

# MOTHER INDIA

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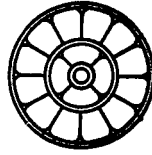
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XX

No. 3

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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## AN UNPUBLISHED POEM OF SRI AUROBINDO

*(These stanzas, found in a rough note-book, are perhaps the last short poem written by Sri Aurobindo.)*

### I

SILENCE is all, say the sages.  
Silence watches the work of the ages;  
In the book of Silence the cosmic Scribe has written his cosmic pages;  
Silence is all, say the sages.

### 2

What then of the word, O speaker?  
What then of the thought, O thinker?  
Thought is the wine of the soul and the word is the beaker;  
Life is the banquet-table—the soul of the sage is the drinker.

### 3

What of the wine, O mortal?  
I am drunk with the wine as I sit at Wisdom's portal,  
Waiting for the Light beyond thought and the Word immortal.  
Long I sit in vain at Wisdom's portal.

### 4

How shalt thou know the Word when it comes, O seeker?  
How shalt thou know the Light when it breaks, O witness?  
I shall hear the voice of the God within me and grow wiser and meeker;  
I shall be the tree that takes in the light as its food, I shall drink its nectar  
of sweetness.

January 14, 1946



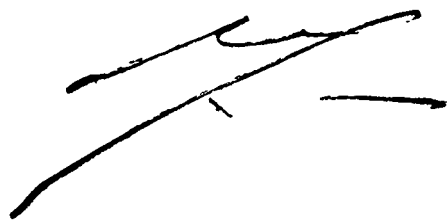
## THE FOUR ASPECTS OF THE MOTHER

### AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF THE MOTHER

*Q. Comment peut-on représenter les quatre aspects (Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi et Mahasaraswati) de la Mère? Comment tiennent-elles; combien de bras ont elles; quelle est l'expression de leurs visages; sur quoi sont elles assises? Je Te pris de me donner quelques indications sur ces points.*

Dans leur aspect  
au dessus de l'Overmind,  
dans les régions supérieures  
les aspects de la Mère  
ont des formes très  
simples et n'ont  
pas des membres  
multiples —  
Tous les détails et les  
complications sont  
des apparences ajoutées

en grande partie  
par les hommes  
pour donner  
une expression  
symbolique à  
des qualités  
Invisibles,



*Q. How is one to represent the four aspects (Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati) of the Mother? How do they stand; how many arms do they have; what is the expression of their faces; on what are they seated? I pray to You to give me some indications on these points.*

A. In their aspect above the Overmind, in the higher regions these aspects of the Mother have very simple forms and do not have multiple limbs.

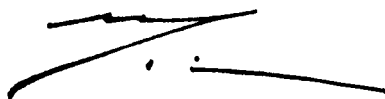
All the details and complications are appearances mostly added by men in order to give a symbolic expression to invisible qualities.

## WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN SADHANA

### AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF THE MOTHER

IN your sadhana what is important is sincerity at every point; if there is that, mistakes can be rectified and do not so much matter. If there is any insincerity, that pulls down the sadhana at once. But whether this constant sincerity is there or there is any falling off from it at any point, is a thing you must learn to see in yourself; if there is the earnest and constant will for it, the power to see will come. Sincerity does not at all depend on satisfying others—it is an inner matter and lies solely between you and me.

May 12, 1939





## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

*Q. You once spoke of the vital indecision of X. What is exactly meant by it? There are people who cannot come to a definite decision when the situation demands it. Again there are others who are constantly changing their decisions. Are both these cases those of vital indecision?*

A. The first is vital indecision—the other is vital instability. Those who can't choose, have the vital indecision and it is usually due to a too active physical mind, seeing too many things or too many sides at a time. The other rises from a lack of control and too much impulse.

1.11.1933

*Q. About the ordinary human reactions in the vital-physical, it is said in Bases of Yoga that one should not be badly affected or upset by them. Does mastery mean this detachment and equality or that there should be no reactions at all?*

A. Detachment is the beginning of mastery, but for complete mastery there should be no reactions at all. When there is something within undisturbed by the reactions that means the inner being is free and master of itself, but it is not yet master of the whole nature. When it is master, it allows no wrong reactions—if any come they are at once repelled and shaken off, and finally none come at all.

4.7.1936

*Q. I do not really know why I suddenly got the idea of chasing the sparrows. I never did it before and rebuked everybody who tried to do so. This evening I suddenly got the idea that they should be driven away as they were making the garden dirty.*

*That shows how I am still open to wrong ideas and suggestions. I pray for your forgiveness and protection.*

A. It was I suppose an idea that came through the physical mind, suggesting the following of a physical utility only and ignoring all other perceptions and motives. You must be on your guard against the ideas and suggestions of this physical mind and accept none without discrimination and subjection to a higher light.

2.3.1937

*Q. As I write this, tears come to my eyes. I am a bit emotional, am I not?*

A. There is no harm in emotion.

1.5.1936

# THE MOTHER AND HER WORKING

## LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

*Self: Kindly tell me what should I aspire for at present when I am quiet?*

SRI AUROBINDO: For the Mother's power to work and bring down by the proper stages the higher consciousness. Also for the system to be more and more fit, quiet, egoless, surrendered. 5-6-1934

*Self: You often speak of the Mother's Force. What is it really?*

SRI AUROBINDO: When I speak of the Mother's Force I do not speak of the force of the Prakriti which carries on things of the Ignorance but of the higher Force of the Divine that descends from above to transform the nature....The Mother's Force is the manifestation of the Mother herself.

*Self: How can we progress quickly without understanding what the Mother does in us?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Plenty of people progress rapidly without understanding what the Force is doing—they simply observe and describe and say "I leave all to the Mother." Eventually the knowledge and understanding come. 7-7-1934

*Self: You said, "H. has got a communicating power if one is at all receptive." Here what communicating power did you mean?*

SRI AUROBINDO: The Mother's influence—faith, joy, peace. 20-8-1934

*Self: Has the Mother really encircled us all, as the poet H feels, "A radiant circle around each of us"?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Those who allow her to encircle them. 23-8-1934

*Self: Sadhaks would not deny her encircling them. Why should they? But perhaps you meant that certain conditions have to be fulfilled before she can fully do it.*

SRI AUROBINDO: There are very few who allow it. There is a general protection around all, but most go out of it by their attitude, thoughts or actions or open the way to other forces. But what H speaks of must be something different from the general protection. 24-8-1934

*Self: I think you would agree that if the Mother's circle is around a sadhak he would never have gloom, doubts, depression etc., all of which is hostile to the Divine.*

SRI AUROBINDO: These things may try to come but they will not be able to enter or stay. 24-8-1934

*Self: A thrill comes from above and passes through my whole body making the "ādhār" still for a time. What is this thrill?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course it is the thrill of the Mother's touch coming from above and felt by the psychic and vital together. 28-8-1934

*Self: During today's Pranam, I perceived the Mother in a majestic form, seated very high. Of course she is always that inwardly. But what I experienced this morning was something on the physical plane and seen by my human eyes. Her grandeur showed as if she had already conquered the whole universe!*

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, the power was there in the body. Both your perception and reaction are right—which shows that you have progressed immensely.

16-9-1934

You are seeking for Self-realisation—but what is that self if not the Mother's self. There is no other.

29-9-1934

From NAGIN DOSHI

---

## 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 right leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becharlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshanker. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)*

MARCH 1, 1940

EVENING

KRISHNALAL had made a painting of a buffalo. The Mother had been heard to remark to Sri Aurobindo that it looked a bit sentimental.

SRI AUROBINDO (*from his bed, to P*): I have been looking at the buffalo. It looks as if it were undergoing a psychic change. (*To S*) What is your opinion?

S: I don't know, Sir. I don't know what is the idea behind. It doesn't appeal to me. The white elephant plucking lotuses from a pond was all right. The elephant is said to be Durga's vehicle. But why the buffalo?

SRI AUROBINDO: The buffalo is also the vehicle of someone.

P: Of Yama, Death.

At this point the Mother came in.

S (*to the Mother*): We have been wondering what the meaning could be of this buffalo.

THE MOTHER: Meaning? Did Krishnalal want to give any meaning? I thought it was only a buffalo, like his cats. One year we had flowers, last year birds and this year beasts.

S narrated some stories in Gujarati about buffaloes.

SRI AUROBINDO (*to N*): Sarat Chatterji also has written a story, hasn't he?

N: I think it was about a bullock.

S: It is supposed that while cow's milk is good, buffalo's milk makes the brain dull. Doctors don't prescribe it. Why don't you take milk, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Because I don't care to.

S: It is very good for blood.

SRI AUROBINDO: I have plenty of blood, I think.

B: Milk is said to be good for spirituality.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is no better than N's brinjal. (*Laughter*) The Mother and I don't take milk. There are many people who have taken milk for many years—even ten years—but I don't know that they have progressed spiritually. Punnuswamy, who was suffering from an ulcer, took nothing but milk.

B: Milk is believed to be an ideal food.

SRI AUROBINDO: I have no idea.

N: Dr. B is rather fond of milk.

S: I also don't disfavour it.

SRI AUROBINDO: But that is for the sake of your blood. (*Laughter*)

S: There are stories of buffaloes being used as a sacrifice.

SRI AUROBINDO: Ah, then this buffalo must be one who is to be so used!

N: Nishikanta is having his old trouble—pain, vomiting, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO: Has he been eating anything?

N: I don't think so. No resource.

SRI AUROBINDO: No resource?

N: No pocket money, but he took some sweets which people had brought during the Darshan period.

SRI AUROBINDO: Ah, I thought so.

N: But they were nothing much—

SRI AUROBINDO: Nothing much?

N: I mean, not so much in quantity—about three or four, he said.

SRI AUROBINDO: How was he cured last time?

N: By your Force, he says.

SRI AUROBINDO: And now he is brought back to his old condition by his own force?

N: It seems D's story about P. Chakravarty's death is not all correct. Nolini himself was one of the party. They never approached D. But the boy's death by bomb-explosion is quite true.

P: Nolini said that Barin was carrying the bomb in his hand with the cap on.

SRI AUROBINDO: Cap on? Just like Barin.

P: And the bomb exploded in the air before touching the ground.

N: Chakravarty thought that as soon as it would touch the ground he would hide himself behind a rock. He didn't expect it would explode before.

SRI AUROBINDO: Even so, it was very risky to watch like that. I think it was Nevins who said that the Indian revolutionaries were as good as the Russian. But this incident is hardly an encouraging one. Time is needed to become efficient. It took the Russians more than 100 years to throw off the Czar. Among the Indian revolutionaries Rashbehari Bose was an exceptional man—very clever in every way...

Pulin Das was also very good.

P: Rashbehari was really remarkable. He was a linguist. He used to talk Punjabi just like a Punjabi and he escaped just the night before the arrests. All the others got arrested.

MARCH 3, 1940

THE MOTHER (*coming into Sri Aurobindo's room at 11 a.m.*): Do you want to hear a story?

SRI AUROINDO: Yes, What is it about?

THE MOTHER: About the theft in Aroumé. It seems a man was lying drunk by the side of the wall with a bag of husks by his side. The time was about 8.30 a.m. Some sadhaks saw him and found that he was the Dining Room's sanitary servant. They took compassion on him but didn't know what to do. They came to A. A went there, hired a rickshaw and put the man in it and sent him home. In the morning Dyuman finds that his bag of husks is missing from the Dining Room, and he sees traces of footsteps on the wall. This man evidently climbed the wall, fell down and lay there in a drunken condition. So now these people have first lost the thief, secondly paid money for him to go home along with the bag of husks! (*Sri Aurobindo started laughing*).

Later, at sponging time, Sri Aurobindo spoke to P, who had not been there in the morning

SRI AUROBINDO: Have you heard the story of Buddhist compassion in Aroumé?

P: No; is it about some theft? I saw A bustling about.

SRI AUROBINDO (*after recounting the story to P*): A out of Buddhist compassion paid the man's rickshaw fare.

S: I was there too at that time.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, you were also one of the Buddhists?

S: No, Sir. I was only a spectator. The whole story sounds like one of D's.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes—only it has the disadvantage of being true. It seems there have been thefts in the house of Benabellis and of the Inspector of Police. It has proved the inefficiency of the Police.

S: D's stories have shed a flood of light on old events.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, the light that never was on sea or land.

P: May I recount a tale of B now? Sudhir told me that once B came to his house as guest. Sudhir asked him straight why he had left Pondicherry and to his straight question wanted straight answer. "When all people are turning towards Pondicherry," he said, "how is it that you have come away? You had many experiences, stayed a long time: Still why have you come away? Tell me frankly."

SRI AUROBINDO (*enjoying the story*): And then? What was the reply?

P: The first day B evaded Sudhir. The second day again he was asked and then

B told him that he had come away because of his personal difficulties. The Mother had asked him repeatedly not to go; even while going away he was having experiences right up to Villupuram, as if he were being carried in a golden egg by the Mother and he was all the time hearing, "Don't go, don't go." But he couldn't listen. He had fallen from the path and was getting the consequences of the fall.

## EVENING

P: I asked Krishnalal whether he had any idea behind his buffalo.

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling*): Yes? What was his answer?

P: He says he wanted to paint a goat first. As he had heard that somebody was presenting a goat to the Ashram, he waited for confirmation. In the meantime he did this buffalo in a single day.

SRI AUROBINDO: All the same he has done it well.

P: He wanted to show, as you said, a psychic change.

SRI AUROBINDO (*breaking into laughter on hearing about the confirmation of his own joke*): It looks also like a well-disposed cow and a bit of a dog too. But there is more of psychic sorrow than of joy—sorrow over the sins of the world. (*Laughter*)

Have you heard that the thief of whom we have talked has paid rather heavily for a little bag of husks? He has been given over to the police, he will lose his job and has lost Rs. 2. Perhaps it is the rickshaw-wallah who has deprived him of the money.

S: I suspect more the servant, Sir, who accompanied him and was taking care of his person. (*Laughter*) But why did he scale the wall when the door was quite open?

SRI AUROBINDO: He was too drunk to know that.

P: Some other things were found in the bag, they say.

SRI AUROBINDO: A's old shirt, which had been presented to him according to the man himself. He has confessed to the Police about the bag but said that he was too drunk to know what he was doing. What will be the law of Karma in his case? He has paid heavily for his Karma in this life, and will he pay still more heavily in the next?

S: No, Sir, it is more than cancelled. (*Laughter*)

S: A man loiters regularly near the Wine Shop by the side of our Dining Room and makes rather a free use of the liquor available,. Dr. B is anxious about him and says, "This poor man will die of his liver."

P: He may die without it as well.

SRI AUROBINDO: With no liver! (*Laughter*)

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

# AN ASTRONOMICAL INTERPRETATION OF RIG VEDA 1,6.

## A PARSI SCHOLAR'S VIEW AND THE EDITOR'S COMMENT

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HERE is F. Max Muller's translation of Rig Veda 1,6 taken from his *Rig Veda Sanhita*-Vol. 1 containing 'Hymns To The Maruts or The Storm Gods':—

- 1: Those who stand around him while he moves on, harness the bright red steed; the lights in heaven shine forth.
- 2: They harness to the chariot on each side his (Indra's) two favourite bays, the brown, the bold, who can carry the hero.
- 3: Thou who createst light where there was no light, and form, O men, where there was no form, hast been born together with the dawns.
- 4: Thereafter they (the Maruts), according to their wont, assumed again the form of new-born babes, taking their sacred name.
- 5: Thou, O Indra, with the swift Maruts who break even through the stronghold, hast found even in their hiding place the bright cows (the days).
- 6: The pious singers (the Maruts) have, after their own mind shouted towards the giver of wealth, the great, the glorious (Indra).
- 7: Mayest thou (host of the Maruts) be verily seen coming together with Indra, the fearless; you are both happy-making and of equal splendour.
- 8: With the beloved hosts of Indra, with the blameless, heavenward-tending (Maruts), the sacrificer cries aloud.
- 9: From yonder, O traveller (Indra), come hither, or down from the light of heaven; the singers all yearn for it,
- 10: Or we ask Indra for help from here, or from heaven, above the earth, or from the great sky.

