

# MOTHER INDIA

OCTOBER, 1969

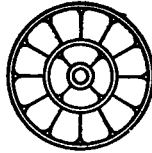
Price : Re. 1.00

All Rights Reserved. No matter appearing in this journal or part thereof may be reproduced or translated without written permission from the publishers except for short extracts as quotations.

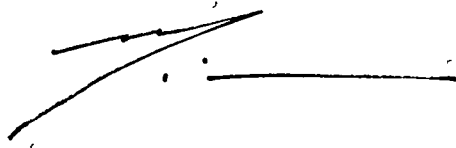
Subscription rates: Annual Rs. 10/-, Sh. 20/-, \$ 3/-  
Single copy Re. 1.00 in India.

All correspondence to be addressed to  
MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2, India.

Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.



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. XXI

No. 9

---

*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

---

### CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
WORDS OF THE MOTHER	... 603
AUROVILLE	... 604
AUROMODELE	... 605
CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO	<i>Dr. R. S. Agarwal</i> ... 606
LIVING SHEER BY HER GRACE (A Poem)	<i>Har Krishan Singh</i> ... 607
TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO	<i>Nirodbaran</i> ... 608
SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK:	
SOME NOTES OF 1920-26	<i>V. Chidanandam</i> ... 613
SRI AUROBINDO'S MISSION	<i>M. P. Pandit</i> ... 619
AUGUST 15 AT THE SRI AUROBINDO CENTER, CRESCENT MOON RANCH, SEDONA, ARIZONA, U.S.A.: AN INFORMAL GLIMPSE THROUGH TWO LETTERS	... 621
TWO LINES FROM SRI AUROBINDO'S <i>Savitri</i> :	
AN EXPLANATORY LETTER	<i>K. D. Sethna</i> ... 622
NAME GLOSSARY TO SRI AUROBINDO'S <i>Ilion</i>	<i>Eric Hughes</i> ... 624
THE INSTRUMENT (A Poem)	<i>Norman Thomas</i> ... 626
PRIAM VISITS ACHILLES:	
A TRANSLATION FROM HOMER IN ENGLISH HEXAMETERS	<i>Jesse Roarke</i> ... 627
KAVI CHAKRAVARTI KAMBAN:	
CAUSERIES ON TAMIL NAD'S GREATEST POET	<i>S. Maharajan</i> ... 631

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
THE EARTH AND THE SUN (A Free English Rendering from the Author's Bengali Poem)	<i>Chumilal Chowdhury</i> ... 639
THE SAGE OF TARUNGIRI AND SEVEN OLD SEEKERS: A SHORT STORY	<i>Manoj Das</i> ... 640
GIFTS OF GRACE: THE FEAR OF PAIN	<i>A Disciple</i> ... 645
THE SECRET SELF IN THE YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO	<i>Norman C. Dowsett</i> ... 647
EARTH'S EARLIEST MANLIKE CREATURES IN INDIA	<i>From TIME</i> ... 651
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE SRI AUROBINDO CIRCLE (SPECIAL NUMBER: TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY—1969)	<i>Review by Lujag Koreshi</i> ... 653
FOCUS	... 657

### Students' Section

A NEW OUTLOOK ON EDUCATION	<i>Romen</i> ... 658
EYE-EDUCATION: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	<i>Dr. R. S. Agarwal</i> ... 661

Editor: K. D. SETHNA

Assistant Editor: MANOJ DAS

Managing Editor: K. R. PODDAR

Published by: P. COUNOUMA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, PONDICHERRY—2

Printed by: AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry—2

PRINTED IN INDIA

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers under No: R. N. 8667/63

**THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE  
TO THE PRIME MINISTER, MRS. INDIRA GANDHI,  
ON THE OCCASION OF HER VISIT TO THE ASHRAM  
ON OCTOBER 13, 1969**

Let India work for the future and take the lead. Thus she will recover her true place in the world.

\*  
\*\*

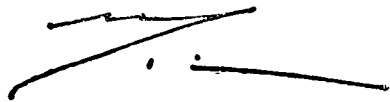
Since long it was the habit to govern through division and opposition. The time has come to govern through union, mutual understanding and collaboration.

\*  
\*\*

To choose a collaborator, the value of the man is more important than the party to which he belongs.

\*  
\*\*


The greatness of a country does not depend on the victory of a party but on the union of all the parties.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a series of connected loops and strokes, positioned at the bottom right of the page.

## AUROVILLE

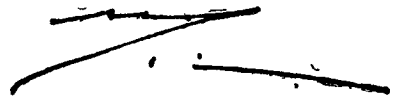
All these questions  
prove that you expect  
Auroville to be a continuation  
of all that has been done  
up to now.

Auroville wants to be  
a new creation  
expressing a new  
consciousness in a new  
way and according  
to new methods.



## AUROMODÈLE

Auromodel is being  
built to make a concrete  
experiment and learn  
how to live in Aurowille



## CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

11-8-1934.

*Q: Today before taking my lunch I remembered you, but you did not appear before me. That made me impatient. I saw the Mother in a vision. She spoke to me: "Do not be impatient, my child, he will be coming just now." I waited for some more time. But still you did not appear. That made me impatient all the more. I was on the point of weeping when the gracious Mother again consoled me. Soon a faint image of you rose up before me, and I began to take my food. What is this state?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It is probably the growth of the need for some kind of contact of which the image is the vehicle.

*Q: While offering my evening prayers, again I saw different images but they were vague and faint. How then to develop these images? Are they real?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Nothing has to be done to develop them. They develop of themselves by the growing practice of seeing. What was faint becomes clear, what was incomplete becomes complete.

One cannot say in a general way that they are real or unreal. Some are formations of the mind—some are images that come to the sight of themselves—some are images of real things that show themselves and, indirectly, to the sight—others are true pictures<sup>1</sup> not merely images.

*Q: Last night I saw you and Lord Krishna in my dreams, but I forgot everything in the morning. When I woke up I was rather wondering whether I was sleeping or awake and whether I was meditating or seeing dreams! What was really that state?*

SRI AUROBINDO: If I understand correctly what you write, it must be a state between the ordinary sleep and waking—but possibly a state of inner wakefulness, such as one gets when one goes inside in meditation.

*Q: How to concentrate on the heart-centre?*

SRI AUROBINDO: You can concentrate the consciousness anywhere in any centre. You have only to think of yourself as centrally there and try to fix and keep that. A strain or strong effort to do so is not necessary, a quiet and steady dwelling on the idea—After a time you will feel something there which you can recognise as consciousness steady and central and from there one can think, receive, originate action.

Most people associate consciousness with the brain or head because that is the centre for intellectual thought and mental vision, but consciousness is not limited



to that kind of thought or vision,—it is everywhere in the system and there are several centres of it. E.g., the centre for emotion is not in the brain but in the heart—the originating centre of vital desire is still lower down.

The two main places where one can centre the consciousness for Yoga are in the head and in the heart—the mind centre and the soul centre.

*From DR. R. S. AGARWAL*

---

## LIVING SHEER BY HER GRACE

ONCE, even in the month of raging June,  
With three warm blankets, I, year after year,  
Happily basked in the burning heat of noon;  
Sun's frown for me was only heaven's cheer.

All changed, and yesterday some Destiny hit  
My soul and watched me in the shade at eleven,  
Dry-throated, breaking my breath, in a fainting fit,  
Benumbed, pale-bodied, crying for Her Heaven.

And I was dying and, hearing, answered none,  
And I was dead but for Her watchful Eye;  
Just then Her letter came—unexpected. Anon  
I was saved and I was living and I was I.

For years my body is bearing stone-eyed days,  
Just hanging by the thin thread of Her Grace.

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

APRIL 8, 1940

N: ANILBARAN asks if *The Psychology of Social Development* and *The Ideal of Human Unity* couldn't be published from England—at least one of them—by his publishers there.

SRI AUROBINDO: Will they take them?

