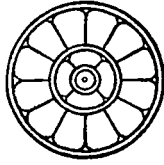


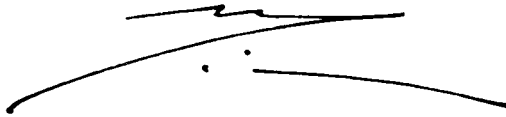
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute:
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

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Vol. X

No. 6

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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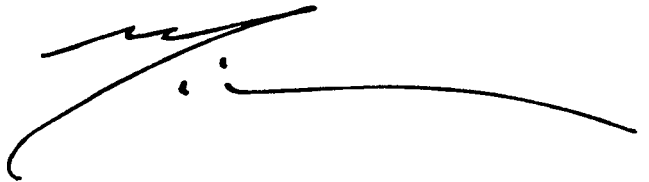
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THE MOTHER ANSWERS A QUESTION

Q. Surely the Mother knows that a certain person is of a type that would rebel or vegetate and, in either case, go away from the Ashram. Knowing this, why does she allow such a person to stay in the Ashram for several years ? Why does she not tell him that his stay would be useless or that he can leave at any time he pleases ?

(24.6.1958)

*Because, to each one is given his
a chance, and there comes always
- an unexpected opening and
- conversion.*



PSEUDO OCCULTISM

(Some Unpublished Letters of Sri Aurobindo)

He was not progressing at all. He was full of pseudo occult delusions and "sufferings". So he is going with our approval to see if he cannot shake them off by a change of atmosphere. (7.3.1936)

He opened himself to wrong suggestions and influences in his desire to get occult powers and be able to figure as a great Yogi. It was these forces that made him feel all sorts of pains and sufferings in his body caused by a distracted state of his nerves, while his mind and vital became clouded and too tired by the struggle between these influences and the truth pressing upon him. (8.3.1936)

X did the same. It is one thing to live within with the Mother and with the truth in the psychic being and another to live in the vital with delusions and false voices that mislead and obscure. (8.3.1936)

He had too much ego, ambition, sex and he brought these into his sadhana, accepted them as part of it — when he tried to free himself from the delusions the vital brought them back because the ego could not free itself from its ambition. (8.3.1936)

How can falsehood (his occultism was a false occultism, an interchange with wrong vital forces) help the sadhana?

Going away was necessary, because staying here he was moved always to do sadhana and sadhana had come for him to mean this occultism. He could not get back to the right track without getting back to the normal mind and living in the ordinary consciousness so as to begin with a blank page. This he failed to do here.

It is not for vital satisfaction that he goes, but to get out of the wrong groove. (8.3.1936)

Q. The Ashram is the best place for getting rid of wrong movements. Is not the Guru's physical presence the best means for doing it?

That is only true if one can open oneself to the Mother. To be here and shut up to it and under another control does not help. (8.3.1936)

NAGIN DOSHI

ILLNESS AND YOGA

(Some Unpublished Letters of Sri Aurobindo)

I suppose your vital physical has opened to the attack and does not make any reaction to shake it off. (31.3.1934)

Reject the movement of the vital physical and affirm the principle of health. The vital desires to be ill—throw out the desire. (31.3.1934)

It was the mind that did not want it; this vital when left to itself often wants illness, it finds it dramatic, thinks it makes it interesting to others, likes to indulge the tamas, etc. etc. (31.3.1934)

A thing that has become chronic does not go by a simple rubbing. You can go on and at the same time call down the Force.

Dayashanker says it is sciatica you have—that is a little difficult to get rid of and sometimes long, unless you can use the yogic method to send it off. (15.6.1934)

To separate yourself from the thing and call in the Mother's force to cure it—or else to use your will force with faith in the power to heal having the support of the Mother's force behind you. If you cannot use either of these methods then you must rely on the action of the medicine.

There is no special device for these things. It is a matter for will and concentration. (15.6.1934)

Q. I believe my consciousness is separate from the vital movements, but it still suffers. And the pains too are continuing.

If it is separate, it should not suffer from them. Even for the pains the body may suffer but the consciousness should not feel itself suffering or overpowered. (16.6.1934)

NAGIN DOSHI

AGNI—THE DIVINE ENERGY

SRI AUROBINDO

(Translated from the Bengali original in *Vividha Rachana*)

IN this sacrifice the conscious being, the lord of the house, is the worshipper, the nature of the being is the consort who shares the dharma of the lord of the house. But who is to be the priest? If it is the being that performs the work of the priest then there is hardly any hope of the sacrifice being well conducted because the being is led by the ego and bound with the triple cord of mind, life and body. Under these conditions if the being becomes the self-appointed vicar, it is the ego which assumes the role of the sacrificer, the Ritwik, and even that of the deity of the sacrifice, and in that case there is great danger of some untoward happening due to the unlawful performance of the ritual. At first the being wants liberation from its extremely circumscribed condition, and if it wishes to be free from bondage then it has to rely on a power other than its own. Even after the triple cord which binds it to the sacrificial post has been loosened, the knowledge and the power capable of directing the ritual does not appear suddenly nor can they be perfectly acquired so soon. Divine knowledge and divine power are necessary, and it is by the sacrifice alone that they can come and grow perfectly. Even when the being is liberated, full of divine knowledge and divine power, it is the Ishwara and not the worshipper who remains the master, giver of sanction and enjoyer of the sacrifice. We have to welcome the Divine and install Him on the altar of the sacrifice. Unless the Divine enters the heart of man, manifests and establishes himself there, it is impossible for a human being to attain divinity and immortality. It is also true that before the awakening of the godhead, in order to invoke him the Seers of the Mantra, the Rishis, accept the priesthood on behalf of the sacrificer; Vashistha and Vishwamitra become vicars of Sudas, Trasadasyu and the son of Bharat. But it is to invite the Divine to accept the place of the priest and the summoner on the altar of the sacrifice that mantras are chanted and offerings made. Unless the Divine awakes in the heart, no one can liberate the being. God is the deliverer: God is the sole priest who can grant the realisation.

When the Divine becomes the vicar, he is then known as Agni, the mystic Fire, and he has the form of fire. The priesthood of Agni is the most auspicious beginning and the best means of performing a successful sacrifice per-

fect in every detail. That is why the priesthood of Agni was established in the first Rik of the first Sukta of the Rigveda.

Who is this Agni ? The root 'ag' means power, one who is powerful is Agni. Again the root 'ag' signifies light or burning, the power which is flooded with the burning light of knowledge, the effective force of knowledge; the possessor of that power is like Agni. The root 'ag' has also the sense of priority and predominance, the force which is the primordial element of the universe, the basic and pre-eminent force among all the manifested universal forces; the possessor of that force is Agni. The root 'ag' also has the meaning 'nayan', to lead, to direct, one who is the possessor of the primal, eternal, ancient and sovereign force in the universe and leads it by the appointed path towards the appointed destination, the youth who is the general of the army of God, the guide on the path who by his knowledge and power propels various forces of Nature in their different activities and keeps them on the right path, that puissance is Agni. All these virtues of Agni have been mentioned and hymned in hundreds of Suktas of the Veda. The original cause of this universe, hidden in all its development, the most fundamental of all forces and paramount among them, stay of all gods, regulator of all dharmas, guardian of the most profound aim and truth of the universe, this Agni is no one else but the omniscient energising power of the Divine, manifest as force, heat and brilliance. The principle of true Existence in the Truth-Consciousness-Bliss contains in itself the Consciousness. That which is the Consciousness of the Existence is also the Force of the Existence. The Consciousness-Force is the sustaining power of the universe, it is the primary cause and creator, the life and the controller of the universe. When the Consciousness hides her face in the bosom of the Being of pure Existence and with her eyes closed contemplates the form of the pure Existence, the infinite Force becomes hushed; this is the state of dissolution in the tranquil ocean of Ananda. Again when the Consciousness lifts her head, opens her eyes and looks lovingly at the face and the body of the Being of pure Existence, meditates on his infinite names and forms, and dwells on the ravishing Lila created by feigned separation and union, the numberless currents of that Ananda give rise to infinite waves of violent pain and universal delight. This variegated concentration, this trance one-pointed yet multitudinous of the Consciousness-Force, is known as the energising Power. When the Being of pure Existence with a view to create some name and form manifests a certain truth or obtains a particular result, assembles and moves his Consciousness-Force and establishes her on his own state, then Tapas, the energising Force is applied.

We find that the Consciousness-Force has two aspects : Consciousness and Energy, the All-Knowledge and the All-Power; but in reality the two

are one. The Knowledge of the Divine is omnipotent and His Power is omniscient. When He conceives light, the birth of light is inevitable because His Knowledge is only the conscious form of His Power. Again in all vibrations of matter, for example, in the dance of an atom or a flash of lightning His Knowledge is involved because His Power is only the dynamism of His Knowledge. Because of our dividing intellect in the Ignorance and the dividing movement of the lower Nature, Knowledge and Power have become separated, unequal, as if fond of quarrelling with each other, exhausted and diminished by discord; or else this simulacrum of dispute is enacted only for the sake of the play. In fact, the All-Knowledge and the All-Power of the Divine are hidden in the minutest act or impulse in the universe; no one has the power to effectuate this act or impulse without the help of that Knowledge and Power or with anything less than them. This All-Knowledge or All-Power works in the same manner in the chanting of the Vedic hymns by the Rishis, in the inauguration of a new cycle by a mighty figure, as in the ravings of an idiot or the agony of a tiny worm which is being assailed. When you and I waste power for want of knowledge or from a lack of power unsuccessfully apply knowledge, then because the Omniscient and Omnipotent sitting behind the veil rectifies and directs the application of force by His Knowledge and the enjoyment of Knowledge by His Power, something can still be achieved in this world by such a puny effort. The appointed work is accomplished and the just result obtained. Though it foils the ignorant design and expectation of you and me, by our very failure His secret intention is carried out and that failure brings us a blessing in disguise and produces a little, partial, yet indispensable good in the smallest detail of a noble universal purpose. The evil, the ignorance and the failure are only masks. He realises the good by the evil, the knowledge by the ignorance, the success by the failure and the unforeseen action by the force which remains concealed. The Presence of Agni in the form of Tapas, Energy, makes such an action possible. This inevitable good, indivisible Knowledge and infallible Power reveal the Agni-aspect of the Divine. As the Consciousness and the Force of the Purusha of pure Existence are one, both of them being vibrations of Ananda, so the Knowledge and the Power of Agni who is the representative of the Divine are inseparable and both of them are beneficial and auspicious.

The external appearance of the world is different; there falsehood, ignorance, evil and failure are predominant. However, behind the mask which frightens the child, the Mother's face is hidden. Inconscience, inertia and suffering are only sorcery. That is why in the Veda our normal consciousness is called night. Even the highest development of our intellect is only a moonlit and star-bedecked play of the divine night. But within the bosom of this night hides her sister Usha carrying the infinity-born light of future Divine

Knowledge. Even in the night of earth-consciousness, the force of Agni blazes again and again and with the glow of Usha radiates the light. It is the force of Agni which prepares the hour of the birth of Truth-conscious Usha in this blind world. The Supreme has sent the force of Agni into this world and established it there; remaining concealed in the heart of objects and living beings, Agni regulates all the movements of the universe. In the midst of momentary falsehood, this Agni is the keeper of the eternal Truth; in the inconscient and the inert, Agni is the secret consciousness of the inconscient, the formidable dynamic force of matter. Shrouded in ignorance Agni is the covert knowledge of the Divine; in the ugliness of sin, Agni is the pristine immaculate purity of the Divine; in the gloomy fog of misery and suffering, Agni is His burning delight of universal enjoyment; clad in soiled rags of weakness and torpor, Agni is His all-bearing, all-accomplishing efficient power of action. If we can once pierce this dark envelope, uncover and kindle this Agni in our hearts, release and direct him upwards, he will bring down Divine Usha into the human consciousness, awaken the inner gods, remove the black sheath of falsehood, ignorance, sorrow and failure and make us immortal and divine in nature. Agni is the first and the supreme living form of the Divine within us. Let us kindle him on the altar of the heart, welcome him as the priest of the sacrifice and in his burning flame of power and knowledge, in his golden and revealing blaze of knowledge, into his all-consuming and purifying blaze of power, offer all our trivial pleasure and pain, all our limited and petty effort and failure, all falsehood and death. Let the old and the untrue be reduced to ashes; then from the heaven-kissing force of Agni will rise as living Savitri the new and the true.

Do not forget that everything is in our heart; Agni is within man, the altar, the offering and the offerer are within and within also the seer, the Word and the deity, the Vedic chant to the Brahman, the anti-divine demons and titans are within; Vritra and the destroyer of Vritra are also within; the battle between the gods and the titans takes place within, Vasishtha, Viswamitra, Angira, Atri, Bhrigu, Atharva, Sudas, Trasadasyu—these five types of the Aryan seekers of the Brahman and the Dasyus—are also within. The Self of man and the universe are one. The near and the far, the ten cardinal points, the two oceans, the seven rivers and the seven worlds are also within him. Our earthly existence is manifested between these two secret oceans. The lower ocean is the concealed infinite consciousness from which, day and night, at each moment, surge up all these emotions and impulses, names and forms, just as the stars and galaxies shine out on the bosom of the goddess Night. In modern language, this is called the Inconscient or the Subconscient, '*apraketam sahlam*' of the Veda, the subconscious ocean. Though it is subconscious, it is

MOTHER INDIA

not devoid of consciousness; the transcendent universal consciousness is in it, capable of all knowledge, proficient in all action, it diffuses itself in a trance as it were and creates the universe and its movements. Above pervades the secret free infinite consciousness called the Superconscient of which this 'consciousness-unconsciousness' is the shadow. There in that world the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss is fully manifested—in satloka, the world of true Existence, as infinite Existence; in Tapoloka, the world of energy of self-conscience, as infinite Consciousness; in Janaloka, the world of creative Delight, as infinite Felicity; and in Maharloka, the world of large consciousness, as the vast Truth of the cosmic Self. The intermediate terrestrial consciousness is the Earth mentioned in the Veda. From this earth rises to the skies the climbing mountain of life, of which each plateau is a step in the ascent, one of the seven inner kingdoms. The gods are helpers in our ascent, the titans are enemies who obstruct the path. This mountain climbing is the sacrificial march of the Vedic seeker of the Truth; with the sacrifice we have to rise to the ocean of light in the supreme ether. Agni is the instrument of this ascent, the leader of the path, the fighter in the battle and the priest of this sacrifice. The Vedic Seer-Poets have established their spiritual knowledge on this fundamental image in the same manner as the Vaishnavas who use the symbol of the enamoured cowherd boys and girls of Vrindavan in their songs on Radha and Krishna. If we remember the significance of this image, the understanding of the truth in the Vedas will then become easy.

