of cowardice, an infamy, against the Law. But neither the mind nor my heart would admit it. The mind says, 'The killing of elders is a heinous sin, to kill them for the sake of one's own happiness would be to fall into impiety, it would be to lose everything, virtue and release from bondage and the other worlds. The desires would be satisfied, the hankering after wealth would be met, but for how long? Enjoyments obtained through unrighteous means can last only until death, after that there is indescribable suffering. And when in the course of enjoyments you taste the blood of your elders in them, what is the peace or happiness you will get?' The heart says, 'These are my dear ones. If they are killed, I shall not be able to enjoy happiness in this life, nor would I want to live. If you give me the enjoyment of empire over the whole earth or give me the pleasure of Indra's riches by the conquest of heaven, even then I will not listen. The grief that will be overtaking me will overcome and weaken all the organs of action and knowledge and make them slack and incapable in their respective work. What will then be your enjoyment?' I am faced with a great unwillingness of mind, the nobility of my Kshatriya nature has been drowned in that unwillingness. I take refuge with thee. Give me knowledge, strength and faith, show me the path to the good, save me."

To see in God one's entire refuge is the way of the Gita's yoga. This is called the surrender or offering of one's self. One who accepts God as the teacher, lord, friend and guide and is prepared to throw away all other rules of living, one who hands over to Sri Krishna all responsibility for one's knowledge, work and the spiritual endeavour without caring for sin and virtue, what is to be done or not to be done, all right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good or evil, he alone is fit for the Gita's yoga. Arjuna said to Sri Krishna, "If you ask me to kill even my preceptors, if you make me understand that this is right and the thing to be done, I shall act accordingly." On the strength of this intense faith, Arjuna was accepted as the best recipient of the Gita's teaching, having overpassed all the great men who were his contemporaries.

In his reply, Sri Krishna first disposed of two of Arjuna's objections, then he took charge as teacher and began to impart the real knowledge. The disposal of the arguments takes us to verse 38, after that begins the teaching of the Gita. But we find in the answer to the objections some invaluable teachings; unless these are grasped

the Gīta's teaching cannot be understood. It is therefore necessary to consider these few words in detail

Sañjaya uvāca

*Evamuktivā hṛṣīkeśam guḍākeśaḥ parantapah
na yotsya iti govindamuktivā tūṣṇīm babbhūva ha* (9)

Sanjaya said:

Thus Gudakesha to Hrishikesha, the scourger of his foes said unto Govinda, "I will not fight", and ceased from words

*tamuvāca hrsīkeśaḥ prahasanniva bhārata
senayorubhayormadhye viṣḍantamidam vacaḥ* (10)

On him thus overcome with weakness in the midmost of either battle, Krishna smiled a little and said:

Śrībhagavān uvāca

*aśocyānanvaśocastvaṁ prajñāvādāmsca bhāṣase
gatāsūnagatāsūmsca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ* (11)

The Lord said:

Thou grievest for whom thou shouldst not grieve and yet speakest wise-seeming words, but the wise grieve not, whether for the dead or for the living.

*na tvevāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ na tvaṁ neme janādhipāḥ
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayamataḥ param* (12)

It is not that I was not before, nor thou nor these lords of the folk, nor yet that we shall not be again hereafter.

*dehinosminiyathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā
tathā dehāntaraprāptirdhīrastatra na muhyati* (13)

Even as the embodied spirit passes in this body to boyhood and youth and age, so also it passes away from this body to another; the strong man suffers not his soul to be clouded by this.

*mātrāsparsāstu kaunteya śītosṇasukhaduḥkhadāḥ
āgamāpāyino 'nityāstāmstutikṣasva bhārata* (14)

But the things of material touch, O son of Kunti, which bring cold and warmth, pleasure and pain, they come and they pass; transient are they, these seek to abandon, O Bharata.

*yam hi na vyathayantyete purusam purusarsabha
samaduhkhasukham dhīram so'mṛtatvāya kalpate* (15)

The man whom these vex not, O lion of men, who is strong and receiveth sorrow and bliss as one, that man is ready for immortality.

*nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ
ubhayaorapī dr̥ṣṭo'ntastvanayostatvadarśibhiḥ* (16)

For that which is not there is no coming into being, and for that which is there is no ceasing to be; yea, of both of these the lookers into truth have seen an end

*avināśi tu tad-viddhi yena sarvamudam tatam
vināśamavyayasyāsyā na kaścit kartumarhati* (17)

But That in which all this universe is extended, know to be imperishable, none hath force to bring to nought the One who decays not neither passes away.

*antavanta ime dehā nityasyoktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ
anāśino'prameyasya tasmād yudhyasva bhārata* (18)

Finite and transient are these bodies called, of the eternal, imperishable and immeasurable embodied Spirit; arise, therefore, and fight, O son of Bharata

*ya enaṁ vetti hantāraṁ yaścainaṁ manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṁ hanti na hanyate* (19)

Who knoweth the Spirit as slayer and who decreeth Him to be slain, both of these discern not. He slayeth not, neither is He slain.

*na jāyate mriyate vā kadācit
nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato'yaṁ purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre* (20)

He is not born nor dieth ever, nor having once been shall not be again. He is unborn, for ever and perpetual. He is the Ancient One who is not slain with the slaying of the body.

*vedāvināśinaṁ nityam ya enamajamavyam
katham sa purusah pārtha kaṁ ghātayati hanti kam* (21)

He who knoweth Him to be imperishable, eternal, unborn and undecaying, whom doth that man, O Partha, slay or cause to be slain?

*vāsāmsi jirṇāni yathā vihāya
navāni grhṇāti naro'parāṇi
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jirṇāny-
anyāni samyāti navāni dehī* (22)

As a man casteth away from him his worn-out robes and taketh to him other and new raiment, so the embodied Spirit casteth away its worn-out bodies and goeth to other and new casings.

*nainaṁ chindanti śastrāṇi nainam dahati pāvakaḥ
na cainaṁ kledayantyāpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ* (23)

Him the sword cleaveth not, Him the fire cannot burn, Him the water wetteth not, and the hot wind withereth not away.

*acchedyo'yamadāhyo'yam'kledyo'śosya eva ca
nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthāṇuracalo'yam sanātanaḥ* (24)

Indivisible, unconsumable, unmergible, unwitherable is He. He is for ever and everywhere, constant and moveth not. He is the One Sempiternal Being

*avayakto'yamacintyo'yamavikāryo'yamucyate
tasmādevaṁ viditvainaṁ nānuśocitumarhasi* (25)

He is unmanifest, unthinkable, unchangeable. If thou knowest Him as such, thou hast no cause to grieve.

*atha cainaṁ nityajātaṁ nityaṁ vā manyase mṛtam
tathāpi tvaṁ mahābāho nainaṁ śocitumarhasi* (26)

And now if yet thou deemest of the Spirit as ever born or ever dying, even so thou hast no cause to grieve for him, O strong-armed.

*jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyurdhruvam janma mṛtasya ca
tasmādaparihārye'rthe na tvaṁ śocitumarhasi* (27)

For of that which is born the death is certain, and of that which is dead, the birth is sure, therefore in a thing inevitable thou oughtest not to grieve.

*avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyaktamadyāni bhārata
avyaktanidhanānyeva tatra kā paridevanā* (28)

Unmanifested in their beginning are creatures, manifested in the middle, O Bharata, they become but unmanifest again at death; what room is there for lamentation?

*āścaryavat paśyati kaścidenam-
āścaryavad vadati tathaiva cānyaḥ
āścaryavaccainamanyaḥ śṛṇoti
śrutvāpyenaṁ veda na caiva kaścit* (29)

As a Mystery one seeth Him, as a Mystery another speaketh of Him, as a Mystery a third heareth of Him, but even with revelation not one knoweth Him.

*dehī nityamavadhyo'yam dehe sarvasya bhārata
tasmāt sarvāṅi bhūtāni na tvam śocitumarhasi* (30)

The embodied One is for ever unslayable in the body of every man, O Bharata; and from Him are all creatures; therefore thou hast no cause for grief.

(To be continued)

SRI AUROBINDO

(Translated by Sanat K. Banerji)

EVERYONE IS AGHAST

A LETTER FROM DILIP KUMAR ROY TO SRI AUROBINDO AND HIS REPLY

2/12/34
To Sri Aurobindo, Today 9 AM
Apoorva^m The same as its
developments and ramifications.

And what do you think
of my handwriting - Bengali?
Everyone is aghast at its
rapid-supramentalisation!
I mean in the direction of
high-born legibility? *oibp*

Marvellous and marvellous!
How did you manage it? I
read one with a sort of trance
eye - I mean an intellectual
without instinct and instinct
I would have to study along
some time in order to write it

The double device the other
could might be - but to all
over. Perhaps if you all
communicate the secret of it
in English or otherwise English
I mean to make of it the
fruit of my writing not
but of light - which is at
at least a decimal relief
to everybody.

The method is very practical
as its pointers.

2-12-34

To Sri Aurobindo: Today I wrote a poem in the same ছন্দ (*chhanda*): its developments and ramifications.

And what do you think of my handwriting—Bengali? Everyone is aghast at its rapid supramentalisation! I mean in the direction of high-born legibility?

DILIP

Marvellous and miraculous! How did you manage it. I read now with a sort of gasping ease—I mean an ease which gasps with astonishment at its own existence. I used formerly to stop at every second line and wonder what the double deuce this or that word might be—but that is all over. Perhaps if you could communicate the secret of it by influence or otherwise I might manage to make one tenth of my own writing just barely legible—which would be at least a decimal relief to everybody. The metre is very pretty and the poem too.

2-12-34

SRI AUROBINDO

UNANIMOUS TRADITION

SOME pointilliste had left this canvas called "The Stars"
 Half-finished, in his dilettante way,—
 "And why this planet skit
 Devolving-ape-infest?"—
 Their pointillistic mind-stuff lit,
 Sage minds co-deem "Pure jest."

February 18, 1936

ARJAVA

Sri Aurobindo's comment: Very successful.

SRI AUROBINDO'S RENDERINGS OF SOME OF THE VEDIC RIKS

(Continued from the issue of March 2000)

इन्द्रो दीर्घाय चक्षस आ सूर्य रोहयद् दिवि ।
वि गोभिरद्रिमैरयत् ॥

(Rigveda, 1.7.3)

Indra for far vision made the Sun to ascend in heaven. he sped him all over the hill by his rays. (SABCL, Vol. 10, p. 119)

Indra for far vision ascends in Heaven up to the sun, he manifests the mountain to all sides with those lustres. (SABCL, Vol. 10, p. 502)

सत्या सत्येभिर्महती महद्भिर्देवी देवेभिर्यजता यजत्रै ।
रुजद् दृळ्हानि दददुस्त्रियाणां प्रति गाव उषसं वावशन्त ॥

(Rigveda, 5.75.7)

True with the gods who are true, great with the gods who are great, she breaks open the strong places and gives of the shining herds; the cows low towards the dawn (SABCL, Vol. 10, p. 121)

True with the gods who are true, great with the gods who are great, sacrificial godhead with the gods sacrificial, she breaks open the strong places, she gives of the shining herds; the cows low towards the Dawn! (SABCL, Vol. 10, p. 136)

एषो उषा अपूर्व्या व्युच्छति प्रिया दिवः ।
स्तुषे वामश्विना बृहत् ॥
या दस्त्रा सिन्धुमातरा मनोतरा रयीणाम् ।
धिया देवा वसुविदा ॥

(Rigveda, 1.46.1-2)

“Lo, the Dawn than which there is none higher, opens out full of delight in the Heavens; O Ashwins, the Vast of you I affirm, ye of whom the Ocean is the mother, accomplishers of the work who pass beyond through the mind to the felicities and, divine, find that substance by the thought.... (SABCL, Vol. 10, p. 124)

आदारो वां मतीनां नासत्या मतवचसा ।
पातं सोमस्य धृष्णुया ।
या नः पीपरदश्विना ज्योतीष्मती तमस्तिर ।
तामस्मे रासाथामिषम् ॥

(Rigveda, 1.46.5-6)

O Lords of the Voyage, who mentalise the word, this is the dissolver of your thinkings,—drink ye of the Soma violently; give to us that impulsion, O Ashwins, which, luminous, carries us through beyond the darkness. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 124)

आ नो नावा मतीनां यातं पाराय गन्तवे ।
युज्जाथामश्विना रथम् ॥
अरित्रं वां दिवस्पृथु तीर्थे सिन्धूनां रथ ।
धिया युयुज्जन् इन्दवः ॥

(Rigveda, 1.46.6-7)

Travel for us in your ship to reach the other shore beyond the thoughts of the mind. Yoke, O Ashwins, your car,—your car that becomes the vast oared ship in Heaven, in the crossing of its rivers. By the thought the powers of Delight have been yoked. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 124)

दिवस्कण्वास इन्दवो वसु सिन्धूनां पदे ।
स्व वज्रि कुह धित्सथः ॥

(Rigveda, 1.46.9)

The Soma-powers of delight in heaven are that substance in the place of the Waters. But where shall you cast aside the veil you have made to conceal you? (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 124)

अभूदु भा उ अंशवे हिरण्यं प्रति सूर्यः ।
व्यख्यज्जिह्वायसितः ॥

(Rigveda, 1.46.10)

Nay, Light has been born for the joy of the Soma;—the Sun that was dark has shot out its tongue towards the Gold. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 124)

अभूदु पारमेतवे पन्था ऋतस्य साधुया ।
अदर्शि वि सुतिर्दिवः ॥

(Rigveda, 1.46.11)

The path of the Truth has come into being by which we shall travel to that other shore; seen is all the wide way through Heaven. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 124)

तत्तदिदश्विनोरवो जरिता प्रति भूषति ।
मदे सोमस्य प्रियतोः ॥

(Rigveda, 1.46.12)

The seeker grows in his being towards increasing manifestation after manifestation of

the Ashwins when they find satisfaction in the ecstasy of the Soma. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 124)

वावसाना विवस्वति सोमस्य पीत्या गिरा ।
मनुष्वच्छंभू आ गतम् ॥

(Rigveda, 1.46.13)

Do ye, dwelling (or, shining) in the all-luminous Sun, by the drinking of the Soma, by the Word come as creators of the bliss into our humanity. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p 124)

युवोरुषा अनु श्रिय परिनोरुपाचरत् ।
ऋता वनथो अत्कुभिः ॥

(Rigveda, 1.46.14)

Dawn comes to us according to your glory when you pervade all our worlds and you win the Truths out of the Nights. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p. 124)

उभा पिबतमश्विनो भा नः शर्म यच्छतम् ।
अुवद्वियाभिरूतिभिः ॥

(Rigveda, 1.46.15)

Both together drink, O Ashwins, both together extend to us the peace by expandings whose wholeness remain untorn. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p 124)

(To be continued)

(Compiled by Sampadananda Mishra)

ALIPORE BOMB CASE TRIAL

C. R. DAS DEFENDS SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of March 2000)

Mr. P. Mitra then argued the case on behalf of Asoka Nandy, Debabrata Bose, Indra Nandy, Hem Chandra Das and Dindyal Bose and contended that no charge of conspiracy had been brought home to them. Suggestions and inferences based on assumptions were the utmost that could be urged against them. *Mr. P. Lall* then dealt with the cases of Nagendra Gupta and Dharani Gupta. Both were convicted by the High Court for possessing arms at 134 Harrison Road and were given 7 years' imprisonment. There was nothing to show they were in any conspiracy.

Babu Nagendra Nath Banerjea, vakil, addressed the Court on behalf of Bejoy Bhattacharya and drew the attention of the Court that the Crown counsel admitted that the evidence fell short of the necessary standard and that the formulae for bomb was not found on the first day and Bejoy was not aware of it.