N: He can write and find out. Allen and Unwin have already included one chapter from *The Ideal of Human Unity* in one of their books.

SRI AUROBINDO: It doesn't follow that they will publish whole books.

S: *The Psychology of Social Development* is being translated into French. If it sells well in France, then in England also there may be a demand.

SRI AUROBINDO: Again it doesn't follow. The French are more plastic and they are interested in these things.

N: May Anilbaran write to his English publishers?

SRI AUROBINDO: I have already promised these books to the Arya Publishing House. Besides, let them be on the way first.

N: It seems Di also is coming out to fight against X. He has written a thesis of 54 pages!

SRI AUROBINDO: Good Lord! I don't see the use of arguing with a man who is shut up in his science. He is at the same stage where Europe was 50 years ago. Except for Russia and perhaps some Socialists, Europe gave up the old scientific standpoint long ago. We are 50 years behind.

N: We are always taking up what they give up.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, we may turn Fascists when they have done with it. The Khaksars are trying to do that.

P: Yes. And J seems to be financing their movement.

SRI AUROBINDO: Now he has asked them to suspend it and is communicating with the Government to remove the ban.

P: Yes; it is he who was behind the trouble in Hyderabad. He stood against Sir Akbar Hydari.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

P: Sir Akbar says that Hyderabad had no Hindu-Moslem trouble before. It has been brought in from outside.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is true. Moslems from the North and the Arya Samaj brought it there. The British Government can't allow the Khaksars to become powerful, for they want to drive away the British.

S: It is said that the Government is behind the present Hindu-Moslem disunity. Somebody said this Muslim-India scheme won't survive Jinnah.

N: A hint to do away with him? (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: By sending him to the war? How old is he?

P: About 60.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, then no chance. (*Laughter*).

P: But his health is rather weak and poor.

SRI AUROBINDO: Diseased people often live long.

N: There's a letter from Y to Nishikanto. Y objects to Nishikanto's use of words like বোনি, গণিকা etc. (womb, prostitute), and says they are unrefined, though he adds that they are found in plenty in Sanskrit. And his own family has Sanskrit culture.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then why does he object?

N: Can't say. He continues that such sensibility about poetry may be due to European influence from which Tagore also is not free. "Why should Iswar Gupta be our ideal when he is not even a greater poet than Tagore?" he asks.

SRI AUROBINDO: What about Bengali prose? Are there no such expressions there?

N: I think there are, especially in modern books. At least in one book which was proscribed for obscenity.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then if they can copy Europe in prose, why not in poetry? European prose contains any number of such things. What Y says smacks of the Victorian period. Europe has moved far away from it. In fact, it has gone to the other extreme. Now they use these expressions for the sake of using them. I don't see why we should be confined to the Victorian period. The point is: if such words are necessary for one's expression, then they have to be used.

N: Even Z objected to the word গণিকা (prostitute) and asked Nishikanto to change it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Change it and put দূৰ্চৰিত্র (a woman of bad character)? It is not the words so much as the way of expression that should matter.

N: Nishikanto was asked by his friends not to send any more poems to Z after such criticism.

SRI AUROBINDO: If criticisms are resented like that—

N: No, not the criticism; they say that he has attacked you and the Mother and spoken against the Ashram.

SRI AUROBINDO: He has not spoken against us. Speaking against the Ashram is not an attack on us.

N: But he has said that by being confined to the limited Ashram atmosphere, the germ of Nishikanto's greatness will be killed and he has referred also to ধর্মের বাহন (religious propaganda), the Ashram philosophy, etc.

P: That can't be called গালাগালি (abuse), it is a criticism of our philosophy, made just as by other people.

SRI AUROBINDO: The book has been published from the Ashram and contains our philosophy. So he has every right to criticise that philosophy. Of course, if the criticisms are hostile and malignant, it is a different matter or, if one attacks us, the question of loyalty and of serving one's Guru comes in. It would be serious even in case of repeated attacks on spirituality. Otherwise, if there are simple criticisms, they are not enough to stop sending poetry to the critic.

N: Is there any such criticism in Gujarat against Punjalal?

P: No, not yet.

SRI AUROBINDO: You mean Gujarat is not modern enough?

P: Perhaps not. Besides, two of the modern poets have come here and they are impressed with what they have seen.

Here P gave a long description of the modern tendency of Gujarati poetry.

#### EVENING

P: Dara has a novel suggestion for solving the Hindu-Muslim problem.

SRI AUROBINDO: What is it?

P: He says that in the South the Hindus are in the majority. So they can be given self-government. In the North-west Frontier the Muslims are in the majority. And they can get self-government. In the rest of the places where they are almost equal, let them fight among themselves.

SRI AUROBINDO: Fight till they come to a solution? Not quite without sense. For short of the threat of a decisive fight, people will go on talking and talking. If there was the possibility of such a fight, then they would come round.

APRIL 9, 1940

S: Senapati Bapat has been arrested. He was asked not to enter Bombay.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, he was asked "to remove himself."

S: Not only did he not do so but he addressed a meeting.

SRI AUROBINDO: That's all very well, but why on earth is he called Senapati?

P: Because he led a Satyagraha movement against the Tatas' extension of their dam.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, Commander-in-Chief of Passive Resistance?

P: Yes, but not quite, because they had swords with them.

S: He seems to try being spectacular.

SRI AUROBINDO: But the spectacle doesn't always come off.

S: That is not his fault.

SRI AUROBINDO: How? Is it because once, when he would have died by drowning, it was his friends who saved him and thus prevented him from being spectacular?

S: Probably. That reminds me of a friend of mine who took more than a lethal dose of opium to commit suicide. But he didn't die; he was quite conscious though he couldn't move his limbs. He was an intellectual and rationalist and was fed up with the world.

SRI AUROBINDO: It was an intellectual attempt at suicide then, but some part in him that was not rationalist saved him. (*Laughter*)

#### EVENING

N: Germany has entered Denmark.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh! The war has begun then. Was this the measure they were considering? It is the direct result of British mine-laying.

S: Germany will now have two fronts.

N: But why did they choose Denmark?

SRI AUROBINDO: Because then they can control the Baltic and the North Sea and from there they can enter any time into Norway and Sweden.

N: So that was the reason of their troop-concentration there?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. The Germans have the power to foresee and act accordingly, while the British act from hour to hour: "if this happens, we will do that—if that, then this."

N: Rumania has been saved.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, she is lucky. The attack on Finland saved her the first time and now the entry into Denmark has done it the second time.

N: Unless Russia takes this opportunity and spreads her net.

SRI AUROBINDO: Now Finland will look on at them sharing the same fate.

N: Poor countries! They wanted to preserve strict neutrality.

SRI AUROBINDO: Even now perhaps Norway and Sweden will say, "We must safeguard our neutrality at any cost." (*Laughter*)

N: The Allies have pledged their support in case they are attacked.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but they must invite the Allies.

P: Well, the Allies will send first 500 men, then 1000, then 2000—like that.

SRI AUROBINDO: \*१८१: \*१८१: (Step by step). (*Laughter*)

P: The 11th of this month seems to be an auspicious day. Something is to happen.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Something is happening all right.

P: There is the combination of Sun and Jupiter, Saturn and Mars. Sun and Jupiter being more powerful will counteract the evil influence of the others. There was to be a dash for peace.

SRI AUROBINDO: Peace? Peace has been dashed all right in Norwegian waters

by the Allies and in the Baltic by Germany. Saturn and Mars are said to have dash, aren't they? They seem to be more powerful than Sun and Jupiter.

P: They may have the start.

SRI AUROBINDO: I see. The other two will come at the end or are working together now to run them out at the end? (*Laughter*)

It was afterwards learnt that the Germans had captured some ports of Norway.

SRI AUROBINDO: The British also should occupy other ports.

APRIL 10, 1940

P: It seems Germany collected all her navy, merchant ships and trawlers to carry her army to Norway. And the British Navy is firing on them.