NIRANJAN

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US

Reminiscences of Various People in Contact with the Mother

(Continued from the last issue)

(6)

A LONG-CHERISHED WISH FULFILLED

IN one of her evening drives the Mother went to a far-off spot outside the town. Seated in an open field, she was talking with two or three sadhaks when she saw at a distance a ragged old beggar woman bowing down and raising her head again and again.

"Why is she doing this?" asked the Mother.

A sadhak went up to the old woman to find the reason. She said, "For so many years I have been waiting for the Darshan of the Mother. Now I have it. That's why I am offering her my pranams." The Mother then sent for her. The woman came, knelt at the Mother's feet and bowed. The Mother laid her hand upon her head. As she left, the Mother said, "Her psychic being has recognised me."

A GESTURE OF UNDERSTANDING

Once a relative of mine visited the Ashram for the first time. She wanted to offer a sari to the Mother, but she had not enough money. A good silken sari costs between 100 and 150 rupees, but it was far beyond the capacity of my relative to spend anything like that.

Anyway she went to the bazar and brought a few samples of saris including a few which were a little costlier.

When the Mother was shown these samples, she chose the one which cost eleven rupees only and, to our greatest pleasure, she wore it the very next day before my relative left Pondicherry in the evening.

THE MOTHER COMES TO A CHILD

I came to Pondicherry with my wife and youngest son of about 8 years in 1940 for the Darshan of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Children were not then so easily permitted into the Ashram as now. The spiritual atmosphere

was considered in many cases to be too intense for the immature child-body and child-nerves.

We bought some flowers at Villupuram to be offered to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. My son too collected some cinema film frames which he said he would offer to the Mother.

On arriving at the Ashram gate we were told that we could not take the boy into the Meditation Hall. "The Mother will see him tomorrow morning and then she will decide about his entrance"

Naturally we felt it a little that we had to leave our son outside, though he was so turned towards the Mother. The child too was sad and started crying. But somehow we made him sit in the Reception Room. To console him we said that if he kept calling to the Mother she would allow him to see her.

We went to the Mother for her blessings and, when we returned, we found him playing outside the gate, with another Ashram boy of his age who also was not allowed within the Ashram compound. As soon as he saw us he came running towards us and, embracing my legs, shouted, "Father, Mother came and told me, 'I will see you tomorrow'."

"How did she come?" we asked him in surprise.

The child took us to the Reception Room and, pointing to the high-raised big photograph of Sri Aurobindo, he said, "She came through the door behind that photograph."

He had been satisfied at this and started playing outside the Ashram Gate before we came after the Mother's blessings in the Meditation Hall.

THE DECISIVE TURN

From my boyhood I was following the Vedantic way of sadhana. Not only had I no interest in the Shakti aspect of the Divine, but I denied it emphatically. More than once in my life, I had had discussions with Tantrik sadhaks and argued with them that the sadhana of the Shakti aspect was a lower pursuit and should not be indulged in, that Shakti should not be worshipped. I was convinced and was proud of my firm stand.

When I was told about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and their Ashram at Pondicherry, I did not believe in their Avatarhood, and all explanations, in this connection, of a friend of mine who had been to the Ashram and was their devotee, fell upon me like rain on a rock. There was little place for them in my heart.

Failing to convince me in talk he sent me a few books by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. I did not wish to decline at that time. After a few days he asked in a letter how far I had studied and understood the contents of the

books. But I quite flatly replied that I had neither the interest nor the inclination nor the time to go through them and that I had plenty of books of my own of far more useful and practical interest.

One evening as usual I was sitting in meditation on my Ishta Deva and telling beads with my Ishta Mantra. Suddenly I felt a strain and pain in my body, especially in the nerves, so that I became restless, and not only could I not continue my meditation but my pain seemed to be beyond relief.

Instantaneously an idea flashed through my mind that I should read one of the books of Sri Aurobindo or the Mother sent by my friend. I got up and stretched my hand towards the shelf. But what book to read and from what page?

I shut my eyes and took one of the books, thinking that whatever book fell to my hand would be the best book to read. It happened to be the *Synthesis of Yoga*. I opened it at random. The page was 196 of the American edition of the book (p. 247 of *On Yoga*, Vol. 1). A long footnote is there in explanation of Ishwara-Shakti, the dual manifested power of the Supreme. In brief it reads, "Ishwara-Shakti is not quite the same as Purusha-Prakriti... Ishwara-Shakti stands behind the relation of Purusha-Prakriti and its ignorant action and turns it to an evolutionary purpose. The Ishwara-Shakti realisation can bring participation in a higher dynamism and a divine working and a total unity and harmony of the being in a spiritual nature."

The footnote was in small print, so I could not read it but I remained gazing at it because my first look went there. I felt the whole of my physical system pacified and a sort of coolness filled it. The rosary fell from my hands. I felt myself drawn into a deep inwardness where I found a white goddess-like figure with white dress standing within me and radiating white light that permeated my body. I did not know what figure it was, but developed a natural reverence for it.

Since that day this figure has become my Ishta Deva. I began to concentrate on her and found myself offering everything to her. I had not yet seen the Mother but felt within that the figure was hers. So I started offering flowers to Sri Aurobindo's book *The Mother*.

A quick change set in in my life and the Mother became its centre. When I came to Pondicherry and saw her I immediately recognised in her the figure that I had visioned.

Since then I have been the child of the Mother.

(To be continued)

Compiled and Reported by
HAR KRISHAN SINGH

MODERN CRITICISM AND THE STUDY OF IMAGERY

THE study of imagery in modern criticism as a clue to the meaning and experience of a poem owes its origin to the new kind of poetry started by T. E. Hulme and Ezra Pound. Pound defined the image as 'that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time...it is the presentation of such a "complex" instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.' (*Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* : Page 4.) Hulme and Pound were the authors of Imagism in England—the aim of which was to restore to poetry the precise use of visual images. This poetry of the mind and bodily sensibilities was no doubt responsible for the concentration on the study of the texture and images in a poem.

There are two ways of studying the images in a poem or a play. We may study them for a knowledge of the mind at work. Miss Spurgeon, for example, has made a special study of the imagery in Shakespeare from this point of view. She believed that 'these word pictures came from the store-house of the unconscious memory and would therefore reveal the furniture of his mind'. (*Shakespeare's Imagery*.)

Modern criticism with its stress on readers' reactions and worship of 'Verbal Ikon' has an altogether different attitude to images in a poem or play. L. C. Knights holds, for instance, that the only profitable approach to Shakespeare is a consideration of his plays as dramatic poems and stresses the need for studying the recurrent images in his plays. And he tries to show that the dominant images help us as readers to realize the theme of the plays.

Wilson Knight of course was the first modern critic to apply this principle systematically to the study of poems and plays. His method however is different from that of L.C.Knights. While L.C.Knights tries to approach the play by way of local analysis and scrutiny of texture and proceeds thus from parts to the whole, Wilson Knight wants us to see each play as an expanded metaphor; and his interpretation of dominant images or image-clusters is made in the light of his vision of the whole play.

C. Day Lewis's *Poetic Image* is perhaps the most significant and comprehensive contribution to the subject on the theoretical side. He defines a poetic image as a sensuous picture in words carrying a charge of poetic passion. Its truth lies in its passion. Day Lewis, unlike some modern critics, emphasizes pleasure as the end of poetry.

The chief value of *Poetic Image* lies however in its stress on the unity in the poem and the way images must be ordered to help us to realize the theme, and in its showing that skill in image-making is by itself no virtue. The images must serve to explore, realize and create order out of chaos. If most images in modern poetry are unsatisfying it is because they are too powerful to give us a picture of the whole. He says: 'whether the images are too strong for their context and, quarrelling among themselves, tear it into shreds or whether they are so purified of human associations that our common earth-bound imagination cannot warm to them: in either case the result is the same—a poem brilliant perhaps in the detail, piercing deep perhaps with its momentary intuitions, but unsatisfying in the round; an incomplete poem: a heap of broken images.' From individual images we rise to the concept of the total image or metaphor; this means something more than all the images of a poem put together. Sometimes a poem may do even without them. And a whole poem may be a kind of metaphor or image of a human situation.

Day Lewis stresses pleasure and sense of harmony as the end of poetry; for the poet's duty is to create a pattern of unity and harmony with the help of images 'to satisfy the human yearning for order and completeness'. He therefore condemns broken images and gives the needed corrective to modern poetry and modern criticism where they tend to overemphasize texture.

Comprehensive as this study is it is yet not balanced. It tends to stress the functional value of the images too much. It is true they are often used to make the experience picturesque as in Robert Frost's

I found a dimpled spider, fat and white,
On a white heal-all, holding up a moth
Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth.

They rouse appropriate emotions as in Auden's

For the Devil has broken parole and arisen,
He has dynamited his way out of prison,
Out of the well where his Papa throws
The rebel angel, the outcast rose.
Like influenza he walks abroad.

But in great poets they become 'transcriptions of truth' allegorical or symbolical. They cease to be merely devices. They are products of intuition. Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* is an example. What he says about Nature is true at once on two levels—on the physical level and on the level of intuition. He describes what he sees—'forms more real than living human beings'.

And when we come to mystic poetry we have a fusion of several meanings. Francis Thompson's

I pleaded, outlaw-wise
By many a hearted casement curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities,

or the Battle of Kurukshetra in our own Gita, not to mention parts of Upanishads and the Vedas, are examples. The poet becomes the Kavi who 'sees'.

It is unfortunate that a similar study of the place of images in drama has not been made. L.C. Knights complains that Bradley's doctrine—'the centre of the tragedy may be said to lie in action issuing from character or in character issuing in action'—lays too much emphasis on character. We are afraid that in practice L.C. Knights lays too much stress on words and images—forgetting for the moment that a dramatic poem must be 'dramatic'.

Even Wilson Knight who shows a vision of the whole neglects other aspects of a play such as stage effects and characterization and more often than not isolates the images or studies them without reference to the character. 'Dramatic character itself like dramatic plot can be an image on the grand scale.' (Ellis Fermor : *Character in Drama*.)

A neglect of these aspects has made the criticism of drama largely subjective. Two examples may be given both from Wilson Knight's *Studies of the 'Great Tragedies'*. The examples are interesting, for they show clearly that a disregard for the setting and characterization can certainly mislead us. *Macbeth* presents according to him a vision of Evil. So does *Othello* where, we are told, 'Othello, Desdemona and Iago are Man, the Divine and the Devil; and the handkerchief becomes the symbol of romantic faith; and its loss an act of desecration of a universal sanctity'. (*Principles of Producing Shakespeare*.)

Imagery in drama is something different from poetic imagery. Stage effects, properties and other direct images all help to make a play; and if we isolate the images in a play and study them as poetic images we may well miss their true significance. The language and imagery of *Julius Caesar* are instances in point. The comparison of the characters to animals and the portents seen by Cassius and Casca may or may not have anything to do with the theme-plot. Their purpose is probably just to reveal the characters of the speakers or it may be that Shakespeare uses them just because he found them in Plutarch.

A comprehensive approach then should include, in the words of Foakes, 'a reference to the subject matter and object matter of poetic imagery, to visual and auditory effects, iterative words, historical and geographical placing and to both the general and particular uses of these things'. (*Shakespeare Survey*—5.)

V. S. SETURAMAN

(With acknowledgements to "Literary Criterion")

RELEASE AND BEYOND

THE eagle-wind comes from the crags of light—
A high unhorizoned bird-breeze of aeonless strength
Breaking the rude manacles of ignorance
With a sweep and a grace that know no end and repose.

The storm-kite of mystic experience descends—
A swift hammer-typhoon of rapture-seeing
Rasing the pile of thought with sudden stroke,
Awaking unknown ecstasies, unknown passion-seas.

The thrilled sun-ray-hawk, the killer-bird of bliss
Comes breaking the citadel-root of even peace;
Its passage is a hunter's sky of joy;
Its descent the meteor-rush of pure release.

Then the unbarred swan-epiphany is sensed
Above the scope of dusk and time-laden tears.
The vastness of God enclasps the freedom and force,
Enriching the earth-substance with sun-wide embrace.

ROMEN

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(POEMS TO THE MOTHER)

(*Continued from the last issue*)

III. THE HUMAN CALL AND ASPIRATION

(*Continued*)

19. NONE OTHER

SAVE Thee not one thing in the world I seek.
My fiery longings rise
To Thee alone, O Mother ;
Let my each limb soul-winged joy-drunk speak :
"In all the world, none other,
None other than Thee I prize."

May I glimpse nothing in the cosmic abyss
Save Thee ; my psyche's eyes
In every substance meet
Mirrored Thy form ; reflected as through prism
I view Thy Light, O Sweet,
Of multi-sunned surprise.

O may I not exist save for Thy Love ;
Wide-wakeful or in dream,
My heart's one yearning be
To live possessed by Thee, spurred in each move
To win Thee, merge with Thee
For Thy Will's joy supreme.

