

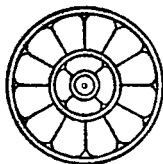
# MOTHER INDIA

SEPTEMBER 1962

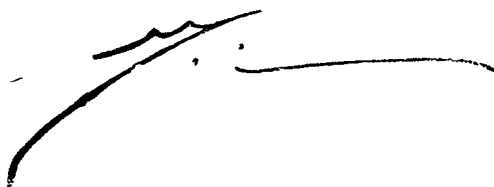
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XIV

No. 8

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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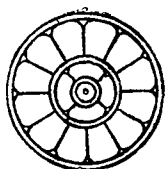
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## A MESSAGE FROM THE MOTHER

Si l'on regarde d'assez haut, quoi que l'on fasse on ne perd jamais son temps  
puisque l'on agit selon sa nature et—sans le savoir—selon la volonté du Seigneur

If one looks from high enough, whatever one does one never wastes one's time  
since one acts according to one's nature and—without knowing it—according  
to the will of the Lord.

A stylized signature or mark consisting of several horizontal and diagonal strokes, possibly representing a name or a decorative flourish.

16-8-1962

## THE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

### PASSIVITY—PSYCHIC EXPERIENCES—THE INVISIBLE WORLDS— THE SUPRAMENTAL YOGA

I HAVE read carefully X's letter and I think the best thing is first to explain his present condition as he describes it. For he does not seem to me to understand the true causes and the meaning.

The present condition of passivity and indifference is a reaction from a former abnormal state to which he was brought by an internal effort not properly guided from without or from within. The effort brought about a certain breaking of the veils which divide the physical from the psychic and vital worlds. But his mind was unprepared and unable to understand his experiences and judged them by the light of fancy and imagination and erroneous mental and vital suggestions. His vital being full of rajasic and egoistic energy rushed up violently to enjoy these new fields and use the force that was working for its own lower ends. This gave an opportunity for a hostile power from the vital world to break in and take partial possession and the result was disorganisation of the nervous and physical system and some of the brain centres. The attack and possession seem to have passed out and left behind the present reaction of passivity with a strong hold of *tamas* and indifference. The *tamas* and indifference are not in themselves desirable things but they are temporarily useful as a rest from the past unnatural tension. The passivity is desirable and a good basis for a new and right working of the *Shakti*.

It is not a true interpretation of his condition that he is dead within and there is only an outside activity. What is true is that the centre of vital egoism that thinks itself the Actor has been crushed and he now feels all the thought and activity playing outside him. This is a state of knowledge; for the real truth is that all these thoughts and activities are Nature's and come into us or pass through us as waves from the Universal Nature. It is our egoism and our limitation in the body and individual physical mind which prevent us from feeling and experiencing this truth. It is a great step to be able to see and feel the truths as he is now doing. This is not of course the complete knowledge. ...<sup>1</sup>becomes more complete and the psychic being opens upward one feels

<sup>1</sup> A phrase has evidently got omitted in the typescript and the words "knowledge" and "becomes" have been joined up, owing most probably to the occurrence of "knowledge" again before "becomes" in the next line as part of a new sentence beginning in the previous one. Such a slip is common in typing. As the original of this letter is not available, the slip cannot be rectified—Editor

all the activities descending from above and can get at their true source and transform them.

The light playing in his head means that there has been an opening to the higher force and knowledge which is descending as light from above and working on the mind to illuminate it. The electrical current is the force descending in order to work in the lower centres and prepare them for the light. The right condition will come when instead of the vital forces trying to push upward the prana becomes calm and surrendered and waiting with full assent for the light and when instead of the chasm in between there is a constant aspiration of the heart towards the truth above. The light must descend into these lower centres so as to transform the emotional and vital and physical being as well as the mental thought and the will.

The utility of psychic experiences and knowledge of the invisible worlds as of other yogic experiences is not to be measured by our narrow human notions of what may be useful for the present physical life of man. In the first place these things are necessary for the fullness of the consciousness and the completeness of the being. In the second place these other worlds are actually working upon us. And if you know and can enter into them then instead of being the victims and puppets of these powers we can consciously deal with, control and use them. Thirdly, in my Yoga, the Yoga of the supramental, the opening of the psychic consciousness to which these experiences belong is quite indispensable. For it is only through the psychic opening that the supramental can fully descend with a strong and concrete grasp and transform the mental, vital and physical being.

This is the condition and its value. For the future if he wishes to accept my Yoga, the conditions are a steady resolve and aspiration towards the truth I am bringing down, a calm passivity and an opening upward towards the source from which the light is coming. The Shakti is already working in him and if he takes and keeps this attitude and has a complete confidence in me there is no reason why he should not advance safely in the Sadhana in spite of the physical and vital damage that has been done to his system.

Pondicherry, 9th December, 1922

## 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, Puram, 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 twentieth instalment in the new Series which, except for the last two occasions, has followed a chronological order and begun at the very beginning. The four earliest talks, after Sri Aurobindo's accident, appeared in Mother India 1952.)*

JANUARY 12, 1939

N NARRATED to Sri Aurobindo an incident that had taken place in Calcutta. The Mother was present during the narration. The incident concerned a girl of about 10 or 12. She belonged to a very well-known family and had visited the Ashram with her parents more than once. Now there was a tea-party in their sumptuous house. Many high-ranking people had been invited. The topic of the Ashram came up. Comments and criticisms started flying freely. Even the Mother and Sri Aurobindo were not spared. The child listened quietly. But when somebody seemed to overstep the limit of decency, she could stand it no longer. In a firm tone she said : "Look here. If you speak one more word about my Gurus, I'll give you such a slap that you'll tumble down."

Everybody was stunned. The child's mamma left the room in shame and anger at the insult to her guests. Her uncle started looking at the ceiling in embarrassment, and to change the subject he started calling to the servants, "Hari, Ram, what a lot of dust is here!"

N's story was enjoyed by all immensely. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo looked happy. Then the Mother left.

SRI AUROBINDO : What this girl does is remarkable for her age. Along with strength of character she has developed an extraordinary intelligence.



When she used to write to us, she would make reflections about people and the world in general, which were beyond even a woman of 50.

N : I'll tell you of some rare traits in her, her powers of judgment as well as of detachment. She had a dancing master. Her parents wanted to dismiss him because he was said to have a bad character. She wouldn't agree at all. Her argument was that character had nothing to do with teaching. But for all her opposition the parents did send the fellow away. And when he left she acted quite contrary to expectation. Although she had fought so much for him, she seemed not the least put out by his dismissal. Then there is the incident of the death of her pet dog. When this animal, which she had loved intensely, died she remained perfectly calm. This set her mamma thinking that she didn't love the dog and also that she might not be loving her even and would one day leave her for the Ashram.

SRI AUROBINDO : Her parents have found out it would be difficult to bend her to their will. She on her side has found out that they keep lying to her.

N : People say she is quite happy where she is at present.

SRI AUROBINDO : How do they make that out ? She wrote to us she was very unhappy outside.

The talk then turned on the purge-trials in Russia by Stalin.

SRI AUROBINDO : What Stalin wants is power—nothing else.

N : Is there nothing in his allegations against Trotsky ?

SRI AUROBINDO : All that is not credible. Most probably Trotsky's followers wanted to get rid of Stalin by killing him but set about it in a clumsy way and so were killed by Stalin. Stalin has been able to get rid of everybody who had worked with Lenin. Litvinoff has managed to escape. I don't know what has happened to his wife. She was very anti-Stalin and could not be ckecked. One has heard of General Blucher and his trial but nothing afterwards. Stalin's parliament meets and talks and disperses. Whatever he and his party say is obeyed.

P : The confessions of the Generals and others were so dramatic.

SRI AUROBINDO : They made them to save their relatives probably.

N . Was Trotsky a better man than Stalin ?

SRI AUROBINDO : He was an idealist, at any rate.

Then there was talk about Japan. P referred to the resignation of all the Japanese Ministers and related some General's declaration about a 100 years' war.

SRI AUROBINDO : Oh yes—to make the world civilised and to drive all Europeans out of Asia ! But it is very unusual for the Japanese to talk as thus

General has done. They never speak of anything beforehand. They get everything ready and act.

S : What about India's freedom ? It seems it will take very long for her to be free from European rule.

SRI AUROBINDO : Not necessarily. It seems to me she will not have to fight to get her freedom. She will get it without any fight.

N : How's that ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That is the prophecy among the Sannyasis.

N : I remember Lele also spoke like that.

SRI AUROBINDO : If India has to fight, she has no chance. But if some new power—Italy, for instance—were able to crush England effectively, as is very unlikely, India would have a chance. For then England wouldn't be able to hold India any more.

N : But that power itself or else some other like Japan can come and capture her again.

SRI AUROBINDO : It can't be so easy. These powers are far away from India. For them it would be a great venture. Besides, only with a navy one can't conquer a country. The navy has to be supported by an army. If India has an army of her own, it will be difficult for any country to conquer her.

But it wouldn't be safe at present to depend on outside help. When the Mother once asked a Japanese friend of hers whether Japan's navy would help India in case of war, he replied: "Don't trust Japan. If she once gets in, it will be hard to get her out."

N : India has no navy.

SRI AUROBINDO : It can be built up after independence, though it may take time.

P : Even the Congress Ministers are not keeping to the policy of Non-violence. They are planning and enforcing military training in the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Bombay and Madras.

P : Sir Sikander Hussain has tried to make a division of India into martial races, like those of the Punjab, and non-martial races.

SRI AUROBINDO : That division was made by the British Government purposely to conquer and keep India down. They got the Pathans, Gurkhas and Punjabis to enter the army and make up the bulk of it. But every part of India had its empire in the past. All India can have military training and equipment in a short time.

N : But what about the Muslims ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The Muslims also don't want foreign rule. There is no doubt that the majority of prominent Muslims want independence.

N : The majority ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes. But they want a Mohammedan Independence government. Even Jinnah wants independence. He has said it many times.

I don't think the Muslims would prefer foreign domination to independence.

If India had the proper equipment, it would be quite a job for other nations to conquer her. Look at Spain. The Spanish Government has no proper equipment and yet the civil war there is dragging on for years. It was different with the Abyssinians, when the Italians attacked them. They were unorganised over and above being poor in equipment.

N : If Franco gets Spain, it will be bad for England.

SRI AUROBINDO : But worse for France. She could easily be cut off from her African colonies and surrounded on all sides. For England also it will be bad, as the Spanish may block the present passage to the East and she may have to go round the other way.

By this spring the intention of the Axis powers will be known. In the mean time Italy is trying to manoeuvre Chamberlain to her side.

N : France depends too much on England.

SRI AUROBINDO : She has to. She can't fight single-handed with Germany and Italy. Everybody knows that in case war breaks out Germany will side with Italy.

N : France can have Russia's help.

SRI AUROBINDO : Not likely. First, she does not trust Russia. Secondly, Russia is divided from France by almost the whole of Europe. Thirdly, Russia is not strong in her navy.

N : Germany is taking revenge for the unjust peace-terms after the last war.

SRI AUROBINDO : It's not exactly that. It was England who thrust Germany into power. She saw that France was getting powerful in Europe after the war. As is her usual self-interested policy, she raised Germany in order to create a balance of power. She didn't expect that Hitler would aim his gun at her. At one time France and England came almost to a point of rivalry. France tried to have friendship with Italy by placating her and England made Mussolini an enemy by applying sanctions against Italy in Abyssinia. But she could not stop Italy from conquering Abyssinia.

I have never seen such bankruptcy of English diplomacy before. Since the war she has been following a most imbecile and weak policy.

N : The papers say that Italy raised this Tunis-Corsica cry to divert the attention of England and France from Spain.

SRI AUROBINDO : What attention ? What have they been doing for Spain ? Nothing ! Even Blum who is a socialist applied this policy of non-intervention in Spain during his premiership.

Of course it is quite foolish for Italy to ask for Tunis or Corsica. No French politician can give them away against the wish of the people. The Italians have no chance here. One may as well ask for Wales and the Isle of Wight from England. Italy by this cry has, on the contrary, given a fright to the Nationalists in Tunis and united them in favour of France.

N : America is also preparing enormously.

S : She is not obliged to take part in European politics.

SRI AUROBINDO : Perhaps Roosevelt has got secret information about hostile designs. It is not a question of meddling in European politics but of guarding against being eaten up. Those who remain behind will be eaten up at last. Some people in America understand this thing. All are not like Chamberlain.

N : The English fleet seems to be the strongest.

SRI AUROBINDO : I can't say, but it is the most experienced. The Italian fleet is very well equipped, but it is difficult to predict how it will fare in actual war. It has not been tried and tested.

N : In a war, the future is likely to be decided in the air rather than on the sea.

SRI AUROBINDO : No; the air can't decide a war. Aeroplanes can only be an aid, but the fate of a war will be decided on the sea. If the navy can be smashed, then you can blockade a nation and starve it out or throw it on its own limited resources while you can have resources everywhere. It is sea-power on which will depend the mastery over other nations. It is because of sea-power that England has been the ruler of the world for three centuries.

France at one time had the lead in air-power, but she has lagged behind now because she foolishly stopped building aeroplanes.

JANUARY 14, 1939

SRI AUROBINDO (*suddenly breaking his silence*) : There is something nice for you, P.

P : For me ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes. A letter has come from America. It is addressed to Sri Aurobindo Ashram. The writer thinks the Ashram is a person. He writes : "I have heard that you are a great Yoga. I am also a Yoga. I have started to predict sporting events. I can go into trance and know everything. If you agree to work in collaboration with me, we will share the profits. Let me know your terms. If you don't want to take the money yourself, you can give it to the poor. Our collaboration will be a service to yourself, to me and to the poor." (*Laughter*)

What do you say, P ? You too can go into trance or send N into trance.

N : He will find me a hard nut !

P : If he goes into trance, I fear he may not come out looking at the heap of dollars.

N : And P will perhaps come out looking at it ?

P : No objection to sharing the profits—but no sharing of the losses !

Sri Aurobindo : All kinds of half-crazy people write from everywhere. I wonder how they get our address.

S : It must be from the magazine in which Anilbaran wrote an article.

SRI AUROBINDO : It may be the article, and perhaps Anilbaran wrote "Sri Aurobindo Ashram" under it, and people thought the Ashram a person.

S : The magazine in which he wrote is published by the — Institute. Its founder has made good business in America. His work is a combination of business and Yoga.

P : Is it possible to predict sporting events ?

S : I know of an astrologer who made a lot of predictions about a cousin of mine, but most of them didn't come true.

SRI AUROBINDO : I had a remarkable experience at Baroda. It was not of astrology, but of thought-reading. My house-manager Chhotalal took me to an astrologer. The man asked me to prepare four questions in my mind. One of the questions came and passed very swiftly through my mind and I hardly formulated it. But he not only read the other three questions but even this which had as good as escaped me. On the other hand, his astrological predictions were not correct.

P : Is anything being tried in America to get your works published ? Did Vaun do anything ?

SRI AUROBINDO : No. The Americans are not easily attracted to profound things. The article an American wrote some time back on me was very superficial. But Nishtha (Miss Wilson) said that it was originally quite deep ; the editor of the paper said it wouldn't do. He thought the Americans wouldn't be interested in such deep things. So he made it what it is.

N : Aren't the Americans open to new ideas ?