SRI AUROBINDO: If the whole German Fleet is out and gets attacked and intercepted by England then it will be Germany that will have to turn back. Hitherto Germany has not proved superior to the British Navy. But it depends on what proportion of the navy is there. If it is only a part or if they have to collect it from various places then it will be difficult for them. Of course, if the French Fleet is also there, then it will be all right. If they had possessed foresight, they would have gathered their fleet near about. It seems they knew that Germany thought of making some such move. At least Denmark and Norway ought to have known. It is their imbecility that is responsible. If they knew, they should have made some secret agreement with the Allies.

S: Germany has given a fine reason that if she hadn't taken these countries, the Allies would have done it. So she has taken them under her protection.

SRI AUROBINDO: (*laughing*): Too entire a protection.

P: If England occupies part of Norway—

SRI AUROBINDO: That depends on her sea-power. If she can, it will be a tremendous economic blockade to Germany.

P: And then the Allies can try to invade Germany through this front.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is difficult because just like the Siegfried line in the West, the Germans have here the Kiel.

EVENING

N: It is reported that about five of England's Destroyers were damaged and one ran ashore, while there were few losses on the German side.

SRI AUROBINDO: It couldn't have been a big battle then and the battle must have been near the shore.

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

# SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

## SOME NOTES OF 1920-1926

*(Continued from the issue of October 15)*

*(These Notes were not taken on the spot. They are recollections of the talks at which their author, V. Chidanandam, was present. Whatever in these talks seized the young aspirant's mind was jotted down the next day. Neither complete continuity nor absolute accuracy could be maintained. But in reconstructing from memory the author sought to capture something of the language no less than of the thought-substance. In places, later editing has been found necessary in order to clarify notations which had served merely as signposts.)*

It seems Baha-Ullah was an ignorant man in the beginning, but had a vital being which received the light—not from the highest truth but from a mental plane—and it was with the resulting force that he created Bahaism. He used to see a light descending into him when he meditated. He had that power of the word which is regarded as the sign of the prophet. The words in themselves may not have anything extraordinary, but they carry a certain power which accomplishes things. He had a gift of telepathy too, which he used when he was imprisoned, to direct his disciples from there. He had also a great power of cursing, and many of his curses came true. He caused certain letters to be written to the ruling monarchs of his time from his prison, it is said, and the manner in which each of them received his letter was reported to him. The Sultan of Turkey and Napoleon III did not receive his letters well and they were cursed accordingly.

*Q. Is it possible that one man's curse should prove true even in the case of a nation?*  
Why not? If there is a strong human vital supported by a Vital Being, it would be effective.

*Q. In that case whole nations may be destroyed.*

Yes, they may be destroyed, if that is destined. Baha-Ullah cursed in the same way as Mohammed did. It is said that Queen Victoria received his message rightly and replied politely. So he gave her his blessing—and it proved a curse to India! His younger son has not the same intelligence, but he has the vital force from his father and he too sees some light in meditation. There are also certain mental truths in the Bahai movement, such as Brotherhood, Equality, etc.

Some people having vital powers influence men through their eyes.

Present-day political activity is intensely rajasic (vitalistic) and to reconcile it with Yoga is not easy. All who took to this Yoga had to give up political activity. In our time we did not go into politics in the rajasic way. We left everything to the higher Shakti. If in this Yoga the truth which we want to achieve is attained, and if India accepts it, then it will give quite a new turn to Indian politics, different from that of European politics. It would be very deep.

Effort is the camouflage of the Higher Will which acts from above. It believes it has succeeded while in reality it is the Higher Will that has worked and if the Divine Will does not want to come down, no amount of effort can bring it down. That is what is going to happen to India as it seems at present. No amount of effort appears to succeed, but there are forces working in England which may prove helpful. Suddenly one day we may find that India is free.

Man's will is the effort put forth by the lesser surface being. The subconscious will may be just contrary to it. It is the subconscious will that is often more powerful. Coué's method of imagination gets this will working for one's betterment. Sometimes, when a truth is to be actualised, the man who makes an effort of conscious will may not achieve it, while in a man who does nothing at all, makes no effort, the truth to be actualised may work more easily from the subconscious because the will there is stronger—as it happens with a character in one of Shaw's plays, *Back to Methuselah*, where the push towards living longer is the theme.

Faith is something more central than the belief of the intellect. The whole being believes. It has something to do with the emotional and psychic being. It is self-existent.

Cruelty is not less immoral than sexual indulgence but nobody condemns a man for being cruel or considers him fallen on that account, because that does not disturb the social life. Adultery upsets social life and therefore society objects to it.

The lyrical form of poetry is old in Indian literature. The modern form and spirit are not there in this literature yet.

Chattopadhyaya's play *Pundalik* is not dramatic at all. The Drama is a form that does not suit him.

In his poetry he has an idea and then he goes on weaving image after image. Often there is more language than substance. The self-control to put only what is necessary is not always there. He has command of language and he knows technique, but he must condense his expression instead of diffusing it.



In the Indian view, art is the response to Universal Beauty, and Beauty and Goodness are one. Beauty is the presence of the Divine in things. Krishna says in the Gita, "I am the splendour of splendid things."

*Q. What is the real meaning behind the story of Pygmalion, the Greek sculptor who fell in love with the image of his own creation? The intensity of his love was such that life appeared in the image.*

The story must not be taken literally. It does not mean that if I love an inanimate object it will become animate. It illustrates the power of love to awaken the true consciousness in persons—the psychic consciousness, the soul-awareness, in those in whom it is dormant.

I am fighting the forces of disease now. It is since some time past that I have thrown them from the vital to the physical plane. If R in her ill-health comes here, I shall have to do the whole thing over again on the vital and the nature of R's illness is such that it would increase on coming here. When the physical difficulties are at a distance, they do not come upon me personally and, if R is away, I can give more effective help from my impersonal self.

The mind and the vital can keep away or keep down things. But the physical will show them up. Whenever you begin to act on the lower parts, the physical resists, comes and sits fast and refuses to move. That is always the nature of the physical—to stick on without moving. You have to get into the universal mind, the universal vital, the universal physical consciousness. From the supermind above, down to the body, one single Power should pervade. This universe that we see is maintained by something from above coming down.

In the past the Yogis do not seem to have had the knowledge of the necessary conditions for bringing down the supermind. The mental being was largely and almost exhaustively worked upon by the Yogis, who acquired *siddhis* thereby. The vital being was also worked upon though not in the right way. The physical was never tackled. They developed the vital being for its own sake and in the terms of the vital being. They do not seem to have understood the whole aspect and so, instead of making the vital a passive channel for the higher working, they developed it on its own: for example, Tailanga Swami. We develop these parts in order to bring down the supermind. Even in curing diseases they used to put the full vital or mental force and their method seems superficially more effective than ours. But they did not penetrate through the vital to the physical. With us the curing of diseases is only secondary. It is not necessary to have a full and rich development of the mental and vital being for the descent of the supermind. It is enough if there is a sufficient basis to start the higher working. If you have to wait for full mental development, then you require centuries. Again, too rich a development of these

parts is sometimes an obstacle. What the mind attains with great effort, the supermind attains with simplicity and directness. Whatever is necessary is brought down with the supermind in its descent, because it carries in it its own fullness. There is an automatic harmony in it. In my own case I found the mental effort an obstacle. But I had to do it in order to get the necessary knowledge. Mind is an infinite snake coiling round and round. The key to my knowledge was that I insisted on the supermind, and the rest I had to work out in order to bring it down.

The Avatar gets the mind, life and body as other people do. The conventional idea of the Avatar is that he is a miracle, that he is not subject to the laws of nature. He accepts the human limitations; if he did not, then he would cease to have any meaning for man. The preparation of body, vital, mind is a certain movement that takes place in nature; nothing takes place in his soul. If he were to use the freedom of his soul, he might grow twenty arms. But he does not. He is not above somewhere and does not come down miraculously. He is everywhere and as the Avatar he has to manifest the divinity.