IV. THE NIGHT OF SOUL AND SELF-OBLIVION

20. REALISATION AND CONDESCENSION

On my ascent's last rung with God I stood,
Ignorance, error, pain were left behind,
One step and all was Truth, Beauty and Good,
Sun smiled, nature obeyed, life lay aligned.

THUS SANG MY SOUL

But the stripped Divine was not my destined goal,
The dust and hell were the Master's choice for me,
I must pay my debt to the suffering earth-soul,
If ever was to end my agony.

I was to live in mud and mud become,
Rekissing of peaks never was I to dream,
The soil was fated to be my love or tomb,
Or between life and death a deathless seam.

My heavenward soaring soul was pinned to the soulless mud :
The body too aspires for its forgotten God.

21. ABANDONING THE FREE AND SOVEREIGN SKIES

Abandoning the free and sovereign skies,
Stretches, truth-cliffs of realisations vast,
Into the vales and wells of woes and lies
I precipitate to burn the glorious past.

I'm locked in grips with life's blind surfaces,
I know not when this crucial strife shall end,
But I do know, behind all pain-play is
Mysterious working of Thy secret Hand.

Without mind-murmur, anguish-feel or doubt,
May I accomplish what Thou may'st dictate,
To the last detail, O Love, and never flout
Thy slightest sign, not one step deviate.

Though to all outward gaze these sufferings
Seem leading straight down to the gulf of Death,
Yet under Thy master-guidance, Thy mother-wings,
All shall turn blissful by Thy immortal Breath.

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

(Continued from the last issue)

(C) AN AUROBINDONIAN CONTEMPLATES PHILOSOPHY*

XXIII. REASON IN ITS DUAL ROLE¹

"A master and slave of stark phenomenon,
She travels on the roads of erring sight...
A bullock yoked in the cart of proven fact,
She drags huge knowledge-bales through Matter's dust
To reach utility's immense bazaar.
Apprentice she has grown to her old drudge;
An aided sense is her seeking's arbiter.
This now she uses as the assayer's stone.
As if she knew not facts are husks of truth,
The husks she keeps, the kernel throws aside."²

HUMAN reason has a double action, mixed or dependent, pure or sovereign. Reason accepts a mixed action when it confines itself to the circle of our sensible experience, admits its law as the final truth and concerns itself only with the study of phenomena, that is to say, with the appearances of things in their relations, processes and utilities. This rational action is incapable of knowing what is, it only knows what appears to be, it has no plummet by which it can sound the depths of being, it can only survey the field of becoming.

Reason, on the other hand, asserts its pure action, when accepting our sensible experiences as a starting-point but refusing to be limited by them it goes behind, judges, works in its own right and strives to arrive at general and unalterable concepts which attach themselves not to the appearances of things, but to that which stands behind their appearances. It may arrive at its result by direct judgment passing immediately from the appearance to that which stands behind it and in that case the concept arrived at may seem to be a result of the sensible experience and dependent upon it though it is really

* Except for some connecting sentences, this section is in the most part a compilation from Sri Aurobindo's own writings drawn from three of his major works: *The Life Divine*, *The Human Cycle* and *Savitri*.

¹ *The Life Divine* (Am. Ed.), pp. 58-59.

² *Savitri*, B. II, C. 10, p. 286.

THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

a perception of reason working in its own right. But the perceptions of the pure reason may also—and this is their more characteristic action—use the experience from which they start as a mere excuse and leave it far behind before they arrive at their result, so far that the result may seem the direct contrary of that which our sensible experience wishes to dictate to us. This movement is legitimate and indispensable, because our normal experience not only covers only a small part of universal fact, but even in the limits of its own field uses instruments that are defective and gives us false weights and measures. It must be exceeded, put away to a distance and its insistences often denied if we are to arrive at more adequate conceptions of the truth of things. To correct the errors of the sense-mind by the use of reason is one of the most valuable powers developed by man and the chief cause of his superiority among terrestrial beings.

XXIV. REASON, THE GUARDIAN ANGEL¹

“Came Reason, the squat godhead artisan,
To her narrow house upon a ridge in Time.
Adept of clear contrivance and design,
She took her firm and irremovable seat...
In her high works of pure intelligence,
In her withdrawal from the senses' trap,
There comes no breaking of the walls of mind,
There leaps no rending flash of absolute power,
There dawns no light of heavenly certitude.”²

Logical reasoning is useful and indispensable in its own field in order to give the mind a certain clearness, precision and subtlety in dealing with its own ideas and word-symbols, so that our perception of the truths which we arrive at by observation and experience or which physically, psychologically or spiritually we have seen, may be as little as possible obscured by the confusions of our average human intelligence, its proneness to take appearance for fact, its haste to be misled by partial truth, its exaggerated conclusions, its intellectual and emotional partialities, its incompetent bungs in that linking of truth to truth by which alone we can arrive at a complete knowledge. We must have a clear, pure, subtle and flexible mind in order that we may fall as little as possible into that ordinary mental habit of our kind which turns truth itself into a purveyor of errors. That clarification, the habit of clear logical reasoning culminating in the method of metaphysical dialectics, does help to accomplish and its part in the preparation of knowledge is therefore very great.

¹ *The Life Divine* (Am. Ed.), p. 331.

² *Savitri*, B. II, C. 10, pp. 283, 285.

But by itself it cannot arrive either at the knowledge of the world, or the knowledge of God, much less reconcile the lower and the higher realisation. It is much more efficiently a guardian against error than a discoverer of truth,—although by deduction from knowledge already acquired it may happen upon new truths and indicate them for experience or for the higher and larger truth-seeing faculties to confirm.

XXV. REASON FUMBLES¹

“Reason cannot tear off that glimmering mask,
Her efforts only make it glimmer more,
In packets she ties up the Indivisible;
Finding her hands too small to hold vast Truth
She breaks up knowledge into alien parts
Or peers through cloud-rack for a vanished sun.”²

In the more subtle field of synthetical or unifying knowledge the logical habit of mind may become a stumbling-block by the very faculty which gives it its peculiar use; for it is so accustomed to making distinctions and dwelling upon distinctions and working by distinctions that it is always a little at sea when distinctions have to be overridden and overpassed.

Indeed, the reason cannot arrive at any final truth because it can neither get to the root of things nor embrace the totality of their secrets; it deals with the finite, the separate, the limited aggregate, and has no measure for the al and the infinite.

And this is so because our thinking mind is in its very nature an ignorant dealer in possibilities, not possessing the truth behind any of them, but sounding and testing each in turn or many together if so perchance it may get at some settled belief or knowledge about them, some certitude; yet, living in a world of relatives and possibilities, it can arrive at no final certainty, no absolute and abiding conviction. Even the actual, the realised can present itself to our mentality as a “may be or may not be,” *syād vā na syād vā*, or as an “is” under the shadow of the “might not have been” and wearing the aspect of that which will not be hereafter.

It might almost be said that no mental statement of things can be altogether true; it is not truth bodied, pure and nude, but a draped figure,—often it is only the drapery that is visible.

Therefore the principle in any enquiry after truth must be always to see and know, the dialectical intellect is to be used only so far as it helps to clarify

¹ *The Life Divine*, pp 331, 372, 441, 533; *The Human Cycle*, pp. 149-150.

² *Savitri*, B II, C. 10, p. 292

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the arrangement and justify the expression of the vision and knowledge, but it cannot be allowed to govern our conceptions and exclude truth that does not fall within the rigid frame of its logic.

But, quite often, Reason forgetting its true function tries to take upon itself the task of finding absolute truth and knowledge; but its attempt is then invariably afflicted with certain basic limitations. Let us discuss the principal among them. But even before that let us enquire into the basic nature of Mind, for, in the last analysis, it is the intrinsic limitation of Mind as a noetic apparatus that lies at the source of all deficiency and deformation suffered by human knowledge.

XXVI. ON MIND¹

“For the world seen she weaves a world conceived :
She spins in stiff but unsubstantial lines
Her gossamer word-webs of abstract thought,
Her segment systems of the Infinite,
Her theodicies and cosmogonic charts
And myths by which she explains the inexplicable...

Although like sunbeams to our glow-worm mind
Her knowledge feigns to fall from a clear heaven,
Its rays are a lantern's lustres in the Night,
She throws a glittering robe on Ignorance.”²

Mind is only a preparatory form of our consciousness. In its essence it is a consciousness which measures, limits, cuts out forms of things from the indivisible whole and contains them as if each were a separate integer. It is this essential characteristic of Mind which conditions the workings of all its operative powers, whether conception, perception, sensation or the dealings of creative thought. It conceives, perceives, senses things as if rigidly cut out from a background or a mass and employs them as fixed units of the material given to it for creation or possession. All its action and enjoyment deal thus with wholes that form part of a greater whole, and these subordinate wholes again are broken up into parts which are also treated as wholes for the particular purposes they serve. Mind may divide, multiply, add, subtract, but it cannot get beyond the limits of this mathematics. If it goes beyond and tries to conceive a real whole, it loses itself in a foreign element; it falls from its own firm ground into the ocean of the intangible, into the abysses of the infinite.

¹ *The Life Divine*, pp. 110, 118, 119, 151.

² *Savitri*, B. II, C. 10, pp. 284, 286.

where it can neither perceive, conceive, sense nor deal with its subject for creation and enjoyment.

Thus, Mind is an instrument of analysis and synthesis, but not of essential knowledge. Its function is to cut out something vaguely from the unknown Thing in itself and call this measurement or delimitation of it the whole, and again to analyse the whole into its parts which it regards as separate mental objects. It is only the parts and accidents that the Mind can see definitely and, after its own fashion, know. Of the whole its only definite idea is an assemblage of parts or a totality of properties and accidents. The whole not seen as a part of something else or in its own parts, properties and accidents is to the mind no more than a vague perception; only when it is analysed and put by itself as a separate constituted object, a totality in a larger totality, can Mind say to itself, "This now I know." And really it does not know. It knows only its own analysis of the object and the idea it has formed of it by a synthesis of the separate parts and properties that it has seen. There its characteristic power, its sure function ceases.

Indeed, Mind is not a faculty of knowledge nor an instrument of omniscience ; it is a faculty for the seeking of knowledge, for expressing as much as it can gain of it in certain forms of a relative thought and for using it towards certain capacities of action. Even when it finds, it does not possess ; it only keeps a certain fund of current coin of Truth—not Truth itself—in the bank of Memory to draw upon according to its needs. For Mind is that which does not know, which tries to know and which never knows except as in a glass darkly.

Mental truth must always remain an intellectual, emotional and sensational representation, not the direct truth, not truth itself in its body and essence. If we would have a greater, a profounder and a real knowledge,—a knowledge and not an intense but formless sentiment such as comes sometimes to certain deep but inarticulate parts of our mentality, Mind has to make room for another consciousness which will fulfil Mind by transcending it or reverse and so rectify its operations after leaping beyond it : the summit of mental knowledge is only a vaulting-board from which that leap can be taken. The utmost mission of mind is to train our obscure consciousness which has emerged out of the dark prison of Matter, to enlighten its blind instincts, random intuitions, vague perceptions till it shall become capable of this greater light and this higher ascension. Mind is a passage, not a culmination.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

KATHA UPANISHAD

(A COMMENTARY)

I. i. 15

लोकादिमग्निं तमुवाच तस्मै या इष्टका यावतीर्वा यथा वा ।
स चापि तत्प्रत्यवदद्यथोत्कमथास्य मृत्युः पुनरेवाह तुष्टः ॥ *

YAMA gives the details about the *yāga* or *iṣṭi* by which Nachiketas could get the desired knowledge and experience. This *iṣṭi*, like all the other Brāhmaṇical *yāgas* or sacrifices or occult rites, was a miniature representation of the extent and arrangement of the actual worlds of heavens. Yama, however, has already declared this knowledge to be a secret, and the seer of the Upanishad too does not tell us anything about it or about the details of the miniature representation, but only summarily says, 'Of that Flame which is the foundation of the (heavenly) worlds he told him and what are the bricks and how many and the way of arranging them', and leaves the matter at that only.

We have already mentioned that there are three very significant epithets applied to the heavenly Fire, two of which, *ananta-lokāptim* and *pratiṣṭham* have been seen in the preceding stanza ; the third one is to be found in this stanza and it is *lokādīm*. The heavenly Fire is the foundation of the other worlds, for it is the Divine Will prevailing in those occult regions. But at the same time that Fire is the foundation of this evolutionary world also, but in a different sense from the former. It is the direct cause and creator of those involutionary worlds, but since the involutionary worlds are the cause or causes of the evolutionary one, this Fire indirectly becomes the cause or foundation of the physical earth and all the creations that arise out of it. As we have already noted, there is always an occult commerce going on between this world and the others, by which the latter are able to send down their influences and influxes on the earth and it is these that are responsible for the bringing out of the submerged subtle elements of life and mind on earth. It is the combined action of the elements emerging out of the material principle and those other elements descending from the subtler levels that bring about the manifestation of those principles on earth. Thus the word *lokādi* is doubly

* *lokādīm agnim tam uvāca tasmai, yā istakā yāvatir vā yathā vā ;
sa cāpi tat pratiyavadad yathoktam, athāsya mṛtyuḥ punarevāha tuṣṭaḥ.*

significant in this context. But also there is a still deeper meaning in it which can become evident only if we know how that heavenly Fire was the foundation of all these worlds literally. In order to get at this meaning we shall have to resume the explanation of the occult methods of the Brāhmaṇic seers, their approach to these other worlds by means of creating model representations of them which resembled the original.

These representations or miniature models they built by means of bricks, *istakāḥ*, which they arranged or piled up one above the other. This process of piling up they called *citi* or *cayana*. It was not a mere fancy that they thought of reaching the heavens by mounting up the piled-up bricks. The outer physical act was only a representation or an accompaniment of the inner occult method. But the outer act was not merely a symbol; it was an essential part of the *yāga*. One could dispense with the outer act in the case of *yoga* but in the *yāga* it was a *sine qua non*. But at the same time we can reduce all those external acts into mere symbols if we like, for the Brāhmaṇic language, just like the Vedic and the Upanishadic, easily lends itself to such an interpretation. Yet it must be remembered that like all the other occult rites or methods this Brāhmaṇic occultism also required physical material. Thus in trying to understand this *yāga* or *iṣṭi* of the Fire which later on came to be known by the name of Nachiketas, we shall keep this double interpretation, the occult and the symbolic, simultaneously before us.