Sri Aurobindo : Yes, but what they want is sensation and novelty. All I can say is that there are more people in America interested in these things than in Europe. In Europe also their numbers are increasing now.

N : But America is much taken up by the Ramakrishna Mission. One Bengali too has been a success. Somebody else from near Bombay made at one time a great name in Europe by his prophecies, but afterwards plenty of started calling people him a swindler.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why swindler ? Did he take money for his prophecies ? Swindling is when one takes money for things one promises to do but doesn't do. If prophecies don't come true, that is not swindling.

By the way, who is Purohit Swamy ?

P : I don't know. It is he who has translated the Upanishads with Yeats in the Belearic Islands and written some commentaries....In his writings he mentions some cases of levitation he has seen.

SRI AUROBINDO : The only levitation I have heard of was of B, who insisted that his whole body had been raised. Another instance was that of a German who levitated by about six inches and then fell down with a thud.

S : Some air-cushions should have been placed below. (*Laughter*)

Here the topic arose : “Can a sadhak or a yogi have his life insured ? Is it in consonance with the spirit of Yoga ?”

SRI AUROBINDO : Thakur Dayanand would have said “No”. As I told you, he was always depending on God and didn’t believe in storing things. Whatever he used to get he spent away. If any day there was nothing, it meant that God wanted him to starve on that day. His followers used to sing and dance—an excited expression of devotion, an emotional demonstration. Later on, he began to complain that his vital forces were being drawn out, and he turned gradually towards Knowledge. All his group had the faith that nothing bad could happen to them. In the shooting affair, the police came when they were dancing and singing, and seeing them in such exaltation they went back. The disciples thought themselves invulnerable and invincible. Then the Government sent soldiers who broke down their demonstrations and arrested the people. Then their faith got shaken.

S : How can the vital forces be drawn out when one is in contact with the Divine Consciousness ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The forces that support the work around one are quite different from the Divine Consciousness.

I had an experience in the Guest House with a man of what may be called an intense type. He was a Maratha. He came to see me. When I came down I felt all around me forces of confusion and death. At once I gathered myself. They were coming from the man. He was unconsciously throwing them out. He was surrounded by forces of disintegration and chaos. Such contacts are dangerous for those who are conscious but weak ; they would draw out the vital forces of these people. If one is not conscious, such contacts are harmless.

P : I remember the telling phrase in which you described him : “a wild intensity of weakness.”

SRI AUROBINDO : These are the type of people who have great intensity but no solidity.

After this, there was some talk about several examples of the type. From Sri Aurobindo’s remarks the following characterisation of them in some detail may be made : “At times these people may do brilliant things, but what they do is still slight and has, as it were, no body. They have a high opinion of themselves, but they are good only as lieutenants : by themselves they are nothing much. They always have to depend on someone, a group or a movement. And they can’t contain themselves, either, and keep quiet : to keep quiet requires solidity. They are never steady. As soon as they get something, they give it up and pursue another line. This applies to their Yoga also. As a result, they have brilliant visions and experiences but no realisation. If the Mother puts her Force into them, they become ambitious, believe they can revolutionise

the world and may even think of becoming Sri Aurobindo's right hand, replacing the Mother ! There is in them a curious mixture of opposites : agnosticism and faith, for instance. And when they happen to be writers, such mixture makes their writings attractive. All in all, they are an interesting lot, if not fit for Yoga or any substantial work. At least one can't feel dull in their company."

There the talk ended. After an interval N asked a question about Sri Aurobindo's leg, which had got a little shortened after the accident on November 24, 1938.

N : Can Yogic power reduce this shortening ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It ought to, but I haven't tried that sort of thing before.

## REMINISCENCES

*(In continuation of the present series, we reproduce below from the August 1962 number of the Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual of Calcutta a section of the article entitled "Reminiscences of Jail" by Nolini Kanta Gupta. In this chapter of his reminiscences, the author gives us an intimate picture of his life in jail in the illustrious company of Sri Aurobindo and the other young patriots who were under-trial prisoners in connection with the Alipore Bomb case of 1908-09. This will be a document of some historical importance when the story of the early Terrorists comes to be told.)*

### IX

IN Alipore Jail we spent a whole year, from 2nd May 1908 to 6th May 1909, as undertrial prisoners. This period might be divided into four distinct phases, according to the type of quarters we were allotted and the kind of life this gave us. Each of these phases was however not of equal length.

The ward we were assigned in the first instance—this was known as the "44 Degrees"—was where we had to spend most of our time in jail, and this in two instalments, once at the beginning and again at the end. The name "44 Degrees." was given because the ward consisted of 44 rooms ; these rooms were actually more like cells. You know the kennels and sheds where dogs and poultry are kept ? These were something very similar. Whatever was to be done had to be done within the four walls of one single room—small and dark ; there was no such thing as a screen or even any kind of privacy. Normally, these cells were set apart for the use of criminals like dacoits or murderers and they were kept singly, one in each cell. But we were kept in batches of three, for whatever reason one cannot say. Perhaps the idea was that if one of us tried to commit suicide, the other two would stop him ! How utterly man could degrade man to a state worse than that of beasts even, one might say, was illustrated admirably by the life one had to lead in these "44 Degrees". Wordsworth must have had good cause to write

And much it grieved my heart to think  
What man has made of man !

But of course one might take this as a fine opportunity for our training and discipline—out of much evil cometh much good. They say the spiritual



life is not for those who do not conquer shame and disgust and fear, and these three things we had to give up almost without a thought while we lived in jail. And in my case at least, this sharing of a single room by a group of three proved to be on the whole happy. It was my great good fortune, I must call it a good fortune indeed, that my room-mates were entirely to my taste and their company wholly happy and beneficial. One of them was Upenda (Upen Banerjee); the other was Sachin Sen Gupta who was almost like a younger brother to me. Sachin had been the youngest member of our group—he was hardly sixteen yet. He was a nephew of Makhan Sen, the revolutionary leader of Dacca. A point about Sachin was that he was a good singer with a very fine voice. His songs were mostly of the patriotic kind, but he sang them so sweetly and with such feeling that it was really a joy to hear him, especially for us who lived under such conditions in jail. I used to try and sing with him in unison and even managed to learn a few of his songs. This was my first acquisition in jail. Let me give an example of the kind of child this boy was. Our case in the Sessions court was drawing to a close and our counsel were making their final submissions on behalf of each of us individually. As Sachin's counsel concluded his statement, Sachin gave a sigh of disappointment. "He could not do the thing properly," he said. "I am young, almost a child. This is the point he should have particularly stressed. He should have appealed to the Judge's heart with a good deal of passion and sentiment. Instead of doing that, he has merely given a dry narration of the bare facts !" After his release from jail, Sachin joined the Ramakrishna Mission at Belur Math and died at a rather early age.

Of about the same age was Sushil, the famous Sushil Sen whom the Presidency Magistrate Kingsford had sentenced to be whipped. Let me relate an amusing incident concerning Sushil here. When at the end of the trial, the Judge invited each of us individually to say if we had any statements to make, Sushil stood up in the dock and declared that he did not wish to say anything in front of the Judge, because, as he put it, "whatever I say will be twisted into law." The whole court room roared with laughter.

Upenda occupied the position of both leader and teacher. It was he who taught us the Gita at the Manicktolla Gardens. Here in jail, by living in his company I learned a lot of things from him, he gave me much courage and energy and enthusiasm and some very good advice. I am grateful to him for all that. He had a particularly soft corner for me, perhaps because his wife's name was also Nolini. He had given me a suggestion as to what sort of defence I should put up in court. "You should say," he explained, "that you do not know anything, that you met me accidentally at your Mess, and that it was I who on finding in the course of our talk that you were interested in Indian philosophy invited you to come to my readings in the Gita's philosophy. You had no other motives or evil intentions." Upenda had also explained to me

certain ways of doing meditation and this helped me pass some of my time in jail.

It was not altogether bad during our first month of jail. And afterwards, when the case came up before the trying Magistrate, we began to have a really good time. For henceforth we had an opportunity to know and meet and talk with everybody else. We drove to court together making a lot of noise on the way; we stayed together in court for the most part of the day; and we drove back again in company. That was enough to keep us gay.

This first phase of our life was over by the end of a month and a half. The scene now opened to still brighter prospects. As the authorities discovered that we meant no harm and were perfectly good boys, they offered us a much nicer place for our stay. It was a spacious hall divided into three compartments, with a verandah and a courtyard in front. And our daily ablutions were now to be performed outside. This second phase of our life became something truly remarkable. Outside, in court, we met everybody. Back home, in the jail, we could meet anyone we chose at any hour of the day or night. Gradually, the company began to take a particular form and shape. We formed ourselves into groups according to each one's taste and predilection. The three compartments of the hall came to be divided from the outset into three distinct groups. Sri Aurobindo occupied a corner in a corner room. Hitherto he had been kept quite separate from us and this was the first time he came in our midst. In his room gathered all those who were interested in the spiritual life, in *sādhana* and meditation. Barin joined here. To the central section of the apartments came those who looked for some kind of mental culture, they were the more "intellectual" types. Here Upen took the lead and I too spent most of my time here because of him. The third compartment belonged to the atheists and rationalists, the so-called "practical" men. Hem Das and his chief disciple young Krishnapiban ruled here. The groups exchanged banter freely among themselves, but there was never any dearth of good feeling and friendship.

It was again during this period itself that we got permission to read books, and a few volumes reached our hands. My people sent me Bacon's *Essays*, Shakespeare's *King John*—I still remember these titles—and several other titles of the type used in my college as textbooks. Some works of Vivekananda came and also the *Brahmavaivarta* and the *Vishnu Purana* in the Basumatī edition. All of these books we went through over and over again and times without number, for new books could not be had for the asking.

But questionings too began to arise : and what next ? Must we rot in jail for the rest of our lives, say for ten years or perhaps twenty ? And supposing some of us were to be hanged, that too did not seem to be a particularly desirable end. Barin got an idea : we must break out of jail. Our lives, he argued, were going to be wasted in any case, so why not do something worthwhile before we lost all ? He consulted some of the others and began to form his plans. Even

maps and charts got ready and contacts were established with co-workers outside, such as the Chandernagore group with men like Srish Ghosh at the top. The idea was to carry out the *coup* sometime in the evening when we were usually left at large in the open compound of our ward. With pistols in hand, we were to rush to the compound wall. Our friends would be posted outside with their arms. From there they would throw in ropes and ladders. We would keep on shooting as we climbed up the wall and then jump on to the other side. From there we would make good our escape in carriages—there were no cars then—along a route fixed in advance and straight to the river-side. There the boats would be waiting. We would sail down the river and on to the Sunderbans and the deep jungle, as in the story of *Debi Chowdhuram* of Bankim.

There were many who could not approve of this romantic plan of Barin. But I was one of the small fry and was prepared to obey orders, whatever they might be. For it had been part of our ideal in life :

Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die :

to quote the poet's words with which my class-fellows greeted me on my first appearance in College after the release. We ourselves had often been singing the refrain,

We care not if we lost our life itself  
In thy service, O Mother,  
With "Bandemataram" on our lips.

Sri Aurobindo however refused to have anything to do with Barin's plans. "As far as I am concerned," he said, "I mean to stand the trial."

Another group, consisting of some four or five persons, had in the meantime been hatching another plan in secret. Kanaï Dutt was there, and Satyen Bose; perhaps Hem Das also was in the know and Upen and Ullas too. But they did not say a word and showed only by their deed what they had meant to do.

Close on this second phase of our life came the third. The authorities had known us long enough by now to get convinced that we could make no trouble, not even the kind of indiscipline which they expected of the ordinary prisoners. There was the big hall where all the forty of us were lodged. Each had his allotted space, with his own "altar," that is, a mound of earth that served as the bedstead and was covered with a blanket; at one end the mound was raised slightly to do duty for the pillow. I had at first nothing but disdain for this piece of earth, but later I came to appreciate its value, as I shall soon relate. Outside the hall, there was a huge courtyard where the water taps were and an aqueduct to carry off the surplus water where one could even take bath. The

kitchen was near at hand and its smells filled the whole place. Up above there was the open sky. One could always come out into the open during the day; the sentries were extremely courteous. We had a regular supply of vegetables and even fish and meat, from outside, and we were sometimes allowed to cook. Inside, within the hall, all manner of games and frolic were on—it was a regular fair. There was acting and caricature, recitation and song, an endless mirth.

In the midst of all this, Sri Aurobindo occupied his little corner engrossed most of the time in his *sādhana* and meditations. But occasionally he too did not hesitate to join in our childish pranks. One day I asked to hear from him something in the Greek language. He gave us a recital of ten or twelve lines from Homer. That was the first time I listened to Greek verse.

Such was the picture of our outer life. But how about the inner feelings ? There a fire had been smouldering. Barin had suggested that it would be easier and more feasible if we tried to make good our escape from jail itself, for we used to take our strolls in the yard adjoining the compound wall and the sentries also did not seem to be much too alert. Revolvers began to be collected—in what manner I shall explain later. But how did we hide them ? Well, I had one in my keeping. On one side of the mound we used as a bed I had made a hole. In order to prevent discovery and lest the sentries should know, I used to sit with my back against the mound and go on digging with my bare hands from behind. The earth was removed to either side and covered with the blanket. In this way the pistol could be kept hidden in a cavity within my “bed”. The opening was covered up with a tin plate on which they served us meals, and then plastered over with mud. But what happened to the pistol I left buried in this way I do not know. For as these plans and preparations were getting under way, there came a bolt from the blue, a deluge that swept away everything like a house of cards. It was Kanai and Satyen who had brought that about.

I did not know Satyen much, for we were told that he was ill and had been kept in the jail hospital. Kanai too was not much of a mixer. But we could sometimes hear him say, “Jail is not for me. I shall give the slip to the British Government.” We used to laugh at his words.

Let me mention here a somewhat similar incident about Sri Aurobindo. One day, as we sat in our cage in the court room, one of the more enterprising sentries—he was an Englishman—came up to him and said jokingly, “Aurobindo (he could not say Aurobindo), you are caught at last, you are caught at last.” Sharp and immediate came Sri Aurobindo’s retort, “And yet I will escape, and yet I will escape !”

To come back to Kanai. Most of the time he used to lie in bed covered up from head to foot. If one got curious and asked him why, he would reply, “Oh, I am trying to find my way into the inner worlds.” One day, a jail warder came and gave him the good news that he had passed his B.A. examination, the

results were just out. Kanai had joined in our activities while preparing for his examination. The next we heard about him was that he was ill and had been removed to hospital. And then.....

All of a sudden, one evening, the alarm bell of the jail rang out. This bell with its furious clang was rung only in a grave emergency. At the same time, a prisoner ran wildly about, shouting in Hindustani, "*Naren Gosain thāndā ho gayā, Naren Gosain thāndā ho gayā*,"—"Naren Gosain has been done for, Naren Gosain has been done for !" Before we had time to think or realise what had happened, swarms of armed policemen with rifles and fixed bayonets trooped into the courtyard where we had been taking our evening stroll. They pushed us back into our quarters like a drove of sheep or as if we had been animals for slaughter. Everyone was searched and we got a few rude jostlings. We were made to form a line and sit down on the spot and the order came, "Now to the 44 Degrees."