The words in parenthesis have been so put by Max Muller, the translator himself, in order to amplify or elucidate the meaning of the verse as he understands it. They are not in the original Sanskrit text itself.

Now let us examine the contents of these 10 verses. As Max Muller observes in a note to verse 1, "the poet begins with a somewhat abrupt description of a sunrise." This is one of the pivotal points for remembrance. The other is given in verse 3 where the poet says:

"Thou who createst light where there was no light, and form,...hast been born together with the DAWNS."



The creator of light is the Sun and he has been born "together with the DAWNS". The use of the word "dawns" in the plural shows unmistakably that this birth or coming back of the Sun takes place in the Arctic regions. It is therefore the re-birth of the Sun which takes place in the Polar regions with the Vernal Equinox as shown by Lokmanya Tilak. That this interpretation is correct is borne out by verse 5 in which Indra is said to have "found even in their hiding place the bright cows" i.e. the sun with its bright rays of light.

It is also borne out by verse 4. Here it is necessary to strike a note of difference with the learned scholar, Max Muller. He thinks the Maruts are storm gods. In a note to verse 4, he explains that

"the idea that the Maruts assumed the form of a 'garbha', lit. of an embryo or a new born child, is only meant to express that the storms burst forth from the womb of the sky as soon as Indra arises to do battle against the demon of darkness. As assisting Indra in this battle, the Maruts, whose name retained for a long time its appellative meaning of storms, attained their rank as deities by the side of Indra, or as the poet expresses it, they assumed their sacred name. This seems to be the whole meaning of the later legend that the Maruts, like the Ribhus, were not originally gods, but became deified for their works".

With all due deference to the memory of so profound and conscientious a scholar as Max Muller, it is submitted that along with other great scholars he has made the mistake of understanding Maruts (at least here) as storm gods. The context of the different verses of this hymn clearly shows that Maruts should be understood here as Aurora Borealis or the Northern Lights.

In the very first verse, the poet gives a description of a sunrise in a clear i.e. cloudless sky and there can be no storms without clouds. He compares the rays of the sun to a "bright red steed" and says that "the lights in heaven shine forth". Where there are no storm clouds, where is the necessity for the poet to think or speak of storm gods?

The "two favourite bays" of verse 2 are not the steeds of Indra who is not mentioned in the verse itself. The verse is in continuation of the concepts of the first verse and carries forward the idea of the harnessing of the sun's chariot. The "two favourite bays" are a poetic way of describing the two main or major rays of red light which are thrown up by the sun and are seen before it itself comes up and is seen above the horizon. Verse 2 describes a gorgeous poetic fancy about a splendid sunrise after many months of a dark night.

Verse 3 refers clearly to the sun and continues further the concepts of the sunrise. By associating it with the idea of "the Dawns" in the plural, it fixes the location in the Polar regions as well as the time of the Vernal Equinox.

The contents of verse 4 describe exactly the phenomenon of the streamers of the Aurora Borealis receding into the womb or "garbha" from which they came. This they begin to do as the bright light of the Dawns advances and finally disappear in the womb when the sun comes up. They are visible only when the sun is below the

horizon during the long polar night.

The Maruts or the Northern Lights are there and "break even through the stronghold" of the darkness of the long polar night, the while Indra is searching for "the bright cows" in the nether world (below the horizon) and finds them according to verse 5.

In verse 6, there is no necessity to interpret the pious singers as the Maruts. These singers are the poets who loudly hail the sun, "the giver of wealth, the great, the glorious". These words show how anxiously the ancient Aryans, the children of Light, waited for the re-appearance of the sun in their polar habitat, every time after its long absence. It is therefore not necessary to apply the words—"the giver of wealth, the great, the glorious"—to Indra. They apply very naturally and much more appropriately to the sun only—particularly when we remember that the piece gives the description of a sunrise in the polar regions.

Likewise the word "thou" in verse 7 cannot refer to the "host of the Maruts". It clearly refers to the sun which is "seen coming together with Indra, the fearless". In these last quoted words is the key to the suggestion that this hymn was composed at the time when the Vernal Equinox used to fall in the Nakshatra Jyeshtha.

We have already seen from verse 3 that the sunrise mentioned in this hymn is the harbinger of the Vernal Equinox in the Polar regions. Now Indra in this verse 7 is not to be understood merely as a god but as the living god whose home is in the constellation Jyeshtha. It is mentioned in Rig Veda I,50,2 that the Nakshatras are the places of abode of the Devas. Indra is the Swami or Ruler of Jyeshtha and it is clear from the wording of verse 7 that Indra is meant to denote the Nakshatra Jyeshtha of which it is the Swami and in which this god abides, and it is thus this constellation with which the sun is "Verily Seen Coming Together". This enables us to fix the time when the author of this hymn, Kanva, the son of Ghora, must have lived viz. between 16,998 and 16,028 B.C. when the Vernal Equinox fell in the Nakshatra Jyeshtha. Other hymns attributed to the same author are Rig Veda I,37, I,38 and I,39 all addressed to Maruts and these three pieces must likewise be taken to belong to the same period.

The words "heavenward-tending" in verse 8 also apply very accurately to the Northern Lights. These Lights usually appear in streamers, which ascend, often in a fan shape, from a dusky line or centre a few degrees above the horizon and reach high up into the vault of heaven.

Verses 9 and 10 contain invocations to Indra for help and the style becomes characteristic of the period if we may judge it by comparison with the way Rashne (or Visakha) is invoked in Rashne Yasht in the Avesta.

In the case Rig Veda I,6 we have been able to fix the period of its composition from the following facts viz.

- (a) the rising of the sun,
- (b) in the polar region as evidenced by the plurality of the dawns,
- (c) which fixes the time of the year as the vernal equinox.

(d) This sunrise is seen with the rise of Indra which can only mean that it is some star or constellation which rises with the sun.

(e) This star we can determine as the Nakshatra Jyeshtha because Indra is its Swami or Ruler and it is therefore Indra's abode.

(f) The calculation of the period of the falling of the Vernal Equinox in the Nakshatral division of Jyeshtha is merely a matter of time calculation.

But in the case of other hymns, the reference to the Nakshatra may be to that in which the Autumnal Equinox takes place. From this we would have to calculate the Nakshatra or Nakshatras in which the Vernal Equinox would fall and thus determine the date. Such a hymn seems to be Rig Veda I,19 which is addressed to Agni and the Maruts. Here Agni is not to be understood merely as the God of Fire but also as the Swami or Ruler of the Nakshatra Krittika or Pleiades, and the time is clearly one of Polar night because the Maruts or Aurora Borealis are invoked with Agni and the Aurora Borealis can only be seen when the sun is not there and the Polar night begins with the disappearance of the sun below the horizon with what we call the Autumnal Equinox but was to the ancients in their Polar habitat merely the beginning of their long period of Polar darkness.

We have advisedly said above: "such a hymn seems to be Rig Veda I,19", because we can only surmise but cannot say for certain from the hymn itself that the Krittikas were the Nakshatral division in which the Autumnal Equinox took place. The internal evidence is not as definite as in the case of Rig Veda I,6.

The whole point of the argument to be constructed out of the two illustrations of Rig Veda I,6 and 19 given above, is that from the Deva worshipped in any hymn, we can in several cases take the hymn to be in reference to the Nakshatra of which the particular Deva is the Swami and from the position of that Nakshatra in the heavens at the time we can infer the possible date of that hymn. It does not mean that such inference of the date will always be possible, because the position of the Nakshatra in the heavens at the time may not be ascertainable with any certainty.

One thing more needs to be pointed out here. In the above discussion, we have pointed out how the Maruts can in several cases of the Rig Vedic hymns be understood as the gods of the Northern Lights. But it must be remembered that the gods change their attributes through various causes operating through any length of time. Once the ancient Aryans are driven out of their original home in the North Polar regions, the Maruts would naturally lose all their meaning as gods of the Northern Lights. Indra or Jyeshtha would also be seen in the sky with the sun at a time when it was the season for thunder and lightning, and would thus acquire a new significance and change from the God of Victory which it was originally, to the God of Thunder.

The Maruts from long and ancient association with Indra would likewise acquire a new significance as the Gods of Storms.

## EDITOR'S COMMENT

The Rigveda is a scripture of multiple meaning and we may assume that astronomical indications are likely to be found in it just as geographical and anthropological data are. But we have to bear in mind that it is primarily a scripture, a corpus of sacred writings. And so the basic question is: Are the hymns the document of primitive Nature-worship or do they embody the experiences of mystics?

We know that their composers were called Rishis, Seers, and that the word "Veda" means "Knowledge" and that Rishi Dirghatamas in I.164.39 speaks of the Riks as "existing in a supreme ether, imperishable and immutable, in which all the gods are seated" and he adds: "one who knows not That, what shall he do with the Riks?" We have also to remember how the sages of the Upanishads, whose mysticism is never in doubt, frequently appealed to the Rigveda's authority for the truths they themselves announced and how both the Upanishads and the Rigveda were jointly called *śruti*, a word which came to mean "revealed scripture". What is more, the Vedic Sun-god Surya is invoked in the Isha Upanishad as a God of revelatory knowledge whose action leads us to the highest truth. And the same function is his in the sacred formula of the Gayatri which for thousands of years has been in the mouth of every Brahmin during his daily meditation—the formula which is a verse from the Rigveda itself, from a hymn of the Rishi Vishwamitra.

Yes, the mystical meaning of the Rigveda can only be denied by overlooking the most obvious facts of spiritual history and tradition. No doubt, there was a Nature-cult in the days of the Vedic Rishis and these Rishis were the priests of Nature-worshipping Aryans and they built their hymns on a principle which allowed a double sense. On the one hand, the formulas and ceremonies of the hymns answer broadly to the details of an outward ritual in which the powers of sun and fire and rain and thunder were propitiated for earthly goods; on the other hand, they were the effective symbols of a spiritual experience, a psychological discipline of occult realisation, expressed in "secret words", *nīnyā vācāṃsi*, which yielded their true import only to the purified in soul, the awakened in knowledge. And, the Rishis being what they were, the symbolic and mystic sense is the fundamental one.

As soon as we see this, a mystic interpretation such as given by Nolini Kanta Gupta of the Sixth Sukta of the Rigveda in a long past issue of *Mother India*<sup>1</sup> must be granted legitimacy, even primacy. And as soon as we see certain other factors we shall conclude that, while some astronomical indications may be present, the general conclusions reached by Mr. Spencer are questionable.

Mr. Spencer says that Rigveda I,6 was composed in the Arctic regions in some century between 16,998 and 16,028 B.C. when the Vernal Equinox fell in the Nakshatra Jyeshtha. Now, although he is right in believing that the succession of dawns before actual sunrise points to a phenomenon of the Arctic regions, he forgets that the

<sup>1</sup> May, 1963, pp. 21-22.

mention of the horses rules out those regions as the place where the hymn was composed, for there were no horses at all there. Natural history knows of no equines in the Arctic at any time of the past. So, if I,6 mentions horses, it must have been composed outside the Arctic. And, as all the geographical data of the Rigveda—the names of mountains, rivers, countries, peoples—point to the Punjab as the central area, there is no reason to look outside the Punjab for the place of composition. If there are any signs of the Arctic, they enter only as memories; but why should memories intrude upon the perception of Nature as it exists in the Punjab? They could only be indirect: the direct reference could be to no Nature-conditions at all. It must be to an inner succession of illuminations—dawns—culminating in the full outburst of the Divine Knowledge, the Truth-light, the Sun of Gnosis.

Generalising the situation, I may quote from Sri Aurobindo a few passages. He shows how pervading in the Rigveda is the image of the Cow of Light and how inevitably it points to a psychological sense for the hymns. Then he asks why, even accepting the inevitable conclusion that the cow is an image for Light, we should not understand it to mean simply the light of day and why we should suppose a double figure in which “cow” means light of dawn and light of dawn is the symbol of an inner illumination. Why not take it that the Rishis were praying not for spiritual illumination, but for daylight? Sri Aurobindo says:

“The objections are manifold and some of them overwhelming. If we assume that the Vedic hymns were composed in India and the dawn is the Indian dawn and the night the brief Indian night of ten or twelve hours, we have to start with the concession that the Vedic Rishis were savages overpowered by a terror of the darkness which they peopled with goblins, ignorant of the natural law of the succession of night and day—which is yet beautifully hymned in many of the Suktas,—and believed that it was only by their prayers and sacrifices that the Sun rose in the heavens and the Dawn emerged from the embrace of her sister Night. Yet they speak of the undeviating rule of the action of the Gods, and of Dawn following always the path of the eternal Law of Truth! We have to suppose that when the Rishi gives vent to the joyous cry, ‘We have crossed over to the other shore of this darkness!’, it was only the normal awakening to the daily sunrise that he thus eagerly hymned. We have to suppose that the Vedic peoples sat down to the sacrifice at dawn and prayed for the light when it had already come. And if we accept all these improbabilities, we are met by the clear statement that it was only after they had sat for nine or for ten months that the lost light and the lost sun were recovered by the Angirasa Rishis. And what are we to make of the constant assertion of the discovery of the Light by the Fathers:—Our fathers found out the hidden light, by the truth in their thoughts they brought to birth the Dawn, *gūḍham jyotiḥ pitaro anvavindan, satyamantrā ajanayan uṣāsam* (VII, 76-4)? If we found such a verse in any collection of poems in any literature, we would at once give it a psychological or a spiritual sense; there is no just reason for a different treatment of the Veda.

“If, however, we are to give a naturalistic explanation and no other to the Vedic

hymns, it is quite clear that the Vedic Dawn and Night cannot be the Night and Dawn of India; it is only in the Arctic regions that the attitude of the Rishis towards these natural circumstances and the statements about the Angirasas become at all intelligible. But though it is extremely probable that the memories of the Arctic home enter into the external sense of the Veda, the Arctic theory does not exclude an inner sense behind the ancient images drawn from Nature nor does it dispense with the necessity for a more coherent and straightforward explanation of the hymns to the Dawn."

Let me return to Mr. Spencer. If the hymn under consideration, with its reference not only to cows but also to horses, was composed in India and if its sunrise is symbolic, would we be justified in reading a description in it of the vernal equinox in the Nakshatra Jyeshtha in the Arctic Circle? What would be the point of such a description? Is the description put there just to show that the Vedic Aryans used to live in the Arctic Circle between 16,998 and 16,028 B.C., even though at the time of the hymn's composition they were in the Punjab? Or should we say that no such chronology is involved but that there is just a broad memory of Arctic dawn-phenomena?

May I request Mr. Spencer to weigh these questions? But chiefly may I request him to go with care through Sri Aurobindo's book, *On the Veda*? No one interested in our most ancient scripture can afford to neglect it.

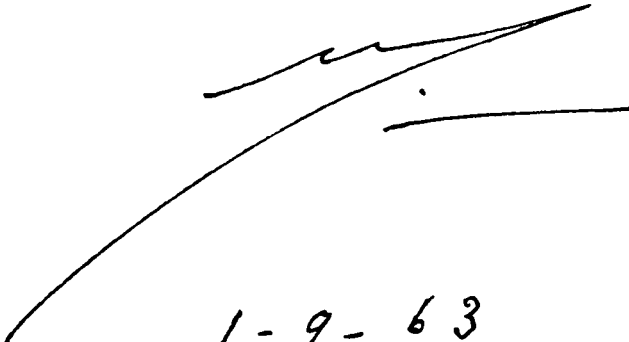
K. D. SETHNA

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## SALUTATIONS

(Continued from the issue of February 21)

*This is how  
all sincere aspirations  
are fulfilled  
With blessings*



1-9-63

26

Miwani (Africa) 1954

O beloved Lord, O dear Krishna,

All beautiful Shyama, flame of my heart, Light of my soul, star of my eyes.

I am tired waiting for you, but why did you not come?

I drowned in the ocean of imaginations...

Early in the morning I went to pluck jasmines for You...I did not notice stones or thorns on the way...I went on...

I reached the jasmine tree and started plucking one flower after another. Meanwhile, O Shyama! I heard the melody of Your flute and I was struck still. My fingers hung, unmoving, on the flowers.