Babu Bejoy Krishna Bose took up the case of Abinash Bhattacharya whom, he said, the Crown Counsel wanted to sacrifice at the altar of Arabinda. Evidence was given that he was connected with *Jugantar* and was the author of two nefarious books *Bartaman Rananiti* and *Mukti Kone Pathey*. So long as Abinash was connected with *Jugantar* there were two prosecutions, viz., those of Bhupendra Dutt and Baikuntha Acharya. The two issues upon which the prosecutions were based were not printed at Abinash's Press. Abinash was only the manager and though he was prosecuted, he was acquitted. After that he cut off all connections and sold the Press. All letters addressed to him as Manager after this were not found with him but with Taranath. The articles reprinted in the *Mukti Kone Pathey* were those upon which the Government did not elect to prosecute and he did not consider it wrong to print them for sale. He wanted to start the *Navasakti* as a paper different from the *Jugantar*—as he thought that by writing violent articles and going to jail the gospel of freedom could not be preached. Abinash's name is not to be found in any notebook anywhere. In all the confessions no mention of Abinash was made except only to show that he was connected with the paper *Jugantar*.

Mr. R. N Roy argued the case then on behalf of Provash Dey and the three Sen brothers of Sylhet and Babu Dwijendra Nath Mookerjea for B. K. Kane.

Mr. E. P. Ghose then addressed the Court on behalf of nine accused persons. He first stated the general principles of law and evidence which the Assessors should bear in mind. He adopted all the points of law taken by Mr. C. R. Dass as his own. The four overt acts, viz., two on the L. G., one against the Mayor and another against Mr. Kingsford were intended for individuals and could not be construed into waging of war. He submitted his clients were all newcomers, novices, who knew nothing of any conspiracy. He then dealt with the individual cases of Purna Chandra Sen,

Narendra Buxi, Krishna Jiban Sanyal, Sachindra K. Sen, Hemendra Ghose, Naliny Gupta, Bejoy Nag, Birendra Nath Ghose, and Sishir Kumar Ghose.

Mr. J. N. Roy then discussed the case of Hrishikesh Kanjulal. He protested against the way the case was put by the Crown Counsel which made the task of the defence difficult. The Court looked like a fortress with the accused not in dock but in an iron cage. Of the 1500 documents put in many were irrelevant. Mr. Norton placed before the Court the whole of the political and moral revolution lately going on in Bengal and challenged the new life that had sprung up with all its aspirations and manifestations. Everything that is grandest and noblest in the culture and manhood of the nation had been placed on trial. Are you strong? you are then a conspirator. Are you young? that absolutely proves that you are a conspirator. Are you religious? you must be a conspirator. Do you read the *Geeta*? Do you study vedantism? Are you a genius? that is proof positive you are a conspirator. After dealing with the evidence against his client he concluded by saying "the eyes of whole Asia, if not the whole world have been upon us for months past. We have done our part and it now remains for you to do yours. You must have observed that in the history of individuals as in the history of nations there comes a time when the sense of judgment is obscured. It is for you to say whether you think that the mere thought of a far off revolution in the minds of half a dozen or dozen men can be accepted as waging war against the King. It is for you to say whether the overt acts in this case do constitute overt acts at all. You will remember the magnitude of the trial and your duty is to do justice. You are no politician and politics have no place in a court of justice. Because a man shows some of the beliefs, some of the hopes, some of the fears of a particular generation does that constitute evidence of association in a case of this character? Lastly, gentlemen, you have heard of the price that England has to pay for the Empire. Well, I will say this that splendid as the Empire is, you will deem, the world will deem that the Empire is nought if it is found wanting when weighed in the balance against justice."

Babu Bejoy Krishna Bose was requested to argue on behalf of Nikhileswar Roy Moulik in the absence of his pleader who had fallen ill. He divided the case into four parts, viz., his alleged connection with the *Jugantar*; his connection with the *Chattra Bhandar*, his connection with the different places and the search of his house at Damrai, and his alleged connection with the conspiracy. He got 160 per month for printing the *Jugantar* in his press. Its office was elsewhere. *Chattra Bhandar* was a purely business concern. His client was not seen in any place of conspiracy nor was he named in any of the confessions. He concluded his address with the following words:—

"And now, gentlemen, you have heard the last of the speeches on behalf of the defence. So far as this historic trial is concerned—the first of its kind in India—what remains now is for you, gentlemen Assessors, to give your opinions and for His Honour the Judge to deliver his judgment. I have the unique honour and opportunity, Sir, of appearing before you in two of the longest trials over which you have presided here in Alipur—perhaps the longest in your Honour's experience as a Judge in this

country. In the other case—*K. E. V. Habib and others*—all the accused persons were acquitted by your Honour. I do not know, neither can I anticipate, what the result of this trial will be, but I have not the least doubt that justice will be vindicated. The task of finding out the really relevant pieces of evidence from the vast mass of irrelevant evidence put in this case, is indeed Herculean. Ridiculed by a reptile press, looked on with suspicion by the prying Police, hampered in our work by the want of facilities for proper instructions, weighed down with the enormity of accumulated prejudice—we have toiled on for months actuated only by the highest and the noblest motives which inspire the profession—holding aloft the glorious tradition for which the Bar stands—to help justice and to vindicate innocence—cheered in our labours by the only redeeming feature in the case, the uniform courtesy we have received from the Bench. To think that all the 36 persons arraigned at the dock behind us, are guilty of a conspiracy to wage war against the King is outrageous. I have no doubt, Sir, that you will decide this case as an English Judge would do—for justice is the bulwark of the state. British rule in India is broad based upon the hearts and affections of the people, not because of its brave Army or invincible Navy—but on account of its strict and impartial administration of justice wherein lies its real strength. Long after the dust of controversy and racial feeling that have been raised over this unfortunate case will be forgotten and when history alone will remain to bear evidence to this strange episode and to write with its unerring hand on the tablet of Time its just and eternal verdict—the one fact which people will never forget and will cherish with pride and satisfaction will be that there was a British Judge who kept himself cool, whose judgment was not warped by prejudices and predilections, who held the scales even and did justice for the sake of justice.”

The opinions of the two Assessors were as follows:—

Guilty	Not Guilty	
	Sishir Ghosh (by one)	Asoke Nandy
	Naliny Sarkar	Sushil Sen
Barindra	Sachindra Sen	Birendra Sen
Indra Bhusan	Kunjo Lal Saha	Hem Sen
Upen Banerjee	Bejoy Nag	Debabrata Bose
Ullaskar Dutt	Narendra Buxi	Nikhileswar Roy
Paresh Moulik (by one)	Purna Sen	Bejoy Bhattacharya
Bibhuty Sarkar	Hemendra Ghose	B. H. Kane
Hem Das	Nirapado Roy	Provash Dey
Hrishikesh Kanjilal	Arabinda Ghose	
	Abinash Bhattacharya	
	Sailendra Buxi	
	Dindoyal Bose	
	Sudhir Sarkar	
	Krishna Jiban Sanyal	
	Birendra Ghose	
	Dharani Gupta	
	Nogendra Gupta	
	Indra Nandy	

THE JUDGMENT

On the 6th May 1909 the following order was passed—

Judgment delivered. Accused Barindra Kumar Ghose and Ullaskar Dutt are sentenced to death under sec. 121, 121A and 122 I. P. C. and they are informed that if they wish to appeal they must do so within one week. Accused Hem Chandra Das, Upendra Nath Banerjee, Bibhuti Bhusan Sarkar, Hrishikesh Kanjilal, Birendra Chandra Sen, Sudhir Kumar Ghose, Indranath Nandy, Abinash Ch. Bhattacharya, Sailendra Nath Bose are sentenced to transportation for life under sec. 121, 121A, and 122 I. P. C. Accused Indra Bhusan Roy is sentenced to transportation for life under sections 121A and 122 I. P. C. Accused Paresh Ch. Moulik, Sishir Kumar Ghose, Nirapado Roy are sentenced to transportation for 10 years under sec. 121A and 122. The properties of all the accused will be forfeited to Government. Asoke Chandra Nandy, Balkrishna Hari Kane, Sushil Kumar Sen are sentenced to transportation for 7 years. Krishna Jibon Sanyal is sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment under sec. 121A. The rest of the accused are acquitted and to be set at liberty. Send the record to the High Court for confirmation of the sentence of death.

(Concluded)

N B The text of the Judgment given on 6 May 1909 by Justice C. P. Beachcroft appeared in the August-September 1998 issues of *Mother India* —R Y D

It was the Mother who selected the heads [of departments] for her purpose in order to organise the whole, all the lines of the work, all the details were arranged by her and the heads trained to observe her methods and it was only afterwards that she stepped back and let the whole thing go on on her lines but with a watchful eye always. The heads are carrying out her policy and instructions and report everything to her and she often modifies what they do when she thinks fit

SRI AUROBINDO

9-1-1936

On the Mother, SABCL, Vol 25, pp 243-244

The Sadhana is done by the Mother according to the Truth and necessity of each nature and of each plane of Nature. It is not one fixed process

SRI AUROBINDO

13-9-1936

On the Mother, SABCL, Vol 25, p 267

SELF-RELIANCE

HATIM Tai had a great reputation among the Arabs of old for the lavishness of his gifts and alms.

“Have you ever met anyone more excellent than yourself?” his friends once asked him.

“Yes,” replied Hatim Tai.

“Who was he?”

“One day I had forty camels sacrificed and I offered a feast to whoever would like to come and share in it. Then I set out with several chiefs to invite guests from far and wide. On the way we came across a woodcutter who had just cut a bundle of thorns. This was the way he earned his livelihood. Seeing that he was poor, I asked him why he did not go to the many feasts given by Hatim Tai. ‘Those who earn their living,’ he answered me, ‘have no need of the bounty of Hatim Tai.’ ”

Why then did Hatim Tai declare that the woodcutter was a better man than himself?

It was because he thought it nobler to work and to provide for oneself than to give others gifts which cost no effort or sacrifice and which, moreover, discourage them from being self-reliant.

Of course it is quite natural that friends should give presents to their friends; it is good that strong arms should come to the help of the poor and the needy; but an able-bodied man should work with his hands, not hold them out for alms. Of course this implies no reflection on those who consecrate themselves entirely to the contemplative life and the search for wisdom.

*

Though the woodcutter’s conduct was noble, yet it was less so than that of the Persian prince whose story I shall tell you.

He was a prince of ancient times and his name was Gushtasp.

He was much annoyed that his father did not treat him as heir to the throne, so he left his native land and wandered to the West. Alone and hungry, he realised that from then on he would have to work for his living. So he went to the sovereign of the land and said to him:

“I am a skilled writer and I should be happy to be employed as a scribe.”

He was told to wait for a few days, for no scribes were needed at the moment. But he was too hungry to wait, so he went to the camel-drivers to ask for work. They did not need any new helper; however, seeing his dire need, they gave him something to eat.

A little further on, Gushtasp stopped at the door of a forge and offered his services to the smith.

“Here,” said the man to him, “you can help me to hammer this piece of iron.” And he placed a hammer in Gushtasp’s hands.

The prince had tremendous strength. He lifted the heavy hammer, brought it down on the anvil and smashed it at the first stroke. The smith was furious and immediately turned him out.

And so Gushtasp started wandering once more in great distress.

Whichever way he turned, there was no way in which he could show his usefulness.

At last he met a farmer working in a cornfield, who took pity on him and gave him food and shelter.

One day there came the news that the daughter of the king of Rum was of an age to marry and that all young men of princely family were invited to the royal banquet. Gushtasp decided to go there and sat at table among all the others. Princess Kitaban saw him, loved him and gave him a bunch of roses as a token of her favour.

The king took a violent dislike for Gushtasp in his poverty. He dared not forbid his daughter to marry him, but as soon as they were married he drove them out of his palace. So they went to live in the heart of the forest and built their hut not far from a river.

Gushtasp was a great hunter. Each day he would cross the river by boat, catch an elk or a wild ass, give half to the boatman and take the rest home to his wife.

One day the boatman brought a young man named Mabrin to see Gushtasp.

“My Lord,” said Mabrin, “I wish to marry the second daughter of the king, your wife’s sister, but I cannot unless I kill the wolf who is ravaging the king’s lands. And I do not know how to do it”

“I will do it for you,” said Gushtasp the hunter.

He went out into the desert and when he found the monster, he shot it down with two arrows and then cut off its head with his hunting knife.

The king came to see the dead beast, and in his joy gave his second daughter to Mabrin.

Some time later, the boatman brought another young man named Ahrun to see Gushtasp. Ahrun wished to marry the third daughter of the king, but first he had to kill a dragon. Gushtasp promised that he would accomplish this new feat.

He took some knives and made them into a ball bristling with sharp points. Then he set out on his quest and found the dragon with fiery breath. He shot many arrows at the body of the monster, leaping from side to side to avoid its claws. Then he fastened the ball of knives to the end of a pike and thrust it down the dragon’s throat. The dragon closed its jaws and fell. Then the prince dispatched it with his sword.

Thus Ahrun married the third daughter of the king

You will not be surprised to hear that in the course of time such a valiant prince became the king of Persia in succession to his father. It was during the reign of Gushtasp that the holy prophet Zerdusht, or Zoroaster, taught the Persians faith in Ormazd, Lord of light and sun and fire and of righteousness and justice.

However, you can see that Gushtasp did not immediately find his place and work in the world.

He tried many things without success, and even at first incurred the enmity of many men, for example that of the good smith.

At last, however, he gained his true station in life and was able to help others until the time came for him to govern them wisely. And it was precisely in helping others that he was better than the woodcutter of whom we have just spoken, for, according to the story, the woodcutter was content to work for himself. Gushtasp was also better than the generous Hatim Tai, for instead of giving from the excess of his wealth, the Persian prince gave the strength of his arm and even risked his life for the sake of others.

None is more worthy of respect than one who, relying on himself, is able by his own effort not only to provide for all his needs, but to increase the well-being and the prosperity of those around him.

Respect the father, engineer or woodcutter, writer or labourer, tradesman, smith or explorer, who by his work, whatever it may be, earns a good living and increases the well-being of his family.

Respect the worker who, in order to serve both his own interests and those of his comrades, joins with them to organise co-operative stores or workshops, or trade-unions which enable each one to assert his rights by raising the powerful voice of the many instead of the weak and pleading voice of an isolated individual

These workers' associations teach workmen to rely on their own strength and to help one another.

And you too, school-children, learn to enrich your intelligence by concentrating on the task your master gives you. And, while you mount the steps of knowledge as best you can, learn also to help, when the need arises, the friend who is less alert and skilful than yourself.

In fairy-tales, one has only to utter a word or rub a lamp or wave a wand for genies to appear and carry people through the air, build palaces in the twinkling of an eye and cause armies of elephants and horsemen to spring from the ground.

But personal effort brings about still greater marvels: it covers the soil with rich harvests, tames wild beasts, tunnels through mountains, erects dykes and bridges, builds cities, launches ships on the ocean and flying machines in the air; in short it gives more well-being and security to all.

By personal effort man becomes more noble, more just, more kind: this is the true progress.

THE MOTHER

A NOTE ON THE OBSERVER AND THE OBSERVED IN MODERN SCIENCE

(Continued from the issue of March 2000)

II

ARE we then to say that science is no longer science, it has now been converted into philosophy, even into idealistic philosophy?