Kanai and others had wanted to get rid of Naren Gosain as soon as possible, not simply because he had been a traitor to the country but in order that his testimony be rejected in the Sessions court, for his evidence would have no value unless it could be tested in cross-examination. This saved us all, at least from the clutches of the law.

Now we were back again to where we had been at the beginning. It was exactly as before, except that now, instead of keeping us three in a room, they made us live separately and alone in our cells. For the authorities had now come to realise what kind of stuff we had beneath the mild surface. That was the end of our golden age in jail. All our special facilities and privileges were withdrawn. The court room was now the only place where we could meet.

The case dragged on for quite sometime, for several months in fact. And then, the trial once over, came a period of utter loneliness. We could do nothing but await the results. This state of dark night lasted nearly two months. I too had occasional fits of depression during this period. "Why, and what, and where, and which way ?" These were questions that came up and clouded the mind. There was a sense of weariness. The one solace I found—it came towards the end—was in the company of Vivekananda. That was when his book, *Colombo to Almora*, came to my hands. What faith and confidence, what strength, what courage breathed through his words and his manner ! All seemed to get cleared up, especially when I read aloud the Vedic and Upanishadic *mantras* like,

*vedāham etaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam  
tam eva viditvā atimṛtyum eti  
nānyaḥ panthāḥ vidyate ayanāya.*

"I know this mighty Person resplendent as the sun, who stands beyond

all darkness, by knowing whom alone one crosses beyond death; there is no other road for the great journey."

Or,

*na tatra sūryo bhāti na candra-tārakam  
nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto ayam agniḥ  
tam eva bhāntam anubhāti sarvam  
tasya bhāsā sarvam idaṁ vibhāti*

"There the sun shines not and the moon has no splendour and the stars are blind; there these lightnings flash not, how then shall burn this earthly fire ? All that shines is but the shadow of this shining; all this universe is effulgent with his light."

Or else,

*yasyeme himavanto mahitvā*

"Whose glory these Himalayan snows declare."

How direct the touch of something eternally true, of a refuge unassailable, a fearless state and foundation unshaken was brought by the words of Vivekananda ! They did in truth bring one near to the Self and impart strength, *ātmada, balada*. Later, I read about Oscar Wilde and his experiences in jail, his *De Profundis*. Whenever I seemed to fall into some deep abyss, immediately there would surge up from the inner depths an aspiration for the heights. This for me was truly the darkest night before dawn.

One day, as I sat deeply brooding with a rather heavy weight on my head, suddenly there came the feeling of a something that was clear and bright and calm, "the horizons grew bright, the winds felt delightful," *disaḥ praseduḥ marutaḥ vavuh sukhāḥ*. I sensed now as if there was nothing more to worry about. My release was destined, a release that was already manifest within me, and in the wind and the sky...

On my last day in jail, we were summoned to court to hear the judgment. One by one the names were called out, of those who had been convicted. My name was not there; that is, I had been discharged. I did not feel any surprise or elation. What had happened was perfectly natural, something that had to be. I took leave of my friends and companions of all these days, bade them good-bye and paced back slowly out into the freedom of the open spaces, my mind at peace. A year had passed.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Sanat K. Banerji from the original Bengali)

## OLD LONG SINCE

(Continued from the previous issue)

### III

It became a habit with me to meet Ramaswami Iyengar on the beach every evening at about 5-30 just after leaving school. It was natural for my school friends also to accompany me.

How did Ramaswami Iyengar come to Pondicherry? How did he meet Sri Aurobindo? I did not know well then. I heard that it was he, Ramaswami Iyengar, who had secretly invited K. V. Rangaswami Iyengar, of whom more presently, and arranged a meeting between him and Sri Aurobindo.

The story is this. A Siddhapurusha—a Yogi—called Nagai Japta was the Kulaguru (family preceptor) of K. Rangaswami Iyengar and a close friend of his. My uncle used to tell me of many a miracle which the Yogi had done. It was rumoured that when paddy fields went dry for want of water, Japta's power would bring down the needed rain and make the withering paddy plants shoot forth again.

This great man had also said to the family members of Rangaswami Iyengar to this effect: "A great saint will come to the South from the North; he is a great Yogi and will show the way not only to our country but to the whole human race; he will be indeed your Kulaguru after me, you should accept him as such." This he said and after a few days disappeared, one did not know where.

On learning of Sri Aurobindo's arrival at Pondicherry, Rangaswami came here secretly with the help of Ramaswami, to see Sri Aurobindo and talk to him. Secrecy was necessary at that time to avoid suspicion of the British Police.

Rangaswami came several times afterwards to meet Sri Aurobindo openly. But it was during the earlier secret visits that Sri Aurobindo wrote—apparently—the book *Yogic Sadhan* for him and gave it to him.

In the company of some close friends like Sr. Nivasachari, Ramaswami and Rangaswami, there used to be now and then what is called "automatic writing", that is to say, writing by spirits, as they are named. I am not sure whether the persons mentioned were the only ones present, there might have been a few others too. I gathered different versions from different people on the matter. It is said that Bharati also used to be in those meetings.

Now, what does automatic writing mean ? It is usually done at night only. In the dim light of a lamp sits a man—the right sort of man, it goes without saying—in deep quietude in a chair beside a table, with pencil and paper in front. He invites or awaits the coming of a spirit, most often the spirit of a dead person. The spirit enters into the quietly expectant medium and taking hold of his hand writes down answers to questions put by the people assembled or sets down whatever it pleases the spirit to say for the amusement or enlightenment of the assembly. I myself witnessed such a phenomenon when Sri Aurobindo did the writing and I was full of wonder. Of course it is truly interesting when the medium is a qualified person; every one is not a Sri Aurobindo.

The book *Yogic Sadhan* had its origin in this way. It is said that it was written through the medium of Sri Aurobindo by some great spirit, probably Rammohan Roy; for it seems Sri Aurobindo said that he saw the figure of Rammohan as he was doing the writing. The spirit entered into him, that is to say, into his hands and wrote down the book. That is why the book, printed at Srirangam Vani Vilas Press, at the instance of Rangaswami Iyengar, was ascribed to an Uttara Yogī as author or editor : that is to say, a Yogī who had come from the North gave form to the book.

As I already mentioned I used to go to the beach after my school hours and stay there till seven or seven-thirty in the evening. Among the persons I met there the most important one was, of course, Ramaswami Iyengar. There I met also Subburattinam, who became famous later on as the writer Bharatidasan. The Young Swaminathan, whose traces I have now lost, was also there and a few schoolmates. All of us used to sit on the sands and, as is the way with youngsters, left no subject undiscussed.

At that time naturally I did not realise what was the new and precious thing which Sri Aurobindo's active presence was shaping in me. Not that even now I have the full knowledge of it. It was, however, Sri Aurobindo's dynamic presence that accounted for the indescribable joy experienced by me. And it was through Ramaswami that the great riches of Sri Aurobindo came down to me as Grace from the Divine, and also spread in a somewhat formless or informal way among all. My thought remained absorbed in whatever Ramaswami would say about Sri Aurobindo, his message, his talk, his jokes, everything.

One day all of a sudden a thought arose in me; I told Ramaswami while on the beach, "I would like very much to dine with you once." I could make out from his face that this proposal of mine came to him like a thunderbolt. The proposal was not made in the presence of others, I whispered it into his ears, when I found myself alone with him; very clearly there was but one motive behind it. I hoped that if I dined with him, Sri Aurobindo also would be there. Ramaswami, evidently bewildered, thought for a moment and then questioned me, "But it is no vegetarian meal in Sri Aurobindo's house; how do you propose to dine there ?" He said this somewhat hesitatingly and hoped it



would put an end to the matter. But I was not to be baulked so easily. A little perplexed, I too retorted, "What if there be no vegetarian meal ? I am ready to dine with you all." He must have been terribly vexed to get such an unexpected reply and in such a categorical manner, without a moment's hesitation. He however gave no expression to his surprise, but asked me to come next day straight from the school at 12 noon and join him. I was beside myself with joy.

Next day the closing bell at the Calvé School went ding-dong at 11-30 sharp. Along with the other students, I too walked out of the school. I went straight home to Muthialpet, took my bath—rather hurriedly—and reached Sri Aurobindo's house at 12 noon precisely. Plunged in the thought that in a little while I would be seeing Sri Aurobindo, I became forgetful of everything else.

The main door of Sri Aurobindo's house in Mission Street was left open. As soon as I entered, Ramswami came and received me. There was none else. The house lay dead silent in the intense heat of broad daylight. My heart too was motionless.

Ramaswami made a move and said, "Let us go to the hotel." On hearing these words I felt as if I had suddenly been thrown down from a height to which I had been lifted up. I could not understand anything. I was then almost dying with hunger. The citadel built by me was cast down by one breath as it were. Well, I started trudging, in that excessive heat, with Ramaswami towards a hotel more than a mile away; I walked the distance with bare feet, without sandals. The meal was served for me alone. Silently, without uttering a single word, I swallowed the food and then proceeded towards my school, Ramaswami accompanying me. I entered the Reading Room of the School, the classes were to start at 3 p.m. And I tried my best to attend to my lessons. In the same street, just a little to the south, lay Sri Aurobindo's house and Ramaswami moved towards it.

So far as I remember this happened in the first week of July in the year 1913.

*(To be continued)*

AMRITA

*(Translated by Parichand from the original Tamil)*

## SYDNEY KARTUS ON SRI AUROBINDO'S TEACHINGS

*(Sydney Kartus is an American writer interested in international problems, social reconstruction, human unity, etc. He was a member of the American House for thirteen years. He is a close student and follower of Sri Aurobindo.)*

*The following is his letter of the 10th July 1962 to A.B.Purani who is lecturing on Sri Aurobindo in the United States.)*

Phoenix 7,  
Arizona

Dear Sri Purani,

On your recommendation made during our talk at Phoenix I obtained your book "Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo", first and second series.

It was a very happy circumstance that made it possible for you to record these talks, and I am sure that your foresight led you to perceive the value that there would be for the future in preserving this record.

In instance after instance, the talks throw light on questions which arise in anyone who has studied the writings of Sri Aurobindo....I find it remarkable that you were able to preserve with clarity and faithfulness conversations on such a wide range of subjects, some of them complex and even technical, not to speak of those relating to the profound questions of the inner life and being.

Two themes seem to stand out conspicuously....First, the primacy of spiritual perfection without which the perfection of outer individual and social life is impossible. Second, the vast catholicity of Sri Aurobindo's viewpoint, on how the perfection of the inner being is to be attained. I do not mean simply the tolerance of allowing people to have their own religious belief. It is something far more than that. No hard and fast rule, no cut-out system, is possible in his yoga, says Sri Aurobindo. It cannot be confined in the narrow circle of the ideas of one man or a set of men.

It is this catholicity which gives to Sri Aurobindo's teachings such an unlimited appeal. Former dispensations could overlook differences based on dogma, race or other considerations. But here in the teaching of the Master of Pondicherry the truth itself in all teachings is made cohesive and compatible. Sri Aurobindo does not cajole differences into co-existence, but fuses all truth in Oneness. Out of this inner composition the outer unity and harmony of mankind is possible to achieve.

## THE DIVINE ALONE

ONE more illusion had been broken. He had realised how often persons whom he had exerted himself for and even served had time and again worked against him. With poignant feeling he had just seen how men whom he had befriended in their trials and stood by in their hour of need, had quietly let him down at the very first test.

He was completely at sea and did not know how to proceed. There seemed to be nothing to stand upon. Suddenly, with a sense of finality, there came these formed lines :

*Nobody is for anybody. Only the Divine will be for you if you are for the Divine.*

In a flash a whole Pathway was lighted for him and the strength given to tread it.

“SADHAKA”

## THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LITERATURE OVERSEAS

*An Address delivered at the Open Session of the Commonwealth  
Conference on the Teaching of English Literature, held in Cambridge,  
1962.*

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to participate in the deliberations of this Conference, and particularly to have this opportunity of addressing you at this open session. It is thanks to the kindness and courtesy of the British Council, who were pleased to sponsor me for the purpose, that I am able to attend this Conference in Cambridge.

A great deal of "lit. crit.", or pseudo-literary study, is current in many universities overseas today. It is detrimental to the teaching of both the English language and English literature. It is fortunate that a good deal of this superfluous activity is making room for plain and sound language teaching. But it is also essential that the teaching of English literature, to those who are equipped for it, should be developed into a healthful and life-giving discipline.

This Conference has been convened to concentrate on the specific problems of teaching English literature overseas. Dr. Holloway's classification into three distinct groups of the countries in which these problems have to be faced and solved is a useful frame of reference. I will comment on it later. But Japan, which he places in the second category is, I believe, in a unique situation. It is highly modernised in its industrial structure and is on a par with advanced western countries. But its literature, it is true, is becoming modernised only gradually. Dr. Holloway mentions Bengal as another country to be placed in the second category. But there is no such country to be found on the map of the world. There are two Bengals and each of them is a State within a country, —East Bengal in Pakistan and West Bengal in India.

It needs to be stressed in these days when all intellectual enquiry seems to lead to statistical tables or mathematical formulae that literary study contributes as much to maturity of understanding and flexibility of mind as to emotional and imaginative development. It promotes the formation of a many-sided, resilient, evolved and evolving personality. A core of being, capable of endless evolution, is created by literary study. It is a more comprehensive core than the one generated by historical or philosophic enquiry because it is the study of all writing which induces the whole soul of man into activity.

It may not be so outstanding a discipline as the study of linguistics along with one or two foreign languages, of mathematics or natural science. But literary study draws upon some of the other disciplines naturally and inevitably. It loses somewhat in intellectual rigour when compared with other disciplines. But it scores over them in the mellowness and wholeness of the human personality which it helps to develop because its appeal is as much emotional and imaginative as it is intellectual.

Literary study has to be conducted from many points of view. The linguistic approach is necessary, for we have to study *Beowulf* and *The Canterbury Tales* with as much perception and understanding as we study *The Waste Land*, if we are to assess them properly. It also makes us aware of the personal and impersonal exercise of language in different kinds of literature. The formal or "aesthetic" approach unravels for us the nature of diverse styles, techniques and literary forms. The psychological approach, supplemented by the biographical, gives us an intimate glimpse into the evolution of a writer's personality. The historical, the sociological and the philosophic approaches help us to relate a work of art to its own environment and connect it with the great political or philosophic movements which it mirrors or against which it is a protest. Finally the essential or evaluative approach attempts to bring out its abiding significance, the light that it throws on the enigma of life or the mystery of the cosmos and the dynamic aesthesis through which it accomplishes this. It is only when we gaze through these seven windows that we are privileged to realise a work of art in its essence, its totality. The essence of a work of art is, in the last analysis, the soul of the individual writer or of a whole people that, consciously or unconsciously, it strives to express. Consequently the supreme aim of literary study is to encounter the soul of an individual or people in the faith that this adventure will culminate in the exploration and evolution of one's own soul. When a student achieves this he knows what literature is like in its depth, width and height. It is only then that he can afford to settle down to specialised study in any branch of his subject,—the literary or social history of a period, biographical or philosophic criticism, prosodic or stylistic analysis or textual emendation.

