# MOTHER INDIA

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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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THE MESSAGE OF 24 NOVEMBER 1958

असतो मा सद्गमय।
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय।
मुत्योमांस्पुते गमय॥
ॐ शान्ति: शान्ति: शान्ति: ॥

(Upanishad)

From the non-being to true being,
from the darkness to the Light,
from death to Immortality.
OM. Peace! Peace! Peace!

(Upanishad)

So be it.

SRI AUROBINDO
TWO UNPUBLISHED SONNETS
Sri Aurobindo

THE YOGI ON THE WHIRLPOOL

On a dire whirlpool in the hurrying river
A life-stilled statue naked, bronze, severe
He kept the posture of a deathless seer
Unshaken by the mad water’s leap and shiver.
Thought could not think in him; flesh could not quiver;
The feet of Time could not adventure here:
Only some unborn Power nude and austere,
Only a Silence mighty to deliver.

His spirit world-wide and companionless
Seated above the torrent of the days
On the deep eddy that our being forms,
Silent, sustained the huge creation’s stress,
Unchanged supporting Nature’s rounds and norms,
Immobile background of the cosmic race.

THE KINGDOM WITHIN

There is a kingdom of the spirit’s ease.
It is not in this helpless swirl of thought,
Foam from the world-sea or spray-whisper caught,
With which we build mind’s shifting symmetries,
Nor in life’s stuff of passionate unease,
Nor the heart’s unsure emotions frailty wrought
Nor trivial clipped sense-joys soon brought \(^1\) to nought
Nor in this body’s solid transiences.

Wider behind that the vast universe
Our spirit scans the drama and the stir,
A peace, a light, an ecstasy, a power
Waiting at the end of blindness and the curse
That veils it from its ignorant minister,
The grandeur of its free eternal hour.

14-3-1936

\(^1\) led
SUPRAMENTALISATION AND THE CONQUEST OF DEATH

(From Nirodharan's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo)

9-10-1936

MYSELF: I find that there is a change of views on your part about the 
Supermind's descent and the work of conquering death for humanity. Formerly 
I thought everything depended on your own success; now it seems a lot depends 
on us in this vital matter. But the outlook for us does not seem very bright; 
even physically it does not appear encouraging, what with illnesses about 
and doctors busy. Moreover, one or two people have actually died.

SRI AUROBINDO: In what does this change of views consist? Did I say 
that nobody could die in the Ashram? If so, I must have been intoxicated or 
passing through a temporary aberration.

As for the conquest of death, it is only one of the sequelae of supramental-
isation—and I am not aware that I have forswn my views about the supramental descent. But I never said or thought that the supramental descent would 
automatically make everybody immortal. The supramental can only make 
the best conditions for anybody who can open up to it then or thereafter attaining to the supramental consciousness and its consequences. But it could not 
dispense with the necessity of sadhana. If it did, the logical consequence would 
be that the whole earth, men, dogs and worms would suddenly wake up to 
find themselves supramental. There would be no need of an Ashram or of Yoga.

Why vital? What is vital is the supramental change of consciousness 
—conquest of death is something minor and, as I have always said, the last 
physical result of it, not the first result of all or the most important—a thing 
to be added to complete the whole, not the one thing needed and essential. 
To put it first is to reverse all spiritual values—it would mean that the seeker 
was actuated, not by any high spiritual aim but by a vital clinging to life or a 
selfish and timid seeking for the security of the body—such a spirit could not 
bring the supramental change.

Certainly, everything depends on my success....But did you imagine 
that would mean the cessation of death on the planet and that sadhana would 
cease to be necessary for anybody?
Increase of numbers brought in all sorts of influences that were not there in the smaller circle before. Doctors did not matter so long as faith was the main thing and a little treatment the help. But when faith went, illness increased and the doctors became not merely useful but indispensable. There was also the third cause, the descent into the physical consciousness with all its doubt, obscurity and resistance. To eliminate all that is no longer possible.

14-10-1936

MYSELF: If the Supermind has descended into you or into the earth consciousness, the question of faith or sadhana becomes irrelevant as regards death, for death is a Force and, when you have a control or conquest over it, it means that its supremacy is lost in this part of the world, whether I have faith or not, do sadhana or not.

SRI AURUBINDO: Good Lord, man. What is this reasoning? Everything is a Force—why should the supramental descent into me or earth assure complete and universal immediate conquest of this Force only or specially among so many?

MYSELF: Even if one does sadhana, illness may come and snatch one away: then one’s chance of supramentalisation is lost. Will not one now be protected and allowed a chance?

SRI AURUBINDO: ...but that is simply warding off death. Perhaps the supramental will do that—(it can, if it wants)—but not for ever. I mean if a man wants 200 years to supramentalise himself, it can’t be promised that he will be kept alive till then.

MYSELF: Has faith any say in the prolongation of life?
SRI AURUBINDO: Faith does help and has helped. It is a fact.

MYSELF: You have also said that to prevent death sadhana is necessary.
SRI AURUBINDO: To make the control of death absolute, not provisional and relative.

MYSELF: I want a final word from you. Wouldn’t your supramentalisation make death impossible in the Asram?
SRI AURUBINDO: Not in the sense that anybody can seek refuge in the supramentalised Asram against death and sit comfortably there without any intention of doing sadhana.
CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

HOMEOPATHY

I

23-12-1935—26-12-1935

MYSELF: How can homeopathy cure diseases through merely the symptoms and without diagnosis?

SRI AUROBINDO: Is it not the very principle of homeopathy that it cures the disease by curing the symptoms? I have always heard so. Do you deny that homeopaths acting on their own system, not on yours, have cured illnesses? If they have, is it not more logical to suppose that there is something in their system than to proclaim the sacrosanct infallibility of the sole allopathic system and its principle? For that matter I myself cure more often by attacking the symptoms than by any other way, because medical diagnosis is uncertain and fallible while the symptoms are there for everybody to see. Of course if a correct indisputable diagnosis is there, so much the better—the view can be more complete, the action easier, the result more sure. But even without infallible diagnosis one can act and get a cure.

MYSELF: When all doctors have failed, how does R proclaim that he will pull a man out? Self-confidence? Isn't it sometimes too risky to commit oneself like that, however strong one's confidence may be?

SRI AUROBINDO: Because he has confidence in himself like all who are able to do in any field big things....Why can't it? How dreadfully downright and sweeping you are in your demands! What ground had Mustapha Kemal for his strong and enormous confidence when he defied all Europe and all the probabilities and possibilities and undertook to save three-quarters dead Turkey?...What does that matter if it succeeds in some places? Napoleon's self-confidence and intuition tripped him up at Waterloo, but before that it had won him Marengo, Jena, Austerlitz.

MYSELF: Was there some extraordinary power behind R before he came here that was responsible for the marvellous results?
MOTHER INDIA

SRI AUROBINDO: Certainly. It was because the Mother saw a great force in him that she accepted him in the Ashram.

MYSELF: I hear he is a very good medium and is a tower of vital strength.
SRI AUROBINDO: Which means of course full of massive vital force which can be used by the Yoga-force for its purposes and being massive can produce striking results.

MYSELF: Is the strength then the real cause of his success?
SRI AUROBINDO: Why the flabbergasts not? What's the use of strength if it can't do things?

MYSELF: But I don't understand how a tower of strength can cure a man!
SRI AUROBINDO: You are very much behind the times. Do you not know that even many doctors now admit and write it publicly that medicines are an element but only one and that the psychological element counts as much and even more? I have heard that from doctors often and read it over reputable medical signatures. And among the psychological elements, they say, one of the most important is the doctor's optimism and self-confidence, (his faith, what? it is only another word for the same thing) and the confidence, hope, helpful mental atmosphere he can inspire in or around his patient. I have seen it stated categorically that a doctor who can do that is far more successful than one who knows Medicine better but cannot....I did not mean that it cannot be done without medicines. But if it is to be done with the aid of medicines, then the right medicine is helpful, the wrong one obviously brings in a danger....How does his knowledge prevent intuition? Even an allopathic doctor has often to intuit what medicine he should give or what mixture—and it is those who intuit best that succeed best. All is not done by sole rule of book or sole rule of thumb even in orthodox Science.

MYSELF: How can a patient, as good as lost, leap up, although he knew nothing of faith in yogic force?
SRI AUROBINDO: That often happens. It is even sometimes easier to deal with a man of that kind, provided he does not know what is being done—so that there is no room for doubt or mental resistance.

MYSELF: I am thrown out of joint at two miracles, Sir: (1) R’s treatment or yours; (2) N’s English poetry, though Madam Doubt still peeps from behind. Anyhow, no chance for me! Kismet, Sir! What to do?

MYSELF: In this resuscitation of G who you say was given up by the best doctors in Pondicherry, V, A and others, and who in spite of their dosing and injecting was near to his last gasp when V ran to R as a last chance, what I am puzzled about is the exact contribution of R's medicines.

SRI AUROBINDO: Exact? How can one measure exactly where vital, mental and spiritual factors come in? In dealing with a star and atom you may (though it appears you can't with an electron) but not with a man and his living mind, soul and body.

MYSELF: If R were an allopathic homeopath, with a difference only in treatment and not in pathology, I wouldn't doubt his explanations.

SRI AUROBINDO: What is an allopathic homeopath? Homeopathic principles are just the opposite of the allopathic. So why must the dealings be fundamentally the same with only a difference of drugs? In spite of what you say you have the solid belief that allopathy alone is true. I suppose allopathic homeopathy is something like a biped with four feet.

MYSELF: A symptomatic treatment can't be applied in cases where the same symptom is produced by two or three different diseases!

SRI AUROBINDO: Why can't it? There is a possibility that you can strike at the cure, whatever it be, through the symptoms and you can kill the root through the stalk and leaves and not start by searching for the roots and digging them out. That at any rate is what I do....

MYSELF: Don't speak of your own cures, please; I can't fight you there!

SRI AUROBINDO: Why should I not speak of my cures when they are perfectly apposite and a proof that you can cure by symptomatic treatment?... You mean you don't want to give me the lie or say I am under a delusion?

MYSELF: How can a homeopath ask a high-blood-pressure man who has just risen from the grave to attend his duties in the old way and give him the usual food?

SRI AUROBINDO: Why can't he, if he has some other means of combating the possible bad results? I have not heard that R asked G to resume his duties.
He represents it as if he remained neutral and it was G's own choice with which he did not interfere. That may have been imprudent; but R is daring in everything and that means a stiff dose of imprudence. Besides he has his theories also which may or may not be right, but I can't say they are prima facie impossible if I can judge by the one he put forward for making S eat the full Ashram meals. If S's accounts of his condition are true, they seem to have been justified by a considerable amount of success.

MYSELF: If you say R is led by intuition I'll stop my argument. But then how did he ignore so important a factor as albumen in G's case?

SRI AUROBINDO: He has intuition but not always the right intuition to fit the case. It is a mental intuition he uses, and mental intuition is a mixed movement....I have answered all that already. I do not say R was right, but he did not act at random; he gave his reasons for rejecting the albumen which I am not medical enough to understand. I would have preferred if he had dealt with and had kept it under observation before letting him loose, but it is not my funeral. I do not expect G to live long and I don't think R expects it either. But in the case of S he has for the time being at least proved his case. He is by the way dealing with G's kidneys today and admits it is a ticklish job; but the first effects he says were successful and he is waiting for the night to pass to see what will be the sequel. For the drug, he says, is highly potentised (that is American language), but may produce an upheaval. Well, there you are, that is the man. Right or wrong? God he knows. I put a force behind him and also await the results.

He had by the way hesitated to act at once on the kidneys because the body needed to be accustomed to renewed vigour (so far as I understand) before risking the coup. Contrary to allopathic pathology? May be. But it has some similarity to what I have seen in my experience of action by Yoga.

Certainly, if you are dejected, diffident, despairing, full of doubt you can't produce a favourable nidus in the atmosphere.

MYSELF: Self-confidence, I suppose, presupposes knowledge and experience. Kemal Pasha and Napoleon surely had the stratagems of war and current politics at their fingers' ends. Even so, had Napoleon been a little less self-confident, things might have had different results at Waterloo.

SRI AUROBINDO: What an absurd statement! Self-confidence is an inborn thing; it does not rest on knowledge and experience....Who says that? I never heard that Napoleon failed at Waterloo for want of self-confidence. I have always read that he failed because he was owing to his recent malady no longer so quick and self-confident in decision and so supple in mental
resource as before. Please don’t write history unless you have data for your novel version.

Please remember that R has studied homeopathy and he has knowledge of homeopathic medicines if not of allopathic pathology. He took a degree in America and the Mother tells me that many of his ideas of which we were so impatient and thought them his own inventions are the ideas of the American school of homeopathy which is more meticulous, intolerant, intransigeant, dead against allopathy, particular about the subtle properties of homeopathic drugs and their evanescence by wrong contacts (quite yogic that) than others.... He was successful outside. While he was outside the Ashram, not yet accepted, he was making remarkable cures and already getting a name. I had to stop him as soon as he became an accepted disciple, even before he came into the Ashram because his practice was illegal. But I had to refuse applications from the town for allowing him to treat patients because he had succeeded so remarkably with them that they wanted to continue. I was not concerning myself in the least with his cures and knew nothing at all about them. And you say all that was luck because his ideas differ from yours? Are you not reasoning like Molière’s doctors who declared that a patient’s audacity in living contrary to the rules of Science was intolerable or like the British Medical Council which refused any validity to Sir Herbert Barker’s cures because he was an osteopath and had no qualified medical knowledge?

The universe is not shut up in the four walls of allopathic medicine. There are plenty of cases of illnesses being cured by other systems (not homeopathy alone) when they had defied the allopaths. My experience is not wide but I have come across a great number of such cases. If it is not so, why then did V come to R for help surprisingly when he and A had failed with all their capacity and experience? V has known and practised homeopathy to some extent. May we not infer that he knew there were cases in which homeopathy (not allopathic homeopathy but pure) might be successful?

It is not a question of drugs alone. The drug is only a support. If you had not intuition and self-confidence and the same thoroughgoing belief in your own action and the Yoga-force behind you you might have done some good but not had the same rapid effect. R believes in his medicines, but he does not believe that they are infallible in their effects or rely on them alone. He believes in the man behind them and the Force behind the man.... They may all study pathology; but I don’t think they all bind themselves to the same conclusions as the allopaths. If they did, they would not be able to have an entirely opposite system.

MYSELF: I don’t deny that personality is a big factor though I don’t know
exactly whether hope, faith etc. operate physically more or bring some occult forces into the field.

SRI AUROBINDO: You have only to admit that the mind and vital can influence the body—then no difficulty is left. In this action of mind and vital on the body faith and hope have an immense importance. I do not at all mean that they are omnipotent or infallibly effective—that is not so. But they assist the action of any force that can be applied, even of an apparently purely material force, but the action may be purely material when it is a question of material objects. But in things that have life or mind or mind and life one cannot isolate the material operation like that. There is always a play of other forces mixed with it in the reception at least and for the most part in the inception and direction also.

MYSELF: If a homeopath went by symptoms only, he would perhaps cut off the leaf but I am afraid the roots would flourish as strongly as ever.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what A told G that homeopathy only gives a transient palliation followed quickly by a worse catastrophe. After all, if it can raise up a man at the last gasp condemned by a rally of the whole allopathic faculty almost with the sentence “No more can be done” and send him walking about for a few more days of cheerful life, it is a rather big palliation. Moreover, in some cases I have watched I have seen R’s drug produce not only a rapid, even an instantaneous improvement, but in the end what seems up to now a lasting one and this in cases of illnesses of ancient standing. However that does not cover K’s case which looks more like a lung affair (Mother always was apprehensive that she might be a consumptive case) than a vicarious menstruation or monstrous vicaration one. R however says that it is his principle to make a diagnosis and never change it or say anything more about it but just go and prove his case by a cure!! What say you to that, sir? Confidence, if you like! However what bothers me about diagnosis is that if you put twenty doctors on a case, they give twenty different diagnoses (in S’s we had three doctors with three quite different theories of the illness) and such jokes as a doctor shouting “Appendix”, opening up a man, finding illness neither of appendix nor volume nor chapter and cheerfully stitching him are extremely common. So if a layman’s respect for allopathic pathology and diagnosis is deficient sometimes and R’s sneers at doctors’ diagnoses find occasionally an echo,—well, it is not altogether without “rational” cause.

(To be continued)
GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO

I. SELF—INDIVIDUAL AND UNIVERSAL

Q. What is called one's self (not the soul or the psychic being) above the head, is it individual or universal? I mean: is one's self the same as others' self or is there individuality in it as is in the soul of each person?

SRI AUROBINDO: The self is felt either as universal, one in all, or as universalised individual the same in essence as others, extended everywhere from each being but centred here. Of course centre is a way of speaking, because no physical centre is usually felt — only all the actions take place around the individual.

(20-10-1935)

Q. When the self is made active by sadhana, does it usually work directly or through the psychic being?

SRI AUROBINDO: Rather directly but with the psychic being as its support. Usually however one does not so much feel the self active as an action in and through the self. What acts in the self depends on the realisation; it is sometimes Nature, sometimes the cosmic Divine, sometimes the Mother.

(20-10-1935)

Q. You said, "sometimes Nature". What is meant by Nature with a capital N?

SRI AUROBINDO: Nature = Prakriti.

(20-10-1935)

Q. Yesterday you wrote to me, "Usually however one does not so much feel the self active as an action in and through the self." I am sorry I fail to grasp the phrase about the self and the action.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Self or Atman is inactive; Nature (Prakriti) or Shakti acts. When the Self is felt it is first an infinite existence, silence, freedom, peace that is felt — that is called Atman or Self. What action takes place in it is according to the realisation either felt as forces of Nature working in that wideness, as the Divine Shakti working or as the cosmic Divine or various powers of them working. It is not felt that the Self is acting.

(22-10-1935)
Q. Is not the self a portion of the Divine?
SRI AUROBINDO: It is the individual being that is a portion of the Divine. The universal self or Atman which is the same in all, is not a portion but an aspect of the Divine.

(22-10-1935)

Q. What is the difference between the cosmic Divine and the Mother?
SRI AUROBINDO: It is a matter of realisation. In the Yoga of the Gita the cosmic Divine is realised as Vasudeva (Krishna). The Vaishnavas realise it as Vishnu, the Shaivas as Shiva, the Tantrics (Shaktas) realise the Divine (Goddess) as the cosmic and even as the Transcendent Divine.

(22-10-1935)

Q. Is not the self and the Jivatman one and the same thing? The soul is considered as a spark of the Divine and the Jivatman as a portion of the Divine.
SRI AUROBINDO: The self, Atman is in its nature either transcendent or universal (Paramatma, Atma). When it individualises and becomes a central being, it is then the Jivatman. The Jivatman feels his oneness with the universal but at the same time his central separateness as a portion of the Divine.

(23-10-1935)

Q. Yesterday you said, "It is the individual being that is a portion of the Divine." Here what is exactly meant by the "individual being"—the soul or the central being?
SRI AUROBINDO: The central being and the soul are both in different ways portions of the Divine. They are in fact two aspects of the same entity, but one is unevolving above Nature, the other evolves a psychic being in Nature.

(23-10-1935)

Q. In the ancient Yogas, was there no difference between realisation and divinisation?
SRI AUROBINDO: They aimed at realisation and did not care about divinisation, except the Tantric and some others. The aim however even in these was rather to become saints and siddhas than anything else.

(26-10-1935)

Q. "What is on the self depends on the realisation; it is sometimes Nature, sometimes the cosmic Divine, sometimes the Mother." Is the self, which is an
aspect of the Divine, so much open to anything that even Nature (the lower Prakriti) can act on it?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is "in the self" not on it. Everything acts in the self. The whole play of Nature takes place in the self, in the Divine. The self contains the universe.

(2-11-1935)

Q. In that case are not the self and the Divine one and the same? How is it then I was told that the self is not even a portion of the Divine but only an aspect?

SRI AUROBINDO: The self is the Divine itself in an essential aspect; it is not a portion. There is no meaning in the phrase "not even a portion" or "only an aspect." An aspect is not something inferior to a portion.

(2-11-1935)

Q. Could you kindly tell me in short the difference between the cosmic Truth and the Divine Truth?

SRI AUROBINDO: The cosmic Truth is the truth of things as they are at present expressed in the universe. The Divine Truth is independent of the universe, above it and originates it.

(2-11-1935)

Q. If the cosmic Truth is the truth of things as they are at present expressed in the universe, I suppose in the eye of the cosmic Divine everything here is perfect.

SRI AUROBINDO: Everything here is not perfect but all works out the cosmic Will in the course of the ages.

(2-11-1935)

Q. How far does the cosmic Divine maintain his unity or relation with the Supramental Divine? We see here hundreds of things and movements about which the Real Divine would not at all say: "They are one with my Will."

SRI AUROBINDO: This is a world of evolution in Matter. If everything were supramental from the beginning, there would be no place for evolution.

(2-11-1935)

Q. When I asked about the difference between the cosmic and the Divine Truth it was not "the truth of things" that was in my mind. Rather I wanted to
*MOTHER INDIA*

know the difference between the Yogi's cosmic experiences and his spiritual experiences.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Yogi's experiences are spiritual experiences — experience of the play of the Forces and its relation with the self, the action of the Guide, what is behind the appearance of things, occurrences etc., etc., the actual realities of the workings of Purusha and Prakriti etc. The Divine Truth is the Truth of the Divine Essence, Consciousness, Self, Knowledge, Light, Power, Bliss. It is something from which the cosmos derives with all its movements, but it is more than the cosmos.

(3-II-1935)

II. DIFFICULTIES OF THE PHYSICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Q. The adverse forces have pushed up the whole of my lower nature in its naked form. It is through inertia, sex, ego etc. that their attack is directed so furiously. If I am to imagine a picture of hell I think I won't be able to paint it worse than my present plight as a result of these forces.