Thus the word *iṣṭi*, to the Brāhmaṇic seers, expressed the actual physical action of performing the sacrifice, from the root *yaj*,—to adore or worship or to perform a ritual, but also at the same time suggested another and deeper sense of arriving at some higher and desirable good, from the root *iṣ*—to desire or to impel. It was because of the mixture of these two meanings that the sacrifices came to mean to the ancient people the higher good. Externally it was the noun etymologically derived from the root *yaj*, but symbolically and psychologically it was connected with the other root *iṣ*.

This fact is borne out from another word *iṣṭakā*, which also has got the same double etymology and also the same double connection with the external rite as well as the psychological idea of ethical good, *iṣṭa*. In those ancient times, even as now, the ideal ethics made no distinction between what is good and what is desirable. The root *iṣ* originally meant to impel, but later on it came to mean also to desire, for it is the desires that are the usual impelling force in the case of most people. The word *iṣṭakā* is etymologically connected with *iṣṭi*; the latter was the action while the former was the means of putting that action into practice, and *iṣaṇā* or *eṣaṇā*, desire to attain to some *iṣṭa* or good, provided the impelling force. *Yāga* or *iṣṭi* could not be performed without the help of *iṣṭakā* which externally meant the bricks but symbolically

the good or virtuous actions. The piling up, *citi* or *cayana*, of the bricks in order to erect a *vedi* or altar, a *stoma* or *stambha* or a pillar or column, was an essential requisite for the external but occult sacrificial performance ; a similar piling up of ethical good in order to erect a *vedi* or means of getting at the higher knowledge (from the root *vid*, to know), a *stoma* or praise or prayer, was equally an essential requisite for the raising up of the inner consciousness towards the higher planes.¹

We find in the Yajurvedic and the Brāhmaṇic texts a detailed procedure of how these bricks are to be made out of clay, how even this action is to be at every stage accompanied by the chanting of specific Vedic mantras recited in a specific way, how these bricks are to be arranged, always in a different manner in each different kind of sacrifice, how each such arrangement by piling up should resemble only a certain kind of figure such as a bird, a hawk, etc., *suparna-citi* or *śyena-citi*, how, that is to say, this man-made structure of *vedi* or *stambha*, i.e., altar or column, should be made to resemble the original arrangement of the heavenly worlds as manifested by the Divine Will, Agni, operating in each particular world.

That the words *īṣṭi* and *īṣṭakā* were thus meant to be symbolical can be seen from the various references to them in the Yajur Veda from which we shall give a few by way of illustration. (All the references given here are from the *Kāṭhaka-Saṃhitā* of the Yajur Veda.) In XX. 1 we find the following passage, in which the words *Vaiśvānara*, *īṣṭakā* and *stoma* are brought together: *diva eva priye dhāmannagniṃ cinuta īṣṭakā vā etā vaiśvānarīr aparimītāḥ.. catasraḥ prācīr upadadhātī catvāri vai chandāṃsi chandobhir devās svargaṃ lokanī. āyan...dve purastāt samīcī upadadhātī dve pascāt...aṣṭā etā upadadhātī, aṣṭākṣarā gāyatrī. ..gāyatro 'gnīr yāvānevāgnis tam cinute, aṣṭā etā upadhāya trayodaśa lokamprṇayā upadadhātī, tā ekavimśatis sṃpadyante, ekavimśo vai stomānām pratiṣṭhā.*

Here the bricks are said to be pertaining to *Vaiśvānara* who, as we have seen before, is the universal Fire or the Divine Will, and they are called

¹ It is interesting to note in this connection that the last offering in man's life is that of his dead body and is called the *antyeṣṭi*, which word is a compound of *antya*-final and *īṣṭi*—sacrifice. Among the Hindus it is a custom that dead bodies are cremated, and the reason for that is that even as all the acts done during one's lifetime were to be an offering to the Divine Will, so also should be the body. It is given to us by the Divine Will and it has to be given back to the Divine Will. The Fire is only the symbol of the Divine Will.

Not only is the word *īṣṭi* common to the other sacrifices as well as to this last consigning of the dead body, but the same act of piling up too is associated with that last *īṣṭi*, although it is not the piling up of bricks but of firewood. The word used is not *citi* but *cita*, which too is derived from the same root *ci* as is the former. The other familiar derivatives from that very root are *cayana*, *saṃcaya*, *saṃcita* (*karma*), and *samuccaya*.

‘*aparimitāḥ*, immeasurable or immense. This shows at once that these bricks are not ordinary bricks at all. Further, the passage says that four bricks are to be placed in the east, for four are the metres or measures and by these four metres or cosmic rhythms the gods attained to the heavenly world. Two others are to be placed in front and two at the back. This makes eight in all, for eight are the syllables in the *gāyatrī* metre and the Fire pertains to *gāyatrī*. Hence the bricks are laid according to the measure of the Fire. After laying these eight, thirteen others are to be laid, making in all twenty-one, for the twenty-first *stoma* is the foundation of the stomas. We have already seen what these stomas are in their symbolic character. Here we are told that the *ekaviṃśa stoma* is the *pratiṣṭhā* or foundation of the stomas. It is the same word *pratiṣṭhā* that is used here as in the Katha Upanishad’s stanza *ananta-lokāptim atho pratiṣṭhām*. We have already noted that the Nachiketa heaven is situated on the twenty-first *ahargaṇa*, which is to be attained by the *ekaviṃśa stoma*. We shall also see later on that this *stoma* and this *pratiṣṭhā* are twice again referred to in the Upanishad in I. ii. 11 : *kāmasyāptim jagataḥ pratiṣṭhām...stomaṁ mahad uru-gāyaṁ pratiṣṭhām*. All this shows that there was a continuous and consistent tradition of occult knowledge preserved throughout the ages beginning from the Veda right up to the Upanishadic times.

In another passage of the *Kāṭhakā Saṁhitā* we are told of the exact nature of the bricks. It says : *sarvā iṣṭakā jyotiṣmatīr...bhavanti* (XX. 6. 13), all the bricks are to be made of or full of Light. And here we are irresistibly reminded of the *jyotiṣṭoma* and we cannot but mark the resemblance between the *jyotiṣmatī* bricks and the *jyotiṣṭoma* sacrifice.

In XX. 8. 17 we are told : *etā ha vai sāhasrīr iṣṭakāḥ somadakṣaḥ kauśreyaḥ śyāmaparṇāya upadadhau, tato vai sāhasrīm puṣṭim paśūnām jagāma, gacchati sāhasrīm puṣṭim paśūnām ya evaṁ vidvān etā upadhatte*. “Somadaksa Kauśreya laid the bricks characterised by the Thousand for Śyāmaparṇa and thereby attained to the thousandfold nurture of the Visions. One who knows thus and lays the bricks attains also to the thousandfold nurture of the Visions.” We have already seen that the word ‘thousand’ in the Vedic symbolism means the perfect perfection of anything on all the three levels of matter, life and mind. The epithet *sāhasrī* as applied to the bricks as well to the *puṣṭi* or nurture of *paśus*, literally cattle, but symbolically Visions (from the root *paś* to see), to the means as well as to the end to be attained by those means, is sufficient to show us that the whole passage is symbolic. Moreover, the name *Somadakṣa*, one who has arrived at the higher Discernment by the divine Delight, and the name *Śyāmaparṇa*, one whose leaves or wings are still dark or obscure, point in the same direction.

But the complete lifting even of this thin veil takes place in XX. 9. 20,

where we read : “*passur vā agniḥ...pāṅktāḥ paśavaḥ...yāḥ prāṇavatīḥ tāḥ pura-
stād upadadhātī prāṇam eva purastād dadhātī...yā manasvatīḥ tā dakṣiṇato
mana eva dakṣiṇato dadhātī...yā cakṣuṣmatīḥ tāḥ paścād cakṣur eva paścād da-
dhātī...yāḥ śrotravatīḥ tāḥ uttarāt śrotram eva uttarād dadhātī .yā vāṇmatīḥ tā
madhye vācam eva madhyato dadhātī...yā evam āsāṁ pratiṣṭhāṁ veda gacchati
pratiṣṭhāṁ...*” Here the word *paśu* is explained as an equivalent of *agni*, which
means that it is the Vision that comes to us when we become aware of the
Divine Will. And these *paśus* or Visions are fivefold, *pāṅktāḥ paśavaḥ*. The
bricks also are of five types, *prāṇavatī*, *manasvatī*, *cakṣuṣmatī*, *śrotravatī* and
vāṇmatī, that is to say, they are characterised by or made of Life, Mind, Sight,
Hearing and Speech respectively. Certainly no one can imagine that the physi-
cal bricks could be anything like this. This passage incidentally throws light
also on the commencing portion of the Kena Upanishad where too this same
fivefold psychological functions are referred to. And, finally, at the end of the
passage quoted we once again find the word *pratiṣṭhā*, “He who thus knows the
Foundation (*pratiṣṭhā*), himself becomes well-founded.”

In XXI. 2. 5 we are told that the seers created or constructed with the
bricks the heavenly metres or cosmic rhythms, *chandāmsi*. The passage gives
us an extraordinarily profound symbolic description of the typal worlds and
how they were created by the cosmic rhythms and how they remained un-
manifest or in an involutionary status until the Rishis or seers came to know
about them and created or manifested them in the evolutionary movement:
“*devā vai svargaṁ lokam yantas teṣāṁ yāṁ chandāmsi anuruktāṁ svargyāṇyāsams
taiḥ saha svargaṁ lokam ayaṁs tāṁ ṛṣayo 'nuprāṇijñāsanta tāni iṣṭakābhur niram-
imata tānīmām cchandāmsi yāni ayajñavāhām yānyeva devānām chandāmsi an-
ruktāṁ sva-gyāṇi taiḥ saha svargaṁ lokam eti ya evaṁ vidvān etā upadhatte.*”
We shall not here enter into the symbolism of the metres, for that would take
us far away from our subject, but shall only note in passing that these metres
are the vast lines or courses of cosmic movements and that they serve as a basis
for the creation of the involutionary worlds. What is of importance to the
point is the reference to the bricks in this connection. It is obvious that these
cannot be the bricks made of earth or clay, for no amount of piling up of
such bricks could lead one to the involutionary worlds of heavens. It was an
occult as well as sym bolic sense that the Vedic seers attached to this action.

In still another passage, XXI. 6. 21, the bricks are simultaneously described
as luminous and pertaining to the Thousand or perfect perfection, *jyotiṣmatīr
etās sāhasrīr iṣṭakāḥ*. And the seer prays, “O Fire, may these bricks be for me
fostering Cows (or, Rays).” And the Rishi further says, “Thus he makes them
fostering Cows (or, Rays); they becoming desire-milking stand by him in the
other world, “*imā me agne iṣṭakā dhenavas santu iti dhenūr evaināḥ kurute tā*

enam kamadughā amuṣmūlloke upatiṣṭhante. Here the bricks become milch-cows yielding the milk of desire and they accompany the seer into the other world and these are the same luminous bricks taking him towards the attainment of the 'Thousand'.

We shall not multiply these instances in which such occult or symbolic bricks are mentioned. But we shall refer to only one passage in which various ways of piling them up are given. It is from a long passage from the *Kāṭhaka Samhitā* XXI 4. 13-19 "...śyena-citaṁ pakṣiṇaṁ cinvīta...alaja-citaṁ pakṣiṇaṁ...cinvīta . kaṅka-citaṁ...pra-uga-citaṁ ..ratha-cakra-citaṁ.. droṇa-citaṁ ...smaśāna-citaṁ.. gāyatra-citaṁ..", where *śyena* means a hawk or a falcon, *alaja* is another kind of bird and *kaṅka* means a heron. These as well as others in the forms of *chariot-wheel*, *clay-pot*, *funeral pyre*, etc., etc. were the formations of the various piles.

Afterwards methods are given by which the deity of the particular sacrifice is to be invoked and manifested in the *vedi*. The manifestation of the *Yajña-Puruṣa* or the conscious Godhead of that sacrifice is the most essential thing among all the multitudinous details of the sacrificial ritual, for without that the sacrifice would be without any purpose and it would not bear the desired result.

As regards the sacrifice shown by Yama to Nachiketas too, all these details are given, but they are not expressly mentioned in the Upanishad; only a general statement is made, *yā iṣṭakā yāvatīr vā yathā vā*, for this was the secret lore imparted by Yama to him. On one side it is the occult method in which many external things are to be used, by practising which method one arrives at a first-hand knowledge and experience of the subtle physical, vital and mental worlds in the universe, and on the other side the whole external sacrifice with all its diverse activities is simply a symbol of something happening deep down in the inner consciousness of the aspirant, while he is finding an entry into those very universal worlds through the circumconscient element of his subliminal being.

(To be continued)

BABHRU

VEDIC STUDY

THE ORIGINS OF ARYAN SPEECH

SPEECH or language is the medium of expression not only between man and man or between one living being and another living being but also between man and the Supreme Spirit, who is the origin of both man and his speech. The Aryan speech originated from the Rishis who in the course of cycles of human evolution and of human civilisation were at first seven, the Sapta Vipras, then later nine, the Navagvas, and still later ten, the Dasagvas. Of course in the document of the Rigveda that we possess now, there are about four hundred of them. It is said that the seven original Rishis are the mental beings directly formed out of the Supreme Spirit by itself.