You came to me from behind the tree. I strewed flowers on You and bowed my head.

27

Miwani (Africa) 30-6-1954

Divinest dearest Mother,

From day to day the draw towards You is constant. Today I asked myself: When shall I put my head in Your lap and renew my age-long relation with you, dispel my sorrows and confusions of years and dedicate my whole life to You?

The inner voice: "All this shall surely be." Tonight, unlike as on other days, I sat in meditation at about seven and my prayers were: "Dear Compassionate Sweet Mother, I salute You. Today—right now I remember You. May Your Grace manifest and let nothing happen except what You wish for me. Lead me to the true path—from the darkness to the Light."

And at once, although there was no sign at all of rain, I yet saw a lightning flash and heard a roar of thunder.

Thus You have heard my prayers and granted them.

28

Miwani (Africa) 1-7-1954

My deeply loved Mother,

Moment after moment my mind becomes unsteady. Sometimes I wonder whether You are right, whether You accept me. Again I wonder how long my life will be and how it will be spent. What should I now do?

But yes, today I have the glimmering of an idea that You are the Supreme Mother. If I give You my mind and body and all my possession; then I shall have nothing of my own and You will have all the work and worry.

I shall do that only. But how? Make me understand. Help me, show me the way. I am Your most ignorant child. Give me a glint of knowledge to start the Divine Life. Whatever inspiration You will give I shall accept.

After this, all of me will have been surrendered at Your Feet—eternal flames of Your sacred Name will have been lit in pore on pore of my body. For the sake of the Supreme Truth and the Supreme Love I shall sacrifice everything of my being. But, O Mother! grant me the strength to do so.

I surely believe that You alone are doing everything that will make my path straight and clear. Let Your Will be accomplished.

Mother, do not forget that You are my Mother and I am Your child. Forgive all my errors, accept me, O Mother, and reveal Your sweet Self.



Give wisdom to all the people of world and lead them to the Divine. May Your great Decree be fulfilled!

29

Miwani (Africa) 1-7-1954

O Mother, Divine Creatrix!

How am I to describe You? O Infinity, O Wonder of Wonders! Mother! who are You? Where are You? What are You doing? Perhaps even the Lord cannot know.

O Supreme Mother! without You the whole universe is helpless and the Lord Himself is helpless ..

O Mother! Victory to You.

30

Miwani (Africa), 11-7-1954

My dear Divine Mother,

In my mind, in my heart, these days Your divine path is more and more laid out, deeply and firmly fixed.

Now I am waiting for one drop of Your revelatory Grace.

For endless years, my love for You has been filling the depths of my heart.

Now You are my one support. So make me Yours. Show me the way and Yourself lead me to my divine Goal.

Absorb me in Your divinity...

31

Miwani (Africa) 11-7-1954

My dear Mother,

Everyday You teach me something new. And now I feel sure that the path to which You are leading me is really the aim and goal of my life.

A human being takes birth with good and bad qualities. It takes long to get rid of the bad ones. To realise the good ones also takes long. And to convert the bad into the good is indeed a great work. But is not this Transformation the very goal of a human being?

I know all my defects. They cannot be removed in a short time. But I am certain—and my heart cries out—that only by Your Grace shall I gain the Victory! You have opened my heart's eyes.

At first I was entangled in illusions. But, truly speaking, my aim and my intense longing and my aspiration are all to be dissolved in the Divine Consciousness. But in the maze of the world I have borne many a stumble, many a wound, many a shock. Thus have several years passed. I have cried my heart out in the midst of terrible obstacles. On top of that a number of illnesses made me their victim. And I lay at death's door—as if the sun of my whole life had been setting. I was thus surrounded

by a fiery ring of calamities. And yet in the deep heart., my desire to be one with the Divine persisted and the spring of my love for You never ran dry.

Outer faith had gone and I felt that there was nothing like God or Truth in the world. But the inner voices were never still and the flame of faith kept burning calm and steady. After sunset there is sunrise. Then a new Dawn was revealed to me, I had a glimpse of You through a relative at the end of 1953. When I saw Your photograph, a new hope was kindled in my soul And gradually the wounds of my heart and mind started healing: slowly a new consciousness grew in me. After that I had a contact with many Sadhakas and men of good-will. Moreover, I came closer and closer to You inwardly and You accepted me.

Yet the volcano of my mind did not calm down soon.

From Bombay I came to Miwanī. There I understood the fact that those whom I had called mine were no longer mine. But everywhere I began to see the various colours of illusion. I knew what I was aspiring for. I understood the source of my defects and as if step by step I started growing detached from the allures and affections and falsehoods of the world. I experienced a new strength and peace establishing themselves in my heart. The true path of my life I could now faintly see.

But now I pray for Your constant Grace, help, blessings and Presence. Make my mind still stronger. My whole being is at Your disposal. Whatever You have thought should come to pass.

O open the door of my heart, call me swiftly to Yourself and make me all Yours.

*(To be continued)*

HUTA

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## REVELATION

EVER Thy nectared glory drips  
Its shining gold apocalypse  
    Though the rock-roofs of agelong sleep;  
Empooled within the heart's lone cave,  
Its joy-streams gather wave on wave,  
Far wisdoms of Thy plumbless deep.

For ever pours the golden rain  
Within the blue lakes of the brain  
    Its strange entranced magic lore;  
The great white swans descend from high  
Within the spirit's vaulted sky  
    And nestle on its star-pearl shore;

Wild gleaming cascades of delight  
Drop headlong from the zenithed height  
    Empowered sun-truths, moons of grace;  
And all the splendour, triumph, power,  
Is gathered to a mystic flower  
    Within the beauty of Thy Face.

TEHMI

## THE SECOND SELF

### A PERSONAL RECORD

#### I

EVEN during these days of speed and planning my native village in a remote corner of northern Balasore, Orissa, on the Bay of Bengal, remains stilled in a strange silence. A friend of mine, who once upon a time spent his vacation as my guest there, expressed long afterwards, the lasting impact in his memory, of the roar of the sea and the constant warbling of the doves, in the background of an auditory void. Of course, things are changing, as on one of my recent visits there, my villagers swore to me that they had seen, with their own eyes how a jeep whisked through the mounds of sand, that is, the village street.

During the years 1942 and 1943, this silence was sepulchral. An unprecedented storm swept over the coastal areas of northern Balasore and of the Contai area of Bengal. A few days of non-stop rain finally broke forth into a tempest, a reign of terror, which continued for twenty-two hours and in its wake brought total devastation to to hundreds of villages. A boy of eight then, I remember to this day the pitiable scene of dozens of men and women, naked or with tattered clothes, hunted into our house during those hours, as ours was the only pukka building, and stood intact whereas all the clay houses, with meagre exceptions, were levelled to the ground. I too remember having seen in the dawn of lull after the night's tempest, tiny birds with eyefuls of death scattered in our garden, which only hours ago 'in the interfluous wood' satiated 'the hungry dark with melody.'

The tempest was soon followed by a big flood in the river Subarnarekha. Even the oldest grandfather in our village did not remember having heard, even from his grandfather, of flood-water ever appearing anywhere near our village. But this time our village was an island, unfamiliar water whirling all around.

The cyclone made the sea swell. In consequence, the blooming greenery of crops—thousands of acres—was all mud. So, soon came famine. It was horrible. On my deserted way to a Primary school, beside which was opened a Government Relief Centre, I often saw men and women crawling to reach the Centre's Kitchen, who, when I saw them again on returning by twilight, were being pierced by vultures and crows, and dragged by jackals and dogs.

Ours was the last house on that point of Indian land and very isolatedly situated too. In front were barren hillocks of glittering sands barricading the tides. It was the time of War. Often in the night my sleep terminated with shocks from explosive sounds reverberating in our doors and windows. Mostly they were from ammunition-tests carried on at the Proof and Experimental Establishment situated miles away to the south-west of our place. But then sometimes the explosions also meant more

than that, as deplorable sights of corpses in full uniform and of large chunks of devastated ships, afloat, were not unusual. Japanese planes bombarded a temporary air-base situated at Amarda, about twenty-five miles from our house. Government was apprehensive of a sudden hostile invasion from the sea and, in order to make the inland inaccessible to the enemy, sent some intelligence to the local police who in their turn decided to confiscate all the vehicles and torch-lights possessed by the public. Accordingly, about sixty villages were combed and two or three old bicycles were discovered and rendered immobile. For many days three confiscated torch-lights remained deposited under my father's custody. Thus the police authorities of a remote locality, unheard and unsung, foiled all prospects of an Axis invasion! ...

The days appeared empty with very little human transactions, and, as I recollect today, it seemed to me then as though the very sun wore a hood of melancholy. Nights came and, along with them, waves of nightmares. Through the window beside my bed, I remained gazing at the vast coastal solitude. In my vision were constantly alive the many-tongued monsters trying to grasp India from across the ocean as depicted in War-posters. Moonlight or mist or darkness—I was accustomed to expect from amid them horrible shapes of things.

And finally they came, just in one of the hours and in the way I used to expect them. It was an hour of dark midnight, a dead hour of silence. They surrounded our house and flashed dozens of powerful torches and created deliberate deafening sounds—a technique to terrorise the sleeping villagers and keep them confined to their mosquito-nets.

When my father hurriedly came down from his cot and lifted me from mine in his arms and through the window I had a glimpse of them who were soldierly in their appearance, naturally it occurred to me that the Japanese had arrived. Minutes later I understood that our house was attacked by a most ferocious gang of dacoits who for decades past had rained terror and ruin on northern Balasore and parts of Midnapore district. They indulged in the play of cruelty freely. I had the chance of witnessing some victims of their perverse dealing a few days earlier than their raid on our house. However, my father was too indifferent a man to take any precautionary measure against such a raid, knowing well that our house, which was entirely transformed to a big treasury then could be the most coveted to them. Two of my elder sisters, the eldest's house having been smashed in the tempest and the other's threatened by the same fate in the flood, came to stay with us carrying with them all their jewellery. Besides, we were somewhat rich by heredity, though more so in folklore than in fact. Besides still, many families of the nearby villages had hoarded in our house their little valuables, gold, silver or packets of cash, as the tempest had left them in the lurch.

As father and I came out of our room, we saw my mother and my sisters coming out of their room. Assault on our front door was in full swing then. We all ran towards the opposite door, facing the village. We reached there only to lose all hope, as that too was being stormed from outside and was shaking pathetically. Struck

dumb, we stood there for a few seconds. Today, twentytwo years after that night, I can recollect very well the sensation of that moment, when we were surrounded by dangers of unpredictable dimensions.

Though perhaps nothing was better than anything then, we, after all, had to do something and so back we all hurried, to pack ourselves in one room. Hardly had we finished bolting the door from within when it staggered with violent knocks from without. My parents and sisters desperately tried to add their strength to the wooden planks. But in a moment the door broke open and they rushed in, about a dozen at a time, a few of them in masks. They were swift and methodical. About sixty in all, they were divided in groups and simultaneously ransacked all the rooms.

Now we were amid them, amid the dreaded ones, who had a long record behind them of ghastly plunder and bloodshed. I who had heard so many hair-raising stories about them, might have screamed in awe dreaming them, now, fresh from an hour's sound sleep, face to face before them, was radically different. I was experiencing something which would have been fabulous to myself an hour ago. I was calm and composed far from any form of fear. I felt, with no help of logic whatsoever, that they could do no harm to any of us. Even, I had this curious feeling that they were gentlemen! And fear, soon I felt, had disappeared from my parents too.

The first activity of the dacoits after invading our room was to capture my father. They obliged my father to sit on a cot and bound his hands backward. While my mother hurled at them all the keys of all the safes, trunks and chests, my father kicked them, since his legs remained free. One of his captors revealed a sharp, dazzling dagger and pointed it to his throat, while another dramatically jumped forward and snatched the dagger away. Everything appeared to me as light as play indeed! There was a secret cabin in that room, where the essence of our hereditary wealth remained, mostly in form of gold. In due course the dacoits explored it. My father simply did not care while the valuable caskets were carried away before his eyes. But when a man was packing three of his dear *hookahs*, with delicate filigree on them, his aristocracy burst forth: "Are you not a gentleman's son, man? How do you think I am going to smoke tomorrow?" And it was seen in the morning that in one of our rooms, now absolutely empty, was carefully left the best of the three *hookahs*.

Well, I had even a feeling that they were gentlemen! And should I now suggest, which I believe to be true, that my feeling and the total absence of panic in all of us did some miracle in them! Their movements seemed rather apologetic and their 'spokesman' addressed my mother as 'mother'. One of them very vigorously interrogated me to find out if I had any knowledge of any more property buried or hidden. I looked at him and asked if at my age I was expected to know all that. He paused to indicate appreciation of my stand and departed.

After their plunder had concluded with smooth success and they had advanced in the direction of the sea, my angry father pursued them in darkness. Twice he

attempted this and both the times he was detected after a little advancement. But he was merely chased back till he returned to us, whereas we knew how a similar tendency in others had brought tragic consequences.

Hundreds gathered as the gangsters disappeared. Many had supposed our house to be inviolable because of its religious tradition and the right to heavenly protection due to the philanthropic deeds of my late grandfather who lives in legends and in the hearts of the people of our locality. Now, many were stunned. As they looked into the vast expanse of deserted coast lost in mysterious darkness, and talked of so many things, slowly my fear returned. I was no more different. I became my old familiar self.

## 2

Fairly soon came a more dangerous occasion, when the advent in me of my different self became yet more revealing. After about a fortnight of the dacoity during which period very prompt investigations were made by a determined group of detectives and the District Police Chiefs, a large police force surrounded an area of three villages about seventeen miles away from our house and amazing discoveries followed. It was a full fledged professional gang with patrons, and fire-arms at their disposal and inter-provincial contacts and transactions. A dense forest on the river Subarnarekha provided them with the privacy for planning, training and dividing the booty. Dacoity had been their practice for generations, perhaps extending back to a century. All involved were arrested, but were released on bail.

That was a night hauntingly desolate. An epidemic of small-pox had broken out and almost every hour news of familiar ones dying reached us. Day after day, the smell of burning dead bodies from the sea-side kept me constantly gloomy.

Then I was down with pox, rather of a serious kind. Our servants, except two, had left to nurse their own relatives. My father had gone to the District town to obtain a licence for a gun—in War time it was not easy to obtain one. My elder brother, who came from Cuttack where he used to study, and one of my sisters were then staying with us. It was only 8 p. m. But during those days that meant quite night. My mother was sitting by my side nursing me. In the spacious verandah in front of the main door, our clerk was absorbed in some little account, so much so that when my mother asked him the cause of some sound of chaotic footsteps originating near him, without raising his drooping head he affectionately answered that it was Padya (our boy-servant) who was playing mischief with him. By then he was actually being made into a parcel under strong ropes! In spite of his answer, however, my mother's intuition instantly told her that it could not be Padya. In another room dwelt an old lady, a grandmother by relation. She wildly came running into our room. As she entered, my mother bolted the door from within. My brother and sister were taking their food. Suddenly my sister exclaimed: "They have come again!" Without a second's discussion, both of them and our cook escaped through

the kitchen-side door into the village. This grandmother and my brother and sister have never afterwards been able to satisfactorily explain how they could jump into such a conclusion with so much of certainty and act accordingly, thus saving us all. To me it was more than intuition. Parallel to all hostile strategies, there is a strategy of Divine Protection, only if we knew and cared to resort to it! ...

This time the dacoits were less in number, about twenty-five. They were abnormal and disorderly. They had come to kill—they shouted. No use bolting the door—they thundered as they dashed a heavy beam of timber against the same. Their voice sounded fantastically inhuman and betrayed a high tension.

We believed that they had come to kill, so that none would remain to identify them or the property recovered from them in the court. My mother and grandmother tried to support the door. They pathetically appealed to the invaders to take away whatever little bits were there in different rooms and to spare us. But as time passed, they grew more and more ferocious. It was clear that they had only one purpose and that was to reach us.

