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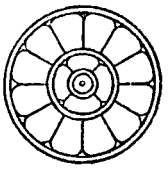

Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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TALKS OF THE MOTHER

(These are Notes written down after attending the talks of the Mother in 1947 apropos of her Prayers and Meditations. Every day a Prayer or two were read out and the Mother commented on them or answered questions put to her. Most of the comments deal with perennial problems of the spiritual life. Some refer to particular occasions; but, just because those occasions are now past, the comments do not lose their point: they always have a wider bearing and join up with the general ones. The Notes are by A. B. Purani.)

30-9-1947

Prayers read : December 22, 1914, and January 2, 1915

It was in 1914 that I had an inner experience and saw India free. I had the experience of the Master of Nations, who was an Asura, and I knew that he and his group would perpetrate horrors unknown to man. I saw all the horrors that were subsequently enacted—even those of the Second World War.

But I knew also another fact : "Horror is gone from the world." Between the knowledge and its translation into material fact there is a long interval. India has got her freedom just now, in 1947, but in the subtle world she was already free in 1914. It took 23 years to translate that truth into the plane of Matter.

3-10-1947

Prayers read : January 18, 24, and February 15, 1915

Q. Why should you feel like common humanity?

One must participate in the limitations of the plane on which one wants to bring about a change : that is to say, one must participate in the conditions of the earth-plane.

If the being who wants to change the law of the earth has no understanding of the defects and the workings here, he cannot bring about a transformation : he will not know what the difficulty, the obstacle, is.

If I did not feel like others, I may bring down the Truth but I cannot bring it to you. In fact, nothing that I may say or do would touch you.

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

If a man's eagerness to come here does not go down to his pocket, it is not worth very much. People want everything made easy. If the journey does not cost them anything and if they have to spend nothing here, they are prepared to come. But if there is difficulty and travelling touches their pocket and things are not easily provided to them, they begin to consider, and are not very eager. It is thought that we are anxious to have visitors. The truth is the opposite. Most visitors are a nuisance. It is not even one in a thousand who is really keen and who therefore is worth having here. The Ashram is not benefited by visitors : it is the other way round.

From the way a man approaches us, you can judge the colour of his aspiration and sincerity. When easy conditions are demanded, the colour is indeed very faint. When a man is willing to give sacrifices and undergo difficulties, then I can say that there is some genuine seeking in him.

The Ashram is pictured as an important place and people are given the idea that they must visit it—and they expect from us a social welcome. But the Ashram is not a social institution—I am not a social being : I am the last person to receive in a social manner.

Q. How shall I convey all this to X?

As you like. I have spoken the blunt truth. If you don't like to listen, don't ask.

8-7-1961

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(These talks are from the Note-books of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others, after the accident to his leg in November 1938. *Besides the recorder, the attendants were : Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becherlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshanker. As the Notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.*

This is the eighth talk in the new Series which follows a chronological order and begins at the very beginning. The four earliest talks, after Sri Aurobindo's accident, appeared in Mother India *in* 1952. *We are now picking up where we then stopped and shall continue systematically.)*

DECEMBER 28, 1938

AT about 5.30 p.m. C had another fit of laughter. Sri Aurobindo reacted to it by asking, "What's the dynamite explosion ?" Then we had to check our merriment. But later on, at about 6.30, the joke was repeated and C complained to Sri Aurobindo that N was making him laugh. Sri Aurobindo replied, "See that he does not make you go off like firework !" We then assembled by the bedside. The atmosphere grew quiet and in consequence N began to yawn. C started mocking him. The result was again laughter, but a subdued gurgle of it.

SRI AUROBINDO : What's the joke ?

N : C is mocking at my yawns.

SRI AUROBINDO : Doesn't he know that just as, according to X, yawning is a fatal symptom, mocking at it may also be a symptom that is fatal ?

As X came into the talk, questions went round about his condition. Someone asked what medicines had been given that day.

S : That is a professional secret.

SRI AUROBINDO : This reminds me of the science of Augury in Rome. There used to be Government Augurs who would be called in to interpret

signs and omens, and from that a College of Augury came into existence. There the Professors delivered lectures with grave and important faces but when afterwards they met together they would laugh among themselves.

By the way, we have got mutilated news on the radio today. They have dropped two important words. Instead of saying that the Italians are planning to march into Djibouti, they have said that the Italians are marching into it. If the Italians actually do so, the French can march into Tripoli as a countermeasure.

P : The French can also organise the Abyssinians against Italy.

SRI AUROBINDO : There won't be time for that.

N : The Italians don't seem to be good soldiers.

SRI AUROBINDO : No. I would be greatly surprised if they could defeat the French—unless Mussolini has changed the Italian character tremendously !

N : They had a hard time in Abyssinia.

SRI AUROBINDO : It was by their superior equipment, air-bombing, mustard gas, etc., that they succeeded.

N : But they will be backed up by the Germans.

SRI AUROBINDO : Italy can't do without Germany.

P : Fischer says that the German army in the last war was the greatest army ever organised in the world.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, they were the most organised and the ablest soldiers in the world, except for the Japanese. But the Japanese are numerically less and financially poorer. The Germans, even with their great soldierly qualities, could not throw up any remarkable military genius like Foche. If Foche had been placed in command before, the war would have ended much earlier.

The Balkan peoples and the Turks are also good fighters. The Austrians are not.

N : What about the Sikhs and the Gurkhas ?

SRI AUROBINDO : They are unsurpassed. But a war does not depend only on soldiers : it depends more on generals.

P : Schomberg says that the Chinese are no good and the Russians are good only at defensive warfare. The Germans at present are trying to expand in the Ukraine. After that, Hitler will come to Central Europe.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, but that will at once combine Russia, Poland, Roumania and Yugoslavia. The small countries will be afraid about their own safety.

P : But I don't understand why Germany should join with Italy in attacking France.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why ? Hitler himself has said in his *Mein Kampf* that Germany is not safe without the destruction of France. And France says the same thing.

N : The way these people are preparing, war seems inevitable.

SRI AUROBINDO : The Mother thought they would not do anything till early next year. Perhaps they are trying to hit now because they think France has been divided by the General Strike. But they lose sight of the fact that an attack will at once bring the whole nation together. In any case, we find the Germans are at present busy enjoying their Christmas.

N : England most probably will have to ally herself with France.

SRI AUROBINDO : You have seen what Chamberlain has said? According to him, England is not obliged to help France in case of war with Italy. But if Italy combines with Germany, one can't say what England will do.

N : In case of a general war, India will have her opportunity for independence.

SRI AUROBINDO : How ?

N : She will refuse to cooperate. I think these Congress Ministries were allowed because of the threat of war in Europe.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, in order to conciliate the Indians.

December 29, 1938

S opened the conversation by asking a question on behalf of Dr. Savour : "What is the connection between the Causal Body and the Psychic Being ?" We do not quite remember what Sri Aurobindo answered, but he said something like : "The Psychic Being is what is called the Chaitya Purusha in the heart; the Causal Body is part of the Superconscious." Then the talk turned on the Atman or Self and the Psychic Being. He said they are not the same. Raman Maharshi was brought in by S who said that the Maharshi had realised the Self and that Brunton had written of the Maharshi's hearing of the Voice in the heart. Sri Aurobindo remarked that the Voice in the heart would mean the Psychic Being and then it would decidedly be not the Atman realisation. At this point the Mother came in and asked Sri Aurobindo : "What are you speaking about ?"

SRI AUROBINDO : S has asked a question which does not hang together.

P : Kapali Shastri has given a version of the Maharshi's experience, which he heard from the Maharshi himself : "One day something opened in the heart and I began to hear 'I, I, I, and everywhere I started seeing the 'I'."

S : Different people say different things about spiritual realisation. How are we to find out which is the highest ? Our own choice is not necessarily the highest.

MOTHER : Each goes to the limit of his own consciousness. I have met any number of people in Europe, India and Japan practising Yoga under different masters. Each claimed that his realisation was the highest. He was quite sure about it and quite satisfied with his condition and yet each was stand-

ing at a different place in consciousness and saying that he had attained the highest.

S : But are there no criteria by which to know the truth ?

MOTHER : What criteria ? If you ask them, they say their experience is something wonderful but can't be described by the mind. I met Y in Japan. He claimed to have reached the peace of Nirvana and he was beaming with joy about it. I thought, "Here is a man who claims to have found peace and reached Nirvana. Let us see. " I asked him to meditate with me. I followed him in meditation and saw that he had reached just behind the mind into a sort of voidness. I waited and waited to follow him elsewhere, but he would not go further. I found that he was supremely satisfied, imagining that he had entered Nirvana !

S : But there must be some fundamental realisation, an ultimate of some kind ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That is to say, there is a fundamental truth of consciousness. But that is not so easy to reach.

S : How then should we choose a Master ? When we choose, we must know.

P : How are you going to know with the mind where he has reached ?

S : Our choice is not psychic.

MOTHER : That is another question. First you must realise about the limit of consciousness and the difference of the places where people stand.

The choice is mostly in answer to your own need, it is governed by your inner necessity. Sometimes it is made by instinct. It is that instinct by which the animals find their right place for food. Only, in human beings it is from within. (*She made a pointing movement with her fingers.*) If you allow your mind to discuss and argue, then the instinct will be veiled.

When you have chosen a thing, the mind naturally wants to believe that it is the highest you have chosen. But this is subjective.

S : If the choice is right, one feels happiness and satisfaction.

MOTHER : One can't depend on feelings and sensations; for very often they misguide. But satisfaction is quite a different thing. There are people who are not satisfied in the best of conditions, while in the worst of conditions some are quite satisfied. Look at the people in the world around. Some are very happy with their own conditions. And again there are some whose satisfaction depends on their livers—a brutally materialistic state. And also there are people who suffer extremely and yet their inmost being knows that that is the truth for them.

S : But there are certain signs, *lakṣaṇas*, in the Shastras by which we can judge.

SRI AUROBINDO : What Shastras ? One can't believe in all that is said in them.

MOTHER : Besides, that may be all right for Indians. What about Europeans ? You can't say they have not realised any Truth. (*Turning to Sri Aurobindo*) Isn't that so ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes.

Then the Mother took her leave for Meditation and there was a pause for some time.

SRI AUROBINDO (*addressing S*) : What are these *lakṣaṇas* you spoke of ?

S : They are common, Sir, everywhere. They are given in the Gita : for example, equal love for others, equal-mindedness in all circumstances, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO : They are rather the conditions for realisation. As for realisation itself, all experiences are true and each has its place. Just because one is true, another is not false. The Truth is infinite. There are so many different ways to come to the Truth. The wider you become, the higher you go, the more you find that there is still more and more. For instance, the Maharshi had his experience of "I"-ness, but when I had the Nirvana experience I couldn't think of any "I". However I might try, I could not find it. The word simply got erased. One can't speak of that experience of mine as "I". It was either "He" or "That". I would call it Laya. Realisation of Self is all right—Laya is a part of a realisation much more comprehensive.

When I don't accept the Self as final, it is not that I have not realised its Truth or that I don't know the One in All and All in the One. But I have other realisations which are equally strong and which cannot be shut out. The Maharshi is right and everybody else is also right.

When the mind tries to understand these things, it takes up fragments and treats them as the Whole and makes unreal distinctions. People speak of Nirguna (Qualitiless) as fundamental and Saguna (Qualitied) as a derivation, a secondary reality. But what did the Upanishad mean by Nirguno Guni and Ananta Saguna ? They can't be thought of as different. When you speak of impersonality as the fundamental truth and of personality as something imposed upon it and therefore unreal, you cut across with your mind something which is beyond both. It is not that personality is the chief thing and the impersonal is only one side or one condition of personality. No ! Both personality and impersonality are aspects of one thing which is indivisible.

Shankara is right and so also are Madhwa and Nimbarka. Only, when they state their truths in mental terms there is a tremendous confusion. Shankara says, "Duality does not exist and all is one." Madhwa says, "There is duality." Nimbarka says, "There is *bhedābheda*, there is duality and division as well as no-division." The Upanishad speaks of Him by knowing whom all is known. What does that mean ? This knowledge, this Vijnana, does not mean merely the fundamental realisation of the One. It means the knowledge of the principles of the

Divine Being, what Krishna speaks of as *jānati tattwataḥ*. One cannot know the complete Divine except in what I have called the Supermind. That's why Krishna said of himself that one who knows him in the true principles of his being is rare. The Upanishads also speak of the Brahman as Chatushpada, having four feet or aspects. They don't just state that all is Brahman and there an end. The realisation of the Self is not all. There are many things beyond that. The Divine Guide within urged me to proceed, adding experience after experience, reaching higher and higher, stopping at none as the final, till I arrived at the Supermind. There I found the Truth indivisible and there everything takes its proper place. There Nirguna and Saguna, impersonality and personality don't exist. They are all aspects of one Truth which cannot be divided.

At the Overmind stage, knowledge begins to rush in upon you from all sides and you see objects from all points of view and each thing from every viewpoint. All sides of knowledge tend to get related and there the cosmic consciousness is not merely static but also dynamic. It is the expression of something still higher, the Supermind above.

When you become cosmic, even though you speak of yourself as "I" it is not "I". The ordinary "I"-ness disappears, and the mental, vital and physical look like representatives of that new consciousness. Ramakrishna speaks of this state as "the form of ego left for action". When you reach the Supermind, you become not only cosmic but also what is beyond the universe—the transcendental—and there you have indivisibility and unity, and this transcendental co-exists with the universal and the individual.

The same principle works out in science. The scientists at one time reduced all the multiplicity of elements to the ether and described the ether in the most contradictory terms. Now they have found the electron as the basis of Matter. By the difference in position and number of electrons you get the whole multiplicity of objects. Here too you find the one that is the many, and the one and the many are not two different things. Both are true and through both you have to go to the Truth.

When you come to politics, the truth again is various. Democracy, plutocracy, monarchy, etc.—all have their truths. Even Mussolini and Hitler stand for some truth.

Ours is a very big Yoga. One has to crawl all over. (*He indicated this with a movement of his hands.*) I think N is not prepared to take all that trouble !

N : Never, Sir ! I have come here because I wanted to avoid trouble.

SRI AUROBINDO : You as such are not called upon to take all that trouble. Even for me it would have been impossible if I had to do it all myself. At a certain stage the Heavens opened and the thing was done for me.

The topic seemed to end here, but P prolonged it by saying : "Kapali Shastry asked the Maharshi whether immortality was possible. The Maharshi

would not say anything, but as Shastry persisted he said that it was possible by Divine Grace."

SRI AUROBINDO : That is hardly an answer. Everything is possible by Grace. There are two things about immortality. One is conquest of death. This doesn't mean that one would never die. It means the power to leave the body at will. The other thing is change or renewal of the body. There is no sense in keeping the same body for years. That is why death is necessary. Death has its reason in that one can by it take another body and have a fresh growth. You know Dasaratha is said to have lived for 60,000 years. I don't know what he did with such a long life—except that at the end he began producing children.

Have you read Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*? It shows how silly intellectuals can be. And what a ridiculous farce he has made of Joan of Arc ! He speaks of her visions as projections of her own mental ideas and decisions. Shaw is all right when he speaks of England, Ireland and Society; but he can't do anything constructive. He fails there miserably.

These intellectuals, when they talk of something beyond their scope, make fools of themselves. See what Russell writes about "introvert". Thinkers like him can't tolerate emptiness or cessation of thought and breaking away from outside interests. You ask them to stop their thoughts; they refuse to accept the result and at once come away from the emptiness, and yet it is through emptiness one has to pass to reach the true Fullness.

NOTE

Nirodbaran acknowledges the help given by A.B.Purani who has added a phrase or a sentence in some places in the record of these talks.

GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO

(Letters)

THE HEART, THE SOUL AND THE PSYCHIC BEING

Q. We believe that the Mother is doing the sadhana in all of us, particularly through the heart; but how is it we scarcely feel this? There must be some veil in us.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is a veil which disappears when the Mother's working as well as her presence is consciously felt at all times. 7-1-1935

Q. I wrote to the Mother a prayer in French. Her answer to it was : "Ouvre ton coeur et tu me trouveras déjà là" ("Open your heart and you will find me already there"). What exactly does this signify?

SRI AUROBINDO : What the Mother meant was this that when there is a certain opening of the heart, you find that there was always the eternal union there (the same that you experience always in the Self above).