SRI AUROBINDO: The one thing wrong would be to allow yourself to be overcome by them. If you remain steady in yourself, you can repel the attack or else it will exhaust itself and pass. In such circumstances you learn to be like a cliff attacked by a stormy sea but never submerged by it.

(12-2-1935)

Q. Most of my nights are spent in very ordinary dreams. That is why I don't prefer to sleep much. Nineteen waking hours are passed with a close intimacy with the Mother and five hours with a close contact with the dark obscurity of the earth!

SRI AUROBINDO: By not sleeping enough you weaken the forces of the physical consciousness — and so the physical basis of the sadhana is less strong than it should be. It gets more open to the forces of inertia.

(15-2-1935)

Q. Let me narrate to you the dream I had yesterday. It might have some connection with my present state of sadhana. Two men were passing on the road with a whole mango tree in their hands. The tree was full of fruits and some were dropping on the road. I and a friend collected a few. As soon as the owners discovered that, they became furious and ran after us. It was the younger one, a boy, who pursued me. I ran and ran with all my force. But the
boy was also a fast runner. Almost three fourths of the night was spent in running only. Twice I took him in my hands and threw him into a pit and yet there he was again after me!

SRI AUROBINDO: The boy obviously represents some lower force and it is your weakness in the being (indicated by running away) that allows him to trouble you.

(23-2-1935)

Q. Running away was the weakness shown in the dream. How does it become a representative of my waking state in connection with the lower force?

SRI AUROBINDO: The running away is the drawing back and allowing it to gain more and more ground — not facing and destroying it.

(5-3-1935)

Q. To my query of yesterday you replied, “I doubt whether the emptiness is the real cause—it is the physical inertia that is the basis of the trouble.” I thought the inertia in itself could only halt the sadhana but not upset the being. Is it not the hostile forces that do it?

SRI AUROBINDO: The inertia gives room and power for the hostile forces to act.

(25-2-1935)

Q. I understand how depression and dissatisfaction can enter me from the environment, but not how the inertia can be so responded to.

SRI AUROBINDO: Everything can be responded to—Inertia also can spread waves of itself like other things.

(28-2-1935)

Q. Since all my present methods appear to be ineffective to deal with the attacks, would you kindly point out some that will bring an immediate relief from the inertia?

SRI AUROBINDO: Either to reject by dynamic means or to remain unaffected and let it pass are the two usual ways of dealing with the attacks.

(4-3-1935)

Q. I fail to understand what there is in my nature that prevents me from my becoming dynamic and fighting out the interfering forces. I know that I can do it. There is a will too. And yet somehow I can’t!
MOTHER INDIA

SRI AUROBINDO: Inertia is the very character of the physical consciousness, left to itself it is accustomed to be passive to forces and to be their instrument or give a mechanical response to them. In your external being there was always a certain tendency to inertia.

(4-3-1935)

Q. It is obvious that, in spite of the inert character of the physical consciousness, formerly there were days when the physical was not so much in the hands of tamas. Rather it was peaceful and at rest. Something has happened. A frequent response to inertia and the lower forces has come as a mere consequence. If we can discover the cause of the intrusion and enlighten it, I suppose there is some hope of a permanent relief from the constant upsurges.

SRI AUROBINDO: When the mind and the vital take hold of the physical and make it an instrument, then there is no inertia. But here the physical consciousness has been dealt with. If it could have received the peace of the self into itself—without covering it over with inertia, then it would have been all right. But the vital has intervened somehow with its demand and dissatisfaction, so there has been this obstruction and inability to progress. This thing often happens in the sadhana and one must have the power either to reject it dynamically or else to remain detached until it has exhausted itself. Then the true movement begins again.

(4-3-1935)

Q. Rejection and detachment when there is a rush of difficulties are good. But I feel they are hardly enough. Something more seems to be essential; the Mother knows what it is and how to do it.

SRI AUROBINDO: You are always expecting the Mother to do it—and here again the laziness and tamas come in—it is the spirit of tamasic surrender. If the Mother puts you back into a good condition, your vital pulls you down again. How is that to stop so long as you say Yes to the vital and accept its discouragement and violences and the rest of it as your own? Detachment is absolutely necessary.

(11-3-1935)

Q. I agree that despair or depression is becoming rather frequent nowadays. But you are suggesting that I am struggling all the time. I can’t understand that.

SRI AUROBINDO: If you are not struggling what are you doing? Letting it come in freely? But that is tamasic. Your letters express a helpless struggle and outcry.

(11-3-1935)
Q. In which parts of my being is tamas harboured?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is in your physical and physical-vital consciousness.

(Q-3-1935)

Q. The weakness of not being able to detach myself at once from the ordinary nature and its actions is obvious (it is reducing, though, after reading your answer, "Detachment is absolutely necessary"). But even during the engrossed state my inner consciousness was rarely allowed to lose itself and suffer falls and difficulties. Perhaps there was always one part of my being that kept itself separate from them.

I pray to the Mother to see the plight of her child, and know how much he is depressed by being dragged away from her, to feel his heart and know how the vital has filled it with agony and pain. How long shall he have to remain in such a burning separation?

Will she not take him again into her heart? It is by that hope that his body is still living on the earth. Who says that the bitter tears shed by her child are in vain?

SRI AUROBINDO: I wanted to stress two things, that is why I have written so much about them.

(1) There must be no tamasic (inert, passive) surrender to the Mother—for that will bring as its reaction a passive inert helplessness before the lower or hostile forces or suggestions, an unresisting or helplessly resisting acquiescence or sufferance of these inroads. A passive condition can bring much peace, quietude, joy even, but it disperses the being instead of concentrating it in wideness and the will becomes atrophied. Surrender must be luminous, active, a willed offering to the Mother and reception of her Force and support to its workings, at the same [time] a strong vigilant will to reject all that is not hers. Too many sadhaks cry before the attacks of their lower nature "I am helpless, I cannot react, it comes and makes me do what it wants." This is a wrong passivity.

(2) One must not get into the habit of a state in which one is always in a struggle with suggestions and forces. People very easily fall into this and make it a habit—the vital part takes a sort of glowing satisfaction in crying out "I am attacked, overcome, suffering, miserable! How tragic is my fate! Why do you not help, O Divine? There is no help, nor divine Grace? I am left to my misery and downfall etc. etc. etc." I do not want one more sadhak to fall into this condition—that is why I am calling Halt! before you get entangled into this kind of habit of constant struggle. It is what these forces want—to make you feel helpless, defeated, overcome. You must not allow it.

(Q-3-1935)

From NAGIN DOSHI
THE GRACE OF SRI AUROBINDO

THE BURDEN-BEAERER OF THE WORLD

It was about 11 o’clock at night after dinner, when, sitting under the Mother’s huge photograph and facing Sri Aurobindo’s of equal size, my friend and I were in the midst of a talk on spirituality, philosophy, mystic experiences and what not!

That day I was very much worried. I felt disgusted and pained at my vital attachments to various petty things and regretted my dark state of sadhana for the last few days.

Suddenly I heard a big crash. The glass of Sri Aurobindo’s photograph had fallen, and—from the picture where Sri Aurobindo was sitting with his piercing look of unfathomable calm and heavenly sagacity—out stepped Christ with a black sheet of cloth folded over his shoulders, his face, his beard, his hair covered with dust and clotted drops of blood and water trickling from his eyes, as if he had come after a long and tiring journey over an arduous path.

He came, stood before me in front of my table and spoke amidst the continuous “philosophic” jabberings of my friend: “You are worrying over your petty troubles. Look at me who have got the burden of the whole earth upon my head. Look at all the world’s miseries heaped there.”

He spoke and merged back in Sri Aurobindo’s photograph, and I could see Sri Aurobindo again looking at me with his deep and calm smiling gaze.

I got up from my chair, went towards the photograph to verify whether its glass was indeed broken, but only to find that everything was intact as before. The whole happening was so clear and concrete that I had not the shadow of a doubt about its authenticity. It was a symbolical seeing, physically visible to the open eyes, and came as an answer to my petty worries.

HIS REASSURING MEASURELESS COMPASSION

I was on a visit to the Ashram in 1923. I had already been here many a time before that. But this time, a few days after my coming, letters began pouring day after day from my wife that she was very ill and that I should return home without much delay.

Although I felt the seriousness of my wife’s illness and fully sympathised with her, I could not decide whether to go back or not. For a few days I postponed my going and remained stuck to my spiritual bent of mind.
One day I received a telegram from her intimating to me the gravity of her illness and wanting my return immediately. I was in a fix. I could not make up my mind, so a serious struggle tormented my days and nights.

That very evening I went to Sri Aurobindo and after his usual discourse with the sadhaks was over I remained behind to see him. I related to him my painful situation and told him that as I was unable to decide in such uneasiness of mind he should guide me.

"It is for you to decide," was his reply. In fact I was coming to the conclusion that I should return home. Suddenly I felt as if a subtle blow gave my head a jerk and created a will in me to the contrary. The struggle increased all the more. Yet in the face of such confusion my lips uttered, "I will be going tomorrow. My wife is on her death-bed; she would like to see me for the last time."

Sri Aurobindo did not answer. I left him.

And I did feel immediately after taking leave of him that indeed I had "left him." My pain turned into self-torture. I knew that my decision was wrong. But now it was taken. I knew that I was deserting him after having accepted him as my Guru. "I left my two spiritual companions. I am now leaving Sri Aurobindo, my last hope and haven. I have been unfaithful to him! I am deserting him!"

I struggled and grieved—and yet I was going the next day.

I went to see him for the last time the next morning—to have with him a meeting of parting and perhaps to secure his blessings in spite of everything.

I approached him and was completely knocked over by his behaviour. The softness of his voice, the compassion of his eyes, his hands of Grace, his flood of joy and peace pouring into me. All contradicted my expectation. I was overwhelmed by a soothing sea of delight that flowed from him and enveloped me. I was brimmed with ecstasy.

Spontaneously I was comparing his Love with my infidelity and cold desertion of him. My decision had been taken. Yet his Grace had accepted me and lavished itself on me. It was nothing if not perfect reassurance. It re-established in me a confidence in his boundless Love, his unrestricted Compassion.

Although I left the Ashram then, I departed armed with his Love and in full confidence that he had not left me.

A few years later I joined the Ashram.

*(To be continued)*

Compiled and reported by

Har Krishan Singh
The year was possibly 1948. The Razakar movement in Hyderabad was taking a most dangerous turn. All the trains which previously used to pass through Hyderabad territory loaded with passengers and luggage were then almost entirely empty and most of the passengers travelling across the country through Hyderabad State now avoided that route and circled round the Nizam's territory to reach their destinations whether in the south, north, east or west.

A friend of mine came to the Ashram in August. He is a very courageous young man and a trained gymnast. When he came he had little faith in his spiritual destiny but when he left I felt very much attracted by his devotion and his attitude of trust in the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. In fact, during his short stay in the Ashram, he had a very wonderful experience which testified to the truth of his inner preparation for Yogic progress.

When he was to leave the Ashram, he talked indignantly of people going round the Nizam's territory to reach their destinations. On his part, he said, he was not going to be cowed down and show his timidity: he would go along the direct route.

At a station before the entry of the train into the Nizam's State, about six persons got into his compartment. My friend had reserved an upper berth in the second class. He was lying in his berth. As the train moved his suspicion was aroused but he kept on wakefully watching their movements. They looked at him from time to time. Now as he could anticipate the coming events he started praying to the Mother and felt deeply that nobody except Her would save him.

They asked him to come down from the berth and keep the luggage ready so that when they would ask him he should be ready to get down at their destination. Now he seriously realised the full bearing and cost of his imprudent adventure.

* Readers are invited to send their experiences to the Editor.
HOW THE MOTHER’S GRACE CAME TO US

The usual practice of the Razakars in that area was that they made the passengers get down at a particular station, took them to the nearby hill, killed them and threw them down the hill into the valley below.

As their intended station came, one of them said, “Take your luggage, get down.” He obeyed. They too got down after him.

He could foresee that his life was now only a matter of moments. Unless some miracle happened there was no hope for his survival from the claws of death. So he kept on continuously remembering the Mother.

As they all alighted from the train on the platform, a huge-statured Razakar chief with long and up-turned moustaches came to the spot and asked his subordinates who had travelled with my friend to that station: “Who is he?” They said that they were taking him “there”. The chief looked at my friend intently. My friend remained peaceful and calm and looked as if nothing was going to happen.

Immediate was the surprising reaction of the Razakar chief. “Let him go,” he ordered his men and, pointing first to his luggage and then to the train, told the young man, “Take your luggage and get in.”

Nobody spoke. In the face of everybody and to the mute astonishment of all, without losing a second and without uttering one word, my friend got into the train, exactly at the moment when the first rays of the sun broke upon the world. As soon as he entered the compartment the train steamed out of the station and he was free.

MYSTERYING LIGHT OF GRACE

Once a relative of a sadhak who has been in the Ashram for some time had arranged in his home town a function where there was to be meditation, singing and kirtan before the photos of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

We, as Arya Samajists, are not expected to have such inclinations as kirtan before any image or even otherwise. But, for myself, I had a natural liking for it. I always felt in my heart: what an exciting and intoxicating adoration is it for the Divine! How it fills one with ecstasy and makes one forget everything except the Adored!

But this was not so with my husband who followed the Arya-Samajist line of thought without much deviation.

A sister of the sadhak’s relative was also attending the function. She invited me to it. I gave my half-consent.

I went home and told my husband about it. I told him that a sadhak from Pondicherry had come and there would be kirtan in B’s house and that I would like him to accompany me, adding that it would be difficult for me to
return home alone at that late hour of night after the function was over. He agreed to accompany me.

We went to the function and enjoyed it immensely. I also sang a song or two. During the function, I was all along lost in the Mother’s photograph, while my husband was deeply moved by Sri Aurobindo’s dynamic personality and piercing look.

After the prasad had been distributed and most of the people had left, we wanted to satisfy the deep curiosity that gripped our heart and soul. We enquired of the sadhak from Pondicherry all about the Ashram that we could conceive at that time. He answered our questions with patience and sympathy. We wanted to offer some money to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and also to be accepted as disciples by them. The sadhak explained that we could write to them and, if they accepted our offering and responded, it would be a token of their accepting us as their disciples.

We went home and, before going to bed, wrote a letter addressed to the Mother and kept our offering nearby. “I am sure,” I said, “the Mother will accept us. Though we are not worthy and fit, still she will take us under the protection of her divine Grace.”

Another hour and a half had passed by then; and, while I slept, my husband was still meditating on his bed. After some time, he suddenly woke me up. The room had become blazing white. An intense milky light was filling the room. The light was not static, it was moving. I thought that it was coming from some car outside. I looked outside the window, but there was no car or any other vehicle from which the light could come.

“The white light is the Mother’s light,” explained my husband who had known so from the above-mentioned sadhak; “and it is in answer to our letter and in acceptance of our surrender,” he added with a certainty of faith.

When the light was gone, we both meditated for some time before going to sleep.

The next day we sent our letter and the offering to the Mother. A few days later, we received from her photographs of herself and Sri Aurobindo and a copy of *The Life Divine*.

(5)

**Her Hint Put Me On The Right Way**

One evening a cousin of mine came to me demanding my help. He wanted to marry a particular girl, who was in Darjeeling. His parents had not only refused permission but told him categorically that, if he carried
out his plans in spite of their advice to the contrary, they would have nothing to do with him and his wife.

The boy was so bespelled by that girl that he preferred to leave his parents rather than forsake his idea. He came and sought to stay with me and asked for my cooperation with his plans.

I found nothing unusual and objectionable in this, for the boy was not going to be a Sannyasi or a Yogi and he had to marry one day and to some girl. What was the harm if both the boy and girl loved each other and agreed to get married, unless, of course, there were some other causes standing in the way and would mar his future career?

I agreed to help him in all good faith and we became friends.

We used to sleep in the same room. One night, before going to sleep, we talked about the arrangements to be made for his marriage. We were lying down on our sides on the beds, facing each other. Suddenly I saw the Mother in person with clear distinct features, as if she was present in very body.

Startled, I got up from my bed, checking the boy with my extended palm from speaking or asking anything, for he too, frightened, had got up with a start to find the reasons for my peculiar behaviour.

"Have you enquired about the character of the girl?" the Mother asked me in a well-articulated tone and vanished.

Now, with my excitement subsided, I turned to my friend. "What happened, what is the matter?" he was demanding of me.

I told him what had happened, and said: "Will you give me a promise that if after sufficient inquiry you found the character of the girl not good you would drop your idea of marriage completely?"

The boy agreed.

Next morning my father-in-law sent me a note saying that I should send the boy to him so that he could personally meet a European tea-planter, who had come from Darjeeling, and get first-hand information from him who happened to know the girl.

I sent him to that European with the reminder that he should relate to me the truth of the matter and that he should not forget the promise given to me.

In the evening the boy came sad and frustrated. The tea-planter had told him that the character of the girl was too well-known to need any inquiry or to be talked about. Even the ordinary street-cooly knew about her.

The marriage was cancelled.

(To be continued)

Compiled and reported by

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

23
SRI AUROBINDO—THE FIRST VOICE FOR INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE

In his preface to *Abraham Lincoln*, Basil William observes: "Statesmen—even the greatest—have rarely won the same unquestioning recognition that falls to the great warriors or those supreme in science, art or literature. This is only natural. A warrior, a man of science, an artist or a poet are judged in the main by definite achievements, by the victories they have won over foreign enemies....For the statesman there is no such exact necessary greatness. The greater he is, the less likely is his work to be marked by decisive achievement which can be signalled by some outstanding event. The chief work of a great statesman rests in a gradual change of direction given to the policy of his people, still more in a change of the spirit within them. Again, the statesman must work with a rough and ready instrument. The soldier finds or makes his army ready to yield unhesitating obedience to his commands, the sailor animates his fleet with his own personal touch....The statesman cannot mould a heterogeneous people, as a well-disciplined army or navy can be moulded, to respond to his call and his alone. He has to do all his work in a society of which a large part cannot see his object and another large part, as far as they do see it, oppose it...."

Sufficient material is not available of Sri Aurobindo's preliminary efforts towards national uplift. Hence it is not possible for students of thought to arrive at a definite conclusion. But from the beginning his work streamed forth from the deeper regions of his own being into the deeper regions of his countrymen. Naturally, very little is on the surface for study and judgment.

One thing more. Sri Aurobindo never cared to push himself to the forefront. On the contrary, he always preferred to remain behind the scene. Hence his part is overshadowed by the activities of others, of those prominent to the public eye. For this reason also a proper study and, where necessary, a comparative study is essential for a clear grasp and a proper assessment of his life-work.

Any country will feel proud and fortunate to have a patriot of the stature of Sri Aurobindo, especially as a leader of profound vision and action. But of all national leaders of his time he is perhaps the least understood. For instance, D.V. Tahmankar writes in his *Lokmanya Tilak*:
“Arabindo Ghosh was a superior type of intellect. In the first flush of revolutionary activity in 1908 he shot up into the political firmament like a meteor, but could not stand the rigours of political persecution and after a short time disappeared from the political scene. He became a recluse, retired to Pondicherry and devoted the rest of his life to the study of philosophy and mysticism.” If the author cared to know a little more, he could hardly hazard such a statement. He goes on to add, “Pal was a great orator and a man of lively imagination, but lacked political discipline. Lajpat Rai travelled to the United States, soon after Tilak’s transportation to Mandalay, and did useful work there as an Indian propagandist. His critics have charged him, not without justification, with escapist tendencies in politics. It was easier, they said, to attack the British administration from a safe distance. Even Tilak had on occasion thought the conduct of Ghosh and Lajpat Rai rather odd in that they stayed away from the battle-field. Their vision may have been clear but their action was certainly weak. One is tempted to conclude that to most of Tilak’s contemporaries nationalism was at the best an intellectual concept or a political cry. However genuinely felt, it was only an aspiration, with Tilak it was a consuming passion.”

Was Sri Aurobindo then an escapist? I shall deal with the question adequately in another issue. In the meantime I shall try to place before the readers some such facts and figures as will help them to judge for themselves what was Sri Aurobindo’s contribution to India’s resurgence and where he stands among the pioneer-leaders and founders of Indian nationalism.

To understand Sri Aurobindo, we shall have to trace the history of the dawn of the 20th century, the ruling conditions at that time that led to the birth of Indian nationalism.

In fact, his life-long evolution is the measure of India’s, nay, of man’s evolution. Hence ‘The Voice incarnate of India’s soul’ is justifiably called the representative soul of humanity.

THE BACKGROUND OF INDIAN NATIONALISM (1893-1905)

Like the years 1905 and 1906, the year 1893 has some important events to record which history cannot afford to omit or ignore. It saw the arrival of Sri Aurobindo in India as well as of the great English lady Mrs. Annie Besant, the founder of the Indian Home Rule movement, and the departure of Vivekananda and Gandhi, the former to America and the latter to South Africa. It was in this year that Tilak started the Ganapati festival with a view to rousing in the people a sense of respect for their religion and their history. It was this year that saw the poisonous outbreak of Hindu-Muslim riots, probably the
first of their kind, in Bombay and Poona. It was this very year that Sri Aurobindo’s first articles on India’s nationalism, revolutionary in spirit and substance, challenging the whole outlook and policy of the Congress, appeared in a Bombay weekly.

The nationalism of the type that developed in India in 1905 had not come into being even though the national Congress had been in existence since 1885. There was neither a fixed goal, nor a systematic method of political philosophy worth the name. Sri Aurobindo’s attack on the Congress was the first of its kind indicative of the emergence of a new Force in India’s politics, embodied in a youth of twenty-two.

The leaders running the Congress of those days had a great confidence in the British sense of justice. So the policy pursued as the policy of the Congress consisted in protest and prayer.

From the beginning Sri Aurobindo’s views were different, and so were the views of Tilak. Thus we find that the leaders of the 19th century (Pherozshah Mehta’s group) had very little to do with the emergence of Indian nationalism, though the sacrifices of some of them for the country cannot be underrated. Very rightly, therefore, Tilak commands the grateful respect of the whole country for holding up a higher ideal and following a different line of action.