As we know, speech is produced by sound, vocal or non-vocal, vocal by the life-breath of a living being, and non-vocal by the wind-breath of the material universe. The instrument of vocal sound is the larynx and the mouth of the living being; the instrument of non-vocal sound is matter itself in its myriad shapes. We know through Science that sound, whether vocal or non-vocal, is a force, the vibrations of which act and react on living and non-living beings and are capable of construction and destruction. While Science admits that sound is a physical energy which can be converted into other forms of physical energy it does not go further than that to trace the relationship between the phenomena of this physical energy and the phenomena of the vital and mental energies either on their own planes or in the physical being manifesting these planes. If Science were able to find that the three energies physical, vital and mental are three different kinds of one single energy, *Ekam Trivridha*, even as the Vedic Seers had found, it would be more easy to trace the origins of not only the ancient Aryan speech but also of all the other languages of man—human speech in general. But the Vedic Rishis went further and found that there was a spiritual energy which is the source of all these three and that it is the Supreme Spirit that contains in itself all these in their essence or seed-form.

So in the far-off antiquity of time, the precise date of which none has been able to fix, the Vedic Rishis knew firstly the nature and origin of sound, vocal and non-vocal, secondly the instrument of sound, living and non-living, thirdly the structure of the various sounds, seed-sounds, root-sounds, word-sounds, and sentence-sounds which formed the language or speech and finally

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they knew the psychology that worked behind this structure forming the language and also the relationship that exists between these four parts of speech-formation.

With regard to sound they say that the Supreme is the source of all sound and this they call *OM*. To them *OM* is a one-syllabic sound which yet contains the three letters *a*, *u* and *m*. They say that this sound is the source of all seed-sounds, root-sounds, word-sounds and sentence-sounds. One Upanishadic Rishi speaks of it and of its three letters as the four statuses of Spirit or Brahman: these four statuses comprise the three different states of the manifested universe and the one state of the un-manifested Beyond, which is the source of all manifestation. He says that one can realise in one's consciousness all the four statuses corresponding to the three letters and the one-syllabic word by concentrating and meditating upon them. If one notices the sound produced in the mouth, one can see that all the sounds of the Sanskrit alphabet are produced in the five different parts of the mouth which are the throat, the palate, the tip of the tongue touching the palate, the teeth and the lips. In the order of these different parts of the mouth, these sounds are called gutturals, palatals, linguals or cerebrals, dentals and labials. Here is the table showing the letters and the corresponding parts of the mouth in which the letters are uttered.

THE FIVE CLASSES

	Unas- pirates	Aspi- rates	Unas- pirates	Aspi- rates	Nas- als	Semi- vowels	Sibi- lants	Simple vowels	Diph- thongs
							St	Lg	
									o
Gutturals -	K	Kh	G	Gh	ṅ	H		a ā e au	
Palatals -	C	Ch	J	Jh	Ñ	Y	Ś	i ī aı	—
Linguals -	ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ	R	ṣ	ṛ ṝ	— —
Dentals -	T	Th	D	Dh	N	L	S	l	— —
						V			o
Labials -	P	Ph	B	Bh	M			u ū	— au

For the pronunciation of the sound *OM*, we see from the table and from actual experience in pronouncing it that all the parts of the mouth need to be used. *Om* is a one-syllabic word containing the syllable *o* and the un-syllabic sound *m*. The letter *o* is called swara, that which is produced by the life-breath,

and the letter *m* is called anu-swara, which denotes that it is an after-sound following the life-breath sound. The swara syllable *o* is the source of all other swara syllables or vowels; the anu-swara *m* is the source of all the consonants or vyanjanas. The syllabic vowels and the unsyllabic consonants are in Sanskrit respectively called *Aksharas*, the indestructibles, and *ksharas*, the destructibles; the latter when joined by the former become *aksharas* also. Firstly, *o* breaks itself into *a* and *u*, of which *a* is guttural and *u* is labial, corresponding to the first and last parts of the mouth. From the table we see that in between these two are *i*, *r* and *l*, which are palatal, cerebral and dental. Thus the five simple vowels with their elongations represent the five parts of the mouth. The diphthongs are also shown in the table.

Similarly, for the consonants which are mainly mutes and then semi-vowels and sibilants, we see that each of the five parts of the mouth has one primary mute, which is voice-less and un-aspirate. These primary mutes are *k*, *c*, *t*, *l* and *p*. Each has a voiceless aspirate, a voiced un-aspirate, a voiced aspirate and a nasal corresponding to it. Thus the mutes are twenty-five as can be seen from the table. There are four semi-vowels *y*, *r*, *l* and *v* in the four latter parts of the mouth and, in the course of formation of words either from root-sounds in combination with affix-sounds or otherwise and of bases from words, they interchange with the vowels which are in the corresponding positions of the mouth. There is the guttural *h* which is a voiced aspirate sound, which also interchanges with other gutturals and palatals. Then there are the three sibilants in the three middle parts of the mouth. The knowledge of these sounds in relationship with the different parts of the mouth enables us to know why and how these sounds interchange and influence one another in the formation of words from roots with affixes. It seems from the very formation of these letters or seed-sounds that a thoroughly scientific mind has worked and evolved them.

(To be continued)

NARAYANA C. REDDI

IS OUR CHRONOLOGY FOR ANCIENT INDIA CORRECT?

Some Criticisms and Suggestions

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DOES the last date of the Western Saka Satraps—between 310 and 319 of an unspecified era—confirm Fleet's interpretation of the epoch of 320 A.D. and fall out of accord with a view based on the Puranas? If, instead of the Saka Era of 78 A.D., we take Varahamihira's older Saka Era of 551 B.C. we get this last date between $(551-310=)$ 241 and $(551-319=)$ 232 B.C., and if we put Chandragupta I's accession in 324 B.C., soon after Alexander's departure, we get for the reign of the Sakas' destroyer Chandragupta II, according to the slight uncertainty in the year-number on his very first inscription, the period between 268 (or 264) and 231 (or 229) B.C. His reign covers the event of Saka history concerned. If we put the accession of the first Gupta a little later than 324 B.C.—anywhere between 323 and 305 B.C.—we shall still get the reign of Chandragupta II overlapping the date of the Sakas' destruction. The time-numerals involved in the second "confirmation" cannot be rendered inapt for the Puranic chronology. And if, as Satya Shrivastava has suggested, the Saka Era of 78 A.D. marks the end of the Sakas or of a Saka king and does not prelude the progression of Saka power, the time-numerals are not only apt for the Puranic chronology but also highly improbable for any other.

As for the Malava Era which we are considering in connection with Bandhuvarman's Mandasor Inscription dated in the year 493 of that Era and mentioning Kumaragupta, there is no intrinsic reason to identify it with the Vikrama Era of 57 B.C. Modern historians hold this Vikrama Era to be identical with not only the Malava Era but also the Krita Era found in various inscriptions. But actually what these inscriptions establish is just the identity of the Malava with the Krita Era : the Mandasor Inscription of Naravarman dated year 461¹ and the Negari Inscription of some Vaishyas dated year 481² speak of both these Eras as if they were one. But no epigraphic proof is there for identifying either the Malava or the Krita with the Vikrama Era. The Malavas are an old people. Their republic is mentioned in the history of Alexander's invasions : they were then at the confluence of the Ravi and the Chenab. They were in the

* The number given in the previous issue was a mistake.

¹ Sircar *Select Inscriptions*, p. 377

² Bhandarkar, *List of Inscriptions of Northern India*, No. 5.

same or another region of the Punjab as far back as the time of Panini who names them (IV. 2, 45) among the "warrior communities" of "the land of rivers" (V. 3, 114). The very word "gaṇa" which occurs several times in the inscriptions of the Malava Era—*Mālavanām gaṇasthityā*, *Mālava-gaṇa sthiti-vasāt*, *Mālavaganānnāte*—serves for Panini to classify them (III. 3, 86) as republics (*saṅghas*). Even according to the modern dating of Panini, the Malava Era could very well be as old as any date upwards of the fourth century B.C. which is the lowest limit possible for him¹ in that time-scheme. It can certainly antedate by a good number of centuries the Vikrama Era and may be taken to mark some important event connected with the great love of liberty and independence which the Malavas are reported by Alexander's historians² to have expressed to the Macedonians.

So, going by the reference to Kumaragupta in Bandhuvarman's Mandasor Inscription of the year 493 of the Malava Era, we may adjust the Era to the reign of any of the three Kumaraguptas in Gupta history, whom we place in the centuries before Christ. If the Gupta Era is 324 B.C., Kumaragupta I's reign, which falls in 415-455 A.D. on the basis of Fleet's theory, falls in 229-189 B.C. Then the Malava Era would commence earlier by 493 years—that is, between 722 and 682 B.C. The date³ of Kumaragupta II is the year 154 of the Gupta Era. With 324 B.C. as again our basis we reach 170 B.C. for him. Then the Malava Era would be $170 + 493 = 663$ B.C. If we take Kumaragupta III whose date⁴ falls some time after the year 215, the Era would be still later.

Perhaps 663 B.C. is the best date; for it yields the right relations with Malava history as recorded in three other Mandasor Inscriptions, one of which is dated the year 589 of the Malava Era and all of which refer to the magnificent military triumphs of a king of Malava named Yasodharman. Yasodharman, seeming originally to belong to a family of feudatory chiefs under an unknown overlord, rose into prominence by his crushing victory over the famous and formidable king Mihirakula and became the sovereign of an empire which extended from the Himalayas to the Western Ocean, from the river Brahmaputra to the Mahendra mountain and included "those countries which were not enjoyed (even) by the Gupta lords and which the command of the chiefs of the Hūṇas failed to penetrate."⁵ Now, if 663 B.C. is the commencement of the Malava Era, the year 589 brings us to $663 - 589 = 74$ B.C., the time of the traditional Vikramaditya of Malava whose empire too was considered

¹ Agarwalla, *India As Known to Pāṇini*, p. 474.

² McCrindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, p. 154.

³ *The Classical Age*, p. 29.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 43.

⁵ Majumdar, *A New History of the Indian People*, p. 203.

equally vast. In fact, Pandey,¹ who has no thought of identifying the two figures, is struck by the fact that the empire of Vikramaditya as described in the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* and the *Kathāsaritsāgara* should be paralleled almost uniquely by that of an actual Malava king. It seems extremely probable that Vikramaditya was Yasodharman and that the celebrity he won for destroying the Sakas was due to his victory over Mihirakula who must have been a Saka and not, as commonly supposed, a Huna. Yasodharman is generally taken to be a destroyer of the Hunas, and he may have come into some conflict with them, but actually his inscription² mentions no conquest over the Hunas and gives prominence to his victory over Mihirakula who nowhere in it is called a Huna and whose defeat is mentioned quite separately from the reference to the Hunas. Majumdar,³ though working with the usual hypothesis for want of a consistent better one in the current system of chronology, has remarked : "In the Mandasor inscription of Yaśodharman reference is made both to Mihirakula and to the Hūṇas, but in a manner which, far from connecting the two, might even suggest a definite distinction between them." Evidently, if an alternative hypothesis can be elaborated, the attitude of the inscription would be more logically explained.

Before we go further, a small point may be disposed of. We may be told : "Vikramaditya, unlike Yasodharman, is associated only with the Sakas and never with the Hunas, never thought of as in possible conflict with them." The answer is that this is a wrong assertion. The *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*⁴, in recounting Vikramaditya's conquests, includes the defeat, at his hands, of "the mean Hūṇas with barbarous hordes". What is true is not the non-association with the Hunas but their minor role as compared to that of the Sakas in his life. And this is precisely the truth we are prompted to feel in regard to Yasodharman by the attitude of his inscription.

What are the facts, if any, outside the inscription to favour the Huna hypothesis about Mihirakula rather than the alternative we propose ? Our historians hold Mihirakula to be the son of a chief from North India who goes by the name of Toramana and who is commonly regarded as a Huna; but, while regarding him as such, Majumdar⁵ honestly tells us : "There is no conclusive evidence to this effect...We possess little definite information about him." We have as little direct ground to take Toramana for a Huna as to take Mihirakula for such. None of the inscriptions of either of them, says Majumdar,⁶ "calls

¹ R B. Pandey, *Vikramāditya of Ujjayinī*, p. 127.

² *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol III, pp 147-48.

³ *Op cit* p 197.

⁴ X 1, 285-286, quoted in Pandey, *Op cit*, p 114

⁵ *The Classical Age*, p 35

⁶ *A New History of the Indian People*, p. 196.

these kings Huns or contains any reference to that people." Majumdar¹ further hints that there is a question whether Tōramana and Mihirakula were Huna or Kushana. Nothing prevents us from looking on them as neither Huna nor Kushana but Saka. On the contrary, if we put Mihirakula's defeat by Yasodharman in 74 B.C. and accept the view of all historians² that Mihirakula was in possession of Kashmir, he fits precisely into the picture which the well-known Sinologist P. C. Bagchi³ has drawn of the Saka influx into India a little earlier as reported by Chinese historians.

Scrutinising the Chinese account regarding the movement of the Sakas from the region of Ta-hia to the region of Ki-pin and disputing the identification of Ki-pin with Kabul-Kapisa, Bagchi says: "The route to Ki-pin which the Śaka king followed is clearly stated. He passed to Hien-tu or the hanging pass while moving towards Ki-pin from his original seat in Ta-hia. This route was recognised by Chavannes and Sir Aurel Stein as the Bolor route through the Yasin valley. This was the route which was usually followed by the ancient travellers from the region of Wakhan to the Indus valley and to Kashmir and Udyana. If we follow the Chinese account literally we are driven to two conclusions: the first that the Śakas who were turned out of Ta-hia by the Yue-ches entered by the Bolor route and the second that Ki-pin which they conquered was Kashmir... This must have taken place before 128 B.C.... The identification of Ki-pin with Kabul-Kapisa is an impossibility. Levi and Chavannes were the first to propose the identification of Ki-pin of the Chinese annals with Kashmir. They pointed out that in a number of Chinese translations of Buddhist texts the translators use Ki-pin for translating the name Kashmir up to 581 A.D. Since 581 A.D. the Buddhist translations as well as the Chinese documents use the name Ki-pin to denote Kapisa and not Kashmir." Bagchi then shows that the geographical details given in the Chinese account point to Kashmir, and he adds: "The name Ki-pin itself seems to suggest the same. In Han pronunciation, the first word *Ki* was definitely a *Ka* probably followed by some consonant which might have been an *s*. *Pin* was pronounced almost certainly in early time *pwr* or *wir*. Hence Ki-pin clearly stood for *Ka (s)-pwr* or *Ka(s)-wir*. This form of the name is also found in the early Greek records in which Kashmir is either Caspini or Kasperia. Ki-pin was thus a correct phonetic transcription of the old name of Kashmir. The Śakas of Ta-hia could not have come to Kashmir *via* Seistan and the lower Indus valley—they must have come there by the shorter route, *i.e.*, the Bolor route from Ta-hia."