The approach of the non-British student to English literature is, in many ways, bound to be different from that of the British student. The non-British student has no easy access to the "inwardness" of the language, whatever that may mean, and to a whole body of allusions, customs and manners. These are encountered naturally by the British student, at least in a large measure, but the non-British student has to pore over books of social history and of mythological and literary reference before he is able to enjoy a literary work. The handicaps of a European student will not be so serious as those of an Afro-Asian in this regard because the former shares the same cultural heritage. Even a non-British Christian student will have a distinct advantage because he knows

the biblical fount of English literature and has, unlike a Hindu or Muslim, been baptised in its waters.

There is another fact that distinguishes the approach of the non-British student from that of the British student. "Literary studies in English," says Dr. Holloway, "will have something else particularly to offer them—something, that is, in excess of what they offer to students in Britain." But the European student also, and not merely the Afro-Asian, gets from English literature something in excess of what he obtains from his own literature. For example, as Sri Aurobindo observes, he will find that the course of English poetry is more faithful to the genius of poetry than that of any other poetry because it covers the field that lies before the genius of poetry by successive steps which follow the natural ascending order of our developing perceptions. "It began by a quite external, a clear and superficial substance and utterance. It proceeded to a deeper vital poetry, a poetry of the power and beauty and wonder and spontaneous thought, the joy and passion and pain, the colour and music of Life, in which the external presentation of life and things was taken up, but exceeded and given its full dynamic and imaginative content. From that it turned to an attempt at mastering the secret of the Latins, the secret of a clear, measured and intellectual dealing with life, things and ideas. Then came an attempt, a brilliant and beautiful attempt to get through Nature and thought and the mentality in life and Nature and their profounder aesthetic suggestion to certain spiritual truths behind them. This attempt could not come to perfect fruition, partly because there had not been the right intellectual preparation or a sufficient basis of spiritual knowledge and experience and only so much could be given as the solitary individual intuition of the poet could by a sovereign effort attain, partly because after the lapse into an age of reason the spontaneous or the intenser language of spiritual poetry could not always be found or, if found, could not be securely kept. So we get a deviation into another age of intellectual, artistic or reflective poetry with a much wider range, but less profound in its roots, less high in its growth; and partly out of this, partly by a recoil from it has come the turn of recent and contemporary poetry which seems at last to be approaching the secret of the utterance of profounder truth with its right magic of speech and rhythm." (*The Future Poetry*, pp. 81-82).

Any student whose mother-tongue is not English will find in English literature new material, the like of which he cannot find in his own—unique varieties of diction like the Shakespearean, the Miltonic and the Wordsworthian; new prose styles like those of Bacon, Browne, Burke and Lamb; new literary forms like the Shakespearean sonnet, Shakespearean tragedy and the dramatic monologue; the evolution of fascinating literary personalities like Shakespeare, Shelley and Keats; charming variations of the European social scene in the essays of Steele, Addison and Goldsmith and in the Victorian novel; the Platonism of Spenser, Shelley and Keats; the typical British reaction to the French

Revolution; the peculiar impact of puritanism and of imperialism—the one seen in Milton, the other in Kipling; and the greatness of the English language which, as Sri Aurobindo says, “of all the modern European languages it has the largest freest poetic energy and natural power” (*The Future Poetry*, p. 265.)

Nor need we think, when defining general aims, that it is only in western countries that the study of English literature is calculated “to assist in the interchange of literary experience and values”. An interchange of this kind is not only possible but inevitable with the other two groups. The nature of this interchange will naturally differ from group to group. The folk tales and the folk songs of the American Indian and the African have had their own impact on American and European literature. A study of the *Upanishads* and *Gita*, of the *Shahnameh* and the *Mahabharata* and of *Panchatantra* and *The Arabian Nights*, colours a good part of English, and indeed European, literature. The modern impact from Afro-Asian countries may not be so perceptible owing to difficulties of translation. But we have to reckon with the influence of writers like Gandhiji, Tagore and Khalil Gibran. The general aim of a study of English literature in western countries is not merely that of “an interchange of literary experience and values”. This applies to the other groups as well. The general aim of the western student should really be to appreciate the uniqueness of English literature as outlined in the preceding paragraph.

It is true that part of the value of the study of English literature for African students is the assistance it offers in the development of indigenous culture by “making available the literary tradition of an advanced country”. In some cases at least this will mean a big leap from naive folk tales and songs to symbolist poetry and the stream of consciousness novel and all the literature of knowledge including encyclopaedias and dictionaries. It will be a transition from oral to written literature. For people who have only an oral tradition in literature, almost everything is bound to be new—intoxicatingly new. Minor forms like the detective novel, the limerick and the one-act play will be as new to them as epic and tragedy. A textbook on chemistry will be as useful for them as one of the world’s classics. All their literary forms will start on a simultaneous career without a time lag—the epic and ballad with the novel and short story, the personal essay with the lyric, and history with biography and autobiography. But they need not be obsessed with the past history of English literature simply because they have no literary past of their own. Like developing countries which benefit by the industrial tradition of the West, the literary pioneers also can avoid waste and fruitless experimentation. For example, their drama need not go through the evolutionary ordeal of the Miracle Play, the Morality, the Interlude and classical or vernacular drama before it arrives at Shakespearean tragedy or comedy. Their Ibsenic plays need not follow Shakespeare after an interval of about three hundred years. The social evolution in Africa is itself unprecedented and so will be their literary evolution.

There is, however, a danger which students of English literature in emerging countries will have to avoid if they are to assist in the development of an indigenous culture. Their literary study will be invaluable for them if they choose to become pioneers of a national literature. But there is also the likelihood that they may come under the spell of La Belle Dame Sans Merci and be held in her thrall for ever. The contrast between their own society and the social evolution presented in English literature is so great that they may be tempted to give up the attempt to transform their society and inaugurate their own literary tradition. They may surrender themselves utterly to a kind of colonialism in their intellectual and aesthetic life in spite of their political emancipation. In that case they will be a "lost generation" like those Indians in the fifties of the last century who thought that they lived in a desert, read Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth or Arnold and dreamed of London, Oxford or Cambridge while sipping their brandy or beer. They remembered with avidity Mr. Bumble's workhouse in which *Oliver Twist* asked for more and every detail in the topography of *Thyrsis* and *The Scholar-Gipsy*, but not the landscape pictured in Kalidasa's *Meghaduta* or the name of the sage who educated Rama and his brothers.

(To be continued)

V. K. GOKAK



## NIRVANA

THE tone and resonance, the gleam and night  
Die like echoing chords on a hill's stark height.  
All vanish in that vacancy, you and I;  
None is there eager to hear the world's loud cry.  
A bourneless silence, still, unmoving, lone,  
Lost beyond thought's ascent, a mute unknown !  
The lines of the unseizable and the quest  
Are sensed not in that vast and termless rest.  
A calm unspeakable rapture with its heat  
Builds no entranced solitude's retreat,  
In the deeps of the heaven-artist's unfathomed force  
Before creation with winged motion rose :  
When all is regained or all in God is lost  
In the beginning's dawn or the holocaust.  
Towards that dazzling eternity of Sun  
Wings, called, the bird of flame-dominion.

CHINMOY

*(Translated by Romen from the original Bengali)*

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## FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE MOTHER

O MOTHER, from that very blessed day  
When fell the first footfall of the dawn's ray,  
My life entire, with Thy one glimpse divine,  
Roused utterly and only to be Thine.  
On that blessed day when my heart got the touch  
Of Thy warm Love and Thy nectar's overmuch,  
Hundreds of lotus petals opened their lips  
To the flooding ecstasy of Thy Apocalypse.  
To-day's fulfilled my life, crowned is my birth,  
With Thy overflowing Benedictions' Mirth,  
My bygone seasons wasted, whiled away  
Were passaging for this new luminous day.  
Life an affectionate puppet, played by Thee,  
I float and sport with Thy nectars of Ecstasy.  
Having long wandered, my life's boat has cast  
Its anchor at the shore of Thy Feet at last.

DULALI

*(Translated by Har Krishan Singh from the original Bengali)*

## ON OCHRE WASTES

I STAND upon the ochre wastes beyond my joy  
And touch your hands—  
Smooth with sea-movements.

My darkened lips would know your unremembered name  
And all you were,  
They thirst to praise you.

Your eyes bend down and touch my gaze,  
Understanding they fold around me  
And hold my heart.

ANURAKTA (Tony Scott)

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## TO NIGHT

NIGHT, O mysterious solitary night !  
Indeed thou art the direst organ of Time.  
Eternal obscurity is thy god-like seat,  
Inconscient is thy chamber's depth sublime,  
Where not one glimpse of spiritual truth can trace  
Its fathomless love to moaning human soul :  
Like a giant thy intangible darknesses  
Stand barrier to mortality's rapturous goal.

When lose our eyes their ether-flaming Sun,  
The wide beauty and ever-wakeful sight  
Of laughing earth, helplessly then I run  
Into thy sullen breast, O fearful night.  
A Maya-dance unveils to human life,  
A distant voice begins its iron roar,  
We fall into a pit of shuddering strife—  
O for the Face of the Golden Truth once more !

*Srijit*  
(with K. D. S.)

## THOUGHTS

STANDING in Heaven Thou stretchest Thy hands earthwards. Standing on earth I stretch my hands heavenwards....

In between falls a wide gulf. Who will bridge it ? Shall I span it ? It is far beyond my capacity. Wilt Thou then undertake to do it ? Instead of answering me straight as to whether Thou wilt or no, what art Thou doing, standing mute ?

Why art Thou drawing me ? Am I the iron and Thou the lodestar ? O Supreme magnet, why didst Thou stretch Thy hands ? Who could foresee at that time that Thou shalt hoist me straight up ? This alone is the spiritual askesis, the magnet draws to kiss.

\*

\*

Our world has seen a Bhimsen of unique physical strength, a Jarasandha of unique vital energy and a Shankara of unique intellectual power. Yet to our dismay our world continues to be the same as ever.

Then there is no other way for the world but to rise beyond them.

\*

\*

Filling strength in weak thighs, our Guru makes us climb up to Mount Kailas. And loading us with Sachchidananda he makes us come down from that lofty place to the valleys of the infernal underworld. But with one single aim.

The aim of enriching the earth.

GIRDHARLAL

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

# THE CREATIVE VALUES

A Review of "Sri Aurobindo Circle, Eighteenth Number", April 1962\*

## I

### POETRY AND DRAMA

GIVING a "psychological definition" of poetry, Dr. John Neihardt, presents a wide and creative view of poetic values which would raise man from his ordinary narrow conception of the world given by materialistic science to a more open and expansive conception sought to be achieved by the art consciousness. In an abridgement by Dr. Sisirkumar Ghose of his two lectures appearing in the Annual *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, the Journal of Sri Aurobindo Society, Bombay, Dr. Neihardt says, "The creative dream is the process of reconstructing the ordinary representation of the world in keeping with an expanding view of it; a creative fusing of two views of the world, each of which would seem to the other like a dream. And that which is added to the narrower standardized conception of the world by this process is poetry."

In this matter-of-fact modern world the higher values of art and education in terms of a reorientation of self and life have given place to economic and monetary values of the material man. So this advocacy, for the expansion of the human consciousness into the "outer field" in order to seek the higher to justify the lower, and make the art consciousness and poetic values a means of communication and thus bring "identification" in men, serves a great cause and brings a new hope for the vanishing values of a finer, nobler, greater and higher life. To acquire poetic values is not to land ourselves in a blank or fanciful world of imagination, but to seek the real and the conscious sense of our living. "We must realize that there is a wide range of valid states of consciousness; that expanded consciousness is not a matter of imagination in the sense of unreality, but in a sense by which alone it is possible to live humanly. The whole man must be the whole of his conscious field. We are generally far less than half men in our normal relations and our materialistic society exists in a very small fraction of the humanly realizable world."

Dr. Ghose, lecturing to his students at the University of Missouri, U.S.A., chose two poets in his introduction : Rabindranath Tagore, the poet of the Dawn, and Sri Aurobindo, the poet of the Everlasting Day. They are the

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poets, the *kavi*, in the real Sanskrit sense, the best sense of the term, for they have seen the truth. They are able to correlate ordinary life and the ideal life, 'reconstruct the ordinary representation of the world in keeping with an expanding view of it,' by the power of what Dr. Neihardt, calls 'the creative dream', and fill the narrow world with 'poetry', the illumining light of the Dawn that will expand it into its own greater, its universal being. As says Rabindranath,

The eternal Dream  
is borne on the wings of ageless Light  
that rends the veil of the vague  
and goes across Time  
weaving ceaseless patterns of Being.

Or as says Sri Aurobindo

Nature shall live to manifest secret God,  
The Spirit shall take up the human play,  
This earthly life become the life divine.

Out of the dramatic play of the conflicting forces of Nature emerges slowly the light, the transforming light of love that harmonises and unifies. Sri Aurobindo brings into the play of his dramatic romance, *Eric*, several types of human personality, the intellectual, emotional, the ethical or the subliminal : Aslaug with her passionate heart, "To dare, to act was always Aslaug's part"; Swegn, her brother and Eric's worst enemy, a typical representative of the best men of his traditional culture and way of life" ("a soul/Brilliant and furious, violent and great,/ A storm, a wind-swept ocean, not a man"); his wife, Hertha, "gifted with an extremely quick, lively and plastic intelligence capable of psychological understanding and manipulation of characters"; and among others the hero Eric whose "personality is surcharged with and radiates an overwhelming power whose impact is felt, recognised and admitted by all the characters in his relationship". It is "because of the masterful, compelling and unselfish character of the hero" that the "education and growth of consciousness of the persons in the play of the old unregenerate pattern of life based on egoistic ignorance into the new horizon of light and love become possible and inevitable", for he becomes the instrument for the triumphant birth of love, the best educator, "of the fundamental types of the human personality to the perception and realisation of the higher and ideal life" by "an uplifting and transforming of the Actual towards the Ideal." "Eric, the complete man," writes M. V. Seetaraman, the reviewer of this poetic drama, "can bring love in the hearts of a limited world of human beings and save them from their death-in-life, their tragic existence, but to save the whole world from Death is the work

of the Divine Mother. The Vibhuti looks forward to the Avatar. Eric points to Savitri."

Lucid and living are the translations of Mallarmé by K. D. Sethna which he continues from the earlier Numbers of the *Circle*. The translated poems are : *Prose (for des Esseintes)*, *Another Fan (Belonging to Mademoiselle Mallarmé)*, *The Tomb of Edgar Poe*, *The Swan* and *The Tomb of Charles Baudelaire*. A few lines from *The Swan* :

Virginal, vivid, beautiful Today—  
Will it tear with a stroke of drunken wing this lone  
Hard lake where haunts mid hoar-frost's overlay  
The transparent glacier of flights unflown ?  
.....  
His neck will shake off the white agony  
Space-flung upon the bird denying space,  
But the soil's horror grips his plumage down.

The first four lines of *The Tomb of Edgar Poe* :

At last to Himself he is changed by eternity,  
The Poet rouses with a naked sword  
His age fear-stricken powerless to see  
Triumphant Death in the strangeness of his Word !

At the end of the *Circle*, we have two beautiful poems by Kamalakanto, *Canticle to the Blue Lotus* and *Kinship* showing a revealing relationship between the Divine and the Emergent Shakti, and the Divine and the aspirant.