In spite of Russell and Eddington who may be considered in this respect as counsellors of despair, the objective reality of the scientific field stands, it is asserted, although somewhat changed

Now, there are four positions possible with regard to the world and reality, depending on the relation between the observer and the observed, the subject and the object. They are: (1) subjective, (2) objective, (3) subjective objective, and (4) objective subjective. The first two are extreme positions, one holding the subject as the sole or absolute reality, the object being a pure fabrication of its will and idea, an illusion, and the other considering the object as the true reality, the subject being an outcome, an epiphenomenon of the object itself, an illusion after all. The first leads to radical or as it is called monistic spirituality the type of which is Mayavada; the second is the highway of materialism, the various avataras of which are Marxism, Pragmatism, Behaviourism, etc. In between lie the other two intermediate positions according to the stress or value given to either of the two extremes. The first of the intermediates is the position held generally by the idealists, by many schools of spirituality. It is a major Vedantic position. It says that the outside world, the objective, is not an illusion, a mere fabrication of the mind or consciousness of the subject, but that it exists and is as real as the subject—it is dovetailed into the subject which is a kind of linchpin holding together and even energising the objects. The object can further be considered as an expression or embodiment of the subject. Both the subject and the object are made of the same stuff of consciousness—the ultimate reality being consciousness. The subject is the consciousness turned on itself and the object is the consciousness turned outside or going abroad. This is pre-eminently the Upanishadic position. In Europe Kant holds a key position in this line, and on the whole idealists from Plato to Bradley and Bosanquet can be said more or less to belong to this category. The second intermediate position views the subject as imbedded into the object, not the object into the subject as in the first one: the subject itself is part of the object, something like its self-regarding or self-recording function. In Europe, apart possibly from some of the early Greek thinkers (Anaxagoras or Democritus, for example), coming to more recent times, we can say that line runs fairly well-represented from Leibnitz to Bergson. In India the Sankhyas and the Vaisheshikas move towards and approach the position, the Tantriks make a still more near approach

Once again, to repeat in other terms the distinction which may sometimes appear to carry no difference. First the subjective objective in which the subject assumes the preponderant position, not denying or minimising the reality of the object. The external world, in this view, is a movement in and of the consciousness of a universal subject. It is subjective in the sense that it is essentially a function of the subject and does not exist apart from it or outside it; it is objective in the sense that it exists really and is not a figment or imaginative construction of any individual consciousness, although it exists in and through the individual consciousness in so far as that consciousness is universalised, is one with the universal consciousness (or the transcendental, the two can be taken together in the present connection). Instead of the Kantian transcendental idealism we can name it transcendental realism.

In the other case the world exists here below in its own reality, outside all apprehending subject, even the universal subject is in a sense part of it, immanent in it—it embraces the subject in its comprehending consciousness and posits it as part of itself or a function of its apprehension. The many Purushas (conscious beings or subjects) are embedded in the universal Nature, say the Sankhyas. Kali, Divine Nature, is the manifest omnipresent omniscient omnipotent reality holding within her the transcendent divine Purusha she supports, sanctions and inspires secretly, yet is dependent on the Mahashakti and without her is nothing, *sunyam*. That is how the Tantriks put it. We may mention here, among European philosophers, the rather interesting conclusion of Leibnitz (to which Russell draws our attention): space is subjective to the view of each monad (subject unit) separately, it is objective when it consists of the assemblage of the viewpoints of all the monads.

The scientific outlook was a protest against the extreme subjective view: it started with the extreme objective standpoint and that remained the fundamental note till the other day, till the fission of the nucleus opened new horizons to our somewhat bewildered mentality. We seem to have entered into a region where we still hold to the objective, no doubt, but not absolutely free from an insistent presence of the subjective. It is the second of the intermediate positions we have tried to describe. Science has yet to decide the implications of that position; whether it will try to entrench itself as much as possible on this side of the subjective or whether it can yield further and go over to or link itself with the deeper subjective position.

The distinction between the two may after all be found to be a matter of stress only, involving no fundamental difference, especially as there are sure to be gradations from the one to the other. The most important landmark, however, the most revolutionary step in modern science would be the discovery of the eternal observer or some sign or image of his, seated within the observed phenomena of moving things—*purushah prakritisthe hi*, as the Gita says.

(Concluded)

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(This article is from *Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta*, Vol. I. It is regretted that the author of the first part was put as Amal Kiran as the typescript was found in his unpublished paper —R Y D.)

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 March 2000)

When earth was built in the unconscious Void
 And nothing was save a material scene,
 Identified with sea and sky and stone
 Her young gods yearned for the release of souls
 Asleep in objects, vague, inanimate ¹

... It is the Divine in the inconscient who aspires for the Divine in the consciousness. That is to say, without the Divine there would be no aspiration; without the consciousness hidden in the inconscience, there would be no possibility of changing the inconscience to consciousness. But because at the very heart of the inconscience there is the divine Consciousness, you aspire, and necessarily—this is what he says—automatically, mechanically, the sacrifice is made. And this is why when one says, ‘‘It is not *you* who aspire, it is the Divine, it is not *you* who make progress, it is the Divine, it is not *you* who are conscious, it is the Divine’’—these are not mere words, it is a fact. And it is simply your ignorance and your unconsciousness which prevent you from realising it.²

(A meditation followed during which the first manifestation of the Supramental Light-Force took place on February 29, 1956.)

Life heard the call and left her nature light.
 Overflowing from her bright magnificent plane
 On the rigid coil and sprawl of mortal space,
 Here too the gracious great-winged Angel poured
 Her splendour and her sweetness and her bliss,
 Hoping to fill a fair new world with joy.³

The Mother told me about this Life Angel who has pearly wings:

From the beginning of the 20th Century, two Life Angels have always been with me on either side, they were protecting me constantly. They were very nice and beautiful creatures indeed.

The Mother drew a beautiful coloured sketch in order to give me an idea about the Life Angel.

The Gods live and breathe under the dominion of Prana and men and all these that are beasts; for Prana is the life of created things and therefore they name it the Life-Stuff of the All. Verily, they who worship the Eternal as Prana, reach* Life to the uttermost; for Prana is the life of created things and therefore they name it the Life-Stuff of the All. And this Self of Prana is the soul in the body of the former one which was of food. ...⁴

* Or, attain mastery of

But above the material world there is a plane of dominant Life that presses down upon this material universe and seeks to pour into it whatever it can of its own types, powers, forces, impulsions, manifesting creative godheads. When in the material world form is ready, the Gods and the Life-Daemons of this higher plane are attracted to put their creative touch upon Matter. Then there comes a rapid and sudden efflorescence of Life; the plant, the animalcule, the insect, the animal appear. A life-soul and a life-force with its many and always more complex movements are manifested in what seemed once to be inert and inanimate substance. Life-souls, life-minds, animal existences are born and evolve; a new world appears that is born and contained in this world of Matter and yet surpasses it in its true dynamic nature⁵

It could be affirmed as a consequence that there is one all-pervading Life or dynamic energy—the material aspect being only its outermost movement—that creates all these forms of the physical universe, Life imperishable and eternal which, even if the whole figure of the universe were quite abolished, would itself still go on existing and be capable of producing a new universe in its place, must indeed, unless it be held back in a state of rest by some higher Power or hold itself back, inevitably go on creating. In that case Life is nothing else than the Force that builds and maintains and destroys forms in the world, it is Life that manifests itself in the form of the earth as much as in the plant that grows upon the earth and the animals that support their existence by devouring the life-force of the plant or of each other. All existence here is a universal Life that takes form of Matter. It might for that purpose hide life-process in physical process before it emerges as submental sensitivity and mentalised vitality, but still it would be throughout the same creative Life-principle....⁶

But while the magic breath was on its way,
Before her gifts could reach our prisoned hearts,
A dark ambiguous Presence questioned all.⁷

The Mother explained to me that I should show in this painting the ambiguous presence with long nails dripping with blood.

So it reminds me of what the Mother said to me in 1960:

Child, have you noticed that now-a-days women grow their nails very long and paint them red? Don't the nails look as if they are dripping blood? I do not like this modern style.

The Mother asked me to paint the nails of this dark being long and dripping with blood. She also said that in this painting I must show the wings of the Life Angel folded up in fear....

.. Life is at constant war with Matter and the battle seems always to end in the

apparent defeat of life and in that collapse downward to the material principle which we call death....⁸

.. Death is imposed on the individual life both by the conditions of its own existence and by its relations to the All-Force which manifests itself in the universe. For the individual life is a particular play of energy specialised to constitute, maintain, energise and finally to dissolve when its utility is over, one of the myriad forms which all serve, each in its own place, time and scope, the whole play of the universe. The energy of life in the body has to support the attack of the energies external to it in the universe; it has to draw them in and feed upon them and is itself being constantly devoured by them. All Matter according to the Upanishad is food, and this is the formula of the material world that 'the eater eating is himself eaten'....⁹

Most things happen in the vital before they happen in the physical, but all that happens in the vital does not realise itself in the physical, or not in the same way. There is always or at least usually a change in the form, time, circumstances due to the different conditions of the physical plane.¹⁰

(To be continued)

HUTA

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- 1 *Savitri*, p 129
- 2 *CWM*, Vol 8, p 79
- 3 *Savitri*, p 130
- 4 *The Upanishads*, SABCL, Vol 12, p 329
- 5 *The Hour of God*, SABCL, Vol 17, p 17
- 6 *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol 18, pp 176-77
- 7 *Savitri*, p 130
- 8 *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol 18, p 232
- 9 *Ibid*, p 192
- 10 *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol 22, p 255

BRANCHES OF THE BANYAN

The 50th Anniversary of Indian Independence

FOR eyes unaccustomed to its order,
it is only a confused splendour
of tropical vegetation under puzzling heavens.

The masses, with the impress of centuries
on them, march closer to 'the ruling passion'.
There are powers of which you are unaware,
the invisible holds your senses and sight,
the infinite is the fragrance of the finite.

There is life beyond life and mind,
God beyond the myriad gods and men,
and man exceeds himself into
the sapphire regions of spirit
in her great yearning to grapple
with the infinite and possess it.

Her mountain tops are not
the mere enchantment of a dream
rising out of the clouds,
without a base. She has always been
creating, with an abundance,
kingdoms, creeds, philosophies,

sciences, arts and monuments, and expanding
outside her borders.

Her Upanishads and the Buddha
are re-echoed by the lips of Christ

Her desire to flow through life carries
each tangent of thought and experience
to its farthest point, bold and naked.

The scriptures embracing all life
with no better record than the memory
and the frail palm-leaf bespeak the beauty
and rhythm, the ray of reason touches
fathomless depths, shines over pinnacles.

During the evening of decline when
old rules lost their meaning,
life was chained to the relics of forms
and the Mahatma was busy assembling
the fragments of a glorious past.

The fire of the spirit remained,
burned no longer with
that large and clear flame
but in intense jets, in patches
of light and dark. India is awake now,

to her own truth, vaguely as yet,
under the impress of borrowed motive and method,
poor in will and feeble in form,
missing the roots.

There is yet some clear light
on patches of this receding deposit
of the past at a time of ebb,

with the seed of the future
when it would again be
in the full tide of its greatness.

BIBHUDATTA MAHANTY

NAGIN-BHAI TELLS ME

(Continued from the issue of March 2000)

23:01:1995

This was about a month ago. I was told that Reality was working in me I did not pay any particular attention to it.

But what happened the day before yesterday is very clear. It was the action of Reality.

Reality told me "I am making your physical a part of myself"

The action was all the way down to my knees I could feel it. It was a long meditation

Reality must be Sri Aurobindo.

Remember what I had told you quite some time back and asked you what is meant by Reality? "I am Reality. I want to make you a part of my Reality."

Our sessions had started with that. I wanted to get certain clarifications and therefore I have been consulting you

Don't reveal these matters to anybody. I am confiding these only to you When the experiences are going on these should be kept absolutely to oneself. '

24:01:1995

Yesterday, after you left, I went to the Samadhi.

I saw a being opening out his chest. He said: "This is the Reality"

Sri Aurobindo confirmed your suggestion that Reality is he himself

01:01:1995

A couple of days ago I was told during the meditation that I must raise my subtle-physical. I was doing it. I rose to quite a height But I could not go yet higher up I could not go very high; I was unable to do that.

There was a projection of Sachchidananda I could recognise it

It disappeared and I saw the Mother. She was sitting up there and intently gazing at me.

It was a very powerful look and she was looking like that at me for a long time I don't think I had ever seen her like that, at no time She was constantly gazing at me, very powerful, from the Overmind I suppose.

30:01:1995

The action is very powerful. It seems that from every atom of the body there is a fire bursting out, here, there, everywhere. Each atom is bursting into a flame, one after the other, like fire-crackers It is very difficult to bear.

I have stopped meditating for the last few days.

Of course, all this is happening in the subtle-physical

I can't bear it. I had two heart attacks and my nervous system is weak. I must be careful

I must be careful. This fire is intense, powerful.

But when it happens, at that time I don't feel anything. At that time nothing is felt that way, it is only afterwards that I feel how powerful the fire is.

03:01:1995

Last few days I am not meditating I am very weak and I do not want to take any chances. I do not want to have any nervous breakdown. I had two heart attacks and I must be careful. Yes, I must be careful.

But I do go to the Samadhi and offer my Pranam

Today Sri Aurobindo blessed me and he was blessing for a long time. Even when I came out it was there; he was still blessing. Its action continued for a long time

They told me that once they take up a work, they cannot stop it. Whether I am meditating or not,—it does not matter to them. They do not bother about it. The work goes on. It cannot be stopped. But then they also know what precautions to take.

Their work goes on, but my conscious participation helps it. That is important.

07:02:1995

Yes, I know what is meant by universal surrender. The other day I had talked to you about it. I know what it is. I am given the experience.

It is certainly not the surrender by everybody. It is the surrender of the universal consciousness of the individual.

I saw it very clearly. Something came out from it and made the surrender. From some point of the universal the surrender is made by coming out and offering itself.

But now the work is in the physical. For that to happen the spirit of my physical body must wake up, it must become conscious. It is that which will receive the higher power and be an instrument for its working

I must be aware of this spirit. I suppose that is what is meant by spiritualisation of the physical. That is the work going on. But, of course, that does not protect the body completely from disease and pain and suffering.

(To be continued)

R Y DESHPANDE

THE COSMIC SONG

It is The Mother's thirst for her child's love
That leaps as a song from the Unknown's heart

Like twinkling stars are the humming notes,
Dots of light alternating with
Little dashes of tranquil passion.

It is the Divine Beloved's lyrical caress
That gently carries me
Inwards into the wide spaces
Of her heart's chambers—
Beyond my little cosmos,
Beyond the world that draws my blinds.

Its melody is
A lullaby to my restless self,
And a marching song to the inner warrior
Seeking adventures in far off planes
Where the very air
Is your fragrant breath
And your smile the guiding light.

O sweet Mother make me see and hear
And perceive with all senses you, only you
Let this song of cosmos describe your shape,
And each note echo
The sound of your happy laughter.

Then each moment will be resonant
With the sound of your footsteps,
Every beat will be a new beginning
With the freshness of your Presence.

DINKAR PALANDE

THE COMPOSITION OF SAVITRI

(Continued from the issue of March 2000)

The last phase

THE third and last major phase in the composition of *Savitri* begins around 1945 with Sri Aurobindo's return to the books that now form Parts Two and Three. Most of these books had not been touched since 1920 or earlier, when Sri Aurobindo had worked on them in the context of "Savithri: A Tale and a Vision", a narrative poem in two parts and eight books, without cantos

He continued to revise Part One, which from the early 1930s to 1944 had absorbed him almost to the exclusion of the rest of the poem. His long preoccupation with Aswapati's Yoga and ascent through the worlds had deepened the conception and enlarged the scope of *Savitri*. A heightening of poetic expression had caused Sri Aurobindo to become dissatisfied with "the old insufficient inspiration" of the early versions.

Therefore the books of Parts Two and Three, some of which were taken up again after an interval of twenty-five years or more, needed extensive rewriting to make them consistent with the first part. Another problem was that the epic treatment of Aswapati's Yoga now dwarfed the story of Savitri and Satyavan itself. Besides reworking and expanding what he had already written, Sri Aurobindo added long passages of entirely new material, including six cantos on Savitri's Yoga. Thus, in a relatively brief period, the principal books of the later parts were rapidly transformed and brought into harmony with the substance, style and scale of Part One.