I got up and sat upon my bed. The first shock gave away to the feeling of a cool freshness in me. It seemed strange, but it was thrilling. My lost self of serene calmness was getting revived in me, but this time with a positive promotion in the experience. My mother once turned to look at me and told me to pray. I went near our western window. One furlong away in that direction was situated our family sanctuary. I cried for God's Protection. I tried to communicate to Him that there was no alternative to His intervention that very moment. Though our door cracked and the attack on it reached its peak, a strong confidence was instilled in me that my prayer and my mother's were not going to fail. In the concrete feeling of certainty in my heart, I knew that God could not afford to be slow in His response to our prayer. The door was on the verge of falling. A blow or two more would have secured its destruction and perhaps ours. But by that time my brother had roused the whole village. People promptly collected in our east-side garden and planned to surround the culprits. The latter could scent it. They recoiled from our door and gathered in the verandah. Thence, they discharged a few arrows into the garden. The arrows were deadly, but they missed our men who did not fail to return some too.

The dacoits retreated, only leaving our absent-minded clerk seriously bleeding. Him they had wounded with a hatchet.

Though the mystery of the second invasion was never quite unravelled, the merit of their first performance was sufficient for the Session Court to award long-term rigorous imprisonment to the whole gang. Thus was totally liquidated a citadel of crime with a dark long tradition. The case has been one of the biggest of its kind in the police-records of my State.

Years passed and off my parents' loving care I pursued my study at different



places and came under new influences. I forgot the experiences of my childhood. Human suffering had perturbed me and out in search of its panacea, I became pledged to a Godless creed. Since 1949 onwards, for a period of nine years, all my emotions had remained constantly charged with the heat of politics. I had no leisure to dive deep through the surface of my existence in quest of my—well, I should say the real self, or at least the second self, which proved marvellous to me in moments of crises. I had forgotten it, but it did not forget me. Longingly perhaps it awaited opportunities when it could surge up into my conscious self and overwhelm it with its spell of love and solace, faith and strength. Such moments have come. Some I have ignored or avoided or forgotten, perhaps with a subconscious awe, lest my little self of ignorance should be lost to it. But again, there have been moments when the emergence of the second self has been too illuminative to be subdued in the darkness of oblivion. Such a moment came, when once in 1956, on the Calcutta-Bangkok route my plane entered an extensive storm. It soared higher and higher, only to encounter layers and layers of clouds. Dense blue with occasional dazzlings kept the plane enveloped for a long time. Though after arrival in Bangkok the officers of the plane confessed that they had had a tough time, maybe it was nothing extraordinary. But while in the sky, during the moments of pending disaster, perhaps many people resorted to silent prayer. At least that was the impression I got when I viewed most of my solemn-faced fellow-passengers. Well, whether they did pray or not, they could if they wished to. But I could not, as I had no God. It is again a queer feeling. Silently I looked at the misty infinity and I looked down to the ocean. Clouds had thinned. Ripples were seen on the vast water. What I felt that very moment is rather difficult to describe. All that Mother Nature communicated to me through the signs of ripples below, was her infinite love. I felt love all around me! There could be no thought for sometime, which was irrelevant to the presence of love.

The effect of this short and silent experience perhaps continued for weeks to come, developing in me a serene indifference towards a series of disturbing incidents which followed shortly. Most of the incidents were of course ideological and, in my early twenties then, appeared to me quite grave. The one I shall mention here was rather an exception which was more interesting than disturbing. This happened at Puntjak in Indonesia. Some political intricacies gave me and a few of my friends, Indian youth-leaders all, the impression that our wandering in the country was unsafe. An Indonesian leader even claimed that his men were secretly guarding us against some dangers. Rumour of time-bombs being discovered in a ship, which was carrying the Chinese delegation to Indonesia for the same cause for which we had gone there, was very much in the air.

Under many apprehensions I had to spend along with my friends a few days in the enchanting solitude of Puntjak hill-station. There was a Government-patronised hotel there, 'Tarun-Giri', situated a few thousand feet above sea-level, with small log-houses scattered around it. The place with extensive forests, mountain-peaks

and cool brooks around, was extremely reclusive except on Saturdays and Sundays, when well-to-do people came from Jakarata to spend their week-end there.

It was a Saturday night and I shared a cabin with a friend in one of the houses of the hotel situated independently. I was fast asleep, as sleep was abundant in the very climate there, cool and clouded, resigned to sylvan dusk soon after sunset.

A single gun-shot resounded and my friend asked me what it could be. Before I answered, there was a wild shout followed by shots, as was evident, from some kind of automatic weapons. In front of our lodge was a swimming pool. We could hear bullets piercing into the water. Looking through the glass-window, we found figures in silhouette moving around the main counter of the hotel. A confused state prevailed for sometime. Then some people passed in front of our lodge.

When it was dawn, we discovered that the hotel had been thoroughly plundered. Three of the log-houses, accommodating some foreigners and one Indonesian family were raided one by one. The fourth house on the raiders' way was vacant. Perhaps they concluded that ours too, which was the fifth and the last, was unoccupied. Thus we were spared.

They had gunned and destroyed three or four cars parked in front of the hotel, so that no news of the raid could immediately be sent out of the hills. But that single night's expedition of theirs included some easy murders too. On their way back, their gun had licked away life from five workers of the local tea plantation. Newspapers told that the bandits belonged to a religious political gang, then a terror to the Government and the people of Indonesia. They had come only for plunder and for the sensation of a few kills, perhaps with no political philosophy to be particularly hostile to us. But in the background of impressions and prejudices created in my mind then, it was not unnatural for me to instantly imagine that we could very well be their target !

These moments are memorable to me for this: my childhood practice of prayer was substituted by a firm materialistic attitude to things, with a conviction logically better-founded than in many others. Yet in such moments I felt as if some intrinsic truth of my existence which was unnaturally hushed down was struggling to come up, not out of any fear in the least, but in its own right of being intrinsic and natural. The struggle often led my mind into a void. But indeed, such feelings constituted the prelude to a resurrection in me of my long suppressed urge to pray.

I have never wanted adventures, nor have I by chance come across anything worthy of that name. I do not mistake these events to be important only as they are. But they have contained in them an invitation to an adventure of spirit, which, when I review them today, appear immensely interesting. These and quite a few more events have shown me the glimpses of an unexplored splendour within myself, and I believe, within all selves. Certain circumstances have only provided occasions for what I have called the second self, to reveal its face. The circumstance might be created by a big event, or small, or even no event. And the second self's reaction to a particular event may not even be immediately obvious. I can never forget a small

gesture of a man, which afterwards shook the very foundation of my approach to things. There was no limit to our curiosity about the historic twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, where de-Stalinisation commenced. While in Jakarta, we three interested and eligible friends arranged a private interview with Mr. D. N. Aidit, then the Secretary of P.K.I., one of the biggest Communist Parties of the world, who attended the Congress. We asked him, "What was your reaction to Khrushchev's report on Stalin?" Before he could censor his reaction, the leader thrice beat his forehead—a gesture of utter bewilderment before Destiny ! We discussed many matters theoretical. I have forgotten almost everything. But I have not forgotten his gesture, which was recognised by me, though not by my surface self, as symbolic. I had read much of his writings. But his gesture, not his writings, revealed his true state to me, when it was revived in my mind afterwards.

By stressing this, which involves the question of destiny, I do not suggest any form of pessimism. Only I have grown beyond a philosophy which claims to be optimistic with no regard for all dimensions of reality. A true optimist must be ready to take cognizance of more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in philosophy—any philosophy.

The psychological experiences, such as becoming numb at a point of acute physical pain, developing a stoical mood at the green-time death of the dearest one I had a number of times. I have never confused such negative states of mind with the experiences I have discussed, which are the positive revelations of inner splendours; not the absence of an emotion, but the unmistakable presence of, if I may take a little liberty in expression, supra-emotional tranquillity.

Calmly and carefully, consciously or unconsciously, I have been steered by my second self through a zigzag road till I have been established in this purpose of life—to struggle to live that self. My sojourn from a life of Godless days to a life under Grace has been an account of silent evolution and gradual advent of the second self. If darkness and doubt still persist, they dwindle and persist only till a day when the paramountcy of the second self over the fretful one of the surface is permanently established. In the capacity of my second self I am the citizen of a world of Light and Love, open to wondrous adventures of consciousness !

MANOJ DAS

# SOME PROBLEMS OF SHAKESPEARE-TRANSLATION INTO TAMIL

*(Continued from the issue of March)*

## UNTRANSLATABLE IMPONDERABLES

We shall next consider how best the translator can tackle the almost untranslatable imponderables of Shakespeare such as his poetry and his exquisite moods.

Pedestrian prose is totally ineffective to deliver these goods, for such prose is amorphous and has no form whereas the poetry of the original resides in the very form of the poetry. If we reduce a Persian rose to a pulp, the contents of the rose may remain intact, but its form, which is about the most significant thing about the rose, would be most certainly destroyed. How best can the translator preserve the form of the original? He must aim at recreating the rose, even though the recreated rose may be less ruddy and less fragrant than the Shakespearean rose.

It is my view that verse translations of Shakespeare have failed to do justice to the original. All of them are anaemic, inexpressive and, for the most part, unintelligible. Lack of requisite poetic efficiency on the part of the translator is one reason for this defect. Another reason is that the exigencies of rhyme and alliteration tempt the translator to go farther away from the original.

“Ahaval” in Tamil is the nearest approximation to the Shakespearean blank verse, but it is the most difficult of metres and it has to be skillfully handled in order to compensate for the absence of rhyme and in order to make it an effective and arresting poetic movement. In modern times, no one with the possible exception of Bhathaly Dasan has handled the Ahaval metre forcibly and arrestingly.

I would, therefore, reject conventional verse forms as ineffective to translate Shakespeare. Probably my own inefficiency in handling verse-forms might explain part of my prejudice, but I advocate resort to rhythmic Tamil prose as the best available and the most supple instrument for translating the blank verse of Shakespeare. By rhythmic prose I mean a prose which may not conform to conventional rules of prosody and yet has a hidden metrical pattern, that is to say, a flexible pattern which enables you to communicate the original Bhavas by deft variations of the pauses, by an ever-changing distribution of caesura, by skilful combination of long and short vowels and by consonantal variations and assonance.

It may be useful to illustrate this point. Let us take one of the lofuest passages in Shakespeare, which occurs in Scene III of Act V, *King Lear*. Lear and Cordelia have been taken prisoner and the shock of his new-found love for Cordelia purges Lear of his insanity and temporarily elevates him to a transcendental level, wherefrom he looks at mankind with the clear and steady sight as of a Jivan Mukta. This is what Lear tells Cordelia:

Come, let's away to prison;  
 We two alone will sing like birds 'n the cage;  
 When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,  
 And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,  
 And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh  
 At gilded Butterflies, and hear poor rogues  
 Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them, too,  
 Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;  
 And take upon's the mystery of things,  
 As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,  
 In a wall'd prison packs and sects of great ones  
 That ebb and flow by the moon.

A lover of Shakespeare may think it a sacrilege to translate this intensely elevating passage, but if we must translate it, we may do it in the following words:

வா, நாம் சிறைச்சாலைக்குப் போய்விடுவோம். கூண்டுக்குள்ளிருக்கும் பறவைகளைப் போல நாம் இருவரும் தனித்திருந்து பாடுவோம். நீ என்னிடம் ஆசீர்வாதம் கேட்கும்போதெல்லாம், நான் மண்டியிட்டு உன்னிடம் மன்னிப்புக் கேட்பேன். தொழுதும், பாடியும், பழங்கதைகள் பேசியும், பசப்பும் வண்ணாத்திப் பூச்சிகளைப் பார்த்து நகைத்தும், அரண்மனைச் செய்திகளைப் புல்லோர் சொல்லக் கேட்டும், யாருக்குத் தோல்வி, யாருக்கு வெற்றி, பதவி யாருக்குக் கிடைத்தது, பதவியிழந்தவன் யார், என்று ஊர் வம்பு பேசியும், பேரண்டத்தின் அற்புதத்தையே மேற்கொண்டவர்களாய், இறைவனுடைய வேலுகாரர்களைப்போல, நாம் வாழ்க்கை நடத்துவோம்.

This translation may not be perfect, but, in my view, it does indicate the direction in which the translator may usefully bend his energies in his attempt to reproduce Shakespeare in Tamil.

#### PRE-VERBAL TAPAS OF THE TRANSLATOR

The most important pre-requisite to the translation of Shakespeare is that the translator should discipline himself by performing a prolonged Tapas. He must walk in the constant company of Shakespeare. He must steep himself in the pages of Shakespeare, in an attempt to participate in his creatorial functions. He must efface his own ego and merge himself without reservations in the characters of Shakespeare and souse himself in the moods and rhythms of the poet. If the translator could keep his mind long enough in this dedicated condition of reverence, humility and Advaita, his subconscious would become a fit medium for receiving and communicating the width, volume and richness of Shakespeare's genius. In this condition of intensity the subconscious invents appropriate combinations of words and patterns of rhythm, which have the power to crystallize the authentic Shakespeare in the Tamil language.

But this process of crystallization is conditioned and limited by the medium's knowledge and understanding of the linguistic and cultural traditions of English and Tamil. Further, the translator must have made a thorough study of the different readings of Shakespeare with reference to the Variorum edition and exercised a sound discretion in choosing the most appropriate text. He must also have studied deeply the interpretations of wise Shakespearean critics such as Johnson and such sensitive critics as Charles Lamb and Coleridge and come to a definite and independent conclusion of his own as to the meaning and purport of every controversial passage in a play. If, after equipping himself with an intellectual preparation of this kind, the translator has the courage to consciously throw all these accretions overboard and then enter into a Tapas of the kind already described, he is bound to succeed in re-creating Shakespeare in Tamil.

As for the Ballads and Folk Songs of Shakespeare, I think they can be effectively translated in popular "Themmangu" tunes.

#### POTENTIALITIES OF TAMIL AS A TRANSLATION MEDIUM

Speaking of the difficulties of catching the subtleties of the English language in French and Bengali, Sri Aurobindo has some penetrating remarks to make. He says:

"There is one supreme faculty of the English language which none other I know possesses, the ease with which it finds the packed allusive turn, the suggestive unexpressed, the door opening on things ineffable. Bengali like French is very clear and living and expressive but to such clear languages the expression of the inexpressible is not so easy. One has to go out of one's way to find it. Witness Mallarmé's wrestlings with the French language to find the symbolic expression, the right turn of speech for what is behind the veil."

Sri Aurobindo winds up with the hope that even in French and Bengali the power to express the inexpressible with less effort may come, but meanwhile the difference remains.

In my judgment, though Tamil is clear and living and expressive enough, it has also developed the capability of communicating the incommunicable. A perusal of the songs of Tirumoolar and the 18 Tamil Siddhas would show how the Tamil language has been trained by them to effortlessly express those occult experiences, which linger on the borderland between language and wordless thought.

Here is a song of Tirumoolar, which illustrates my proposition:

ஆறு தெருவில் அகப்பட்ட சந்தியில்  
சாறு படுவன நான்கு பனையுள்  
ஏற்ற கரியதோர் ஏனியிட்டு அப்பனை  
ஏறலுற்றேன், கடல் ஏழும் கண்டேனே.

The Tamil translator need not, therefore, despair of those passages of Shakespeare, which impinge on the inexpressible.

Take, for instance, the context (Act V, Scene IV) in which Seyton announces to Macbeth the death of Lady Macbeth with an abruptness, full of pathos:

The Queen, my Lord, is dead.

Macbeth is moved by those words to reflect upon the emptiness of human life in words at once sublime and obscure. He exclaims:

She should have died hereafter;  
There would have been a time for such a word.  
Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death.

There is an eerie spaciousness and mysticity in the expression,

To the last syllable of recorded time.

In this line we hear the footfalls of Man marching to his inexorable doom—a march along the unending corridors of time. This line can be translated without loss of mysticity as follows:

காலக் கணக்கின் கடைசி எழுத்துவரை

“காலம்”, which is the Tamil equivalent of “time”, has a richer metaphysical connotation than its English compeer. “எழுத்து”, while communicating the impression of “recorded time”, does more; it evokes in the Tamil mind by sheer association the tyranny of Destiny.

Numerous instances can be given of the superiority of Tamil over English in the matter of expression of the eternal verities of life. This superiority is due to the fact that some of our greatest mystics and metaphysicians have, by expressing their experiences in Tamil, trained the Tamil language to effortlessly express the ineffable.