2-7-1935

Q. One can understand how the mind and the inner being get veiled by things like tamas (inertia), but why do the self and the soul get veiled?

SRI AUROBINDO : You forget that the self and the soul were covered for a long time, thousands of lives. So now although they are unveiled, it needs some tapasya to keep them always so. 26-8-1935

The self feels always its unity with the Divine and is always the same. The soul is a portion of the Divine that comes down into the evolution and evolves a psychic being more and more developed through experiences of successive lives until it is ready for the divine realisation here. 4-11-1935

The soul in evolution is only a power for the evolution, it contains everything in potentiality; but that can only be worked out by the psychic being. It is quite different from the condition of the self. 5-11-1935

Every soul is not evolved and active; nor is every soul turned directly to the Divine before practising Yoga. For a long time it seeks the Divine through men and things much more than directly. 23-10-1935

The soul is always pure, but the knowledge and force in it are involved and come out only as the psychic being evolves and grows stronger. 29-10-1935

Q. When the soul returns for a new birth after death, who moulds the outer mind, vital and physical?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is done by Nature under the influence of the soul. In a certain sense it may be said that the soul does it, because what it sees as needed is drawn in as material and shaped. 26-10-1935

Q. What is meant by "shaped"? Is a construction made?

SRI AUROBINDO : Unless material is given form (i.e. shaped) it cannot be used. Construction itself means shaping. You can't construct something shapeless. 28-10-1935

All belongs to Nature—the soul itself acts under the conditions and by the agency of Nature. 28-10-1935

Q. Has the soul itself a form? A sadhak said he saw his psychic being as a woman.

SRI AUROBINDO : The soul is not limited by any form, but the psychic being puts out a form for its expression just as the mental, vital and subtle physical Purushas do—that is to say, one can see or another person can see one's psychic being in such and such a form. But this seeing is of two kinds —there is the standing characteristic form taken by this being in this life and there are symbolic forms such as when one sees the psychic as a new-born child in the lap of the Mother.

If the sadhak in question really saw his psychic in the form of a woman it can only have been a constructed appearance expressing some quality or attribute of the psychic. 18-10-1935

As there is in us mind which one does not see in form but is aware [of] and as there is at the same time a mental being which one can see in form, so there is a soul and a psychic being. The soul is there same always, the psychic being is what it develops in the evolution. 20-10-1935

Q. When you say that the psychic being puts out a form, do you imply that it has a subtle-physical form—that one can can see it, that it is an embodied personality—just like a human body?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, but it is not limited by the form as the physical consciousness. 20-10-1935

Q. When there is a strong working or pressure on the heart-centre, is it some action on the psychic being?

SRI AUROBINDO : Action does not take place on the psychic being, but on the emotional vital. That may result in the release of the psychic being.
20-12-1935

Q. To concentrate only on being with the Mother's heart and want only to be hers and live for her and care for no other experience : what do you think of this attitude?

SRI AUROBINDO : The attitude is good for awakening the psychic being and the inner being generally. But if the higher experience comes it should not be stopped. 12-3-1935

Q. Even higher or deeper experiences do not seem valuable at all if one cannot love the Mother with the true heart.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is a mistake to think like that. The experiences prepare the different parts of the being for loving in the right way, so that it is not the soul alone that loves. So long as they are open to ignorance and ego they cannot receive and hold the love rightly. 23-10-1935

Q. Psychic love for the Mother—or else death : this is what one feels at times as a final resolution.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is altogether the wrong attitude. It is once more the vital coming in—it is not a psychic attitude. If in asking for the psychic love, you take an attitude that is vital not psychic, how do you expect the psychic to come ? 2-3-1935

Q. How is the psychic to be brought forward?

SRI AUROBINDO : It comes forward of itself either through constant love and aspiration or when the mind and vital have been made ready by the descent from above and the working of the Force. 13-3-1935

Q. Why is one so open to the general atmosphere in spite of keeping aloof in order to help the psychic being?

SRI AUROBINDO : One is always open so long as there is not the final change. If things do not come in, it is because the consciousness is vigilant or the psychic in front; but the least want of vigilance or relaxation can allow something to enter. 27-2-1935

To bring the psychic forward, selfishness and demand (which is the base of the vital feelings) must be got rid of—or at least never accepted. 2-3-1935

Q. A feeling in one's inmost part for the Mother, which brings tears automatically. What is it?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is the natural psychic movement of love and bhakti deep down in the being. 20-3-1935

Q. The psychic tears sometimes become like what we know as weeping.

SRI AUROBINDO : There is a psychic sorrow which is not like the vital one—but it may be that the feeling came from the psychic but the vital took it up. 11-9-1935

There is a psychic sorrow which usually comes when the soul feels how strong is the resistance in the world and how much the Forces in it rage against the Mother. 11-9-1935

The vital took it up perhaps and gave it a more vehement and turbid expression—otherwise there is nothing disturbing in a psychic sorrow. 12-9-1935

Q. Should not one's sadhana be full of remarkable things always?

SRI AUROBINDO : Why do you need something remarkable ? The love of the soul is the true thing, simple and absolute—the rest is good only if it is a means of manifestation of the soul's love. 10-11-1935

Q. Some part is acting as a mediator between the higher nature and the lower, but it is always fluttering and dependent on the common ego. A mediator is supposed to remain detached from both the parties. Has the psychic taken up this role?

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't know what is this mediator. The only parts that can mediate are the psychic being or else the mental Purusha or mental will. But the psychic does not flutter. If it is either of the other two, you ought to be able to know. 12-11-1935

Q. Two fires are sometimes felt—one in the heart pressing for purification of the natural parts; the other above, in the Self of the Higher Consciousness, supporting the first with ever-living ever-knowing power.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, the two are necessary for any complete or rapid transformation. 24-3-1935

Q. How is it that the psychic being often rises above the head to the Sat-chit-ananda plane and governs the being from there?

SRI AUROBINDO : Probably it joins the central being there. 15-1-1935

Any part of the being can go upward and meet its source there. The central being is always above; the psychic is its outer part below. If the psychic goes up it may be also to join its source the central being. 16-1-1935

Q. The psychic is below, but surely it does not become the lower Prakriti (Nature)?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is not the lower Prakriti in the usual sense. It is the inmost being supporting the lower Prakriti and urging it towards the higher.

17-1-1935

From NAGIN DOSHI

SRI AUROBINDO ON INDIA'S DESTINY

MUMUKSHUTWA*

(Sri Aurobindo once wrote, in a letter that has since been published in Mother India, *January* 1959 *: "I entered into political action and continued it from* 1905 *to* 1910 *with one aim and one alone : to get into the mind of the people a settled will for freedom and the necessity of a struggle to achieve it, in place of the futile ambling Congress methods till then in vogue." The enemy he had to fight was therefore more within than without : it was the blind opposition of his own respected countrymen that stood most in the way. Here is an illustration.)*

THERE are four essential pre-conditions which must be fulfilled by every man before he can, according to the high theosophy of the Vedanta, be considered qualified for putting himself in training for the attainment of final emancipation.

The first of these conditions is *viveka* or right discrimination between self and not-self. The second is dis-attachment or *vairāgya*, which is defined as the absolute renunciation of the desire for the fruits of all human endeavour whether here or hereafter. The third are a number of mental and spiritual acquisitions having for their common end the subjugation of the senses and the suppression of all desires. And the fourth is *mumukṣutva*, or intense and irrepressible longing for salvation.

The first condition may be fulfilled by mere intellection. The second may be fulfilled through sheer self-repression. The third may be fulfilled through desire for supernatural powers and influences. And though thus fulfilled, they may yet fail to lead any man to a knowledge of Brahman and the emancipation which that knowledge necessarily brings on. The most important of the four pre-conditions of the theosophy of the Vedanta is therefore the last,—the longing for salvation. Where this is absent, all else are of no avail.

Mumukṣutva or the longing for emancipation is also the most important pre-condition of political emancipation also. This longing implies as its own preconditions, one, the existence of bondage, and, two, a keen sense of it. And the most disheartening feature in the present political leadership both in Bengal and elsewhere is an almost utter absence of this sense. Our leaders

* *Bandemataram*, Daily Edition, 20.9.06.

are not at all conscious of their own and their country's present political bondage. They do not, notwithstanding all their ravings against Government, really feel the utter degradation and misery of their present position in the constitution of their State. Their sense of the disabilities and disadvantages of British despotism is personal and self-regarding. They complain because they are not appointed to high offices in the administration, and the appointment of a Bengali as the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, or of a Madrasee as Advocate-General in Madras, sends up a chorus of congratulations from the whole body of the Indian press, who have not as yet arisen to a perception of the elementary truth that such isolated instances of official advancement do not and can never compensate for the serious intellectual and moral wrong which the government of one people by another, and an alien people, always inflicts. The leader who today leads a most violent attack on the Government, is therefore found, the moment that Government admits him into its counsels or woos him with offers of honour and preferment, to support and defend it most enthusiastically. All this is due to the absence of that keen sense of bondage,—of that *mumukṣutva*—which is an essential pre-condition of emancipation both of individuals and nations.

And to those who are able to critically examine and analyse the present political situation in this country, this *mumukṣutva*, this deep and burning sense of bondage, and this earnest and unquenchable longing for salvation, must have appeared as the distinguishing feature of the New Party, labelled of late as the extremists, by those who love their chains. Had the *Indian Mirror* still continued its allegiance to the Himalayan Mahatmas, and sought inspiration from those saints and sages in whose name it had not very long ago been daily proclaiming the coming doom of the world,—instead of dancing to the tune of Messers. Hamilton and Co., he would, we doubt not, have been instructed to christen the New Party, not in the borrowed phraseology of Anglo-India, but with the ancient and Aryan, and the truly theosophic name of political Mumukshus.

Mumukṣutva implies an intense longing for emancipation. But to long for a thing, however intensely it may be, is not at once to get it. The *Mirror*, under evident inspiration from high quarters, condemns our desire for absolute autonomy, because "we have not as yet gone through our preliminary training." But how, my dear old friend, are we to put ourselves under this training if we are not permitted to cherish a desire for the fruit thereof? Every training means restrictions, denials, renunciation of something or other which may seem immediately pleasant or profitable. And what is to furnish the incentive for submitting to these restrictions, if we are not to think of all the good and the glory that will be attained through these preliminary disciplines and training? What man can labour to earn wealth or learning if he is not permitted to think of and wish for the benefits of these? The ancient sages perhaps

knew a little of these things, and they always said that no man can qualify himself for putting himself in training for the acquisition of divine wisdom or the attainment of salvation, unless and until he is moved by an intense and unconquerable longing for these. The *Mirror* has dabbled more than half his life in spiritual mysteries and ethical and religious cultures; and we were not prepared to find such little knowledge of and insight into the most elementary principles of spiritual and religious life, as his recent pronouncements against the New Party sadly betray.

We are not surprised at the attitude of the *Statesman.* This "Friend of India," like the Mara of old, is anxious naturally to keep us in perpetual bondage, for therein lies the selfish aggrandisement of all his race. Mara has always put temptations in the way of the *mumukṣu*, seeking to divert him from his search after Truth and Illumination. He tempted the Buddha. He tempted Christ. Both had to fight and conquer him before the final illumination came; one did it under the immortal Bodhi Tree, the other in the wilderness of the hills of Galilee. But numerous are the brood of Mara, their name is legion. They waylay every individual and every nation that yearns and strives for illumination and emancipation.

The *Mirror* stands face to face with Mara today; but has he so soon forgotten the teachings and the wisdom of the Tathagata that he has, on the first onslaught, laid his soul at the feet of the Enemy? Take up your beads, old and revered brother, count the sacred mantras as of old, and say with Jesus,—Get you gone, Satan,—and this nightmare will be dispelled. All India waits thy illumination!

Compiled by SANAT K. BANERJI

GHOST 'GUIDE' GAVE A SPY HIS LIFE

"I AM YOUR SPIRIT," SAID THE VISION, "TRUST MY STRENGTH AND YOU WILL NEVER REGRET IT."

(We reproduce, by kind permission, the review which appeared in the London Weekly TODAY, February 4, 1961, of a new book THE LOST FOOTSTEPS by a Roumanian fighter for freedom. The extraordinary story is an unconscious proof of the Grace of Sri Aurobindo acting all over the world. The proof will be immediately recognised by all who know that Sri Aurobindo, when he was himself a fighter for freedom in the Indian political field, was famous under the name "Aurobindo Ghose".)

IN a Communist prison beneath the streets of Bucharest, a Roumanian lawyer named Silviu Craciunas lay plotting suicide. For months he had endured fiendish torture at the hands of the security police.

He was accused, rightly, of spying; and he refused to reveal the full purpose of his mission or the names of his contacts.

He had been beaten, suspended by his feet, forced to run in a circle for hours, starved, kept awake on his feet for days on end. Now he could take the torture no longer.

In minute detail he laid plans to cut the piping cord from his pyjama seams and to hang himself from a drainpipe in a lavatory during the few minutes of the day when he was not under observation.

But one evening he had an hallucination in which he met a Brahmin hermit named Aurobin Dogos. The hermit argued him out of killing himself and persuaded him that life was sacred.

BLIND COURAGE

A physical wreck, close to madness, Craciunas had long talks with the hermit. He wanted to know what he and his fellow countrymen, armed only with their free will, could do against Communists.

The Brahmin told him:

"The human will and spirit must not be resigned at moments of crisis; it must go on looking for a solution, however overwhelming the odds. You must not accept defeat, you must not believe your efforts to be in vain. If

you have the blind courage to continue to endure and to struggle, you will find a new beginning in your life."

Over many months Craciunas talked with the hermit and with his help endured the continuing torture. And the philosophy of the Brahmin, who was really Craciunas's conscience, proved to be correct.

With immense courage Craciunas conquered the cruelty of the Communist police, and after four terrible years escaped while undergoing hospital examinations to determine how much more torture he could endure. Today, he lives in London.

In a remarkable book published this week[1]—*The Lost Footsteps*—he describes his life-saving meeting with the Brahmin hermit. It is the highlight of a compelling account of ten years which Craciunas spent in Roumania as a resistance worker, spy and prisoner of the Reds.

Craciunas was thirty-four, a bachelor and director of several companies in Bucharest when the Communists took control in Roumania in 1948.

Wanted by the secret police for helping political refugees to escape, he joined the underground movement and escaped to the West in 1949.

Six months later, the Roumanian National Committee operating in Paris urged him to return to Roumania to open up more escape routes and to help to organize resistance groups.

Out of his intense feeling for his fellow countrymen and his native land Craciunas gave up his new freedom—and Alba, the girl he had fallen in lov with in Paris—and returned along one of his own escape routes to Bucharest.

His mission took six months. In September, 1950, he sent a coded message to his guides on the Austrian border saying he would be ready to cross the Iron Curtain on the twentieth of that month. But he never reached the frontier.

On the night of September 18, in a darkened back street of Bucharest, two plain-clothed security agents seized him.

Minutes later, he lay in a tiny cell in the political prison beneath the city streets.

Within an hour, he stood, dressed only in his shirt and under powerful floodlights, before interrogators.

When his answers dissatisfied them, they had him trussed like a fowl, hung up by his feet and systematically beaten. He counted the blows. At the eightieth he lost consciousness.

The police revived him and worked him over again when he still refused to answer questions.

After several hours of this treatment he was unhooked and carried back to the interrogation room for more questions. Thus passed the first day of his four years' ordeal.

[1] By Collins-Harvill, at 21s.

On the Run

Even after Craciunas escaped from the Communists, it took him three more years to get out of Roumania. The biggest difficulty was not evading the police but raising the money to pay the guides at the Austrian frontier and his helpers along the escape route.

Craciunas needed £1,300. One of his friends even sold his house and sent him the proceeds. Among the Roumanian exiles living in Western Europe only Alba believed his coded messages saying he was still alive and needed help. She smuggled money to him through the Iron Curtain.

Meanwhile, Craciunas several times narrowly avoided recapture. Nuns hid him in a convent for several months.

On All Souls' Night in the university town of Cluj, Craciunas had the intensely moving experience of lying hidden within twenty paces of his parents and four relatives paying homage at the family grave.

He knew he would never see them again—yet he dare not reveal himself.

By November, 1956, he had collected the money he needed. After a nightmare, seven-hundred mile journey across Roumania and Hungary, he reached the Austrain border and met his guides on March 22, 1957—seven years later than he had intended.