*Q. Did Buddha attain to the supermind?*

His aim was not to produce the superman. His idea was to realise the world as the impermanent manifestation of the Permanent, to leave the world and to remain For ever in Nirvana.

*Q. His vital and physical consciousness did not live in Nirvana, did it?*

Evidently not.

*Q. Then were those parts subject to ignorance or were they freed? Could they have dragged him back to the bondage of birth?*

It is the popular idea that birth is bondage. So long as one is in the mental being, it appears so. But if you look at it from above, there is no such thing. One is not affected by birth or death.

*Q. Did Buddha achieve the perfection of his nature?*

He may have entered a brighter ignorance. He may have rejected the vital and physical being, in which the ignorance is darker.

*Q. The Jains say that we have to prepare our body in another field of consciousness and then take this physical body.*

That may be said of the true body which is in the supermind. We have to bring that body down into the physical. The Jain philosophy is concerned with individual freedom. We want to bring down the supermind as a new faculty, just as the mind is now a permanent status of consciousness in humanity. We want to create a race in which the supermind will be a permanent faculty.

The mind takes things in a fixed, rigid way. Whoever has realised the supermind is reluctant to speak about it because the mind deforms the truths of supermind. Rebirth, Karma cannot be grasped by the mind. How did the first action arise? Actions alone are not ultimately responsible for rebirth. Birth is not due to action but to a certain impulse to manifest, and the Avatar is as much impelled to manifest as anybody else. It may be that Krishna manifested his personalities several times before he took birth (the Gita's *bahuni vyatītāni me janmāni*). When the Avatar takes birth, he may draw all his past personalities into his being. All the births may not be full manifestations. They may not even constitute known historical personalities. It is not always the known historical personalities who are great in the spiritual sense.

We become richer in our personality with age. The popular idea is that the Avatar is always perfect. He is not so in the ordinary sense. Some people think that in the case of Krishna the supermind was brought down into the physical, but, whatever the fact, it was not established on the terrestrial plane as a law. It was rather a projection from the higher plane on this earth-plane; nothing was materially altered here; otherwise the result could not go away.

When the consciousness is transformed down to the physical, then a man may enter another body with the full knowledge of the physical consciousness of his past birth, so that, practically speaking, he is the same person with the same consciousness down to the physical. The body is merely a necessary mechanism for him. In the ordinary man it is not so; he cannot be the same in mind, life and body; the constant thing in him is the central being only, which coordinates and supports the continuity of the several personalities.

The popular notions of God are only good insofar as they prepare the psychic being behind to receive truths that belong to a plane higher than the intellectual. Intellectual knowledge is after all only an external help.

In some senses, the later phase of Indian spirituality, the Bhakti period, has done India a great harm. It gave room for much pretension and pose.

Whenever a man pushes his way, or is pushed, into this Yoga, he is not able to continue it. To take up Yoga on an impulse of the vital being is always the wrong thing to do. There must not be in the sadhaka anything centrally wrong that invites hostile forces and delights in them.

It is good for the soul's future that a man should die quietly. He must gather himself up and he can do it better when he is quiet. If he is unquiet he cannot do it. When he is unquiet, it means that some part of his being is not prepared for the change that is coming.

The struggle at the time of death is, in the generality of cases, due to a violent attachment to the body. There must be no struggle. There must be complete detachment from the body. The common idea is that it does not matter how you die. But the fact is that it does matter.

Suicide is rarely committed quietly, with a perfect calm, with the decision that it is the best thing for one to do. As generally committed, it is one of the worst things for the soul, for it creates psychic conditions most unfavourable to the man. Also, death by violence is not good, for some part of the being—especially the physico-vital—is thrown out against the aggressor or against the objects that violently kill. It is another matter if the physico-vital is calmed down, in which case one may leave the body peacefully. Some people, even when they are in their normal consciousness and have not left this world, see the other side clearly and calmly.

*(To be continued)*

V. CHIDANANDAN

---

## SRI AUROBINDO'S MISSION

Do you think the Mission of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother will succeed?

This was the question put to me the other day. Not for the first time, to be sure. For I have sensed this query in many quarters though not formulated in so many words and my answer was what it will always be. There is no question here of likelihood of success or not. The Mission has succeeded already. It has become a part of the human heritage. Let me explain.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have come to reclaim Life for God, to link man to a Divine Power that not only liberates him from his many-sided Ignorance but adds a new dimension to his being by reason of which he can embody the Divine and establish a Divine Consciousness as a ruling Power on the Earth. The Masters—Sri Aurobindo and the Mother—have established this truth of Divine Manifestation as the sole meaning of the life-movement. Hereafter there can be no divorce, in the thought of man, between Nature and God, Matter and Spirit, Earth and Heaven. Man has been forced to realise that life is incomplete without the Divine even as the Divine is incomplete when truncated of its manifestation that is the universe. The balance between the two terms of the Creative Spirit which had been disturbed in the course of the age-old evolution of humanity has been restored. Life can no longer be dismissed as a dream or a meaningless chimera. Life has been read in its due and true significance and given a direction. A new Divine Dynamis, the Truth-Consciousness, *ṛta-cit* of the Veda, has been successfully invoked from the higher worlds of the Spirit and established as an active Force in the Earth-Consciousness. The leap from the Iron Age to the Golden has been effected. The godly doors—*devīḥ dvārāḥ*—have been opened. The rest is a matter of working out of the consequences—the total perfection of man, release of his body from the hold of disease and death, plenary revelation of the Divine Glory in the physical universe, etc. Necessarily that takes time, the extent of which depends largely on the readiness of the human soil.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have laid the foundations of the New Age, in which the New Life is to manifest on the wings of the New Consciousness that has already begun to make itself felt in innumerable ways by those who are sensitive to subtler movements. It is now for the disciples, for those who believe and have some direct experience of the Truth of this Ideal, to demonstrate in their lives the verity of this Vision and build up the nucleus for the intended manifestation. The way to do it, the path of the Integral Yoga, has also been cleaved and perfected by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The best of the past has been caught up and canalised into the formation of the new Knowledge that forms the framework of this teaching. The Power that ensures progress and victory in this Yoga has been firmly set in motion.

The mental horizons of the world have expanded at an incredible pace and the Unity of mankind is a fact that none disputes today. But the way to realise this truth

and make it effective in the dynamics of life is shown by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. They have pointed out and left it as a fact for verification that this oneness of all is to be felt and realised first at the soul level. All other unities are a simulacrum. One has first to discover one's own Self. That Self is the deepest reality in one, transcending the limited ego. In that Self one comes to find the meeting-ground with all beings and all things. This found, the rest is a matter for organisation at different levels of existence.

Thus the *practical* success or otherwise depends upon the sincerity of those who follow the great Teaching that bridges all gulfs, ignores nothing, appreciates everything in its true bearing. The Pathfinders have discovered and laid the road. It is for the followers to speed up their pace and tread the path to the inevitable destination. To the extent they succeed in doing so they will demonstrate the soundness of the Mission whose standard is in their hands. Each one who claims to be a disciple or devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother has a responsibility devolving upon him to delve within and find his inner psychic centre, to break through the ego-bound walls of ignorance, enlarge his consciousness, universalise himself and open himself to the action and rule of the transcendent Shakti flowing from the Truth-World above.

M. P. PANDIT

---

**AUGUST 15**  
**AT THE SRI AUROBINDO CENTER, CRESCENT**  
**MOON RANCH, SEDONA, ARIZONA, U.S.A.**

**AN INFORMAL GLIMPSE THROUGH TWO LETTERS**

*(The first excerpt is from a letter by the organisers of the Center, Lois and Nick Duncan, to an American friend in the Ashram at Pondicherry. The second comes from a letter to the Duncans from an American teacher of Philosophy in Mesa, near Phoenix, Arizona.)*

I

"BOTH Seyril and Ida celebrated Sri Aurobindo's birthday with us. As you may have heard, it was very simple, but we hope with an atmosphere of beauty. Seyril read from *Savitri*. There was meditation in Purani Niwas, with flowers and candles, preceded by chants from the Ashram, with luminaries lining the pathway to the little Temple ('luminaries' are a Mexican custom—candles stuck in sand inside of paper bags. Really very effective—childlike and with a touch of fantasy). It was a very harmonious and happy occasion."