But despite his sincere love for the country and his whole-souled devotion to her cause, despite his indomitable courage and great leadership, his outlook had not yet broadened to the measure of the All-India nationalism of the revolutionary type that developed later on. From historical records we find that his activities were only confined to Maharashtra: for example, social reforms like Education of Girls by Christians, Age of Consent Bill and the like. But Tilak took no time to realise the futility of such efforts and at once turned his attention to another means of rallying the people round a common object—unity through religion. With this end in view, he first started the Ganapati Festival on a large scale and then, as a further step, he introduced the Shivaji Festival to inspire his countrymen with courage and devotion to the country’s cause. This hero-worship of Shivaji drew a far larger number of people everywhere but in the course of ten years the first flush of enthusiasm gradually faded away.

Nevertheless, it served to create a stir, however small, in the national mind; but the main issue—the issue of exploitation which was draining the life-blood of the country—still remained untackled.

It is not that our veteran leaders were not conscious of the exploitation that was going on in the country. Dadabhai Naoroji was one of the first few to place before the public of England the fact that because of their heartless rule
the average annual income of the people had dwindled down to Rs. 20 per head. Another noteworthy remark of his was that although Mohamed Gazni had plundered India eighteen times and the wound he had inflicted was severe it stopped after eighteen assaults, but there was no end to the bleeding of India by the Britishers.

In the second session of the Congress Sir Dinshaw Wacha said—"Forty million of people had only one meal a day and not always that."  

Despite all knowledge of the country's terrible misery, the leaders stood helpless and could do nothing to strike at the root of the evil—the evil of exploitation. It may be that the might of the ruling power had overawed them and they were at a loss to find a way out of the impasse, except through constitutional agitation.

History, however, shows two master-minds in the country working in two different directions.

Besides the continuous drainage of the people's life-blood through exploitation, there was a widespread but insidious attack on our culture—through the spread of Christianity. The Britishers hoped that if our culture was supplanted by Christianity we would ignore mosques and temples and adopt western ways of life and, not feeling the Britishers as foreigners, accept an eternity of their rule.

The Chairman of the Directors of the East India Company, Mr. Mangles, said in the House of Commons in 1857:

"Providence has entrusted the extensive empire of Hindustan to England in order that the banner of Christ should wave triumphant from one end of India to the other. Every one must exert his strength that there may be no dilatoriness on any account in continuing in the country the grand work of making all India Christian."

Reverend Kennedy said at more or less the same time:

"Whatever misfortune comes on us, as long as our empire in India continues, so long let us not forget that our chief work is the propagation of Christianity in the land. Until Hindustan from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas embraces the religion of Christ and until it condemns the Hindu and Moslem religions our efforts must continue persistently. For this work we must make all efforts we can and use all the power and all the authority in our hands and continuous and unceasing efforts must be kept on until India becomes a magnificent nation, the bulwark of Christianity in the East."

The same motive worked behind the introduction of English education in India as indicated in a private letter of Macaulay written to his mother on

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1 How India Wrought Her Freedom by Annie Besant, p. 19.
October 12, 1836—"It is my firm belief, that if our plan of education is followed up, there would be not a single idolater in Bengal 30 years hence."

"Lord Canning himself distributed thousands of rupees to every mission and from this fact it is clear that the wish was strong in the heart of Lord Canning that all India should be Christian....And what was Government but Lord Canning and his Councillors? And thus Canning and his Council had surpassed all other officers in their holy zeal for conversion and were feeding the missionaries with lakhs of rupees.

"The Commander of the Bengal Infantry himself writes in the Government Report that he has been continuing uninterruptedly for 28 years the policy of Christianising the military and that it was a part of military duty only to save the souls of heathens from Satan."

As a matter of fact, the educated section of our country in Bombay and Bengal, ignoring their own religion and culture, did fall an easy victim to the new glamour and felt proud to be called British subjects. And the fear that India would eventually be turned into a Christiandom and be a perpetual serf of Britain was one of the reasons that led to the Great Revolt of 1857.

These facts lead to an easy inference that there were hidden motives and deeper reasons why the alien rulers were so eager and earnest to make India Christian. To kill the national consciousness of a people it is necessary to kill its individuality first. So long as the religious feeling of a people was alive and active it could not be lulled to sleep perpetually and made to feel safe. To enslave a nation it was necessary to kill its religion. If India was made Christian this safety would be achieved. No voice would then ever rise against the alien rule; rather the country would feel blessed under its mighty protection.

After the suppression of the Revolt of 1857, the glories of our race and of our swadharma were as good as wiped out from the minds of our people. In the blood of our countrymen there were not perhaps as many grains of nationalism as there were of calcium. What India is and in what her Indianness lay, the nature of her sadhana, her spiritual life in the world, what we had lost, what needed to be recovered: of all this even educated minds had no clear conception. The English had rubbed it in that what we had lost was no more than an old worn-out copper coin, and wondered why we regretted it. In its place they were willing to give us sterling gold which we should receive with a grateful heart. Not only the man in the street but also the educated man of the country thought—in fact, it had almost grown into a general conviction with the people—that whoever had even a grain of this gold was great. Says Lala Lajpatrai, "For a time the English-knowing Indian prided himself on

1 *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, pp. 59 and 61.
imitating his master. He took his dress, he took his cheroot and pipe and also his cup and beefsteak. He began to live in houses built and furnished in the English way. He detested Indian life and took pride in being Anglicized. Everything Indian was odious to his eyes. The Indians were barbarians; their religion was a bundle of superstitions; they were dirty people; their customs and manners were uncivilized; they were a set of narrow-minded bigots who did not know that man was born free....”¹ In other words, the more Anglicized you were, the greater the success you could command. Forgotten was the land of rishis and munis, the Aryavarta of the Aryans, the Lilabhum of the Avatars, the Bharat where Sri Krishna had sung the Song Celestial, the land that had resounded with the Sankhaninad of the Sankhyas, the Bharat on whose brow had shone the Sun of Truth, a few rays of which caught by countries like China, Japan and Java had made them feel infinitely blessed.

The subject nation felt happy in its subjection. The rulers got their dream fulfilled.

Tilak was the first to realise the gravity of the situation and it was he who thought of effective steps to counter it. His study of Greek history suggested to him the adoption of the way of the Olympic Games, through which he hoped to turn the people back to a true sense of their own religion and culture through a sense of their national customs and historic institutions.

That done, the next step of welding them into a nation would be easier. That is why in 1893 “he hit upon the idea of starting the Ganesh Festival.”

“For the next ten years we find him devoting his energies to organising movements in Maharashtra which aimed at reviving the lost moral dignity and self-esteem of the people.”²

**WHAT WAS SRI AUROBINDO DOING DURING THIS PERIOD?**

How Sri Aurobindo was a keen student of Greek literature, history and culture and what mastery he had over them can be seen from his academic career and his poetry. Despite this, it is interesting to note that his source of action and inspiration was not Greece but “medieval France and the revolts which liberated America and Italy. He took much of his inspiration from these movements and their leaders, especially Jeanne d’Arc and Mazzini.”³ The influence of Parnell was also working in him up to the year 1908 as is indicated in his articles on “The Doctrine of Passive Resistance.”

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¹ *Young India* by Lajpat Rai (4th Edition), p. 120.
² *Lokamanya Tilak* by D. V. Tahmankar, p. 160.
³ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, p. 33.
MOTHER INDIA

As we saw, Tilak did not stop with the Ganesh Festival but started the Shivaji Festival. Sri Aurobindo drew inspiration from Goddess Bhavani more than from her instrument Shivaji. Goddess Bhavani was the Goddess of strength. She was the source of Shivaji's strength that made him defy the mighty Moghuls. How Sri Aurobindo visualised Maharashtrian valour against the background of Bhavani's force can be seen in his poem Baji Prabhu:

And Baji knew the Goddess formidable
Who watches over India till the end.

The main object of Sri Aurobindo's "Bhavani Mandir" scheme\(^1\) was to free the mind and heart of a chosen few from fear of jail, fear of death, fear of the might of the foreign rulers and to infuse into the initiates the passion to fight for the country's emancipation even with the last drop of their blood. Only those were called to this work who were prepared to stake their all for the country.

"We need a nucleus of men in whom the Shakti is developed to its uttermost extent, in whom it fills every corner of the personality and overflows to fertilize the earth. These will go forth and carry the flame to every nook and cranny of our land."

"We have all things else, but we are empty of strength, void of energy. We have abandoned Shakti and are therefore abandoned by Shakti. The Mother is not in our hearts, in our brain, in our arms."

"If India is to survive, she must be made young again. Rushing and billowing streams of energy must be poured into her; her soul must become, as it was in the old times, like the surges, vast, puissant, calm or turbulent at will, an ocean of action or of force." This is "Bhavani Mandir," every word of which is fire. And who is Bhavani? She herself answers:

"I am the Infinite Energy which streams forth from the Eternal in the world and the Eternal in yourselves. I am the Mother of the Universe, the Mother of the Worlds and for you who are children of the sacred land, Aryabhumi, made of her clay and reared by her sun and winds, I am Bhavani Bharati, Mother of India."

The Shivaji Festival was introduced in 1894. In 1896 we see Sri Aurobindo being elected President of the Secret Society at Poona, set up by Thakur Saheb, a noble of a Rajput State. Thakur Saheb had contacted two or three regiments of the Indian army and had won them over to his side. Once Sri Aurobindo

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\(^1\) The Rowlatt Committee of 1918 took cognizance of the Bhawani Mandir scheme in their report.
journeyed to Central India to meet there some officers and men of one of the regiments.

When for the murder of the Englishman Rand in 1897 Damodar Chapekar, President of Hindu Sangha, was hanged, Sri Aurobindo in the midst of the perilous situation coolly took charge not only of this institution but of the Secret Society and of Tarun Sangha, all the three amalgamated into one anti-government organisation with himself as the head.

Except for Tilak and Sri Aurobindo, we find no other national leader facing the dangers of the day. To lead secret societies whose avowed object was to upset the Government was indeed playing with fire.

Barindra Kumar Ghose writes in his *Agnyuga* that Sri Aurobindo had initiated him into revolutionary work by placing in his hands an unsheathed sword and a copy of the Gita with a vow that he would carry on the work of revolution as long as there was life in him. If any secret escaped from his mouth or if he committed any action contrary to the rules of the Secret Society he would pay the penalty by his life.

According to Hemchandra, Sri Aurobindo’s plan was to divide Bengal into six centres. When his plan was placed before the youths, “it attained rapid prosperity; existing groups and associations of young men who had not yet the clear idea or any settled programme of revolution began to turn in this direction and a few who had already the revolutionary aim were contacted and soon developed activity on organised lines; the few rapidly became many.”

His intention was that “centres were to be established in every town and eventually in every village.”

Madhavrao was sent abroad for military training, to learn bomb-making and to secure arms etc. This is referred to in one of his letters to Mrinalini: “I have to keep money to send to Madhavrao. He is sent to England on a special mission.”

Hemchandra says in his book *Btplab Prachesta* that in one of his visits to the Midnapore centre Sri Aurobindo himself initiated him along with three or four others into this cult with the sword and the Gita in hand. He adds that Sri Aurobindo with others tried his aim at a target.

What his ultimate aim was in these secret activities is clear from his words: “My idea was an armed revolution in the whole of India.”

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1 *Agnyuga*, p. 39.
2 *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, pp 41-2.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid. p. 20
5 In reply to a question Sri Aurobindo said thus on 18th December, 1938.
Going back to the year 1893, we hear the first voice raised against the mendicant policy and practice of the Congress. Whose was this voice? In 1892 Dadabhai Naoroji stood for election to the British Parliament from Holborn. “Who would vote for the black man?” came the taunt of Lord Salisbury. But thanks to his great position and prestige among the people of England, the Parsi was returned to Parliament. Sri Aurobindo was then in England. And he, a mere boy barely out of his teens, was one of the first among the Indians in England as well as in India to raise his powerful voice against the basic policy of the moderates.

The speeches that Naoroji delivered in the House of Commons created a very good impression. For the amelioration of the condition of the country he introduced several constructive proposals. Among them was the Simultaneous Examination of the I.C.S. in England as well as in India. Sir Surendranath Banerjee also used to take much interest in this subject, as noted by Dr. P. Sitaramayya. For Sri Aurobindo, it was “playing with bubbles.” His contention was: “Nor will Simultaneous Examination and the liberal appointments of Indians mend matters; for an Englishman serves the Government as a member of the same ruling race and can afford to be occasionally independent; but the Indian civilian is a serf masquerading as a heaven-born and can only deserve favour and promotion by his zeal in fastening the yoke heavier upon his fellow-countrymen. As a rule, the foreign Government can rely on the ‘native’ civilian to be more zealously oppressive than even the average Anglo-Indian official.”

If the history of the Indian freedom movement is to be accurate and authentic, it is up to it to take note of the fact that Sri Aurobindo’s was the first voice for India’s independence. While still a student in England, he enrolled himself as a member of the Secret Society named “Lotus and Dagger,” each member of which vowed “to work for the liberation of India.” Here he made several “revolutionary speeches” which were noted against him by the British authorities, obviously for their serious import. The same year that he returned from England, just a little more than four months after his arrival, he pursued his labours for India’s emancipation by trying, first of all, to emancipate the only organised national body of the time, the Indian National Congress, mainly from its rooted belief in British justice.

2 *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, p. 13.
3 Ibid., p. 14.
In this connection, his very first two articles "created a sensation and frightened Ranade and other Congress leaders". "They succeeded in preventing further publication and he drew back into silence. But he did not abandon either his ideas or his hope of effective action." 

He was the first to advocate mass awakening; the first to give Indian nationalism a spiritual basis, a spiritual bent and a spiritual motive; the first as a political leader to teach the children of Bengal to risk their all for the country in a holy sacrifice. He sent a clarion call to the youths to become the sacrificial fuel in the sacred yajna set aflame for the liberation of the country.

The facts given below will speak for themselves.

In 1893 Dadabhai Naoroji, the leader of the Moderates, said in the course of his presidential address at the Lahore Congress: "Our faith in the instinctive love of justice and fair play of the people of the United Kingdom is not misplaced. I for one have not the shadow of a doubt in dealing with such justice-loving fair-minded people as the British... We may rest fully assured that we shall not work in vain. It is this conviction which has supported me against all difficulties. I have never faltered in my faith in British character and have always believed that the time will come when the sentiments of the British nation and our Gracious Sovereign proclaimed to us in our Great Charter of the Proclamation of 1858 will be realised."

According to Tahmankar, Tilak was occupied with educational movements during the first eleven years of his political career. Again at another place he says: "Tilak's political career began in earnest with the two disasters which overtook India in the year 1896 and 1897." Quoting Dr. Sahasrabudhe, Tahmankar says, "In his well-informed essay on Indian Democracy Dr. S. P. Sahasrabudhe has already shown how every page of the Keshari bears witness to Tilak's great concern for workers, peasants...." But the quotation supposed to be the best possible from the Keshari of 1881 is this: "Whether a country is rich or poor, conquered or free, the majority of its inhabitants, as a rule, earns its livelihood by manual labour. It cannot be said therefore that a particular country has, economically speaking, improved so long as the conditions of the toiling majority in that country have not improved."

Another biographer of Tilak, Panduranga Ganesh Despande, in his Lokamanya Tilak, in Hindi, says: "In 1895 the Congress session was held in Poona.

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1 Sri Aurobindo on Himself, p. 27.
3 Lokamanya Tilak by D. V. Tahmankar, p. 37.
4 Ibid., p. 127
5 Ibid., p. 319.
In the issue of the *Keshari* dated 5th January 1895, Tilak made a survey of the Congress activities for the past ten years and expressed his satisfaction.\(^1\)

Another point which gives us reason to say that Sri Aurobindo's was the first voice against the basic policy of the 19th century Congress is the fact that in the *Keshari* no such radical views were expressed from 1881 to 1893. If they had been, they would have attracted public attention and there would have been Ranades to baulk them, as was in the case of Sri Aurobindo. It is only from Dr. Shay that we learn that it was in 1896 that Tilak publicly disagreed with the Congress. He says:\(^2\)

"Tilak held a post in the Congress as early as 1892, as Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Conference. In 1894, he was elected a fellow of Bombay University....For two years he was a member of the Bombay Legislative Council ...he soon realised that public office under the alien raj was self-defeating. About this time he also began to become disillusioned with the programme and policies of the Moderate-dominated Congress....In 1896, he publicly announced his disagreement with the policies of the Congress in writing." Then Dr. Shay goes on to quote from the *Keshari* of January 12, 1896:

"For the last twelve years we have been shouting ourselves hoarse, desiring that the Government should hear us. But our shouting has no more affected the Government than the sound of a gnat. Our rulers disbelieve our statements or profess to do so. Let us now try to force our grievances into their ears by strong constitutional means. We must give the best political education possible to the ignorant villagers. We must meet them on terms of equality, teach them their rights and show them how to fight constitutionally. Then only will the Government realise that to despise the Congress was to despise the Indian Nation. Then only will the efforts of the Congress leaders be crowned with success. Such a work will require a large body of able and single-minded workers to whom politics would not mean some holiday recreation but an everyday duty to be performed with strictest regularity and utmost capacity."

From these facts it is clear that from close contact with the Congress and the Legislative Council for some years Tilak experienced the futility of their policies and lines of action but all he did to meet the situation was to try to force the country's grievances into the rulers' ears by strong constitutional means, by training the masses to fight constitutionally.

Sri Aurobindo's stand from the very beginning was different. He was for a radical change in the Congress policy, not for the redress of grievances but for striking at the root of the grievances. The following quotations bear this out.

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\(^1\) *Lokamanya Tilak* by D. V. Thamankar, p. 83.

\(^2\) *The Legacy of Lokamanya*, p. 79.
At the special Session of the Congress held at Calcutta Lala Lajpat Rai observed in his presidential address....“It was at Calcutta that the ideals of the new Nationalism that has since then grown into a mighty tree, were first expounded and explained by one of the purest-minded and the most intellectual of Bengal's gifted sons, I mean, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh.”

Dr. K. M. Munshi's views also deserve mention:

“Few people in the present generation are able to appreciate the value of Sri Aurobindo's contribution to our nationalism, who between 1904 and 1909 gave a new shape to its form and content...."

“It was this young man who, in the nineties of the last century when leading Indians looked upon British Rule as a gift of Providence, not only conceived the idea of Indian Independence, but took steps to achieve it. In spite of his being entirely foreign-bred, the Mother—for, to him, India was the Mother—claimed him as her own and he became the prophet of our militant nationalism, spreading the cult of the 'Eternal and Timeless India' among aspiring young men; founding revolutionary societies; leading an outspoken national wing to new ventures. Apart from secret societies founded and inspired by him, he attempted, though unsuccessfully, to convert the Congress into an instrument of revolutionary action. He gave to the country the programme of non-cooperation, boycott of British goods, national schools as a substitute for Government institutions, arbitration courts in place of the ordinary courts of law and volunteer organisations to prepare for mass action—a programme so successfully adopted by Gandhiji in succeeding decades.”

As regards Sri Aurobindo's insistence on mass awakening, let us hear the comment of Mr. Despande, the editor of the Indu Prakash:

“Honest criticism is very badly needed. Our institutions have no strong foundation and are in hourly danger of falling down. Under these circumstances, it was idle, nay, criminal, to remain silent while our whole energy in political progress was spent in a wrong direction. The question at issue is momentous. It is the making or unmaking of the nation.”

Such was the prevailing condition of the country and of its national sentiment in 1893 when Sri Aurobindo levelled his first attack at the Congress.

Probably no leader had a higher esteem for the Congress than Sri Aurobindo in the beginning. Here are his words:

“The Congress was to us all that is to man most dear, most high and most sacred; a well of living water in deserts more than Saharan, a proud banner

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1 *The Call to Young India* by Lajpat Rai, p. 160.
2 K. M. Munshi—Foreword to *Mahayogi* by R. R. Diwakar.
3 *Life of Sri Aurobindo* by A. B. Purani.
in the battle of liberty, and a holy temple of concord where the races met and mingled."\(^1\)

Still he took his stand against the Congress in those early days simply because he considered the interests of the country superior to the prestige of the Congress.

As regards mass awakening, the famous leader Sir Phirozshah Mehta had come to the conclusion: "The awakening of the masses from their ignorance and misery is entirely unimportant and any expenditure of energy in that direction entirely premature.\(^2\)

Sri Aurobindo’s viewpoint was diametrically opposite: "The proletariat among us is sunk in ignorance and overwhelmed with distress. But with that distressed and ignorant proletariat...resides, whether we like it or not, our sole assurance of hope, our sole chance in the future."\(^3\)

In the issue of the Indu Prakash of March, 1894, his prevision about the masses expressed itself as follows: "Whoever succeeds in understanding and eliciting their strength becomes by the very fact master of the future."

"History teaches us," says Mr. Manomohan Ghosh, Chairman of the Reception Committee of the 1890 Calcutta Congress, ‘that in all ages and all countries it is the thinking classes who have led the unthinking, and in the present state of our society we are bound not only to think for ourselves, but also to think for those who are still too ignorant to exercise that important function.’ History teaches! why, these gentlemen can never have studied any history at all except that of England."\(^4\)

Evidently, according to Sri Aurobindo, Ghosh had not in view the mass upheaval in France which through “purification by blood and fire...blotted out in five terrible years the accumulated oppression of thirteen centuries.”\(^5\)

Sri Aurobindo believed it was this example that held good for India. How radical, and unerring and straightforward were these public utterances one can judge for oneself. Prof. Haridas Mookerjee states: “Few patriots and politicians can bear comparison with Sri Aurobindo.”\(^6\)

Though these revolutionary ideas could not catch the imagination of the then ruling leaders of the Congress, yet the future showed that this series of articles contained the embryo of India’s revolutionary nationalism.