Still his troubles were not over. Though reunited with his beloved Alba, he could find no country to accept him.

Eventually, a fellow Roumanian introduced him to a London publisher who asked him to write a book about his experiences behind the Iron Curtain. Craciunas appealed to the Home Secretary for political asylum.

The result of that appeal is revealed on the book's opening page.

Craciunas dedicates the book to Mr. R.A.Butler "in great gratitude for the opportunity he gave me to acquaint myself with the spirit of liberty and humanitarianism in England."

Craciunas's publishers are billing *The Lost Footsteps* as their biggest non-fiction book of 1961. It deserves such treatment. And the man deserves the rewards it will bring.

DON EVERITT

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

THE ASHRAM ATMOSPHERE : 1940-47

I

FROM 1926 to 1938 things went on smoothly, then there came several changes. Our attempt here will be to portray the Ashram life as it evolved after 1938 and the events that reflected themselves in the atmosphere.

Most shocking of all was an accident to Sri Aurobindo's right leg. To the surprise of us all, it happened on the 23rd November 1938, just on the eve of the Darshan day. Why it so happened we have Sri Aurobindo's version to explain, as noted down by Nirodbaran from the talks he and others had in those days :

"The hostile forces have tried many times to prevent things like the Darshan but I have succeeded in warding off all their attacks. At the time the accident to my leg happened, I was occupied with guarding the Mother and I forgot about myself. I didn't think the hostiles would attack me. That was my mistake."

About the Sadhana that had been going on earlier, Sri Aurobindo observed: "When I was doing sadhana on the mental plane things came so easily. It was child's play. With the vital being, though it was not easy, yet it was interesting. But this physical is absolutely hard. It has been left untried by the ancient Yogis, it has been neglected....All the accumulated difficulty is lying there. Any attempt made to conquer it is full of drudgery and labour. It is like trench-war with no truce. You must either fight and win or collapse."[1]

Sri Aurobindo spoke about the same thing on another occasion: "It is when the Sadhana came down into the physical and the subconscient that things became very difficult. I myself had to struggle for two years; for the subconscient is absolutely inert, like stone. Though my mind was quite awake above, it could not exert any influence down below. It is a Herculean labour, for, when one enters there it is a sort of an unexplored continent....And once it is conquered, it becomes easy for people who come after me, which is what is meant by realisation of one in all".[2]

Before the accident only Champaklal, among the sadhaks, used to go regularly into Sri Aurobindo's room when Sri Aurobindo himself was in it.

[1] *Life of Sri Aurobindo*, by A.B. Purani, p. 196.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 196-7.

Soon after he had joined the Ashram, he was taken up into personal service of the Master. One or two others would help to clean the room and keep things ready for Sri Aurobindo's use, but they could do so only while he was in the bath-room. Even when they were cleaning the adjacent room where he used to walk in their absence, the doors of his room would be kept shut. After the accident, Ashram doctors, including Dr. Manilal of Baroda, and non-doctors like Purani and others were let into his room. At 5 o'clock several of his attendants gathered round him and listened to his talk.

We had no idea of all this and outwardly there was no effect of it in the Ashram atmosphere. A change was markedly felt with the breaking out of the Second World War. When Sri Aurobindo began to intervene, it caused a stir in the whole Ashram.

Before 1939 we were shut up in our "little world" and occupied with our own concerns though that did not mean that we ceased to take any interest in the goings-on of the world.

There was never a period when Sri Aurobindo did not take interest in world-affairs. There was not an important political event which escaped his notice. Several dailies—and even monthlies like *The Modern Review*—were regularly sent up to him and he himself read them, especially *The Hindu*. Years later he got them read out to him.

From Nirodbaran's record we learn that for years Sri Aurobindo had been directly working not only on the circle of his disciples but also on the international scene. Thus the Master said in continuation of his remarks about his own accident. "As for the Ashram, I have been extremely successful, but while I have tried to work on the world the results have been varied. In Spain, in Madrid, I was splendidly successful. General Miaja was an admirable instrument to work on. Basque was an utter failure. Negus was a good instrument but the people around him, though good warriors, were too ill-organised and ill-equipped. The work in Egypt was not a success. In Ireland and Turkey the success was tremendous. In Ireland I have done exactly what I wanted to do in Bengal."

As stated before, in the trail of the Second World War there came about several changes in the Ashram affecting the atmosphere.

We all know that when the war broke out Sri Aurobindo did not "actively concern himself with it", but as it progressed he came forward with all his spiritual powers for the protection of the British and the Allied Cause.

This was completely misunderstood by his countrymen, even by some of his disciples. Very few could discern its high purpose.

Among the members of the Ashram there were a number who had suffered and sacrificed a lot for the sake of the country and some had taken active part in the revolutionary movement. Naturally they were all eager to see the country free from the foreign grip. Even those who had never taken any interest in

politics were taken aback by Sri Aurobindo's open support to the British. He who had taken his stand against British rule even from his early college days, whom Nevinson had characterised in 1907 as "the most dangerous man in India", now decided to throw the whole weight of his spiritual powers on the side of the Allies when Britain was about to be smashed and enslaved by Hitler ! Why he did so is yet a mystery to the outside world.

To reassure the wavering among us, the Mother wrote on May 6, 1940 : "It has become necessary to state emphatically and clearly that all who by their thoughts and wishes are supporting and calling for the victory of the Nazis are by that very fact collaborating with the Asura against the Divine and helping to bring about the victory of the Asura."

Indian national feeling against the British was so bitter that every victory of Hitler was acclaimed as ours. The atmosphere of the whole country was such that those who were in sympathy with the British—though they could be counted on the tips of one's fingers—were looked upon as traitors to the country.

In the teeth of such country-wide feeling Sri Aurobindo addressed a letter to the Governor of Madras covering a contribution made to the Viceroy's War Purposes Fund, in token of a complete adhesion to the Allied cause. The letter runs :

"We feel that not only is this a battle waged in just self-defence and in defence of the nations threatened with the world domination of Germany and the Nazi system of life, but that it is a defence of civilisation and its highest attained social, cultural and spiritual values and of the whole future of humanity. To this cause our support and sympathy will be unswerving whatever may happen; we look forward to the victory of Britain and, as the eventual result, an era of peace and union among nations and a better and more secure world-order."[1]

Sri Aurobindo not only made a contribution to the War Fund but "encouraged those who sought his advice to enter the army or share in the war effort."

Two young brilliant sons of a pair of devoted disciple joined the Air Force in England and were killed in action. Another joined the Navy. Now he is here in the Ashram.

When some of the Mother's disciples wanted to come to Pondicherry for safety against the fear of bombing, Sri Aurobindo wrote :

"Calcutta is now in the danger zone. But the Mother does not wish that any one should leave his post because of the danger. Those who are very eager to remove their children can do so...."

After the fall of Dunkirk France captulated and England had no choice

[1] The letter was signed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

but to surrender or be a shambles. When Churchill proposed to France a union with Britain so that they might carry on the fight as one country General Weygand convinced Pétain that England was lost. "In three weeks England will have her neck wrung like a chicken." To make a union with Great Britain was, according to Pétain, "fusion with a corpse".

When Chruchill warned Russia, by sending "message after message" two months before Germany invaded her, that Hitler was planning to attack her, it was taken by Moscow as a "device of a beaten power to inveigle another power into sharing its doom."[1]

Not that Churchill did not realise the extremity of England's situation. Yet the Force working in him made him take a grim stand against the onrush of the Asuric Forces and send forth a strong appeal to France never to accept defeat but come over to England and give a joint fight as One Nation.

The French Premier Reynaud and men like General De Gaulle welcomed this plan but the "defeatist section led by Marshall Pétain refused even to examine it" and it was rejected by the cabinet. All this is history but history does not know how an unseen Power has worked from afar and saved civilisation.

As regards Churchill's plan, so far as my information goes, Sri Aurobindo appreciated it very much. According to him and the Mother, its rejection by France at that hour was a rejection of the Divine Grace itself that had come to the help of France. It came at the most opportune moment, but France could not rise to the occasion.

Such was again the case with India. On March 11, 1942 Churchill announced that a new Indian Union would be created as a fully independent dominion. As soon as the war ended, a New Constitution would be framed consisting of elected representatives. Then he sent out to India Sir Stafford Cripps, a Member of his Cabinet, with these proposals worked out in detail.

Sri Aurobindo urged upon the leaders the acceptance of the offer, without minding the defects. But human logic and apprehension prevailed over Divine Wisdom. The proposals were rejected. The Mother is reported to have remarked that, as in the case of France, this rejection by India was the rejection of the Divine Grace itself. And she saw before her the possibility of a grave calamity and a blood bath that India would have to pass through. Now it is admitted on all hands that had the Cripps' proposals been accepted India could have been spared the curse of Partition, and the concomitant blood bath.

Despite the failure of France to rise to the occasion the Mother and Sri Aurobindo stood at the back of the Allied Cause. Why they intervened is clear from their letters and statements. But even most of the Ashramites did not know how deeply and predominantly Sri Aurobindo was concentrated on

[1] *Sir Winston Churchill* by Herbert Leslie Stewart, p. 131.

the war. Serving nation and humanity, himself in the background, was Sri Aurobindo's way; so too is the Mother's. They gave absolutely no indication of how they were working on the fateful war situation. Such is the traditional way of spiritual leaders. Even today neither Britain nor France, nor even India, knows that there was one who did so much for them.

We can understand a scientist, seated in a room, watching and controlling the course of a spaceman, but we cannot divine how the action of a Yogi can effect a revolutionary change in a world war.

Sri Krishna assured Arjuna—"All have already been slain by me. Now act as my instrument." This implies that all had been slain on the subtle plane or it would have been impossible for Arjuna to triumph over Karna, Bhishma, and their forces.

To-day scientific marvels are becoming less marvellous because we now believe in the height of man's mental powers. We have yet to believe that infinitely higher than the mental are spiritual heights and their powers. One day the fact of the spiritual forces vanquishing the organised Asuric power will be freely believed in. And that day perhaps is not very far off.

Upon this war depended whether the path of evolution would remain open and all that man had achieved so far would survive, or everything would be brought to ruin by the monstrous strength of the Nazi war machine.

Man is weak by nature. Hence he needs the help of God. By himself alone he cannot stand the fury of the Rakshasa and the Asura.

In Hitler the Rakshasa and the Asura found a most effective instrument in order to engulf the earth and establish the rule of Darkness. To-day's suffering is nothing in relation to what it would have been if Hitler had won. To take just a glimpse of his dark intent : he declared that it was a crime to educate the coloured peoples and they should be kept as serfs and labourers.

The fate of India also hung in the balance,[1] "because of her people's leanings towards Hitler, during the War." When the Allies finally won, our people thought that as a powerful nation like the Germans had suffered defeat at the hands of Britain, no hope was therefore left to India to wrest her freedom from the grip of a Diehard like Churchill. But we know when the divine purpose was served and Churchill lapsed into his former self and indulged in his blusters : "I have not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."—"We mean to hold our own."—"We have no intention of casting away that most truly bright and precious jewel in the crown of the King...."[2], he found himself thrown out of power and the

[1] he (Sri Aurobindo) saw that behind Hitler and Nazism were dark Asuric forces and that their success would mean .the enslavement not only of Europe but of Asia, and in it India, an enslavement far more terrible than any this country had ever endured, and the undoing of all the work that had been done for her liberation.—*Sri Aurobindo and His Ashram*, p. 39.

[2] *Sir Winston Churchill* by Herbert Leslie Stewart.

Labour Government was installed in August 1945, and the next divine purpose —the liberation of India—got carried out.

Thus the lesson of the Mahabharata we see repeated in the present age. It is well known that as an instrument of Sri Krishna, powerful with his power, Arjuna was invincible at Kurukshetra, and overcame mighty heroes and achieved victory. But after the victory his sense of vanity that none on earth was his match lost him his power. He could not even prevent the treasures of the disconsolate women he was escorting from Dwarka to Hastinapore from being looted.

2

Peace is in great request everywhere but how many care for the Giver of peace ?[1] Humanity needs a wholesome hammering from time to time:

"Wherefore God hammers so fiercely at his world, tramples and kneads it like dough, casts it so often into the blood-bath and red hell-heat of the furnace ? Because humanity in the mass is still a hard, crude and vile ore which will not otherwise be smelted and shaped; as is his material, so is his method. Let it help to transmute itself into nobler and purer metal, his ways with it will be gentler and sweeter, much loftier and fairer its uses."[2]

Because we are dominated by our lower nature, we are easily possessed by anti-divine forces. We suffer till the Divine comes to our help in some way or other. If it is the collectivity that suffers, then either He comes to our rescue through a *vibhūti* or a Prophet or incarnates Himself in a human mould and acts from behind the veil or in the open.

An evidence of Sri Aurobindo's active intervention in the war was first available in the Mother's letter of May 9, 1940 already quoted.

On coming to power Churchill openly stated in his speech that the whole western seaboard of Europe from North Cape to the Spanish frontier was in German hands ; all the ports, all the airfields on this immense front would be employed against the single-handed British as the potential springboard of an invasion.

Hence his words—"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat"—cannot be taken as mere rhetoric but were a grim picture of the real situation.

"The first big attack began on August 12 ; and the 15th of August was for Britain, the most crucial day when she was subjected to an attack from "about a hundred bombers and eight hundred planes to pin her down in the South."

[1] "God has made the world a field of battle and filled it with trampling of combatants and the cries of a great wrestle and struggle. Would you filch His Peace without paying the price He has fixed for it ?"—Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Glimpses.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

According to Churchill that was "the largest air-battle of that period".

Apropos of this battle and its date—August 15 which is Sri Aurobindo's birthday—the editor of *Mother India* wrote in 1950 while considering the world-significance of this date : "Hitler fixed in 1940 the 15th of August, as the day on which he would complete his conquest of Western Europe by broadcasting from Buckingham Palace the collapse of Britain. The fall of Britain would have signed the death-warrant of the whole world outside America. August 15 was meant to be the end of World War II, with a decisive victory of the forces intent on putting the clock back and establishing on earth the reign of the Asura, the Titan, over the evolving god in humanity. But instead of resounding triumph, August 15 found Britain still full of fight and on that day the largest toll so far was taken of the Luftwaffe—180 German planes shot down in British skies ! We might well designate it as the turning-point in the Battle for Britain."

From September 7 to November 3 an average of two hundred German bombers attacked London every night. In this desperate condition, "for more than a year, Britain stood alone."

Was it humanly possible for a small island to sustain itself in this terrible plight ?

In reply to a query why Britain was losing ground every day notwithstanding Sri Aurobindo's full support, the Mother is reported to have said that if Sri Aurobindo had not helped Britain, she would have been swallowed up by Hitler long ago.

To appreciate the force of the Mother's statement let us recall from Sir Winston's speech of May 9, 1940 :

"It would be foolish, however, to disguise the gravity of the hour. It would be still more foolish to lose heart and courage or to suppose that well-equipped armies numbering three or four millions of men can be overcome in the space of a few weeks, or even months, by a scoop, or raid of mechanized vehicles, however formidable."[1]

Hitler had thought that Britain could be bombed into submission. So he made the German Air Force concentrate its fury upon her and maintain the blitz throughout the winter of 1940. He wanted to see whether heavy German raids combined with the threat of invasion would "shake British resolution to continue the war".[2]

What was it that, far from shaking her resolution, stiffened and steeled it all the more so as to enable Churchill to declare just five days after August 15 that "Britain would continue the struggle as long as the enemy pleases."[3]

[1] *The War Speeches* by Winston Churchill, Vol. I, p. 183.

[2] Goering's boastful promise that he would finish off the British from the air.—*Hitler : A Study in Tyranny*, p. 290.

[3] *The Second World War*, Sir Winston Churchill, p. 343.

When all British minds thought "the enemy would cross by night and land at dawn"[1] and Hitler had even "signed the first directive for the invasion of Britain",[2] what led him away from his target ?