## II

### THE PSYCHIC BEING, THE INDIVIDUAL SELF

The constantly aspiring element in man, the portion of the Divine, is called by Sri Aurobindo, "the psychic being", which, says M. P. Pandit in his article, is "one of the key-concepts in the Philosophy and Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother". The soul in man is the divine spark, the psychic essence which, when it develops in the course of evolution, takes some shape and form, a personality, and is called the psychic being. It is in conjunction with the Jivatman above the evolution, the "central being" of man, as Sri Aurobindo says. The Jivatman remains unborn and uninvolved, as an individualised Self (Atman), while the psychic being, its "deputy", is involved in the evolution,

but remains behind man's instrumental being which is constituted of mind, life and body, waiting for its hour of true and faultless governance, when allowed to act in order to lead him on this spiritual destiny.

The article depicts in clear language the exact role of the psychic being as explained by Sri Aurobindo. There is, however, no mention in the article of the "psychic plane" which would have made it more complete. The "psychic plane", by the way, is not in the hierarchy of planes of the Lower or the Higher Hemisphere of Existence. Although the psychic is derived from "the divine principle of Ananda", its plane is behind the worlds of mind, vital and physical and there the psychic returns after leaving the body and from there comes to birth when it finds suitable conditions ready for its return, till through many births, knowing its oneness with the Jivatman above the evolution and with the Divine, it becomes free and has no need to return to the psychic plane but lives in the high spiritual planes which the realised person has achieved.

Arabinda Basu's article on Person and Personality basing itself on two passages from the *Prayers and Meditations* of the Mother, takes up the question of the individual self from the point of view of different Yogic systems, like the Samkhya, Jnana, Karma, Bhakti, and the integral view of the Mother. He says, according to this view, "...the individual self is the Brahman as a conscious focus and centre of its self-knowledge and self-enjoyment and a means of its power and manifestation. The individual self descends into the world as the soul or psychic being and evolves into its utterly free nature. But that is not all. It not only itself evolves but is also the pivot of the evolution of the earth-nature to its intended perfection. From a nature of Ignorance it has to be transmuted into the nature of Knowledge. But just as the individual self is necessary as a centre of Consciousness-Force for the manifestation of the world out of the multiple One, so also the individual soul is indispensable for the evolution of the triple Nature of Matter, Life and Mind into the Power of Supramental Substance, Force and Knowledge."

The psychic being is the instrument of spiritual progress, or, as Rishabhchandra says in his *The Double Lever of Ascent*, one of the levers of ascent, the other lever being the "supreme Grace from above that answers" to the "fixed and unfailing aspiration that calls from below". The push and the power behind the call of the involved complexity of life comes from the growing psychic. On one side, explains the writer, is the triple labour of aspiration, rejection and surrender and the qualities of openness, receptivity, plasticity, sincerity and consciousness, and on the other "the direct action of the Mother's Force" which makes the aspirant pass through "three successive stages and attitudes : the first is that of the servant; the second, that of the instrument; the third, that of the child."

The real child-attitude comes when the sadhana passes from the early "mental" search to the psychic simplicity.

"But that was to change on that day of days when I met the Mother. As She smiled at me in greeting, I gazed deeply into the glorious eyes and found myself engulfed in a wake of Peace and Bliss. The question that I had meant to ask Her went unasked. But, though I did not realize it at the time, *The Question* had been answered. I had found what I had been looking for.

"Some weeks later, after I had returned home, the full impact of Her Force descended into me. Then, I realized, with finality and joy, that the real reason of my being was to become a true child of the Mother, one who would increasingly become a true manifesting instrument of Her Will."

This is how Rutledge Tompkins in his "What the Integral Yoga means to me" describes his transformed attitude, as a Westerner, in the process of his becoming a child. He relates very keenly how the "transformation" came to him. He says that with the growth of faith and the psychic inwardness and the loving surrender, "...many... shafts of Knowledge and Truth have cast their light upon me...and the harvest will become increasingly bountiful with an increase in trust and confidence on my part. But the greatest delight is a slow but growing sense of Consciousness of the Mother above me, around me, and within me. This cannot be described in words."

### III

#### THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

Although the life of Sri Aurobindo "has not been on the surface for men to see" and also his Integral Yoga is not a thing of external practices or outer disciplines but a matter of inward realisation and the Divine's manifestation in a surrendering and widening composite life of soul, mind, life and body, yet even "the bare externals" have constantly been a great and abiding source of inspiration for men of action in the social and political field as well as for the seekers of Truth. Dr. J. N. Chubb, broadcasting on the All-India Radio, Bombay, recalls them in a short account *Sri Aurobindo—His Life and Teachings*. He says, "History is by and large moulded not by economic and material forces but by men, their ideas and the power of their spirit. The measure of their greatness is determined partly by the field of their activity, the sphere in which they lived, laboured, loved, suffered and gave of their best. But among the Great there is a small group of messianic personalities who come into the world, not for the fulfilment of specialised interests and limited or parochial purposes, but as harbingers of Divinity. Theirs is a cosmic enterprise. They come to lay their saviour hands on humanity and bring to the world a new dispensation of the Eternal Light and Love. Such were Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Ramakrishna, to mention the greatest of them. To this exalted lineage belongs Sri Aurobindo in our times."



His life and teachings are full of "the certitude of eventual victory" of the Divine Will for the "New Manifestation," i.e. the Supramental Manifestation. This he said as far back as 1933, and now we see how this Manifestation has become a reality and as a result thereof greater victories are in the offing.

In the beginning of the *Circle* there are a number of unpublished letters of Sri Aurobindo on subjects like : social pressure as the cause of people in ordinary life keeping calm and controlled; temporary advantage of the vital falsehood over the superior sattwic nature; why poverty and misery exist in spite of the world's possessing double its needs; results of swallowing the outside influences unconsciously; fasting as the way to get the wrong realisation; Christ's healing the sick to bring faith into them; Ramakrishna and Gauranga Chaitanya not using powers, etc. etc.

#### IV

##### SOCIETY AND THE BREAKDOWN OF THE FAMILY SYSTEM

Man as a social being has passed through various phases of development. Sri Aurobindo enumerates in *The Human Cycle* four psychological steps, symbolic, typical, conventional, individualist and subjective, that man has already covered. The last, the spiritual, will be a culmination of these. Sanat Banerjee takes up the first, the symbolic, and describing its salient features, illustrates them profusely with passages from the *Satapatha* and the *Aitareya Brahmanas*—two of the most well-known books belonging to Vedic Literature. These deal with Gods, creation, sequence of the worlds of creation, Asuras, battles between Asuras and Devas, religious institutions, rites, sacrifices, etc., etc.

Some of the quotations from these Brahmanas are very interesting :

Prajapati "created three worlds, namely, earth, air, and heaven. He heated them and three lights were produced : Agni from the earth, Vayu from the air, and Aditya from heaven. He heated them again, in consequence of which the three Vedas were produced. The Rigveda came from Agni, the Yajurveda from Vayu, and the Samaveda from Aditya...."

"The sacrifice shall be your food, immortality your sap, and the sun your light." "Your eating shall be monthly", but later "Your eating shall be in the evening and in the morning, your offspring your death and the fire your light."

"In the beginning both the gods and men were together here on earth. But whatever did not belong to the men for that they importuned the gods, saying, this is not ours, let it be ours. Being indignant at this importunity, the gods then disappeared."

"The Devas and Asuras were fighting in these worlds...."

"The Asuras made the earth an iron castle, the air a silver, the sky a golden castle...."

“By means of sacrifice the gods obtained that supreme authority which they now wield. They said, ‘How may this world of ours be unattainable by men ?’ They then sipped the sap of sacrifice as bees would suck out honey. And having drained the sacrifice and effaced its traces by means of the sacrificial stake, they disappeared. And because they effaced (*yopāya*) therewith, therefore it is called *yūpa*, a stake.”

Following up his Note on the Modern Family from the previous Number, Kishor Gandhi raises the question : will the family system survive in the future evolution of humanity or will it break down and fade out of existence ? and attempts to answer it in the light of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. After surveying the situation in modern times and the past history of the family system, its needs and desires, its *raison d’être*, he observes that “all the social systems which were created in the past and which still persist in the present, in however modified forms, for the satisfaction of man’s vital needs and desires will have no place in his future spiritual evolution, for the imperative need before such an evolution can take place is that he must radically discard these needs and desires and aspire for the higher spiritual life.” “And since, in Sri Aurobindo’s view, in his future evolution man will have to outgrow his vital egoistic nature, the family, along with all other social institutions of man created for the satisfaction of this vital nature, must also break down and disappear. If, however, he still clings on to the family relationships, they will not only retard but may even altogether prevent his higher spiritual evolution because they will keep him enslaved to the instincts and cravings of his vital nature, the liberation from which is an indispensable necessity of all spiritual endeavour.”

According to the Mother, the breakdown of the family system “was, and is still, an indispensable move to bring humanity to a higher and broader realisation.”

## V

### THE DIVINE HELP AND THE MANIFESTATION OF SUPREME LOVE

We repeat here the Mother’s three prominent and illuminating messages of Hope for the aspirant displayed in the beginning of the Annual :

“All help is given to you always, but you must learn to receive it in the silence of your heart and not through external means. It is in the silence of your heart that the Divine will speak to you and will guide you and will lead you to your goal. But for that you must have full faith in the Divine Grace and Love.”

“If you want to live in Ananda, you must not try to impose your will on the Divine, but on the contrary, you must be ready to accept all that comes to you from Him, with an equal peace ; because He knows better than us what is good for our progress.”

“And when the day will come for the manifestation of the supreme Love, for the crystallised, concentrated descent of the supreme Love, that will indeed be the moment of Transformation. Because nothing will be able to resist That.”

The day has come. The Mother's Power and Personality of supreme Love, says Sri Aurobindo, is among those that “were more difficult to bring down and have not stood out in front with so much prominence in the evolution of the earth-nature.... Presences indispensable for the supramental realisation...” It is now transporting the universe on its formidable warm pulsations of compassion further in its manifestation. It is the “Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flows from a supreme divine Love, the Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful divinest Life and even now supports from its secrecies the work of all the other Powers of the universe”. The Mother is now tending and furthering it in Her recent intermediary programme of withdrawal and rest, so that the Work of Sri Aurobindo, which alone is Her Work, may be carried to its culmination and finished sooner than later.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

# Students' Section

## 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 FORTY

WE have finished our discussion of pure poetry. We gave the subject the broadest definition possible and made pure poetry depend not on the kind but on the quality. All kinds can be "pure" and the purity is determined by the distance from prose—distance in terms of intensity of vision, intensity of word, intensity of rhythm and not in terms of what is popularly thought of as poetic—namely, a special vocabulary and an unfamiliar theme. Pure poetry thus becomes co-extensive with life itself, but life in its inner nature : as Nirodbaran has put it in a line which is poetry at its purest—

Life that is deep and wonder-vast.

"Inner nature" : that is a phrase which we can make our point of departure into a talk on what Sri Aurobindo calls Planes of Poetry. And the talk would not be irrelevant to pure poetry, for poetry can be pure not only with any vocabulary and with any theme but also from any plane. According to Sri Aurobindo, man lives on several planes, and Existence is a manifold chord of powers, each power constituting a plane on which there is a universal play and within this universal Nature a large number of individual natures.

People do not always realise that there are other worlds than the physical : they consider all the powers of our being as merely different aspects of bodily activity or else, if distinct from that activity, effective only through centres in the body—the brain, the heart, the solar plexus and the less solar and more lunar or lunatic centres below. The play of different centres in us is felt in a general manner by most people ; and a hint, through such a feeling, at Sri Aurobindo's "planes" is very well given in a semi-doggerel a poet once composed in connection with his lady-love :

I put my hand upon my heart  
And swore that we should never part.  
I wonder what I would have said  
If I had put it on my head.

The question, of course, is whether when one puts one's hand upon the heart, one is at all conscious of a head to which the hand may be transferred : as commonly expressed, one loses one's head. But we cannot perhaps totally deny the co-presence and interaction of head and heart. You must be remembering the lines I once quoted to you from Housman :

If men were drunk for ever  
With liquor, love or fights,  
Fain would I rise of mornings  
And fain lie down at nights.  
But men at times are sober  
And think by fits and starts,  
And when they think, they fasten  
Their hands upon their hearts.

Thinking and feeling take place simultaneously in the Housmanian situation. But one may argue that thinking itself takes place in various centres and not always in the head. Did I never tell you what Aristotle took to be the seat of thought ? If ever there was a sheer intellectual, an intellectual whose work is abstract and even at times dry-as-dust, it was Aristotle. Quite a contrast to Plato whose mind was not only a light but also a fire, one in which intellect was married to imagination and made the philosopher a poet even if he did not fulfil the poetic element in him through any substantial body of verse proper. Chesterton has wittily hit off the difference between Plato and Aristotle and summed up the qualities of their thinking :

Said Aristotle unto Plato :  
"Have another hot potato."  
Said Plato unto Aristotle :  
"No, thank you, I prefer the bottle."

I suppose Aristotle had finished talking to Plato and was offering to continue. Plato's permission he must have asked because Plato was his teacher. But one hot potato of sober and earth-heavy intellectualism from the pupil was enough for the teacher who loved a soar, with all the being a lightness in the high heavens drenched with the luminous wine of the sun-god. The bottle symbolises the holding, by man's mind, of the fire and ether of inspired supra-intellectual vision. We may say the bottle stands for individual expression and the wine in it for the stuff of poetry shaped according to the form of the individual's being. But just as bottles vary in shape as well as volume, so also the wine itself varies. The variety we can describe in several ways. At present we shall describe it in terms of planes.

However, before we come to planes, let us finish with Aristotle. I said that Aristotle was brains incarnate. And yet when he wrote of the functions of the human system he said that the brain had the function merely of regulating the temperature of the body: some sort of balancing of our hot and cold sensations was the work of the grey matter of our cerebrum ! Imaginatively, we might state that when things got very white or very black the brain mixed a compensating hue and endeavoured constantly to make everything grey like its own matter ! Aristotle never thought that his own thought was working through his brain. When he got very cold-blooded with abstractions the brain added a bit of warmth and saved him from freezing to death by his own intellectualism : it could not change his potato to anything else but could make it hot. Or, looking at Plato, he must have believed that when Plato got too fiery with his famous allegories and myths and metaphors illustrating philosophical doctrines the brain manufactured an amount of ice and spread it in Plato's body in order to save him from internal combustion : his bottle might contain "fire-water" but it could come iced to the thinker's palate. Aristotle, locating the movement of thought itself, fixed upon the heart as its seat.

Perhaps Plato would have done the same and with more reason. Aristotle's attribution of thinking to the heart provides us with an insight into the Greek nature. The Greeks are often regarded as intellectuals out and out, but when we closely examine the character of their intellectuality we see a certain instinctive trend in it, a fine feeling for truth. It is not insignificant that the Greeks identified the highest Truth with the highest Beauty and defined Virtue itself as the courage to live and die for the highest Beauty. But what is this Beauty ? It is not appearance, it is essence—not beauty of body but beauty of being. We have ordinarily set up the figure of Apollo or of Aphrodite as representing the Greek ideal of Beauty. But actually this ideal was caught in the pug-nosed, stumpy, pot-bellied satyr of a man that was Socrates ! He was Beauty incarnate because his very being was saturated with a sense of the supreme Beauty that was Truth. The mere physical looks did not matter in the ultimate judgment, the ultimate grading. Here we discern a

premium put on Character, on Goodness. But one thing we must remember : a puritan virtue, a self-torturing ethicism, a bigoted and persecuting morality was never what the Greeks meant by Goodness. Greek Goodness had a grace about it, a wideness about it, a balance and harmony about it. The Greek ethical sense was fused with the Greek aesthetic sense just as the Greek sense of truth was always charged with a sense of proportion and symmetry and a lucid shapeliness as if truth could never be true unless it came living either in visible loveliness or in loveliness of moral nature and action.