2

"The birthday celebration was perfect. It was informal, simple, very strongly devoted and, as usual, everyone felt at ease. You know, sometimes people come to the ranch who aren't really interested in Sri Aurobindo, and then because of your faith and trust and devotion, a seed is planted and they are interested even if they weren't when they came. The Mother's consciousness works through you in such a beautiful way.

"School is over for the summer. The students were very receptive to Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. Some want his books, others were able to incorporate his philosophy in with their own beliefs. One boy was so impressed with Plato and Sri Aurobindo that he changed his major to philosophy. He borrowed one book on Sri Aurobindo and is coming over next week to borrow another. As a whole, the students liked the message Sri Aurobindo had for them. The scientific-minded liked his notion of involution-evolution; the philosophically-minded were much impressed with his synthesis and idea of the spiritual consciousness underlying all; the visionaries soared on metaphysical flights to the Supermind. It was a wonderful experience to watch his Force work on them."

## TWO LINES FROM SRI AUROBINDO'S *SAVITRI*

### AN EXPLANATORY LETTER

MAY I proceed as in a classroom, taking nothing for granted? The lines you wish me to explain in brief—

Akin to the march of unaccomplished Powers  
Beyond life's arc in spirit's immensities<sup>1</sup>—

occur in a passage where the soul of Aswapathy (Savitri's royal father) is released from Ignorance and his mind and body undergo their "first spiritual change" by a Knowledge drawn from above and within. What pours down from the overhead planes is called "a wide self-knowledge" and what broadens out from the subliminal and the psychic depths is termed "a new world-knowledge". With a combination of both, Aswapathy faces the objective and subjective Nature that constitutes our common habitual experience, our life of Ignorance, the physical and psychological field of our works. These works are changed and surpassed by Aswapathy's soul-release, as we learn from the two lines just preceding your quotation:

A genius heightened in his body's cells  
That knew the meaning of his fate-hedged works...

Now it is the set process of embodied existence that ordinarily determines all the outer and inner activities of one's life: the activities are "fate-hedged". But behind this process are "cosmic forces", "occult impulse", "the unknown Guardians of the world". One who gets into touch with them can bring new energies into play—either the dynamism of "an inner Light" or the Shakti of "spirit's immensities" or both together. A cosmicity other than known Nature's is drawn forth into action, a deep universal Will and an archetypal Harmony from beyond even that Will, the Harmony of the Original Divine Ideas that have to be fulfilled on-earth. Aswapathy's consciousness of the secret creativity that can alter everything is pictured in the phrases:

Awakened to the lines that Nature hides,  
Attuned to her movements that exceed our ken,  
He grew one with a covert universe.<sup>2</sup>

These phrases anticipate the four verses from "A genius..." to "spirit's immensities". Within the "covert universe" are the "unaccomplished Powers" on their

<sup>1</sup> Book I, Canto 3, p. 51 (One-volume Edition, 1954)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



march in the Spirit-space transcending the limited arc of life: those Powers are the hidden lines and movements of a Supernature, with significances and purposes pressing to be realised through the slow and restricted and seemingly deterministic works of the human individual in a small earth-pattern of evolution. When Aswapathy won his soul's release from Ignorance and

His daily thoughts looked up to the True and One,  
His commonest doings welled from an inner Light,<sup>1</sup>

there took place in his very physical substance—"his body's cells"—an extraordinary growth of consciousness, a supernormal intensification of perception and puissance, due to the unfoldment of the real being in him, the essential animating self of him, and resulting in a wide awake sustained ascent to a visionary and intuitive plane. This is summed up in the words: "A genius heightened". "Genius" seems used in the ordinary connotation as well as in the connotation of "in-dwelling soul". From the high plane reached, Aswapathy caught the concealed sense of all his embodied existence, a sense akin to or instinct with the drive of the Primal Truths of the Transcendent that have to become the Final Realities of the Individual in the life-terms of the physical universe.

Henceforth Aswapathy's "walk through Time outstripped the human stride" and every step of his brought nearer to accomplishment the Powers of the immense Spirit from the Overworld. Part of the means towards that accomplishment was a join-up with cosmic forces:

The universal strengths were linked with his;  
Filling earth's smallness with their boundless breaths,  
He drew the energies that transmute an age.<sup>2</sup>

K. D. SETHNA

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Please note in the second line the word "filling". In the printed version it has got distorted into "feeling".

## NAME GLOSSARY TO SRI AUROBINDO'S *ILION*

(Continued from the September issue)

*Lacedaemon*: Sparta.

*Laertes*: king of Ithaca and father of Odysseus.

*Laocoon*: Trojan prince, brother of Anchises (*q.v.*) and priest of the Thymbraean Apollo or (in some accounts) of Poseidon. He protested against bringing the Wooden Horse into Troy, and two great serpents came over the sea from Tenedos and killed him and his two sons. The serpents are also said to have been sent by Apollo to punish him for having married in spite of his priesthood.

*Laomedon*: a legendary king of Troy, and father of Priam. His grave lay over the Scaean Gate of Troy and ensured the safety of the city so long as it was undisturbed.

*Larissa*: principal city of Thessaly.

*Latona* (Lete): a Titaness, daughter of Coeus and Phoebe, and the mother of Apollo.

*Leitus*: a cohort of Prothoënor, leader of the Theban contingent against Troy.

*Lemnian*: of Lemnos, an island of the northeast Aegean. It was a food-supply center for the Achaeans at Troy, but it is doubtful if it had a Greek population.

*Libya*: Greek name for Africa.

*Locris*: Eastern Locris was the mainland coast of the Euboean Straits, from Thermopylae to Larymna; Western Locris was the valley of Amphissa and the north coast of the Corinthian Gulf.

*Loxias*: here, it is an epithet of Apollo.

*Lycia*: ancient district in southern Asia Minor, a mountainous coastal region watered by the Xanthia and bounded on the northwest by Caria.

*Lycomedes*: a king of Scyros, to whose court Achilles was sent to hide among the women. There he was found by Odysseus and enlisted to join the Greeks against Troy. Achilles seems to have joined the Greek forces involuntarily and not as a subject of Agamemnon.

*Macedon*: ancient kingdom north of Thessaly and northwest of the Aegean.

*Mammon*: personification of riches and worldliness.

*Marpessa*: bride of Idas, a son of Aphareus and brother of Lynceus. She was descended from Ares. Carried off by Apollo but restored by Zeus, she was offered her choice between the two. She chose Idas, who was an Argonaut fighter in the Trojan War.

*Medes*: people of Media, akin to the Persians.

*Media*: mountainous country southwest of the Caspian Sea.

*Meges*: a Greek warrior.

*Memnon*: a mythical king of Ethiopia; son of Eos and Tithonus. He went to Troy to aid his uncle, Priam; he was slain by Achilles.

*Menelaus*: younger brother of Agamemnon and husband of Helen.

*Meriones*: apparently a cohort of Achilles slain by Penthesilea. He seems to have been very valiant and his death to have caused great grief among the Hellenes.

*Messene*: capital of Messenia, the southwest region of the Peloponnesus. West Messenia was ruled by Nestor; the rest, possibly by Menelaus.

*Minos*: a king of Crete; son of Zeus and Europa; husband of Pasiphaë, a daughter of Helios.

*Morpheus*: one of the three sons of Sleep (the others being Ikelos or Phobetor and Phantasos) who send respectively visions of human forms, beasts, and inanimate objects.

*Mycenae*: an area in the northeast corner of the Argive plains, six miles from Argos and nine from the sea.