Here was the master-stroke of Sri Aurobindo's divine diplomacy. It reminds one of Sri Krishna's move in killing Jarasandha and thus saving his army for the battle of *Kurukṣetra*. Sri Aurobindo saw that Stalin's Russia alone could stand the might of Germany on land as Britain in air and on sea. Hence he pressed the occult button, as it were, to bring about the villain's *buddhibhraṁśa*[3] (mental aberration) and send him straight to his doom at the proper hands. To substantiate this point let us first quote the closing lines of Sri Aurobindo's poem about Hitler written on October 16, 1939, just one month after the outbreak of the war. He refers to the preternatural force driving the German Dictator and continues :

> Thus driven he must stride on conquering all,
> Threatening and clamouring, brutal, invincible,
> Until he meets upon his storm-swept road
> A greater devil—or thunderstroke of God.[4]

How these prophetic words turned into fact is well-known history.

Next we shall quote Churchill :

".. it was the Russian armies which had done the main work in tearing the guts out of the German army. In the air and on the ocean we could maintain our place, but there was no force in the world which could have been called into being, except after several more years, that would have been able to maul and break the German army unless it had been subjected to the terrible slaughter and manhandling that has befallen it through the strength of the Russian Soviet armies.[5]"

Hitler was so sure of victory that he did not even provide his army with adequate winter clothing. But the more he tried to extricate himself from the bog, the deeper he found himself entrenched in it.

Had Hitler invaded Britain first, the very backbone of the Allied resistance would have broken. Then nothing could have saved the world from being plunged into barbarism and darkness.

People wondered why Sri Aurobindo was giving so much support to a sworn enemy of India, like Churchill. Sri Aurobindo's concern was not for

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Hitler* by Alan Bullock, 6th Edition, p. 296.

[3] "He (Hitler) then made up his mind to invade Britain, but rapidly lost faith in it, largely on account of growing preoccupation with Russia." —*Hitler . A Study in Tyranny*, p. 296.

[4] *More Poems*, "The Dwarf Napoleon", p. 58.

[5] *The Wisdom of Winston Churchill* by F.B. Czarnomski, p. 157.

Britain, the United States, India or any other country. We must understand the significance of his support from his global viewpoint.[1] His concern was for the whole of humanity. Because Churchill at that time stood as the sturdy champion of the cause of human freedom,[2] he was chosen as a fit instrument.

Sri Aurobindo has written :

"What we have to see is on which side men and nations put themselves ; if they put themselves on the right side they at once make themselves instruments of the Divine purpose in spite of all defects, errors, wrong movements."

"The victory of one side (the Allies) would keep the path open for the evolutionary forces : the victory of the other side would drag back humanity, degrade it horribly and might lead even, at the worst, to its eventual failure as a race, as others in the past evolution failed and perished. That is the whole question..."[3]

Addressing Parliament Churchill said in the darkest days :

"Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation. Upon it depends our own British life... If we stand up to him (Hitler) all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward... But if we fail, then the whole world including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for will sink into the abyss of a new dark age..."[4]

This occasion was characterised by Churchill as "the finest hour." Who was behind these inspired words ?

[1] Sri Aurobindo wrote to a disciple (29-7-1942) "You should not think of it as a fight for certain nations against others or even for India ; it is a struggle for an ideal that has to establish itself on earth in the life of humanity, for a Truth that has yet to realise itself fully and against a darkness and falsehood that are trying to overcome the earth and mankind in the immediate future It is the forces behind the battle that have to be seen and not this or that superficial circumstance...There cannot be the slightest doubt that if one side wins, there will be an end of all such freedom and hope of light and truth and the work that has to be done will be subjected to conditions which would make it humanly impossible ; there will be a reign of falsehood and darkness, a cruel oppression and degradation for most of the human race such as people in this country do not dream of and cannot yet at all realise. If the other side that has declared itself for the free future of humanity triumphs this terrible danger will have been averted and conditions will have been created in which there will be a chance for the Ideal to grow, for the Divine work to be done ; for the spiritual Truth for which we stand to establish itself on the earth. Those who fight for this cause are fighting for the Divine and against the threatened reign of the Asura."

[2] "We are fighting by ourselves alone, but we are not fighting for ourselves alone." Churchill.

[3] The letter continues : "The Divine takes men as they are and uses men and his instruments even if they are not flawless in virtue, angelic, holy and pure If they are of good will, if, to use the Biblical phrase, they are on the Lord's side, that is enough for the work to be done. Even if I knew that the Allies would misuse their victory. I would still put my force behind them.

"At any rate things could not be one-hundredth part as bad as they would be under Hitler. The ways of the Lord would still be open—to keep them open is what matters..,"

[4] *The War Speeches* by Winston Churchill, Vol. I, pp. 206-7.

And Churchill's post-war stand was no less lofty :

"The first step in the re-creation of the European family must be partnership between France and Germany. In this way only can France recover the moral and cultural leadership of Europe. There can be no revival of Europe without a spiritually great France and a spiritually great Germany." (Zurich, September 19, 1946).

It must not be mistaken that Sri Aurobindo was against Germany or Russia or any other country. He was against whoever blocked human evolution. Now let us look at the other side.

The German politics was based on the principle that every citizen was directly or indirectly responsible to Hitler for his life and conduct.[1]

Hitler told his generals on August 22, 1939 : "On the whole there are only three great statesmen in the world : Stalin, myself and Mussolini. Mussolini, the weakest, has not been able to break with either the power of the crown or of the church. Stalin and I are the only ones that see the future."[2]

Nothing else mattered but the expansion of German power. Once declared Ernst Rohm, "Europe, the entire world may go up in flames. What do we care ? Germany must live and be free."[3]

"Hitler...was sure of himself, stubborn and full of mistrust of everyone. There were only two or three people with whom he was on sufficiently friendly terms. One of these was Ernst Rohm, whom he got shot on June 30, 1934."[4]

Within this context let us read Hitler's commandment to the nation : "Thou shalt have no other God but Germany."

In the year 1934, five years before the outbreak of war, Sri Aurobindo had characterised Hitler as an Asura: "outside are earthquakes and Hitler and a collapsing civilisation."[5]

Hitler was taking the Asuric inspiration for the Divine. He felt elated that his decisions would effect the lives of millions. Declaring war on America in the speech of December 11 he said : "I can only be grateful to Providence that it entrusted me with the leadership in this historical struggle... A historical revision on a unique scale has been imposed on us by the Creator."[6]

Most of Hitler's speech was devoted to abuse of the American President Roosevelt whom he depicted as a creature of the Jews.[7]

The way the Jews were treated by Hitler illustrates the might of the Rakshasa and the Asura. Ruthlessness is the law of their being. Hitler thought

[1] *The Substance of Politics* by A. Appadorai (Secretary General, India Council of World Affairs), p. 387.

[2] *Modern Germany* by Koppel S. Pinson, p. 482.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 497.

[5] *Letters of Sri Aurobindo*, Part II, p. 342.

[6] *Hitler* by Alan Bullock p. 334.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 335.

that without a solution of the Jewish problem there was no salvation of mankind. And as a solution three million Jews were killed in a way unknown so far in history.[1]

Sri Aurobindo declared the war to be the Mother's war. What did it signify ?

Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta's article on the occasion gives the answer. Part of it was broadcast from the All India Radio, Delhi :

"...There is no insurmountable disparity between spirituality and worldliness, between meditation and the most terrible work—*ghore karmani* : The Gita has definitively proved the truth of the fact millenniums ago. War has not been the monopoly of warriors alone : it will not be much of an exaggeration to say that Avatars, the incarnations of the Divine, have done little besides that. And what of the Divine Mother herself ? The main work of an Avatar is often to subdue the evil doers, those that follow and pull others to follow the Wrong Path. And the Divine Mother, She who harbours in her bosom the supreme Truth and Consciousness and Bliss, is in one of her essential aspects the slayer of the Demon, of the Asura."

When Churchill took office he was hailed as a national hero. From his speeches and actions it was clear that he was open to higher influences and had the power to rise to the occasion. He showed three outstanding qualities—fearlessness, dash and drive, a clear vision.[2]

To entertain fear is to play into the hands of the anti-divine forces. For fear in itself, according to the Mother, is "one of the greatest impurities, one of those that come directly from anti-divine forces which want to destroy the divine action upon earth..."[3]

In the face of massive destruction at home and heavy defeats abroad Churchill never gave way to fear in his heart. Let us listen to him after the fall of Singapore :

"Singapore has fallen. All the Malaya Peninsula has been overrun. Other dangers gather round us there... This, therefore, is one of those moments when the British race and nation can show their quality and their genius.

[1] "The camp commandant told me that he had liquidated eighty thousand in the course of one half year... He used monoxide gas and I did not think that his methods were very efficient. So I used Cyelon B. it took from three to fifteen minutes to kill people in the chamber . After the bodies were removed, our special commands took off the rings and extracted the gold from the teeth of the cropses. we built our gas-chamber to accommodate two thousand people at one time."—*Hitler* by Alan Bullock, p. 353.

[2] "I declare to you here, on this considerable occasion, even now when misguided or suborned Frenchmen are firing upon their rescuers, I declare to you my faith that France will rise again. While there are men like General De Gaulle and all those who follow him...in the cause of France, my confidence in the future of France is sure.— *The Wisdom of Winston Churchill*, p. 144.".

[3] *Bulletin of Physical Education*, February 1961, p. 55.

This is one of those moments when it can draw from the heart of misfortune the vital impulse of victory." (London, February 15, 1942)

Whenever there was a speech by Churchill the Mother and the Master would listen to it intently. He became their timely instrument for the proper conduct of the war and a final smash-up of the adverse forces.

(3)

Formerly there was no radio in the Ashram, and for a long time people were not encouraged to have one. In fact, anything in the form of personal enjoyment, however harmless or innocent it might appear, was not encouraged unless it had something to do directly with the Divine Service. From that viewpoint, listening to the radio was no exception; moreover, it was felt that along with the radio waves many subtler waves of undesirable forces would infiltrate into the Ashram atmosphere. Long afterwards, once it so happened that a radio set came into the possession of the Ashram. It was in 1938 perhaps or near about. But there was no question of anybody using it. The Mother ordered it to be kept in the store-room.

In the early days of the War, a young man, a local devotee, who was listening to his own radio at home, was noting the gist of the war news and sending it to Sri Aurobindo daily. Why and how did he get the inspiration of doing so is not known to us. But very religiously he was sending it, although in length it was not more than half a foolscap of handwriting. This used to be read by Pavitra to Sri Aurobindo, and later it was put up on the Ashram notice-board for the Ashramites to read.

As the war began to take a serious turn—by that time Paris had fallen into Hitler's hands—and Sri Aurobindo wished to have more detailed news, the chance for using that radio lying idle in the store-room came up. So the Mother entrusted Pavitra—who was an ex-Captain of the French Army in the First World War and therefore the fit person—to furnish a more detailed account of the War.

Not to prolong the article with details which will be of no importance to the reader, we omit some of the minor facts of the successive stages by which this supply of War news from the Ashram radio came into operation. Suffice it to say that Pavitra did the job admirably, and from that time on we also got the opportunity of reading a few sheets of detailed information of the World War, well typed by some assistant of Pavitra's. The were put up on the notice board after Sri Aurobindo had finished with them. This helped people to have the authentic information from the side of the Allies and discouraged false rumours.

Thus it was for the first time that a radio was brought into use in the Ashram, and very clearly for a higher purpose only. In this connection it

may be stated that the person to whom the Mother entrusted this special use of the radio remained absolutely faithful to his mission and never employed the set for his personal pleasure by listening to any programme of amusement.

When the War entered upon a crucial phase things began to move too fast for these news bulletins. Sri Aurobindo wanted to be constantly informed about the events. It was felt necessary to shift the radio to the main compound of the Ashram (so long it was in another building near by); the obvious choice was Pavitra's room. So from that time again the process changed. Pavitra began now taking notes himself and immediately going to Sri Aurobindo and reading them to him, a number of times daily. By then more than one radio had replaced the old one in Pavitra's room, as by constant use the apparatus was getting out of order. And some people who could manage to get a radio took the opportunity to have the Mother's sanction to use it.

With the War taking its definite turn on the fall of Dunkirk, mentioned earlier, Sri Aurobindo also concentrated himself more on the struggle. From that time on he wanted to listen directly to the War news and more especially to the speeches of Churchill etc. So a direct loudspeaker connection, branched from the main radio in Pavitra's room, was made in Sri Aurobindo's room; and from now Pavitra's job of reporting was dropped, and Sri Aurobindo began to listen to the radio himself from as many quarters of the globe as the radio could pick up, of course all from the sources of the Allies, both in English and in French. Sri Aurobindo never heard Nazi broadcasts nor did he allow them in the Ashram. It may be interesting to note that all the finest and epoch-making speeches of Churchill, of President Roosevelt and of General De Gaulle began from this time, and Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were listening to them.

Thus a greater portion of the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's time and energy got concentrated on inwardly conducting the war and saving the God-given destiny of man. Few people know that their help was there at every crucial turn in the course of the war.

The Mother and Sri Aurobindo willed the return to power, for the fourth term, of President Roosevelt, because he was the only man of strong determination and will-power, just the man needed for the hour. Other such instances have been given in their proper places.

It is the subtle power that serves as the sustaining force.[1] Sri Aurobindo has said...."The Occult working and the material working can and do join, the occult power gives to the material working its utmost efficiency. As for the one who is helped not feeling the Force at work, his knowing might help very

[1] It is this force that saved Silviu Craciunas, a Roumanian lawyer, from an intended suicide and sustained him through a series of brutal tortures in prison. The details can be seen elsewhere in *Mother India*.

substantially the effective working but it need not be indispensable, the effect can be there even if he does not know how the thing is done."[1]

Except for five or six hours, day and night Sri Aurobindo worked for the Allied Victory. Like a Guardian Angel of the Allied Cause, he spent most of his time in hearing the news, following the events and watching the effect of his subtle working. To quote his own words : "My force...is being largely used for helping the right development of the war and for change in the human world."[2]

Whenever there was a piece of good news from the Allied front, the Ashram put on a bright face. In pre-war days our whole energy had centred round our sadhana. Sadhana first, all else next. When the Mother and Sri Aurobindo directed their attention to winning the war, "Victory" became as dominant a note in the atmosphere.

Just as Hitler had chosen the 15th of August, 1940 to mark his victory over Britain, Churchill, five years later, on the same day, made an announcement in the House of Commons :

"Once again the British Commenwealth and Empire emerges safe, undiminished and united from a mortal struggle. Monstrous tyrannies which menaced our life have been beaten to the ground and are in ruin....The light is brighter because it comes not only from the fierce but fading glow of military achievements....but because there mingle with it in mellow splendour the hopes, joys and blessings of almost all mankind."[3]

In the hour of victory Churchill did not totally forget the power that had saved the world :

"...the House...desired to offer thanks to Almighty God, to the great Power which seems to shape and design the fortunes of nations and the destiny of man; and I therefore...move that the House do now attend at the Church of St. Margaret, Westminster, to give humble and reverent thanks to Almighty God for our deliverance from the threat of German domination."[4]

This day August 15, 1945, marked the end of the Axis powers with the surrender of Japan. "He (Sri Aurobindo) had not, for various reasons, intervened with his spiritual force against the Japanese aggression till it became evident that Japan intended to attack and even invade and conquer India.[5]...When

[1] *Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual*, No. 8 p. 86.

[2] *Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, p. 276.

[3] *The Wisdom of Winston Churchill* by F.B. Czarnomski, p 162.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[5] "I now began to sense that the Government anticipated a Japanese attack on India the Japanese would make an attempt to occupy Bengal. They (the Government) thought that the Japanese would attack by sea and advance on Calcutta "—Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, p. 72.

negotiations (with Cripps) failed, Sri Aurobindo returned to his reliance on the use of spiritual force alone against the aggressor and had the satisfaction of seeing the tide of Japanese victory which had till then swept everything before it, changed immediately into a tide of rapid, crushing and finally immense and overwhelming defeat."[1]

After the Allied victory we had the joy of being the participants in the dawn of India's independence. Sri Aurobindo hailed it as the beginning of a new era.

To us it was a matter of special joy because the independence came on the day which is the birthday of our Master. He lived to see a great life-long dream of his fulfilled. Was it merely a coincidence or a divine dispensation ? According to the original scheme India's liberation was fixed for "a date not later than June 1948".[2] Who intervened to advance it to August 15, 1947 ?

Let the next great goal be fulfilled, let spiritual India rise in her full glory to clasp all humanity to her soul; then the time will come for humanity to assess who chose this date to make India "enter a new era" and why in 1910 Sri Krishna had taken Sri Aurobindo off from his political activities.