\(^1\) Indu Prakash, the first issue.
\(^2\) Ibid., 4-12-1893.
\(^3\) Ibid., 4-12-1893.
\(^4\) Ibid., 18th September, 1893.
\(^5\) Ibid.,
\(^6\) Hindusthan Standard, August 15, 1958.
When Mr. Sun-Yet-Sen was not even allowed to show his plan to the then Viceroy, he withdrew from China and after a time came out with such power that people even to-day commemorate the occasion by holding a festival every year. What fruits Sri Aurobindo’s efforts bore we shall discuss later on.

So far we have seen that his vision, his views, his actions have put him in an isolation, though certainly in a splendid isolation. In India’s political firmament, against a galaxy of the leading minds of the country, Sri Aurobindo was a star apart, with a new message of light and liberty.

Narayan Prasad
SRI AUROBINDO’S SAVITRI

A NOTE BY RAYMOND FRANK PIPER, PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY, EMERITUS SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, U.S.A.

(The following is a quotation from pages 131 and 132 of Chapter XV, “Expansions of Aesthetic Experience: Through Art to God”, in Professor Piper’s THE HUNGRY EYE—AN INTRODUCTION TO COSMIC ART (Publishers: De Vorse & Co., California 1956). Professor Piper refers to Sri Aurobindo elsewhere also in his book. On page 31 he writes: “...the Indian master, Sri Aurobindo, one of the few greatest minds of our century.”)

We know that we must resort to the art of poetry for expressing, to the fullest possible artistic limits, the yearnings and battles of mankind for eternal life. And fortunately a tremendous new body of metaphysical and mystical poetry has already inaugurated the new Age of Illumination. This poetry radiates from the master metaphysician, mystic, and poet, Sri Aurobindo, and his Ashram in Pondicherry, India. During a period of nearly fifty years before his passing in 1950, he created what is probably the greatest epic in the English language and the longest poem (23,831 lines of iambic blank verse) in any language of the modern world. I venture the judgment that it is the most comprehensive, integrated, beautiful, and perfect cosmic poem ever composed. It ranges symbolically from a primordial cosmic void, through earth’s darkness and struggles, to the highest realms of supramental spiritual existence, and illumines every important concern of man, through verse of unparalleled massiveness, magnificence, and metaphorical brilliance.

This epic is called Savitri, A Legend and a Symbol, 1951, published by the Ashram. A sentence from K. D. Sethna (The Poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo, 1947, p. 119) indicates its plot. “Savitri, fighting Satyavan’s death, is in Sri Aurobindo’s hands an avatar of the immortal Beauty and Love plunging into the trials of terrestrial life and seeking to overcome them not only in herself but also in the world she has embraced as her own: she is sworn to put an utter end to earth’s estrangement from God.” The poem begins,
SRI AUROBINDO’S SAVITRI

“It was the hour before the Gods awake...
A fathomless zero occupied the world.”

And it ends,

“She brooded through her stillness on a thought
Deep-guarded by her mystic folds of light,
And in her bosom nursed a greater dawn.”

Savitri is perhaps the most powerful artistic work in the world for expanding man’s mind towards the Absolute.
LONG ago there were two friends, two young men of the same age and occupation, who although they were devoted friends were always quarrelling.

The trouble was that whereas one of them was a believer, the other was a confirmed atheist, and consequently the arguments they would have over whether God existed or not would often become quite fierce.

One day a dreadful thing happened.

They went off to work as usual, which was cutting down trees for firewood, when again they began to argue.

"I tell you there is a God," said the believer.

"Nonsense," smiled the other cynically.

"There must be a God, I tell you, because in the first case we didn’t create ourselves, now, did we? And in the second case, nothing can come from nothing..."

"Oh fiddlesticks," said the disbeliever calmly, "It’s poor fools like you who believe everything you’re told because you’ve no sense to think for yourself. Now if you had read as much as I have on the subject..."

Suddenly his friend lost his temper completely.

"There is a God, I tell you," he screamed, and raising the axe he was carrying brought the blunt end crashing down on his friend’s head, killing him outright and raising a bump.

Then horrified and full of remorse at what he had done, he hit himself on the head and slumped down dead beside the body of his companion.

Presently they both stood, sadly looking down at the mortal frames they had so violently vacated, for they were now in their subtle bodies.

But habit dies hard, and when they realised they weren’t at all dead, they began to argue again.

"Now look what you’ve done," complained the agnostic. "You had no right to hit me with the hatchet."

"I was merely trying to impress upon you," said the other patiently, "the undeniable fact that there is a God."

"That’s all very well, but you could have been a little more tactful."

Just then a holy man came upon the scene and, seeing the two youthful
bodies lying there, began to weep in pity. Solemnly he began to pray that life be again restored to those two bodies that had been so cruelly struck down in the prime of youth. And so earnest were his entreaties that two gods came down in response.

The gods looked at the bodies, and observing that they were young and fresh and, apart from the bumps, almost as good as new, they decided that they would themselves inhabit them, and go a-romping about the earth for a while. Whereupon the holy man was overjoyed to see his prayer answered, for the bodies came to life, stood up, turned to each other and smiled, then hand in hand joyfully went on their way.

"There," exclaimed the believer triumphantly, "I told you there was a God."

"Oh fiddlesticks," said the agnostic calmly. "It's poor fools like you who believe everything you see. Now if you had read as much as I have on the subject..."

But his companion wasn't listening any more. He was reaching for the axe again.

**The Brothers**

Once there were five brothers named respectively Pavitra, Rajarshi, Indra, Devendra, and Eknath.

They were all seriously intent on doing their sadhana because each wanted to realise the Divine just as soon as possible.

Pavitra was a great and industrious worker, so he chose the way of Works. Rajarshi was by nature emotional and loving, so he chose the way of Love and Bhakti. Indra was possessed of a great intellect, so he naturally followed the way of Knowledge. Devendra was blessed with a fine physique and so found Hatha Yoga much to his liking; while Eknath, having no exceptional gifts, had a general interest in all of the ways to the Divine.

The years went by, but, sad to relate, not one of them in spite of the intensity of his efforts could say that he had realised God.

So one day they held council together and decided to consult a wise old Guru to find out which one of them was nearest to Realisation, since of course none of them had attained to it.

Solemnly they came and sat round the old man—who for the most part dwelt beneath a large and shady tree—and presented their case.

When they had finished talking, he looked steadily at each of the brothers in turn and, taking up a piece of stick he kept for the purpose, began to write in the sandy earth. This, it must be explained, was his only method of communication because he maintained a strict silence.
Slowly he began to write the letter P.

"Ah," thought Pavitra, "of course it is I who am nearest to the Divine. Just what I expected. Those others with their high feelings and sentiments and grand-sounding knowledge are all very well....But, in the end, it is the Worker on whom everybody depends. He gets things done, and he's the one who is sent for if things go wrong. The rest are only idle idealists and splendid talkers...."

But the next letter wasn't what Pavitra expected. It was the letter R.

"Ah," thought Rajarshi, "of course it is I. For after all, Work and Knowledge and so on are all right, but everybody knows the power that Love has. My brothers are good enough in their own way of course, but really none of them can love as well as I can."

But the next letter wasn't what Rajarshi expected. It was the letter I.

"Ah," thought Indra, "who else could it be but me? It is Intelligence above all that people need to get anywhere near the Divine, and that's what I've got. Not that the rest are stupid, of course, but compared to myself they obviously lack comprehension. And nobody can get very far without it."

But the next letter wasn't what Indra expected. It was the letter D. Devendra looked at the crestfallen faces of his brothers and smiled.

"What is the good," he thought, "of all endeavour towards the Light if we don't have a strong body to contain it? It seems to me that my poor brothers would have done better if they had each had some more exercise and better muscles, and had not done so much reading of books and so on."

But the next letter wasn't what Devendra expected. It was the letter E.

Eknath almost laughed because now he knew that the old man had been playing a game, and it was his name he was going to write. After all, it was an all-round development that was needed most, and that was his ideal. Consequently it was he who was nearest to the Divine, which was what he had expected all along. It couldn't be otherwise.

But the happy smile faded from Eknath's face when he realised that the old man had finished writing and had laid down the stick.

For the wise guru had found a way to express in a word that all were equally near to the Divine and, because of one unfortunate quality, equally far. And it took the earnest brothers quite a few moments to comprehend the full implication of the little word that lay inscribed before them.
ODE TO THE SUN OF SRI AUROBINDO'S COMPASSION

Matchless eternity of burning diamond grace!
Limitless Fire of the Inscrutable!
O ocean-will
Of the deathless, ageless pinnacle-gaze,
Thou art
Now a close portion of the earth's time-heart.
Not in response to dumb appeal
But self-lost sacrifice ineffable
Thou hast come down
On night's sleep-frown,
A bourseless majesty of the sun,
A crown
Of god-dominion
To make
This cosmic body of ignorance
Awake
To His unboundaried omnipotent trance
And kill
The titan and the snake
Of abysses unchangeable.
O peak,
Thy grandiose flame I seek,
Though limbs are blind,
Unaware that Thy glory of the Vast
In timeless holocaust
Has leaned
Into the core of dusty matter and mind,
And time has not gleaned
Thy spaceless heritage-wealth of god
And clod
Yet sleeps by epiphanies ungripped.
A giant impotence desire-lipped
Strangles the soul
And clips
MOTHER INDIA

Its luminous winging to His Whole
Of apocalypse.
But my indrawn spirit knows
That Thy mystic rose
Is there within the heart of somnolence
Behind all coma's fence.
Soon shall it rise to see
The damask sky-immortality
Is there in its void
And a wide uncontrollable flood
Awaits
Beyond its eyeless gates.
I know Thy presence shall bring
The last advent of the King;
A symbol of His grace
That stoops from golden firmamental ways
Thou art He,
The saving eternity
That shall change our swoon
Into the bright awakening of Noon,
Thy light
Shall bare His all-conquering infinite
And earth shall rise
To front His visage of gnostic surprise—
Alone
It shall merge in His unthinkable unknown.

ROMEN
THUS SANG MY SOUL

(Poems To the Mother)

(10)

IV. THE NIGHT OF SOUL AND SELF-OBLIVION
(Continued)

27. THE END OF ME

I want to get away from the coercing coil
Of a world that keeps my hands-feet yoked to the toil
Of tearful life. Unable its grief to shake
I summon Thy swift-winged help! O Mother, break
These feebling fetters, for the longing of my heart
Outcries to Thee alone.—Love, what for art
Thou and Thy gloried compassion, if my call
Must turn back unechoed unanswered after all,
If my beseechings had to bring back baffled hope
More shattered than before. O Sweet, now stop
Thy cruel playfulness. Unbearable
Becomes the worldly burden: now let fall
From me this crying cloak of mortality.
Victory of Thy Love is the end of me.

28. INITIATION

O Lord, in deep despair I lie;
My love's fervour for Thee afrost,
   No more heart's fine free pinions fly.
   Of all my singeing sins washed white,
I freeze, in purity's self-love lost.
   Not all the Blue-born touches bliss me;
Haunted I come by colours of night
Seeking Redemption's only place,—
With instancy of Thy very Grace
O kiss me.
Hovering and roving through winds and whirlwinds of life I come
Precipitating into Thy Compassion's sea,
As deeper and deeper down self-ocean's heart I plumb
I face uprushing dark's confused profundity.

An unforeseen battle becomes my occupation,
For my self-light's survival I have dauntless waged
A multi-frontal war against the falsehood's fabrication
Of Truth. In a life-and-death struggle I am engaged.

I strive and fight and slay, am slain, I suffer rout,
Rise, fall again and rise anew to be defeated
Or win a victory. Clash-locked through faith and doubt
I march, so never is man's right “to be” forfeited.

But never, Mother, may I lose the hard-won ground
That widens the field of Thy new Light's manifestation,
Let everywhere Thy omnipotent Love's reveille sound:
"Rejoice, O souls, now over the world rules God's Compassion."

(To be continued)
WAVES IN THE ONE

All men who die
Share death with Me,
Yet I am deathless.

All men who live
Share life with Me,
Yet I am life-less.

All change that is
Is change in Me,
Yet am I forever changeless.

All that is finite
Is born from Me,
Though I am infinite.

All that is speech
Proceeds from My silence,
Yet I am Nameless.

All that is many
Unfolds from the One,
Yet I am unseparate.

Whatever lives
Lives in Me,
Yet am I forever beyond.

From fear of Me
From love of Me,
All worlds rise and fall—
Eternally.

Irwin L. Arlt
SRI AUROBINDO was essentially a philosophical temperament interested profoundly in the fundamentals of things. Human nature, ultimate reality and social progress, all interested him deeply and he sought real solutions of the problems raised by them. We have said before that he primarily addressed himself to the problem of world thought, culture and progress. The solution he has offered is, therefore, of general application. However, the nature of it has been inspired by earlier Indian ventures in the field and is, therefore, Indian in character and as such has a special application to India.

The world situation today is, we have said earlier, a culmination and a crisis of a great civilisation. It may be stated clearly in Sri Aurobindo’s own words. Says he, “At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed the choice of its destiny, for a stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way.... Man has created a system of civilisation which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage ... Reason and science can only help by standardising, by fixing everything into an artificially arranged and mechanised unity of material life. A greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole-power is needed to weld all into a greater unity of whole-life.”

Thus the present times constitute an evolutionary crisis in human history, which involves a high state of development of one faculty accompanied by an experience of its limitations and which involves a call for the next higher faculty in the evolutional scale. This next higher faculty is the one of whole-knowledge, whole-will and whole-being, which can competently deal with the rich and complex cultural life of the times. In other words, the growth and training of integral personality and synthetic function of consciousness are now required.

If this reading of the cultural situation is correct, then we have to take up a new attitude to life as a whole and go forth on a new venture of a higher

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cultural life, of which the basic principle will be integrality of knowledge, life and experience. This will mean a new education, a new personality and a new scale of values. Philosophy, as also other branches of learning, will then proceed upon an essential basis of unity of life and experience and seek an interpretation and enrichment of the same. It will then, no longer, be a purely intellectual pursuit and adventure of ideas, taking its origin in intellectual curiosity and ministering to intellect alone. It will be, on the other hand, a seeking of life as a whole and ministering to its full growth and need. The divorce of the theoretical and the practical interests will have to be made good in a more comprehensive interest of life and experience.

This standpoint should mean to India no new adventure, but a recovery of an old familiar approach now enriched by the new experience of purely intellectual inquiry. In India, philosophy, religion and yoga have always gone hand in hand. Philosophy has given mental clarity and conviction to the religious aspiration and practice while religion and yoga have given vigour and life to philosophical reflection. This standpoint would put contemporary philosophy in India in conscious continuity with the full force of its past traditions and give her the best psychological situation for future creativity. And the period of the recent past, which today stands as an interruption, will then get assimilated as a fine enrichment.

The new lead which Sri Aurobindo gives to Indian philosophy primarily consists of this essential standpoint. Philosophy must, according to him, be an interpretation of integral experience, conscious, subconscious and superconscious, and a means of its growth and enrichment. Its seeking for the True and the Real must be integral, involving knowing, feeling and willing and lead to an actual enhancement in life and experience. Such enhancement in life and experience really involves a progressive growth and development of a succession of instruments of knowledge. And it is in the growth and attainment of these that the best prospects of the extension of our knowledge of Reality lie. In his view, “only by an extension of the field of consciousness and an unhoped-for increase in our instruments of knowledge” can the problems of philosophy be really solved. Mind, Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition, Overmind and Supermind are the most important successive instruments attainable in a vertical extension and growth of man’s consciousness. And each one of them means a higher power of knowledge. The problems, which are insoluble for mind, are not so to intuition, because the latter is able to grasp the inner essences of things, whereas mind has to build upon outer forms.

This view gives to philosophy a vast, in fact an infinite range of exploration and discovery and, therefore, prospects of inexhaustible creativity. The creati-
vity of the ideational trains is obviously a poor thing by the side of the infinite resources of integral experience. A mere sense of higher instruments of knowledge itself opens up indefinite hope to tackle all problems. This is a capital point of the new lead that Sri Aurobindo's philosophy gives, with a great wealth of evidence and argument, to contemporary India as well as the world.

On another point the lead has in a way a more exclusive reference to India. The doctrine of the unreality of the world and matter had found expression in the Upanishads themselves, but it was only one trend there. Later in Buddhism it became a reasoned philosophy and in Shankara's Mayavada a confirmed principle. With this development has gone a relative pessimism too. All this has naturally contributed to the growth of a distinct outlook upon life, which in the changed atmosphere of the contemporary world is finding itself ill at ease. Leaders of thought and life in India have during the last century uniformly represented a life- and world-affirming outlook in place of the older life- and world-denying one. But while in action we have adopted the affirming attitude, in inner feeling the denying attitude persists with a considerable force. This makes us divided within ourselves and weakens our acceptance of science, technology and the spirit of social progress distinguishing modern life. This calls for a proper philosophy to aid the necessary inner reintegration.

Now the lead of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy here is that matter is no denial of the spirit, but only an obscure and dense form of it, which is evolutionally tending to become a proper medium and expression of it. The direct issue of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy itself is whether divine life is possible on earth. In other words, can the Spirit be reconciled with Matter or must the Spirit remain an eternal stranger in the wastes of material existence? Sri Aurobindo's answer is categorical. Matter is "a fit and noble material" and entirely amenable to the Spirit. And this he demonstrates by supplying and characterising the various evolutional steps, and recognisably showing how Matter is the other end of the same continuous series to the Spirit. Besides, these various steps being the normal cosmic processes leading to the manifestation of the Spirit, the world and matter become the proper stage for the realisation of the Divine. A divine life on earth is, therefore, not only possible, it is the necessary culmination of the course of evolution.

This is the barest substance of a philosophical position, which the Indian cultural situation frantically calls for and without which we can hardly get out of our inner conflict.

Shankara had, in his day, recovered the Absolute Brahman to the metaphysical mind of India. In that the Indian mind found its true anchor-sheet of life and that was a supreme satisfaction. But the world had been dropped as 'Maya' and with that had gone human individuality, religious aspiration and
social progress. Today evidently a new philosophical synthesis is needed. And this Sri Aurobindo gives us in a full comprehensive form. He reaffirms the fundamental truth of Vedantic philosophy, viz., that the absolute Brahman is the only Reality. But this does not now mean a denial of the world. The world is the legitimate Becoming of the Being of Brahman. It is the evolving expression, manifestation or self-realisation of the Brahman in outer form. Of this evolutionary march human individuals are the leaders, since it is in them that the higher qualities of experience are first realised and then generalised in society. Individuality and universality are both essential to the progressive realisation of the Transcendental in the world. And religion, philosophy, art, literature and socio-political life are the aids and means in the education and training of mankind in its march towards the realisation of the divine life on earth, which is inherent in the nature of the evolutionary process itself.

Such is the new lead which contemporary Indian philosophy is called upon to consider and ponder over, as much for self-rejuvenation and future creativity as for readaptation of the national culture. The same is a contribution of present-day India to the philosophical thought of the world, both for a reorientation of the general cultural situation and for giving to philosophy the direction of a more integral purpose.

(Concluded)

INDRASEN
BUDDHISM VIS-À-VIS HINDUISM

(Continued from the previous issue)

THE NATURE OF BUDDHA'S EXPERIENCE OF NIRVANA

There are two methods of dealing with a problem: practical and theoretical; psychological and metaphysical. For example, the Sankhya discussed tattvas, principles; the Yoga, assuming those principles, discussed methodology, the processes. Similarly, while the Vedanta discusses principles, the nature of the supreme Reality, Buddhism discusses method, the moral and meditational disciplines leading to supernatural experiences whose nature Buddha refused to describe. True, Buddha also speaks of Prajna, the four noble truths, but these too are offered in the first instance for practical purposes, for the purpose of fixing one’s mind on them for creating a state of vairagya in the aspirant, for turning him away from the world of names and forms. Their full transcendental meaning is revealed only at the end. And when that happens, that is Buddhahood, Enlightenment and Nirvana whose nature he refused to discuss.

But can we guess, in the face of Buddha’s silence, the meaning of what he meant? By guessing, I do not mean arriving at and knowing the truth as he knew them. That is not given to intellect at all. By guessing, I mean, can we place him in the spiritual tradition? That is, was Buddha just a freak in the sense that what happened to him happened to none else before and to none else after except of course to some of his bright disciples? Or was he a mighty representative, a leader of a well-authenticated spiritual tradition such as is so highly developed in the Upanishads and confirmed by scriptures of all faiths and ages? In short, did he belong to a spiritual tradition which is timeless and the same everywhere except in unessentials or was he an accident in the spiritual tradition of mankind?

I believe that, posed thus, the question is not difficult to answer. His spiritual experience could not be freakish, arbitrary and personal. It must have been of a character universal and necessary. There is reason to believe that his spiritual experience was wholly in the Vedantic tradition. This conclusion is inescapable as one studies Buddha’s teachings. Buddha himself claims no more. He only claims to have “seen an ancient way, an ancient road followed by the wholly awakened ones of older times”. In Buddhism, as in the Vedanta, self-
BUDDHISM VIS-À-VIS HINDUISM

abnegation was to precede a transcendental experience. One has to discover the voidness of the seeming full before one can discover the fullness of the seeming void. "Not by speech, not by mind, not by sight can He be apprehended." Desire has to go: "when are cut all the knots of the heart on earth". All mental construction, imagination and fancy have to go. "When cease the five senses, together with the mind, and the intellect stirs not," then begins the dawn of the spiritual knowledge and freedom. Buddha confirms the Upanishadic truth above. He says, "The Tathagata, O Vaccha, is free from all theories; but this, Vaccha, does the Tathagata know,—the nature of form and how form arises, and how form perishes; the nature of sensation, and how sensation arises, and how sensation perishes; the nature of perception and how perception perishes; the nature of the predisposition, and how the predispositions arise, and how they finish; the nature of consciousness, and how consciousness arises, and how consciousness perishes. Therefore, say I that the Tathagata has attained deliverance and is free from attachment, inasmuch as all imaginings, or agitations, or false notions concerning an Ego or anything pertaining to an Ego, have perished, have faded away, have been given up and relinquished." The seeming self, the vital as well as the mental, which is mistaken for the permanent and the eternal has to fall silent.