Thus, if Mihirakula's defeat is out before 74 B.C., there is nothing incon-

¹ *The Classical Age*, p. 59.

² *Ibid*, p. 35.

³ *The Indian History Congress*, 1943, Presidential Address, pp. 33-35.

gruous in considering this king of Kashmir a Saka successor to the Sakas who conquered Kashmir before 128 B.C.

Against this may be urged the remarks of Sen¹ about a Chinese pilgrim, Sung-yun: "Early in 520 A.D. Sung-yun entered the country then under Mihirakula's rule", and he says also: "The contemporary account of Sung-yun of that ill-mannered, ill-favoured barbarian warrior is not without interest." From this we may incline to think that Mihirakula could not have lived in the first century B.C. But the fact is that his contemporaneity with Sung-yun is merely an inference inspired by the current chronology. Sung-yun gives no name to any Huna king of his own day, and if we accept the current chronology and believe that Sung-yun met a Huna king all we can say of Mihirakula is, in Majumdar's words² "It is not ..unlikely that he is the king whom Sung-yun met in Gāndhara" If we do not accept this chronology, nothing obliges us to put Mihirakula in Sung-yun's time. Further, the description Sung-yun gives seems to be of a king whom he places not in his own time but two generations prior to himself,³ so that it cannot in any case be applied to Mihirakula.

The contemporaneity of Sung-yun and Mihirakula or, in general, the current dating of the latter is also not binding on us from the account left by Cosmas, surnamed Indicopleustes (Indian navigator), an Alexandrine Greek, in his *Christian Topography*, a book probably begun in A.D. 535 but not put in its final form till A.D. 547. Cosmas in one place speaks of a White Hun King named Gollas as the lord of India and an oppressor of the people. Majumdar⁴ comments: "It is generally believed that king Gollas in the above account refers to Mihirakula whose name is also written as Mihiragul." Here a certain semi-echo in the name can be granted, yet the identification hardly forces itself. And there is a significant fact which works against the conjectured identification. "It must be noted," observes Majumdar,⁵ "that, whereas the chief seat of Hūṇa power, according to both Sung-yun and Cosmas, was to the west of the Indus, Mihirakula's capital, according to Huen-Tsang, was at Sākala (Sialkot) and that of Toramāṇa, according to the Jaina book (*Kuvalaya-mālā*), on the river Chenab"

Even the name "Mihirakula" has not anything exclusively Huna about it. It only means: "Of the family of the Mihiras." "Mihira" is the same as "Mer" of "Meher" and signifies "Sun". The Hunas were indeed sun-worshippers, but the Sakas too were most certainly such, as we know from the Puranas⁶ where

¹ *India Through Chinese Eyes* (1957), p p. 163-64

² *The Classical Age*, p. 36

³ S. Beal, *Sung-yun's Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol I, Introd. pp. 99-100.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 36

⁵ *A New History of the Indian People*, p. 198.

⁶ Agni, 119. 21; Brahmanda, XX. 71; Kurma, I, 48. 36-37.

Śaka-dvīpa is the land of the Maga-dvijas who worship the sun-god. The cult of Shiva which Mihirakula, if we may judge from his coins, seems to have practised is also known to be characteristic of the Sakas : the Mahābhārata¹ regards *Śaka-dvīpa* as a centre of Saivism.

What makes it still more probable that Mihirakula was of the Saka group that came to India and ruled over Kashmir a little prior to the time of Vikramaditya and that the Yasodharman who defeated him was this very Vikramaditya is that Toramana whom our historians look upon as Mihirakula's father is put by Kalhana's history of Kashmir, the *Rājataranginī*, just one generation before Vikramaditya. Kalhana separates Mihirakula from Toramana by a good number of generations and hence far beyond any such date as either our historians or we ourselves give to Yasodharman. But if, as is almost certain, Toramana is Mihirakula's father, the Saka-destroyer and Era-founder Vikramaditya of the *Rājataranginī* (III) must belong to the same time as Yasodharman. In another way too Kalhana leads to the conclusion that the time of Yasodharman was the same as Vikramaditya's. Huen-Tsang² has described the Gupta king Baladitya's fight with Mihirakula. Now Kalhana (III), suggests the contemporaneity of Baladitya and Toramana. He states that Toramana forbade the currency of the coins with the name "Bala" within his territory and largely circulated the dinara coined by himself. D. N. Mookerji³ remarks : "It is evident therefore that Toramāṇa ruled for a few years contemporaneously with Bālāditya." And hence not only can Toramana's son Mihirakula be considered a contemporary of Baladitya but also Baladitya can be considered a contemporary of Vikramaditya whom Toramana preceded by a generation, and since Bālāditya and Yasodharman were contemporaries the time of Vikramaditya must be the same as Yasodharman's.

Huen Tsang, whom we have mentioned above, has himself indicated the time of the defeat of Mihirakula by Baladitya. Majumdar⁴ informs us : "The most important point to be noted is that Huen Tsang places the defeat 'some centuries ago', i.e., several hundred years before c. 633 A.D. when he visited Sākala. This is hardly compatible with the view that the incident referred to by him took place about 530 A.D. As Watters has pointed out, other Chinese authorities also seem to place Mihirakula long before that date." Majumdar's own reaction is : "This naturally casts grave doubts on the credibility of Huen Tsang's story about Mihirakula." But Huen Tsang's chronology is just what it should be on our hypothesis.

¹ VIII. II, 8-38.

² Sen, *Op cit*, pp 135-39.

³ *Bhāratya Vidyā*, Vol. V. Miscellany, p. 113.

⁴ *Op. cit*, pp. 196-97.

And we may draw attention to the fact that the Chinese pilgrim is not only general in his agreement with our criticism of the modern view but also indicates in particular the correctness of our own by his hint on the age of Baladitya. Sen¹ says that in Hiuen Tsang's account Baladitya was the great grandson of Sakraditya who is credited by the pilgrim to have built the earliest monastery at Nalanda shortly after Buddha's death, and in between Sakraditya and Baladitya we have the mention of Sakraditya's son Buddhagupta and of Buddhagupta's son Tathagatagupta. Many of our historians² identify Hiuen Tsang's Baladitya with one of the kings of the Gupta dynasty, Narsimhagupta surnamed Baladitya. Either Narsimhagupta or some other scion of the same dynasty, who was more or less his contemporary—e.g., Bhanugupta³—must have been the king meant by Hiuen Tsang; for, the Pilgrim's Buddhagupta, grandson of Sakraditya, must be identified with the historical Buddhagupta, grandson of Kumaragupta, especially as Kumaragupta's title Mahendraditya includes like Sakraditya a name of Indra.⁴ So we may conclude that Hiuen Tsang believed the Guptas to have flourished shortly after the Nirvana of Buddha. Of course the belief is mistaken, both the Indian time-scheme and the modern can demonstrate its shortcoming, but the mistake should drive home with some precision Hiuen Tsang's sense of the antiquity of the Guptas.

On Fleet's theory, Narsimhagupta who has to be placed just before the year 215 of the Gupta Era⁵ would be just previous to $320+215=535$ A.D., fairly close to Hiuen Tsang's own time. If Hiuen Tsang thought his Baladitya to be pretty recent and yet affirmed Sakraditya to have existed shortly after Buddha's death we should absurdly have to consider Hiuen Tsang to have dated Buddha in the early years of the Christian Era. But he does nothing of the sort although he gives four different views prevalent in his time about the number of years elapsed since Buddha's Nirvana : (1) 1500 years, (2) 1300 years, (3) 1200 years, (4) 900 years.⁶ As Hiuen Tsang's time in India is c. 630-643 A.D., none of the views puts Buddha's death after Christ : the latest date is 643 A.D.- $900=257$ B.C. We do not know which of the four dates was favoured by Hiuen Tsang himself, but, judging from even the latest, we can be certain that he did not regard the Guptas as having been near his own day : they were to him sufficiently far to go considerably beyond Fleet's epoch and, on even the latest of his own dates for Buddha's death, they were for him ancient enough to be previous to Christ.

¹ *Op cit*, pp. 135-9, 162

² *The Classical Age*, pp. 37, 43.

³ Raychaudhuri, *The Political History of Ancient India*, p.

⁴ *Ibid*, p 325.

⁵ *The Classical Age*, p 43

⁶ Watters, II, p 28

IS OUR CHRONOLOGY FOR ANCIENT INDIA CORRECT?

Clearly, Hiuen Tsang can be taken to support our chronology of the Guptas. And his expression, "some centuries ago", in connection with Mihirakula can be no slip on his part. So far as he is concerned, we are free, if not actually encouraged, to put Narsimhagupta Baladitya where our Gupta Era of c. 324 B.C. would want him—namely, just before $324-215=109$ B.C., a time which bears out our dating of Yasodharman, since Yasodharman fought Mihirakula after Baladitya had done so.¹ Thus, through Baladitya, Hiuen Tsang allows for Yasodharman the period of the traditional Vikramaditya and sanctions broadly our identification of the one with the other. He also lends support, by his chronology, to our proposition that Mihirakula was a Saka king whom Vikramaditya defeated and by whose overthrow he won the title Sakari.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

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¹ Raychaudhuri, *Op. cit.*, p. 402, footnote 2.

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Thoughts and Aphorisms by Sri Aurobindo. Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Ponicherry. Pages 90, price Rs. 2/-.

It seems that the aphoristic style is the oldest literary form of expression and perhaps the most appealing, suggestive and revelatory. One notices that the aphoristic expression of any idea has been specially natural and powerful with the intuitive and the mystic personality. Cryptography has been the commonest expressive medium of intuitive perception. The entire body of the earliest scriptures of the world is in aphoristic language. In the Vedas and Upanishads, the sages and seers have packed into a little space a vast knowledge dealing with the highest and deepest problems of existence.

All aphorisms have a light and a power of their own, but those sprung directly from a luminous level of consciousness have such a gripping mystery about them that they plunge into our very core of consciousness, shatter the many traditional half-understood or misunderstood conceptions, overwhelm us by their audacity and jolt us with a transforming tremor of Truth.

To this category belong the aphorisms contained in the book under review. We had a foretaste of the quality in Sri Aurobindo's earlier booklet entitled *Thoughts and Glimpses* which had formed a portion of the present book. The already published pieces have been excluded from this volume. Although the present work, unlike *Thoughts and Glimpses*, remains unrevised by the author, it takes us to a far wider field of intense insight into various subjects.

The aphorisms have been classed under three main headings, Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti; but they pronounce on a vast variety of matters such as wisdom and folly, religion and machinery, materialism and art, altruism and medical science, success and failure, democracy, communism, love, work, genius and many others.

The get-up of this neatly printed book is simple and attractive and the price reasonable.

It would be better for us here to quote some of the aphorisms than try to explain their power and beauty :

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Because God is invincibly great, He can afford to be weak ; because He is immutably pure, He can indulge with impunity in sin ; He knows eternally all delight, therefore He tastes also the delight of pain ; He is inalienably wise, therefore He has not debarred Himself from folly.

...God alone knows when and how to blunder wisely and fail effectively.

I have failed, thou sayest. Say rather that God is circling about towards His object.

There is no mortality. It is only the Immortal who can die ; the mortal could neither be born nor perish.

To the senses it is always true that the sun moves round the earth ; this is false to the reason. To the reason it is always true that the earth moves round the sun ; this is false to the supreme vision. Neither earth moves nor sun ; there is only a change in the relation of sun-consciousness and earth-consciousness.

There are four very great events in history the siege of Troy, the life and crucifixion of Christ, the exile of Krishna in Brindaban and the colloquy with Arjuna on the field of Kurukshetra. The siege of Troy created Hellas, the exile in Brindavan created devotional religion, (for before there was only meditation and worship), Christ from his cross humanised Europe, the colloquy at Kurukshetra will yet liberate humanity. Yet it is said that none of these four events ever happened.

This is a miracle that men can love God, yet fail to love humanity. With whom are they in love then ?

Selfishness kills the soul ; destroy it. But take care that your altruism does not kill the souls of others.

The quarrels of religious sects are like the disputing of pots, which shall be alone allowed to hold the immortalising nectar. Let them dispute, but the thing for us is to get at the nectar in whatever pot and obtain immortality.

Vivekananda, exalting Sannyasa, has said that in all Indian history there is only one Janaka. Not so, for Janaka is not the name of a single individual, but a dynasty of self-ruling kings and the triumph-cry of an ideal.

MOTHER INDIA

Three times God laughed at Shankara, first, when he returned to burn the corpse of his mother, again, when he commented on the Isha Upanishad, and the third time when he stormed about India preaching inaction.

I cannot give to the barbarous comfort and encumbered ostentation of European life the name of civilisation. Men who are not free in their souls and nobly rhythmical in their appointments are not civilised.

God's servant is something ; God's slave is greater.

He who would win high spiritual degrees, must pass endless tests and examinations. But most are anxious only to bribe the examiner.

Devotion is not utterly fulfilled till it becomes action and knowledge.