The deterioration of Sri Aurobindo's eyesight in the mid-1940s had important consequences for his method of working. As his handwriting grew less legible, he came to rely increasingly on dictation to complete the revision of *Savitri*. Meanwhile the text was copied and typed in preparation for publication. Many separate cantos and finally the whole of Part One appeared in print before Sri Aurobindo's passing in December 1950.

The chit-pad versions

The work on Parts Two and Three distinguishes the last period in the composition of *Savitri* from the preceding phase. But the continuing revision of Part One is no less significant. Before describing the sequence in which Sri Aurobindo took up the later books, it will be convenient to conclude the survey of the manuscripts of Part One.

We have seen that the two-column manuscript of 1944 is the last continuous version of Part One written out by Sri Aurobindo in his own hand. Yet an example of a column of that manuscript, reproduced in the previous instalment, revealed considerable differences from the final text. Most of the differences are due to work done

by Sri Aurobindo in the small note pads he typically used around 1946.

These chit-pads contain material for all three parts of *Savitri*. The manner in which passages for Books One and Two are often interspersed with passages for the later books, especially Books Six and Ten, suggests that Sri Aurobindo was working simultaneously on different parts of the poem.

Several of these small note-pads have remained intact. But sheets containing Sri Aurobindo's last handwritten versions of passages for Part One were torn out of the pads and pinned to the two-column manuscript. These sheets with new or rewritten matter replaced much of the 1944 version of Book One and were inserted at many points throughout Book Two.

Dictated revision

In a letter to Dilip Kumar Roy on 17 February 1945, Sri Aurobindo wrote about the condition of his eyes:

I had your letter read to my by Nirod—it would have been physically impossible for me to go through it myself, my eyes were too bad.. I have been suffering for some time from defective eyesight due to overstrain and chronic attacks on the eyes—especially in sleep. . I can write though I can't easily read what I have written and can't revise.. I hope this letter is not a jumble of mistakes or even more illegible than usual. I have tried to write as large and fair as was possible for me.

Eight days later, Sri Aurobindo observed in a dictated letter:

I may say that I see no reason for alarm or apprehension about my eyesight, it has happened before and I was able to recover even getting a better reading eyesight than before. These things are for me a question of the working of the Yogic force.

Nevertheless, there was no permanent improvement. Sri Aurobindo's handwriting from this time onwards visibly reflects his impaired eyesight. From 1945 to 1947 he continued to write, but his way of working on *Savitri* was determined by the situation he had described to Dilip: "I can write though I can't easily read what I have written and can't revise." He had his lines read to him—though, if necessary, he could sometimes read them with a magnifying glass—and he dictated the revision. After 1947, he stopped writing in his own hand altogether and worked entirely by dictation.

In the manuscripts of *Savitri*, therefore, Sri Aurobindo's handwriting is often mixed with the quite different and easily distinguishable writing of his scribe, Nirodbaran. As an example, we may take a page of the final manuscript of the opening section of Book One, Canto Five. This will complete the discussion of the

development of that section, begun in the last instalment with facsimiles of the 1942 and 1944 manuscripts.

In the two-column manuscript of 1944, we have seen these lines.

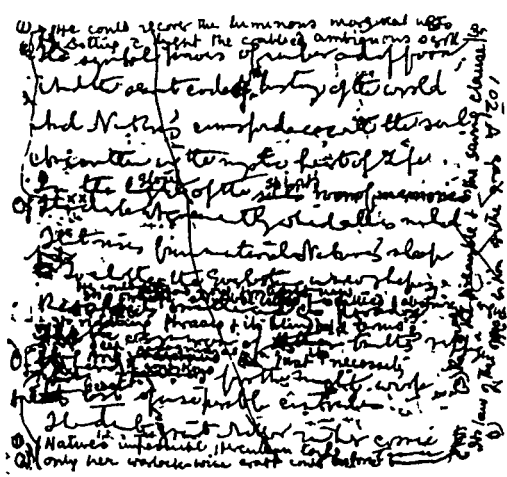
Opened was the Book of Being's index page,
 Perused the record graphs of the cosmic scribe;
 He read the original ukase held back
 In the locked archives of the spirit's crypt...

In one of the small note-pads mentioned above, Sri Aurobindo drafted a greatly expanded version of this passage. The first two lines grew into an eight-line sentence

There in a hidden chamber closed and mute
 Are kept the tables of the sacred Law,
 And there the record graphs of the cosmic scribe,
 And there the Book of Being's index page,
 And the text and glossary of the Vedic Truth
 And the long unpublished history of the world
 And Nature's correspondence with the soul
 Are written in the mystic heart of Life.

But this was only the beginning of the elaboration of the literary imagery suggested briefly in the 1944 version. In the same draft, some twenty more lines intervene before the "original ukase" in the "locked archives"

In the next version, Sri Aurobindo enlarged the passage further in his own hand, then added the finishing touches by dictation. Here is a facsimile of a page of this manuscript:



If this calls to mind the “crabbed ambiguous scroll” with its “luminous marginal notes” described in the top margin of the passage itself, the task of copying this page and hundreds more, often less legible than this, at the pace needed to keep up with Sri Aurobindo’s revision, may seem comparable to the “impossible Herculean toil” mentioned at the bottom of the page. We will see that Nirod did this work remarkably well, but with occasional slips which show him to be a human instrument, not an incarnation of the “omniscient Scribe” who appears later in this canto. This human element was to have an effect on some details of the form in which *Savitri* was published.

Of the twenty-three lines crowded on this small page, thirteen were written by Sri Aurobindo in his own hand. Disregarding dictated additions and alterations, they may be transcribed:

The symbol powers of number and of form,
 And the secret coded history of the world
 And Nature’s correspondence with the soul
 Are written in the mystic heart of Life.
 In the light of the soul’s room of memories
 The dark Agreement by which all is ruled
 That rises from material Nature’s sleep
 To clothe the Everlasting in new shapes,
 Revealed its oracle and its paradox
 And the oxymoron of their truth’s repliques,
 Its hard provisos for the mighty work,
 Its list of inseparable contraries.
 The dumb great Mother in her cosmic trance. ..

The revised text reads as follows, printing dictated words and lines in italics to show the changes:

The symbol powers of number and of form,
 And the secret *code of the* history of the world
 And Nature’s correspondence with the soul
 Are written in the mystic heart of Life.
 In the *glow of the spirit’s* room of memories
He could recover the luminous marginal notes
Dotting with light the crabbed ambiguous scroll
Rescue the preamble and the saving clause
 Of the dark Agreement by which all is ruled
 That rises from material Nature’s sleep
 To clothe the Everlasting in new shapes.
He could reread now and interpret new

*Its strange symbol letters, scattered abstruse signs,
 Resolve its oracle and its paradox
 Its riddling phrases and its blindfold terms,
 The deep oxymoron of its truth's repliques,
 And recognise as a just necessity
 Its hard conditions for the mighty work
 Nature's impossible Herculean toil,
 Only her warlock-wise craft could enforce
 Its law of the opposition of the gods
 And list of inseparable contraries.
 The dumb great Mother in her cosmic trance....*

The scribe made a fair copy of this on both sides of a similar small sheet, cancelling the original when he had done so. Both sheets were attached, with others containing the preceding and following passages, to the corresponding page of the two-column manuscript of Book One, Canto Five, which they replaced

The fair copy was an almost exact transcript of the revised text. A significant discrepancy is found in the third line from the bottom, where the scribe omitted "the" before "opposition" when he copied "Its law of the opposition of the gods" The scribe did not supply missing punctuation while copying, but left it to be added by Sri Aurobindo in the next stage of revision.

One serious error in the fair copy was not a copying mistake, but a mishearing marked on the manuscript itself. When the scribe read the original lines, he evidently had trouble reading "list" in the second line from the bottom of the page in Sri Aurobindo's handwriting.

Its list of inseparable contraries.

The scribe underlined the second word and must have asked Sri Aurobindo about it. Mishearing the vowel, he wrote "least" in his own hand above Sri Aurobindo's word. He did not cancel the original word, which was assumed to be the same. He copied the line with "least" (and with "Its" changed to "And", as dictated by Sri Aurobindo):

And least of inseparable contraries

Fortunately, the mistake was detected at the next stage and the wrong word never came to be printed, as sometimes happened. For example, the scribe evidently misheard "weeks" as "wicks", due to a similar confusion of long and short vowels, in the description of the monsoon near the beginning of Book Four. As a result, the first two editions of *Savitri* carried this puzzling line:

None saw through dank drenched wicks the dungeon sun.

Only in 1970 was “wicks” emended and the line printed in its present form:

None saw through dank drenched weeks the dungeon sun

The books of Part One were copied into a large ledger from the final manuscript, which consisted of the two-column version with attached chit-pad sheets, revised by dictation. The scribe copied the above passage of Book One, Canto Five, from the fair copy he had already made.

Sri Aurobindo’s light revision of the passage as it appeared in the ledger consisted mostly of supplying essential punctuation omitted at the time of dictating new lines. He also joined “wise” and “craft” in the expression “warlock-wisecraft” (the hyphen was dropped by mistake in the typed copy) and he corrected “least” to “list”. He changed “And” before “list” back to “Its”, the word he had originally written.

This was his last change in the wording of this passage. But elsewhere in the first three books, the copy in the ledger was revised far more significantly. There were to be several more stages in the revision of Part One as a whole. Many passages underwent substantial change when Sri Aurobindo revised the typescripts, proofs and printed fascicles of the cantos of Part One, simultaneously or alternately with his formidable task of completing on a corresponding scale the long-neglected books forming the rest of *Savitri*.

Note on the facsimile

The facsimile in this instalment shows the actual size of the small manuscript page. The three facsimiles in the previous instalment were reduced to fit the page size of *Mother India*. The number “102A”, seen near the top of the right margin in the present facsimile, was put in pencil by the Archives for the sake of identification, as were the numbers “27” and “94” on the pages shown in the first two facsimiles in the previous instalment. All other markings seen in the facsimiles are Sri Aurobindo’s or, where there is dictated revision, Nirod’s.

In the facsimile in this issue, Sri Aurobindo’s “3” in the upper right corner was written over by the word “notes” in a dictated line. Nirod wrote and underlined another “3” in his own hand. This is the third such page in Book One, Canto Five; “102” is the page number of this chitpad sheet when all such sheets belonging to the final version are counted from the beginning of Book One.

(To be continued)

INVOCATION TO THE YET-UNRISEN SUN*

Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* — Keynote for a New Millennium

GOOD evening, ladies and gentlemen It is a great honour for me to be asked to speak to you this evening, at such a worthy institution, and in memory of such a distinguished figure as Professor Nikam. I know that far more eminent speakers than myself have given this memorial lecture in the past, such as Professor Manoj Das, Dr. Mangesh V. Nadkarni, and Sraddhalu Ranade, and I cannot pretend to be worthy to follow in their footsteps—so perhaps I should say a few words about my background, to justify my presence here before you this evening

As you mentioned, sir, I studied English Language and Literature. But some time after that, feeling very deeply discouraged at the state of the world and full of longing that there should be real social change, apparently “by chance”...these things seem to happen by chance, but it was not at all by chance...one Sunday afternoon in April 1969 I came to know the name and something of the teachings of Sri Aurobindo I was in London at the time. And what I heard that afternoon seemed to me to open a door, so that I didn't have to be a rebel any more, I didn't any more have to run around the world wondering what on earth to do about all the dreadful things that I saw. I felt that a path had opened up for me, and that if I would follow it faithfully I would be enabled to do everything possible towards the fulfilment of my aims. And again, apparently “by chance”, circumstances brought me to Auroville, which was in its very beginning stages in those days. As you know, Auroville was founded by the Mother in February 1968, so when I came there in November 1970 it was still quite a pioneering venture, depending very much on the Presence and Guidance of the Mother And she had founded that international township project as a place where people from all cultures and backgrounds who wished for a really radical change in the world, could come to work for that change, according to the ideals and vision of Sri Aurobindo. The Mother gave me work in education, and that is the field I have been involved in ever since. Recently our project of Savitri Bhavan has come up, with the aspiration that there should be in Auroville a place that really breathes the atmosphere of Savitri...which, as I hope to show this evening, is far more than just the title of a book

The title chosen for tonight's talk refers to the new millennium. We are now less than two months away from a date that seems to carry so much significance, such a load of both hopes and anxieties. 1st January 2000—the beginning of a new period of one thousand years. Speaking personally, I can say that I have had a sense of anticipation about this day from my very childhood. I have a clear remembrance of myself, at the age of about 8 or 9, realising that this significant date lay in the foreseeable future, and calculating how old I would be when it came and wondering

* Professor N A Nikam Memorial Lecture at the Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore on Tuesday, November 2, 1999

whether I would live to see it, and what the world would look like in the year 2000. Surely some of you must also have experienced that sense of anticipation.

Of course this date is purely conventional. If we were using another calendar, starting from another historical point, we would not be approaching the year 2000 at all, but the year 1480, or 5653, for example. As it is, we are supposed to be counting from the birth of Christ—an event now believed to have happened 6 or 7 years earlier or later. So this date is really arbitrary. But our teacher the Mother has told us that although these things may be conventional, when a convention is shared by a large enough number of people it does have real power and significance—for the real significances are always psychological. They have far more to do with inner realities than with mere material ‘facts’. So the fact that a very large proportion of the world population is looking forward to the start of a new millennium, a new thousand-year period in the history of mankind, creates the climate and possibility for real change.

And however we look at it—whether our nature and circumstances lead us to look forward to this turning-point, and all it brings, with hope or with deep concern... most probably a mixture of the two—any sensitive thinking person looking at the present state of the world cannot help but feel the need for a very great change. Unless there is really radical change, it does not seem as if we can look forward to another 1000 years of existence for the human race, or even the earth. This perception has been growing among informed people, and gradually it is becoming more and more clear that this change will have to be, essentially, primarily, a psychological one. All the other changes—the social, political, economic and environmental changes the world needs so urgently for every human being to have the possibility to live a truly human life—are no longer dependent on technological change, or the discovery of new material resources. The resources, the technologies are there to ensure a poverty-free life for everyone on this planet—but it seems as if we are all locked into old outdated patterns of attitude and behaviour which go on perpetuating old problems, or replicating them even if temporary remedies get implemented. And yet the change required in human psychology seems so radical, so profound and widespread, that we have difficulty in believing that it is possible. How could a change of such magnitude come about? What is going to help us—all of us human beings—to change all the old habits of perception, of thought, of behaviour, that keep the world going the way it is going?

In *Savitri* Sri Aurobindo gives us his prophecy. In fact there are several prophetic passages in different contexts, but I would like to read out to you just one of them. It occurs on page 55:

Thus will the masked Transcendent mount his throne
When darkness deepens strangling the earth's breast
And man's corporeal mind is the only lamp,
As a thief's in the night shall be the covert tread
Of one who steps unseen into his house

A Voice ill-heard shall speak, the soul obey,
 A power into mind's inner chamber steal,
 A charm and sweetness open life's closed doors
 And beauty conquer the resisting world,
 The truth-light capture Nature by surprise,
 A stealth of God compel the heart to bliss
 And earth grow unexpectedly divine.

That charm, that sweetness, that beauty that have the power to overcome all the resistances of our nature, so that everything can suddenly change, is, I believe, the power of Savitri.

How can I say such a thing? Isn't Savitri just a legendary figure, or a fictional character? Let me read what Sri Aurobindo himself has written in his "Author's Note" to his poem.

The tale of Satyavan and Savitri is recited in the Mahabharata as a story of conjugal love conquering death. But this legend is, as shown by many features of the human tale, one of the many symbolic myths of the Vedic cycle.