Not only in the self-noughting of the phenomenal but also in the characterisation of the transcendental, Buddha follows the Upanishads. The nihilistic rendering by which Buddhism is known today is caused by his future followers like Nagasena, but there is little in the teachings of the master himself to support this negativism. "The Deathless has been found by me," declared Buddha after his enlightenment. Nirvana was described as a state 'in which there is neither old age, nor fear, nor disease, nor birth, nor death, nor anxiety.' In Udana (Suttapitaka), it is called abhuta, ajata, akata, asankhata (unbecome, unborn, unmade, uncompounded). This is almost the language of the Vedanta, the THAT of the Upanishads, declared to be imperishable, deathless, free, unborn, self-existent (svayambhu), uncompassing (paribhu) by Isa Upanishad; resplendent (divya), formless (a-mūrtta), pure (subhra) by Mundaka Upanishad; timeless (a-kāla), without parts (a-kāla), great glory (mahad yasas) by Śvetasvatara Upanishad. In this state which is called Nirvanic by Buddha and Brahmic by the Vedanta, there is a complete cessation of diminution or development, the state of prapancopasama as the Mandukya Upanishad declares. It is self-same eternally and "deep, immeasurable and unfathomable."

The interesting account of Buddha's spiritual experience of enlightenment confirms and closely agrees with the Upanishadic teachings regarding the nature of the Ultimate Reality.

"At that time the Buddha, the Blessed One, was dwelling at Uruvela
at the foot of the Bo tree on the banks of the river Neranjara, having just attained the Buddhahship. Then the Blessed One sat cross-legged for seven days together at the foot of the Bo-tree experiencing the bliss of emancipation....Then the Blessed One, after the lapse of seven days, arose from that state of exalted calm, and leaving the foot of the Bo-tree...he sat cross-legged at the foot of the Ajapata banyan tree for seven days together, experiencing the bliss of emancipation.”

Thus he kept enjoying this super-natural calm and bliss for 49 days at a stretch moving from tree to tree every seven days.

Here the experience of Nirvana is not couched in the language of “nothingness”, “emptiness”, but is constituted of “exalted calm, bliss, emancipation, bodhihood”. It is just as the Upanishads speak. Peace that passeth understanding, Sat, Chit, Ananda, knowledge, freedom, light. In the spiritual tradition this state has been called “void” as well as “all”.

NOTHINGNESS OF THE PHENOMENAL WORLD

So at the time of enlightenment, Gautama not only entered a state which was “deep, immeasurable, unfathomable,” saw a reality full of “calm,” “bliss”, “liberation” and quite indescribable as the Upanishads assert, but was also vouchsafed the vision of the true status of the phenomenal world. This vision was not different from the Vedantic characterisation of this world. Buddha saw in a moment the entire process which constitutes this sansar, this world-cycle, this fleeting stream of life. He saw what caused births’ and rebirths’ endless round, what framed the edifice of repeated births, decay, dissolution and death. He saw the mighty law of Karma, the law of Dependent Origination: on ignorance depends karma; on karma depends consciousness; on consciousness depend name and form; on name and form depend the six organs of sense; on the six organs of sense depends contact; on contact depends sensation; on sensation depends desire; on desire depends attachment; on attachment depends existence; on existence depends birth; on birth depends old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair.

He saw the law forward and back. He saw how it gave rise to the entire aggregate of misery. He also saw how on the complete fading out and cessation of the last term or link, the whole chain snaps and the entire aggregation of misery ceases. And as he saw the law of the phenomenal world, he was also released from its bondage. He sang:

O builder! I have discovered thee!
This fabric thou shalt never rebuild!
Thy rafters all are broken now,
And pointed roof demolished lies!
The mind has demolition reached,
And seen the last of all desire!

What Buddha saw is the common experience of spirituality everywhere though the experience is differently couched. But the common element can be expressed thus: that the world and man divorced from God, the phenomenal world conceived independently of the transcendental principle, is nothing, is less than nothing. Conceived as such, it is an illusion, maya, an imposition, a house of cards, a castle of sand, mere saw-dust, dry-rot, a sagging, sinking, stinking garbage-heap. They build in vain who build without God.

This “builder” who weaves the fabric of existence is everywhere. Its power is found to be so flimsy when the true knowledge comes, but before that it is so nightmarishly real. Having no support anywhere in essence, yet ubiquitous it is in its external expression. It surrounds one on all sides. It seeps through every pore. It is laid thick layer upon layer. It is gross as well as subtle. Its empire is vast. Its sovereignty is everywhere. It lives not only in the grosser acts and thoughts of men, it lives in their righteousness, ideals and good too. No wonder saints who have seen its universal sway have tried to describe it by different images and names. They call it Maya or Avidya. The Christians and the Muslims call it the ‘devil’, but ‘devil’ is hardly the word for it. For it gives birth not only to diabolic acts and thoughts, but is the author of the whole realm of names and forms, good as well as bad. So Maya or Avidya is not just like wrong perception or an error of judgment, it is more like a Kantian category which imposes itself at the very source of all phenomenal perceptions and judgments, enters into the very constitution and fibre of our empirical knowledge, effort and will.

Though so universal and powerful, yet when the transcendental light dawns, it is either completely transfigured or it completely disappears like mist before the sun. “When that which is perfect is come, then that which is imperfect and in part, will be rejected and counted for nought”, as Saint Paul says. Saints of all ages have spoken of the universality of the phenomenal world, its comparative unreality when the knowledge of God dawns, and they have yearned, pleaded, prayed again and again to be taken out of this ocean of misery and relativity and phenomenality, to be granted refuge at the lotus-feet of the Lord. There are beautiful poems by Kabir, Surdas, Rama-prasad and Mira on the subject which echo the cry of the human soul in bondage and exile for freedom and re-union in and with the Divine.

The dying-to-self, inner purification, transcendence from the world of mind and desires are normal things that happen to any saint of stature, but the
process is generally silent. It is rare that the knowledge, as gained from the Spirit’s static poise, of the origin and the dissolution of the whole world of all names and forms is revealed so powerfully and intimately as it was to Buddha. Again in other saints sufficient deepening or silencing of the surface mind and being is enough for higher spiritual experiences to pour in. But in Buddha it is obvious that what happened was not mere silencing and deepening and detachment at the surface, but a complete cessation and annihilation of all that could give rise to the world of names and forms. His dialogues (and also his statues and pictures) exude peace, self-recollectedness, detachment and yet compassion, all with a powerful transcendental impress.

Though rare, yet the revelation is not an isolated phenomenon. All spiritual literature in general and the Vedantic literature in particular abound in this, though the terms and images of the form-creating power or principle need not be the same in all revelations. Some have seen God high in heaven creating the worlds, oceans, stars, nights and days out of “nothing” from his status of plenitude and self-sufficiency by the creative power of his word-fiat or chit-shakti. We have Platonic and Neo-Platonic images of the process of creation or manifestation. Others have seen God pouring himself out in multitudinous forms and yet remaining essentially unaffected by His creation. In the Gita, we find Lord Krishna revealing his mighty Form to Arjuna: time and space, high gods and noble warriors, everything in the three worlds rising from and rushing headlong into His “gaping mouth, tremendous-toothed and terrible to see”.

There are other revelations less theistic though not less transcendental. Some have seen the world of relative forms appearing and disappearing according to the laws of Karma. Sankhya provides another account. In it we see Prakriti, moved forward by its three Gunas, giving rise to the whole world of names and forms. At the time of dissolution Prakriti in equilibrium withdraws unto itself all the forms and forces it created and goes out of manifestation. Buddha’s revelation is akin to the above in the sense that the process of creation or manifestation is not referred to a conscious principle, to a purusha or to God, but to a Law as immanent and absolute as the former. In Buddha, the terms of the Law of Dependent Origination, on which hangs all the world of names and forms, sound like ordinary facts of life, but the knowledge of their operation as revealed to him was transcendental.

Quite in keeping with the practical approach of Buddha, the terms of his Law are rather individualised: Karma, contact, consciousness, desire, etc. On the other hand, Sankhya talks in the language of principles, tattvas: prakriti, mahat, Ahamkara, Manas, tanmatras etc.

(To be continued)
The trinity of place, time and occasion makes this a very momentous and blessed event. It is symptomatic of abundant grace. To the universal spirit, resident in this deathless city of Varanasi, hallowed by historic and prehistoric sanctity, I bow. Such is the place. What is the time? On this 15th August, 1947, India emerged in the World's family of nations as a politically emancipated State. All over this great country, the young and the old, have assembled today to mark the political deliverance. I, therefore, salute this day of political deliverance. But what is the great abiding occasion which to-day draws us here together? It is to remember and honour with reverence the advent of Sri Aurobindo, the apostle of a new age and a new era. He turned the tide of history to grant a deliverance more momentous than the social, economic and political emancipation of a people, more momentous than even the first emergence of man on the face of the Earth. Re-making of man was his life's work. Transformation of the human species was his theme and no less. Before him Darwin and Herbert Spencer appear pitifully inadequate and Nietzsche's Superman becomes a pallid shadow before Sri Aurobindo's Life Divine and Cosmic Man. So unique is his contribution that its magnitude and sweep are hardly realised. He anticipated many centuries of human evolution and epitomised in himself the symbol of a universe redeemed. In him we see the whole pageant of life flower and come to fruition, in a manner grander than the harmony of Beethoven and more beautiful than the canvas of Rembrandt. In honouring such an occasion we are participating in an event of universal significance. I, therefore, stand in silent reverence before this majestic peak which unfolds the ever-widening horizons reflecting the entire panorama and ultimate destiny of man, and render my homage.

I have chosen for this occasion the subject of the integration of the spirit of man with the mythology of matter.

There is an invisible bridge that connects the cosmic spirit with its myriads of material manifestations. The very diversity of the material manifestations
presents the mark of disintegration. The white light of the spiritual integer is broken by an invisible prism into bands of different colours. The inherent disintegrality of matter is enhanced by our preoccupation with their divergences.

The mark of the modern world is disintegration. There can be no materialism without disintegration, division and sub-division of matter. Disintegration of the Atom disturbs our mind in the modern age because we are overawed by its potentialities. But this is only a feature. It is not the climax. The nuclear fission is not the only fission that dominates the world of matter. The climax is yet to come. The destination of matter is dissolution. Science, as we understand it to-day, is an inevitable phenomenon inherent in the composition of matter. Science is a part of materialism. Its thesis is matter. A warning on semantics is essential at this point. When I say that Science is a part of materialism, I understand the words "science" and "materialism" in their common connotation prevailing to-day, and not in the higher philosophical and more comprehensive sense to which I shall ultimately return in course of this address.

What is the prevailing and dominating feature of the modern human mind? The burning hope that universal education will teach us wise living has produced only ashes so far and seems to be teaching us the dire lesson that education makes good men better and bad men worse. The missionary faith in universal democracy in the Nineteenth Century has served only to produce in the Twentieth new and strange inequalities and still more perverse hatred and jealousy. We wish something, and quite the contrary happens. Wisdom is lost in the race for cleverness, and life is lost in words. The world of to-day is more didactic than at any other time of our recorded past. Never were more books and pamphlets written to tell us with such assumed precision what to do, how to behave, which queue to stand in, and what slogan to shout. But the great need goes abegging all the time for the quality of life lived. We have failed to graduate from phrase to fact.

The imperative need to-day is re-integration of life and human personality. The need is to discover the bridge between spirit and matter. The familiar nostrums have not delivered their goods. In composition, man remains individual. The besetting modern error has been to treat him as a mass product and deal with him in the mass. Modern politics, modern democracy, modern business, modern industry and modern science treat the individual as a mass product. They make him mechanical, and not spontaneous. They make him automatic, and not organic. A false science has emphasised the insignificance of man and has robbed him of his dignity of living, with the result that he has lost all sense of responsibility, for a universe which has become too big where
he appears too small to count. Faithlessness is not our only deficiency. With
the loss of faith has come its attendant vice, the lack of responsibility.
Increasing power with decreasing responsibility is bound to produce—and is
daily producing—a situation where the fruits of our knowledge no longer
nourish but poison.

The first step in re-integration is the realisation that knowledge cannot
be divorced from character. Knowledge is the essence of character. It is the
breath of the quality of life lived. Knowledge is not verbal. It is the spirit
of life. The product of a study is not the book, but the man. To live funda­
mentally and not automatically, to make life original as it was intended to be
and not mechanical,—it is necessary to recover man’s lost sense of responsibility.
The harmony and the rhythms of the spatial firmament have an octave of
affinity within man. The distant tickings of the cosmic clock are not a far-off
irrelevance but are essential to move the pendulum of individual life in creative
swing. When this co-relation is missed, the pendulum of individual life stops
in dead sterility and then all our attempts at improving the world become some­
thing of a variety entertainment in the dark. Integration begins, therefore,
by the awareness that man is not a victim of an irrational destiny but is himself
a conscious participant in that destiny. He is not merely the mould but also
the moulder of the destiny of the universe. This individual reform is an in­
dispensable preface to any enduring social and political order.

How does this awareness come and how does one achieve this integration?

Solitude is essential. Solitude is a powerful and necessary experience.
If a man is never solitary, he is never aware. To be solitary is to be spiritual.
Collective enthusiasm is not conducive to spiritual experience. It is always
vicarious and muddled. Its streams are not limpid and pure. There is an
integral equation between the container and the content. Every individual
has to solve that equation for himself before he thinks of his effective personal
or social utility. Environment may provide the lock. It usually does. But
the individual man remains the key. The key requires to be fashioned in
solitude before it is ready. No assault, economic, political or social, upon
the lock of environment which imprisons the spirit of man, is going to open
it unless the key is ready.

Integration, therefore, demands fitness of the instrument which is used
to discover knowledge and dispense service and utility. Knowledge is imma­
nent in the universe and waits to be discovered. It is not something external
to the individual. It is not something which one acquires as an ornament or
a decoration or an acquisition. It is the very stuff of our existence. Know­
ledge is not dialectics. It is not a dictionary of information. Knowledge is
transformation. The knower does not know the object until the identity of the
knower and that of the object merge. The seer never really sees the object unless both stand transfigured in a total revelation. That is why the physical sciences to-day shall never know because their instruments of knowledge are by their nature imperfect and deficient, and calculated to accentuate and mechanise the difference between the subject and object. However perfect the machine, it will never succeed in replacing the man. There will always be a man behind even the most perfect automaton. A false dichotomy between matter and spirit, between the seeker and the sought has converted the sunrise of science into a false dawn. Our constant complaint that while we seek peace we get war, while we seek harmony we get discord, and while we seek health we get diseases, has so clouded our judgment and perplexed our outlook that we do not pause to think that the failure is not due to what we seek but lies in us, the seekers. The result is that we are continually seeking for institutional scapegoats by blaming this particular philosophy or that, this particular economic system or that, and this particular educational system or that. Every time we do it, we miss the real issue. “The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves.” We do not seek to correct ourselves. We always take ourselves for granted, and all the rest we put under fire. We do not know ourselves, and we want to know others. The responsible scheme of the universe is that we can get what we are and not what we say we are. Man’s attempt to defeat that responsibility is the central source of modern confusion. If we ourselves are part of the disease, then we cannot hope to cure the disease without curing ourselves as the first step in the process.

Our individual nature is the pivot round which the universe revolves. A grip on that central axis of human personality is the need of the hour. The only way of doing good to the world is by our being good. Altruism, like charity, begins at home. An inexorable calculus dictates that only to the degree we improve ourselves we can improve others. If we do not cultivate knowledge of what is going to happen to ourselves the next moment and if we do not endeavour to know how this matter of our body or mind works, then it becomes an odd adventure indeed when we proceed to plan for the future and lay down the standards for society in times to come. The universal frustration that overwhelms the modern world is due to our too ready assumption of the right to order others before we have learnt to discharge the primary obligation to order our individual lives. Man has to emancipate himself first before he can think of emancipating the world or else humanitarianism becomes another name for bullying others. It is only the emancipated man who has become the heir to knowledge and who can find the springs of effective action and who avoids dissipating himself. The conflict between knowledge and life has filled this age with the hubbub of a debate and we are developing the
dubious talent for building an argument with a pronounced incapacity to abide by its conclusions. Knowledge of what is right comes from right conduct and, therefore, is and should never be a substitute for doing what is right. It is not enough to state a case unless there is the capacity to use the verdict. It is not enough to diagnose without the capacity to prescribe. That capacity belongs to character, and not to cleverness. That is why in India character was insisted on as a prelude to knowledge and not as a sequel to intelligence. Intelligence is a by-product of character. It is used by character, tendencies, and the Samskaras.

Integration, therefore, includes, first, an attempt to rescue ourselves from automatic to spontaneous living. Solitude is the aid to recollect the dissipated fragments of individual personality. No one can hope to be the source of power and effective action without insulation. This insulation does not mean the glass house or the ivory tower. It means elimination of the handicaps with which man is born in the world of matter. It is the creation of that necessary condition which helps one to hold power and energy for effective use, without dissipation.

The next step is meditation. This is the great art of focussing the diffused personality normally enmeshed in time and space and imprisoned within the walls of hereditary and environmental constructions. Both time and space are mental. The purpose of meditation is to watch their operation with a view to dissociate the individual nature from their grip and so achieve emancipation into the universal (and transcendent) energy, the source of knowledge and informed action. Meditation is often misunderstood as concentration. Meditation is not the art of concentration, but is just the opposite. It is the art of deconcentration. We are the products and results of concentration or tension. Our body is the result of a physical and biological tension or concentration. Our mind is the result of the tension or concentration of our desires, forgotten and remembered. Meditation is the technique of releasing such tension. It is a discipline both of the mind and of the body. It is the training to disencumber the mind. If we fast in the body to improve its functions, it is more necessary to fast in the mind to improve its tone and its capacity. There is a perpetual dialogue between that which happens and that which is willed, between fate and action, between address and answer, between event and effort, and by meditation one is helped to discover this correspondence and so help to build the bridge between being and becoming. Over that bridge the traffic of spiritual knowledge and the message of informed action flow unhampered by our egoistic absorptions.

The spirit still remains the bearer of all matter and the coiner of all values. Most of us are sleep-walkers. If we are alive, we are never awake. We are
mesmerised by the world's routine and by our own predilections. We spin round and speed like humming tops but fast asleep. Meditation helps to break this dread routine and bring into focus the one emergent peak to which man can climb when all the rest of the world has sunk beneath the waves. It helps to illuminate the impenetrable regions of superior logic whose message gets jammed by the false traffic signals of our misinformed sensory impressions. In other words, meditation is the endeavour of the soul to pick up from the glamour and fret of the day the distillation of a perfect peace. Its reward is the sense of focus which puts all things in their perspective, where matter is no longer the despotic Sovereign for which we always mistake it, and where matter is not the King reigning in its own right but only an ambassador of reality which in truth it is. In that view, there is no difference in principle between matter and spirit.

Meditation is followed by the third step of deliverance. Deliverance is the exchange of the fraction for the whole, the individual for the universal. It is often misunderstood as renunciation. But in essence it is no renunciation. We renounce nothing but our fetters. We live with our mind fettered and by sheer habit develop a liking for the perverse security of our chains. The essential part of this deliverance is the surrender of the human personality for the universal personality. The individual will is surrendered in order to bring in the universal will. The purpose of life is not achieved in space and time but in a deeper level of reality. The accessories are not the man although we habitually confuse them with him. Deliverance aims at firsthand knowledge of human existence and discards the secondhand knowledge through human environment. We have to die to our accessories to attain life and energy. One does not discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore. But the cloak has become the core, and we are afraid of the open and we have chosen to remain as mere coasters. The integrated man who has delivered himself is the Columbus who comes home and a new world takes over. Deliverance follows the spiritual awareness of the potential heart-break which is implicit in the seeming fact that our eyes see farther than our hands can reach. Relaxed but informed serenity is the answer to this tense self-imprisoned age of stress. That only comes through deliverance. Deliverance insists that we cannot cling to our limitations and hope to be free and wants us to realise that the too obvious glory of flowers is always inspired by the subtler miracle of the foliage. The foliage in this context is our intellectual and mental animation which usually is mistaken for life. Intellectual and mental animation is very often a psychotherapeutic compensation for spiritual devitalisation. What is important is less the reason for the experience of deliverance than the experience itself. The inscape determines the landscape. That is where the physical
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sciences are badly editing nature and are to-day blind enough to call themselves the authors of nature.

Deliverance is not the ultimate destiny of man. After this comes the phase of charging the vessel with knowledge and power. It is the inflow of boundless spiritual energy which courses unimpeded in the perfected instrument. It is then that the illumination of our existence is no longer darkened by our prejudices and by our attitudes. It is then that man embarks on informed action and life ceases to be the uninformed adventure into which we have converted it. In this luminous awareness when intuition is released from thraldom, there is no more any lag between thought and action. It is such a man who acquires social utility, and no other. It is such a man who has earned the right to serve humanity. It is necessary to point out to our generation that reason and intelligence cannot function effectively unless the generators of feelings are attuned to do their work. It is always the contained and unagitated person and not the fidget who can mould the destiny of mankind. The process of integration disciplines intelligence by curing it of its suspected and unsuspected selfishness. Then man becomes the spirit that refuses to hate when others are hateful, the spirit that is just when others are unjust, and the spirit that is unselfish when others are selfish. It is this consecration that is the reward of deliverance, and the action of the delivered man is not hysteria but living dedication. His life then is no longer one of argument. He demonstrates by life. He escapes from the tyranny and perversion of drawing sufficient conclusion from insufficient premises which is our present method of living.