*Myrmidons*: a race turned into men from ants by Zeus to populate the island of Aegina at the request of Aeacus. Achilles was their leader in the Trojan War.

*Mysia*: ancient country in northwest Asia Minor, bounded on the north by the Propontis, east by Bithynia and Phrygia, south by Lydia, and west by the Aegean. It included the regions of the Troad.

*Naiad*: one of the nymphs believed to live in and give life and perpetuity to lakes, springs, rivers, and fountains.

*Neoptolemus*: son of Achilles. In the *Iliad*, he is sent for by the Greeks after his death, as his presence is necessary, according to oracle, for the taking of Troy. Here, however, he comes before his father has been slain, but for the same purpose.

*Nereus*: an old sea-god; son of Pontus and father, by the Oceanid Doris, of the Nereids, with whom he lives in the sea.

*Nestor*: son of Neleus; an old man and an ineffective and platitudinous counsellor of the Greeks. He retained some strength and mental vigor long after his youth had passed. He was the lord of West Messenia.

*Odysseus*: son and successor of Laertes, king of Ithaca; husband of Penelope, father of Telemachus. He came from the fringe of the Achaeon world.

*Oileus*: an epithet of Locrian Ajax, who was the son of Oileus, a legendary Locrian king.

*Olympus*: a mountain on the borders of Macedonia and Thessaly. It was a home of the gods.

*Orcus*: in Roman mythology, the god of the underworld, identified with the Greek Horcus, the god of oaths, who punished perjurers. Later he became identified with Hades. Here, the reference is to Hades.

*Oread*: a nymph of the mountains and hills.

*Orphean*: of Orpheus, a Thracian; founder of the Orphic religion. By his music he was able to charm even wild beasts and birds.

*Orestes*: here, probably a Trojan warrior known for his swiftness.

*Orus*: a Trojan senator.

*Oxus*: the modern Amu Darya, a river in central and eastern Asia, flowing from the Pamir plateau to Lake Aral.

*(To be continued)*

ERIC HUGHES

---

## THE INSTRUMENT

NEW, tin-tipped, unblown,  
the bamboo reed,  
punctured  
between each knuckle-bone,  
is poked over the shoulder  
like shooting with mirrors.

I wait  
with all things ready,  
aiming between  
the eyes...

Sometimes new flutes  
are hung in trees  
for the wind  
to blow the tune.  
It is the same tune.

It is the ritual music  
of bashful lovers, never  
played for war,  
but often at festivals  
and triumphs, and for  
the celebration of mysteries.

When I am empty  
like the flute  
then it will come;  
for long before the reed was cut  
this song was sung.

NORMAN THOMAS

## PRIAM VISITS ACHILLES

### A TRANSLATION FROM HOMER IN ENGLISH HEXAMETERS

*(We are glad to publish this translation of a famous episode in Homer's Iliad. The translator, Mr. Jesse Roarke of the U.S.A., has done his work very well. He has, we are informed, translated the whole epic of Homer—and, if this extract which comes towards the end is representative, we may say that the hard task of carrying the Homeric afflatus over into English in a form answering to the original as much as it can in a language differently structured and spoken has been accomplished with some success in many parts. And that is all we can reasonably ask for where a super-poet like Homer is concerned. Quite a few of the quantitative units may take some time to go home to the ear accustomed to Sri Aurobindo's masterly handling of the form according to his reading of the true quantities prevalent or possible in the new language; but that would be due mostly to the more frequent use by Mr. Roarke of the spondee or trochee as compared to the predominance of the dactyl as the basic foot in Sri Aurobindo's Ilion in the midst of a vast diversity of expressive modulation. It is a question whether this divergence is not somewhat of a hindrance at times to the largeness of utterance we expect from the Homeric movement; but the inspiration in the passages we are reproducing is sufficiently strong to leap over technical hitches, if any—and scholars still differ as to the technical importance of the spondee in Homer, though the greater occurrence of the dactyl on the whole is rarely in doubt. Anyway, future poets are free to follow their own instinct and ear in the wake of Sri Aurobindo's pioneering achievement on a grand scale, which sets the broad norm. We hope Mr. Roarke will find a sympathetic publisher for a work which must compare very favourably with the various attempts in his country to make the Bard of Scio come across in all kinds of unresponsive metres.)*

THEN the Helper, Hermes, opened the door for the old man,  
Bringing within the glorious gifts for swift-footed Peleion;  
Then did he step from the car to the ground and address him in these words:  
"I that have come to you am a god immortal, old father;  
I am Hermes, sent by Zeus the Father to guide you.  
Now indeed, before I have come to the sight of Achilles,  
I shall withdraw, for nemesis comes when the gods who are deathless  
Mingle in comradeship too freely with men who are mortal.  
Now do you go within and clasp the knees of Peleion,  
By his father entreat him and by his mother with fair hair,  
By his child, that so you may reach to the life within him."

So he spoke, and then back to lofty Olympos departed  
Hermes; Priam leaping out of his car to the ground, and  
Leaving Idaios there, who stood with the mules and the horses,  
Holding them firm; and the old man straight for the house of Achilles  
Went, where the favored of Zeus was wont to sit; and he found him  
There, his comrades seated apart, while two of them only,  
Automedon the hero and Alkimos scion of Ares,  
Waited upon him with care; and, filled with eating and drinking,  
He just had turned from his meal, and the table still stood beside him.  
All unnoticed there entered great Priam, and close to Achilles  
Came, and he clasped his knees in his grip, and he kissed his two hands,  
Terrible bane of so many men, that had slaughtered his own sons.  
There as when Ate blinds a man and sways him to murder,  
And he flees from his home to a rich land, unto a strange house,  
Wonder seizing on those that look upon him, Achilles  
Wondered so at the sight of Priam the image of godhood;  
So the rest alike, as they glanced upon one another.  
Then the voice of Priam spoke and was raised in entreaty:  
"O Achilles like to the gods, remember your father,  
Whose years are even as mine, on the grievous tread of his old age;  
Haply now the dwellers about are treating him badly,  
Harming him, now there is none for his shield from ruin and evil.  
Yet whenever he hears of you and knows you are living,  
Then he has joy in his breast and day by day he is hopeful,  
Waiting to see his own dear son returned from the Troad;  
Yet myself am bereft entirely, I who begot sons  
Best in Troy's broad land, and see not one who is left me.  
Fifty I had, at that time when the sons of Achaia came here:  
Out of the self-same womb were nineteen sprung, and the others  
Several women bore me of those who live in my palace.  
Most of them now are unstrung by the hand of furious Ares;  
And the one who was left me, and guarded his city and people  
Standing alone, you killed as he fought in defense of his homeland:  
Hektor. And now I am come to the ships of Achaia for his sake,  
Bringing gifts untold to you, to sue for his ransom.  
Have due thought of the gods, Achilles, and show me compassion,  
Your father bear in your heart; for I am more to be pitied  
Even than he, who am suffering what none has suffered on earth—to  
Lift my hand to the face of the man that has slaughtered my own son."