Discipleship to God the Teacher, sonship to God the Father, tenderness of God the Mother, clasp of the hand of the divine Friend, laughter and sport with our Comrade and Boy-Playfellow, blissful servitude to God the Master, rapturous love of our divine Paramour, these are the seven beatitudes of life in the human body...

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

Sri Aurobindo Circle : Fourteenth Number. Journal of Sri Aurobindo Society, Bombay ; Pulished by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Pages 176 ; price Rs. 6/-.

We welcome the Fourteenth Number of Sri Aurobindo Circle which has well stood by its purpose. The Journal is published every year on 24th April, the date when the Mother came to Pondicherry for the second and last time in 1920 to collaborate with Sri Aurobindo for the fulfilment of their divine mission.

The contributions in the present Number, most of them on philosophy and poetry, have a novelty and freshness of their own and are indeed instructive.

The first thing that strikes the reader on opening the magazine is the Mother's message, a very significant message for all of us who are in right earnest to make the best of the Manifestation of the Supramental Power which constitutes the supreme ideal and aim of the "hero-warriors" of Sri

Aurobindo's Yoga. "When in your heart and thought you will make no difference between Sri Aurobindo and me, when to think of Sri Aurobindo will be to think of me and to think of me will mean to think of Sri Aurobindo inevitably, when to see one will mean inevitably to see the other, like *one and the same Person*,—then you will know that you begin to be open to the supramental force and consciousness."

We have two new and beautiful facsimiles of the Mother's photographs taken in the Theatre Hall of the S.A. International University Centre when she was giving her message to the All India Radio on 21st February on the occasion of the Jubilee celebrations of her completed eightieth year.

The Mother's letters, as well as those of Sri Aurobindo, to a sadhak on the soul's journey after death and on her help to the departed souls, throw a very clear light on the subject. She says, "Whoever has an aspiration at the end of his life or even only at the moment of death comes to me for shelter and help. Immediately after death there is a difficult and, for many, a dangerous time when crossing the vital world before reaching the psychic world which is the place of peace and rest. It is for this crossing through this vital world that so many people come to me without having even known my physical being, instinctively because they perceive the Light that guides and protects."

Another set of unpublished letters of Sri Aurobindo on the Mother are in answer to the sadhaks' queries on their experiences about the presence and light of the Mother or on establishing contact and oneness with her, as well as on her working on the sadhaks. Then we have the Master's letters with corresponding questions by the sadhaks on his viewpoints on Beauty, Goodness, on Style, Working of the Cosmic Will, the Uses of Sex-energy etc. followed by his readings in the Taittiriya Upanishad, entitled *The Knowledge of Brahman*. "Knowledge does not end with knowing," says Sri Aurobindo, "nor is it pursued and found for the sake of knowing alone. It has its full value only when it leads to some greater gain than itself, some gain of being. Simply to know the eternal and to remain in the pain, struggle and inferiority of our present way of being, would be a poor and lame advantage."

An attempt to cull and collect Sri Aurobindo's views on Sociology and present them in one place in a coherent and connected manner, or to write independent papers on his Social Philosophy is now long due, and the series contemplated by Kishor Gandhi is a praiseworthy feature. His preliminary observations appearing in the present issue hold out good promise and focus with intellectual acuteness our attention on Sri Aurobindo's leading ideas in this field.

P. B. Saint-Hilaire's (Pavitra's) letters to a seeker from the West, translated from the French by Niranjan, lucidly as well as pointedly communicate the

basic ideas of the practical aspect of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and are written with an intimate touch of spiritual feeling.

On one hand, Jugal Kishore Mukherjee in his essay *From the 'Tiny Gene' to the 'Future God'*, "on the Marvel that is Man", traces the history of the viewpoints of various philosophers and scientists about the creation, the origin of species, in a picturesque and almost a poetic language, and on the other Kireet Joshi discusses the Ascent of Knowledge according to Sri Aurobindo from the perceptual level to the culminating Supramental level when "the movement of knowledge reaches the summit of being and experience", where there is no contradiction between the idea and the experience. The article is very well done and takes the reader stage by stage from one inference to another in a clear logical sequence till it culminates in proving the total fulfilment of the primary conditions of complete knowledge, the complete mutuality and identity of the terms of knowledge, on the supramental level.

Shreekrishna Piasad reviews the recent bringing to light of some of the not-so-known poets of the seventeenth century—Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, etc.,—now termed Metaphysical poets, whose "peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination" and "subtle interplay of emotion and thought", is their "greatest achievement". He revalues the new inner sensitiveness in the poetry "of meditation" by Eliot and other modern poets who were instrumental in bringing "a Donne-like mind and spiritual apprehension to bear upon the contemporary world, and re-establishing the conceits of the Metaphysicals in modern dress." The writer also examines two major poetic achievements of Donne with erudition, lucidity and thoroughness.

Sisir Kumar Ghose has successfully been able to epitomise the essence and the basic position of Sri Aurobindo's *Future Poetry*. We are sure the former's aim in writing this article "to find some reader or readers who will look at it with fresh eyes" will be fulfilled. His review will give them a fairly understandable picture of what Sri Aurobindo elucidates at length in his volume, dealing with the trends and history of English poetry substantiated by suitable examples, and with the creation of the future poetry whose realm will be "a larger field of being, made more real to men's experience" with a promise of resuming "on a larger scale, with a wider and more shining vision the greater effect it once had on the life of the race in the noble antique cultures". Thus the future poetry will set "new voices" sounding as a result of "the growth of the power of the spirit on the mind of man which is the promise of the coming era".

K. D. Sethna's *Glimpses of Mallarmé*, continued from the last issue and to be continued, is now concerned with an English translation of the great French Symbolist's poems, with a general introduction and some commentaries

on particular pieces. Credit is due to the translator for his remarkable success in reproducing Mallarmé for the English readers. The translations are so near and fair to the original in thought and beauty of expression and create such fine and felicitous poetry that we have Mallarmé in English without suspecting that the poems are translations.

The six poems of Syed Mehdi Imam are marked by elevated passion and colour and attractive rhythms that have some technical novelty. They in places serve very well the mystic subject-matter. One cannot say there is a sustained inspiration, but the energy of the writer carries one through the inequalities. Only the last piece *Prithvi* seems to be more rhetoric than poetry and fails on the whole. The author has also another contribution in poetic semi-biblical semi-Sufi prose, "The Star of the Silence", consisting of what he calls "two meditations".

"The Descent of the Mind of Light", Canto VIII of the Book of the Divine Mother in Romen's epic *Lotus Flame*, affords us a felicitous flow of vision and rhythm, with the inspiring high seriousness that runs through most of this poet's rich and bold expression of large inner moods. Perhaps there is a touch of monotony here and there in some of the verbal turns, but the fineness of each turn taken by itself cannot be denied.

The lore of the short poem, *The Evasive Charmer*, by Har Krishan Singh is rather evasive and as "none knows the story of my heart", his rather queer hide and seek, in his stunned ethereality, with his deny of "enticing and escaping melodies," is perhaps permissible because of its pretty mysticism, even though strange.

We have towards the end an interesting analysis, set forth with examples, of the affinity of Wordsworth's philosophy to Neo-Platonism, by K. P. Ambastha. He has cited verses from the poet's works to map out his metaphysical doctrine on God, Universe and Man. *Metaphysic of Individuality* by H. P. Sullivan competently shows in a very systematic and exhaustive manner that the inner self, the psychic being, and not the ego, is the true individuality.

Blue Sparks of Neel Prakash at the end have something of the blueness and brightness of the higher mind reflected in them. They show his aptitude to express "assimilated experience (which) alone can lead to a rich and vigorous and purposive growth".

"BANDA"

The History and Culture of the Indian People, Volume 5 : The Struggle for Empire. Edited by R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker : Foreword by K. M. Munshi. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. Pp. lxx+940.

This is the latest instalment of the Vidya Bhavan's monumental history of the Indian people in ten volumes. The first four volumes have been reviewed in these pages. The present volume not only keeps up the standard set earlier; it would seem that there is a gradual improvement as the work proceeds. The get-up and presentation has been excellent throughout.

Never before has the history of India received such generous and comprehensive treatment. If the history of a people is to be a record of its soul, its aspirations and achievement or failure in all the various fields of human endeavour, here we have a history of that kind. It is the first attempt in modern times to write an *Itihāsa* of India in the sense in which the term was understood in ancient days. It is *Itihāsa* shorn of its legends.

The whole life of the Indian people has been taken in its purview and an attempt has been made to give an account of each aspect as succinctly as possible within the available space. The political background has received adequate attention—in this particular volume it takes up about a quarter of the book. The rest of the volume is devoted to other aspects of the national life : Political Theory and Organisation, Law and Legal Institutions, Language and Literature, Religion and Philosophy, Education, Art, Social and Economic Condition. The last chapter, on Colonial and Cultural Expansion, treats of India Overseas and gives an account of the Far Eastern kingdoms which owed their origin and development to our country. It is sumptuous fare for the general reader. Even the scholar may find here material of interest. We should be grateful to the publishers that they have made available for the first time a composite picture of the age within the covers of a single volume.

A work of this nature needed the collaboration of a number of specialists. But a remarkable feature is that the specialists seem to be aware of what the others in their own fields are doing. The editing of the work is obviously in competent hands. The Foreword to each volume gives an added link and provides a bird's eye view of the entire period. It can hardly be expected in a work of this kind that everybody will agree on all the details. The history of India is still an infant science and points of disagreement are many. Even when the facts are established beyond question, their interpretation will provide food for thought, and opinions will continue to differ. The editors must be complimented on their treatment of controversial points.

On reading the available works on Indian history, one normally gathers the impression that "Hindu" India came to a sudden end with the coming of

the Muslims about 1200 A.D. This volume would be a standing denial of any such view. It contains overwhelming evidence to show that India continued to be India in spite of the foreign inroad. The rapid success of the invaders has been a puzzle for many a student of this period. Perhaps a solution might be found in the view that India needed a breathing space after its long millennial effort, a little time to recover from the effects of an overblown intellectuality which had marked her recent past. The barbarian from the north-west brought with him a new vigour and a destructive force, which in the long run proved salutary to India in spite of the temporary damage done. He not only roused the Rajput in the north and the Andhra and the Mahratta in the south to some sense of political unity. His greater work lay in his withdrawal of patronage from the classical tongue. This gave the regional vernaculars their chance. The old aristocratic culture was broken up into regional units and was given a new impetus through the vernacular literatures. Almost for the first time in Indian history, the masses began to have a say in the shaping of our culture. The saints and prophets many of whom belonged to the "lower classes" could now speak to them in their own language and appeal directly to their heart. The beginning of the "Muslim" Period was in this sense the beginning of India's regeneration.

The new religions of Bhakti that arose about the same period in the north and had their repercussions in the south might perhaps be better appreciated if studied in this context. In earlier ages, the main attempt had been to approach the Divinity through the higher thinking mind and we had the lofty and austere philosophies. Now, there was the attempt to sublimate the feelings and turn them Godwards in an entire consecration. This would make a much larger number turn their thoughts to God. This explains why Rādhā became a central figure in the cult, since Rādhā symbolises the utter consecration to Godhead. This also was the reason why there were signs of moral degradation which may have been absent in earlier forms of worship. One cannot bring in the masses and still hope to keep the cult free from all contamination. Perhaps the modern scholar has been a little too harsh on his judgment on the medieval religious system. There were blemishes without a doubt, but there came also Sri Chaitanya and Mirabai, Ramprasad and Ramakrishna.

Another feature of the period which commences about this time was the growing hold of the Shastra on the mind of the age. India had for long ages been a land of the Shastra. But never before perhaps did it accept the authority of Shastra with such supine docility. Many reasons may be given in explanation of this phenomenon : the reaction that had set in after the long intellectual labour, the desire of the masses to have a ready-made pattern of

conduct in the face of the new conditions brought about by Muslim rule, the inability of most to read the original works in Sanskrit, the failure to evolve a secular head who could take the place of the Brahmin Shāstrakāra as head and centre of the social system. Whatever the reasons, the fact is patent that for the most part Indians ceased to think for themselves and were relying more and more on second-hand opinion. This has been rightly taken as a serious defect. The one thing we could say in defence is that it was this very inertia that saved the ancient heritage from complete destruction under the impact of Islam and, later, of Europe.

The picture will probably grow darker in the volumes to come.

S. K. BANERJI

Twenty Years of the Visva-Bharati Cheena-Bhavana, 1937-1957. by *Tan Yun-Shan*. The Sino-Indian Cultural Society of India, Santiniketan West Bengal, India. 1957. Rs 6/- only.

My mind goes back to a simple function in 1934: Rabindranath Tagore inaugurating the Indian Branch of the Sino-Indian Cultural Society at Santiniketan with Prof. Tan as the Secretary. Since then the governments have changed, in China as in India, but through weal and woe the Cheena Bhavan has forged ahead. The present record of its varied research activities is the best proof of the devoted work done by Prof. Tan and his associates all these years. That the work—restoration of texts, training of students—and the excellent unequalled library have received general acclamation is as it should be. In linking India with her ancient neighbour, China, Prof. Tan's pioneering work will always be remembered. Recently there have been misgivings in some quarters over the affairs of the Visva-Bharati. As one who had once the privilege of sharing the life there I like to believe that these are but a passing phase—perhaps a necessary phase—and that one day “the dream” bequeathed by the Poet will be realised by his institution. The present publication is an encouraging sign—and a tribute to Prof. Tan's selfless and organising activities. By his labours he has earned the gratitude of two nations, his “two homes” as he calls them.

SISIRKUMAR MITRA

Students' Section

THE MOTHER'S TALKS TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN

Q. Can one increase one's faith by one's personal effort?

Faith is certainly a present the Divine Grace gives us. It is like a door which opens suddenly on an eternal truth and by which we can see it, almost touch it.