At the apex of integration of human personality stand balance and wisdom. Balance is the mark of spirituality. It is the state which blends absorption and intervention. Absorption is first a reverence for the overriding interior necessity of the human spirit and then a delving into the depth of our individual self to reach its confluence with the universal spirit. Intervention is the emergence from that depth with sanctified instinct and clarified intuition, continually charged with the currents of eternal life and deathless energy. The balance between attachment and detachment which keeps up the commerce between the interior and the exterior—it is this balance that cements the integration and keeps it inviolate. It is the disengaged activity. In such an integration the peaks of human experience are realised without neglecting the values of the plains. Out of the balance comes wisdom as the consummation of an integrated life. It is beyond time and space because it is all-inclusive, covering all time and all space. Space has no independent existence except as an order or arrangement of things perceived by the mind nor has time any more independent existence except as an order of events by which we measure it. Space is congealed time. It is static time. Dynamic time is the sense of movement. The unintegrated
man playing the part of a biological team is a prisoner of time and space. He alternates between static time and dynamic time, between time and space. This breaks him into fragments, with the result that coordination between his thought and action and between action and result is delayed or upset. We occasionally succeed in destroying static time, but always at the cost of dynamic time. We never conquer time and space simultaneously. That is why spatial nearness is not necessarily a guarantee of psychological nearness and that is the reason why our space-conquering devices of the modern age have failed to bring men together. Because we are conquering space by a device which correspondingly increases our sense of movement in dynamic time, the result is that a mind fettered by the heightened tempo of dynamic time is never ready to assimilate the food brought near by the conquest of space. Nature, violated, retaliates. We see it every day in our frustrations in the midst of the conquests of science. The secret is that we do not alter things but in fact grow above them. The wisdom that I have just spoken of ensures this co-ordination between thought, action and result by conquest of both time and space. A man with such wisdom, being neither the slave of the past nor the purveyor of the future, is the master of the eternal present. He has the strength to venture beyond the certainties of the past, the intrepid wisdom to plunge into the hitherto unexplored potentialities of the future and to live creatively in a meaningful present. Action without wisdom is spasmodic and is a fetter which binds us to some object or other. The false wisdom which is not expressed in action is a barren abstraction and is equally a fetter. Wisdom combined with action is the seal and the hallmark of the emancipated man who has integrated himself. Wisdom combined with action is true freedom and liberation. They are intrinsically one. The lamp and the light are inseparable. The wisdom that is the fruit of an integrated life teaches man that he extends beyond the frontiers of his physical body and beyond the self-imposed limitations of his consciousness. Then alone man realises that he is not a model of the universe but is the universe itself, that he is not a dead copy or imitation or an image but is himself the original. This awareness of being the whole is the dawn of real social value which rends the veil of delusions. This realisation of man's real destiny lifts him out of his dependence on things. It breaks down the enclosing walls of accident and entropy.

Structure of Government and society depends in the long run on the conception formed of the nature of man. To attempt to understand cosmology is, therefore, neither an intellectual speculation nor a philosophical abstraction. It is the most practical task before the world to-day.

The mythology of matter takes its daily grip when man denies his spirit and thereby fails to see the entire gamut from noumenon to phenomenon.
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The process is one, though the stages are different. There is no antithesis between matter and spirit. The physical sciences of to-day have come to the verge of the awareness that all matter is some kind of energy. The scientist of the modern age will tell you that our conception of matter and of its nature is changing. The physical sciences give the glimpse of a universe where nothing is inert but everything is radiant and vibrant with energy. The tiny atom of the physicists has become today a colossus. Is the spirit of man, therefore, wrong in suggesting that matter is only a grosser form of spirit-energy, that matter is conscious energy in hibernation? The great philosophies in India and the magnificent spiritual disciplines of our great country insist on this one reality of consciousness as the pervading medium in which all matter exists. The mythology of matter grows when human consciousness and awareness are overcast by superstition. To overcome that superstition a whole technique is provided in the magnificent sweep of Sri Aurobindo's original contributions to Yoga and Philosophy. For him, therefore, it was not enough to ascend. After ascending beyond the veils of phenomena, one has to descend as the delivered and the integrated man for conscious participation as both the player and the instrument rolled into one. Many are the false gods that come on the way. In distress man cries out in the words of the Vedas:

"Kasmī Devāya Habīṣā Vidhema?"
"Which God shall I worship?"

But the answer is as true to-day as when it was given by the Vedas:

"Yā Atma-dā Baladā
Yasmyan Visva Upāsate...
Yasya Chhāyā Amritam."

"Him who puts the very soul into everything and grants strength: whom the universe venerates and whose canopy is deathless life and immortality."

The mythology of matter uses time and space as its main actors. Space represents the whole domain of universal manifestation. It is co-extensive with the world and the universe. The world is no more infinite than is space itself. Like space it does not contain every possibility but only represents a certain particular order of possibilities. Space has two characteristics — quantity and quality. Quantitative space represents the sense of distance, the sense of area, and the sense of separation. Qualitative space is the sense of direction. It introduces the notion of shape to the already existing notion of size. Equivalence in size does not necessarily mean equivalence in shape. Shape indicates the directional tendencies of space and shows its quality. There can never be a size without a shape. The mythology of matter fails to distinguish the two.
Similarly, time is misunderstood. Time differentiates space. If space is the literature, then time is the punctuation, paragraphing and chapterising. Space is the sound and time is the light. That is why this world of manifestations is a universe of light and sound. Without time, space will defy our habitual comprehension. But time has also qualitative and quantitative aspects. The clock, or the hour or the minute, represents quantitative time. But the hour can be a minute, and the minute can be an hour. We know how that happens. This is the qualitative aspect of time. Here time is not measured by the clock but by the intensity and absorption and assimilation of experience. The mythology of matter thrives on the preoccupation with the quantitative aspects of time and space and is based on the ignorance of their qualitative aspects. The qualitative aspects of time and space show that there can be no empty space or empty time. Space is a plenum, not a vacuum. Time is a continuum. The modern physicist is knocking at the door of the spatio-temporal continuum. It seems to get the message of the qualitative aspect of time and space. But while it has got the ideology, now it has yet to change its methodology, for with the methods of the land you cannot fly into the air. This qualitative content of time and space reveals the mutability of matter. The mutability of matter proves that some other factor is responsible to create a dent or change in matter and its forms. The secret is that all matter is the result of nuclear energy, again a subject of great excitement in modern science. When nuclear energy is emancipated, then that energy becomes all-powerful and fully creative. But the methodology of science, in working on matter within the bounds of quantitative time and quantitative space, has failed to see that this nuclear energy cannot be emancipated except in accordance with the rules of the spirit or cosmic energy. Call it nuclear energy, call it nuclear fission, call it atomic energy, call it the Kundalini or by any name you choose, the emphasis to-day has to be laid on the principle of obtaining that energy by obedience to the cosmic laws which still now defy the materialistic methodology of modern physical science. Energy can be understood in its own terms and not by the laws of matter. The spirit has to be understood in its own terms and not in terms of its derivatives. The Rubicon has to be crossed. This is the Ardha-Mātrā of the Pranava and the Omkāra. The Nāda and the Kala, the sound and the light, the space and the time have to be alike connected and crossed by the super-arc to reach the Bindu of cosmic energy, cosmic reality and cosmic awareness. The Bindu is the Sindhu. Then the centre and the circumference are one. It is only then that the mythology of matter vanishes into the cosmology of the universe.
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Loving Homage**: Sri Aurobindo Pathmandir, 15 College Square, Calcutta. Pages 386. Price Rs. 10.

The *Loving Homage* is the result of a devoted and sincere labour of love on the part of Sri Aurobindo Pathmandir, Calcutta, which organised the Anniversary celebrations of the Mother’s 80th Birthday. The book consists of papers selected out of those received at the Seminar held at Calcutta on that auspicious occasion. The selection covers a wide area of the Mother’s work in the various fields of her many-sided activity in the fulfilment of her divine Mission. The contributors are from diverse walks of life. This makes the book representative of the widespread recognition of her personality as the Divine Mother, and as the Fulfiller of Sri Aurobindo’s mission of the divinisation of earth.

We have articles *The Divine Mother* by Nolini Kanta Gupta, *The Mother* by Himansu K. Niyogi, *The Mother’s Sadhana For the Earth* by Rishabhchand, the *Literary Genius of the Mother* by Shree Krishna Prasad. Haridas Chaudhuri writes on *The Mother and the Concept of Divine Shakti*, N.K. Das Gupta pens *Sri Aurobindo and The Mother on Dreams* while there are *Interviews in Japan* by V.K. Gokak who, at great personal pains, tried to collect reminiscences of a number of people connected with the Mother when she had been in that country.

Nolini Kanta Gupta in his short piece of two pages brings out the double aspect of the Mother’s total personality. She is the Mother as well as the Divine, so humbly and simply veiling her Divine Personality when acting out her human aspect. We have to recognise her double aspect, says the writer and adds, “It is only by remembering her twofold truth, the two arms of her love with which she enfolds us and cherishes us that we can hope to be her true children.”

The Presidential address by R.R. Diwakar pays a deep and impassioned tribute to the Mother who “has devoted all her energies for the fulfilment of the dream not only of a few human beings, not only of humanity, but the dream probably of the whole universe, to rise to a higher consciousness leading to divinity.” He says, “After all, so long as we have bodies, so long as we use these bodies, so long as we can perceive the world only through the senses, the Mother is to us a living symbol of Shakti, a bright example of pure and intense love, a symbol of sacrifice and service for her children.” He asserts the necessity of our making a sincere effort to help her mission on earth.

S.K. Maitra beautifully epitomises Sri Aurobindo’s vision of the shape
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of things to come in respect of Society, Poetry and Philosophy. Erudite articles, *Sri Aurobindo or the Future of Philosophy* by K.C.Varadachari and *Shankara and Sri Aurobindo* by J.N.Chubb and *Sri Aurobindo as a Dramatist* by Sunil Chandra Sarkar, show the application of Sri Aurobindo’s genius in Philosophy and Drama. Tan Yun Shan’s *The Universal Mother in Sino-Indian Culture* brings out in the small compass of a few pages the doctrine of the Universal Mother in the two cultures. Srinivasa Iyengar’s learned piece on Sri Aurobindo’s *Savtrii* traces the comparisons between this epic and the *Divine Comedy* of Dante and the *Paradise Lost* and the *Paradise Regained* of Milton. “In a sense *Savtrii* is the *The Life Divine,*” writes the author, “expressed in terms of poetry, even as *The Divine Comedy* is Catholic theology and the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas turned into poetry.”

Shree Krishna Prasad explores a yet-untouched aspect of the Mother’s deep and mystic personality — her literary genius — and succeeds remarkably in featuring the effect of word-power of the Mother’s writings and their forceful revelation in a simple yet beautiful style.


In Section Two which consists of French originals with English translations, we have a letter to the Mother by G. Monod Herzen which makes enjoyable reading because of its personal touch. Then we have an interesting article *The Great Problems of Our Time and Their Solution in the Light of Sri Aurobindo’s Thought* by Félicien Challaye. The long *Allegory of the Divine Man* is written in a free flowing rhythm and will be appreciated for its simplicity, clarity and fine imagery. This section ends with a letter by C.F. Baron, the former Governor of Pondicherry, *For the 21st of February 1958.*

Two Visions in the Appendix by S.M. bring out the Grace and Glory of the Divine Mother in fighting the Asuras, driving out the forces of darkness and spreading and manifesting a New Light from Heaven.

This large-sized book of 386 pages on fine paper has a beautiful goden-coloured title-page with the impression of the Mother’s Feet against the background of a coloured drawing of a thousand-petalled lotus.

We recommend this book to all those who are eager to explore Sri Aurobindo’s thought and the Mother’s varied personality.

“**BANDA**”
To round off our thesis about the original Gupta Era we may quote a few arguments in our favour from Mankad. Mankad reminds us of Strabo’s statement that according to Megasthenes “the king, in addition to his family name, must adopt the surname of Palibothras, as Sandrocottus, for instance, did” (McCrindle, *Ancient India*, Strabo, 1901, p. 43). Mankad remarks that so far no scholar has attempted an explanation of this. Apropos the two details of Strabo—(1) the king should adopt his family name and (2) in addition to that he must adopt the surname of Palibothras—Mankad comments: “the family name Maurya is not known to have been adopted by the Mauryas.” Further, Strabo’s statement is said to imply that if Palibothras was the surname the family name must have been a part of the personal name—precisely as in the case of the Guptas who attached the family name to their own to form Chandragupta or Samudragupta or Kumaragupta or Skandagupta. As regards the surname, Palibothras, Mankad says of Strabo’s statement: “This only means that the king should be known as Pātaliputra meaning so and so of Pātaliputra. The practice of distinguishing the personal names of kings by the names of their capitals is found in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta...

“Again, the Udayagiri cave inscription of Chandragupta II of Gupta Era 82 describes the minister Śāba as Pātaliputra (1.4)....What Megasthenes says is that the king was known as the king of a particular country or of a particular capital city. Thus Samudragupta will be called Pātaliputra Samudragupta. The practice may have arisen for distinguishing between the kings of the same name ruling at the same time in different countries. This practice might have obtained in the days of the Mauryas also, but that it did obtain in the days of Samudragupta is proved from his own inscription. This also may be taken to lend support to indicate contemporaneity of Samudragupta and Megasthenes.”

1 *Purānic Chronology*, pp. 299-301, 303-305.
Mankad continues: "Firdausi in his *Shahnameh*, while describing the rule of Behram Gur, the Sassanian king, says that the king of Kanauj, with the seven kings of Sind, Hind, etc., was submissive to the Iranian emperor. This means that Behram Gur's authority extended up to Kanauj. Now the time of Behram Gur is put by scholars from c. 420-40 A.D. According to the current chronology, from 420-40 A.D. in India was ruling Kumaragupta I, and it is a fact acknowledged by all and attested by numismatic and epigraphic evidence that, in the days of Kumaragupta I and even of Skandagupta, the Gupta empire had maintained its imperial character. Therefore in 420-40 A.D. Kanauj and other provinces named by Firdausi should have been under Kumaragupta I and not under Behram Gur. Therefore if the current chronology is accepted, we should either take Firdausi's account to be incorrect or the date of Behram Gur as incorrect. But we shall have to do neither, if we put the Guptas in e. 300 B.C.

"Greek writers talk of several embassies sent by Indian kings to Roman emperors. I shall quote these passages here.1

"Strabo (p. 77-8): 'This writer (Nikolaos Damaskenos, a contemporary of Emperor Augustus) says that at Antioch by Daphne he met with Indian ambassadors who had been sent to Augustus Caesar (c. 21 B.C.)...The letter was written in Greek on parchment and imported that Poros was the writer, and that though he was the sovereign of 600 kings, he nevertheless set a high value on being Caesar's friend, and was willing to grant him passage, wherever he wished, through his dominions, and to assist him in any good enterprise.'

"Several other writers confirm this embassy, *e.g.*, Suetonius, Florus, Orsius, Dion Cassius.

"Eusebios Pamphili (born 264 A.D., died 340 A.D.) says (p. 214): 'Ambassadors from the Indians of the East brought presents...which they presented to the king (Constantine the Great, d. 337 A.D.) as an acknowledgment that his sovereignty extended to their ocean. They told him, too, how the Princes of India had dedicated pictures and statues in his honour in token that they recognised him as their autocrat and king.' (McCrindle notes that this embassy reached Constantinople in the last year of the emperor Constantine the Great, *i.e.*, in 336-37 A.D.)

"Ammianus Marcellinus (a native of Antioch in Syria, who was living in 390 A.D.) says (p. 93): 'Embassies from all quarters flocked to him (the Emperor Julian in 361 A.D.), the Indian nations vying with emulous zeal in sending their foremost men, with presents as far as from Divi (Maldives) and the Serendiv (Ceylon).'

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1 From *Ancient India as described by Herodotus and others*, by McCrindle, 1901.
"Sextus Aurelius Victor (c. 352-80 A.D.) : 'Yea, even the Indians, Bactrians, Hyrkanians sent ambassadors, having acknowledged of the justice of a prince so mighty (the Emperor Julian).'

"Joannes Malda : 'At the same time (530 A.D.) an ambassador of the Indians was sent to Constantinople.'

"These passages show that Indian kings in c. 21 B.C. and from c. 337-61 A.D. sent ambassadors to the Roman emperors. If we analyse these accounts, we find that the embassy sent to Augustus (c. 21 B.C.) was by a king of India who considered himself to be an equal of the Roman emperor, and in no way inferior to him. He himself was the overlord of 600 kings. But the embassies sent to Constantine and Julian seem to have been sent by Indian princes (there seems to be no overlord then), who acknowledged the power of the Roman emperors. These embassies were sent from 336-367 A.D. Now these are precisely the years of the rule of the great Samudragupta, according to the present-day accepted chronology. If the chronology is correct, India in 336-367 A.D. was the most powerful country under Samudragupta, whose sphere of political superiority had extended up to the borders of Iran and practically the whole of India was under him. But the above evidence suggests a politically weak India (without any sovereign power) during these years. As in the case of Behram Gur, so here also there arises a conflict; and this can be removed if we put the rise of the Guptas in c. 300 B.C."

Mankad has also this to say: "From Kathāsartsāgara it is clear that, in Brhatkatha of Guṇḍāhyya, there was a story of Vikrama of Pāṭaliputra. Vikrama of Pāṭaliputra can only be Chandragupta II. Therefore this means that the Guptas lived before Guṇḍāhyya, i.e., 1st century A.D."

Mankad further writes: "There is one other line of argument which indicates the same period for the Guptas. The Besnagar Garuda-dhvaja Pillar Inscription of Heliodorus shows this:

"(i) Bhāgavata-dharma was current in the 1st and 2nd century B.C. in the Gwalior region as the Garuda-dhvaja was erected there.

"(ii) The same religion was current near Taxila and even the Greeks adopted it as their religion, as is clear from Heliodorus being called an inhabitant of Taxila and being clearly described as a Bhāgavata in that inscription.

"If we follow the current chronology the 2nd to 4th centuries B.C. are occupied by the Mauryas and the Sungas. Neither of these dynasties had adopted Vaiṣṇavism, much less Bhāgavatism as the religion. Both the Mauryas and the Sungas are known to have adopted and propagated religions other than Vaiṣṇavism and Bhāgavatism. How then was it that the Greeks adopted this religion in N. W. India in c. 125 B.C.—the date to which this inscription is ascribed? What grounds, apart from this inscription, have we to believe that
Bhāgavatism was so flourishing and influential a religion in the days of the Mauryas and the Sungas, so that even the foreigners took to it? Under the circumstances Heliodorus following Bhāgavatism in c. 125 B.C. is an isolated instance, not at all fitting in the known religious condition of India of those days."

On the other hand, if we place the Guptas in c. 300 B.C. we can well explain this inscription of Heliodorus. Mankad writes: "That Bhāgavatism was adopted as their own religion by the Guptas is an acknowledged fact of history. ...During the reigns of three or four successive Gupta Emperors Bhāgavatism had highly flourished in India. That is why in c. 125 B.C. we find a Greek describing himself as a Bhāgavata. Thus the phenomenon of Heliodorus taking to Bhāgavatism would be quite natural in the 2nd century B.C. Consider along with this one other point. Heliodorus had erected a pillar with a Garuda-dhvaja. The Garuda-dhvaja was the royal ensign of the Guptas. Neither the Mauryas nor he Śuṅgas are known to have had the Garuda-dhvaja as their flag. This may mean that the defeated Greeks had adopted the Bhāgavata religion as well as the Garuda-dhvaja of the Guptas. The spread of Bhāgavatism in N.W. India and its adoption by a Greek in c. 125 B.C. together with the mention of the Garuda-dhvaja, to my mind is only possible in Gupta or post-Gupta days.

"In this connection two more points may be noted here. King Bhagabhadra mentioned in this inscription is usually identified by the scholars with the 6th or the 9th Śuṅga king. None of these kings is Bhagabhadra in any Ms. of any Purāṇa. The sixth king is called Odraka etc., and the ninth king is called Bhaga or Bhāgavata. In the inscription the king is not called Śuṅga. So that there is absolutely no evidence, other than a false synchronism created on the authority of the present-day chronology, to identify this Bhagabhadra with any of the Śuṅga kings.

"If Bhagabhadra of this inscription is not a Śuṅga king, the date of Heliodorus may not be round about 125 B.C. Heliodorus was sent by the Greek king Antialcidas. Scholars are not agreed about the date of this Antialcidas. After the discovery of this inscription and after identifying Bhagabhadra with a Śuṅga king, the scholars have taken this Antialcidas to have flourished after Eukratides. On the other hand, Von Sallet has said (Cambridge History of India, pp. 554-6) that a coin of Antialcidas was restruck by Eukratides whose dates are from c. 175 B.C. to 162 B.C. Thus Antialcidas and therefore Heliodorus may be placed earlier than c. 175 B.C. If he is put, say in c. 200 B.C., the influence of the Gupta kings, with Bhāgavatism as their religion and with the Garuda-dhvaja as their royal flag, would be more living and strong and could be very well explained, for in c. 200 B.C. ruled, according to my scheme, Kumāragupta I."
Here we may point out in fairness the argument of Narain\(^1\) based on the discovery of a second Garuda pillar inscription at Besnagar in which a King Bhagavata is mentioned and his twelfth regnal year recorded. Narain argues that most probably Bhāgabhadrā with his fourteenth regnal year and Bhāgavata with his twelfth are one and the same person and that since the Puranic fifth Sunga who is variously called Odraka, Andhraka and Bhadraka is credited in the Puranas with a reign of only two or seven years, Bhāgabhadrā-Bhāgavata must be the ninth Sunga named Bhaga or Bhagavata whom the Puranas give a reign of thirty-two years. An added recommendation of the theory that makes Helodorus a contemporary of the ninth Sunga is the fact that the later Sungas are known to have ruled over Vidiśā which is in the Besnagar region. But Narain is careful to append to his discussion the footnote: “It is strange that none of the Sunga kings are known to have used metronymics as did Bhāgabhadrā who is called Kasiputra or Kosiputra (Kautsiputra), although the use of metronymics was common during this period all over India. Might we suggest that Bhāgabhadrā-Bhāgavata was a local king?”