So he spoke, and he moved him with longing to weep for his father;  
There he took the old man's hand and gently removed him.  
Thinking so of their dead they wept, and for man-slaying Hektor

Flowed the tears of the one as he lay at the feet of Achilles,  
While Achilles wept for his father, and then for Patroklos.  
Through the shelter aloft was borne the sound of their grieving.  
But when with weeping was sated the heart of noble Achilles,  
And the yearning for tears from his breast and limbs had departed,  
Then he sprang from his seat, and he raised the old man by the hand, with  
Pity upon his hair and his beard, so grey with his age; and  
Thus it was that he spoke and addressed him there, with his winged words:  
“Hapless man, it is sure you have borne in your heart many sorrows.  
How have you dared to come alone to the ships of Achaia,  
Meeting the eyes of myself who have slain your many and valiant  
Sons? A core of iron you have, a heart undefeated.  
But come now, and sit on a seat, and we will let all of our sorrows  
Quiet lie and still in our hearts in spite of our pain; for  
There is nothing to gain, from chill and grievous lamenting.  
For so it is that the gods have spun for suffering mortals,  
Giving them life that is pain while themselves live free from all sorrow.  
Two are the urns on the floor of the God with the gifts that he gives of  
Evil to men, while stands alone the urn of his good gifts;  
Whom is given a mingled lot by Zeus of the thunder,  
He in his life meets now with evil and now with good; but  
Whom he gives alone of the baneful, scorn is his portion,  
Woe, and a ravenous madness across the face of the rich earth  
Drives him, and he wanders despised of gods and of mortals.  
Even of old from his birth the gods gave glorious gifts to  
Peleus; for he surpassed all other men with his substance,  
Riches and kingliness and the rule of the Myrmidons; mortal  
Man though he was, yet given a goddess to wife by the high gods.  
But to him also evil came from a god, and permitted  
Not, that many sons in his halls dwelt, princely and mighty;  
His was only one son, with an early doom; and I may not  
Tend him now as he grows in his age, now far from my homeland,  
Far, I dwell in the Troian land, to hurt you and your children.  
And of you, old man, we have heard how you prospered of old, how  
Over all that Lesbos the seat of Makar to the north bounds,  
Upland Phrygia too and the Hellespont flowing without end,  
Over these people you rose, old man, by your wealth and your good sons:  
Thus men say. But yet from the time when the gods of the heavens  
Brought this bane, around your city are slaughter and harsh war.  
Hold, keep courage, and bear no unending lament at your life's spring;  
Nothing avails your grieving over your son, you shall bring him  
Not from death to life; but rather suffer still more pain.”

Then responded Priam, the old man, image of godhood:  
"Heaven-fostered, bid me not to a seat, while Hektor  
Lies in midst of the shelters uncared for still; but directly  
Yield, that at once my eyes may behold him now; and accept the  
Many gifts that I bring for his ransom. So may you take them  
Having delight of their wealth, and so may you come to your homeland,  
You who spare me and bid me to live still seeing the sunlight."

Then with a flashing glare from under his brows said Achilles:  
"Do not provoke me, old man. Of myself I am minded to yield him,  
Hektor, to you. For a messenger came to me from the God; my  
Mother, who bore me, daughter of the Old One deep on the sea's floor.  
And I know in my depths, O Priam, it does not escape me,  
That you were led by some god to the swift ships of the Achaians.  
Never a mortal man, whatever his vigor and youth's strength,  
Here among the host would dare to come. And he surely  
Could not escape the watch, nor easily manage our door's bar.  
So do you stir my heart no more in the midst of my sorrows,  
Lest, old man, not even yourself I spare, in the shelters  
Suppliant though you are, and transgress the word of the great God."

So it was that he spoke; and the old man, fearing, obeyed him.

JESSE ROARKE

---



# KAVI CHAKRAVARTI KAMBAN

## CAUSERIES ON TAMIL NAD'S GREATEST POET

*(Continued from the September issue)*

### XI

BHARATA, after uttering his great words of grief in the presence of Kaikeyi, rose up and left saying:

“I will no longer be  
by the side of this sinner  
who has a mind filled  
with unspeakable cruelty;  
I will go and make obeisance  
to the golden feet  
of Kausalaya, the Pure,  
and thereby destroy  
my unbearable agony.”

Approaching Kausalya,  
he threw himself down with such force  
that the floor cracked and was cloven;  
his comely crimson hands  
enfolding  
her tiny lotus feet,  
he lay and waited.

The sight of the grieving Kausalya reinforced his grief:

“In which world does my father dwell?  
Wheresoever is my brother gone?  
Oh! this lonely me—  
came I to see this mournful scene?  
heal me, pray,  
of the anguish rising in my heart.”  
As he made these plaintive cries  
Heaven's Immortals,  
disheartened, wept.  
Tired Bharata rolled,  
the floor-dust staining his shoulders,  
and said,

“Failed have I to sight my father’s feet.  
How could the guardian of the Earth  
    remove himself from his post?  
Why did you not hold him back?  
Verily have you blundered.  
All the wicked ones  
    have not perished with all their tribes!  
—but who am I to utter curses upon them?  
Am I not the thief born  
    of that sinful woman’s loins?  
and I have not put an end  
    to my life and, with it, my grief!”

Bharata, in the profound depths of his being, feels a slur cast on his ancient royal family which was descended from the Sun:

“This ancient dynasty,  
    which has grown more dazzling  
than that Sun-god  
    who expels Earth’s darkness  
    by riding on a chariot—  
this dynasty has become tainted  
    by a slander called Bharata.”  
Thus lamented the one  
    whose shoulders mounted high  
    like a hill of emerald.

Lastly, Bharata despairs over the citizens who, kingless, grope in the dark:

“Should this sightless country  
    writhe in pain and grief,  
with the Commander of the swordsmen’s army  
    gone to Heaven  
and his peerless son  
    gone to the wilderness?”  
So wailed the one,  
    who was Virtue himself and  
    whose long arms reached down beyond his knees.

As Kausalya listened to these words of lofty sorrow, she felt an instantaneous sense of identity with Bharata:

Weeping,  
she gathered up and embraced the Prince

whose speech was full of purity;  
 she enfolded him in tender love,  
 as if the one who had given up the Crown  
 and gone to the perilous jungle  
 had come back and stood  
 right in front of her.

Kausalya gratefully eulogized the magnificent nobility of Bharata and, while doing so, she called him the King of Kings:

“Oh! King of Kings,  
 who  
 of all your royal ancestors  
 had virtues  
 that could rival yours?”  
 Thus blessed the woman,  
 who  
 the more and more she pondered,  
 the more and more did weep.

That Kausalya should have addressed him as the King of Kings stung Bharata to the quick and made him more miserable. He prostrated himself at the feet of Kausalya and started lamenting again. At this juncture came Sage Vasishtha at whose feet Bharata fell and asked pitiably, “Pray, tell me the whereabouts of my father.” Unable to find words to express himself, the sage wept and embraced Bharata. As Vasishtha was consoling the Prince, the people of Ayodhya hurried there softly to condole with Bharata. They made obeisance to him with heartfelt sympathy.

The elder statesmen and  
 the city's residents,  
 the army commanders and  
 princely chieftains,  
 the austere sages and  
 all the intelligentsia  
 surrounded the lovely Prince  
 and stood  
 in accordance with the protocol.

As they stood thus, Minister Sumantra, who was eager to tender proper advice to the Prince, looked Sage Vasishtha in the face. The Sage, who without the medium of speech understood what Sumantra conveyed through his look, addressed Bharata and said:

“Guard this Earth;  
your duty it is to do so.”

Vasishta elaborated this theme. He added:

“Priests, Sages, old men and Kings  
have approached you  
with this purpose—  
that you should establish law and order.  
Being of spotless character,  
you will take this to heart.”

The theory of sovereignty is expounded by Vasishta with convincing clarity and objectivity:

“A Realm without a strong King  
is like a Day without the dazzling Sun  
and a planetless Night without a lucid Moon,  
and a body without the in-dwelling  
invisible soul.”

Even in gangsterdom, for efficiency and systematic performance of Evil, a Ruler is needed:

“We have seen no domain leaderless,  
without a protecting chief,  
whether in the world of Celestials  
or in that under-world  
where giants of stupendous strength  
roam about doing Evil—  
or wherever it may be  
that a Regime does exist.”

If we would but investigate with care all the things that exist in the cosmos, we could not fail to perceive that every single thing is governed by a sovereign principle:

“If, adopting the right methodology,  
we investigate, with the ultimate insight,  
the objects of Creation,  
whether on Earth or in Heaven—  
those that stand and those that move,  
in unerring obedience to an Eternal law—  
we see not a solitary thing  
that is without a Sovereign.”

After expounding the theory of sovereignty Vasishta addresses Bharata and offers him wise counsel:

“Your father is dead,  
your brother has renounced the crown  
which has descended upon you  
by virtue of your mother’s request.  
Take over, my son,  
the government of this limitless domain.  
This, in brief, is our appeal.”