But it is a sad fact that in expressing the every-day occurrences of modern secular life Tamil lags far behind English and requires to be tutored and trained. This deficiency can be made good only by a conscious effort on the part of the intelligentsia of Tamil Nad to think in Tamil and to express in Tamil all the facts and subtleties of contemporary thinking and living.

## CONCLUSION

By translating Shakespeare into Tamil, the translator performs a double service. In the first place, he offers to the Tamils glimpses of a new world of vision and experience. In the second place, in the very process of translation the translator will be amazed to find how Shakespeare forces the Tamil language to speak in new accents, and adds to Tamil a new dimension of expression. The afflatus of Shakespeare, the creative breath of his inspiration is bound to quicken and energize the Tamil language. In fact, Shakespeare translation is a wholesome mode of blood-transfusion, which can impart a fresh vigour to our language and strengthen the seeds of future creativity.

*(Concluded)*

S. MAHARAJAN

## FLY, BIRD

FLY, bird—fly, bird—  
Take me on your feathered limbs  
When you glide across the sun.  
I too a flyer of the sky  
Know your longings and the sorrows  
Of your heart.

Singing brother, shimmering in light,  
Studded wings of pearl,  
Singer of the stars—  
Can you hear me, loved one?  
I below too cry.

Soar free, winged one,  
Go where I cannot fly.  
Take to the heights of my hopes,  
Your flight is like my sigh.  
Coupled are we: the clay dreams of sun.

GEORGETTE COTY



## WHAT SHAKESPEARE WROTE ABOUT INDIA

*For the 404th birth-and-death anniversary of Shakespeare we are reproducing, with acknowledgements, from last year's Hindu Weekly Magazine of that date, the following article, slightly adapted in a few places for the sake of quoting the poet more fully.*

THE layman's interest in Shakespeare is deep enough to make him eager to know what the greatest wielder of the English language knew about this country. Few though his references are, yet the lines he quilled about India do reveal that he had heard much about this fabulous land—the land of untold wealth, strange customs, vast ignorance and of course an ancient religion.

That Shakespeare merely heard about some common practices among the people professing an ancient faith, Hinduism, and never had an opportunity to understand fully the philosophy underlying those practices is amply borne out by two of his references to sun-worship. Unlike to-day what must have greeted the earliest visitors setting foot on our raw beaches is the figure of the prostrate man with straight-stretched arms and closed palms offering worship to the sun—the giver of all life on earth. This was a daily duty—a solemn request to the great giver of life to protect it also. But the early traders probably lacked the open-mind that is necessary to understand and appreciate other's faith. So they, in their despatches to England, must have informed their countrymen about the so-called blind faith and other superstitions that Indians were immersed in. Else, there can't be a way to explain how Shakespeare terms sun-worship 'a religious error.' In *All's Well That Ends Well* a devoted Helena loves an indifferent Bertram. He is her sun and she almost worships him, but in vain. Dejectedly, she says,

Thus, Indian-like,  
Religious in mine error, I adore  
The sun that looks upon his worshipper,  
But knows of him no more.

(Act 1, Scene,3)

What more can we say, by way of comment, than that Shakespeare knew of "him" no more than so much?

But more than so much about sun-worship as a practice Shakespeare seems to have known. I mean the scientific truth behind *Sūryanamaskār*—that it did a lot of good to the eyes. The folly of being wise after the incident is well portrayed in *Love's Labour's Lost* with a mention of the sunworshipper's dereliction :

a rude and savage man of Ind,  
At the first opening of the gorgeous east,  
Bows not his vassal head and, stricken blind,  
Kisses the base ground with obedient breast.

(Act 4, sc. 3.)

It should strike us as something singular that what has been ment in this passage is nothing but the very idea contained in a Tamil adage: 'Sūryanamaskār after spoiling the eyes'.

#### FAME OF INDIA

Shakespeare lived in the times when the fame of an India in possession of rich and precious stones, plenty of gold and other mineral resources had already spread throughout Europe. For many a soldier of fortune, this country was a veritable gold-mine. The saying then was that all the sea routes from Europe led to India. Naturally, then, the bard of Avon felt it desirable to speak in high praise of India's natural wealth. In *King Henry the Fourth*, (Part I) Mortimer lists his father's virtues and exclaims that he is

as bountiful  
As mines of India.

(Act, 3, sc, 1)

The precious stones disembowelled by such bountiful mines used to enrich the crowns of the then kings. Even such a crown, declares *King Henry the Sixth* (Part III) is not so valuable as the crown of content in his heart:

My crown is in my heart, not on my head;  
Not decked with diamonds and Indian stones.

(Act 3, Sc 2)

If Cressida is a pearl to Troilus, then "her bed is India" *Troilus and Cressida*, (Act 1 Sc. 1), the bed of all mineral marvels. In *King Henry the Eighth*, we have a queen likened in worth to the Indies:

Our king has all the Indies in his arms,  
And more and richer when he strains that lady.

In the same play, the Duke of Norfolk talks in terms of Britain being made an India (Act 1 Sc. 1) in wealth. With all these, is it any wonder that all the countries vied with one another in their trade with a prosperous India? Such a state cannot go

without mention by Shakespeare. And so his character Bassanio makes trade enquiries from Salerio (*Merchant of Venice*, Act 3 Sc 2) and brackets India with other countries in commerce like Tripolis, Mexico, Barbary, etc.

But, alas, it is a great pity that according to the story that Shakespeare believed in, in spite of possessing so much gold and other precious stones, Indians were ignorant of their rich value. True or not, Shakespeare made use of it to bring home the tragedy of Othello's rash killing of Desdemona in a moment of suspicious hate, not knowing that she was "chaste as the icicle that hangs on Diana's temple". Othello calls himself

One whose hand,  
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away  
Richer than all his tribe.

(Act 5, Sc. 2)

This passage itself is doubly controversial. Whether the Indian means a Red Indian or only an Indian of India is one thing. Another version is that the word 'Indian' ought to have been 'Judean' which is an allusion to Herod who jealously cast aside his wife, almost a pearl to him. Much can be said in refutation of the alleged "spurning of the golden ore by Indians" (Drayton's *Legend of Matilda*). Having been a trading nation through centuries, it is somewhat too much to take without a pinch of salt that any in this country would ever have thrown a pearl away. But it is idle to search for full truth in the tales carried by travellers and tradesmen. And in the main, Shakespeare's knowledge of India was only confined to what trickled through messages of maritime traders and adventurers.

#### BEAUTY OF WOMEN

There is in *Merchant of Venice* another unflattering reference to India. In this case, the mention is about the beauty of Indian women. The clever Bassanio refuses to be misled by the glittering caskets and tells Portia how the exterior can belie the inner worth. Appearances are as deceptive as

The beauteous scarf  
Veiling an Indian beauty.

(Act. 3, Sc. 2)

Now, what could Shakespeare possibly mean by an Indian beauty being veiled by a deceptive scarf? Perhaps that was how, the ill-informed dramatist thought, the generally dark complexion of Indian women was covered to "entrap the wisest", to use his own words. Or does he mean that a beautiful scarf was used to cover cleverly

a not so beautiful face? Then why the word 'beauty' beside Indian? One may guess that in Shakespeare's conception of beauty, dark complexion was a detractor. Even so it is an error to suppose that features played only a secondary role in the making of a beauty.

Of India's famed spices, Shakespeare has written just the whole truth. The very Indian air was spiced says Titania in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. She stole a lovely boy from an Indian king and lavished such love and fondness upon him that her Lord Oberon grew jealous and said to himself:

I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy.

It is a point to think over here that foreign visitors to India took away not only her gold and precious jewels but also lovely boys from the laps of their royal 'parents'!

And all this was going on despite the fact that India was far far away from England in those days of inadequate transport. This great distance that yawned between the two countries is also spoken of in his references to this country. In the conversation between Oberon and Titania (*Midsummer Night's Dream*) the poet refers to the "farthest steep" of India. In *Troilus and Cressida*, Pander lays a wager on the condition of going to India barefoot. So far away from the fireside of Avon cottage, this country often comes near enough the poet's mind to merit specific references no matter if critical or eulogistic.

S. D. MANI

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

One reference has escaped the author. It is in *The Tempest*, where Trinculo speaks of the sensation-mania of people in England: "When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame begger, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian."

(Act, 2, Sc. 2)

## HARMONY OF LIFE

*This is the full text from which some excerpts were broadcast by All India Radio on February 21, 1968, from Pondicherry.*

Q-1: Mr. Sitaram, What made you come here?

A: I should say it was the voice of Sri Aurobindo.

I was a boy in my early twenties, when I happened to read the book *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo. I was thrilled. Subsequently when I took up *The Synthesis of Yoga* and then his other writings the magic spell on me was complete. He does not take us to dream land or a fairy place. It is here on this earth itself, he makes us see the harmony and beauty and wonder of it all hidden everywhere. This earth is a sacred place; it is the chosen field of God. Man is the destined instrument. There is a beauty and a joy and a divine harmony above us, within us. We have only to bring them out in our external lives. It will be done. It is being done. It is God who is doing it. The result is sure and inevitable. But what about the innumerable discords we see around us today? They are only a temporary phenomenon, an intermediate phase, a stage in our difficult evolution. There is no abiding reality behind them. They are superficial and impermanent. They are bound to disappear as we grow in our souls. This is how perhaps I understood Sri Aurobindo.

Now, what is this voice behind these inspired words, words that convey the Supreme Truth to the heart of the listener, and make a profound change there? Is it not that age-long voice of God that ever comes to man again and again calling him to his immortal destiny? Is it not that sweet voice of the eternal Flute-player attracting every human heart out of its sorrow to a Divine Bliss? That same voice of divine Love which in the Gita cries "Come to me, I shall deliver thee from all sin and evil. Do not grieve. Thou art dear to me"; and again on the battle-field of Kuru-Kshetra it says "Fight and enjoy a prosperous kingdom." And today it is the same voice that in Sri Aurobindo is calling man to a far greater fulfilment, to exceed the last boundaries of ignorance and enjoy here on the earth a Divine Life of bliss and harmony for ever. The soul that has heard this call, can it remain content with mortal days and ordinary life? It takes a plunge headlong. That is how you find so many here in the Ashram and I am but one of them.

Still, where is the proof that the Divine Life of Harmony can be achieved now and not at a later age centuries hence? The proof is the Mother herself and Her daily active life. She has achieved this complete harmony in her own life and is expressing it in all her activities. That is not all. She is giving ample proof that she can do it in others too—to the extent that they sincerely want it. And that is the Ashram.

The life of the Ashram is a Divine melody, an exquisite music composed and played by the MOTHER. It is this that attracted me to join the Ashram as it does to so many others.

*Q-2: In retrospect how do you think that you have achieved the purpose of coming to the Ashram?*

A: We are in the middle of the journey. The ship is moving on in the enormous ocean. Our captain is God Himself. Always our Captain holds the rudder well. He never sleeps. We have full confidence in our Captain. We have passed through many a storm and thunder safely because of Him. I am not to worry how far I have come, how far it is still from the goal. All that is the Pilot's business. He is competent, all-knowing and mighty. We have put our entire trust and responsibility on Him. That way it is safest. I am only one of the many oarsmen. I have only to obey His generous and loving command and do the small bit of my job well and go to sleep without worrying about the rest. He will see to everything in time.

*Q-3: What is your contribution to the Harmony of life which is achieved in this place?*

A: The harmony that you find in the Ashram to-day is due exclusively to the presence of the Mother who has realised God long ago and is expressing that great inner harmony in Her own life and in the life of the Ashram.

*Q-4: Do you think your individuality has merged completely in this great institution?*

A: I don't think so. Every one here is a unique musical instrument in the grand orchestra conducted by the Divine Mother. You may not be able to distinguish a particular note in the general orchestra but the individuality is always there, be it veena or flute or whatever it is. It has a unique role to fulfil in the general orchestra, which no other can do. It is so with everybody in the world. Each one is unique, and the part he has to play, the role he has to fill, the mission he is to accomplish in the world is also unique. He cannot be replaced.

*Q-5: What do you think is your best wish to the Mother for her 90th birthday?*

A: I would rather like to present a garland of flowers. The garland of my whole life of wild flowers I would like to place at her divine feet with adoration and love. Along with that I would wish to offer a song of gratitude and thanksgiving. That song should come from the depths of my heart and it should be the song of my soul.

S.

## **NOBILITY**

### **A TRUE INCIDENT**

Air-conditioned, terribly cold, it was the Caravelle plane flying thirty thousand feet high. I pulled out the beautiful sky-blue blanket with a shining velvet border from a shelf on the left and covered myself to my satisfaction and also put another small blanket on my legs and feet.

On a seat in the adjacent row a young Sardarji was sitting only in a shirt, and shivering. I asked him, 'Sardarji, you could afford to pay for the air-travel and you could not afford to have a coat?' He spontaneously replied, "No, I have a beautiful warm coat but it is gone into my suit-case and this aeroplane is such a funny and whimsical vehicle that it cannot be stopped, so that I may take out my coat from the suit-case. In our village we could stop the bullock-cart anywhere we liked and take out the things and even get out of the bullock-cart and walk with the same. But what an imprisonment here—high in the sky!"

I suggested that he could ask for a blanket from the Hostess and cover himself but he said that he was strong enough and more powerful than the cold. So I kept quiet.

When the plane landed at the Palam Airport I took off the blanket. Sardarji suddenly got up and took it away from my hands. I said, "Sardarji, now there is no cold—it is rather warm." He simply said, "But the blanket was mine, and I have to take it home."

SURENDRA NATH JAUHAR

# SRI AUROBINDO—SAVIOUR FROM DEATH

## A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

It was on August 15, 1938, I had my first Darshan of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. This was the only Darshan I had, before Sri Aurobindo's passing on December 5, 1950. When I read in the papers that "No rigor mortis had set in and the body did not show any sign of disintegration," I rushed to Pondicherry on December 9, 1950 and had the last Darshan of the Master lying in state on a bed. It seemed to me that Sri Aurobindo was really living, but absorbed in a beatific contemplation. The body appeared to me bathed in a spiritual aura. I was transported with feelings of exaltation, as I felt that I saw Lord Krishna himself in Sri Aurobindo.

I left Pondicherry at 9 a.m. and then read in the papers of Madras that the body had later showed some small signs of decay and was interred in the afternoon in the Ashram courtyard itself. Since then I have always been feeling that I was blessed indeed to have seen Sri Aurobindo on both the occasions. At the first Darshan on August 15, 1938, I prostrated myself before him and Sri Aurobindo touched my head with his right palm by way of Blessing. Since then I have been feeling that Lord Krishna himself had blessed me thus.

But Sri Aurobindo came to me in a more concrete manner at about 2.30 a.m. On February 19, 1952 when I lay prostrate, practically dying, with both the legs broken, with multiple injuries and compound fracture, and drenched in blood. The fire was fast approaching me. This was the result of the aeroplane crash at Nagpur on the night service when I was on my way to Delhi on professional work. The pilot and a passenger who were in the cockpit had already become the victim of fire. The Radio Officer was aflame and the fire was steadily approaching me. My face was charred. Death looked certain. I could feel that in a few minutes the fire would approach me and would burn me alive. Death did not seem to me so fearful. But I was afraid of the pain and suffering to which I would be subjected. I prayed to God to absolve me of all sins and cried out "Vasudeva, Vasudeva". I implored the mercy of god to take my life without the horror I saw in store for me as the fire was approaching. I wanted to repeat the 10 Slokas in the *Narayaneeyam* wherein the Devotee describes Lord Krishna as he saw him, but I could not do so owing to hard breathing. I pictured before me Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sri Vivekananda, Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo as I had seen him on February 15, 1938 and prayed thus:

"I identified you with Sri Krishna himself. I took your Blessing as the Blessings of Lord Krishna. If you are really Lord Krishna, I want to see you before I die. You want to take my life away. But may I not be subjected to the pain and



suffering of being burnt to death by fire!"