In the divine vision of the Mother, August 15, the birthday of Sri Aurobindo, is a date of capital importance in the life of the earth, from the physical point of view; and India's independence or the birth of a free nation on that great day was its natural consequence; and its ultimate consequence will be the divinisation of Matter, the object of the last Avatar.

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

[1] *Sri Aurobindo and His Ashram*, pp. 39-40.

[2] "On February 20, 1947, the British Government announced its intention of transferring power into Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948."—Cuthbert Collin Davis, Reader in Indian History, Oxford University, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1960), Vol. 12, p. 178.

THE LIFE DIVINE OF SRI AUROBINDO : ITS LEADING PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS

(Classified Excerpts)

(v) BECOMING

So long as the intuition fixes itself only upon that which we become, we see ourselves as a continual progression of movement and change in consciousness in the eternal succession of Time. We are the river, the flame of the Buddhist illustration. But there is a supreme experience and a supreme intuition by which we go back behind our surface self and find that this becoming, change, succession are only a mode of our being and that there is that in us which is not involved at all in the becoming....The pure existent is then a fact and no mere concept, it is the fundamental reality. But, let us hasten to add, the movements, the energy, the becoming are also a fact, also a reality. The supreme intuition and its corresponding experience may correct the other, may go beyond, may suspend, but do not abolish it. We have therefore two fundamental facts of pure existence and of world-existence, a fact of Being, a fact of Becoming.[1]

It is evident that there are not really two selves, but one conscious being which throws itself up in the waves of conscious force so as to experience itself in a succession of changing movements of itself, by which it is not really changed, increased or diminished....When it (the conscious being) does get back to that deeper knowledge, it does not condemn the observed phenomenon as unreal, but it perceives an immutable being, energy or real substance not phenomenal, not subject in itself to the senses; it sees at the same time a becoming or real phenomenon of that being, energy or substance. This becoming we call phenomenon because, actually, as things are with us now, it manifests itself to the consciousness under the conditions of sense-perception and sense-relation and not directly to the consciousness itself in its pure and unconditioned embracing and totally comprehending knowledge.[2]

The possession of the Being who is beyond all becomings, brings to us freedom from the bonds of attachment and ignorance in the cosmic existence and brings by that freedom a free possession of the Becoming and of the cosmic existence. The knowledge of the Becoming is a part of knowledge; it acts as an Ignorance only because we dwell imprisoned in it, *avidyāyām antare*,

without possessing the Oneness of the Being, which is its base, its stuff, its spirit, its cause of manifestation and without which it could not be possible.[3]

The Absolute manifests itself in two terms, a Being and a Becoming. The Being is the fundamental reality; the Becoming is an effectual reality : it is a dynamic power and result, a creative energy and working out of the Being, a constantly persistent yet mutable form, process, outcome of its immutable formless essence....Becoming can only know itself wholly when it knows itself as Being; the soul in the Becoming arrives at self-knowledge and immortality when it knows the Supreme and Absolute and possesses the nature of the Infinite and Eternal.[4]

It is a perfected and divinised life for which the earth-nature is seeking, and this seeking is a sign of the Divine Will in Nature. Other seekings also there are and these too find their means of self-fulfilment; a withdrawal into the supreme peace or ecstasy, a withdrawal into the bliss of the Divine Presence are open to the soul in earth-existence : for the Infinite in its manifestation has many possibilities and is not confined by its formulations. But neither of these withdrawals can be the fundamental intention in the Becoming itself here; for then an evolutionary progression would not have been undertaken,—such a progression here can only have for its aim a self-fulfilment here : a progressive manifestation of this kind can only have for its soul of significance the revelation of Being in a perfect Becoming.[5]

SECTION IV : THE WORLD AS ILLUSION AND THE WORLD AS TRUTH

(i) ILLUSION

The theory of the cosmic Illusion gets rid of an original contradiction, a problem and mystery which may be otherwise soluble, by erecting another contradiction, a new problem and mystery which is irreconcilable in its terms and insoluble. For we start with the conception or experience of an absolute Reality which is in its nature eternally one, supracosmic, static, immobile, immutable, self-aware of its pure existence, and a phenomenon of cosmos, dynamism, motion, mutability, modifications of the original pure existence, differentiation, infinite multiplicity. This phenomenon is got rid of by declaring it to be a perpetual Illusion, Maya. But this brings in, in effect, a self-contradictory dual status of consciousness of the One to annul a self-contradictory dual status of being of the One. A phenomenal truth of multiplicity of the One is annulled by setting up a conceptual falsehood in the One creating an unreal multiplicity. The one for ever self-aware of its pure existence entertains a perpetual imagination or illusory construction of itself as an infinite multiplicity of ignorant and

suffering beings unaware of self who have to wake one by one to awareness of self and cease individually to be.[6]

.....the gulf between its (mind's) ignorance and the supreme Truth and Knowledge disables it from discovering the true connections of the transcendent Reality and the cosmic Reality. In a higher status of consciousness the difficulty disappears, the connection is established; the sense of unreality recedes and a theory of illusion becomes superfluous and inapplicable. It cannot be the final truth that the Supreme Consciousness has no regard upon the universe or that it regards it as a fiction which its self in time upholds as real. The cosmic can only exist by dependence on the supracosmic, Brahman in time must have some significance for Brahman in timeless eternity; otherwise there could be no self and spirit in things and therefore no basis for the temporal existence.[7]

Our consciousness sees a part and parts only of the Manifestation,—if manifestation it be,—and treats it or them as if they were separate entities; all our illusions and errors arise from a limited separative awareness which creates unrealities or misconceives the Real. But the problem becomes still more enigmatic when we perceive that our material world seems to arise directly, not out of any original Being and Consciousness, but out of a status of Inconscience and apparent Non-Existence, our ignorance itself is something that has appeared as if with difficulty and struggle out of the Inconscience.[8]

Illusion, knowledge and ignorance are terms or results of our consciousness, and it is only by looking deeply into our consciousness that we can discover and determine the character and relations of the Knowledge and the Ignorance or of the Illusion, if it exists, and the Reality.[9]

Therefore we accept the truth on which the philosophies of the supracosmic Absolute take their stand; Illusionism itself, even if we contest its ultimate conclusions, can still be accepted as the way in which the soul in mind, the mental being, has to see things in a spiritual-pragmatic experience when it cuts itself off from the Becoming in order to approach and enter into the Absolute. But also, since the Becoming is real and is inevitable in the very self-power of the Infinite and Eternal, this too is not a complete philosophy of existence. It is possible for the soul in the Becoming to know itself as the Being and possess the Becoming, to know itself as Infinite in essence but also as the Infinite self-expressed in the finite, the timeless Eternal regarding itself and its works in the founding status and the developing motion of Time-eternity. This realisation is the culmination of the Becoming; it is the fulfilment of the Being in its dynamic reality.[10]

(ii) SHANKARA

In the philosophy of Shankara one feels the presence of a conflict, an opposition which this powerful intellect has stated with full force and masterfully arranged rather than solved with any finality,—the conflict of an intuition intensely aware of an absolute transcendent and inmost Reality and a strong intellectual reason regarding the world with a keen and vigorous rational intelligence. The intellect of the thinker regards the phenomenal world from the standpoint of the reason; reason is there the judge and the authority and no suprarational authority can prevail against it : but behind the phenomenal world is a transcendent Reality which the intuition alone can see; there reason—a least a finite dividing limited reason—cannot prevail against the intuitive experience, it cannot even relate the two, it cannot therefore solve the mystery of the universe. The reason has to affirm the reality of the phenomenal existence, to affirm its truths as valid : but they are valid only in that phenomenal existence. This phenomenal existence is real because it is a temporal phenomenon of the eternal Existence, the Reality: but it is not itself that Reality and, when we pass beyond the phenomenon to the Real, it still exists but is no longer valid to our consciousness ; it is therefore unreal. Shankara takes up this contradiction, this opposition which is normal to our mental consciousness when it becomes aware of both sides of existence and stands between them; he resolves it by obliging the reason to recognise its limits, in which its unimpaired sovereignty is left to it within its own cosmic province, and to acquiesce in the soul's intuition of the transcendent Reality and to support, by a dialectic which ends by dissolving the whole cosmic phenomenal and rational-practical edifice of things, its escape from the limitations constructed and imposed on the mind by Maya.[11]

The Buddha applied his penetrating rational intellect supported by an intuitive vision to the world as our mind and sense see it and discovered the principle of its construction and the way of release from all constructions, but he refused to go farther. Shankara took the farther step and regarded the suprarational Truth, which Buddha kept behind the veil as realisable by cancellation of the constructions of consciousness but beyond the scope of the reason's discovery. Shankara, standing between the world and the eternal Reality, saw that the mystery of the world must be ultimately suprarational, not conceivable or expressible by our reason, *anirvacanīya* ; but he maintained the world as seen by the reason and sense as valid and had therefore to posit an unreal reality, because he did not take one step still farther. For to know the real truth of the world, its reality, it must be seen from the suprarational awareness, from the view of the Superconscience...[12]

Compiled by NATHANIEL PEARSON

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MYSTIC FIRE

REMEMBER, O soul, the Rishis of the early dawn
Whose birth and life and mission,
Whose spirit's passion for the Unknown
Are now obscure. But the words of their vision,
Their inspiration, the wealth of their subtle hearing
Mingled with the alchemy of golden rhyme,
Have left immortal marks on the forehead of time.
O expectant initiates of the future noon,
Catch hold of the mind's mane;
Call forth the oncoming boon
To kindle the sacred light, to link up the cut-off vein.
Obscurity will stay no more;
Revealed shall be the radiant face
Of the triumphant Truth of the Vedic lore,
Ablaze anew the mystic fire of the ancient race.

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

SIGNPOSTS AND SYMBOLS

"VINGT-ET-UNS"

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The poems came to the writer some two decades ago; revised recently, they are now being serially published in batches of twos.

The pieces number Twenty-One in all; and each of them comprises of just Twenty-One lines : hence the cryptic sub-title "Vingt-et-uns".

Apart from their recondite value as psychological signposts in the growth of the writer's being, the poems might presumably provide amusing and useful material for aesthetic enquiry—as to the adequacy or otherwise of the novel mould into which spiritual experience is here sought to be cast and the technique-mode governing the multilateral symbolism thereof.

Incidentally, the writer knows only now that 'Vingt-et-un' is a gambling card-game; and that knowledge imparts to him the hope that his successful (?) gamble with the new Form may well inspire other lovers of the Muse to try their hand at this new Form-and-Game and come off with better windfalls!

15

A SHOCK quivers, and the crustations thick
Shatter a-piece, disgorging lava and ore :
The molten debris of millennial yore
Returns to light at length from suffering-round ;
And agelong effrontery of obdurate shelves
Convects once more to the Laboratory vast,
Where veriest Fire conducts experiments grand,
Testing and smelting, casting and tempering anew :
And Time presides on his subterraneous throne,
Marking off moments on Kalpic-Brahmic scales !

Ah, the revelation in those moments few
Of what we hide—and hold in store—within,
When we stand bewildered, staggered, at the sight
Of sulphurous mammoths rolling down pell-mell:
When, ah, another shock, and we sink down right
To Lethean regions in one obstreperous mass—
Our monumental labours closed on us—
And we feel just freed of all tramells and tentacles,
Our person fledging into our inmost self,
Our inmost leaping unto our highest self,
And both condensing-fusing into Newer Self than ever !

16

I drink in draughts of innocent air that breathes
Sweet balm into my being, and feed on milk
Of richest love wide-proffered on all sides :
And yet—and yet—high-stationed Zeus alone,
Who chained me down to these dull penal fires,
Knows best why I secrete but virulence
That can strike life dead in a single lightning-flash
And undo vast labour of aeonic centuries
In one fateful moment of fang-curdling spite !

O why ? I ask, and the fires writhe within,
Chafing and churning along my veins the more :
Fires-nether that neither burn themselves to death
Nor turn to glowing cinders this gossamer-sheath
They've donned so dubious-dark ! O why, I ask,
And ask but the Sphinx-like silences demure:
Whereat, space-swelling, my spiral coils unfold,
Reaching right up the Throne that hurled me here :
I dart at the Flaming Feet in agony keen,
And a softest trickle issues forth the Feet,
Overflowing my crown with nectar-like impress :
And,...blissful in that antidotal Touch,... I die!

CHIMANBHAI

NEW ROADS

Book XI

The Psychic Dawn

iii

There's a recoil from Light
which sleeps in the secret of Dawn;

There's a reaction to Bliss
that only the heart in us knows;

There's a return to the depths
which only the heights understand—

There's an echo in Man
born from heavens afar;

There's a cry from the soul
which echoes through all the worlds.

* *

Enter
new dawns of the Nature
where Light in ecstasy dwells;

Enter
the dawn of the Body
where Peace finds Light in the cells:

Enter
the dawn of the Vital
where emotion has grown beyond tears—

Enter
the dawn of the Mind
where Mind has transcended all fears.

Quietly
over the valley,
Swift
across the sea,
Silent forces
awake now
Sleeping
humanity—
Softly
new forms arising
Out of
inconscient Night,
Swiftly
new powers descending
Down from
a measureless Height.
Hovering worlds
beyond us
Wait for
the call of earth—
Wait for
evolving Man
To enter
this higher Birth,

* *

Only a heart,
unmixed
with the lower human love;

Only emotions
controlled
to serve new powers above—

Only a Will,
resolved
to leave the past behind;

Only thoughts
that are fixed
on an ecstasy far beyond Mind,

Only the Force
    new-growing
        deep into peace that aspires—

Only a Joy
    new-unfolding
        born of creative fires;

Only a Light
    that evolves
        a knowledge that love never mars,

Only a Truth
    that progresses
        by labour to the stars.

NORMAN DOWSETT

THE STARS

1

RISE, O Star, from my toes
Higher still and higher,
Across the boundary of the knee
Mount for ever.

Pass through the thighs,
The pelvic darkness,
The groins, the abdomen
And the plexus.

Are the steps difficult ?
Try harder, try—
Shake off the scent of the dust
And unfold your wings.

Unfold your golden wings,
Rise to the heart,
Fly higher, higher still
Towards the narrow throat.

My eyes are aglow with your light,
My mouth utters a newer word,
My lips have a curve unknown to my past
My brows are flaming wings.

Star of the earth, mount higher,
Higher still
Until you have left my cranium
And settled like a flag above.

2

Far...near...
Past passions,
The flow and the flower.
The visions

Of myriad daybreaks
And the shaking of mortal branches.
Small children
By the roadside

Playing with broken toys
Of battle and love.
They too have their stars
Somewhere in the body.

They'howl or they sing :
Far ... near ...
The sheer
Precipice of human thought.

A flower can hold the flow
Of a thousand rivers.
Worlds roll on unceasingly
Along their sandy shores.

Everything has its star
Somewhere hidden,
In the leaf, in the rock
Or somewhere else, surely.

3

A lonely star
The twang of a Spanish guitar.

Vibrations in body's cells
Like foreign canticles

Strange, sweet.
Soft feet

Of a child
Sounding on the wild
Waters
Where the golden daughters

Of snake-
goddesses shake

Their long dark hair.
Somewhere somewhere ...

4

Do not sleep.
Awake and look
Through darkness
Beyond stellar lights.

Nothing is lost.
All that was dead
Comes through the being
Transfigured.

Dig deeper in your dream,
Stones and stars are intermingled,
Count them and order them,
Wash them with wine.

Outward and inward
Both become Homeward.
Double the Cape of Thought
And throw your anchor,

Where the storms are silent
And the shore is in sight.
Then dispose of your cargo
Of stones and stars.

5

All have a star
Somewhere in the body
Hidden in the abdomen
Or punching in the plexus.

The Earth is its Mother
And the Heaven its Father.
It mounts and sings
The songs of love.

O Master of the Golden Dance
I offer my star to you
Take it and plant it on your brow.
Your star and my star will shine together.

RANAJIT

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(38)

VIII. Mothering the Bond of Love : Prayers and Praises

(Continued)

69. The Only Spot for Me !

The only spot for me in the world lies under
Thy lotus-petalled Feet ; yet strand and strand
Of my outgoing energy disband,
Desert Thy saviour Love, refuse surrender,
Wander away from Thy enveloping tender
Compassion ; O with Thy magnetic wand
Of Grace these lightward turn, bid them to stand
Gathered, bright, tamed, fulfilled in blissful wonder.