I am sure all of you must be familiar with the traditional legend. But, as Sri Aurobindo points out here, it has a symbolic content, and that is what he is most concerned to bring out in his own version. You know perhaps that one of the many fields on which Sri Aurobindo has cast new light is that of Vedic studies. He has gone against all the trends of European-inspired scholarship and criticism, to say that the Vedas are not the naturalistic hymns of an animistic worshipping people, but really the expression of a profound esoteric psychological knowledge. That knowledge was expressed in a way that would have an outward meaning for people who were not yet ready to grasp the inner significance: there is always an inner and an outer significance. So too the tale of Savitri, that charming and even moving legend, has also a deep symbolic meaning:

Satyavan is the soul carrying the divine truth of being within itself but descended into the grip of death and ignorance.

Satyavan: the name means 'One who possesses Truth'—but he has descended, he is in the grip, the control of all the forces of this world of death and ignorance.

Savitri is the Divine Word, daughter of the Sun, goddess of the supreme Truth who comes down and is born to save...

But, says Sri Aurobindo.

Still this is not a mere allegory, the characters are not personified qualities, but incarnations or emanations of living and conscious Forces with whom we can enter into concrete touch and they take human bodies in order to help man and show him the way from his mortal state to a divine consciousness and immortal life.

So I think I'm not unjustified in saying that there is a being, a force, whom we can name Savitri. And by looking a little bit at her name, and at what Sri Aurobindo says about her in the poem, I'd like to bring out something about the qualities of that being, and how she can help us to change.

My attention was attracted recently to a few lines in Book Four, Canto 2, which refer to Savitri's name. They come at the point in the story where Sri Aurobindo is telling how, after her father Aswapati has done a tremendous tapasya, as a result Savitri has been born and she is growing up in his kingdom. And there only her immediate circle, the very few people in the palace know about her.

Earth nursed, unconscious still, the inhabiting flame...

Savitri has come as an emanation of the Supreme Mother. She is there like a flame, inhabiting the heart of the earth, bringing with her all kinds of wonderful qualities, but nobody knows about her yet. Nevertheless:

A growing sense of something new and rare
And beautiful stole across the heart of Time
Then a faint whisper of her touched the soil...
The eye of the great world discovered her,
And wonder lifted up its bardic voice.

People began to spread her name abroad. And then come these three lines:

A key to a Light still kept in being's core,
The sun-word of an ancient mystery's sense,
Her name ran murmuring on the lips of men...

These lines refer to the symbolic sense of Savitri's name. The name 'Savitri' in itself is a mantra, a key to a light that is still kept secret in the dark cave of being, waiting for its hour to emerge. Sri Aurobindo refers to Savitri's name as "sun-word", for Savitri is "the Divine Word, daughter of the Sun", the power of inspired and creative speech which can bring the illumination of the supreme Truth. This sun-word belongs to or carries the meaning of "an ancient mystery"—a body of ancient esoteric knowledge that is only accessible to initiates.

As I mentioned a moment ago, in his writings about the Vedas, Sri Aurobindo

has shown how the images in those ancient hymns and slokas always had a dual significance: an outer meaning that was accessible to the surface understanding, and an inner, esoteric and psychological sense which revealed itself to the vision of an inner knowledge and experience. In this symbology the Sun represents the full light of Divine Consciousness.

(To be concluded)

SHRADDHAVAN

THE CRAVING

I AM not content with a single draught
 From the fountain of your love;
 I long for the eternal springs
 To slake my parching thirst.

My burning hunger increases still
 With the little bites I take.
 Let me in freely, into your orchard
 With sweet and luscious fruits

I do not bother to pick up
 The scattered grams of gold.
 I must have the master-key
 To the house where the soul's treasures are.

My spirit's craving is not quenched
 By the random noise you play.
 Let celestial music flow, for ever
 To bathe my soul in its joy

M L THANGAPPA

SRI AUROBINDO: INSIDE, OUTSIDE, UPSIDE DOWN*

WHEN I came to San Francisco twenty years ago I imagined my future to be in the university, as a teacher of Sanskrit or perhaps Indian religion. But Sri Aurobindo has ruined me for scholastic work. Despite the rigorous logic of his *Life Divine*, his is not a study; it is a call to action. As the Mother said, he represents an action direct from the Supreme. His Shakti may manifest in words and mental knowledge, but it is not based on thought nor does it find its highest pinnacle there.

“Inside, Outside, Upside Down,” may sound like a strange topic on Sri Aurobindo’s birthday. But through these three directions we will explore Sri Aurobindo and his Yoga. All Yoga starts on the inside, with contemplation and discovery. It then moves outside, towards action. And the culmination of yoga is a reversal, a turning upside-down of fundamental perceptions—inside, outside, upside-down.

Recently someone posed a question on the e-mail list where the integral Yoga is discussed. An acquaintance was asked: “Who is the Mother? What does she mean to you?” He didn’t know how to answer. Subjects close to our heart are often the most difficult to explain. A year ago I lay next to my father on a bed; he had become disabled through Parkinson’s disease. We were discussing what Sri Aurobindo means to me. I wanted to say that I have two fathers, he who brought me to adulthood, and Sri Aurobindo who was taking me beyond the human. But how do you say that to your own father?

What do Sri Aurobindo and the Mother mean to you who are in this Yoga? No doubt the experience each of you have differs widely, even radically. But we recognise each other as a family, we who have devoted ourselves to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, who see the Yoga as the one true goal in life. This recognition is not a set of beliefs, nor is there any external measure; rather, one has to spend time with another person, see the light in the eyes, the link in the heart.

Sri Aurobindo wrote to a biographer: “. . .neither you nor anyone else knows anything at all of my life; it has not been on the surface for men to see.”¹ If we are to meet him, we have to go inside, turn inward.

During the next hour let us do just that, pause, contemplate greatness, and examine our relationship with Sri Aurobindo.

You will have to excuse me if I sound like a bhakta, but there are some topics to which normal emotions do not apply. Whatever truth is in me is due to Sri Aurobindo’s influence. The last twenty years of my life have been spent with Sri Aurobindo at my side, day after day, year after year, in a struggle to rise to his presence, and at every moment I feel his weight pressing down on me. He has guided my body along dark mountain trails, steadied my emotions in the face of physical danger, and filled my being with joy in the midst of great suffering.

How do we meet Sri Aurobindo? For some, he comes in a dream. For others, he

* A Talk given at the Cultural Integration Fellowship, San Francisco on 15 August 1999

shows himself in visions. For many, his influence is more universal—light in the mind, bliss in the heart, peace in the being. But even if you do not have these experiences, I would say to you that there is a lifetime's education, and a whole universe to explore, by simply reading his books at the level of the mind alone.

Would you like to meet Sri Aurobindo? Read him out loud. Whether you believe in or feel anything other than the ideas in Sri Aurobindo's books, a perfectly wonderful way to meet the man is to read him into the air, using your own voice. Read to yourself, or to a friend, or to a spouse. Talk or be silent. Read a sentence or a chapter, stop to ponder, stop to laugh at the sheer truth of it. Read him as if the words were yours—make his thoughts and his reality yours. Then Sri Aurobindo will enter your life.

Thomas Carlyle wrote, "If a book comes from the heart, it will contrive to reach other hearts."² Sri Aurobindo's words come from places far beyond the heart—and are capable of reaching those places within us as well. Do not become discouraged if some of his writings, such as *Savitri*, are difficult or even impossible to read at first. I myself could not read *Savitri* for years; it was as mysterious as an Egyptian scroll. Once Sri Aurobindo awakens those hidden places, your life will be changed for ever.

His works encompass a stunningly wide range. If you are an activist, read the *Bande Mataram* for some fiery political rhetoric, then *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity* for the general picture. If philosophy is your interest, read *The Life Divine* with its finely textured reasoning. If you would like exposition of traditional Indian texts, read *Essays on the Gita* which tracks the original virtually shloka by shloka through the entire text.

But, if you are called to Yoga, as I suspect most of us are, because of its clarion call for experience and realisation, then a special pleasure awaits you. Sri Aurobindo wrote four books that collectively hold more Yogic knowledge than the world is likely to see for some time to come.

First is *The Synthesis of Yoga*. I confess to having an almost inordinate love of this book, having read it perhaps a dozen times. The *Synthesis* was my introduction to Sri Aurobindo and, at a time when I imagined I knew the basics of Indian spirituality, it put a real scare into me. Even on the first page you realise that everything you have read before is but a guess, an intimation, whereas here is truth, experienced directly, stated in perfect wholeness. In *The Synthesis of Yoga* you meet a teacher who can place every aspect of the spiritual life into perspective, page after page, chapter after chapter. Our small study group in Sacramento reads the *Synthesis* aloud, and often we stop after a paragraph just to exclaim at the reality and force that flows through the words.

Second is *Letters on Yoga*. Here are excerpted thousands of details about the actual working out of Yoga in the lives of individuals. If you are wondering about visions, or what advice a guru would give to someone struggling with sexual impulses, it's all here, from the same man who could present the global overview of the *Synthesis*.

Third, if you can open your mind, is *Savitri*. Here you must read with a different consciousness; the words have to flow into you rather than being read. *Savitri* is a vision, not an argument; it is truth revealed and manifested, not explained. *Savitri*, with its sweeping visions and words of power, transcends the limits of the rational mind. Reading *Savitri* is rightfully said to be a complete sadhana unto itself. One summer, having nothing but time and solitude on my hands, I read through the entire epic aloud. Though it sounds impossible, such a reading takes only about forty hours and, if you do it, I guarantee you that it will reverberate within you for the rest of your life.

Lastly, for the person who has read everything, who is familiar with the whole sweep and range of spiritual writings, of East and West, who has mastered Sanskrit, who knows Sri Aurobindo's philosophy backwards and forwards, read his *Record of Yoga*. Here you meet a side of the man shown nowhere else, the practising Yogi. The *Record*, Sri Aurobindo's journal of his own practice, is almost blindingly dense. Here is a typical entry.

First two *chatustayas* attacked and momentarily touched. Sraddha farther shaken especially in Saundaryam and Utthapana of the Sharira and consequently in Karmachatustaya.

The *Record* is organised by a structure called *sapta chatustaya*, seven groups of four. The first *chatustaya* is *shanti* or *samata*: peace, equanimity. Equality is emphasised throughout Sri Aurobindo's writings as the first necessity, as the rock on which all else stands. The second *chatustaya* is *shakti*, right power of the instruments. The third is *vijnana*, or Supermind. What could possibly remain beyond attainment of the Supermind? Perfection of the body, the fullness of universal Brahman consciousness, universal action, and complete Yogic perfection, *siddhi*. The *Record* shows the daily practical workings among these superhuman levels, put in a simple and straightforward style.

Ashley Montagu, a true genius of our time, wrote: "All reality is relationship, and all relationships are enlarged and enriched in proportion to the sensitivity with which they are perceived and lived." Have you not known a friend with whom you forged a special bond, shared the trivialities of daily life? The touch of truth often comes unexpectedly through a person, an example, a word spoken or an act observed. Although we may think of Yoga as a solitary practice, it is not limited to those half-hours seated in lotus-pose on the floor. Yoga also develops in the full press of life, in the spark of soul to soul. We have the power to lift each other at every moment.

In my early days as a nurse, when every moment seemed like a crisis, our unit had a young doctor with an air of calmness so complete that he seemed to move and talk in slow motion, even when all around him were losing their heads. His presence was palpable. Later I studied with a music teacher who could take you in any condition, whether a state of complete ineptitude or sublime mastery, and inspire you

to move to the next level. Even a brief nearness reshapes our lives.

In such relationships, which can last a lifetime, you open up to new possibilities, feel a joy in the goodness, the truth of another person. Life is enriched, enlarged. Imagine that sense of enlargement magnified a thousandfold—close your eyes and feel the silent peace of a mountain at dawn, the heart-wrenching beauty of a desert sunset—you have begun to feel the companion that is Sri Aurobindo. A feeling such as Savitri had on seeing Satyavan for the first time:

A mystic tumult from her depths arose;
 Haled, smitten erect like one who dreamed at ease,
 Life ran to gaze from every gate of sense:
 Thoughts indistinct and glad in moon-must heavens,
 Feelings as when a universe takes birth,
 Swept through the turmoil of her bosom's space
 Invaded by a swarm of golden gods:
 Arising to a hymn of wonder's priests
 Her soul flung wide its doors to this new sun.
 An alchemy worked, the transmutation came;
 The missioned face had wrought the Master's spell.
 In the nameless light of two approaching eyes
 A swift and fated turning of her days
 Appeared and stretched to the gleam of unknown worlds.
 Then trembling with the mystic shock her heart
 Moved in her breast and cried out like a bird
 Who hears his mate upon a neighbouring bough³

When a companion lives in realms which we cannot even imagine, when he has journeyed on roads beyond our reckoning, he becomes a teacher or a guru. Speaking of the guru, in *The Synthesis of Yoga* Sri Aurobindo writes: "This inner Guide is often veiled at first by the very intensity of our personal effort and by the ego's preoccupation with itself and its aims."⁴ The answers to our questions depend on us, our openness to Sri Aurobindo's truth will vary, depending on our history.

As a young man I did not believe that a personal relationship could be a vehicle for higher truth. My yoga had been interior, pursued in an aspiration for peace or silence. When I met my future wife Marta, however, a universe of possibilities began to unfold, and I realised that one can transcend normal relationships, that in the midst of living there can be a sharing of oneness and joy between two people. As Mary Shelley said, harmony is the soul of our companionship.

I mention this not only as a testament to greater things, but also as a reminder that all good things are based on an inner connection, not the incidentals of birth or belief. Sri Aurobindo writes:

The soul can recognise its answering soul
 Across dividing Time and, on Life's roads
 Absorbed wrapped traveller, turning it recovers
 Familiar splendours in an unknown face
 And touched by the warning finger of swift love
 It thrills again to an immortal joy
 Wearing a mortal body for delight.
 There is a Power within that knows beyond
 Our knowings, we are greater than our thoughts,
 And sometimes earth unveils that vision here
 To live, to love are signs of infinite things,
 Love is a glory from eternity's spheres.⁵

SRI Aurobindo can be that answering soul. To meet him you must become him, or at least emulate his infinite qualities. Not by attempting to write another *Savitri*, or a commentary on the Gita, but by embodying his essential characteristics. For if his life was—~~is~~—lived on the interior rather than the exterior, that is where Sri Aurobindo can be found.

How does one emulate Sri Aurobindo? By developing an unqualified silence, a wide universality of thought, a mind that dispassionately considers all things, that hangs on to no fixed opinions. By having a flexibility of consciousness, an openness to higher things, a plasticity to higher forces. By inculcating a depth of sincerity, a fidelity to truth in all its richness. Above all, by surrendering to the universal and divine, a willingness to be guided by the Mother, the universal Shakti.

(To be concluded)

DAVID HUTCHINSON

References

- 1 Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself*, SABCL, Vol 26 front matter
- 2 Thomas Carlyle, in *The Delights of Reading*, edited by Otto L. Bettmann, p 79
- 3 *Savitri* pp 395-96
- 4 *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p 56
- 5 *Savitri* p 397

The Mother deals with each one in a different way, according to their need and their nature, not according to any fixed mental rule. It would be absurd for her to do the same thing with everybody as if all were machines which had to be touched and handled in the same way.

31-10-1935

SRI AUROBINDO
On the Mother, SABCL, Vol. 25, p. 300

JAYANTILAL-DA: A LIFE FULFILLED IN THE DIVINE

Hearts can feel so many things
that words can never say,
And thoughts that mean
the most of all,
Are those we can't convey

IN his tribute to Nolini-da Jayantilal-da wrote: ‘‘Nolini never projected himself as a thinker, a writer, a worker or a sadhak. He lived unobtrusively like a white shadow of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. He never displayed any restlessness of ambition. Personality, ambition, self-importance, self-assertion of an individual were lost in his identity with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.’’ These words could very well apply to Jayantilal-da himself.