The word "Vasudeva" was coming to me often as I remembered that this name had been pronounced by Sri Aurobindo himself in the Alipore Jail when he had the cosmic vision. I eagerly waited for that vision. Then suddenly a tall well-built man, a member of the staff living in the quarters near the aerodrome, rushed into the fire at the risk of his own life and lifted me out. I came to know of him later on. But I felt at that time that it was "Vasudeva" who was actually lifting me out of the fire and taking me outside the zone of danger. If this is not the Grace of Sri Aurobindo what else is? Sri Aurobindo thus really came to me and gave me back the life which was practically extinct.

I was in bed for one year and on many occasions during that period my life was in despair. If I am living today and my two legs had been saved from amputation, it was due to the Grace of Sri Aurobindo. If I have not become crippled in life and disabled for any active service, it is all due to the protection of Sri Aurobindo. Of course, I have been having the Grace and blessings of the Mother for some years now. But of this I may write later.

N. PANCHAPAGESA IYER

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## NOT ON STILTED LEGS

NOT on stilted legs does heaven walk  
 But poised like the sweetness of a butterfly  
 And swift in its superconscient ease  
 This faery of translucent mystic flame  
 Winging through the vistas of varied worlds  
 Flies into the invisible beyond.  
 O the luminous legs of the soul-vision  
 Climbing the ladder of the secret skies  
 Tier on glowing tier in sequences  
 Set by some archangel power of light!  
 My diamond of the upward burning will  
 Huge and wondrous like a god-elephant  
 With the bejewelled belly of the laughing fire  
 Drinking the sunful of the golden grace  
 Rushes to the land of the gnostic gleam  
 Where the dreamer knows himself and the dream.

RENUKADAS Y. DESHPANDE

## CAN THE EXISTENCE OF GOD BE PROVED?

*(Continued from the issue of March)*

*(This is a discussion between three philosophers: (1) an Anselmian (A) who believes that the existence of God can be rationally and strictly demonstrated; (2) a Kantian (K) who holds that all arguments that claim to demonstrate God's existence are fallacious; and (3) a Critical Philosopher (C) who agrees with K, but at the same time holds that the proposition 'God exists' is self-evident to the wise.*

*In the last discussion A expounded the Anselmian argument, better known as the Ontological Argument, to prove the existence of God'.)*

- A. Well, C, let us hear your objections to the argument I presented which, I claim, proves the existence of God. I think that if anyone follows my argument carefully he has no more right to question God's existence than to deny the truth of the mathematical equation  $7+5=12$ . But apparently the argument has not carried conviction to either C or K.
- K. Before C unleashes his polemic I think we should have A's argument before us in a summary form. I would like to put in my own words what I think A was trying to persuade us to believe, and A can tell us if I have represented his argument correctly.
- A. Go ahead.
- K. A's argument is that God, understood as the Unsurpassable Being, must exist, for contingent existence is not appropriate to Divinity, it being an inferior mode of existence, and so, if God can exist, He must necessarily exist. Is that correct?
- A. Yes, I accept your statement of my argument, though this condensed form cannot bring out all the logical subtleties which are contained in it and which we have already discussed.
- K. If C will permit me I would like to return to the criticism which I made last time, and that is that A is unjustifiably restricting the choice to two alternatives—God exists contingently or God exists necessarily—and arguing that we must accept the latter. I still think there is a third alternative, *viz.* God does not exist.
- C. A objected to your saying, If God exists, He necessarily exists. He said this does not make sense.
- K. Yes, I remember; but I think it depends on how you interpret the proposition, If God exists, He necessarily exists.
- A. Does it make sense to say, If God exists (and He may not exist), then He necessarily exists?

- K. Not if this is taken to mean, if God exists contingently, then He exists necessarily.
- A. What else can it mean? The antecedent of the proposition regards the question of God's existence as open and the proposition declares that on condition that the question is open it is closed!
- K. I don't think that interpretation is either correct or fair. The hypothetical proposition asserts that God's necessary existence follows from his existence and not from the uncertainty concerning God's existence.
- C. Last time I agreed with A, a little too hastily, when he said that the proposition, If God exists, He necessarily exists, makes no sense, but now I think K is right. When we say, If it rains, the ground will be wet, wetness is a consequence of rain and not of the uncertainty concerning rain.
- A. But you forget that we are concerned with a modal proposition.<sup>1</sup> Is it permissible to say, If it rains, it will necessarily rain?
- K. This does sound odd, but the necessity we are concerned with is logical, not causal. A claims that 'God exists' is a necessary truth of logic. That the ground will be wet on account of rain can never be a logical truth. Let me put it this way: does A object to anyone saying, If a given proposition is true, then it is necessarily true?
- A. I don't see how the necessary truth of a proposition can follow from the truth of a proposition.
- C. I think here A is right, but I also think I can see where the trouble lies. The example I gave, If it rains, the ground will be wet, is misleading. Wetness is a *consequence* of rain. I think K would agree that he doesn't want to say that God's necessary existence is a *consequence* of God's existence, but that the two are inseparable. Hence the two alternatives are: either God does not exist or He exists in a certain manner which we call necessary existence.
- K. Quite so. Take the proposition, Either he will not come or he will be punctual. This may be stated hypothetically, If he comes, he will be punctual. But this does not mean that his being punctual is a consequence of his coming. The proposition asserts that his coming and his being punctual are inseparable.
- C. Precisely. The proposition, If God exists, He exists necessarily, does not connect two modalities, the contingent and the necessary, as antecedent and consequent. It merely offers two alternatives, non-existence or necessary existence.
- A. I still think that the proposition, If God exists, He necessarily exists, does not make sense, but I now admit that in view of what C and K have pointed out I was too hasty in dismissing it as nonsense. I must remind myself that it sometimes takes a lot of hard thinking to see what is self-evident.
- K. Or to see that what seemed self-evident is after all not evident at all!
- C. Or is even evidently not true!
- A. Perhaps, perhaps. But, if you remember, I also gave an argument to show that God's non-existence is not a conceivable alternative.

K. Could you restate it briefly?

A. It is the argument that, in the case of God, the merely possible is the impossible. But I would like to present it a little differently, and, I hope, more convincingly. You admit that if God exists, He exists necessarily?

C. Only provisionally, for this argument of yours that necessary existence is a superior manner of existence also requires scrutiny.

A. Very well. Provisionally, let us take it that God, if He exists, exists necessarily and not contingently. This means we are not permitted to say, God exists, but He might not have existed.

K. To avoid a possible trap let me make it clear that if we are not permitted to say God might not have existed it is only on condition that we first say 'God exists'; but this we need not do.

C. That's right. What we are not permitted by the argument to say is that God exists *contingently*, but this does not place a ban on our saying, God does not exist.

A. I wasn't setting a trap, and, let me assure you, I had not myself fallen into it. To proceed: God can only exist, if at all, necessarily. Now you would, I suppose, admit that it is possible for God to exist?

K. Yes, if this means there is nothing in the notion of God which makes His existence impossible.

A. Now if we say that it is possible for God to exist, we must, in accordance with what you have granted, also say that it is only possible for God to exist necessarily. Therefore the possibility of God's existence implies the necessity of God's existence. If possible, then necessary, or not possibly not. In the case of God the merely possible is the impossible. Q.e.d.?

K. Not so fast. The argument has become a little subtle and I would like to think about it. Do you think, C, that A has shown that the possibility of God's existence implies the necessity of God's existence? For if so, since we admit that God's existence is possible, we would also have to admit that it is necessary, and that, therefore, God necessarily exists.

C. I don't think A has shown that the crucial step in his argument is valid. What A is entitled to say is that the possibility of God's existence, *if realized*, can only be realized in one way, *i.e.*, as necessary existence. Let's look at it this way: 'It is possible for God to exist' means that the notion of God is such that we can say that God is either existent or non-existent. In fact a genuine concept, that is to say anything that is clearly conceived, is nothing but a possible existent, *i.e.*, existent or non-existent. Now necessary existence is connected not with the *possibility* of existence, but with *existence* which is possible. So, once again, the conclusion is, not an unconditional 'God necessarily exists', but 'God necessarily exists *if He exists*'.

K. I find C's analysis very convincing. It occurs to me that there is an ambiguity in the idea of God's possible existence which A, perhaps, is unconsciously exploiting. A possibility is related to actuality in one of two ways: (a) either

it may be realized or it may be nullified in actual fact; or (b) it may be realized in one of two or more alternative ways. Now in the case of God's existence there are two different ways in which its possibility may be contemplated; and the relation of possibility to actuality will be of a different kind in the two cases. In the first case the possibility of God's existence is such that it is fulfilled if God exists and nullified if God does not exist. In the second case the possibility of God's existence is such that it is realized either as contingent existence or as necessary existence. Now it seems to me that when A says, 'the possibility of God's existence implies the necessity of God's existence' he is considering the second case of possibility and ignoring the first. But to do so is to beg the question. The first question is whether the possibility of God's existence is realized or nullified. If the latter, *i.e.*, if God does not exist, the question whether God exists contingently or necessarily simply does not arise.

- C. I agree. What has A to say to our criticism of his argument?
- A. I confess I am a little shaken, particularly by K's criticism. I think, however, that the argument itself survives, though it needs a restatement. Let me approach it from a different angle by examining the notion of necessary existence. What both of you are prepared to grant, provisionally, is that if God exists (and He may not) He necessarily exists. I still think this is a very odd thing to say. You are making what is necessary dependent on what is contingent.
- K. I don't think there is anything odd about that. In fact I think that all necessity is conditional.<sup>2</sup> For instance, if I say, A triangle necessarily has three angles, the necessity which is asserted is clearly conditional. The proposition means, under the condition that there is a triangle three angles will necessarily be found in it.
- A. I think you have chosen a bad example. The proposition, A triangle has three angles, is analytic, and I don't think analytic propositions can be regarded as necessary. They merely record conventions of language. Take instead the proposition, The angles of a Euclidean triangle are equal to two right angles. We are not saying here that there are, in the world, angles which are equal to two right angles, but that the angles of a Euclidean triangle (whether there is such a triangle or not is quite immaterial) are necessarily equal to two right angles. And this necessity is unconditional.
- C. I think A is right. I would even go further and say that all necessity is unconditional, or it is not necessity. What K's example shows, if it shows anything, is that the existence of something is conditional, but the proposition does not say that angles totalling two right angles necessarily exist, but that the angles of a Euclidean triangle necessarily total two right angles.
- A. I agree; and the view that all necessity is unconditional further strengthens my argument. To return to it: I do not see how what is necessary can follow from what is contingent. It therefore does not make sense to say, If God exists, He necessarily exists.

- C. I think we are back again at the point we have already discussed, and I think that while A is right against K in saying that all necessity is unconditional, he is making the same old mistake of thinking that when we say God necessarily exists, if He exists, we are making God's necessary existence conditional on His existing in the same way in which the wetness of the ground is conditional on its raining. We are merely saying that God's existence can only be necessary existence, and this leaves us free to say that God may not exist.
- A. Let me again put it differently. What is necessary existence? According to me to say that something has necessary existence is to say that its non-existence is inconceivable.
- K. But before you draw the conclusion that since God's non-existence is inconceivable He therefore necessarily exists, let me remind you that the argument only leads us to admit that it is only the non-existence of an existing God that is inconceivable. We are not entitled to say, unconditionally, the non-existence of God is inconceivable.
- A. But what on earth can one mean by saying the non-existence of an existing thing is inconceivable? If the non-existence of a thing is conceivable, how does it become inconceivable if the thing exists?
- C. I am beginning to see A's point. It is a very tricky one. I suspect now that the real trouble lies in what we have provisionally admitted, namely, that God's existence can only be necessary existence.
- A. Before you raise a fresh objection let me press home the point I have made through a slightly different approach. Aren't you saying the two alternatives are: God does not exist or God necessarily exists?
- C. Yes, if we grant your premiss about the superiority of necessary existence.
- A. Now I suggest that the alternatives are strictly: God necessarily does not exist or He necessarily exists. I should have made this clear from the start that my argument really rules out contingent non-existence as well as contingent existence in the case of God.
- K. What is your reason for saying God's non-existence cannot be contingent? Why can we not say, God does not exist, but He might have existed?
- A. My reason is this: contingent non-existence presupposes the possibility of contingent existence and contingent existence only. That is, of something that does not exist, but might have existed, we can only say that if it existed it would exist contingently and not necessarily.
- C. You mean that if we say of something non-existent that it could have existed we must also say that even if it existed it might not have existed?
- A. Yes, that's what I mean. And I have already shown that God cannot exist contingently. Hence it follows that God's non-existence, if He does not exist, cannot be contingent; it has to be necessary.
- K. But why should we grant this? Why can we not say, X does not exist, but if it did it would exist necessarily?

- A. It seems self-evident to me that if something does not in fact exist which might have existed, then, if it existed, it could only exist contingently.
- K. I'm afraid its not self-evident to me. What do you think, C?
- C. We are back at the troublesome modal hypothetical, If X exists, it necessarily exists. For K this makes sense, for A it does not. I don't think we shall get anywhere by pursuing this point further. Last time we met I had agreed with A. In the discussion today I veered round to K's point of view. But now I think the real trouble lies elsewhere. As I said some time back we must look carefully into this notion of necessary existence. May we do so at another meeting?

*(To be continued)*

JEHANGIR N. CHUBB

### NOTES

1. A modal proposition introduces the notions of possibility and necessity. Modality refers to the kind of assertion made and the mode of being of that concerning which the assertion is made. The modal proposition not merely asserts something that it claims to be true, but asserts that what is true is either necessarily true or contingently true. In the former case the denial of what is asserted is self-contradictory or inconceivable; in the latter case the denial is conceivable but is regarded as false.

Anselm's second argument is a modal argument. That which exists without a conceivable alternative of failing to exist, *i.e.*, that which necessarily exists, exists in a superior manner to that which exists but whose non-existence is conceivable, *i.e.*, that which exists contingently. This makes necessary an intensive discussion of the logic of modal propositions.

2. One of Kant's objections to the Ontological Argument was that, since necessity is always conditional, we cannot unconditionally assert that something necessarily exists. According to me Kant's view on this point represents nothing but confusion.

## THE VISION OF AUROVILLE

ON February 28, at 10.30 a.m., the foundation-stone of a new city, Auroville, was symbolically laid on the outskirts of Pondicherry. But the building up of Auroville will not signify merely the addition of another township after the fashion of Chandigarh or Brasilia. Its life will not move, in however novel a fashion, in the grooves of the past. It will be the city of a New Humanity. For, it is founded by one who stands for an unprecedented development of the Yogic Consciousness—the Mother who guides the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and who has turned to this project in order to realise on a large scale the spiritual work of Sri Aurobindo: the establishment upon earth of what he has called the Divine Supermind. In the words of the Mother:

“Humanity is not the last rung of terrestrial creation. Evolution continues and man will be surpassed. It is for each one to know whether he wants to participate in the advent of this new species.

“For those who are satisfied with the world as it is, Auroville has evidently no reason for existence.” (August 1966)

Indeed, in this world torn asunder by strifes and discords, Auroville will be the first ‘world city’ wherein will be realised in a most concrete way the ideal of human unity and universal brotherhood. Released from all possible fetters of divisive creeds and propensities, of whatever sort, men will meet here their fellow-beings on the plane of joyous collaboration. Harmony will be the keynote around which everything else would turn. Not the clashes and conflicts of contending egos but the free self-expression of the unitary spiritual consciousness will shape and govern the Life of Auroville. Thus, many of the values intrinsic to the present social organisation of man will be discarded in this ‘City of Dawn’; there will grow up instead altogether new values that will help to usher a truer and nobler individual and collective existence for man.

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If Auroville may strike the sceptic and the worldly-wise as a dream, we should reply that it is a dream of the Spirit and we may digress a little to point out an occult mystery as regards the nature of spiritual dreams.

This externally visible world tangible to the physical senses is not the only world of reality. It is rather the truth that before getting manifested in the physical, things take shape and become realised in the subtle realms. Time and space of the gross domain are not the only time and space possible. As a matter of fact, each plane of consciousness and every world of manifestation have their respective times and spaces. And these different times bear to each other certain ‘phase-differences’, to borrow the picturesque expression used by the physicists. The present of the



## THE VISION OF AUROVILLE

gross is the past of the subtle and the present of the latter is the future of the former. Thus, when the blinkers fall off from our consciousness and the windows of our inner gaze are opened wide, we are apt to awake to

A world unseen, unknown by outward mind...