Yet is it not Thou who lurest me away
From Thee, and from Thy Feet tak'st me astray
So that world's poison-nectar having tasted,
Through heaven-hell, through joy-grief having hasted,
Through flaming trials purified, O Sweet,
I find last refuge at Thy luminous Feet ?

(To be continued)

Har Krishan Singh

THOUGHTS

I HAVE learnt a hundred thousand things. But the feeling that I have learnt something really worth learning was reserved for very few things. One of these rare things learnt was the way to turn the senses inwards.

* *

When with my own effort I endeavoured to clear a mountain of difficulties I could, after a long labour, hardly put aside five stones. But now with the dynamite of surrender to the Divine I can blow off a whole mountain in less than no time.

* *

If I reduce my business to half, then the amount of profit and loss will also follow suit.

We dig a well, but if we had stopped short of reaching the well-spring, then we would have only dug a pit.

Likewise if the seeker who sets out to reach the immaculate core hidden deep down in the heart's cave turns back then he will not derive half of that benefit which would be his share did he but stand face to face before the Divine Presence seated in the heart.

The whole endeavour might end in smoke.

O Man, if you have to turn back in midstream, then better to stay on in the world. Do not venture forth into the spiritual quest.

GIRDHARLAL

(Translated from the author's Gujarati book "Uparāma")

Students' Section

RÉPONSES — ANSWERS

Q. Douce Mère, dans la Section d'Éducation Physique, Tu as fait tous les arrangements nécessaires afin que par l'entraînement physique nous puissions développer notre corps de tous les cotés possibles et qu'ainsi nous devenions prêts à participer à la Grande Oeuvre de Transformation Intégrale.

Nous enseignons les jeux, les sports, et toutes sortes d'activités physiques depuis plusieurs années, mais nous trouvons que la plupart de nos élèves ne peuvent pas saisir cet esprit fondamental. Ils sont généralement égarés par l'amusement, l'excitation, l'humeur impulsive et toutes sortes de préférences et d'aversions. En conséquence, la discipline, la volonté, la résolution, le travail dur et l'attitude vraie qui rendent notre progrès certain manquent généralement. Un match de football ou un jeu excitant éveille beaucoup d'enthousiasme mais un travail consciencieux et concentré qui aidera à maîtriser certaines qualités physiques et à rectifier certains défauts, est toujours fait d'une manière peu empressée. Une grande majorité des élèves, grands et petits, souffrent de cette maladie. Il y en a très peu qui approchent l'Éducation Physique avec l'esprit vrai. Comment apprendre à faire de cela notre pratique générale ?

Q. Sweet Mother, in the Section of Physical Education, you have made all the necessary arrangements so that by physical training we may be able to develop our body all round and thus become ready to participate in the Great Work of Integral Transformation.

We have been teaching games, sports and all sorts of physical activities for several years, but we find that the majority of our pupils cannot catch the fundamental spirit. They are generally led astray by amusement, excitement, impulsive mood and all kinds of likes and dislikes. In consequence, the discipline, the will, the resolution, the hard work and the true attitude which render progress certain are lacking on the whole. A Football match or an exciting game arouses a lot of enthusiasm but a conscientious and concentrated work which will help us to command certain physical qualities and set right certain defects is always done with very little eagerness. The great bulk of pupils, big and small, suffer from this

malady. There are very few who approach Physical Education with the right attitude. How shall we learn to make a general practice of it?

R. C'est le contenu de la conscience qui doit changer, le niveau de la conscience qui doit s'élever, la qualité de la conscience qui doit progresser.

Les choses sont telles que tu les décris, parce que la plupart des enfants ont leur conscience centrée dans le physique qui est tamasique et peu enclin à l'effort. Ils veulent une vie facile, et c'est seulement l'excitation ou l'émulation d'un jeu ou d'une compétition qui éveille en eux assez d'intérêt pour qu'ils consentent à faire un effort. Il faut pour cela qu'une passion vitale s'éveille et intensifie la volonté.

L'idée de progrès appartient à la volonté intelligente qui est active seulement chez ceux, un nombre minime, qui sont en contact avec leur être psychique ; plus tard, chez ceux qui sont plus développés mentalement et commencent à comprendre la nécessité de se développer et de se surmonter soi-même.

J'ai dit que le remède est d'élever la conscience à un niveau supérieur. Mais, naturellement, il faut commencer par le niveau de conscience des capitaines et des instructeurs eux-mêmes.

Ils doivent, tout d'abord, avoir une conception claire de ce qu'ils veulent obtenir de ceux dont ils ont la responsabilité ; et non seulement cela, mais ils doivent avoir réalisé en eux-mêmes les qualités qu'ils exigent des autres. En plus même de ces qualités, ils doivent avoir développé dans leur caractère et leur action, beaucoup de patience, d'endurance, de bienveillance, de comprehension et d'impartialité. Ils ne doivent pas avoir de préférences ni d'antipathies, pas d'attractions ni de dégoûts.

C'est pourquoi le nouveau groupe de capitaines doit vraiment être un groupe d'élite pour donner le bon exemple aux élèves et aux étudiants, si nous voulons qu'à leur tour ils adoptent l'attitude vraie.

A tous Je dis donc : mettez-vous au travail sincèrement et les obstacles seront, tôt ou tard, surmontés.

La Mère

A. It is the contents of the consciousness that ought to change, the level of the consciousness that ought to rise, the quality of the consciousness that ought to progress.

Things are as you have described them, because most children have their consciousness centred in the physical which is tamasic and little inclined towards effort. They want an easy life, and it is only the excitement or the rivalry of a game or of a competition that awakes in them enough interest for consenting to make an effort. It is necessary for this that a vital passion should awake and intensify the will.

The idea of progress belongs to the intelligent will which is active only in those—very few—who are in contact with their psychic being; later on, in those who are mentally more developed and begin to understand the need of developing and surpassing themselves.

I have said that the remedy is to raise the consciousness to a higher level. But, naturally, one should start with the consciousness-level of the captains and instructors themselves.

First of all, they should have a clear conception of what they want to get out of those for whom they are responsible; and not only that, but they should have realised in themselves the qualities which they demand from others. Over and above these qualities, they should have developed in their character and their action a lot of patience, endurance, benevolence, understanding and impartiality. They should have no preferences or antipathies, no attractions or revulsions.

That is why the new group of captains ought really to be a group of the élite in order to set a good example to the pupils and students, if we want that they in their turn should adopt the true attitude.

To all therefore I say: start to work sincerely and the obstacles will be, soon or late, overcome.

THE MOTHER

ANECDOTES OF THE MASTER

ONE morning Mridu goes to feed her parrot and what does she find ? The bird is no longer on its perch, it is at the bottom of the cage—gone to the other world, having fulfilled its term here.

Mridu is disconsolate. She weeps, she raves, she threatens the very heavens for this injustice. Immediately the wailing goes up to Sri Aurobindo in a page-long letter accusing him of killing the bird. And he replies :

"We have nothing to do with the death of the bird. We certainly could not have sent it to the other world because of your being vexed with it. We cannot give you permission for another bird. It is the nature of a bird to make the floor dirty, and that will make you angry again. Besides birds have very delicate lives, they easily die. You can have another after your transformation which, let us hope, will be very soon."

And then Mridu wanted the Mother to give a name to her bird (not the dead one). The Master replied :

"The Mother gave names for cats because they understand and answer ; she has never given any for birds and does not wish to do it. Now even for cats she is not giving names." (28.4.1932)

Mridu was very proud of being "Bhagavan's Cook". She was not merely contented with cooking and sending the food to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, but it had to be savoured, appreciated and praised or she would be upset. Letters would go to Sri Aurobindo daily, moaning and complaining. Some of the replies of Sri Aurobindo show his compassion and love even in matters which we might consider trifling.

"You can prepare 'sandesh' every Sunday. When we do not eat much of it, it is not because it is bad, but because that day we are not able to eat for some other reason, yesterday everything was in confusion and we had too much to do to think of eating."

And again :

"It is not the amount I eat that matters, but the spirit in which I eat which is one of fervent appreciation of the excellence of your work and offering." (18-5-1934)

Mridu's *chef d'œuvre* was "luchis". One day Sri Aurobindo did not touch any ; Mridu felt neglected and complained. Promptly came his answer :

"There was nothing the matter with the 'luchis'. When the hot weather comes (especially May-June) I drink more fruit juice and eat hardly anything.

Mother also at this time diminishes the quantity of her food very much, but today she was late, so she could eat little."

On another occasion the plea was : "Am I cooking so badly that you have hardly touched my food ?"

Answer : "The 'luchis' were all right. The sandesh was very good. That I eat little does not prove that your cooking is bad—it only proves that my eating capacity is small."

Ill-health makes Mridu despondent, she thinks she is going to die.

"Nonsense. If you die who will make our luchis ?

"Don't get distressed for nothing—you have to live 80 years at least (the Doctor has promised you from your horoscope), so it is better to spend them cheerfully and in Ananda."

S.

TALKS ON POETRY

(These Talks were given to a group of students starting their University life. They have been prepared for publication from notes and memory, except in the few places where they have been expanded a little. Here and there the material is slightly rearranged in the interests of unity of theme. As far as possible the actual turns of phrase used in the Class have been recovered and, at the request of the students, even the digressions have been preserved. The Talks make, in this form, somewhat unconventional pieces, but the aim has been to retain not only their touch of literature and serious thought but also their touch of life and laughter.)

TALK THIRTY

WE have now to take a close look at Mallarmé's Azure. We have already seen it as a sort of lost Eden of young hopes and innocent hungers—

l'enfance
Adorable des bois de roses sous l'azur
Naturel—

(Infancy's adorable rose-woods with their crown
Of natural azure—)

something to which Mallarmé has a nostalgic relation in the midst of his quest for a new kind of poetic utterance that keeps eluding him. You may note that the Azure makes here for Mallarmé a joint reality with rose-woods. Flowers on the earth and the blue sky above fused in his mind and in an early reference to the latter he speaks of the former as having their origin in the Azure : he makes Mother Earth cull flowers

Des avalanches d'or du vieil azur, au jour
Premier...

(From the ancient azure's avalanching gold,
On the first day...)

The Life Force at its most delicately beautiful in an exquisite abundance is what the Azure in one aspect is. Just a shade different is the aspect in which

the Azure is a source of vague desires for life's fullness. Mallarmé writes of it as of a child's thirst in the morning for its mother's breast :

...des lèvres que l'air du vierge azur affame...

(...lips made hungry by the virgin azure's air...)

Like a Godhead hanging aloft in a lovely languor of illimitable ease the Azure calls and calls : the poet's soul fountains irresistibly to it :

Fidèle, un blanc jet d'eau soupire vers l'Azur !
—Vers l'Azur attendri d'Octobre pâle et pûr...

(Faithful, towards the Azure, a white jet sighs !
—Soft Azure in pale pure October skies...)

Here we have an interesting combination of white and blue and we may also surmise the background which is a garden where the white jet is leaping upward. Our of Nature's tenderly thrilled prolificity the aspiration goes forth —a white aspiration feeling that the Azure above is the ultimate goal of this crystalline cry.

The Azure in all these lines is felt as a blissful creator—an effortless artist bringing out of himself the world of sensation, the world of plastic form and powerful scent and penetrating touch. The Azure is an inexhaustible spontaneous fecundity—all-creating, all-containing, all-constituting. But this fecundity is found by Mallarmé to be not altogether a cause of innocent hunger in the human heart. There is a subtle sensuousness in the very essence of the Azure and it evokes a rapture of response in the depth of our flesh-built being. Mallarmé figures a young girl stirred by it and saying :

le tiède azur d'été,
Vers qui nativement la femme se dévoile...

(summer's tepid azure,
To which a woman is born to unveil herself...)

Innocence and voluptuousness are thus blended in the omnipresent blue. Yearning and love in terms of subtilised sensation, in terms of soulful sensuousness : that is what the Azure reveals itself to be when Mallarmé the idealist answers to its call. It is at the same time wonderful and disturbing to him : the natural man in him enjoys its stimulus but the white jet at the centre of his being, though sighing towards it as towards the highest it can view, holds in

its *soupir* not only a delicate idealistic ache but also a vague tremulous regret that it can do no other than thus move blueward.

The artist in Mallarmé is also disturbed. Bent on creating some rare poetry and failing to do so he wanders amidst Nature's prolific domain of leaf and blossom and winged music, and nurses in his own breast a poignant *ennui*, a boredom and a fatigue with wasted effort so much in contrast to the ease with which the Azure conjures up the world around him by means of an entranced happiness as of an infinite overarching flower :

> J'attend, en m'abimant, que mon ennui s'élève...
> —Cependant l'Azur rit sur la haie et l'éveil
> De tant d'oiseaux en fleur gazouillant au soleil.
>
> (I wait, self-doomed, for boredom to lift up...
> —But the Azure laughs above the hedge and the rush
> Of bird on bird in bloom with the sun their cry.)

The intensest agony experienced by the artist Mallarmé *vis-á-vis* the Azure finds tongue in the famous poem called *L'Azur*. There the disturbance caused in him by the sky-presence turns into a revolt. Under the gaze of the great Demiurge on high, the productive abundance at once sublime and soft, innocent and voluptuous, sky-showered and earth-sprouted, the poet feels not only barren but also baulked and broken as if by a subtle mockery :

> De l'éternel Azur la sereine ironie
> Accable, belle indolemment comme les fleurs,
> Le poète impuissant qui maudit son génie
> A travers un désert stérile de Douleurs.
>
> (The eternal Azure's serene irony
> Crushes with its indolent beauty as of flowers
> The impuissant poet cursing his genius
> Through a sterile desert of desparing hours.)

He seeks to escape but in vain. Always the Azure is there, beautifully beyond all attainment and imitation and urging him to an ever-hopeless striving. Like an Ideal it shines, yet an Ideal that denies his fruition : it is a Divinity whose beatific omnipotence becomes a torturing obsession to him, a Devil that will not let him rest. It sends him flying to all sorts of endeavours to forget it, but everything reminds him of it. He even attempts to abolish its idealistic spur to him and turns towards the commonalty of men so that he may be lost in the human herd. Just then the Church bells ring their even-song, the

Angelus, and he is pierced with a memory of the unattainable altitude and his own impotence tears at his heart again. His whole life becomes one cry :

Je suis hanté : l'Azur ! l'Azur ! l'Azur ! l'Azur !

(I am haunted : Azure ! Azure ! Azure ! Azure !)

Here Mallarmé the artist finds his most bitter and passionate expression under the pressure of the Azure. Mallarmé the idealist may be heard through the mouth of his dramatic character, Hérodiade, the daughter of Herodias whom history knows as Salomé. Salomé was a dancer at the court of King Herod of Palestine. We are told by legend that she fell in love with John the Baptist, the holy man who preceded and heralded Jesus. On being repulsed by him she took a horrible revenge. When, after a marvellous dance, King Herod offered to give her anything she asked, she demanded the head of John the Baptist. The head was brought to her on a plate. She seems to have been a woman who fell passionately in love with the Baptist's purity : she would not yield to any man, she would live in seclusion from their attentions and be a sinner only with a saint ! In Mallarmé's poem she is pictured as living frigidly, all by herself, a bewitching woman who would not surrender her virginity to anyone. Through her mouth Mallarmé expresses his sense of a strange hell in the glorious godhead of the Azure, a satanic sweetness whose allure has to be shunned, though seeming ever so heavenly :

...clos les volets, l'azur
Séraphique sourit dans les vitres profondes,
Et je déteste, moi, le bel azur !
Des ondes
Se bercent et, là-bas, sais-tu pas un pays
Où le sinistre ciel ait les regards haïs
De Vénus qui, le soir, brûle dans le feuillage :
J'y partirais...

(...close all the shutters, the seraphic
Azure is smiling through the panes profound,
I hate the beautiful Azure !
Lo beyond
The cradling of the billows, there in the haze
A land whose sullen skies bear the loathed gaze
Of Venus who, eve-long, in the foliage burns :
I'll thither...)