Anybody coming into contact with Jayantilal-da would not have failed to notice his utter simplicity, gentleness, humility and courtesy. In fact he was their very embodiment. However, the depth of the inner man is rarely glimpsed by others: given to few words as he was, he never liked to talk about himself.

By qualification and training he was an artist—and what an exquisite and sublime artist! If only he had exhibited his works of art to the general public, as many others did, there is no doubt he would have been acclaimed as one among the great. There is an indescribable quality in them, stirring the very soul deep within. No wonder that even Jayantilal-da’s own renowned teacher of art, Nandalal Bose, had a word of spontaneous praise for his erstwhile student!

In his initial years in the Ashram, Jayantilal-da mainly engaged himself in giving expression to his artistic talents by way of numerous sketches of the landscape of Pondicherry and its suburbs which he presented to the Mother. Slowly the scope of his work and activities widened when the Mother started entrusting him tasks unconnected with art. He proved his mettle in successfully handling them, however difficult or complicated they might be. Thus, throughout his life he proved to be a sure and efficient trouble-shooter for the Ashram. In the course of many years, Jayantilal-da had occasion to meet top political leaders of the country for the sake of the Ashram. He already had contacts with such political figures as Achyut Patwardhan, Ashok Mehta, C Subramanyam, *et al*.

Jayantilal-da spent a number of years working in the Ashram Press. There he mastered the intricacies of printing technology and book design. In the latter, his artistic abilities played a significant part. The infinite care and excellence with which he produced the 30-volume set of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library in the early 70s have been appreciated by one and all. Equally well-produced have been the 17 volumes of the Mother’s Collected Works.

Jayantilal-da also played a major role in setting up of the All India Press. This project has proved its worth by ranking among the much sought-after presses in India.

Jayantilal-da was held by the staff of the All India Press in great esteem. To give an example of how close they felt towards him: when in 1994 he suffered a heart-attack and was under intensive care for ten days, one of the employees of the All India Press not only arranged special worship in a local temple for the speedy recovery of Jayantilal-da, but he also vowed to perform *anga-pradakshina* (circumambulating the deity by rolling round) at the Palani temple as his thanksgiving for Jayantilal-da's recovery. He subsequently duly fulfilled this vow and brought prasada from the temple to Jayantilal-da.

In the beginning of the 70s a need was felt to have a special department to look after the manuscripts of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It was Jayantilal-da to whom the Mother entrusted the responsibility. That is how the Archives and Research Library came into being. Over the years it has grown into a fine set-up with a cold-storage facility for storing all the primary manuscripts, records and photographs, an editorial section equipped with computers and table-top printers, a reprography section, a photography unit, a library stocking all the works of and on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and a Conservation Laboratory for undertaking repairs and upkeep of archival material. The Archives was also involved in attempts to restore, with the help of INTACH, some of the Mother's paintings maintained in the Ashram's Art Gallery. Following the discovery in 1971 of Sri Aurobindo's until then unknown writings in a few almirahs in Alipore Jail, the Ashram took possession of these writings with the permission of the Calcutta High Court. These were carefully sorted out, classified, collated and micro-filmed, but by then the Birth Centenary Library had already been published. The material contained in these writings was therefore published over a period of 18 years, from 1977 to 1994, in the journal *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*. In 1991 all the records of the famous Alipore Bomb Trial maintained in the Alipore Courts were micro-filmed with the permission of the Calcutta High Court. Again, in 1997, one more almirah containing unknown writings of Sri Aurobindo was accidentally discovered. These writings were micro-filmed with the assistance of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, after obtaining the permission of the Calcutta High Court.

A unique feature of the set-up of the Archives and Research Library is the atmosphere of total freedom in which the staff works. Jayantilal-da never believed in imposing any kind of external discipline on the members of his staff. By his example, encompassing love and solicitude, Jayantilal-da induced among the members a strong sense of belonging to an extended family.

With his deep interest in art and architecture it was not surprising that he became a Foundation Member of INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage); he also took on himself the role of Convenor of the Pondicherry Chapter of INTACH. Thus he was instrumental in laying the foundations of INTACH's activities in Pondicherry. The highlight of his tenure as the Convenor of the local Chapter was the Workshop on the Architectural Heritage of Pondicherry that he organised for final year architectural students of the Universities in South India. The album of architectural drawings and streetscapes that the participants at the Workshop brought out

will be cherished by all those who love the French style of architecture in Pondicherry; unfortunately it is slowly becoming extinct.

From August 1992 to March 1993 a young Ukrainian, Alexey Ksendziouk, was working in the Archives. He translated selected texts from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother into Russian. At the instance of Jayantilal-da he started working on the idea of bringing out a periodical in Russian dealing with integral Yoga. It was named *Sadhana* and was intended to be a quarterly, with the first issue scheduled for release in February 1993. Alexey finalised the text and layout of the first three issues during his stay in the Ashram. The first issue was sent to Jayantilal-da's friend, Michael Bonke in Germany, who managed to get 10,000 copies of it printed and sent to Russia for distribution. In the meanwhile, Alexey went back to the Ukraine promising to continue working on his translations of the Ashram's books and also on the journal. The circulation of the first issue of *Sadhana* proved to be an unqualified success and had a tremendous impact on the Russians and also on some others in countries like Germany and Finland. This is evident from the spate of letters coming to the Archives. Extracts from these letters were published serially in *Mother India*, from January to July 1998.

In October 1994 Michael Bonke set up a Centre called *Aditi* in St Petersburg for authentic translation into Russian of the Ashram's books and for their publication and distribution, and also for the sale of original Ashram publications. To date this Centre has brought out translations of several works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, keeping the price comparatively low. The seed that was sown by Jayantilal-da has thus grown into a very impressive and flourishing tree.

With his abiding interest in and love of art, Jayantilal-da had been producing year after year exquisitely designed diaries for the Ashram. He would patiently spend several hours daily, for two to three months each year, choosing the illustrations, suitable quotations from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and working on the layout and design of the jacket. Devotees and admirers invariably treasured the diaries; some even considered it sacrilegious to write any of their personal notes in them. The last such diary produced was for the year 1999 and, fittingly, the illustrations in it are reproductions of selected paintings of renowned Ashram artists like Krishnalal, Sanjiban-da, Anil Kumar and Jayantilal-da himself. Jayantilal-da worked on this diary during September-November 1998 even when his physical condition was under severe strain.

One of Jayantilal-da's chief characteristics was the complete absence of any trace of ego. He lived never for himself but for others. As the scope of work in the Archives expanded, the staff also increased. But in the matter of space and the number of chairs needed a kind of musical chairs system operated in the office. Staggered timings were maintained by some of the members of the staff, yet the space constraint was becoming quite severe. Jayantilal-da's response to this situation, typical of him, was to surrender his own bedroom for the office. He moved into a cubby-hole of a dressing room which already housed a cupboard, a chest of drawers and a wooden bookshelf. It took quite a bit of persuasion by his staff to retain his bed where

it was. All this amounted to total loss of privacy for Jayantilal-da, but it never bothered him. His was after all an open house for anybody, any time of the day.

Anybody who came into close contact with Jayantilal-da was charmed by the selfless love he poured out. He was indeed the very embodiment of selfless and universal love.

He could never refuse any help sought from him by anybody, even if it meant much trouble for himself. And there never was any dearth of people seeking his help. Thus what he has done for ever so many people is legend.

Jayantilal-da was a man of great practical vision and silent dynamism. However, in the implementation of his various ideas, initiatives and projects, he never imposed his will on others, rather he depended entirely on their willing participation and co-operation.

Jayantilal-da was deeply steeped in the Aurobindonian literature and could readily say from which volume a given passage was taken. His interests were, however, wide and vastly varied. Apart from pure art and things artistic, he took keen interest in politics, sports and all practical aspects of life and living. Poor eyesight (his left eye, operated on for removal of cataract in the 70s, had become practically useless and the right eye, operated on in 1993, was only half useful) did not deter him from his avid reading. With the help of a magnifying glass, he read his daily newspaper, journals like *India Today* and any book that came into his hands.

For anyone born in the early part of this century, the fast-changing scenario of scientific developments, the present electronic age in which new inventions and obsolescence apparently go almost hand in hand, would have been practically impossible to keep track of. One would rather give up trying to understand things than delve deep into them. Not so Jayantilal-da. He not only understood practically everything about modern machines and methods used in the printing industry, but also took in his stride such scientific miracles as cloning. His thirst for knowledge was truly amazing.

Jayantilal-da never maintained a diary, nor did he jot down the many tasks he had in his mind, except when he had to go out of Pondicherry for any work of the Ashram. But he went about his work without any problem. It was indeed a wonder how he could contain so many things in his mind and attend to them one by one.

Every day in the morning Jayantilal-da would go to the Ashram Press—mostly taking a rickshaw—and, after his work there, would come back walking unless somebody gave him a lift. Whenever the work in hand demanded, he would go again in the afternoon the same way. After recovery from the heart-attack that he suffered in March 1994, the pace of his activities was necessarily reduced. He continued his daily visit to the Press, but covering the distance between the Press and the Archives by foot was done rarely.

(To be concluded)

B G PATTEGAR

A CONFRONTATION THAT ENDED WELL

AFTER the disturbances of February 1965 all Ashramites were, by the order of the Mother, to finish their dinner at the Dining Room and return to their respective places before nightfall.

One evening as I came out of the Dining Room and was heading towards the Ashram, two unknown young men accosted me in a rather challenging tone. "Are you an Ashramite? What is being done in the Ashram?"—asked one of them.

"How can I answer in a single word? And this is not the proper place to discuss such things," I quipped. He softened and now humbly asked: "Could you please give us some time? We are interested in this matter."

It seemed to me that they were students and the older one did most of the talking. Although normally I avoid such confrontations, I felt an urge within me to take up the challenge. While talking we proceeded towards the sea-beach, sat down and continued our discussions.

I told them in short under what circumstances Sri Aurobindo arrived in Pondicherry and ultimately how the Ashram was founded by the Mother.

They had heard the word "Superman". The older one asked: "How to become a superman?"

I replied: "To become a superman is not our object. It is a long process. Our immediate object is self-purification and self-perfection by getting rid of ego and desires."

He pursued further: "Why should one give up desires? They are the salt of life, they are necessary."

I replied: "So long as they are necessary for you, keep them, but if you want to become a superman with the desires of your lower nature intact you can succeed only in becoming a super-ego and not a superman."

At this the younger student broke into a laugh. The older one was a bit chastened.

I explained to them that ego and desires are at the root of all ills of mankind. In all fields of life it is these defects of human nature which thwart man's progress towards true supermanhood.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in their attempt to lift mankind out of this mire have themselves trod a new path, hitherto unknown to man, for the realisation and manifestation of the supreme Truth and opened that path for the whole of humanity not only for its liberation but for its total transformation. We in this Ashram are trying to follow this path to the best of our capacity. Our Ashram is not a factory for the production of supermen; it is a human laboratory where experiments are going on for the creation of a new and better humanity. We know that the path is extremely difficult and hazardous but we have deliberately taken to this path because we know in the very core of our being that this is the only thing worth attempting. Unlike people of other walks of life we do not crave for personal success but for the progress

of the totality by ourselves progressing. Unlike political and religious leaders we do not blame others but try to free ourselves from all blemishes.

They listened with rapt attention and thanked me heartily before we parted with handshakes and namaskars.

ABANI SINHA

TIME-SPIRIT

TIME spirit broods motionless even as a tree
 Regards wagons of life's train go by,
 Now the noisy rolling wheels in tandem,
 Now the vacuous stillness, profound, serene.
 The sun rises and sets; slow the moon climbs,
 And night with her starry banner comes.

Lazily the nebulous clouds agglomerate above
 And lazily below awaits the insatiate earth;
 Content with his simple devices a rustic poet sings:
 "O heavenly god, lean down from above,
 Lower thy golden pitcher, fill earth's cup with love."
 Thus pass unnumbered days; few fixities in an uncertain world!

HEMANT KAPOOR

THE ODYSSEY — AN ADAPTATION

(Continued from the issue of March 2000)

Scene 11

Demodocus. Thus the pride of Odysseus directed the wrath of Poseidon straight to the heart of Ithaca's king [*Poseidon appears with his trident and stirs up the ocean. The sailors go to the next island.*] Next they came to the island of Aeolus whom Cronion had given control of the winds. These he kept pent up in a cave and dispatched at his pleasure. Sometimes he released the gentlest of breezes only enough to lift the damp locks on a sailor's forehead. Regularly he pleased the merchants with his trade winds, and often he released the full power of gales, hurricanes and typhoons. Odysseus entered the brass wall surrounding the city and, after feasting, breathed life into the tales of Troy. Aeolus was swept up in the turmoil of battles, and thrilled to the deeds of the heroes, Achilles, Ajax, Hector, Paris and, of course, Odysseus himself. Then Aeolus saw the force of his nature and deemed him able to keep bridled the winds. He gathered them up in a bag made of ox-hide, leaving only the Zephyr to speed the men home. Odysseus kept the bag safely beside him, for if opened, the winds would drive them all back. He kept secret the wealth and held watch through the night and he sailed through the day. For nine days sleep could not touch him. On the tenth his will was rewarded, for the sight of Ithaca came into view. The sight of smoke rising from chimneys brought a sense of relief with the nearness of home. He gave up his struggle, and sank to the deck and slept like the dead. Yet too soon was his slumber, too soon his belief in the end of his troubles, for though Odysseus, the captain, was steady, those beneath him were not. They grumbled and sulked and thought themselves ill-used, for they'd come from the war with nothing at all. To return to their homes with only their lives saved seemed too little to offer their wives and their kin. What was in the bag that Odysseus guarded so jealously? Surely Aeolus had offered him riches and jewels. Was he alone to have glory and they to have nothing? Was this their reward for all that they'd done? Their arguments rang out as their swords had in Troya [*Elpenor tries to wake Odysseus, but is prevented by the others*], until one with a thrust cut open the bag. Then their arguments were drowned, engulfed in the whirlwinds and the ship spun around like a top. As Odysseus awoke and looked towards his homeland, Ithaca sank back like a dream after dawn. Back, back to the island and the guardian of the winds. When Aeolus saw what happened he refused to hear Odysseus's pleas. The gods must be angry, Odysseus must be their enemy to reverse the help Aeolus had given to them.

So onward they went with no wind to fill out their sails, and they rowed, completely becalmed in the sea. At last they arrived at an island whose lushness and beauty were more welcome than wind.

Scene 12

Odysseus: This island is enchanting. Such delicate scents waft through the air. Once again we must explore to gather provisions, but we must move with care. Eurylochus, you and I will divide the men in two groups, only one will venture within. [*The men fall into two groups behind them.*] We'll draw lots to see who will discover whether this beauty reflects or disguises the inhabitants herein
[*They draw lots. Eurylochus is to go*] Take care, Eurylochus. I hold your lives dear.

Eurylochus: I will be cautious [*They leave. Animals of all kinds come bounding up to them. At first the men are frightened. Then they see they are friendly.*]

Sailor: It's as if they expect a scrap from their master.

Sailor: It's strange. They almost seem to be pleading

Eurylochus: I would swear these eyes were of humans. [*Singing is heard within.*]

Sailor: It's the voice of a goddess!

Sailor: How gracefully she moves, as a tree sways in the wind.

Sailor: Ho! mistress, ho!
[*Only Eurylochus looks unsure and moves away, hiding.*]

Circe: What nature of creature calls at my door?

Sailor: We are soldiers, madam, sailing home from Troy

Circe: Soldiers? From Troy?