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Where all things dreamed by the mind are seen and true  
And all that the life longs for is drawn close.<sup>1</sup>

It is because of this gift of supreme spiritual vision that the Mother can assuredly declare that she can see the future of Auroville in its totality. And it is highly significant that even in January 1966 when there was not the slightest visible sign of the building up of the city, the Mother announced with all her characteristic simple directness:

“Auroville is going well and becomes more and more real, but its realisation does not advance in the habitual manner, and it is more visible for the interior consciousness than for the exterior vision.”

The very name ‘Auroville’ given by the Mother to this city of new Humanity represents as it were the graph of its destiny. Auroville has two derivative meanings: (i) the ‘City of Sri Aurobindo’, and (ii) the ‘City of Dawn’. Let us humbly seek to unravel the symbolic mystery of these two names.

Auroville aspires to become the city of Sri Aurobindo. The Sanskrit word ‘*aurobindo*’ signifies a lotus and the red lotus symbolises the Avatar. Sri Aurobindo is the supramental Avatar and hence a red lotus represents for us the Consciousness of Sri Aurobindo. Exactly at 10.30 hours of the morning of February 28, when the Mother was consecrating the birth of this ‘City of Red Lotus’ in her vibrant live voice brought by wire transmission directly to the spot of dedication from her room upstairs six miles away in Sri Aurobindo Ashram, the following two glowing stanzas from Arjava’s poem ‘RED LOTUS: Sri Aurobindo’s Consciousness’ rang and reverberated in our inner ear:

When spirit-sense to the last high peak gyring  
Finds all Thy mountain-bud aflame with rose—  
Touched by the eager hues of Dawn’s aspiring—  
What raptured Silence watches Thee unclose!  
Then the vast span of those Truth-petals reaching  
To the utmost arc of Being’s finitude

<sup>1</sup> *Savitri*.

With vibrant answer to dark's wan beseeching  
Transforms a world, from Thy grave beauty hued.<sup>1</sup>

The life of Auroville will be shaped by the Sri Aurobindo-Consciousness, for it is the City of Sri Aurobindo. And what the Sri Aurobindo-Consciousness represents for the world at large can only be glimpsed through the words of the Mother whose consciousness, in the words of Sri Aurobindo himself, "and mine are the same, the one Divine Consciousness in two, because that is necessary for the play."<sup>2</sup> Here are a few revelations on Sri Aurobindo made by the Mother (Italics ours):

(1) "What Sri Aurobindo represents in the world's history is not a teaching, not even a revelation; it is *a decisive action direct from the Supreme*."<sup>3</sup>

(2) "Since the beginning of earth history, Sri Aurobindo has always presided over the great earthly transformation, under one form or another, one name or another."<sup>4</sup>

(3) "Sri Aurobindo has come announcing to the world *the realisation of to-morrow*."<sup>5</sup>

(4) "Sri Aurobindo does not belong to the past or to history. Sri Aurobindo is *the future marching towards its realisation*."

We must then clothe ourselves with *eternal youth* in order to be able to advance with the desired rapidity and not linger upon the way."<sup>6</sup>

It is now abundantly clear that Auroville, the City of Sri Aurobindo, will not be a new retreading of the old walks; its whole orientation will be towards the future—a future renewing itself at every moment. Hence the unambiguous statements of the Mother on the nature of Auroville:

(a) "At last a place where one will be able to think of the future only."  
(January 1967)

(b) Condition for living in Auroville: "To have the will to collaborate in all that favours the future realisation."

It is worth noting in this connection that the following message of the Mother will be carved in block letters on a stone which is to be placed in Auroville in or by the side of a pool with *red lotuses*:

"Auroville is the shelter built for all those who want to hasten towards a future of knowledge, peace and unity." (16-3-1967)

This then is Auroville, the City of Sri Aurobindo, the City of the Red Lotus. But this is also the 'City of Dawn'. In the symbolic consciousness of the Vedic Seers, Dawn is the divine Power representing the medium of awakening the activity

<sup>1</sup> Arjava (J.A.Chadwick) : *Poems*, p. 177

<sup>2</sup> *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, p. 361.

<sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> *The Mother on Sri Aurobindo*, pp. 1,7,11.

<sup>6</sup> The Mother's message addressed on 31.3.67 to the teachers of *Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*,

and the growth of all other divine Powers. Dawn is the symbol for the advent new divine Splendour breaking out in the mortal consciousness of man. The two main functions that Dawn fulfils are (i) to elevate humanity to the full force of the Light of Knowledge, and (ii) to reveal the Truth and pour the Bliss of Amrita into the lower triple existence of man. Hence the Rishis proclaimed in one voice that Dawn divine is the great Awakener, *bodhayantī* (Rig-Veda, V.80.2); she leads the way and walks in front, *yātyagre* (V.80.2); she it is who brings down the heavenly Light into us, *svarāvahantī*; she makes our path easy of walking, *sugāṇ pathaḥ kṛṇvati* (V.80.2); for she is the carrier of Truth, *ṛtāvarī* (V.80.1)—indeed, she is born of Truth, *ṛtejāḥ* (I. 113. 12).

All the aforesaid epithets are equally applicable to the Dawn-City Auroville. Borrowing the voice of the Seers of old we too can declare that in the midst of the disintegrating world-scene, the City of Dawn will act as the beacon-light to all, *netrī* (I.113.4); for in her will be operative the power of conscious Knowledge, *cikīṛvī* (IV.52.4). Hence the founding of Auroville betokens the possibility of dispelling the earth's ignorance and gloom, *bādhāmānā tamāṁsi* (VII.77.1). We hold aloft the hope that the life of Auroville will awaken into action all the dynamisms of the Truth, *sūnṛtānām aceti* (I.113.4) and open the doors of variegated creation, *citrā vi duro na āvaḥ* (I.113.4). The City of Dawn will ever propel the world to the resplendent future, *prārpyā jagadvyu* (I.113.4); for, in the luminous words of the Mother:

“Auroville must be at the service of the Truth, beyond all convictions, social, political and religious.” (20-9-1966).

Yes, Truth will be the talisman of the Dawn-City Auroville. We all know that Truth and Love are the key-words of many of the Mother's recent messages. Let us remember the New-Year message for the year 1965: “Salute to the advent of the the Truth.” Then the exhortation for 1966: “Cling to Truth.” And the message for the year after (1967): “Men, countries, continents, The choice is imperative: Truth or the Abyss.” This year too, both on the occasion of her birthday and on the anniversary of the Day of Supramental Manifestation, the Mother's messages revolve around the two alchemic words “Truth” and “Love”. Here is the message of February 21:

“The best way to hasten the manifestation of the Divine's Love is to collaborate for the triumph of the Truth.”

And the message of the 29th of February:

“Truth alone can give to the world the power of receiving and manifesting the Divine's Love.”

In the light of the sequence of these messages of the Mother we can discern the import of the birth of Auroville. This City of Sri Aurobindo, the City of Dawn, is indeed born of Truth (*ṛta-prajātā*), will ever have its foundation on Truth (*ṛtāyini*); and being ever on guard for the preservation of Truth (*ṛtapā*), she will collaborate in the growing manifestation of Truth (*ṛtavṛdhā*).

We, who witnessed the ceremony of the laying of the Foundation Stone of Auro-

ville on that sun-bathed morning of February 28, 1968, could not but be reminded of the prophetic lines of *Savitri*, when the Mother heralded the birth of the City of Dawn by reading the 'Charter of Auroville':

A gold supernal sun of timeless Truth  
 Poured down the mystery of the eternal Ray  
 Through a silence quivering with the word of Light  
 On an endless ocean of discovery.<sup>1</sup>

"Through a silence quivering with the word of Light": it was so indeed! Here are the words of Light of the Mother ringing in the silence of the expectant hearts:

"Auroville salutes all men of good will.  
 Are invited to Auroville all those who have thirst  
 for progress and aspire after a higher and truer life.

Auroville will be the field of self-expression of ageless youth. Almost as a symbolic reminder of the destiny of Auroville a contingent of about three hundred young people hailing from different corners of the globe actively participated in its ceremony of dedication. But this is no more than a symbol; for, as the Mother has so often pointed out, true youth and age are attributes of consciousness and not of the body. How beautifully does She express this truth when she declares:

"It is not the number of years you have lived that makes you old. You become old when you stop progressing.

"As soon as you feel you have done what you had to do, as soon as you think you know what you ought to know, as soon as you want to sit and enjoy the results of your effort, with the feeling you have worked enough in life, then at once you become old and begin to decline.

"When, on the contrary, you are convinced that what you know is nothing compared to all that remains to be known, when you feel that what you have done is just the starting-point of what remains to be done, when you see the future like an attractive sun shining with the innumerable possibilities yet to be achieved, then you are young, howsoever many are the years you have passed upon earth, young and rich with all the realisations of tomorrow."<sup>2</sup>

Auroville aspires to be the playfield of such unaging youth. And it is not without significance that the Mother's New-Year message for this year of the birth of Auroville is as follows:

"Remain young, never stop striving towards perfection."

<sup>1</sup> *Savitri*, Book II Canto XI, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin*, February '68, p. 19.

Auroville will be the city of peace and unity—not the simulacrum of peace imposed from outside, not the unity whose other name is uniformity, but the peace and unity arising out of the truth of Spirit's oneness. Hence the pertinency of the Mother's messages:

“Auroville is the effort towards peace in sincerity and Truth.”

“Auroville is an attempt towards peace, friendship, fraternity, unity.”

Even at the risk of being dubbed day-dreaming idealists, we feel tempted to quote here a few lines from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, occurring in a Canto bearing the highly significant title “The House of the Spirit and the New Creation.” These lines may be taken to represent the life of the citizens of future Auroville, the dream-child of the Divine Mother:

None was apart, none lived for himself alone,  
Each lived for God in him and God in all,  
Each soleness inexpressibly held the whole.  
There oneness was not tied to monotone;  
It showed a thousand aspects of itself...

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Each gave its powers to help its neighbours' parts,  
But suffered no diminution by the gift;  
Profiteers of a mystic interchange,  
They grew by what they took and what they gave,  
All others they felt as their own complements,  
One in the might and joy of multitude.<sup>1</sup>

This then is Auroville, the City of Sri Aurobindo and the City of Dawn, wherein after their immemorial divorce Matter will be consciously wedded to Spirit again, and this mystic marriage of Earth and Heaven will be the harbinger of a divinised life here upon the face of our globe.

Hail, Auroville, City of promise and resurrected humanity. We salute your advent and pray with fervent hearts that your journey of glory prosper day by day and your very presence in this benighted world act as a catalyst for the welfare of all. *Ayam ārambhaḥ śubhāya bhavatu!*

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

<sup>1</sup> *Savitri*, Book III Canto III, pp. 294-296.

## IN THE VISION OF HER FACE

In the many-vistaed vision of Her face  
Started the wonder voyage of my soul,  
Through world on world of a forgotten sense  
Of one supreme inseparable whole.

Now in the spheres of a silver solitude  
My white prayer-passioned pinions upsoar,  
Each beat of the wings a song of beatitude,  
Being a breath of Ecstasy's rose-core.

A child of Her wondrous cradle is my self,  
A bliss-born wave of the illimitable sea;  
Swept ever by the winds of the sapphire, a leaf  
Afloat from eternity to eternity.

VENKATARANGA

## I KNOW THEE...

I KNOW Thee, Thy ways and Thy cunning.  
Wouldst Thou tease me to tire and fall?  
I'll not be teased but call and call  
Till Thou ownest defeat and comest running!

I know Thou lovest and canst not leave me for long.  
And what if Thou lingerest afar? Hast Thou  
Not given me the voice to sing, the song  
Of praise and love and faith, and the head to bow?

Wilt Thou then close Thy ears not to hear?  
I'll sing all the same and with pure joy touch  
On the harp of heart the notes of such  
Victorious love that Thou canst not but near!

“Gopi”

# *Students' Section*

## THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

### TWELFTH SEMINAR

13TH AUGUST 1967

### SRI AUROBINDO AND THE NEW AGE

*(Continued from the March issue)*

## II

*"He has come to bid the earth to prepare for its luminous future."* — THE MOTHER

SRI Aurobindo is the incarnation of the new age. In him we find embodied the new Truth that would manifest in life, thought, emotions, action, and every sphere of human existence. It is through him and by him that the age of the supramental manifestation has its birth. He is both its precursor and its daemon of creation and fulfilment. It is extremely difficult to do justice to him in the small compass of a speech. We would only trace the main points in an outline.

At the outset, let us make this initial statement to remove any misunderstanding. When we say Sri Aurobindo, it is not Sri Aurobindo alone as an isolated spiritual personality, a lone godhead like Krishna or Rama, but a Power who is amidst us along with the Divine Mother; their fusion and their spiritual oneness makes possible the total manifestation of the supramental Truth. They act simultaneously as one Power, one Consciousness and there is no division in their working and method. Keeping this fundamental unity in mind, we must approach and deal with the subject.

The advent of Sri Aurobindo is the beginning of a new age. He comes as an embodied promise of the greatest culmination the earth has ever seen. By his birth, a new era commenced in the history of earth's consciousness. As a result of his intense life-long labour, sacrificing even the realisation in his body, he made possible the descent of the supramental Power into the earth consciousness. All his work, prior to this epoch-making event, was one of preparation of the ground. His field was the entire life of man, its growth and its evolution. A total victory, a change of the whole human consciousness was his unique goal. He would not accept as final any half-way house, or partial result, or intermediate stage. And all this he did not for himself, or of his glory, but because it was his divine mission upon earth.

At first he works from behind; but as his work progresses his presence comes more and more to the forefront. As he conquers newer ground, he comes closer to us, not as a vague presence, but as a guide, a friend, a master, who has made man's sadhana his own, man's development his own. We can no longer shut him away as an undefinable personality; we recognise him as an incarnation of a new Truth, who has made, by his descent, all past and its heritage obsolete. Sri Aurobindo thus is the precursor of a new age.

He reveals the path of yoga as an integral path of self-perfection and transformation. He departs from other prevalent yogas by giving to his yoga a new meaning and a new orientation, a new scope and a new fulfilment. Because Sri Aurobindo's vision is all-embracing, his yoga too embraces all parts of the human consciousness down to the very physical; he brings all under the direct illumination of the spirit and makes the entire field of man's being a salient ground of divine intervention and working. Some may consider this path to be eclectic. But it is not a patchwork of so many divergent systems, but a true synthesis of all other ways attempted by man at different times. The past yogas have become obsolete due to their one-sided approach and method; the present age demands a total approach, an integral method, an all-sided fulfilment. Sri Aurobindo fulfils the crying need of the hour of man's surpassing his limits and his slavery to life and mind and his ego. He shows us that unless all parts of the being are brought under the light of the spirit the next step towards a greater evolution cannot take place. For this end, he employs a system in which Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana have place but in effect it surpasses them all. It is the yoga of the future, it is the path of the integral transformation. In it the surrender to the supreme Shakti is as important as personal tapasya and dynamism and status have equal place; in one word, the realisation is not confined to one part of the being but to the whole human person, who with all his facets, realises the truth, makes it a part of his thinking, willing, feeling and sensations. Such a goal is not for the man clinging to the past, it is for the man who has the future as his goal. The yoga of Sri Aurobindo is a living challenge to exceed ourselves and meet the unexpected.

The modern theory of evolution is an important step in philosophy which has its scientific bearing in biology as well. Evolution, in the sense of a graded creation, was a concept known to the ancient world. But today, it has become very intricate in its bearing and significance. In spite of this intricacy, the philosophical concept has not tallied with the biological findings. In Sri Aurobindo there is no discrepancy between these and he reveals that biology only proves that a greater ascent of man is a logical step. This future superman is not a utopian dream, it is a logical culmination of nature's perfection. But according to Sri Aurobindo, previous to the first step of evolution, there is involution which makes evolution possible, a fact which no philosopher from Heraclitus to Teilhard de Chardin has seized or expressed. If mind and life were not already involved in matter, they could not have evolved out of the material base; so too the Supermund, which is the next principle to evolve beyond mind, is already involved in mind, life and matter.