All this complexity-in-unity of the Greek mind expressed itself in Greek poetry which, according to Sri Aurobindo, dealt with life from one large viewpoint, that of the inspired reason and the enlightened and chastened aesthetic sense. Mark the epithet "inspired" affixed to "reason". Not reason in its own rights but with an influx of something that is both more luminous and more sweet than itself—something that yet keeps the *swabhāva* of reason unspoiled and allows a bright order, an exquisite interrelation and wholeness. Mark also the epithets "enlightened" and "chastened" for "aesthetic sense". Beauty is indeed the guiding deity for the Greeks but upon it falls a light and on it works a refining power, the beauty is not blind, the beauty is not uncontrolled and licentious. Even in Aristotle, despite his apparent dryness, one feels a certain height and depth : his style is abstract but his substance is concrete and is not of a flat and level world of thought. Now and then the inner height and depth break through the style, as when he speaks of the Immortal within the mortal or when he seeks to characterise the nature of the original Divinity who is the Prime Mover. *Vis-à-vis* motion, Aristotle says that it cannot be explained in terms of causality by saying that one thing moves another. What moves another is itself in motion and, like that, we have an infinite regress with nothing static to start from. Only that which is unmoved, eternally at rest, immutable, can be the cause of motion : it must stand outside the time-process which is motion endless and everywhere. However, how shall we conceive of the unmoved Mover's effect of endless and ubiquitous motion ? How is this motion caused without any movement on the part of God ? Aristotle struck out the wonderful explanatory phrase : "He moves all things by being their beloved." This is thought working through the heart, and the inner heart besides, not the merely emotion-flushed heart but the heart in which, as Sophocles puts it, are engraved those eternal laws whose home is the high ether.

By the way, the famous last line of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, which we once Englished—

The love that moves the sun and all the stars—

is Aristotelian and not Romantic-mystic. It is not the doctrine that God is the Love by which things in the world are set moving to their proper goal,

Dante does not deny that God is Love, though his equation could permit certain things that would shock us out of our skins, as when he makes everlasting Hell declare :

I too was created by Eternal Love.

But what Dante in that terminal line of his masterpiece meant was the love inspired in all created things by God's Beauty and guiding each to its fulfilment which is ultimately that Beauty itself.

Yes, the Greeks made the heart the seat of thought, though it was rather the aesthetic than the emotional heart : they were not drowned in emotion, they were quickened into artistic harmony. Aristotle would have been surprised at being called "brainy". But if he had met an African Hottentot in the act of thinking, the Hottentot would have been surprised at Aristotle's calling him "hearty". When the psychologist Jung had a talk with the African aborigines and advised some of them to think more and use their brains, they looked at him as if he had himself been what we should term "brainless". They would have used another expression with a reference to a part of the body far below the cranium. They told Jung politely that the seat of thought was not up there in the skull but right down here inside the belly. Don't think the Hottentot is quite off the mark. The Mother has told us that thinking can be done through even one's little finger : in fact, wherever one's consciousness chooses to poise itself. I suppose that, though the person himself may not be conscious of it, the fingers of the writer, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, even the cricketer, always think—and often think more quickly, more efficiently than their owner does with his brain where he is commonly poised.

We have talked of thinking on various levels and parts—we seem to have digressed in doing so ; but the apparent digression is really relevant to our theme. And it is relevant not only because several levels and parts are involved. It is relevant also because what is involved is thinking. Man, full-fledged man, man of the historical times as distinguished from the prehistoric *Homo Neanderthalensis* and the like, is labelled zoologically as *Homo Sapiens*, "Wise Man", "Man the Thinker". Of course each of us considers himself wise and considers every other person otherwise, but all distinctions here too are made in terms of more wisdom, less wisdom, no wisdom. Thought is our main characteristic, and when we speak of poetic planes we may broadly speak of poetic thinking from this plane or that, from the brain-level or the heart-level or the belly-level, etc. But we should specify one thing : the multi-levelled poetic thinking occurs from inside the levels and not from their surface.

This specification takes us back to the phrase with which we commenced our lecture : inner nature. Poetry, like all art, like all worthwhile expression, comes from the inner nature of man. Speaking of planes, we should declare



that the outer physical plane is never the source of poetry. To look at the world without any insight is not poetry : our physical eyes image things without looking into them. A photographic expression will not be poetry or any literature : it will be expression in which aspiration and dream and desire and understanding have no part : a bare description will be all we get. To the outer eye of man things are as they were to Wordsworth's Peter Bell :

A primrose by a river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him  
And it was nothing more.

We may say : "A yellow primrose is a thing interesting enough. Why can't it be made poetry?" Well, when we speak of it we shall have to stop with the words "yellow primrose" and not associate the object with any gleam in our gaze, any stir of our pulse, any thrill in our brain, any figurative view of it as in the Porter's expression in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* : "...go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire" or else as in Ophelia's speech to her brother Laertes in *Hamlet* :

Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,  
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,  
And recks not his own rede. (I. iii. 50)

Even the word "primrose" has something of attitude and judgment mixed with it, for it derives from the Mediaeval English "primerose" which itself is from the Mediaeval Latin "prima rosa", literally, "first rose". We do not know why this rose was called "first", but some sort of grading in quality or time seems involved and that means attitude and judgment. Perhaps we have a clue in Milton's line :

Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies. .

("Rathe" means coming or blooming early in the day or the year.) Even to feel the yellow primrose to be beautiful is to bring in more than a mere perception. Emotion, imagination, understanding—all these things make of the primrose something beyond just a perceived object. Surely, poetry exceeds the bare act of perceiving. It is sight plus insight, and to have insight an eye other than the outer comes into operation. Our inner nature begins to act.

That is why, when Sri Aurobindo speaks of the poetic phenomenon, he refers always to the "subtle" planes and not the gross external physical. Thus

he says in general: "Poetry, if it deserves the name at all, comes always from some subtle plane through the creative vital and uses the outer mind and other external instruments for transmission only." In all poetry, the creative vital is necessary, for else there can be no manifestation on earth. The creative vital is required even for the manifestation of the Supermind in the world. And to let the work of the creative vital out into the physical plane, the outer mind and other instruments enter the field. The best poetry is produced when the vital force of creative beauty allows itself to respond faithfully to the inspiration and the outer consciousness remains entirely passive and transmits what the inspiration has formed with the vital substance and impetus without being mixed or altered. The inspiration itself can hail from any one of the following planes :

- 1) The Subtle Physical.
- 2) The Vital.
- 3) The Creative Intelligence.
- 4) The Inner Mind, with its four domains :
  - a) The Inner Mind Intelligence.
  - b) The Intuitive Intelligence.
  - c) The Mystic Mind.
  - d) The Mind of Dynamic Vision.
- 5) The Psychic.
- 6) The Higher Mind.
- 7) The Illumined Mind.
- 8) The Intuition or the Intuitive Mind.
- 9) The Overmind, with its four domains :
  - a) The Mental Overmind.
  - b) The Intuitive Overmind or the Overmind Intuition.
  - c) The Overmind Proper.
  - d) The Gnostic or Supramentalised Overmind.

The Inner Mind Intelligence is the Inner Mind acting not in a special field of its own but in the same field as the Creative Intelligence, though with a different power. The Intuitive Intelligence is the Inner Mind receiving from the plane of the Intuition a light not its own and adapting itself to it : the pure intuitive play is here mixed with the functioning of the mind and diminished or coated with something less luminous. The Mystic Mind works amidst occult formations belonging to another field than the one in which the Creative Intelligence operates. The Mind of Dynamic Vision is a power that has tremendous force, usually of a packed kind in which occult symbols and visions weave a pattern baffling to the reason and the logical faculty yet impressively ordered in its own way. The planes starting with the Higher Mind are all "overhead" : they have no organised centre in the human system. The Psychic is also not exactly a part of the gradation below the head : it is our inmost, our deepest being and stands behind the planes of the subtle physical, the vital

and the mental, even the inner mental : its station is at the back of the centre, represented by the heart, where the vital and the mental interplay as emotion. It can open more easily than any other to the Overhead, but its own function is not directly to open to it: it has a divine sweetness and light without the powerful amplitude that belongs to the overhead levels. The Overmind's four domains are the highest levels of poetry. When the Overmind lifts into itself the Creative Intelligence, the Higher Mind and the Illumined Mind and in the process modifies itself to suit the new working it forms the Mental Overmind. When it takes up the Intuition together with these powers into itself and again gets suitably modified, we have the Intuitive Overmind or the Overmind Intuition. Perhaps the Overmind Proper and the Gnostic Overmind may be regarded as one whole, but it may be useful to distinguish them in the sense that the former may be conceived as employing whatever gnostic light it has in its own nature due to the Overmind being a delegate of the Supermind, whereas the latter may be conceived as admitting a new influx from the Supermind in the process of its own transformation into the Supreme Truth.

You may ask : "Why is not the Supermind listed among the planes of poetry ?" Sri Aurobindo has said that the Supermind has never directly worked in the world in the past. The Overmind has been the top power so far. Possibly some influence from the Supermind has made itself felt : just as the idea-substance of the Overmind can come into mental poetry and yet the word and the rhythm may be of the mind, so also the idea-substance of the Supermind may drop into the Overmind and still the resultant poetry may have the typical Overmind word and rhythm. The best passages of the Gita, many passages in the Upanishads and a good deal of the Rigveda are Overmind poetry : the Rigveda is also likely to have some idea-substance from the Supermind. Where the Supermind is sure to have worked most abundantly, infusing even more than its idea-substance, is of course Sri Aurobindo's own *Savitri*. *Savitri* is wholly charged with the Supermind vision and experience : the general expression in it has been said by Sri Aurobindo in private letters to be of the Overmind either sheer or lifting into itself the planes below it.

I am not competent to pronounce on what the sheer Supermind poetry would be like. It might even alter the structure and texture of human language, just as the structure and texture of the human body would be altered by the transformation effected in Yoga by the Supermind. Something of the present formation will remain, but the change will be pretty radical and much more than what the Overmind can do. The Overmind is indeed a delegate of the Supermind, yet a crucial change takes place when it is projected from the sovereign Gnosis. It is the perfect Mind, the global Mind : it is not the Beyond-Mind. The Supermind is the Divine in His own immediate being : the Overmind is the Divine as He would be in the Mind tuned into utmost closeness to that immediate being. In relation to ourselves, the Overmind converts to

its extreme spiritual form the humanity of the human body, it makes our body divinely human. The Supermind reverses the relation and makes our body humanly divine. Not the human but the divine is the supramental basis : in terms of the divine the human will stand, unlike as with the Overmind where the divine will stand in terms of the human. Another way of putting it is that the archetype of the human is the Overmind, while the archetype of the Overmind is the Supermind. The difference between supramental poetry and overmind poetry is the same, roughly, as between the poetry of the Overmind and that of the Mind. That is at least how I understand things—from what the Mother once told me. She said in effect : “The gulf between the Overmind and the Supermind is just like the gulf between the Overmind and man’s mental consciousness.” I recollect lines in *Savitri* where the Supermind is said to be seen like a faint star in a remote distance from the top ridge of the Overmind. So you can imagine the difference. A sort of divine darkness divides the one from the other or, if you like, we may say that the Supermind is to the Overmind—in Miltonic phrase—“dark with excessive bright”: Sri Aurobindo would perhaps describe it as veiled by a Ray no eye of the Gods can bear.

AMAL KIRAN (K.D. SETHNA)

# THE DESCENT OF THE BLUE

*(Continued from the last issue)*

## ACT 3

### Scene I

*(Khulna. A religious mendicant sings while passing by the residence of Dr. K.D. Ghosh.)*

Mother, Mother, Mother Kali !  
Knowledge of earth is strange to me.  
I know not how to sing of Thee.  
My feeble mind is a fruitless tree.  
Thine Eyes are fire, Thy Heart is love.  
My bosom pines to be thy dove.

K.D. : Ah, what moving and melting music! Mother Kali to my rescue!  
Who else can cool my racking pain ? A thought about my son Auro is eating  
into my heart.

*(Enter a messenger with a telegram)*

MESSENGER : Sir, a wire for you.

K.D. : Ah, at last ! Maybe, it's from Auro. *(On opening the message he falls to the ground. His soul turns the keen vibration of its pain to an inner music.)*

My Auro ! Auro ! all world-pain in flood  
Within my finite breast.  
My pride, my country's pride, O earth's hope-noon,  
The all-transforming Crest !

Alas ! to feed my longings high, no more  
I shall see my Auro, my son.  
The sombre night envelops my mortal sheath.  
To-day my heart is undone.

Now cruel fate has torn my vision's Rose.  
 Auro, I shut my eyes  
 To see your golden face, to be with you  
 In the blue-white climbing skies.<sup>1</sup>

Scene 2

(*Deoghar. The abode of Rishi Rajnarayan Bose. The Rishi is chanting a Vedic hymn.*)

अग्नि दूत पुरो दधे हव्यवाहमुप बुवे ।  
 देवाँ आ सादयादिह ॥

I set in front Fire, the messenger, and speak to the carrier of the offerings; may he bring to their session here the gods. (*Tr. by Sri Aurobindo*)

(*Enter Auro and his maternal uncle Jogendra.*)

JOGENDRA : Father, look, here is Auro.

(*The Rishi springs to his feet and hugs Auro warmly to his breast before the grandson could bend his head down. The Rishi knew well that his Auro was no human being but Sri Krishna in human form. A deep silence seems to vibrate with their hearts' exchanges.*)

THE RISHI : Jogen, call Swarna quick. Where is she ? Swarna, Swarna ! (*Half-choked in joy he calls out to his daughter at the top of his voice.*)

Auro, my child, do you find your country, your Motherland, familiar ?

AURO : Dadu, I'm afraid I call to mind nothing that I had seen and heard before I left India. Things now appear to be refreshing, inspiring, enlightening. As I stepped on India's soil, at Apollo Bunder, Bombay, I felt drowned as if in a sea of peace.

THE RISHI : Oh, it's significant, deeply significant. It is a signal. Mother India wants you to be her own, for her work, for her soul's work. It was her soul's embrace to her chosen child.

(*Enter Swarnalata with two of her women friends.*)

Look, Swarna, here is Auro ! The gift of our dreams is here.

SWARNA (*after scanning Auro's face for a few seconds*) : No, father, not at all. This youth doesn't take after my child Auro. In England I left him quite

<sup>1</sup> K. D Ghosh had almost intuitive high hopes that his Auro was to brighten the face of the mother country. The ship which was to carry Auro sank on the way. But Auro boarded a second ship. On the assumption that his son must have perished with the lost ship his father died of a broken heart.

young on earth. How could he grow such a big moustache ! My son can never grow so big. No, you can never be my son. He had more grace in his face. Impossible, impossible. Father, I'm not such a fool as you take me to be. Oh, now, now !