The Bhagabhadrā controversy may therefore be taken as inconclusive. What would seem really serious is that some predecessors of Antialcidas are said to have made extensive conquests in India. Most scholars have spoken of Demetrius I (200-185 B.C.) and Menander (155-130 B.C.) as having held wide possessions to the east and south-east of the Indus. If they are right, at least the early period between 200 and 130 B.C. cannot be of the Guptas, for between 229 and 177 B.C. our chronology puts Kumaragupta I and Skandagupta, two great kings who held their empire intact in spite of attacks by various enemies. On the other hand, if the Mauryas were on the throne at this period, as our historians believe, the alleged conquests of Demetrius I no less than of Menander are just such as we may expect since soon after Asoka the Maurya empire was cracking up. However, Narain\(^2\) has recently challenged the old view of territorial extensions by those two Indo-Greeks.

After a thorough and searching survey of all numismatic and literary sources, he has concluded: “Thus we have little evidence to support the theory of extensive conquests in India by Demetrius I, the son of Euthydemos. It is also probable that the credit for having conquered the Paropamisadae and Gandhāra has been unjustifiably transferred from Demetrius II to the homonymous son of Euthydemos. It is unfortunate that Demetrius I has enjoyed his unjustified fame for so long that time and again scholars have falsely traced his name in various Indian words closely or even remotely resembling it in sound or meaning, without any regard to the nature and date of the source

\(^{1}\) The Indo-Greeks (1957), p. 119.  
\(^{2}\) Ibid., pp. 39-44.
concerned.” In the last part of the above statement Narain is alluding to words like Dattamitra mentioned in the Mahabharata, Devamantiya found in the Mitindapaniha, Dharmamita supposed in the Yuga Purāṇa, Dmīta conjectured in the Hathgumpha inscription, Timitra read in a Besnagar seal, Dāmodara present in the Rājatarangini. Narain makes short work of all identifications of “Demetrius” with names actually there in Indian books or inscriptions and shows the reading of other Greek names to be untenable or, if possible, utterly inapplicable. No ground for belief in any possession by Demetrius I of parts of India is left.

As for Menander, Narain places this king’s reputed city Sāgala or Sākala in the Swat valley and does not identify it with Sialkot, and he writes of Menander’s empire thus: “Menander’s kingdom shows Indo-Greek power at its height. He ruled from the Kabul valley in the west to the Ravi in the east, and from the Swat valley in the north to northern Arachosia in the south.” But Narain concedes: “There is evidence that he made raids even beyond the Ravi and the Beas into the Jamuna valley and led an army in league with others to Pāṭaliputra: but there is nothing to prove his conquest of these areas.”

We should differ from even this restricted attribution of further power to Menander, for Narain’s notion that Menander marched up to Pataliputra is based on an interpretation of the Yuga Purana according to the theory that “Yavana” originally meant “Greek” and according to the time-scheme current among our historians. He observes: “The real start of the Indo-Greek invasion becomes clear only on the analysis of the material contained in the historical section of the Gārgi Samhitā, the Yuga Purāṇa. It tells us that the Pañchala and Mathurā powers, together with the Yavanas who were known for their valour (suvikrāntaḥ), attacked Sāketa and marched on to possess Kusumadhvaja (Pāṭaliputra). When they reached the mud fortifications of Pāṭaliputra the people became confounded and there was disorder. The Pañchalas and the other kings who attacked Pāṭaliputra destroyed the city. However, the invaders quarrelled among themselves and as a result of the fierce fighting between them the Yavanas could not remain in the Madhyadesa.” Narain also writes: “Patañjali who wrote his Mahabḥāṣya not earlier than the middle of the second century B.C., has given two examples in illustration of the use of the imperfect tense to denote an event which has recently happened. Arunad Yavanāḥ Sāketam (The Yavana was besieging Sāketa), and Arunad Yavanāḥ Madhyamikāṁ (The Yavana was besieging Madhyamikā). If these grammatical illustrations give any historical information and are not

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2 Ibid., p. 97.  
3 Ibid., p. 81.  
4 Ibid., pp. 82-83.  
5 Ibid., p. 82.  
6 Ibid., p. 82.
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mere school examples, they refer to the sieges of Sāketa and Madhyanikā (near Chitor) by a Yavana king about the middle of the second century B.C. Similarly, Kālidāsa's drama Mālavikāgnimitra (Act V) preserves the memory of a conflict on the banks of the river Sindhu in which a Yavana force was defeated by Puṣyamitra's grandson Vasumitra during the reign of the former who died in c. 148 B.C."

If Yavana means Greek and if Puṣyamitra, duri ng whose reign Patanjali lived, flourished in the middle of the second century B.C., the eminent gram­marian must have had in mind Menander who lived at the same time. Further, since Patanjali's examples mention both Yavanas and the sack of Sāketa just as the Yuga Purana does, the Yuga Purana must be referring to the same events that Patanjali implied to be recent and, if Yavana means Greek, it too must have had Menander in mind. But, while we may grant Menander the date Narain gives him, we do not concur either in the connotation ascribed to Yavana nor in the current chronology of Puṣyamitra's reign. So, for us, the expedition into Madhyadesa with which Menander is honoured is a non­sequent. Menander's power extended only to the Ravi in the east. And, as Menander is generally acknowledged to have marked the height of Indo-Greek power, we may safely conclude that the Gupta empire suffered little from the Indo-Greeks.

We have gone to some length in this matter not only because, vis-à-vis the Indo-Greeks, we wished to show the Guptas as perfectly plausible in the pre-Christian period but also because by removing the Indo-Greeks from the position of rulers of India in any significant manner we clear the field for attacks by others whom we have figured as making inroads into India in the pre-Christian period: the Hunas in the time of Skandagupta and the Saka Mihi rakula in the time of Narsimhagupta. After Skandagupta (177 B.C.) the Hunas must have carved out a substantial empire in India to deserve the tribute implied in Yasodharman's phrase that he commanded a territory greater than that of the Guptas or of the Hunas. But the Huna empire must have been short-lived in spite of its extent, for, if Mihirakula was a Saka and not a Huna, the Sakas rather than the Hunas must have been in prominence in the days of Narsimhagupta, c. 109 B.C.

A last word on the Garuḍa-dhvaja. Mankad has rightly said that we know of the adoption of it as a flag in connection with neither the Mauryas nor the Sungas but only the Guptas. What needs to be said further is not only that its presence in the early centuries before Christ shows Bhagavatism, as of the Guptas, flourishing at this period but also that in a sculpture assigned unmistakably to this period and taken as confirming the details given by Megasthenes about the royal and military conditions of India we find the Garuḍa-
dhvaja adopted as a flag. Mookerji\(^1\) writes: “A nearly life-size figure of an infantry soldier armed as described by Megasthenes appears among the sculptures of Bharhut which are generally taken to date from the age of Asoka”. Mookerji\(^2\) also refers to Strabo’s account (XV. I. 55) from Megasthenes: “When he (the King) goes to hunt, it is in a kind of Bacchic procession, surrounded by women who form a circle. some of the women are in chariots, some on horseback, some on elephants, fully armed as in war.” Then Mooker remarks: “It is interesting to note that there is a representation of a procession in a Bharhut sculpture (c. second century B.C.) of the figure of a woman riding a horse fully caparisoned and carrying a standard, the garuḍadhvaja (A Guide to Sculptures in the Indian Museum I. 24).” So we have Megasthenes confirmed by a sculpture dated to a time shortly after his and bearing a prominent characteristic of Gupta sovereignty: the royal house of the time is proved to be of the Gupta Bhāgavatas.

Our thesis is now rounded off, both positively and negatively. Not only have we criticised the current picture of history but have also met the difficulties in the way of our identification of Sandrocottus with Chandragupta I, by a satisfying answer in most cases and, in a few, an answer reminding the objectors that similar difficulties can be raised against their own theory. Therefore we may declare the Puranic chronology vindicated, and rightly demand a revision of the dates of ancient Indian history in the light of India’s own tradition.

27

We may now cast into tabular form the chronology of our ancient history, as founded on the Puranas and determined on Puranic and other grounds:

3138 B.C. The Bharata War, the birth of Parikshit, the coronation of Yudhishtira as well as of Marjari or Somapi, the first of the 22 kings of the Barhadratha dynasty who reigned for 1006 years.

3102 B.C. The Kali Yuga beginning with the death of Krishna, the abdication of Yudhishtira and the coronation of Parikshit.

3077 B.C. The death of Yudhishtira, marking a new era of his and a special occasion for calculating the Saptarishi Era.

2132 B.C. The end of the Barhadrathas and the beginning of the Pradyota dynasty of 5 kings lasting for 138 years.

\(^1\) Chandragupta Maurya and His Times, p. 276.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 98.
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1994 B.C. The end of the Pradyotas and the beginning of the Sisunaga dynasty of 10 kings lasting for 360 years.

1887 B.C. The birth of Buddha.

1807 B.C. The death of Buddha.

c. 1650 B.C The time of Panmi.¹

1634 B.C. The end of the Sisunagas and the beginning of the Nanda dynasty of 9 kings—Mahapadma ruling for 88 years and his 8 sons for 12.

1534 B.C. The end of the Nandas and the beginning of the Maurya dynasty of 12 kings lasting for 351 years, the reign-periods of the first three being:

1534-1500 B.C. Chandragupta.
1500-1472 B.C. Bindusara.
1472-1436 B.C. Asoka.

1183 B.C. The end of the Mauryas and the beginning of the Sunga dynasty of 10 kings lasting for 300 years, the reign-period of the founder Pushyamitra being 1183-1123 B.C.

c. 1150 B.C. The time of Patanjali.

883 B.C. The end of the Sungas and the beginning of the Kanva dynasty of 4 kings lasting for 85 years.

798 B.C. The end of the Kanvas and the beginning of the Andhra (Satavahana) dynasty of 31 kings lasting for 411 years, the reign-period of the greatest of them, Gautamiputra Satakarni, being: 522-497 B.C.

653 B.C. The Malava Era.

551 B.C. The old Saka Era according to Varahamihira—2526 years after the new Era of Yudhishtthra in 3077 B.C.

c. 515 B.C. The first advent of the Sakas, from Seistan, under Bhumaka-Yasotika, bringing the old Saka Era with them.

504 B.C. The death of Nahapana, the Saka Mahakshatrapa of the Kshaharata family, at the hands of Gautamiputra Satakarni.

498 B.C. The Andhau inscriptions of Chastana, the Mahakshatrapa of the Kardamaka family, and of his grandson Rudradaman I.

¹ In the article in which Panmi's time was touched upon, there was a mistake due to V. S. Agrawala's interpretation of an astronomical datum—the primacy of the nakshatra Dhanishtha or Sravishtha in the star-list—drawn from Panmi. That interpretation was based on a misunderstanding of the precession of the equinoxes and the solstices. Agrawala, erroneously taking the sun to enter a nakshatra at the first point instead of at the last, had given 1372 B.C. as the upper limit and 405 B.C. as the lower of Panmi's date. Astronomically, the lower limit should be 1372 B.C. and the upper c. 2340 B.C. If, apart from his astronomical blunder, Agrawala's adjustment of Panmi into the framework of the royal dynasties is followed, the date given in our Table would be the approximate time of the great grammarian.
478 B.C. The Junagarh inscription of the Mahakshatrapa Rudradaman I.
387 B.C. The end of the Andhras.
326 B.C. The Naga king Chandramsa—Xandrames, king of the Indian interior about the Ganges at the time of Alexander’s invasion of India.
c. 324 B.C. The beginning of the Imperial Gupta dynasty lasting for 644 years, the reign-periods of the main kings, as indicated by the years in the Gupta Era of c. 324 B.C., being:
  324-290 B.C. Chandragupta I=Sandrocottus.
  290-264 B.C. Samudragupta=Amitrachates (=Amitrachcheta?)
  264-229 B.C. Chandragupta II.
  229-189 B.C. Kumaragupta I.
  189-177 B.C. Skandagupta.
  170 B.C. Kumaragupta II.
  167-144 B.C. Budhagupta.
  109-? B.C. Narsimhagupta (Baladitya).
c. 182 B.C. The first attack of the Huns on India in Skandagupta’s time.
c. 130 B.C. The second advent of the Sakas from Bactria (Ta-hia) into Ki-pin (Kashmir) and down to Avanti in the reign of the father of Vikramaditya of Ujjayini.
124 B.C. The time of Varahamihira’s Panchasiddhāntikā, 427 years after his Saka Era of 551 B.C.
109 B.C. Narasimhagupta Baladitya’s fight with Mihirakula the Saka king.
74 B.C. The Mandasor Inscription of Yasodharman—Vikramaditya of Ujjayini, after his victory over Mihirakula.
57 B.C. The Vikrama Era of Yasodharman—Vikramaditya.
78 A.D. The new Saka Era marking the defeat of a Saka king at the hands of Salivahana.
c. 175 A.D. The time of Srigupta, a late Imperial Gupta.
c. 260 or
310 A.D. The time of a second Samudragupta, a late Imperial Gupta contemporary of the Cylonese king either Sri Meghavarnabhaya or Kittisri Meghavarna.
320 A.D. The new Gupta Era starting from the end of the Imperial Guptas according to Alberuni.

(Concluded)

K. D. Sethna
HOPKINS IN FRENCH


English poetry is not easily amenable to translation into French verse, but of all English poets G. M. Hopkins would seem the most intractable. The translator must grapple with alliterations, assonances, compound words, new verbal inventions, combining to form the woof of a sprung-rhythm which in itself is as foreign as Chinese to the French tradition. Where are the equivalents to "self-yeast, fallowboots fellow, prickproof, heaven-roisterers in gay-gangs, wring-world right foot"? To make things even more difficult, Hopkins boycotted words of Latin derivation and concentrated on a vocabulary of Saxon stock, particularly those monosyllabic words of which the counterpart in French literature was so woefully reduced when the Grand Siècle decided that Gothic expressions were non nobles.

And suppose that, through prodigious exertions, the translator overcomes those obstacles he will still find himself faced with the most arduous problem of all, that of conveying the multivalent unity of Hopkins's poetry, what M. Pierre Leyris calls its polyvalence. In every sonnet and stanza of Hopkins the constituent parts are interdependent to such a degree that hardly a word can be moved, or a value altered, without the line crumbling away; moreover, this interdependence operates on different levels at the same time, each word being specially chosen for a combination of intellectual, visual, harmonic, and rhythmic qualities, seen as facets of the same reality, all of which are intimately related to the other words and their facets in the context. How can those poetic chords pass into an alien music without the logical sequence of the phrase being lost on the way? There is no hope of rendering into French the polyvalence of "shipwrack" (wreck and rack), "told" (toll), "spells," "haven" (heaven). In his pungent introduction M. Pierre Leyris shows himself well aware of those difficulties and of the limitation imposed on him by his medium; he proposes
simply to give the French an echo of Hopkins’s music, “un reflet dans un miroir terni.” Does he succeed?

First of all he follows the poet in taking the same liberty with syntax and morphology, even if this procedure means stretching the French language to breaking-point. Only new moulds can bring Hopkins to life in a foreign world. The poem “As kingfishers catch fire” has a line which runs: “Each mortal thing...selves-goes itself; myself it speaks and spells;”. The pronoun “self” has given birth to the verb “to selve.” That cannot be done with the French soi. In order to suggest somehow the assonance and the activity of the inscape “selves-goes itself,” M. Leyris produces the Franco-Latin se: “S’avère, per-se-vèrè, incante et dit moi-même.” For “spells” he had to choose between incante and épèle. “Self-yeast,” in another poem, becomes soi-levain and “lionlimb” bras-lion (Why not? Have we not terre-mère?); “lovely-dumb” makes doux-taire and “blue-bleak” bleu-blème. Oxford, that “Towery city and branchy between towers; Cuckoo-echomg, bell-swarmed, lark-charmed, rook-racked, river-rounded,” Oxford is hailed as

Cité tourrée, cité branchue entre tes tours;

Coucou-sonnante, embourdonnée, d’aloues charmée, de freux-rouée, de rus-cernée.

Aloue equals, in Old French, alouette; ru (brook) is unusual, except in dialect; freux-rouée is exactly “rook-racked”; embourdonnée (from bourdon, great bell) is a normal construction with a slightly archaic flavour; coucou-sonnante is a superb expression which shows how Hopkins can invigorate French poetry.

Like his model, M. Leyris commutes verbs into nouns, coining (une) éloigne for “(a) remove,” to avoid the colourless éloignement, and ce garder inoui, which sounds perhaps a little too shrill, for “this to hoard unheard.” Or vice versa, he conjures verbs out of substantives: Squamez-vous, yeux, de double nuit (from squame, scale), rendering beautifully “Be shelled, eyes, with double dark.” Esquat, for “squat,” is archaic or popular, and demeurance retains the graceful termination usual in medieval and Renaissance poetry.

And so on. Every line brings forth marvels of ingenuity and imagination. But we must not infer, from these examples, that the translation is a bag of tricks. On the whole, M. Leyris writes as simply as the original will allow, and many of the poems are of a crystalline limpidity. It is true that, occasionally, his scrupulous poetical scholarship sounds too elaborate, and that his rhythm lacks the power to carry off the line with all its freight: “Précipitée par-dessus bord dans le puits rond,/la pierre sonne; émue la corde chante; en branle/la cloche arquée, trouvant langue, clame son nom.” This version does not convey the sensation of glory, the sonorous, bell-like rhythm produced by Hopkins’s five-stressed monosyllabic lines with their interplay of long
and short vowels, clinched by alliterative consonants: As tumbled over rim in roundy wells stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name."

"Précipité par dessus bord" would have tasted like hay to Hopkins's palate. And how abstract and political sounds: "Bah! peu me chaut l'égalité, pourvu que chacun ait son pain," compared with the ballad-style of "Little I reck ho! lack-level in, if all had bread." But so goes French, and a "Tom" of the Haute-Loire would certainly, at least nowadays, speak like M. Leyris (except for "peu me chaut"). Such failures are rare, however; in most cases the poetry soars and the impossible comes true, as in the first lines of the same "Tom's Garland":

Tom qu'enguirlande un fer esquati et revêche,
Tom; puis son pote ès brodequins, Dick le noueux qui, jetant bêche
Au tas, s'en retourne avec lui, étripant les pierres à feu;
(Tom-garlanded with squat and surly steel
Tom; then Tom's fallowboots fellow piles pick
By him and rips out rockfire homeforth-sturdy Dick;).

And in those of "Peace":
Quand vas-tu, Paix, ramier des bois, quand vas-tu clore,
Tes ailes elusive et ta rondes rôdeuse
À mon entour cesser enfin pour ma ramée?
(When will you ever, Peace, wild wood-dove, shy wings shut,
Your round me roaming end, and under be my boughs?).

Or in "Ce fol envol de floconneux pigeons épars dans la basse-cour apeurée" ("Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare").

The contrast between the poetical values of English and French could hardly be more striking than in the last two quotations, but the style and spirit are akin. A sculpture has been transposed into an analogous painting. But of the later poems none equals, in our view, "The Leaden Echo":

Comment tenir—is there any any, is there none such, nowhere
known some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch or
catch or key to keep
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, from vanishing away?
O is there no frowning of these wrinkles, rankèd wrinkles deep,
Down? no waving off of these most mournful messengers, still messengers,
sad and stealing messengers of grey?
No there's none, there's none, O no there's none,
Nor can you long be, what you now are, called fair, (etc.)
Rien pour effaroucher des rides, ces arrois de creuses rides, pour chasser
Ces muets messagers, ces messagers combien chagrins, ces tristes messagers
furtifs du gris prochain ?
Non, nulle ni rien, non nulle ni rien, ô non, non, nulle ni rien,
Ni longtemps ne seras-tu, comme en ce jour, dite belle (&c.).

One could also quote extensively from "The Habit of Perfection," "Carrión Comfort," "Andromeda," "The Windhover," the so-called Terrible Sonnets (which are breath-taking) and "That Nature is a Heraclitean fire", a translator's Paganini Concerto, where M. Leyris performs incredible feats of virtuosity. "The Wreck of the Deutschland" has been omitted and that is why the book is called Requie, instead of Anthologie, another reason being that it contains extracts from diaries, letters and sermons, which illustrate Hopkins’s ideas and sensibility.

The examples given here are enough to show how M. Pierre Leyris has married the stresses of his free verse to the sonority of vowel and resistance of consonant in a way which suggests sprung-rhythm as faithfully as French can possibly do. This is remarkable enough, considering that at the same time he produces a most accurate translation of a difficult text. But the even greater wonder is that Hopkins’s music and cadence, transmuted through his interpreter’s ear, have created a striking new poetical language of which the influence in France (if it is listened to) might be incalculable. Not unlike Mr. Arthur Waley, M. Leyris seems to be one of those poets on whom lies an interdict forbidding them from expressing their genius otherwise than through the medium of a foreign language out of which they chisel masterpieces for their native literature.

(With acknowledgments to "The Times Literary Supplement" of April 4, 1958.)
FLASHERS

He alone is my superior who possesses my confidence.
He alone is my inferior whose bosom friend is pride.
He alone is my friend who dares to correct me.
He alone is my foe who is afraid of truth.

* * *

If you have much, give much. If you have little, give little. But willingly, and not unwillingly. To give unwillingly means to present the rose together with numberless thorns. To give willingly means to present only the rose.

* * *

We always think of ourselves. We have no time for others. We forget the undeniable truth that they and we are but one in essence. Our complete freedom is a far cry so long as they are in bondage.