Like all things in the human ascent, there is, especially at the start, the necessity of personal effort. It may be that in certain exceptional circumstances, for reasons that totally escape our intelligence, faith comes like an accident, in a way altogether unexpected, almost without being even asked for, but in the most frequent instances it is always a response to a desire, a need, an aspiration, something in the being that seeks, that wishes, even though it may not be in a very conscious and systematic manner. But in any case, when faith is granted, when one has had this sudden and inner illumination, to keep it constantly in the active consciousness individual effort is quite indispensable. We have to cling to our faith, will our faith, we must search for it, cultivate it, protect it.

There is in the human mind a morbid and deplorable habit of doubt, discussion, scepticism. It is there that human effort must be exercised, the refusal to admit them, the refusal to give them a hearing, and again the refusal to follow them. There is no game more dangerous than to play mentally with doubt and scepticism. These are not only enemies, they are a terrible trap from which, once you fall into it, you have a formidable difficulty to get yourself out. There are persons who think that it is a very great elegance of mind to play with ideas, to discuss them, to contradict faith, that this gives you a very superior attitude, that you are thus above all kinds of superstition and ignorance, but it is in giving ear to the suggestions of doubt and scepticism that you fall into the grossest ignorance and draw away from the right path. You enter into confusion, into error, into a meander of contradictions. You are not always sure of the power to get out. You go so far off from the inner truth that you lose the way and sometimes also you lose all possible contact with your soul.

MOTHER INDIA

Certainly, personal effort is necessary to preserve faith, to allow it to increase in oneself. Later, much later, some day one may see on looking backward that all that has happened to one, even what appeared to be the worst, was a divine grace in order to make one advance on the road, and then one perceives that the personal effort was also a grace, but before reaching there one has to march a lot, fight a lot, sometimes even suffer a lot.

To sit in an inert passivity and say : "If I ought to have faith, I shall have it, the Divine will give it to me", this is an attitude of idleness, of unconsciousness and almost of bad will.

For the inner flame to burn you must feed it, keep an eye on the fire, throw into it the combustible matter of all the errors which you wish to get rid of, all that retards your progress, all that obscures the path. If you do not feed the fire, it smoulders under the ashes of your unconsciousness and your inertia and then it is no longer years but it is lives, it is centuries that will pass before you arrive at your goal.

One should watch over one's faith as one watches over the cradle of something infinitely precious, and protect it most carefully from all that can change it.

In the ignorance and obscurity of the commencement, faith is the most direct expression of the divine power which can fight and conquer.

July 9, 1958.

(K. D. S.)



ARISTOTLE'S *POETICS*

(*An Exposition and an Interpretation*)

A. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THE *Poetics* of Aristotle was written about 330 B.C., some seventy years after the death of Euripides in the era of the New Comedy of Menander. Aristotle was thus in a position to survey the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. But the origins of drama as it came from the hands of Thespis must have been obscure. The manuscript of the *Poetics* is incomplete. The first part dealing with Tragedy and Epic in particular has been preserved, the second part dealing with Comedy and the subject of Katharsis has been lost. The book is largely a collection of lecture-notes. There is a systematic elucidation of the principles of Tragedy. But definition of important words such as Mimesis, creative representation, Poesis, creative activity, Katharsis or Purification, is wanting. There is an overlapping of the subject matter. The Epic is dealt with in two different chapters. There are inconsistencies of arguments, repetitions, certain changes of terminology, and digressions, accompanied by a cryptic crammed style which makes the *Poetics* difficult reading. Nevertheless, the chief elements of Tragedy stand out in clear and admirable perspective. No book on dramatic theory has had so deep an impression upon succeeding generations as the *Poetics* of Aristotle who has seized with a gigantic grasp the elements of Tragedy.

B. SCHEME OF THE *POETICS*

The *Poetics* consists of 26 chapters which may be divided into five sections. Chapters 1-5 deal with the subject of Poetry, Poesis or creative activity of the arts in general, and with Tragedy, the Epic and Comedy in particular, as modes of creative representation. Chapters 6-22 define Tragedy as a mode of Mimesis or creative representation in Plot, Action and Character and elucidate the general principles of construction of the Tragic Drama of the Greeks. Chapters 23-24 pass on to the rules of construction of the Epic. Chapter 25 deals with criticism and replies as to construction of Tragedy and Epic. Chapter 26 closes with the arguments as to the respective merits of Tragedy and the Epic. Tragedy is given superiority because it combines Language, Metre and Music.

The pith of the *Poetics* is in chapters 6-22 relating to the rules and subject of Tragedy. These chapters must be further analysed. Chapter 6 deals with the well-known definition of Tragedy as a form of Mimesis, and establishes six elements of the Drama, namely, Plot, Character, Idea or Thought, Diction, Melody, and Spectacle. Chapters 7-11 further elaborate the rules as to construction of plots and coherence of action. Chapter 12 is a kind of postscript giving further details of the parts of Greek Tragedy, namely, Prologue, Episode, Exode, Stasimon, Commos and the Chorus. The latter seems to be an addendum. Its authenticity has been doubted by some scholars. Chapters 13-14 deal with tragic effects of Greek plots and limitations of their subject-matter, and with Pleasure and Pathos of Tragedy in general. Chapter 15 expounds the rules relating to Character with a note on the *Mechane* of the Greek Drama. Chapters 16-18 state several forms of Discoveries in the Greek Drama. They also deal with certain rules of practical construction of plots. Chapter 19 is concerned with Diction and Thought. Chapters 20-22 touch upon the language of Tragedy, parts of speech, and poetic words of the Greek tongue.

C. DIFFERENTIATION OF TRAGEDY

The first step of Aristotle is to differentiate Tragedy from Poetry in general and from Epic and Comedy in particular, as a mode of Mimesis. Poetry is used in a general sense as the faculty of creation divisible into five groups. When it uses Rhythm alone, it becomes the art of Dancing, when it uses Language alone, it becomes prose creative writing such as the mimes or the Socratic dialogues; when it uses Rhythm and Language, its compositions are elegies and epics; when it uses Rhythm and Tune it becomes Instrumental Music; when it uses Rhythm, Language and Tune it fashions Lyrics, Tragedy and Comedy. The common basis of Poetry is Rhythm and Mimesis. Tragedy is a particular form of Poetry. It is integral creative activity. It uses three elements of Poetry, namely Rhythm, Language and Tune. This distinguishes Tragedy as a special form of Poetry.

It is to be noted that these are the distinguishing marks of Greek Tragedy and not of Tragedy in general. Greek Tragedy combined singing and flute-playing (Rhythm), Language (Verse) and Tune (dancing and singing and instrumental music). In Modern Drama, the Play, the Ballet and the Opera are separate arts. Modern Drama is not integral Poetry in Aristotle's sense.

In the second step, Aristotle distinguishes Tragedy from Comedy. Comedy deals with men worse than the average. Its subject is the Ridiculous and the Ugly. The Ridiculous is a mistake or deformity not productive of pain. It is a mask which excites laughter.

This distinction made by Aristotle is not wholly valid even in respect of Greek Tragedy. Humour in Euripides is frequently not ridiculous or ugly. In *Alcestis*, the humour of Hercules is introduced not only to create laughter but as relief from tragic tension. The plays of Aristophanes are directed not only to excite laughter but to criticise politicians and philosophers and literary men. Aristotle makes a clear distinction between Tragedy and Comedy. In the history of the Greek Drama, they were distinct. But in actual practice in Euripides there was the tendency to combine Tragedy and Comedy. In Euripides the amalgamation is almost complete. In Modern Drama, there is separation between Tragedy and Comedy.

In the third step, Aristotle distinguishes Tragedy from the Epic. Tragedy is dramatic in form, Epic uses the narrative. Tragedy has a definite magnitude. Its events are in the single circuit of the sun. The Epic has a vastitude. *The Cyclops* of Euripides is a story taken from the *Odyssey*. It is a play within a certain dimension. The *Odyssey* has a greater breadth. Tragedy is in Iambic verse, the Epic usually in the Hexameter. The Epic may have resemblances to Tragedy. It may be simple or complex, it may have Peripeteia. There may be a Discovery in it. But these resemblances do not make Tragedy the Epic. The essential difference is that the Epic Poet does not dramatise.

The distinction between Tragedy and the Epic made by Aristotle is deeply weighted with truth. It is of universal application. There is Peripeteia of Satan and Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost*. But *Paradise Lost* is not a Drama. Neither in the *Aeneid* of Virgil nor in Dante's *Divina Commedia* is there any dramatisation. The Epic does not belong to the dramatic order of writing.

Aristotle awards the prize to Tragedy in comparison with the Epic because Tragedy is integral writing using Language, Rhythm and Tune. The two forms of writing cannot be compared. The Epic is broader, it is vast and superhuman; the Drama is human. It deals with matter-of-fact issues or with essential largeness of nature. Lear and Hamlet cannot be compared with Homer's heroes and heroines.

In the fourth step, Aristotle establishes the limits of Tragedy. Tragedy is not Comedy because it deals with the serious and not the ridiculous; it is not the Epic because it is dramatic and not narrative in form; it is not Lyric because it is an expression of creative activity. Tragedy is a special type of creative activity, representation of life in dramatic form through Plot, Action and Character, serious and of a certain magnitude swept by the emotions of pity and terror, carrying the accessories of Language, Tune and Dance and creating in the beholder the purification of the passions. Tragedy, lastly, is a coherent whole with events running in the single circuit of the sun. It has a certain unity of Time and Place.

The limit of Tragedy as set by Aristotle is not strictly correct even in respect of the Greek Drama. The rigid distinction between Tragedy and Comedy was observed in the early stages of the Drama. Aristotle forgets the evolution of the Drama. He takes a static view of the Drama. Both Sophocles and Euripides tend to remove the distinction of Tragedy and Comedy. In *Alcestis* and *The Cyclops*, Tragedy and Comedy almost meet. Substantially, however, the Aristotelean limits of Tragedy are right in respect of the Greek stage.

In the fifth step, Aristotle divides the elements of Tragedy into six parts namely, Plot, Character, Idea or Thought, Diction, Melody, and Spectacle. Each of these parts are severally elaborated in the *Poetics* in detail. In a post-script or after-thought, he further defines the elements of Tragedy as consisting of Prologue, Episode, Exode, Stasimon, and Commos. The Prologue begins the play relating the antecedents of the drama, the Episode enlarges the action, the Exode and the rest of the Choral portions place on the Orchestra singing and dancing as accessories of Pleasure and Pity.

Having defined the elements of Tragedy, Aristotle passes cursorily over the origin of Tragedy. He deals almost exhaustively with Plot and Character. Idea or Thought, Diction, Melody and Spectacle are incompletely covered. Perhaps they were left over for consideration in the lost second book or they were not covered by the word Poetry and formed a branch of Music or Melody.

(To be continued)

SYED MEHDI IMAM

THE LITTLE LAMP

Its feeble light removed no gloom ;
It seemed to flicker in shame ;
A gush of wind could bring its doom,
By blowing off its flame.

No charm was there, no beauty's sway,
No sign of regal grace ;
The humble little lamp of clay
Tried to hide its face.

Then the mighty hand of Destiny
Played an ordained part ;
The lamp was guarded solemnly
Within a temple's heart.

And now it smiles with heavenly Bliss,
Safe from storm and rain ;
Deadened lamps by its single kiss
Their lustrous forms regain.

I come to share thy sacred light,
O little fairy queen !
And thus will end my sombre night,
As if it never had been.

SAILEN

THE KING AND THE RISHI

ONCE there was a mighty and learned king who being in possession of so much now wanted to learn something about God.

So forthwith he set out in disguise to visit a great rishi who lived secluded in a forest.

At last he arrived at a tiny hermitage.

The rishi, wise and undeceived, smiled when the king, dusty with travel, knelt in apparent humility before him.

"Well, O king," he said, "can it be that having grown weary of intellectual achievements and material conquests you would also conquer God? Can it be that your appetite, now dulled with delights grown commonplace, would savour the Unique?"

"O Rishi," replied the king, "I have for the nonce laid away my kingship and travelled far and long that I might hear your teachings. I would not be mocked."

"Perhaps", said the rishi, "but then neither would God."

But the king could not understand.

"Teach me your noble truths, O Rishi, and I will build for you a fine hermitage where you may live in comfort in your declining years."

The gentle rishi smiled.

"My son, my years are but the endless ticking of a clock, and my declining like the sun that sinks only to rise again."

But the king could not understand.

"Make me your pupil, O Rishi, and I will make of this dull forest a city of Learning and Skill. I will build around you libraries and schools, and all the world will acknowledge your wisdom."

The rishi gazed with calm and passionless eyes into the earnest face of the importunate king.

"Since my wisdom is not mine, neither would be the city, nor the acclaim, so wherein would I profit?"

But the king could not understand.

Impatiently he stood up, made a curt sign of respect and farewell and strode away.

He was infuriated—that he, who knew so much could understand so little, that he who was so powerful was so impotent, that he who owned a kingdom possessed but a paisa.

THE KING AND THE RISHI

Yet, despite the promptings of his pride, he could not leave.

For a while he sat in the still forest and when his mind had grown a little quiet, the face of the rishi rose before him and he saw again, but with a heightened clarity, the sublime and lofty calm, the tender compassion, the majestic humility, the passionless eyes of love. There was a strange and sudden tugging at his heart.

Swiftly he rose and eagerly retraced his steps. Without a word he threw himself at the feet of his master, and his face was wet with tears....

The rishi nodded his head in understanding.

"Yes, my son, now indeed I can teach you, for only now are you teachable. Not because you have given me of your wealth, but because you have given me of your soul..."

And the king could understand.

GODFREY

FIRE-BALL

O sweet fire-ball !
To whom do you call ?

In the morning dew,
Who'll play with you ?

Kindling the earth
You bring soul-birth.

From Heaven's Height
Descends your light—

For Time indeed
An immortal seed.

JYOTI KUMARI

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