*(Exit Swarnalata in utter delusion)*

*(A chorus of laughter by Jogendra and the two women. Silent, amazed, Auro looks on.)*

THE RISHI : Auro, your mother is off her head and so am I. Like father like daughter.

AURO : If my mother is queer in her brain then I too....There's no other go.

*(Enter Swarnalata)*

SWARNA : I remember well that my Auro had a cut on one of his fingers. Let me see if you have that mark.

AURO *(shooting a glance half-afraid at his mother's face and showing his finger)* : Here's it, mother, here's the mark.

SWARNA : My Auro, my Auro ! You are my son Auro. Father, he is my son Auro. Truly he is the Krishna of my dream. *(Overwhelmed with joy she places her right palm on her son's devoted head.)* Now I am more than right that you are my son Auro.

AURO : Dadu, goodness gracious ! At last my mother has to say, 'Eureka, Eureka !'

### Scene 3

*(Baroda. Aurobindo's own chamber. He is rapt in his studies. His room is a treasure-house of the Goddess of learning. Suddenly he closes his book.)*

AURO : I simply don't know how man can go on doing anything against his own preference for long. My nature revolts at the Administrative Service. The work I am doing is not at all congenial to me. I'll ask the Gaekwar to shift me to his College.

*(Enter a peon and hands Aurobindo a letter.)*

PEON : Sir, His Highness the Gaekwar requests the favour of your company at lunch and he seeks for your advice to settle up a serious matter.

AURO : I see. Thank you.

*(Enter Dinendra Kumar Roy)*

AURO : Dinen Babu, His Highness has asked me to lunch. So I have to miss your company to-day.

DINENDRA : It is so nice of the Gaekwar. But isn't it time for you to be there ?

AURO *(looking at his watch)* : Yes, it is. I'm off.

*Scene 4*

*(Baroda. Aurobindo's room. Absorbed in studies.)*

*(Enter Dinendra Kumar)*

DINENDRA : A telegram for you.

AUROBINDO *(after reading it)* : Ramesh Babu—Ramesh Chandra Dutta—arrives to-morrow from Bengal. We must make all necessary arrangements for him.

DINENDRA : Keshta ! Keshta !

*(Enter Keshta)*

KESHTA : Babu, Babu.

DINENDRA : To-morrow a very, very great man comes from Bengal. So your cooking must be an excellent one.

KESHTA : Easily done, Sir. But one thing. Spices and ghee have gone short.

DINENDRA *(handing the servant a five-rupee note)* : Buy spices and ghee from the market, and don't forget to buy potatoes, cauliflowers and green mangoes.

*Scene 5*

*(Baroda College. Aurobindo is now Professor of English. He declares a prize...)*

AUROBINDO : I declare a prize in an Essay-cum-Debate Competition on "Japan and the Japanese"

*(K.M.Munshi, a student, stands up.)*

MUNSHI :<sup>1</sup> Sir, How can nationalism be developed ?

<sup>1</sup> From here to the end of the scene the speeches are quotations from K M Munshi's memoirs.



AUROBINDO (*pointing to a wall-map of India*) : Look at that map. Learn to find in it the portrait of Bharatmata. The cities, mountains, rivers and forests are the materials which go to make up Her body. The people inhabiting the country are the cells which go to make up Her living tissues. Our literature is Her memory and speech. The spirit of Her culture is Her soul. The happiness and freedom of Her children is Her salvation. Behold Bharat as a living Mother, meditate upon Her and worship Her in the nine-fold way of *bhakti*.

MUNSHI : Sir, how can I meditate upon the Mother ?

AUROBINDO : Just go through the works of Swami Vivekananda, and you will be able to meditate upon the Mother.

### Scene 6

(*Lunch. Aurobindo, Ramesh Dutta and Dinendra Kumar. Keshta serves them.*)

RAMESH : Mr. Ghosh, does your cook serve you with such dishes daily ?

AUROBINDO : No, no. These are special dishes for you.

DINENDRA : Good Heavens ! special dishes, indeed ! (*Looks daggers at Keshta*) Keshta, how incorrigible you are ! You have spoiled everything. Your very sight is repugnant to me. Barmecide covers were better far than your nuisance. What a burning sensation from mouth to gullet !

KESHTA : Sir, excuse me this time. I am extremely sorry. I shall be very, very careful next time.

DINENDRA : And where is your ghee ? You have given us so much water for our bath, you fool ?

AUROBINDO : How is it that I was quite unaware of all this ? I wonder how I could eat without feeling anything !

(*Dinendra and Ramesh burst into laughter*)

DINENDRA : Aurobindo, my young friend, you do not belong to this earth. You remain in your own world.

KESHTA (*looking at Dinendra Kumar*) : Sir, next time I shall prepare a grand dish.

AUROBINDO (*with a compassionate look*) : Keshta, it will be quite nice of you if you can.

KESHTA : Sir, I promise, I shall be no fool again.

### Scene 7

(*Baroda. Charu Dutta's bungalow. Aurobindo spends a short holiday there. Charu Dutta, Lilavati and Subodh.*)

CHARU : Chief, to our great good luck we have you with us today. This time I have something serious to confide to you. I have read your *Bhavani Mandir*. It has moved me to my depths. I have decided to give myself to the service of your great Ideal.

AURO : Very glad, godspeed.

SUBODH : We intend to open a National College in Bengal with you as the Head.

AURO : Believe me, I must go to Bengal if you sincerely want me there.

SUBODH : We hesitate to offer you a remuneration far beneath your notice. Still poor Bengal would have a princely youth like you for the post.

AURO : My friend, to be able to serve the Mother is itself a high honour for any one.

SUBODH : Your sacrifice has ennobled your country. Your sacrifice will win her freedom.

LILAVATI : Ah, stop, Subodh. (*Turning to Aurobindo and handing him a little saloon rifle*) Come, Ghosh Saheb, take a hand.<sup>1</sup>

AURO (*hesitatingly*) : Sorry, Lilavati. I have never touched a gun. I know nothing about shooting.

(*At repeated requests of Lilavati, Charu and Subodh, he takes the rifle. Charu explains to him the technique of aiming over a V-sight.*)

No, Charu is too hasty. Lilavati, you stand by me.

(*Aurobindo starts firing at the head of a match stick at about twelve feet off from him. He repeats it several times, every time with success.*)

LILAVATI : Ghosh Saheb, wonderful, unbelievable. You have mastered the art of shooting in a trice.

CHARU : If realisation in Yoga does not come to such a man, will it come to bunglers like you and me ?

CHINMOY

(*To be continued*)

<sup>1</sup> From here on some of the sentences spoken by Lilavati and Charu are from Charu Dutt's memoirs.

## SELF-TEACHINGS

### “CLIMB TO A LIGHTHOUSE”

No one is superior or inferior, sinful or saintly, in any sense to God. We are all out on a climb of a natural, progressive ladder of perfection to the height of a lighthouse tower for all the beautiful and delightful vision of the supermind where the wideness of peace and joy is as limitless as the open sky.

On such a steep climb of numerous steps, naturally each one finishes the adventure speedily, slowly, or in instalments (rebirths) in accordance with his individual physical, mental or vital constitution and strength. So why should the sense of superiority or inferiority arise ?

Sooner or later, surmounting all stumbling blocks, fatigues and exhaustions, each one will surely complete his journey to the eternal heavenly heights. Keep your will firm, gradually free from all imperfections, and have faith in the goal.

NARWANI

## A GREAT SERVICE TO SANSKRIT

(A REVIEW OF *Vachaspatyam* : A Comprehensive Sanskrit Dictionary by the late Taranath Bhattacharya, published by Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi; pages 5500 in Six Vols; price first vol. Rs. 75, complete set Rs. 400, pre-publication price Rs. 220 only.)

The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, one of the biggest Sanskrit publishing firm in India, was started in 1992 by the late Sri Haridas Gupta at Varanasi. He and his son Sri Krishnadas Gupta have already published about 1000 Sanskrit books which include some rare works which they took pains to find out in the form of manuscripts from the houses of old Pandits and which probably would have been lost but for their devotion. Sri Krishnadas Gupta has published recently *Shabda-Kalpadruma*, a big Sanskrit dictionary of 4000 pages in 5 volumes. One would be surprised to note that he has now undertaken the publication of another encyclopaedic work, the one under review named *Vachaspatyam* of 5500 pages in six volumes, written by Sri Taranath Bhattacharya, Guru of the late Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar ("the Ocean of Knowledge" of which the first volume is just out.

What a serious Sanskrit reader or writer needs from a good dictionary is the etymology of the word, *e.g.* the root from which it has been derived, the rules of the Panini grammar according to which it has been formed, the various meanings associated with the word, and quotations from eminent writers so that he may be able to consult some commentaries on the word and use it in any particular sense current or non-current according to his choice, or add a new sense to it or coin a new word on its basis for his own writings in full light and not in ignorance or scanty knowledge. All these needs of the readers and writers are amply fulfilled by this work.

What is lacking is, firstly, that at the places where the quotations are given, the names of the books or authors are given in abbreviated form like Sa, da(सा.द.) Shā, Bhā (शा.भ.) but there is no list of full names in the beginning of the work. Secondly, where the quotations are given, no exact places of the sentences or verses are given except on a few occasions, and so the reader finds difficulty in tracing the quotations and consulting commentaries on them. We hope that the devotion which has prompted the publisher to undertake such a huge work of immense national and cultural value will also urge him to remove these minor but not unimportant defects in the other five volumes under print and to make some improvement in the printing too.

Anyway, it is a most useful work for research in almost all the branches

of Knowledge which have a connection with Sanskrit. When we consider the high cost of paper and printing, the price Rs. 220 for six big volumes shows that the publisher's mind is above ordinary commercial interests. We hope that Libraries and Scholars will find it a priceless gem enriching their treasure stores.

Many cultures have appeared upon the surface of the earth and disappeared after facing a little opposition, leaving only names and some no name even. But Indian culture, the most ancient of all, has been facing successfully various oppositions and coming out victorious every time. And now, although outwardly emaciated, after facing the most terrible attack from the mightiest Western materialistic culture under the yoke of a foreign rule and getting victory over it, it is going to raise its head in the sky like the Himalaya mountain. The real source of its strength, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, lies in her spirituality laid down in its foundation by our forefathers.

After independence we find a wave of linguism and provincialism rising in India and trying to cut it into pieces and her sincere patriots are attempting to establish unity. But the real and permanent source of unity lies in spirituality with which Sanskrit literature is saturated. Not only the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita and the Philosophies but even the epics and dramas are full of it. So naturally every reader of Sanskrit literature breathes in something of its spirituality. Sanskrit literature was developed and enriched by the pandits of all provinces and languages of India without the least tinge of narrow "isms" these in their heart. Therefore any attempt made to propagate Sanskrit should be encouraged by every devotee of India and her culture.

The publisher of *Vachaspatyam* really deserves patronage from the central and provincial governments and other generous people so that he may be able to publish more and more Sanskrit works of national, cultural and spiritual importance with more enthusiasm and in a better and better form.

K. D. ACHARYA

# THE UNIVERSE—AN IDEAL KINGDOM

## A VISION FROM THE VEDAS

THE Vedas constitute without doubt man's most ancient literature. They contain the secrets of all wisdom. But at every step one comes up against difficulties in knowing their secret meaning.

One way to study the Vedas is to read their secrets under three aspects ; *viz* : universal, social and individual. In the first one is to study about the planets and their functions, the second deals with the social behaviour of man, and in the third one is to study the functions of all the organs or so-called deities residing in the human body.

What is in the universe, the same is in the nation and in the human body.

The Vedic Mantras describe the *gods*. But the description of the gods can be seen as really the description of an arrangement of universal administration.

According to this vision the Vedic gods and their function form a complete model for the administration of a modern state, but on a far wider scale to include the entire universe in its sphere.

Let us set forth this excellent administrative system with the help of a table :

### ADMINISTRATIVE BODY OF THE UNIVERSAL KINGDOM

(1) *Para Brahma* (परब्रह्म) is the Honourable President of that universal Republic. He is an indifferent spectator. Only his existence suffices to make the Ministers and Deputy Ministers carry out their functions.

(2) *Paramātmā* (परमात्मा) is the next in command as Vice-President.

(3) *Aditi* (अदिति) (Nature). An eternal and beginningless Mother who creates and forms a body of various Ministers and Deputy Ministers.

### THE AIM

The aim of this administration is to maintain peace everywhere

and to make all the human beings work co-operatively as the limbs in a human body.

(4) *Sadasaspati* and *Kṣetrapati* (सदसस्पति and क्षेत्रपति) these are two chairmen to guide and control the deliberations of the assemblies, corresponding to our parliament.

## MINISTERS

### *Education Ministry*

Education being of prime importance *Ĵātavedā Agni* जातवेदा अग्नि *Brahmaṇaspati* ब्रह्मणस्पति and *Br̥haspati* बृहस्पति jointly hold that portfolio. Among them *Ĵātaveda Agni* is the Minister and the remaining two are the Deputy Ministers.

The adjectives quoted below may help a reader to know the ability of Agni, as the Education Minister.

कवितमः (Rig. 3.14.1) An excellent scholar.

जातवेदाः (Rig. 1.44.1.) The fountain-head of all wisdom.

मेधिरः (Rig. 1.31.2) Intelligent.

विचर्षणिः (Rig. 1.31.6) An Eminent Scholar.

सु-वेदः (Rig. 4.7.6) Wise-Learned.

### *Defence Ministry*

*Indra* (इन्द्र) *Upendra Viṣṇu* (विष्णु) and *Rudra* (रुद्र) form a powerful ministry of defence. *Indra* is Minister, and *Upendra Viṣṇu* is deputy Minister and *Rudra* is Commander-in-Chief, while the *Maruts* (मरुत्) are soldiers.

The adjectives applied to *Indra* by the Vedic Rishi make it quite obvious that *Indra* is quite able to hold this Ministry :

अक्षित-ऊतिः (Rig. 1.5.9) A possessor of innumerable means of defence.

अत्कं वसानः (Rig. 4.18.5) *Indra* puts on armour.

अ-दयः (Rig. 10.103.7) He is very severe to his enemies.

अ-भीरुः (Rig. 4.29.2) Bravery.

इषु-हस्त (Rig. 10.103.2) He possesses an arrow in his hand.

वज्र-हस्तः (Rig. 1.100.2) He keeps an iron Vajra in his right hand.

### Health Ministry

The *Aśvin* Twins prefer to look after health and sanitation. Between them, one is perfect in general treatment while the other is an expert surgeon. The description of them runs thus :

वीरं वर्धयतः They make the generation powerful.

च्यवानं युवानं चक्रयुः They made the old Chyawan a young man.

विश्वलाये आयसीं जङ्घां प्रत्यधत्तम् They replaced by an iron leg the broken leg of Vishpala and made her able to walk.

औषधि functions as the Head of the Medical Department.

*Somaḥ* (सोमः) is the chief-in-charge of the various herbs.

*Gauh* (गौः) holds the portfolio of the in-charge of Milk-supplying Department.

### Food Ministry

*Pūṣā* ( पूषा ) tactfully performs his duties as the Minister for food.

*Sūrya* ( सूर्य ) assisted by *savitā* and *Āditya* carries on the portfolio of purifying the things of the Universe.

अस्य कोशः न अवपद्यते His granary is never empty ; it remains ever full of grains.