Sailor: We've been wandering the ocean, unable to reach home.

Sailor: We seek provisions to continue our journey.

Circe: Provisions? You would like food. Of course, come. In the palace of Circe, every man receives that which he desires. [*She waves a hand and food is given. The men are amazed, sit and start eating greedily Eurylochus alone waits outside watching. Soon she taps them with a wand and they turn into pigs.*]

Circe: There! Now you have reached the end of your wanderings. I have hastened your journey towards the ultimate fulfillment of your nature. [*She shoos them out. Eurylochus is horrified, and runs to tell Odysseus.*]

Eurylochus: Odysseus! [*out of breath*] The men! They are pigs!

Odysseus: Pigs? What do you mean? What have they done?

Eurylochus: It's not what they've done. It's what they are.

Odysseus: Come, Eurylochus, don't be so...

Eurylochus: God help me, it's true! We came upon the palace of a goddess, no, a witch! Outside, all manner of beasts fawned on us as dogs might on their masters. At first it seemed true, then, that this was a place of unparalleled harmony. But their eyes... I couldn't understand their eyes, so knowing, so sad, so unspeakably sad. Now I understand! She has enchanted them all. They all once were human!

Odysseus. I will go to them.

Eurylochus: No! Odysseus, no! She will bewitch you, too.

Odysseus. I cannot leave them like this. [*He goes. Hermes appears Odysseus draws his sword*]

Hermes: Put up your sword. I will not harm you.

Odysseus: Are you not of this island?

Hermes: No more than you.

Odysseus: Then why are you here?

Hermes. To keep a poor, brave fool from rushing precipitously to an unhappy fate. What would you be? A boar? A tiger? Ah! I know. You are cunning. Perhaps a fox. It more suits your nature than this mad charging into certain destruction.

Odysseus: What do you know of me?

Hermes: More than you think I am Hermes. god of those who make mischief, like you.

Odysseus: Then truly I am blessed, and my troubles are at an end.

Hermes: Your troubles? At an end? Not likely. Your troubles you have conjured up yourself, no witch need take the blame. Men go forth in the world making their

conquests. We gods will help you rise to the task, but you open the way for challenges undreamt of... which we use to broaden your skills.

Odysseus: You play games with us?

Hermes: If you are ready.

Odysseus: But the rules of the game you keep to yourselves. We needlessly blunder.

Hermes: That makes it more interesting, don't you think? But we sometimes give hints if you know how to follow them. Come, let me guide you a little. I can teach you to outfox this vixen, this witch. [*He leads him aside as Circe re-enters. We see Hermes talking to Odysseus and giving him a moly plant. It has a white top and a black root. Odysseus goes and stands across from Circe.*]

Circe: Good sir, come in. Are you looking for something?

Odysseus: My men.

Circe: There are no men here, but perhaps we can find something else which will please. Have you eaten? Are you tired?

Odysseus: I seek no pleasure. Only my men.

Circe: Your men. Of course, we must find them. If they've landed here they cannot be very far. Come sit and eat, there will be time for other things then. [*Odysseus hesitates, then sits. As Circe looks elsewhere, he takes out the moly plant and puts it in the food. She serves him various dishes and then from behind she taps him with her wand. Nothing happens. She taps again. Odysseus takes the wand and draws his sword and threatens her with it.*]

Odysseus: My men.

Circe: How can this be? No man has ever escaped my enchantment.

Odysseus: This time one man has.

Circe: Then you are a man beyond others and you must stay by my side.

Odysseus: Like a pet?

Circe: Like a husband, the best of any I've had.

Odysseus. You've had others?

Circe: A handful.

Odysseus. What happened to them?

Circe. I outlived them. [*He looks on unbelieving*] or tired of them. Or transformed them.

Odysseus: Into pigs?

Circe: Great Zeus, no! I would never touch one so low. My husbands have become lions, elks, one is even a hawk.

Odysseus: [*disgusted*] Have you feelings?

Circe. I could. [*coyly*]

Odysseus. My wife Penelope waits for me.

Circe: Alas.

Odysseus. And my men have wives and mothers as well.

Circe They do?

Odysseus. Besides I'd rather not know what you would make of me. [*She considers this and starts to speak*] My men, and an oath to harm us no more.

Circe: If you like.

Odysseus: I do.

Circe: [*She calls them They come.*] Your men. It's a pity [*She starts to use her wand*] You don't like them like this? It does rather suit them. [*Odysseus simply replies with his sword at her throat*] If you wish. [*She transforms them.*]

Odysseus: They look younger and stronger than before!

Circe. But now, must you hurry? Why don't you stay for some time There is plenty to eat and good wine for all. This island has delights you haven't yet guessed. [*She looks at Odysseus teasingly.*]

Odysseus. Perhaps for some time [*He walks off, following her. Elpenor looks after him and would like to follow Odysseus doesn't notice. Elpenor drops back*]

Demodocus Perhaps for some time. One year One full year they stayed and they feasted. They drank. They explored this isle of enchantment. The enticements were subtle, the diversions bewitching and lost were the memories of home. [*Elpenor looks restless, following Odysseus with his eyes.*] But at last they were sated, the sweetness was cloying, the wonders demystified, the attractions unveiled. Then they became restless and grumbled and fought, and Odysseus understood their impatience

Odysseus: Circe, Ithaca calls

Circe. And Penelope.

Odysseus. That's true

Circe: I knew it would end, but my days will be lonely.

Odysseus: There will be other men.

Circe. But none will compare to my Odysseus of many devices

Odysseus: We must go.

Circe: But not straight to Ithaca. Riding the foam-curved laughter of the waves is never enough. Poseidon will thwart you, his anger defeat you. Your journey would thus be in vain.

Odysseus: Then where?

Circe. To Hades. You must delve to the depths and seek the words of a seer. Tiresias alone can give you the advice that you need.

Odysseus: Impossible! No ship of the world has ever reached Hades!

Circe: Impossible! For you? When were you ever baffled? You outwitted the Trojans You escaped Polyphemus... and you enchanted the ultimate enchantress.

Odysseus: For that I was guided by Hermes

Circe: I too can guide when I choose. Set your sails The north wind will take you and I will instruct you in the rites you must follow to enter the world of the dead

Odysseus: If a journey to Hades is the price I must pay then onward to Hades we'll go. Ithaca, my jewel, once again slips out of my grasp [*turns to the men.*] We are leaving [*cheers*] Make ready. [*They do. Elpenor is not there. When Odysseus and all are ready, he looks around.*] And Elpenor?

Sailor: Where is Elpenor?

Sailor: I saw him last night. He partied with us. I think he was there to the last

Sailor: This island never suited him. To me he always seemed lost. [*They all call "Elpenor". Slowly he awakes on the top of a roof. He looks stunned with sleep. The sailors all laugh. He takes a step and falls to his death. One sailor goes to check.*]

Sailor: He is dead

Odysseus: [*goes to him and kneels*] A son of my heart. My Elpenor. I have neglected you. I've been lost in a world of my own. My own son, Telemachus! What my absence must mean to him. Make haste. To the land of shadows and death we must go. To honour Elpenor's death, I must give Telemachus life. [*As the sailors are making ready Odysseus talks to Circe and then takes leave of her. He points to Elpenor as Elpenor is being carried out.*]

(*To be continued*)

NANCY WHITLOW

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of March 2000)

WHAT started as a critical review of a remarkable book of Dr. James Cousins, *New Ways in English Literature*, developed into a series of essays—32 in number—that appeared in the *Arya* (from December 1917 to July 1920) under the title ‘The Future Poetry’ Poetry had been a subject after his heart and no wonder Sri Aurobindo delves deep in these studies in the theme of poetry in general—the essence of poetry, Rhythm and Movement, Style, and Substance, Vision and Utterance before he goes to discuss the character and course of English Poetry, Chaucer, Shakespear, Spencer, Marlow, Milton, Byron, Wordsworth, the Victorian poets—Tennyson, Browning and Arnold—and the more recent poets like Yeats, Whitman, Carpenter, Tagore, are discussed in depth, Sri Aurobindo sees in the general trend of poetry a distinct turn towards the Breath of the Spirit, and a more insistent *mantric* note in the best examples of poetic expression. He visualises an increasing force of overhead inspiration intuitive, revelatory, entering into the poetry of tomorrow. Much of the poetry he wrote subsequently, his Sonnets and other poems are of yogic experience.

The Future Poetry (being a critical history of English poetry that started as a book-review) will be discussed more appropriately. There are some minor sequences and collections too, *Heracitus*, *The Superman*, *Evolution*, *Views and Reviews* and *Thoughts and Glimpes*. There are, again, perceptive pieces of criticism like the review-article on Harindranath Chattopadhyaya’s first book of poems, *The Feast of Youth* (1918), another review article on H. G. Wells’s *God, the Invisible King*, a review of the Journal *Shama’a* with a gallant defence of Professor Radhakrishnan (“Well known as a perfectly competent philosophic critic and thinker”) against the ill-tempered attack by one J. B. Raju, and a review of another journal *Sanskrit Research* with comments on articles by Tilak and R. D. Ranade, which were included in Volume 17 (*The Hour of God*) of Sri Aurobindo’s Birth Centenary Library In the same volume appear Sri Aurobindo’s articles on the two poets of bhakti—Nammavar and Andal—who are held in great veneration by the Tamils. Taken all in all, the *Arya* heritage is a formidable body of writing, and knowledge and wisdom, variety and versatility, as its distinguishing marks. There is not a page but hits the eye with its own sparkling gems of thought, its glow of purpose, or its radiance of peace It is verily a global—a universal—consciousness that is displayed everywhere. It is a voice of indubitable authority that is heard, it is the sovereign assurance of a Master that is communicated to a distracted world. It would be fitting, however, to make a special reference to *Heracitus*, rather an unusual book

Heracitus appeared serially in the *Arya*, during 1916-17 Having begun as a review of R. D. Ranade’s paper on the philosophy of Heracitus, it presently expanded into a fresh study of the Greek philosopher of the sixth century B.C. whose cryptic sayings have exercised such a strange fascination on posterity Himself a

profound student of Greek literature and thought, Sri Aurobindo is here on ground quite familiar to him, and his reading of Heraclitus has thus a very special value for the modern reader. Heraclitus was evidently teased by the "first and last things" of philosophy, and the lines of his reasoning seem to be reminiscent of some of the boldest adventures and loftiest flight in the Veda and the Upanishads, thereby pointing to the close filiations between ancient Greek and Hindu thought.

Sri Aurobindo rightly maintains that Heraclitus was much more than a clever maker of aphorisms or enigmatic epigrams; in his own right he was a mystic as well, though of the Apollonian and not of the Dionysian kind.

Sri Aurobindo's own words run: "And though no partaker in or supporter of any kind of rites or mummary, Heraclitus still strikes one as at least an intellectual child of the Mysteries and of mysticism, although perhaps a rebel son in the house of his mother. He has something of the mystic style, something of the intuitive Apollonian inlook into the secrets of existence"'

This is important, for it makes Heraclitus a seer who spoke from the level of illumination, and not of mere cerebration. Heraclitus had his moments of illumination when ideas raced in his head, but not caring to reduce them into a formal system, he turned them into knotted or pregnant aphorisms, often couched in a language that is as much of a riddle as the riddle of the universe that he would fain unriddle if he could. Sri Aurobindo observes: "Heraclitus was greatly preoccupied with his idea of eternal becoming, for him the one right account of the cosmos, but his cosmos has still an eternal basis, a unique original principle. That distinguishes his thought radically from Nietzsche's or the Buddhists'. The later Greeks derived from him the idea of the perpetual stream of things, "All things are in flux." The idea of the universe as constant motion and unceasing change was always before him, and yet behind and in it all he saw too a constant principle of determination and even a mysterious principle of identity. Every day, he says, it is a new sun that rises; yes, but if the sun is always new, it exists only by change from moment to moment, like all things in Nature, still it is the same ever-living Fire that rises with each dawn in the shape of the sun. We can never step again into the same stream, for ever other waters are flowing; and yet, says Heraclitus, "we do and we do not enter into the same waters." The sense is clear; there is an identity in things, in all existences, *sarva-bhūtāni*, as well as a constant changing, there is a Being as well as a Becoming and by that we have an eternal and real existence as well as a temporary and apparent, not merely a constant mutation but a constant identical existence. Zeus exists, a sempiternal active Fire and eternal Word, a One by which all things are unified, all laws and results perpetually determined, all measures unalterably maintained. Day and Night are one, Death and Life are one, Youth and Age are one, Good and Evil are one, because there is the One and all these are only its various shapes and appearances.

Heraclitus would not have accepted a purely psychological principle of Self as the origin of things, but in essence he is not very far from the Vedantic position. The Buddhists of the Nihilistic school used in their own way the image of the stream and

the image of the fire. They saw, as Heraclitus saw, that nothing in the world is for two moments the same even in the most insistent continuity of forms. The flame maintains itself unchanged in appearance, but every moment it is another and not the same fire; the stream is sustained in its flow by ever new waters''²

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

References

1 *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 16, p 336

2 *Ibid* pp 346-47

I do not find that the Mother is a rigid disciplinarian. On the contrary, I have seen with what a constant leniency, tolerant patience and kindness she has met the huge mass of indiscipline, disobedience, self-assertion, revolt that has surrounded her, even revolt to her very face and violent letters overwhelming her with the worst kind of vituperation. A rigid disciplinarian would not have treated these things like that.

SRI AUROBINDO
On the Mother, SABCL, Vol 25, pp. 229-230

25-2-1945

Mother never avoids opening letters or any other work because of absence of time she deals with all the work that comes to her even if she is ill or if she has no time for rest

SRI AUROBINDO
On the Mother, SABCL, Vol 25, p 279

15-2-1936

Mother prefers that when she walks on the terrace people should not be looking at her because it is the only time when she can concentrate a little on herself—apart from the necessity of taking some fresh air and movement for the health of the body. If she has to attend to the pull of so many people, that cannot be done. The interview she gives you is a different matter, she has to arrange it herself and it is part of her work, so there is no need to change. What was said was only for the walk on the terrace

SRI AUROBINDO
On the Mother, SABCL, Vol. 25, p 279

LAZY-BONES HAVE THEIR FALL

A Fable

A SIDDHA doctor was once called in to treat Thirupulisami of his diabetes. The doctor advised his patient thus: “Well! All that you have to do is to take five tender shoots from a bael tree, munch and gulp them down. You should do this in the early morning and on the next day munch five tender shoots from a jambolna tree and swallow them. Do it for forty days and you can get rid of your diabetes. If you follow my advice, you’ll never be a diabetic again.”

Thirupulisami fittingly rewarded the doctor before he saw him off. And then he ordered his men to plant and nurture a bael and a jambolna sapling in the backyard.

The plants grew to be trees and peeped over the compound wall.

Oh, what a bother it would be to get up early in the morning! Thirupulisami was still in a dilemma.

Oh, someone has to pluck five tender shoots for him. And Thirupulisami was yet to appoint someone.

Oh, to munch the tender shoots or to grind them? Should clarify it from the doctor. Thirupulisami was yet to consult him.

The very presence of the bael and the jambolna gave Thirupulisami a false sense of security. He believed that he was no more a diabetic and so happily ate daily rice food all the three times. The result—he became a chronic diabetic.

Yet another diabetic was Kuppusami who lived on the other side of the compound wall. Poverty and diabetes drove him to the edge of death. But he had a strong will.

Ever since the trees peeped over the wall, and showed their lovely faces to Kuppusami, he ate their tender shoots every day without a break.

A year rolled by.

“Hey! You diabetic! How are you?” Narayanasami inquired of his friend Kuppusami.

“Diabetic! Oh, that was in the past. A long forgotten one,” came the reply.

Hospitalised, Thirupulisami asked the doctor, “Will I live or die?”