In Sri Aurobindo we have the philosophy of the future. Here philosophy goes beyond its rational scope and, fused with spiritual experience and realisation, assumes a new form, substance and logical system. That is, it is a greater and wider philosophy where the whole problems of fate, freewill, soul, nature, life and a host of others are seen, not with the eyes of a dialectical logician, but with the eyes of the seer, whose span and depth are greater.

In psychology, Sri Aurobindo brings us a new light, making obsolete the past and current trends. His discoveries of the deeper and higher levels of consciousness make the work of even the foremost modern psychologists insignificant in comparison. He distinguishes the various layers of the complex human personality and consciousness and reveals their processes and functions. Lastly, he shows their future potentialities when they will be transformed and become the instruments of the spirit. This psychological knowledge makes his yoga more precise and subtle and lends fullness to man's ascent to self-perfection.

In literature, Sri Aurobindo has given us a poetry which does not belong to this age or to any age in the past. His literary criticism always points to the future. What is new in his poetry is not so much the form as the substance, the significance and the value. His best poetry comes down from a plane of consciousness as yet untapped by any poet of the past or present. Each line of his epic *Savitri* is an adventure into the unknown, a rare and unforgettable experience in beauty, music, felicity and power. He unveils to us greater worlds of Truth, of harmony, of peace. He also makes us travel through many supra-physical domains of life, mind and spirit. Here all is revealed as true and luminous with the God-touch. Through poetry, Sri Aurobindo comes closest to us with his message of the unborn and the future. Here the rebel is more than ever a creator, an architect of new forms and of a new world that is yet to be born.

Sri Aurobindo gives to sociology, politics and allied sciences a new orientation which is at once global and profound. He lays bare the growth of the soul of individual and nation with their problems and solutions. He interprets history in the light of the spirit and shows the real meaning in the curves of its cyclic development. He also shows us the real significance of religion and its role in the path of man's perfection. He defines for us what true civilisation is and the significance of barbarism. At every step he reveals himself as the seer, the prophet and the avatar of the new age that is now coming.

Sri Aurobindo is not a mere armchair critic or philosopher. What he reveals in his writings, he manifests actually in his own life and body as well. He lives the truth of the spirit and, at each step, he unveils to us that preaching and practice are one. That is why he does not neglect the body and its perfection. For the true plenitude to come, we cannot shut out the body which is the earthly base of human personality. In his concept of integral education, therefore, all have equal importance, the education of the soul, of the mind, of the life and the body.

Let us not forget that the new age that is just being born, is the result of his

unique labour and sacrifice, the greatness and magnitude of which cannot be imagined by men. He ushers a new age of dynamic spirituality which is all-embracing and encompasses in its scope all the spheres of human life and endeavour. Nothing would be left out which is true or which serves the essential truth of the life and the spirit.

In this new age:

“The Spirit’s eyes shall look through Nature’s eyes,  
The Spirit’s force shall occupy Nature’s force,  
This world shall be God’s visible garden-house,  
The earth shall be a field and camp of God.”<sup>1</sup>

ROMEN

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After all the speeches were over, Kishor Gandhi read out the following extracts from the writings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo to which he had referred in his introductory speech:

(1)

(You spoke of Sri Aurobindo’s birth as ‘eternal’ in the history of the universe. What exactly was meant by ‘eternal’?)

The sentence can be understood in four different ways on four ascending planes of consciousness:

1. Physically, the consequences of the birth will be of eternal importance in the world.
2. Mentally, it is a birth that will be eternally remembered in the universal history.
3. Psychically, a birth that recurs for ever from age to age upon earth.
4. Spiritually, the birth of the Eternal upon earth.

THE MOTHER

(2)

We must not be bewildered by appearances. Sri Aurobindo has not left us. Sri Aurobindo is here, as living and as present as ever and it is left to us to realise his work with all the sincerity, eagerness and concentration necessary.

THE MOTHER

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, (First edition) Book XI, Canto I, p. 330.

(3)

To express our gratitude to Sri Aurobindo we can do nothing better than to be a living demonstration of his teaching.

THE MOTHER

(4)

By slow degrees the Supramental is exerting its influence; now one part of the being and now another feels the embrace or the touch of its divinity; but when it comes down in all its self-existent power, a supreme radical change will seize the whole nature. We are moving nearer and nearer the hour of its complete triumph. Once the world-conditions are ready the full descent will take place carrying everything before it. Its presence will be unmistakable, its force will brook no resistance, doubts and difficulties will not torture you any longer. For the Divine will stand manifest—unveiled in its total perfection. I do not, however, mean to say that the whole world will at once feel its presence or be transformed; but I do mean that a part of humanity will know and participate in its descent—say this little world of ours here. From there the transfiguring grace will most effectively radiate. And fortunately for the aspirants, that successful future will materialise for them in spite of all the obstacles set in its way by unregenerate human nature!

THE MOTHER

(*Words of the Mother*, Third Series, pp. 91-2.)

(5)

If the light that is being born increases, if the number of individuals who seek to realise the possibility in themselves and in the world grows large and they get nearer the right way, then the Spirit who is here in man, now a concealed divinity, a developing light and power, will descend more fully as the Avatar of a yet unseen and unguessed Godhead from above into the soul of mankind and into the great individualities in whom the light and power are the strongest. There will then be fulfilled the change that will prepare the transition of human life from its present limits into those larger and purer horizons; the earthly evolution will have taken its great impetus upward and accomplished the revealing step in a divine progression of which the birth of thinking and aspiring man from the animal nature was only an obscure preparation and a far-off promise.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*The Human Cycle*, p. 334.)

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Then Arati read out the following passage from *Savitri*:

When superman is born as Nature's king  
His presence shall transfigure Matter's world;  
He shall light up Truth's fire in Nature's night,  
He shall lay upon the earth Truth's greater law;  
Man too shall turn towards the Spirit's call.  
Awake to his hidden possibility,  
Awake to all that slept within his heart  
And all that Nature meant when earth was formed  
And the Spirit made this ignorant world his home,  
He shall aspire to Truth and God and Bliss.  
Interpreter of a diviner law  
And instrument of a supreme design  
The higher kind shall lean to lift up man.  
Man shall desire to climb to his own heights.  
The truth above shall wake a nether truth;  
Even the dumb earth become a sentient force.  
The Spirit's tops and Nature's base shall draw  
Near to the secret of their separate truth  
And know each other as one deity.  
The Spirit shall look out through Matter's gaze  
And Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face.  
Then man and superman shall be at one  
And all the earth become a single life.  
Even the multitude shall hear the Voice  
And turn to commune with the Spirit within  
And strive to obey the high spiritual law;  
This earth shall stir with impulses sublime,  
Humanity awake to deepest self,  
Nature the hidden godhead recognise.  
Even the many shall some answer make  
And bear the splendour of the Divine's rush  
And his impetuous knock at unseen doors.  
A heavenlier passion shall upheave men's lives,  
Their mind shall share in the ineffable gleam,  
Their heart shall feel the ecstasy and the fire,  
Earth's bodies shall be conscious of a soul;  
Mortality's bon-slaves shall unloose their bonds,  
Mere men into spiritual beings grow  
And see awake the dumb divinity.  
Intuitive beams shall touch the nature's peaks,

A revelation stir the nature's depths;  
 The Truth shall be the leader of their lives,  
 Truth shall dictate their thought and speech and act,  
 They shall feel themselves lifted nearer to the sky,  
 As if a little lower than the gods.  
 For knowledge shall pour down its radiant streams  
 And even darkened mind quiver with new life  
 And kindle and burn with the Ideal's fire  
 And turn to escape from mortal ignorance.  
 The frontiers of the Ignorance shall recede,  
 More and more souls shall enter into light  
 Minds lit, inspired, the occult summoner hear  
 and lives blaze with a sudden inner flame  
 And hearts grow enamoured of divine delight  
 And human wills tune to the divine will,  
 These separate selves the Spirit's oneness feel,  
 These senses of heavenly sense grow capable,  
 The flesh and nerves of a strange ethereal joy  
 And mortal bodies of immortality.  
 A divine force shall flow through tissue and cell  
 And take the charge of breath and speech and act  
 And all the thoughts shall be a glow of suns  
 And every feeling a celestial thrill.  
 Often a lustrous inner dawn shall come  
 Lighting the chambers of the slumbering mind;  
 A sudden bliss shall run through every limb  
 And Nature with a mightier Presence fill.  
 Thus shall the earth open to divinity  
 And common natures feel the wide uplift,  
 Illumine common acts with the Spirit's ray  
 And meet the deity in common things.  
 Nature shall live to manifest secret God,  
 The Spirit shall take up the human play,  
 This earthly life become the life divine.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, First University Edition, Book XI, Canto I, pp. 796-98.)

At the end of the Seminar, Kishor Gandhi, on behalf of the Association, thanked all those who had come to attend the Seminar and also those who had participated in it.

*Compiled by* KISHOR GANDHI

# EYE EDUCATION

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. When I go out in the sun I often get a headache. Can I use dark glasses or goggles?

A. If you have a liking for sun-glasses, you may use mild-coloured ones, but usually all such glasses make the eyes more sensitive and unhealthy.

When you go out in the sun, keep the lids lowered and blink frequently; then there will be natural protection from light and heat; imagine that the side objects and the road are moving backwards as one experiences while travelling in a train—poles and trees appearing to rush past in the opposite direction. This also lessens the strain.

Every morning take a little sun-treatment. Face the sun with eyes closed for a few minutes. This will strengthen your eyes.

Q. What is Snellen test card or eye chart?

A. The Snellen eye chart has letters printed in varying sizes. It is used to test the eyesight for distance. The smallest letter seen on the eye chart from 10 feet or 20 feet is a measure of your distance vision.

It is a very useful thing for eye education so as to prevent and cure defective eyesight for distance.

Q. What is cataract?

A. Cataract is an opacity of the lens in the pupil, which interferes with good vision. According to Dr. Bates, the cause, in several cases is: spasm of external eye muscles due to eye strain. Such cases are benefitted by reading fine print daily.

Q. I use glasses of -6 but I do not use them at the time of physical exercise. What causes pain in my eyes while doing physical exercise and how to cure it?

A. You are straining your eyes. Keep the lids a little lowered while doing any physical exercise and blink often.

Q. What was the trouble with Krishna Roy, a friend of mine.? She was “blind” in her left eye and now she sees quite normally with that eye. How did she get cured in your clinic?

A. She had been having Amblyopia in her left eye since childhood. The word Amblyopia means blindness, the eye cannot be helped by glasses and for this no

apparent or sufficient cause can be found in the constitution of the eye. She was cured by eye education and mental relaxation exercises.

Q. Previously I had the notion that reading under a bright light was good for my eyes. But now I find that reading in semi-darkness is helpful and avoids strain. Previously 20 minutes reading used to tire my eyes, now two hours reading produces no strain. Can you explain this fact?

A. In bright light the glare reflected from the paper creates strain in the eyes.

Q. My father often tells me to stop seeing the cinema. Is the cinema really harmful for the eyes?

A. Cinematograph pictures are commonly supposed to be injurious to the eyes and it is a fact that often they cause much discomfort and the lowering of vision. They can, however, be made a means of improving the eyes. When they hurt the eyes, it is because the person strains to see them. If this tendency to strain can be overcome, the vision is always improved and if the practice of viewing pictures is continued, many eye troubles are relieved.

How to see a cinema picture:—Sit comfortably, keep the upper lids a little lowered, the chin a little raised and blink frequently.

The common mistake, while seeing the cinema, is to keep the lids raised and stop blinking.

Q. Why do you advise to read the same Snellen test card daily as a means of eye education? Children have learnt it by heart.

A. You cannot see anything perfectly unless you have seen it before. When the eye looks at an unfamiliar object it always strains more or less to see that object, and an error of refraction is always produced. When the children look at unfamiliar writings or figures on the blackboard, distant maps, diagrams, or pictures, they become shortsighted, though their vision may be under other circumstances absolutely normal. The same thing happens when adults look at unfamiliar distant objects. When the eyes regard a familiar object, however, the effect is quite otherwise.

This fact furnishes us with a means of overcoming the mental strain to which the children are subjected by the modern educational system. It is impossible to see anything perfectly when the mind is under a strain, and if children become able to relax by looking at familiar objects, they become able, sometimes in a brief space of time, to maintain their relaxation by looking at unfamiliar objects.

This is why I recommend to read the same familiar Snellen test card.

If you need a Snellen test card or eye chart, please send Rs. 2/- by M. O. or in stamps to Dr. Agarwal, Eye Clinic, Pondicherry-2.

R. S. AGARWAL

**SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND RESEARCH**

**NEWSLETTER**

No.4

APRIL 1968

1. *The Place of Yoga in Education.*

The cry all over the world, for new methods of education, higher and wider orientation-concepts of learning, more sincere and truth-seeking approaches to knowledge, reflects the demand of a new level of conscious awareness in the rising generation of students.

It seems quite obvious that the present patterns of educational institutions and organisations of learning are obsolete and inadequate for the demands made upon them by modern life and thinking. In fact all institutional formations of the past seem to be on the point of disintegration. Modern life has become so top-heavy and complicated, especially in large cities where increasing numbers of people and problems present themselves, that one feels an underlying anxiety as to what is going to happen next.

When man comes to the point—which again repeats itself from cycle to evolutionary cycle—where he sees no help and no way out of his human dilemma by ordinary means, then he turns to extraordinary possibilities. He turns to the forgotten images of his inner life. The beliefs of childhood come back to him as a Golden Thread running through all the chaos and dim complexity of unfulfilled desires, hopes and aspirations. He turns to God and those who have the knowledge of God.

The concept that Yoga is something to be practised late in life, after one has tried everything else, is a concept no longer tenable. Once we see that Yoga is life, that all life is Yoga, that union with the truth of our own being and union with the truth of terrestrial manifestation are union with That from which and by which all this was created, we can no longer wait till the end of life to take part in this integral movement towards unity. It is part of the New Consciousness descending upon the earth nature. It is the urge in man to make new beginnings. It is the Great Longing to free oneself from the old labours of the past and enter new fields of creative wonder and higher perfection.

This New Consciousness insists that we prepare the soil for a new sowing. It is from the children of today that the blossoms of tomorrow will emerge, therefore we have to make possible the foundation of wider and higher concepts of learning in a much freer climate of study than was ever conceived before, and with a much more plastic approach to accepting new ideas and new methods of working.

Education must “educate” that which is latent in the being. If every human being has something individually special to manifest in his life then that must be



educated from within so that each may contribute to the community the best that is in him, to life, to the human aggregate of which he is a part.

This concept of education alone can justify an individual's existence among his fellow-men and fulfil the longing deep in the human soul.

Yoga, integral yoga, is a seeking for the truth of one's being, a seeking for the meaning and purpose of this terrestrial life, a seeking for the truth of man's existence in the universe. This seeking begins with the beginning of life and it never ends. Therefore, we shall never be sincere to life or to ourselves unless we prepare for such seeking as an integral part of education, an education which takes cognizance of the whole being : physical, vital, mental and spiritual. An education which continues throughout life and which aims at an inner and outer progress towards the highest which human thought can envisage. As Sri Aurobindo says : "It manifests itself...in the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality."

## 2. *Thought of the Month*

"The majority of mankind do not think, they have only thought-sensations; a large minority think confusedly, mixing up desires, predilections, passions, prejudices, old associations and prejudices with pure and disinterested thought. Only a few, the rare aristocrats of the earth, can really and truly think."

Sri Aurobindo, *The National Value of Art*

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

On the invitation of Mr. Ryan, D. P. I., Pondicherry, Norman Dowsett inaugurated on March 21, 1968 the one-week seminar course on Modern Concepts and Techniques of Teaching. This was an Orientation Workshop for Graduate Teachers of Science and History which was organised and conducted by The National Council of Educational Research & Training, New Delhi. Delegates from various parts of the State of Pondicherry attended the course.

(EDITOR)

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