### Finance Ministry

*Bhagaḥ* ( भगः ) is the finance Minister.

### Ministry for Industries

*Viśvakarmā* ( विश्वकर्मा ) ably assisted by *tvaṣṭā* ( त्वष्टा ) and *ṛbhu* ( ऋभु ) naturally is in charge of Industries, big and small.

*Vāstoṣpate* ( वास्तोष्पते ) prefers to look after the ministry of habilitation.

### Ministry for Navigation

Who else but the mighty *Varuṇa* ( वरुण ) could shoulder the burden of the office of the First Lord of the Admiralty, controlling the large fleet running across the seven seas of the great ocean ?



*Parjanyaḥ* ( पर्जन्यः ) assisted by *Āpaḥ* ( आपः ) *Nadyaḥ* ( नद्यः ) and *Sarasvatī* ( सरस्वती ) functions as the Minister for Agriculture.

*Uṣā* ( उषा ) is to look after the females and the female children's welfare while *Venaḥ* ( वेनः ) is to take care of the males and male children's welfare.

*Kaḥ* ( कः ) is the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department. He performs his duties quite hidden. No one can recognise him. Therefore he is called कः meaning who ?

*Aśvaḥ* ( अश्वः ) or the horse, being the only means for communication in ancient times, is placed on the ministership for communication in the universal Administration.

The picture as we have developed on these lines is quite complete and the various adjectives used in the texts, amply justify the interpretation. It does not take us long to reconstruct the full analogy with this key.

The Ministers perform their duties perfectly and honestly, not taking any kind of bribe and not interfering with others' work. The administration of the deities is an ideal one and is to be followed by the modern administrators.

The Veda is a political as well as a religious work in the modern sense. Not for nothing do the Hindus believe that all knowledge, all experience and all worldly wisdom comes from the Vedas. That such a belief, as strong as the force of time, is well founded will now be obvious.

This political and religious treatise of the Veda is for creating a small unit of peace loving humanity and for a better mutual understanding of human relations. The vedas in this sense are not religious, not otherworldly, but fully worldly, confining their attention to the well-being of the world. Vedic prayers and Vedic prayers alone embrace the entire world, not this or that small region or a group of people.

Such an administration, with co-operation and mutual understanding, if conducted in the world, may certainly bring world peace, the long-awaited truth.

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# SANSKRIT SIMPLIFIED

## BOOK I

### LESSON IV

1. We have seen how verbal bases are used in the Present Tense. They themselves are formed from verbal roots, known in Sanskrit as धातुs. It is these roots that are the source of the parts of speech that form the language. Henceforward we shall give the root also along with the verbal base. *e.g.* वद् (root) - वद (verbal base); गम् (root) - गच्छ (verbal base); पा (root) - पिब (verbal base); भू (root) - भव (verbal base); दृश् (root) - पश्य (verbal base); etc.

2. A number of words in their proper grammatical forms make a phrase, and phrases used in the proper way make sentences. We shall now make some phrases. We should here remember that an adjective is used in the same gender, number and case as the noun it qualifies.

Phrases :—(1) Clean water स्वच्छम् सलिलम् (स्वच्छ adj. वि. clean, सलिल-न.=जल-न. water); (2) Gracious God कृपायः देवः (कृपाय-वि. gracious); (3) A virtuous lady सुशीला नारी (सुशीला-वि. स्त्री. virtuous नारी-स्त्री. lady); (4) With the right hand दक्षिणेन हस्तेन (दक्षिण-वि. right, हस्त-पुं. hand); (5) For or to the amicable boy सुशीलाय बालाय (सुशील-वि. पुं. amicable, virtuous, good, well-behaved, etc.); (6) From the fathomless sea अगाधात् समुद्रात् (अगाध-वि. पुं. fathomless, समुद्र-पुं. sea); (7) From the heaven of the gods देवानाम् स्वर्गात् (स्वर्ग-पुं. heaven); (8) In the clear water of the stream निर्झरस्य निर्मले जले (निर्झर-पुं. stream, निर्मल-adj. clear); (9) The word of a gentleman सज्जनस्य वचनम् (सज्जन-पुं., gentleman, वचन-न. word); (10) The Ashram of Sri Aurobindo श्रीअरविन्दस्य आश्रमः (आश्रम-पुं. Ashram, hermitage); (11) Great men of India भारतस्य महाजनाः (भारत-न. India, महाजन-पुं. great man); (12) From the son of the king of Jayapur जयपुरस्य भूपस्य पुत्रात् (भूप-पुं. king, पुत्र-पुं. son); (13) From the garden of my house मम गृहस्य उद्यानात् (गृह-न. house); (14) In the lotuses of the lake पुष्कराणाम् पद्मेषु (पुष्कर-पुं. lake, पद्म-न. lotus=कमल-न.); (15) Rama, Lakshman and Sita रामः लक्ष्मणः सीता च or रामः च

लक्ष्मणः च सीता च; (च is used after each word or once at the end of all the words which it joins.) (16) At the time of the spring वसन्तस्य समये or काले (वसन्त-पुं. spring, समय-पुं. = काल-पुं. time); (17) For the study of the Vedas वेदानाम् पठनाय (वेद-पुं. Veda, पठन-न. study); (18) Dilip, the grandfather of Aja अजस्य पितामहः दिलीपः (पितामह-पुं. grandfather); (19) Water, fallen from the sky आकाशात् पतितम् तोयम् (आकाश-पुं. n. sky, पतित-p.p. वि. fallen, तोय-न. = जल-न. = सलिल-न. water) (20) In the forests of our country अस्माकम् देशस्य अरण्येषु (अस्माकम्, our, देश-पुं. country, अरण्य-न. = वन-न.)

3. Here are some sentences in which the phrases given above are used. Translate them and make other similar sentences. Change the number of words appropriately.

१. अस्मिन् (in this m.n.) सरोवरे स्वच्छम् जलम् अस्ति ।
२. कृपायः देवः जनानाम् कल्याणम् (कल्याण-न. good) एव करोति । (एव-only, करोति does) ।
३. इयम् (f. this) सुशीला नारी विश्वस्य (विश्व-न. world) विभूषणम् (न. ornament) ।
४. अहम् स्वेन (स्व adj. one's own) दक्षिणेन हस्तेन लिखामि, खादामि कार्यम् (कार्यं न. work) च करोमि (do) ।
५. गुरुः (गुरु पुं. the master) सुशीलाय बालाय स्नेहेन (स्नेह-पुं. affection) ज्ञानस्य (ज्ञान-न. knowledge) प्रदानम् (न. giving) करोति ।
६. साहसिकाः (साहसिक-वि. adventurous) जनाः अगाधात् समुद्रात् महामूल्यानि (महामूल्य-वि. of great price) मौक्तिकानि (मौक्तिक-न. pearl) आनयन्ति (आ-नो-आनय verbal base—bring) ।
७. त्रिशंकुः (m. name of a king) देवानाम् स्वर्गात् अधः (indeclinable —ind. अ.—downward) पतति ।
८. मनोहराः (मनोहर-adj. charming) मीनाः (मीन-पुं. = मत्स्य-पुं. fish) निर्झरस्य निर्मले जले तरन्ति (तृ तर verbal base—swim) ।
९. सज्जनस्य वचनम् कदापि मिथ्या (अव्ययम्-अ. ind. false) न भवति ।
१०. श्रीअरविन्दस्य आश्रमः भारतवर्षस्य (भारतवर्ष-पुं. India) पुण्यम् (वि. holy) तीर्थम् (न. place of pilgrimage) ।
११. भारतस्य महाजनाः महाकार्याणि (महाकार्य-न. great deed) साधयन्ति (साध्—accomplish —साधय verbal base) ।
१२. जयपुरस्य (जयपुर-न. name of a city) भूपस्य पुत्रात् पण्डिताः संमानम् (संमान-पुं. honour) विन्दन्ति (विद्—विन्द verbal base—get) ।
१३. सः देवपूजनाय (पूजन-न. worship) सम गृहस्य उद्यानात् कुसुमानि (कुसुम-न. flower) समाहरति (समाहृ-समाहर verbal base—gather) ।
१४. हंसाः (हंस-पुं. swan) पुष्करस्य पद्मेषु (सरोवरस्य कमलेषु) विहरन्ति (विहृ- विहर verbal base—sport) ।

१५. रामः लक्ष्मणः सीता च दशरथस्य (दशरथ-पुं. name of Rama's father )  
आदेशात् (आदेश-पुं. command) वनम् गच्छन्ति ।
१६. वसन्तस्य समये उद्यानानि पुष्पैः पूर्णानि (पूर्ण-p.p.वि. full) भवन्ति ।
१७. देशानाम् पठनाय जनाः काशीनगरम् (city of Kashi) गच्छन्ति ।
१८. अजस्य पितामहः विलीपः वसिष्ठस्य (वसिष्ठ-पुं. name of a famous sage)  
आश्रमाय प्रस्थितः (p.p. started) ।
१९. यथा (अ. just as) आकाशात् पतितम् तोयम् सागरम् (सागर-पुं. sea) गच्छति  
तथा (अ. in the same way) अस्माकम् प्रेमप्रवाहाः (प्रेमप्रवाह-पुं) streams  
of love) परमेश्वरम् प्रति (अ. towards) गच्छन्ति ।
२०. अस्माकम् देशस्य अरण्येषु व्याघ्राः गजाः (गज-पुं. elephant) च भवन्ति ।

### सन्धि

Sandhi or coalescence is an important part in the structure of Sanskrit. Generally it takes place in the following circumstances :

1. When a vowel is followed by another vowel;
2. When a consonant is followed by another consonant or a vowel;
3. When Visarga is followed by either a vowel or a consonant. The first is called स्वरसन्धि, the second व्यञ्जनसन्धि and the third विसर्गसन्धि.

But in order to understand and effect these सन्धिस, a detailed knowledge of the vowels and the consonants is an unavoidable need. We shall therefore give a chart in which all the letters of the alphabet are systematically arranged, according to the organ of speech from which they are uttered and the quality they possess. It is not necessary to know every detail in the beginning; but as need arises this chart will supply the necessary information.

Before giving the chart, we shall mention the five organs of speech. They are the gullet (कण्ठ), the palate (तालु), the roof of the palate just above the roots of the upper teeth, (मूर्धा), the upper teeth (दन्त), the lips (ओष्ठ). Those letters that are uttered from the gullet (कण्ठ) are called कण्ठ्य or कण्ठस्थानीय i.e. gutturals, from the palate (तालु) are called तालव्य or तालुस्थानीय i.e. palatals, from the roof of the palate (मूर्धा) are called मूर्धन्य or मूर्धस्थानीय i.e. linguals, from the teeth (दन्त) are called दन्त्य or दन्तस्थानीय i.e. dentals and from the lips are called ओष्ठ्य or ओष्ठस्थानीय i.e. labials.

Table of the Sanskrit Alphabet (तालिका)

वर्णानां स्थान-प्रयत्न-तालिका												
Vowels स्वराः			Consonants व्यञ्जनानि									
Soft घोष  Unaspirate अल्पप्राण					Mutes स्पर्श-व्यञ्जनानि				Semi-vowels	Sibilants		
							Nasals अनुनासिका	अन्तस्थाः	ऊष्मवर्णाः			
			Hard अघोष	Soft घोष	Soft घोष	Soft घोष	Soft घोष	Soft घोष	Soft घोष	Hard अघोष		
The Five Classes पञ्चवर्गाः			Unaspirate अल्पप्राण	Aspirate महाप्राण	Unaspirate अल्पप्राण	Aspirate महाप्राण	Unaspirate अल्पप्राण	Unaspirate अल्पप्राण	Aspirate महाप्राण	Aspirate महाप्राण		
अ,आ,	ए,ऐ,	ओ,औ	Gutturals कण्ठ्य	क्	ख्	ग्	घ्	ङ्		ह्		
इ,ई,	ए,ऐ,		Palatals तालव्य	च्	छ्	ज्	झ्	ञ्	य्		श्	
ऋ, ॠ			Linguals मूर्धन्य	ट्	ठ्	ड्	ढ्	ण्	र्		ष्	
ॡ			Dentals दन्त्य	त्	थ्	द्	ध्	न्	ल् व्		स्	
उ,ऊ,		ओ,औ	Labials ओष्ठ्य	प्	फ्	ब्	भ्	म्	व्			

1. स्पर्शव्यञ्जनानि: The 25 consonants, beginning with क् and ending in स्, a sort of touching of the tongue with the organ of speech takes place in the first four classes and in the case of labials there takes place the touching of the lips.

2. The first two letters of the five classes together with the sibilants श् ष् स् are hard अघोष; and the last three together with the semivowels य् र् ल्व्, and the aspirate ह् are soft घोष. Thus we have 13 hard and 20 soft consonants.

3. ङ्, ञ्, ण्, न् and म् are called nasals, for they are uttered with the help of the nose.

4. श्, ष्, स् and ह् are called ऊष्मवर्णाः, for a sort of hot breath is produced when they are uttered. In English they are called sibilants, especially श्, ष् and स्; ह् is called the soft aspirate.

5. व् belongs to two classes the Dental and the Labial. ए and ऐ belong to both the Guttural and the Palatal class; similarly ओ and औ belong to the Guttural as well as the Labial class. The reason for their belonging to two classes is this that both of those organs of speech are used in their utterance.

श्लोक ५.

माता मे पार्वती देवी पिता देवो महेश्वरः ।

बान्धवाः शिवभक्ताश्च स्वदेशो भुवनत्रयम् ॥

सार्थपदच्छेदः— माता mother (मातृ f.) मे my (मम) पार्वती Parvati देवी Goddess; पिता father (पितृ-पुं.) देवः God महेश्वरः the great Lord Shiva; बान्धवाः brothers बान्धव-पुं. brother, kinsman शिवभक्ताः devotees of Shiva च and; स्वदेशः one's own country स्व one's own देश-पुं. country भुवनत्रयम् the three worlds (भुवन-न. world + त्रयम् three taken collectively) are

पार्वती देवी मे माता (अस्ति), देवः महेश्वरः (मे) पिता (अस्ति), शिवभक्ताः च (मे) बान्धवाः (सन्ति), भुवनत्रयम् (मे) स्वदेशः (अस्ति) .

Goddess Parvati is my mother; God Shiva, the great Lord; is my father; and the devotees of Shiva are my brothers : (all) the three worlds are my own country.

श्लोक ६.

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णु गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुः साक्षात्परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

सार्थपदच्छेदः— गुरुः the spiritual master ब्रह्मा the Creator, गुरुः विष्णुः God Vishnu, the Omnipresent Divine, गुरुः देवः महेश्वरः, गुरुः साक्षात् in person परम् supreme ब्रह्म the Divine Being, तस्मै to that श्रीगुरवे to the holy master, नमः obeisance to.

गुरुः ब्रह्मा (अस्ति), गुरुः देवः महेश्वरः (अस्ति), गुरुः साक्षात् परम् ब्रह्म (अस्ति); तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः (अस्तु).

The Guru is Brahma, the Creator; the Guru is God Shiva, the great Lord; the Guru is the Supreme Divine Being in person : obeisance to that holy master.

Errata : Lesson III page 87. instead of ( पादपानाम् पादप-पुं.) read पादपानाम् (पादप-पुं.) and instead of सब read वस, 22nd word.

PUJALAL