“Can’t say...quite serious,” came the reply.

“Poor me! I have ignored the bael and the jambolna available in my backyard.”

Know you, Thirupulisami! Herbs that can easily put all diseases to flight surround man. Only the diligent make use of them.

And men like Thirupulisami dig their own graves by being lazy.

P RAJA

(Translated from the original story of Bharathidasan in Tamil.)

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sri Aurobindo—The Poet by K. D. Sethna. Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry; second edition, pp. 436 Rs 180.

[*Sri Aurobindo—The Poet* is a research work of Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna) dealing with many aspects of Sri Aurobindo's poetic genius. The author's direct association with the Master-Poet has the merit of bringing out the heart and soul of his poetry in a most perceptive way. It is this which makes the work of Amal Kiran valuable and enduring. First published in 1970, we are glad to see that it is now coming in a second edition. This is an ample recognition of the fact that the author's critical appreciation takes the reader closer to Sri Aurobindo's poetry in all its varied range

The review of the first edition of *Sri Aurobindo—The Poet* was done by the late Prof. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar in *The Hindustan Times Weekly* in 1970. Apropos of a certain statement of the reviewer Amal Kiran clarified the point which, along with the review, was published in the October 1971 issue of *Mother India*. We reproduce these two items here in the context of the second edition of the book.—R Y.D.]

RECENT years have witnessed a growing interest in Sri Aurobindo the original thinker, the metaphysician of *The Life Divine*, and the Yogin whose vision of future human unity is being sought to be realized in a seminal way through the "Auroville" experiment near Pondicherry. As his birth centenary (August 15, 1973) is fairly near, special editions, biographical memoirs and facet-by-facet studies on the patriot, the thinker, the Yogi and the poet may be expected in the coming months. The present study may be greeted as one of the earliest—and one of the most authoritative—of such publications

There are many who, while readily conceding that Sri Aurobindo was a sterling patriot, a revolutionary thinker and a great Yogi, nevertheless express doubts about his unique achievement as a poet. His colossal poetic output (about 50,000 lines in bulk) was entirely in English, and people ask whether it is at all likely that one can accomplish poetic summitry in a language not one's own. (But then, owing to the circumstances of his early life, English was as good as a mother tongue to Sri Aurobindo.) Besides, as Sri Aurobindo himself acknowledged in a letter to Mr. Sethna in 1947:

It is a misfortune of my poetry from the point of view of recognition that the earlier works forming the bulk of the *Collected Poems* belongs to the past and has little chance of recognition now that the aesthetic atmosphere has so violently changed, while the later mystical work and *Savitri* belong to the future and will probably have to wait for recognition of any merit they have for another strong change.

In the result, Sri Aurobindo the poet has been both praised by some on this side idolatry, and disposed of with a civil leer or dismissed with cheap disdain by others. Mr. Sethna has been among the best informed, the most consistent and the most illuminating among the former, and he has had more than once to break a lance with some of the latter category. In his compact monograph, *The Poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo* (1947). Mr. Sethna concentrated on the two early romances (*Urvashi* and *Love and Death*), on Sri Aurobindo's handling of the Hexameter in *Ilion*, and on his later mystic poetry including *Savitri*. The present volume is more of a mixed dish, being a collection of articles (the earliest going back to 1929), talks, notes, questions and answers and replies to and correspondence with some denigrators and critics of Sri Aurobindo's poetry. The book naturally lacks tightness of structure, but gains in opulence and amplitude. Himself a poet of considerable distinction and a close student of English and French poetry, Mr. Sethna was also in continuous touch with Sri Aurobindo for over twenty years, and it could almost be said that he was the "only true begetter" of *Savitri*. What he writes on Sri Aurobindo the poet is thus the result of a deep commitment to poetry and to Sri Aurobindo's poetry, and is very different from the general run of what passes today for literary criticism.

As a critic, Mr. Sethna is usually concerned with the inner reality of the poems he examines and in establishing correspondences between the soul quality and the enveloping imaginative cast, emotional mould, verbal shape and rhythmic pattern that in their different ways contain, yet also mediate between, the inner light and the outer world. His methods yield the most satisfying results when he concentrates on a short poem like *Rose of God* or on individual passages in *Savitri* or even on a single line like "Swan of the supreme and spaceless ether...", but he is a good guide even where his canvas is larger as in his essays on *Ilion*, the Homeric poem in Hexameters, or on Sri Aurobindo's earlier work. Occasionally—very occasionally—Mr. Sethna allows himself to be carried away by his enthusiasm, as when he writes of *The Rishi*:

"...the whole makes one of the very rare pieces for which, if at all so unpleasant a bargain were to be struck, one might even exchange the twelve Upanishads."

But normally he is restrained enough in his expression of praise, and his critical comments invariably stimulate interest rather than put the reader on the defensive.

Of rather special interest are the two essays in which Mr. Sethna discusses Sri Aurobindo's poetry in the light of Coventry Patmore's characterization of the Poetic Phrase (that it must have piquancy, felicity and magnificence) and Ezra Pound's classification of poetry under the heads Melopoeia, Phanopoeia and Logopoeia. Mr. Sethna's wide-ranging knowledge and his perception as a critic of poetry are seen to the best advantage in these essays. As for the pieces warmed up by the spirit of debate, they are no doubt excellent in their kind, but it must be added that one cannot be argued into a condition of love—even of indubitable poetry.

Mr. Sethna's book, the garner of a lifetime devoted to the profession of poetry,

would prove an indispensable lifebuoy to those who are ready to lose themselves in the flood of Sri Aurobindo's poetry. It is valuable as much for the revealing light it throws on Sri Aurobindo the poet as for the insight it gives into Mr. Sethna's own poetic and critical sensibility. The book is beautifully produced, and is commendably free from printer's mistakes.

K R SRINIVASA IYENGAR

(With acknowledgements to *The Hindustan Times Weekly*, Sunday, 25 October 1970, p 11)

A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR TO THE REVIEWER

My dear Iyengar,

Thanks for reviewing my book. I may say that your review is the best that has so far appeared, and I don't think it will be easily outdone. When I say "best" I don't mean that it gives me the best press in the superficial sense of this expression, but that it is the most perceptive. Next to it I may place L. D. M.'s in the *Madras Mail*.

Your remark about my apotheosis of *The Rishi* is correct: I have exaggerated there. And before letting my verdict stand in this first and earliest essay of mine on Sri Aurobindo's poetry, I questioned my conscience several times. I tried one or two alternatives, but they left me with nothing worthwhile, so I finally decided to let the thing be. Let me, however, explain it to you a little bit.

In 1929, *The Rishi* was for me the top of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual poetry: I had seen nothing of *Savitri*, and none of the "Six Poems" and others of their kind had seen the light—or rather, shown us the light. My keenest response to a new type of verse was, at the time, couched in that enthusiastic encomium. It was not only very sincere, but also rather sensitive. something unprecedented was about to be introduced and it would be best introduced by an assertion which would make people sit up and take notice. That is one point.

Another is that a certain striking form is achieved in the statement: here is a memorable exaggeration which will go down alive and kicking to posterity, something like Pope's (I quote from somewhat faint memory)—

Read Homer once and you will read no more,
For all things else will sound so weak, so poor.
Verse may seem prose but still persist to read,
And Homer will be all the books you need.

A similar example is Caliph Omar's sweeping piety *vis-à-vis* the burning of the famous library at Alexandria: "If the books contain what is in the Koran, they are superfluous. If they contain what is not in the Koran, they are pernicious. So let them burn."

A third point: the whole of the essay concerned passed under Sri Aurobindo's eyes. Not that he could have concurred with this statement, but he did not demur either. So I conclude that I must have discerned in *The Rishi* much more than others had—and this “much more” was nearer the truth than what they had perceived. The running away of the enthusiasm was, as it were, a spur to a lagging and neglectful critical opinion. It served an important purpose which Sri Aurobindo must have approved of. This point boils down to, more or less, the very first one in my series, but with the added significance that Sri Aurobindo's seal of approval is involved, giving the hyperbole a sort of halo, with which I may be ill-advised to tamper.

Of course you have not mis-fired in drawing attention to the exaggerated note, and I am glad you have balanced the judicious praise with this bit of kindly criticism. Your review would have lost something of its value without this gesture. The explanation I have given above is not meant quite to be a defence. Even less is it intended to be a grave objection to your comment. It is just a private view, not altogether befogged, which I have ventured to put before you because of your understanding, sympathy and appreciation.

K D SETHNA

Sri Aurobindo on English Poets by Prof. Supriyo Bhattacharya. Published by Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Calcutta.

The book under review is unique in the sense that it brings to light a new aspect of Sri Aurobindo that has so far remained unexplored. The name of Sri Aurobindo conjures up at once in our imagination the portrait of an avatar, a great yogi and philosopher par excellence and the poet of life divine. But very few think of him as a great literary critic, and the present book fills to some extent that vacuum. A critic to be great and original in his assessment, that is to pronounce creative judgement, has to be a poet himself or at least must be endowed with some poetic sensibility: Plato, Longinus, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Arnold, T. S. Eliot are some such luminaries. Besides, if the poet is a seer poet with yogic vision, one cannot imagine to what height of brilliance literary criticism would reach. Sri Aurobindo is not only the creator of future poetry, the bard of life divine, but is also a great yogi and philosopher. As a yogi he has given us the Supramental Yoga, as a philosopher he has given us the philosophy of *The Life Divine*, as a poet he has given us the new epic *Savitri*. Whatever field he touches, he takes us to new heights of truth. So also in the field of poetic criticism.

The Future Poetry of Sri Aurobindo and his innumerable letters on literature, poetry and art are his monumental legacy to posterity. These writings undoubtedly herald an age of new criticism. The bulk of Sri Aurobindo's utterances and judgements in these writings are concerned with English poetry and poets in particular and literature and poetry in general. The entire assessment of English poetry from the age of Chaucer to the contemporary era may be classified into three groups:

- (a) His critical judgment of the poetry of an age;
- (b) His assessment of individual poets and their works,
- (c) His comparative criticism and judgments on poets of different ages.

These critical utterances are characterised by apt word and phrase, no superfluity of word and expression, every comment goes into the very soul of poetry, stating the moving power behind poetic creation. The critical judgment of the poetry of an age is similarly characterised by his terse statements pointing to the fundamental that guides the poetic creation of that age. On the age of Chaucer he writes, "It is the poetry of the external action of life... The motive is the poetic observation of ordinary human life and character. .simply as it reflects itself in the individual mind and temperament of the poet." Or again, "The Elizabethan drama is an expression of the stir of the life-spirit; at its best it is a great or strong, buoyant or rich or beautiful, passionately excessive or gloomily tenebrous force of vital poetry. The poetry which comes out of this mood is likely to have great charm and imaginative, emotional or descriptive appeal. but may very well miss that depth of profounder substance and that self-possessing plenitude of form which are the other characteristics of a rounded artistic creation." But "the music of a deeper spirit of higher significance" is missing here.

On individual poets: Shakespeare's dramatic method "labours simply for the joy of a multiple poetic vision of life and vital creation with no centre except the life-power itself, no co-ordination except that thrown out spontaneously by the unseizable workings of its energy.. It is this sheer creative Ananda of the life-spirit which is Shakespeare" At many places Sri Aurobindo has given his critical opinion on individual works of poets. To cite a few: "Hamlet is a Mind, an intellectual, but like many intellectuals a mind that looks too much all round and sees too many sides to have an effective will for action. He plans ingeniously without coming to anything decisive. And when he does act, it is on a vital impulse. Shakespeare suggests but does not bring out the idealist in him, the man of bright illusions." Again, "Paradise Lost commands admiration.... It is true that he [Milton] had not an original intellectuality, his mind was rather scholastic and traditional, but he had an original soul and personality and the vision of a poet... Milton has seen Satan and Death and Sin and Hell and Chaos; there is a Scriptural greatness in his account of these things; he has not seen God and heaven and man or the soul of humanity at once divine and fallen..." In Paradise Lost "the intellectual element becomes too predominant, the fatal danger of a failure of vision."

A very significant and illuminating aspect of Sri Aurobindo's critical writings is his comparative criticism. To state a few: "Homer and Chaucer are poets of the physical consciousness" Lines of Keats like

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale

or

The journey homeward to habitual self!

“are Shakespearean in their quality, they have recovered the direct revealing word and intimate image of the full intuitive manner, but they enter into a world of thought and inner truth other than Shakespeare’s.” Comparing Shakespeare’s passage—‘Life’s but a walking shadow’—with Shelley’s—‘Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass’—both voicing a kindred idea of transience, Sri Aurobindo comments, “The one has the colour of an intuition of the life-soul in one of its intense moods and we not only think the thought but seem to feel it even in our nerves of mental sensation, the other is the thought-mind itself uttering in a moved, inspired and illuminative language an idea of the pure intelligence”

Again, “Dante and Shakespeare stand at the summit of poetic fame, but each with so different a way of genius that comparison is unprofitable. Shakespeare has powers that Dante cannot rival; Dante has heights which Shakespeare could not reach; but in essence they stand as mighty equals.” Comparing the poetry of Blake and Shakespeare, Sri Aurobindo writes “Blake’s may be pure poetry in Housman’s sense and Shakespeare’s not except in a few passages, but nobody can contend that Blake’s genius had the width and volume and richness of Shakespeare’s. It can be said that Blake as a mystic poet achieved things beyond Shakespeare’s measure—for Shakespeare had not the mystic’s vision, but as a poet of the play of life Shakespeare is everywhere and Blake nowhere.” Such comparisons will open a vast field of comparative criticism.

Among the poet-critics of the pre-Aurobindonian era, only Coleridge may be said to have given a systematic theory of criticism in his ‘Esemplastic Imagination’. How far that theory explains poetic creation is, of course, not the subject of this review. Prof. Bhattacharya has really done a good job by including the concept of ‘Overmind Poetry’ and Sri Aurobindo’s concept of ‘Overmind Aesthesis’ as stated by the seer poet himself. The editor certainly deserves a word of praise for this painstaking work of compilation. The reviewer however is of the opinion that the book could have been much more profitable to students and scholars of literature if there had been an organised editing on the lines discussed in the foregoing paragraphs.

As the book forms Part One only, it is hoped that the lacuna would be filled in the subsequent part. The foreword by Prof. Manoj Das has added a lustre to the book.

ASOKA GANGULI

Note: Quotations from Sri Aurobindo’s writings are from the book under review.

Students' Section

LINCOLN'S LETTER TO HIS SON'S TEACHER

HE will have to learn, I know, that all men are not just, all men are not true, but teach him also that for every scoundrel there is a hero, that for every selfish politician there is a dedicated leader Teach him that for every enemy there is a friend

It will take time, I know, but teach him if you can that a dollar earned is of far more value than five found, teach him to lose and also to enjoy winning Steer him away from envy If you can, teach him the secret of quiet laughter Teach him if you can the wonder of books But also give him quiet time to ponder the eternal mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun and flowers on a green hillside In school teach him it's far more honourable to fail than to cheat Teach him to have faith in his own ideas even if everyone tells him they are wrong To be gentle with gentle people and tough with tough

Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone is getting on the bandwagon, to listen to all men, but teach him also to filter all he hears on a screen of truth and take only the good that comes through Teach him if you can how to laugh when he is sad and that there is no shame in tears

Teach him to scoff at cynics and to beware of too much sweetness Teach him to sell his brawn and brain to the highest bidder but never to put a price tag on his heart and soul Teach him to close his ears to a howling mob and to stand and fight

Treat him gently but do not cuddle him because only the test of fire makes fine steel Let him have the courage to be impatient, let him have the patience to be brave Teach him always to have sublime faith in himself because then he'll always have sublime faith in mankind

That's a big order, but see what you can do because he's a fine little fellow