* * *

O God, you too have a choice, as I have. Your choice is my perfection. My choice is your fulfilment.

* * *

I do not want to be a walking dictionary of the world. I want to be a fixed faith in the Unseen. Mastery is not my goal. My goal is surrender.

* * *

Our humility is dignity. Our nothingness is plenitude.

* * *

Faith is the plant. Aspiration is the tree. Surrender is the fruit.
Our best friend and our worst foe are within us. The former being vigilance, the latter complacency.

Success goes to the Absolute alone, for all contradictions and reconciliations are ever at His command.

They are the bravest who make friends with solitude. They are the weakest who delight in noise.

Paradise and hell are within me. My aspiration sports with paradise. My desires sport with hell.

CHINMOY
THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

Life is one phenomenon and death the other the meaning of which is the greatest challenge to science and philosophy.

Let us see what progress is made towards the solution of this mystery by the scientist and the philosopher.

Science has two theories about the origin of life. Life might have been the result of a combination of certain chemical substances the nature of which is not yet known. The other theory is that life might have descended from some other planet into earth under certain conditions and begun to spread itself. If life is the result of a combination of chemical substances it must have been present in some of them in some form or other. If it is completely absent it cannot come out, for nothing comes out of nothing. The second theory is also unsatisfactory. If it is said that life might have descended into earth from some other planet, the question arises how life has come into existence in that planet itself. The question is not of where but of how.

Let us see if this mystery can be solved according to Hindu Philosophy. The Vedas say that 'Matter is Brahman' or, if we are reluctant to use this metaphysical word, we can say that all matter is only a condensed form of a Universal Self-Conscious Force which is absolute and besides which there is nothing. According to science some decades back, matter was inert matter. But now it is recognised that matter is a condensed form of energy. If we stop there as the scientists have done till now, we cannot explain the principle of 'Intelligence' which is present in nature's working. Energy being blind, there must be something behind it for the manifestation of Intelligence. So we have to go beyond this blind energy and postulate something which comprises everything: Matter, Life, Consciousness. This the Vedas called 'Brahman'. So when everything is only a condensed form of 'Brahman' there is no question of how life came into existence. It is always there. When it comes to a stage of evolution where our gross senses recognise certain signs, we say that a certain thing is living. In fact there is no fundamental difference between what we call an inanimate thing and an animate. In the former, life is latent and, seeing the progress of science, we may not hold it impossible for the scientist to devise instruments sensitive enough to tap this brooding life in matter.

C. Sitaram
TWENTY-ONE year old Gopal was sitting on a log in the garden, in front of his Guru’s room.

He was in utter anguish, for all his efforts seemed to fail him. “If there is any truth in yoga, why don’t I succeed with all my efforts? I feel nothing, see nothing, realise nothing”. This was the constant thought that was terribly haunting him.

The Guru came to pluck some flowers from the garden. He threw a smile of wisdom on the young disciple and said calmly, “Child, why dost thou worry? Confide in the Lord and go on on thy way. The time of victory for thee is not too far now, only let thy condition be a little more ripened.”

These words sank deep in the ardent seeker and re-kindled the flame of hope and zeal within him.

The Guru again left him alone in the garden. Slowly and slowly the aspiration of his heart grew intenser and intenser and took the form of a prayer, “O Lord! I call Thee. If indeed Thou existest anywhere, reply to my call. Tell me where Thou art. I know nothing, O Lord! nor do I have any yogic qualification, all that I can do is to take refuge in Thee and call Thee.”

The moments passed, the prayer became more and more living, spontaneous and effective till at last it grew so mighty that it moved the Lord. And lo! all of a sudden everything changed. Innocent Gopal began feeling a marvellous Presence in everything. He began hearing a melodious echo from everything. He felt as if the beautiful flowers around him were telling him, “Here I am, — smiling through these flowers.” The bees and the butterflies too were telling him, “See, it is I Myself who am flying from flower to flower in the guise of these attractive insects.” The fresh breeze too sang in his ear, “It is I Myself that thou art breathing, dost thou understand now?” And from far off in the sky, the sun and the clouds too, playing at hide and seek, echoed, “Look, it is I who give sunshine and shade!” Even his own clothes and body whispered to him, “It is I who am embracing thee.” All without exception wore the face of the Lord and played the same note: “See, thou wert calling me. Here I am. Behold me now.” His inner eye saw, his inner ear heard.

The darkness of his consciousness was over; the light had dawned. There was no place for sorrow now. Everything was giving him the message of joy.
GOD'S RESPONSE

The Guru again came with a smile. In him too Gopal beheld the same throbbing Presence. Now there was a smile, the smile of the soul, on Gopal’s face too. He got up from the log and bowed down at the feet of his Guru and washed them with the tears of gratitude and ecstasy. Never before had he shed such holy tears.

The Guru put his compassionate hand on Gopal’s head, then lifted him up with both hands and embraced him.

The two felt that they were one.

DEVAKINANDAN
OUR SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

"DING...DONG...KLANG!" goes the bell; it is 7:45 a.m. Our first period begins with the prayer,

"Make of us the hero warriors we aspire to become. May we fight successfully the great battle of the future that is to be born, against the past that seeks to endure; so that the new things may manifest and we be ready to receive them."

Just now I am going to the Anatomy class; next is English Literature; then, after a recess of 15 minutes,—which means time for taking soup,—will be the History class; in the fourth period we have French. At 11:30 we shall go home, have lunch, take rest for some time, prepare a bit of our lessons, and again off to school at 2:15 p.m. Till 3 o'clock we shall have Indian Languages, after which some have Drawing class, some laboratory work, others technical class. Those who are free in any of these periods go to the library attached to our University Centre; it is a big library with comfortable reading rooms. "4 p.m. !" says the clock, and our school is over.

We then rush home, get ready, put on our uniform for Physical Training, take some light refreshments and 'bye bye' to home for a few hours.

At 5 p.m. begins our group activity in the Play Ground. In rotation we have various kinds of games, athletics, combatives, gymnastics and many other things. The programme is so well organised and supervised that everyone gets the amount of exercise and recreation he or she requires. Here boys and girls, men and women have equal rights and attend the daily programme side by side. Among us we have members from nearly all the parts of the world and from all the classes of society; but no one cares a jot for these trifling differences! We are brothers and sisters brought up in the teachings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. We know that man has to change himself before he can hope to build up a world-unity and a peaceful world-government. Therefore here we have to observe ourselves, know what we really want to be, get in touch with the flame that is in our hearts and that can make man happy even if he does not have a penny in his pocket. Happiness really comes from inside the heart. At times, when we forget that flame, nothing on earth can please us, not even a prince's fortune. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother believe
that as Nature has gradually created stone, plant, animal and man, so too a new kind of man will evolve among us. That man—the Superman—will not not be any more happy with the comforts and charms of the day-to-day life but will be Divine in his nature; he will embody a new consciousness that is eager to come down on the earth. That is why we are preparing ourselves in the hope to realise that new knowledge.

I am sorry to have gone off the track. Yes, till 6-45 we take Physical Training. Then all the groups are called for the March Past when the Mother takes our salute. Members right from the age of 4 up to the age of 78 attend this item after which a short Gymnastic Marching takes place for the elderly members. During this interval we, the students, go either to the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo or sit in the study-room for preparing our lessons. Our teachers love us as their own brothers and sisters, and are always ready to help us whenever needed. In this way they serve the Mother. We have, in our school, on an average one teacher for two students. If you happen to peep ever into our study-room, you will find us busy with various subjects: world-history, geography, Sanskrit, Latin, French, English, different Indian classics, mathematics, science (for which we have separate laboratories), shorthand, poetry, painting, engineering and what not? Here we are not only encouraged to appreciate the values of the arts, literature and music, but also we have found a great inspiration to kindle our creative faculties. This way, instead of leaving ourselves like fallow land or a piece of stone, we learn the best of what we can, since the Mother has said, “The diamond shows all its beauty when it is cut artistically”.

After the Marching there takes place the “Concentration” under the guidance of the Mother who can be called the Tao, as described by Laotse, the goal as well as the means to attain the goal. We stand in silence before Her, and direct all our thought, energy and capacity to one point and pray that we may be ready to act according to the Divine’s Will.

After the “Concentration” we have on certain days a class where the Mother reads out passages from her works or from those by Sri Aurobindo; at this time we put questions to her concerning our progress and the ideal life we are seeking for. Each day ends with a meditation. Once a month now—it used to be every week formerly—the Mother distributes sweets or nuts to us, which is an occasion for us to approach her personally. Often we have cinema shows too. Then we return home and prepare ourselves for the next morning which begins with the “Darshan” of the Mother at her balcony.

Here we are breathing an air which is surcharged with the perfume of spiritual life; this life is the basis of all fruitful culture and education. We do not want to repeat what man has already done. We know that the hour is coming when all human beings of sincere good-will and effort shall receive what their
souls were seeking from age to age. The Teacher, our Ideal, is fortunately
He, "who destroys our darkness by the resplendent light of his knowledge;
that light becomes within us the increasing glory of his own self-revelation.
He discloses progressively in us his own nature of freedom, bliss, love,
power, immortal being. He sets above us his divine example as our ideal and
transforms the lower existence into a reflection of that which it contemplates.
By the inpouring of his own influence and presence into us he enables the
individual being to attain to identity with the universal and transcendent".

PRITHWINDRA
"THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER"

A SUMMARY

A ship was drifted away to the South Pole and got caught in the ice. The sailors would have certainly died of hunger, thirst and cold. When one day an albatross flew over the ship, the sailors gave it bits of food and accepted it as a Christian soul.

Suddenly the ice around the ship cracked and the wind started blowing and the ship was free. The helmsman steered the ship through the ice and the voyage started anew.

The albatross flew above the ship and the ship sailed smoothly along.

One day a mariner on the ship, who was very cruel at heart, shot the albatross with his cross-bow. The poor bird fell dead on the deck, and all the sailors cursed the mariner for having killed the bird which had made the ship sail.

Then suddenly the wind stopped blowing and the sun became hotter and the sailors justified the killing of the bird.

Days went by and the ship was still "like a painted ship upon a painted ocean". The sailors grew thinner and thinner without food and water. Again the sailors cursed the mariner and hung the albatross around his neck for a cross.

One day they saw a form approaching the ship. It was Death; and all the sailors died save the mariner who had killed the bird. He was to suffer more than the others.

His throat grew so dry that he could not even pray. He kept gazing at the sea where he saw the little creatures of the water playing and he blessed them unawares. Suddenly the dead bird fell from his neck and the curse was raised. The dead sailors rose and the ship began to sail. Soon the land was sighted and the ship stopped in the harbour. A hermit came in his little boat to meet the sailors but just when he came near the ship sank. Only the mariner was saved and brought to land.

From then on the mariner went about the world teaching people the love for all living things and he had to confess his crime to someone every year.

MADHUSUDAN
ARISTOTLE'S POETICS

AN EXPOSITION AND AN INTERPRETATION

[F.] CHARACTER

ARISTOTLE's treatment of Character in Tragedy is limited by the conditions of the Greek Theatre. Firstly Tragic Character must be good, secondly it must be appropriate, thirdly it must be realistic, and fourthly it must be consistent throughout. The first rule excludes the villain. There is no place for an Iago in Aristotle's scheme of Character. The evolutionary view of the Greek Drama does not support Aristotle. Clytemnestra is a dark Character. Medea's plans of the double murder of the bride and her children imply the character of the villain. In the Ion of Euripides the servant is definitely a villain. In the New Comedy of Menander the villain is a stock character. The first rule is based upon the structure of the plays of Sophocles such as Oedipus Tyrannus and lays down too wide a proposition in respect of even the Greek drama. The first rule is inconsistent with the third. If the characters are to be realistic, they must be good and bad. Sheer realism requires that every kind of character be permitted upon the stage. The second rule that Character must be appropriate, that is, the female character must behave as the female, and the male as the male, is correct in general principle. But no limitation can be put upon Character. A woman such as Medea may act like a man, Orestes in certain plays of Euripides acts as a woman. He shrinks from the murder of Clytemnestra. Electra acts as the murderess. Rigid rules of character-making cannot fit in with even the Greek stage. The rule that Character must be realistic must also be construed liberally. All characters must be real or approximately so. But Character may be idealistic as well as realistic. Puck and Ariel are idealistic characters. Miranda is a creation of the imagination. Prospero is neither idealistic nor realistic. He is a magician. He belongs to the domain of the occult. The fourth rule that Character must be consistent is subject to exceptions. Sometimes the truth of Character is its inconsistency. Inconsistent action may be realistic action. A criminal in love may cease to be a criminal in action. Othello's action in strangling Desdemona is inconsistent with his devotion. Yet he has a higher consistency. It is misunderstanding and jealousy which causes him to be inconsistent. He has psychological inconsistency.
ARISTOTLE'S Poetics

Subject to the limitations of the Greek stage and the infant conditions of the Greek Theatre, Aristotle's rules as to Character crystallise the central principles of Greek Drama and perhaps of universal Drama.

In a complex plot, there are five incidents of Character—Harmatia, Peripeteia, Discovery, Pathos, and Katharsis. Harmatia is some seed of imperfection of Character, inherent pride, search for power, or some latent past, some unfulfilled Karmic destiny necessitated by the soul. Peripeteia is the fall of the soul due to the inherent defect. Discovery is the realisation of the defect. Pity and Fear, Pathos or Suffering, arise by reason of the Discovery. Katharsis is the purification of the passions, artistic pleasure, moral lesson, or release from repression which result from Tragic Spectacle. The five incidents of Character form a coherent movement of Character in action and thus constitute dramatic action or Praxis.

Plot and Character are interconnected. The five incidents of Character are also the five incidents of the complex Plot. In Plot is the coherent movement of events, in Character the coherent movement of its fall. Coherence is essential to both Plot and Character.

Peripeteia is the turning of the affairs of the play from one state to another in the probable and natural sequence. Thus, in Oedipus Tyrannus, the Messenger arrives to tell Oedipus the secret of his birth to remove his fears. Actually, he reveals the facts by which Oedipus is shown to be the murderer of Laius and the husband of his mother. This constitutes the fall of Character. Peripeteia is equivalent to the crisis of the modern play. Aristotle does not draw a distinction between outer and inner Peripeteia of Character. The fall and blinding of Oedipus is outer Peripeteia. There is a failure in all his outer circumstances. In Medea, there is an inner Peripeteia. In her outer circumstances she succeeds. Jason's bride and children are murdered. There is an inner spiritual Peripeteia. She has lost her soul. Euripides is a psychologist. To him the outer and the inner Peripeteia are equally important.

Discovery is described as the change of Character from ignorance to knowledge which leads to love or hate in personages marked for good or evil fortune. Thus the Discovery of Oedipus that he is a murderer spurs him to self-hate and leads in the end to his blinding. Aristotle gives six instances of Discovery from Greek plays, namely, by signs, by birth-marks, by direct statements, by recollection, by inference, by hearsay reports, by natural revelation arising from the circumstances of the play. He also grades different kinds of Discoveries. The least artistic Discovery is when the Character makes a direct statement of his identity. Aristotle disapproves of abrupt or blunt Discovery. He approves of Discovery which arises naturally from the incidents of the play as in Oedipus Tyrannus and Iphigeneia in Taurica where Iphigeneia is
revealed by the reading of the letter to Orestes. Aristotle does not expressly distinguish between outer and inner Discovery. The Discovery of Oedipus is outer and inner. There is the outer realisation of facts of the murder of Laius and the inner realisation of the soul's latent imperfections which have led to the state of things.

Pathos is defined by Aristotle as Suffering, as action of a destructive or painful nature such as murders on the stage, tortures and the like which evoke terror and pity. The arousing of terror and pity is laid down as the essential condition of Tragedy. This may be true of the Greek stage. It does not, however, apply to the whole of Drama. Even Euripides tends to substitute in his melodramatic plays a happy ending. Terror and Pity are subdued. In the New Comedy terror and pity give place to humour and satire. In Marlowe and Webster, Horror and Death are the very kernel of Tragedy. They conform to the Aristotelian ideal. The range of Shakespeare's plays is wider, In A Midsummer Night's Dream, terror and pity turn into the smiles of the Fairyland of Titania. In Kalidasa, in accordance with Indian tradition, terror and pity are reduced. His spiritual ascents into Poetry demand scenes of delight and beauty.

Katharsis of Character is not defined in the Poetics. Presumably, it is the purgation of the soul after the crisis of action. The errors of Oedipus are removed by his suffering after his blindness, that is, by the action of Peripeteia and Discovery. Thus Harmatia, Peripeteia, Discovery, Pathos, Praxis end in Katharsis. Katharsis is the purgation of the lower self and its passions through action. As Harmatia is the beginning, Katharsis is the end of Tragic action.

In respect of Plot, Aristotle envisages three kinds of Tragic Situations, firstly when a good man passes from happiness to misery, secondly when a bad man passes from misery to happiness, and thirdly when an extremely bad man passes from happiness to misery. Aristotle does not give approval to any of these three situations of Tragic action as an ideal. His Tragic Hero, suggested perhaps by Oedipus Tyrannus, is an intermediate kind of personage, a man not preeminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vices and depravity, but by some error of judgement—a man too who is in the enjoyment of a great reputation and prosperity. This preference may also be ascribed to his inclination to the ethical theory of the 'Golden Mean'. Othello conforms to this type of Tragic Hero. Antigone, engaged to Haemon, born, as she says, for Love and not Hate, passing from deserved happiness to undeserved misery by her resistance to the irresponsible law of the tyrant,
ARISTOTLE'S Poetics

would be excluded under the first category. On the same ground, noble charac-
ters such as Cordelia, Desdemona, Lear and Hamlet, would also be ruled out.
Macbeth, not preeminently a bad man, but incited by the ambitions of Lady
Macbeth, would be eliminated under the second category. Richard III, a pre-
eminently bad man, would be inadmissible under the third category. These
rules are based upon some of the Greek plays. They express the preference
of Aristotle. They are in the nature of a general direction for the composers of
the Greek Drama and the Greek audience.

Aristotle divides the deed of horror which Tragic Situations require into
four classes: firstly the deed of horror done with conscious knowledge as when
Medea murders her children with full knowledge of its consequences in her
fit of jealousy; secondly the deed of horror done in ignorance, its
consequences discovered later as when Oedipus murders his father Laius
and marries his mother and makes the discovery later; thirdly the deed
of horror about to be done, its discovery made before the deed is com-
plete as when Iphigeneia in Taurica, about to sacrifice her brother Orestes,
reads the letter and recognises him; fourthly the deed of horror about to
be done with full knowledge and not completed. The fourth category
of the deed of horror has the least approval of Aristotle. The test of the quality
of the deed of horror is the extent to which it arouses terror and pity. A deed of
horror contemplated with knowledge and not completed arouses no terror or pity.
It points to a failure of the dramatic situation. Thus if Macbeth had not com-
mitted the murder of Duncan because of the prompting of his conscience, there
would have been no tragic situation. Aristotle does not allow for a melodramatic
end by which the character retracts from a tragic situation. He further adds
that where the deed of horror is done by relative to relative, or friend to friend,
and not enemy to enemy, the tragic intensity is increased. All the remaining
three categories of deeds of horror are approved in different degrees. His pre-
fERENCE is for the plot where the deed is done in ignorance and the discovery is
astounding as in Oedipus or as in Iphigeneia where the sacrifice is about to be
completed but the discovery of brother and sister saves them. The four situat-
ions of Tragic Drama are taken from Greek plays. No clear principle or in-
variable rule can be laid down. Macbeth's murder of Duncan is done with
full knowledge and even reluctance. It creates the maximum horror and in-
tensest pity for Duncan. Killing him in ignorance would have spoiled the dramatic
effect. Deliberation was the essence of the situation. The position of Hamlet
is different. Hamlet kills in ignorance with the poisoned sword and is killed
in ignorance. He kills the King with full knowledge. There is equal intensity
in all the scenes. He has an opportunity to kill his step-father at his prayers
and he retreats from the horror of the deed. His withdrawal from the murder

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at this moment shows the hesitant and nervous disposition of Hamlet. This gives the highest tragic effect. The tragic deed depends for its dramatic effect not merely upon the knowledge or ignorance of the Character but upon the total situation of the play.

From the tragic situation evolves Aristotle’s division of the forms of Tragedies. First is the Complex Tragedy involving Peripeteia, fall of character and discovery, of which the best example is the Oedipus Tyrannus. Second is the Emotional Tragedy—the Tragedy of suffering such as the Ajax of Sophocles. Third is the Tragedy of Character such as the lost play of Peleus. Fourth is the Tragedy of Spectacle such as the Prometheus of Aeschylus. In this classification, Aristotle gives insufficient attention to the plays of Euripides which extended the field of Tragedy into the political drama, the domestic, the social, and the romantic melodrama. His division of the Greek dramas is guided by a certain conservatism due perhaps to his general sense of moderation and to his personal preference for the plays of Sophocles who represents the Middle period of Greek Tragedy. The Poetics largely misses the originality of Euripides in expanding the basis of Drama.

The part prescribed by Aristotle to the chorus is dominated by the Sophoclean ideal. The chorus must be as an actor. It must be a part of the play. In Sophocles, this direction is right. The chorus takes its part in the drama. In Sophocles, both Plot and Character are simple. In Euripides, Plot becomes complicated by subplots or suspenses of action as in Ion or Iphigenia in Taurica and characters become a complex of emotions. When events move with rapidity, particularly where conspiracies ripen, the presence of the chorus is an impediment to dramatic action. Euripides wisely made the chorus an interlude which Aristotle disapproves. The general evolution of the Greek Drama supports Euripides. Eventually the chorus is altogether eliminated. This clears the stage for the dramatic action. In the Modern Drama, from the chorus have sprung the Opera and the Ballet. The stage has appropriated the entire dramatic action. The Euripidean drama is the predecessor of the Modern Drama. Aristotle’s rule has today no application to the Theatre.

(To be continued)

SYED MEHDI IMAM