No doubt, the Azure finds a natural echo in our heart, all our delight seems awaiting us in it, but the depth of rapture by which we are fascinated is a sensuousness, a voluptuousness to be surpassed. We must shut our eyes to the beauty that glows out to us from that depth : then alone shall we discover the ultimate truth and, through it, the ultimate beauty. For, the ultimate beauty is of Eternity, not of Time, and the way towards it is not the way of the body-thrilled desire but the way of self-withdrawn virginity. Along a track of whiteness within us seeking a white felicity and no blue bliss, we have to move: our consummation is some vast Nirvana, an oblivion of the colourful storm that is Nature. Even though the track may seek to lie through a shadowy bleakness under "sullen skies" we must enter into their loathing of the Azure-lapped foliage-burning Venus and resolutely say : "I'll thither."

Occasionally, just as the white jet sighs to the blue, the blue sends forth to Mallarmé a glimmer of the Nirvanic peace and then we have a line like :

L'insensibilité de l'azur et des pierres.

(The insensibility of the Azure and of stones.)

But mostly the Azure is a splendorous Time-God and, though invested with an ecstatic innocence at its high origin or in its flowery reflex below, its appeal and evocation is to a refined voluptuary in man, the sex-tinged lover of the beautiful. Enchanting as the Azure-steeped existence might be, Mallarmé aches to transcend it. At first this ache finds no clear formulation. He just feels his own sterility as strangely elevating in the very moment that it is terribly depressing. And his innate *ennui*, at war with the sensuous stir in his heart, is driven under the Azure's multiform paradoxical presence to a desperate yearning for sleep, death, extinction. He feels that in them there is a secret of fulfilment which the Azure can never give to the deepest and highest in man.

As I have said in an earlier lecture, the sleep, death, extinction yearned for was to Mallarmé not what is usually understood by these things. They were to be something queerly conscious. The experience which he had of the Superconscient through the Inconscient supplied the basis on which he built the idealism as well as the artistry of his later life. It set him pursuing the composition of enigmatic verse in which unearthly idealities figured as emerging from and hovering against an infinite White which is at the same time sterility and the Ineffable. The link between this sterility and the Ineffable is a virginity of being.

We may now look at Mallarmé's White from several angles. From the viewpoint of Art, this White is, as we have observed,

...le vide papier que la blancheur défend.

(...the empty paper guarded by its own white.)

It is also the season of Winter, when the snow takes away the mind from sensuousness and puts it in tune with the far Ideal :

L'hiver, saison de l'art serein, l'hiver lucide...

(Winter, serene art's season, lucid winter...)

Mallarmé's best work used to be done in the cold months. Here he is like Milton who has left it on record that his finest inspiration came between the autumnal equinox and the vernal equinox. Betwen September 21 and March 21 the old Puritan poet sat day after day in his favourite pose, one leg thrown over the arm of a chair, and dictated his magnificent thunder to his bored daughters or secretaries. There is something cold about Milton's splendour, but I wonder whether the quality of his verse can be described as snowy or crystalline. One may speak of a certain grey grandeur in him, but not anything in the Mallarméan line. For one thing, he is not subtle enough, not inward enough. For another, though he is a scrupulous shaper of things, he is not enough of a purifier. No doubt a greater creator than Mallarmé, but in terms of the Azure, however dulled by Puritanism in the midst of the sublime vitality that the Renaissance temper in him brought to his work. Mallarmé's delicacy and depth are not in Milton, just as Milton's vibrant vastness is lacking in Mallarmé. We cannot think of Milton raising the soul of Winter to that intensity of remote coldness we find in the phrase Mallarmé gives to his Hérodiade when she apostrophises the star-pierced night :

O toi qui te meure, toi qui brûle de chasteté,
Nuit blanche de glaçons et de neige cruelle...

(O you that die to yourself in chastity's glow,
White night of clotted ice and cruel snow...)

Here is a passion for passionlessness that Milton's Puritanism of reasoned restraint is miles away from. Even in a less passionately passionless treatment of the stars we have a non-Miltonic sense of the virginal, the white—a sense that is aesthetic and mystic, not mental and moral. Here, as also in the previous vision, there is a merger of the Ultimate with the Ideal. The White is seen not as a formless infinity but as a pattern, and the pattern is given as caught in a reflective earth-mood. A glimpse of some chord of the Archetype-harmony in the rapt consciousness is suggested through the physical imaging of the constellation Great Bear, with its seven silver points, in a still mirror hung in the poet's room opposite a window :

...encor
Que dans l'oublie fermé par le cadre, se fixe
De scintillations sitôt le septuor.

(...while yet
In the frame-closed oblivion is set
At once of scintillations the septet.)

The French word "septuor" is a term in Music, meaning a piece for seven voices or seven instruments. So the suggestion here is of a sevenfold music that is yet a sevenfold silence.

The idea of whiteness and scintillation is presented in a different form in a poem about a Japanese fan in the hand of Mallarmé's daughter. At the end of a whole series of intuitive fantasies whose central motif is "un pur délice sans chemin"—"a pure pathless delight"—the poet sees the Japanese fan folded up by his daughter and held against her braceleted arm as if it were a wing closed in a self-inwardness, and he discovers in that still attitude of cool colourlessness against cool colour a conjuration of dream-distances : a queen-hood of virginal mystery calls up a magical sky filled with sunset-splendour : the shut fan is like a sceptre—

Le sceptre des rivages roses
Stagnants sur les soirs d'or, ce l'est,
Ce blanc vol fermé que tu poses
Contre le feu d'un bracelet.

(Sceptre of roseate shores that lean
Stagnant on depths of evening gold—
This flight of whiteness which you fold
To rest athwart a bangle's sheen.)

You may mark here how Mallarmé is able to take up any subject, be it ever so trivial, and use it as a means to his *Rêve* and his *Mystère*. He has written memorably apropos of a glass-tube in a chandelier, the ash collected at the tip of his cigar, the lace-curtains on a window whose panes brighten with the dawn after the poet's night-vigil for the revelatory word and into whose brightness the curtains seem to dissolve by becoming translucent—curtains that are quite different in their function from those on a bed which shut one up into darkness :

Cet unanime blanc conflit
D'une guirlande avec la même,
Enfui contre la vitre blême
Flotte plus qu'il n'ensevelit.

(This conflict of unanimous white,
Garland with garland-twin a-strain
And vanishing on the window pane,
Floats more than buries down the sight.)

In this vision, blessing with its poetic suggestion Mallarmé's nightlong search for self-expression, we have a symbol for Mallarméan poetry itself: the poet has to be like the white curtains and lose his own identity by turning into a diaphanous transmitter of virginal light like the dawn's—the poet has to carry the eyes of his reader towards free ethereal spaces as those curtains do and not submerge the consciousness into dense earthly comfort or pleasure as do bed-curtains.

The Mallarméan White comes also in the symbol of sailing beyond the temporal and terrestrial to some infinity and eternity. In one poem a young practitioner of verse-craft is hailed as a new Vasco da Gama whom no mere Orient can halt or satisfy : a salute is raised

Au seul souci de voyager
Outre une Inde splendide et trouble—

(To the lone will of voyaging
Beyond all Ind of splendour and trouble—)

and in another poem we find this "seul souci" growing concretised at the end of another toast to the poet's goal of transcendence :

Solitude, récif, étoile
A n'importe ce qui valut
Le blanc souci de notre toile.

(Solitude, rocky reef and star,
To all that lures of high avail
The straining whiteness of our sail.)

Here, as in the preceding quotations, we are shown what we should strive to attain in the future. But Mallarmé's conception of the supreme White covers life's beginning no less than life's end. This White is what meets us at very birth and if we go deeper than the high-hung Azure that seems to make the infant's lips thirsty for some ultimate happiness we shall discover the true source of that primal longing. In fact, the very line we have cited in this connection is preceded by a phrase pointing to the White rather than the Azure and

leading on to the latter simply because Mallarmé did not yet fathom profoundly enough his own poet-heart. Let us give now the total context :

...le sein
Par qui coule en blancheur sibylline la femme
Pour les lèvres que l'air du vierge azur affame...

(...the breast
Whence flows in sybilline whiteness woman bare
For lips made hungry by the virgin azure's air...)

"Blancheur sibylline"—that is the stuff of sovereign felicity. And even the "azur" which is taken for the top splendour drawing the idealist's vision is characterised as "vierge". The truth behind the aspiration of these lines stands out clear in some words Hérodiade utters, Hérodiade who has spoken of the burning fires of chastity in the heights of heaven : these words are her cry to her old nurse who suckled her as a babe and they convey the sense of a supreme purity merging childhood and sainthood in a mystic White :

Je ne veux rien d'humain, et, sculptée
Si tu me vois les yeux perdues en paradis,
C'est quand je me souviens de ton lait bu jadis...

(Nought human I desire and if perchance
Thou seest me sculpture-still with paradised glance,
Know that I dream thy milk my child-lips drained...)

We may say that the Mallarméan poet awakes to his mission in the very moment he tastes for the first time the milk of his mother's or his nurse's breast. Behind that initial—or, shall we say, initiatory—gulp of life-nourishment is the primordial Mystery for whose service and revelation he is born. Has not Coleridge spoken of the essential poet as one who inspires "holy dread" by "his flashing eyes, his floating hair",

For he on honey-dew hath fed
And drunk the milk of paradise.

It is this "milk of paradise" that Mallarmé symbolises in those lines in the mouth of his Hérodiade. And the nurse to whom they are addressed is a medium, as it were, through whom he throws out a shape-suggestion of the primordial Mystery about which he affords us a hint in a prose-phrase more poetic than the verse of many poets and brief-bright and sudden-white like the very

lightning-burst it expresses : "Quelque éclair suprême où s'éveille la Figure que nul n'est"—"A supreme flash from which is aroused that Shape which no one is".

Mallarmé never faltered in his aspiration towards this Shape. But he never felt that he had achieved his aim. And it is true that time and again what he achieves is only an inner subtlety and not the mystic flash. But even in the midst of his greatest triumphs he rhythms forth a regret. I suppose the regret is due to the fact that though Mallarmé the poet has found fulfilment in some poems Mallarmé the idealist has not made his home in what these poems have sung. The fulfilment went no further than communicating a living sense of the wondrous White. But to be at all moments this Wonder itself and to let poetry issue from such an experience—"where," asked Mallarmé, "where is this in my poetic life ?" All his verses he regarded as mere preliminaries to some great Work yet undone. And even these preliminaries—how few were they ! Not that he was unaware of the special quality of his exiguous production. He knew he had caught a small pure flame which grander poets had missed : particularly the grand poet Victor Hugo who had spoken so much about "infinité" and "éternité" and "divinité" seemed to miss that flame because he had no access to the inner secrecy in whose ever-present Absence Mallarmé breathed and moved. Hugo, besides being led away by his rhetorical tendency from the true mystic articulation, was still subject to the intellectualism inherent in the French language as developed through the centuries : Hugo at even his best had but sublimated by an imaginative and rhythmic process the spirit of prose. It is with men like Nerval and Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Verlaine, that the French Muse began to emancipate herself from prose, and in Mallarmé she exceeded herself by partly becoming non-French. Mallarmé was conscious of his own rare accomplishment, his distillation of poetry through a hushed inwardness. But he was conscious also of the immensely more that remained to be accomplished. His consciousness of his own rarity was just the strength with which he was able to resist all temptation to be popular, to write in the usual mode: it saved him from loss of his poetic virginity, so to speak, but it did not provide him with any self-satisfaction. The lack of self-satisfaction found speech in several fine poems, and once he uttered it with a masterly poetic art in a sonnet which he wrote in 1885—a confession of failure which is one of his greatest poetic successes : *Le Cygne* (*The Swan*). It has a basis of personal poetic history, but it widens out into a soul-truth valid for Man in general. With an analysis of this sonnet we may conclude our survey of Mallarmé the Symbolist.

(*To be continued*)

AMAL KIRAN (K. D. SETHNA)

MAHASARASWATI*

PEERLESS Artisan of perfection's gold—
Slowly She shapes the world atom by atom.
Hers the deft finger and her ken is keen.
She captures our human life with patience unknown
And grows within our heart with measured steps.
Ever-wakeful Fashioner of Truth is She.
Close to our tangible Nature her rhythmic Feet.
Mother Maheshwari places to the fore
The stupendous flow of the forces of the world,
Mahakali floods them with her strength and speed,
Mahalakshmi founds their rhythms and their measures,
Mahasaraswati in tiniest detail
Observes their governing power and then acts.
With a toil supreme and care She moulds, remoulds
Each part until is won its genuine form.
Her heart suffers no bold untimely halt,
Nothing is paltry to her all-piercing Eyes,
Nothing can fool her sight, however disguised.

Her Knowledge grows upon her Intuition's soil.
Acceptable things alone She fondly grasps.
Her diamond-patience is an all-puissant love.
Her wonder-touch transforms this inert clay
To a pure perfection-vessel of lucid bloom.
Sweetly She leads our skill to the Gates above.
The care-free souls reach not the stream of her love:
Mastery alone can bathe in her sea of Grace.
She's void of smile until perfection dawns.
Her high omniscience carves the poignant earth.
Tireless She weaves to heavenly patternings
Our floating chaos fretted with feeble hopes.

* A versification of the substance of "The Four Aspects of the Mother" in Sri Aurobindo's book *The Mother*. The poet dealt with Maheshwari, Mahakali and Mahalakshmi in other issues of our Journal.

A fiery will, a surge of sincerity
Her sole demand from aspiring human souls.
Never She breathes the hurtful air of grief.
She is the sweet Mother to our teeming wants:
Our perpetual Pole-star and our Confidante,
She drives away our brooding darkness dun,
All eyeless lassitudes, with her sun-vast smile.
She points us to the eternal shine of bliss
And She alone is the essential hand
To crown the endeavour of the other powers.
Dauntless She affirms for Matter a basis divine.

"MADAL"

SRI KRISHNA — SRI AUROBINDO

(I)

"You can't expect me to argue about my own spiritual greatness in comparison with Krishna's. The question itself would be relevant only if there were two sectarian religions in opposition, Aurobindoism and Vaishnavism, each insisting on its own God's greatness. That is not the case. And then what Krishna must I challenge,—the Krishna of the Gita who is the transcendent Godhead, Paramatma, Purushottam, the cosmic Deity, Master of the universe, Vasudeva who is all, the Immanent in the heart of all creatures, or the Godhead who was incarnate at Brindavan and Dwarka and Kurukshetra and who was the guide of my yoga and with whom I realised identity ? All that is not to me something philosophical or mental but a matter of daily and hourly realisation and intimate to the stuff of my consciousness. Then from what position can I adjudicate this dispute ? X thinks I am superior in greatness, you think there can be nothing greater than Krishna : each is entitled to have his own view or feeling."

25-2-1945 SRI AUROBINDO

(II)

"In Mother's childhood's visions she saw myself whom she knew as 'Krishna'."

11-7-1935 SRI AUROBINDO

(III)

"If you reach Krishna you reach the Divine; if you can give yourself to him, you give yourself to me."

18-6-1943 SRI AUROBINDO

(IV)

"This struggle in you (between bhakti for Sri Krishna and the sense of the divinity of the Mother) is quite unnecessary; for the two things are one and go perfectly together. It is he who has brought you to the Mother and it is by adoration of her that you will realise him. He is here in the Ashram and it is his work that is being done here."

1933 SRI AUROBINDO

(V)

"The Mother and myself stand for the same Power in two forms."
1933 SRI AUROBINDO

(VI)

"It is a very common experience, that of the identity between myself and the Mother (the perception that we are one) expressed in the fusing of the two images."
4-11-1935 SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo was born at 4-30 a.m. (one hour before sunrise) on 15th August, 1872. According to the Hindu Astrological Panchang (Calendar) a Tithi (date) begins after sunrise; therefore Sri Aurobindo's exact birth Tithi, according to the Hindu Panchang, was Bhadra Krishna Saptami (7). Sri Krishna in Dwaparayuga was also born at midnight of Bhadra Krishna Saptami. The child was carried from Mathura by his father Vasudeva to a distant village Gokula where he reached a little before day-dawn. This is the reason why Sri Krishna's birthday is celebrated in Mathura city on Bhadra Krishna Saptami (7) at the midnight of which he was born, whereas at Gokula (where his birth was known after sunrise) and all over India it is celebrated on Bhadra Krishna Ashtami (8) as Janmashtami. The delay of Sri Krishna's coming in the person of Sri Aurobindo is 4 ½ hours which symbolically cover a vast period of nearly five thousand years of Kaliyuga.

Sri Krishna came at midnight with a scheme of the next step in evolution for the day-dawn of spirituality, by shifting world administration to spiritual men from the hands of so-called royalty of heredity; he put an end to the lives of the Kings Kansa, Jarasandha and Shishupal, besides others at Kuruskhetra. The meaning and consequence of his plan may have been that on the throne of Hastinapura, the only centre of empire left in India, there should sit Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa (the famous compiler of the Vedas and later the poet of the Mahabharata) who had the Power of giving Divya Drishti to Sanjaya, his disciple. But the then dictators and leaders of the nations did not realise his scheme though they all honoured, respected and loved him. Perhaps the then "midnight" 's rigid heredity-consciousness of Dwaparayuga could not accept and embrace the scheme of Sri Krishna suitable for day-dawn. But how could Rudra, the Commander in Heaven and sincere advocate of Divine Nature, bear this negligence and disregard in carrying out the Divine Will ?

Calamity fell on Indian soil, the Ganges erased Hastinapura from sight, the sea engulfed Dwarka, the two centres of proud royalty vanished; barbarous Bhils raped royal ladies, leaving the unique champion of his age, prince Arjuna,

helpless. Invaders came, bloodshed in Tandava Nritya danced for centuries; wise kings, guides, leaders and dictators gave inheritance to the unwise, the unwise to fools, and fools to idiots, as if the advent of high souls were altogether blocked except for a few rare ones. The heavens saw the heredity of kings abolished from the face of India before 1950.

Of course, a trend, a move, was made to establish the temple-monarchy in co-operation with royalty of heredity, but alas ! it was too late, the trend of spirituality had slipped down too low, to the poverty of mere magic and occultism. The number of powerful spiritual figures was on the decrease, true organisation was rare, Guruvada and Gurugiri were inherited. So again came Sri Krishna to take birth, in Calcutta, after the lapse of the dark dire midnight of Kaliyuga.

The ancient Avatars played the role not of Divine Gurus, but Divine Kings; Sri Krishna took up this work but nominally, he had no organised disciples except a few, and the one most favourite was Arjuna, his relative, friend, companion and comrade, but a disciple for only an hour or two on the battlefield of Kurukshetra when he refused to fight owing to a false and weak pity. But this time Sri Krishna came as a Guru on Guruvar, Vrihaspativar, Thursday, one hour before the beginning of Friday. In India Guruvar, Vrihaspativar, Thursday, is a traditional Gurupuja day for Hindus. Unfortunately the long-continued yoke of Mohammedan rule has abolished this Puja-day from North India: only Shravani (Shravan Purnima), the Initiation day for new disciples, and Ganesh Chaturthi (the fourth day after the Initiation day), the day for convocation and conference of degree to disciples after their final training, are celebrated, but in South India every Guruvar too is celebrated as Gurupuja day in educational institutions.

Those who worship on Saptami or on Ashtami and on Guruvar, adore Sri Krishna—Sri Aurobindo, the though they may be unconscious of the person of Sri Aurobindo.

Those who worship on 15th August adore Sri Krishna—Sri Aurobindo, the Charioteer of the Great War of World Kurukshetra, who was directing and leading nations with his vast spiritual power from behind the scenes.

Those who worship on 15th August to celebrate the independence of India adore Sri Krishna—Sri Aurobindo who led the Indian Movement for freedom at its very start and whose work was crowned at the end by the coincidence of Independence Day with the day of his birth.

VASHISHTHA

THE INFLUENCE OF BEAUTIFUL OBJECTS ON MEN

(Class-work, 13-7-1961, of PREMA, aged 13: 6th Form, Section A.)

WHEN we see a beautiful thing our hearts go out to that thing completely and we forget ourselves. But when we see an ugly creature or thing it brings us horror and dismay. There are so many beautiful things all over the world and so many ugly things also. But there is a thing which I like very very much for its beauty, colour and form. And if this thing did not exist I do not know how I could enjoy my life.

Everywhere we go we find flowers. Tiny ones and big ones, and each seems lovelier than the others. All the flowers bring us different sentiments and thoughts. As for the one called *Power*, it has a dark red shade and looks like a flame of fire aspiring towards God. Then the Jasmines—clad in their white robes they twinkle like the stars in the night and form a milky way. They give us such a calm and joyful feeling. And with that we forget our sorrowings and everything else, our work, our worries and we have only the joy of looking upon them and the sense of lovely things of another world.

As these flowers give us these feelings, the flowers like Sun-flower and the one which means *Plasticity* give me another feeling. With their radiant yellow colours of all kinds, they give us strength, courage and energy. And once we look upon them our faces are happy with the radiance of their lights.

Like these flowers that I love so much, and just as each has something to give us, each beautiful object and person make us feel something if our hearts open to them.

THE RIVER OF GOLD

INTRODUCTION

THIS play for children was created out of the idea that *gold* is the symbol of Truth and an "Age of Gold" is the symbolic representation of a "peak" in the evoultion of the human race. There have been several peaks in our history or even perhaps in our pre-history,—of which we could mention a few.

Atlantis, with its culture rising to a perfection of the occult and mental powers, but forgetting its origins in the Divine. The Vedic Age with its perfection of the Rishis and the heights to which they aspired but for which the common people were not then ready. The Age of the Old Testament, which had its Prophets, with their zeal and faith in the One God, but which lost its essence in the cruder sacrificial passions of the mass. The Age of the Pharaohs, the kings of Egypt, who almost recaptured the knowledge and power of Atlantis—but failed because of the inner impurity and corrupt politics of the High Priests. The Age of Greece and Rome—the one with its perfection of Art and Thought, the other with its administrative power, its military might and majesty.

Each age reached a perfection adding one more possible attribute to the sum total of human evolution. But it seemed that whenever that perfection was reached it had already lost sight of the greater Goal, the ultimate Aim to which mankind aspires—that of an integral Perfection where man may live in the Truth and Harmony of creative Delight, rising to a Splendour even far beyond the gods.

This little play symbolises, in a fairy-story way, the "lost" Truth and its recapture. The Maidens symbolise the *Guardians of the Gold*, they lose it 'By losing all remembrance in the play'. The Dwarfs, who have stolen it away represent the *Powers of the Underworld*, from whom it can only be recovered by the Shepherd Boy—symbolising *Purity* and the *Power of Immortality*. The Children are the *Youth of the World*, who are the evolving souls on earth, affected by the forces and powers that govern the world of Man.

We have only space to give here two scenes of the play but these two scenes of the First Act give a fair representative picture of the 'conflict' between the two forces which, although they never come together, are acted upon from the world of the mortals who acquire the power to influence them.

Prologue Scene

1st Child : (*To Shepherd Boy*) Why do you play such a sad tune ?
2nd Child : Because he is sad like the sorrowing Rune.
3rd Child : Even on the brightest day
We never feel we want to play.
4th Child : How long will this melancholy last ?
5th Child : Well, it came quite quick, so it won't go fast !
6th Child : They say that even the Man in the Moon
Weeps, for the light has gone from the Rune.
7th Child : There's a legend, a story which says one day
A dwarf came along and stole it away.
1st Child : Can dwarfs steal gold where the rivers run ?
Steal the joy from the day ; the warmth from the sun ?
2nd Child : (*To Shepherd Boy*) Tell us, Sweet Singer, the legend of the Rune,
Then play on your pipes a happier tune—
Make with your magic a fairy scene,
Fashion from dream what might have been.

Prologue

Shepherd Boy: Long, long ago when the earth was new,
When the gods had the world for their play,
When man was a part of Nature
And the fairies had their day :
There came a Dawn to remember
When maidens wild and free
Danced in the sacred groves
Of ancient Arcady.

They lost themselves in the magic
Rhythm of vital waves
Of sense and circumstance,
Which even the mortal craves—
They lost therefore the treasure
Entrusted to their care :
The wealth of the world—the power
Which soon becomes a snare—
A River of Golden Light
Flowing from the Sun
Which upheld the Truth of the world

Since that Truth was won
From the seat of the ancient gods.

Now deep in the bowels of the earth
Where no god or nymph could go,
That Treasure—seized by the Dwarfs—
Did through their darkness flow.

ACT I : *Scene I*

The River Maidens on a hillside beside the flowing River Rune discuss their position.—They are discovered in attitudes of despair.

QUEEN RUENA : We may well cry to the heavens
What shall we do ? What shall we do ?
'Tis much too heavy a task the gods have set.
And if we fail—our banishment from earth
Will kill the seed of our mortality.

IRONICA : What use have we with this new frailty—
This passing promise of mortality ?

QUEEN RUENA : 'Tis only here on earth that we can grow
Into that Splendour far beyond the gods.

SINCERITY : (*Reasoning*) But why should all the burden fall on us ?

DOUTEUSE : (*Doubtfully*) The gods themselves, with all their show of power,
Could not prevail upon the tiny Dwarfs—
Then how can we... ?

QUEEN RUENA : ...We made the first mistake
By losing all Remembrance in the play
We threw away our powers of vigilance.

SARCASTICA : And so we have to pay a price for play !

SIMPLICITY : (*Resolutely*) We're not afraid to pay for our mistake.

ESPERANCE : (*Innocently*) But we have nothing, how then shall we pay ?

SINCERITY : Yes, we have failed to guard the gold of the gods
And the guilt of our broken trust is our unease.
Broken the purpose of our unity—
Divided, we are mere playthings of the Powers.

QUEEN RUENA : We have ourselves divided, it is true,
But let us now unite and think as one—
Recall the Origin from which we came
And use those powers given at our birth
To bend the Dwarfs to our intelligence.

ESPERANCE : If only we could live such brave ideals.
IRONICA : Ideals and dreams ! how will they serve us now ?
Stuff and nonsense ! songs and poetry !
SIMPLICITY : We could try at least—better than to weep,
(*looking at Ironica*) Or scoff at brave ideals and unity.
SINCERITY : First we must find a way to meet the Dwarfs,
Then seek a means to bargain or outwit
By reason or by ingenuity—
DOUTEUSE : (*Gloomily*) They'll surely never leave their hidden caves
Now all the gods have frightened them away.
SINCERITY : What is their greatest weakness that we know ?
To play on that might bring some first result.
IRONICA : (*Scornfully*) They have no weakness, only we are weak
We only know how to play with the wind and the rain ;
We dance with the stars, flirt with the sun and the moon,
For we are the Rune maidens lost in a mortal world.
QUEEN RUENA : The Dance of the Stars ! when the moon is round and full ;
The Dance of the Stars—which always the sprites attend—
Each falling star, food for fairies and fays,
For the king of the Dwarfs—a diamond diadem !
SARCASTICA : (*Sarcastically*) Oh yes, we can dance—the gods will make us dance !
SIMPLICITY : A diamond diadem ! why yes, that's true !
(*Thoughtfully*) The Dwarf's one weakness—is—he must possess.
Then what more rare a gift can he desire
Than a magic diamond plucked from the soul of a star ?
ESPERANCE : But only the sprites and fairies, elves and fays
Can catch the star-dust from a falling star !
SINCERITY : But the Dwarfs ; they always try and hope one day
By chance to capture what they most desire.
SARCASTICA : (*Sarcastically*) And tell us pray—what do they most desire ?
SINCERITY : Why wealth and power, but chiefly power, I think.
QUEEN RUENA : (*Standing*) This then we can agree—when the moon is full
And the waters mirror the magic of the stars ;
When breezes whisper to the fairy folk :
"Come, come—the Rune Maidens' dancing calls to the skies
To bring the Bliss of Heaven into the heart—
Come, come ! perform our Rite, the Dance of the Stars—
At midnight—when the moon is overhead."

SONG OF THE RUNE MAIDENS

Sing ye mountains ! sing ye skies !
Let the raindrops fill your eyes—
Come each one and take a part,
Let all heaven fill your heart

Let all Nature now draw near,
Joy and laughter banish fear—
Lift your voices to the skies,
Let the star-dust fill your eyes.

Sing until the stars fall down
And earth in beauty wears a crown !

QUEEN RUENA : This we'll sing when the moon is full.

Scene II

THE UNDERWORLD OF THE DWARFS AND THE STOLEN RIVER.

A cavern, through which flows The River of Gold—bringing its Light to the underground darkness.

The Dwarfs are assembled in a disorderly manner round their king NEMOS who is seated on a rock-platform higher than the rest.

NEMOS : (*Shouting above the hubbub*) Silence ! Silence ! you earth-dwelling goblins of the night !
(*He waits*)

The quaking of earth has ceased ; the thundering skies
Return to silence—still in you wild fears
Squeeze dim utterance from your belly-pains.

(*Many are still figetting and hopping about changing their places.*)

Be still ! you gnomes of Negasus, be still !

(*They all become as statues.*)

Know you not we yet retain the gold
Of all the earth—this frozen Light of Dawn ?

We are the rulers of the wealth of the world ;
We need no longer hide as toads in the night
Nor slave like lizard-lice in caverns foul—

(Pointing to the Gold)
This Sunlight fashioned into living stone
Will bring new powers to our obscurity—
We'll rule the earth with pomp and majesty
And bargain with the heavens for the stars.

(The king's words here throw the dwarfs into a panic of avarice so as to conjure up dreams of future power.)

1st DWARF : The gold is good but stars have power !
Let's change the gold for one bright star !

2nd DWARF : Yes, power to rule both men and things !
The soul of a star the wood-nymph sings,
One star—we'll all have diamond rings !

All sing the song of the river

SONG OF THE RIVER

Above and below
The Rune river sings—
up above, down below
The Rune river sings.

From skies above
to cavern below
high above deep below
The Rune river sings;

From the mountains above
to the valleys below
up above down below
The Rune river sings

From the fountainhead
to the river bed
the river sings
up above down below
The Rune River sings !

(The king does not like this reaction)

3rd DWARF : The maidens of the Rune catch stars
When they dance beneath the moon.
4th DWARF : Yes, I've seen when the moon is full,
They then perform their secret rites.
5TH DWARF : Caught in the magic of their hair
The falling stars remain on earth
To crown those Runic maidens fair—
Queens, where never kings take birth !
6TH DWARF : B...b...bravo ! 1...let's all g...g...get diamond rings—
Oh, g...g...goody ginks ! lets all be kings !

(The king now raises himself to his full height in rage, he takes a deep indrawn breath—then blows them all over)

NEMOS : Phwewoo ! ! Earth-worms !
Grubs of gramarye,
Ye grovelling servants of the living grave !
What know ye of kings and majesty—
Or even how the lords of earth behave ?
I am the only king in this dungeon world,
For I alone can set my mind to think,
I alone remember and recall
Your vague beginnings, your stupidities
Your first crude clutchings of a mortal world
That gave you shape and form and fantasy.
Do ye not know, ye wood-spirits of the past,
Your early substance was as the mortal air—
Without a habitation or a home;
Your only refuge, dead abandoned trees
That haunt the forest of the shades of Night?

(The dwarfs have been moving slowly nearer to the king—one by one—as if fascinated, like animals hypnotised by the sound of the voice—and as he continues he makes them "freeze" with each gesture which he uses to interspace the lines of his powerful rhetoric.)

Attend ! Ye shadows of a bygone age !
Be still and listen to the voice of a king !
Ye are the playthings of my magic art,
The puppets which I dangle on a string
Of Chance—mere dancing dolls of my desire !

My will, my wish, that are the very blood
That fills your veins—the fever and the fire
Which animates your dim deformities—

(*Gesture to the Dwarfs*)

Dance ! Ye sons of pettiness and pride !
Dance ! Temptation's toys of vanity !
Dance ! Ye demons of the nether Dis !

DANCE OF THE DWARFS

NEMOS : Ha, ha, ha, he, he, he !
Dance ye, sons of gramarye—
Ha, ha, ha ! he, he, he !
Dance ye goblins of the Night !

CHORUS : Ha, ha, ha ! he, he, he !
We're the sons of gramarye—
Ha, ha, ha ! he, he, he !
Dance O brother ! dance with me !

NEMOS : Ha, ha, ha ! he, he, he !
Dance ye earth-worms of the Dark—
Ha, ha, ha ! he, he, he !
Dance ye gnomes of Negasus !

CHORUS : Ha, ha, ha ! he, he, he !
We are the earth-worms of the free—
Ha, ha, ha ! he, he, he !
We are the gnomes of Liberty !

Ha, ha, ha ! he, he, he !
Ha, ha, ha ! he, he, he !
We are the Demons of the Dark !

NORMAN DOWSETT

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