The Sage uttered these words out of genuine sympathy for the people, without meaning any offence to Bharata.

The moment he heard  
Vasishta’s passionate plea  
to rule the Earth  
committed to his care,  
Bharata shivered in fear;  
he shivered more, in fact,  
than a person who is asked  
to swallow poison;  
his eyes flowing with tears,  
he was reduced to utter exhaustion.

His tongue twisted and blabbered,  
his eyes narrowed down to slits,  
his heart melted with more than effeminate pity,  
his life shrank  
and as his reviving consciousness gave him support,  
he started  
laying bare his heart  
to the courtly Assembly.

With glowing indignation Bharata asks if it is proper for men of virtue to give such advice:

“Fancy my putting the crown  
upon my head,  
when my elder brother,  
(the lord of the three worlds)  
is there to wear it!  
If crowning myself becomes Virtue

because the elders say so,  
can blame attach to the act of the woman,  
who has brought me forth?"

Now turning to the Kings assembled, Bharata asks:

"I challenge the Kings  
who are assembled in this royal court  
to give me one single precedent  
since the beginning of Time  
to show  
that any younger son was ever lawfully crowned  
while the elder was alive.

"Funny is this law  
and fantastic, indeed!  
I will not live to bear the burden  
of governing the peoples of this Earth;  
he must be brought back,  
and crowned  
with the lofty crown bedecked with lovely flowers  
in accordance with law  
and custom immemorial.

"Else,  
along with him  
I will, in the forest wild, dwell  
and perform severe *tapas* in comfort;  
If you utter any word more  
I will kill myself."

The assembled men realized that Bharata's resolve was unshakable. They were also struck with his sublime sense of justice and his incandescent eagerness to right the wrong done to Rama. They hailed him in words of grateful joy:

"Is Fame a thing to be fostered  
by holding the sceptre  
or by nourishing the Virtues  
or by performing sacrifices?  
Your Fame will live and survive  
the destruction of the worlds,  
seven upon seven!"

At once, Bharata called Satrugna and asked him to proclaim by tom-tom to the people that he was resolved to give them back their lawful Sovereign:

Then the city revived,  
like a soulless body  
springing to life again,  
on hearing those nectarine words.

It is the diagnosis of Kamban that all sorrow is the result of the deprivation of love and that all sorrow can be cured by an adequate dose of love. The following song describing popular exaltation is crowned with this sentiment:

Like the seven seas,  
surged forth the armed troops;  
the joyous outcry of the people  
overtook and surged  
ahead of the Army.  
Dead and gone was the ambition  
of Kekaya's daughter;  
Grief passed away,  
driven out by swelling LOVE.

Hordes of elephants, horses and chariots were now on the move towards the forest. Valmiki's Bharata mounted a chariot and rode fast, in his eagerness to meet Rama and bring him back as King of Ayodhya. But Kamban's Bharata is too penitent to go in that manner:

Hearing  
that Rama had gone thence  
to the wilderness  
on foot,  
Bharata, too, went—  
followed by speedful chariots,  
cavalcades of horses and majestic elephants—  
on foot.

Though he had an extensive retinue of vehicles and animals, he chose to go to the forest on a *pada yatra* (foot-pilgrimage). The pathos of this situation is brought out by Kamban taking out the word “காலிசே” (on foot) from its normal syntactical context and putting it as the last word in the stanza.

All inanimate things,  
All unmoving plants and moving animals,

were moved,  
 as lovely Bharata, with his army of archers,  
 wended his way  
 through paddy lands  
 as fertile as the land of the Cauvery,  
 and reached the Ganges.

Kamban, who was born and bred in the delta fed by the Cauvery river in the far South, assesses the fertility of the distant Gangetic delta in terms intelligible to his readers.

An army of sixty thousand battalions came after Bharata who had gone after Rama. Guha, who was on the opposite bank of the Ganges, noticed this vast army and jumped to the conclusion that the Army was directed against Rama.

As the Army reached  
       the Ganges' bank  
 he grew in fury  
       and said,

"This Army is poised  
 just to fight against that noble Prince,  
 who resembles the cloud  
 pregnant with the waters  
 of the coralline sea."

As Guha is fired by a noble anger, he casts a contemptuous glance at the huge army:

The one, who was named Guha,  
       had the power  
       excelling that of the Lord of Death.  
 He looked scornfully at the vast Army  
       as if it were dust,  
 Grinning to excess,  
 his eyes afire,  
       his nostrils fuming,  
 his eyebrows arched and quivering  
       like a battle-ready bow.

Guha's thirst for battle animates two inanimate things—eyebrows and bow.

*(To be continued)*

S. MAHARAJAN



## THE EARTH AND THE SUN

THE EARTH: Wealth of fire is deposited in the darkness of my soil. Why then should I whirl non-stop around the sun?

Will not my thirst for light be ever quenched? Will never the darkness of my body be diminished?

The soft and tender glow that shines in the budding flowers was sleeping in me hidden in seeds, absorbed as it were, formless and colourless, embracing my atoms. Bit by bit it wakes up, smiles and quivers beautifully in the myriad figures of creation. My heart throbs with secret fire. Wherefore, then, is this mysterious yearning for the rays of the distant sun?

A voice comes—Oh how can there be fire inside the earth where everything is extinct and as cold as death?

THE EARTH: Alas! is there really no fire in me? Is it not there in black coal, not even in the womb of the volcano and in the body of mineral oil? If the sun is the only source of enlivening fire, why is there dearth of life in the deserts? Why grow no corn, no shrub, no tree in the sands of the Sahara?

The keen question with outspread wings rises high up in the vast sky where the sun is busy writing the book of destiny and the golden letters laugh.

THE SUN: O earth, who says there is no fire in you? The emblem of victory shines on your forehead. Sacrificial flame rises from your heart and in your depth burns the submarine fire.

My body is a mass of flaming spirituality. Waves of fire surge in my bosom. My eyes shower red-hot rays and my mouth smiles out illumination.

But you, O earth, are sweet, soothing, green and beautiful. Your body is the honeycomb of delight. Calm, tranquil and refreshing are your fields and forests. The golden crops, the paddy flowers contain your nectarous sap which delights immensely the hearts of the toiling peasants.

I sprinkle fire for creation. Fire-born are you. Amidst the vast space full of stars and planets you are the destined one to evolve Truth-consciousness.

Where lies then the difference between you and me? You are my novel offspring. The substance of your body will be gold-bright and the slumber of your atoms be over for ever...

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

*(A free English rendering by the author from his own Bengali poem.)*

## THE SAGE OF TARUNGIRI AND SEVEN OLD SEEKERS\*

### A SHORT STORY

THE sudden cool breeze that flushed the faces of the seven old friends of the Merry Guys' Club and flapped their pockets and brushed their moustaches and tickled their bald pates, seemed to have come from a very remote distance, from beyond the green vale their club house overlooked or even the reserve forest that spread along the river.

Such a sudden breeze often bestirred the memory and showed up the old gems of wonders and hopes that had lain buried under the garbage of years.

At such moments the friends generally expected the retired judge Mr. Jekyl to say something. He was so poetical that his judgments, even on cases of corruption or adulteration, were famous for imaginative outbursts.

As Mr. Jekyl tightened his tie and coughed a little—omens that he would speak—others looked at him. But Mr. Jekyl only said, "Alas!"

There was silence again. Mr. Lall said, "Jekyl, we certainly expected something more valuable from you!"

"Valuable?" asked Mr. Jekyl. "The whole concept of valuation is deceptive. You work hard for a lifetime and accumulate a lakh of rupees. Then there is a devaluation. Your one lakh might mean fifty thousand. Might be less. Where is the value of those sweating years which your accumulation symbolised?"

Mr. Jekyl's philosophy was always constructed on current developments.

Mr. Khanna said, "But so far as I know, no such thing has happened in your life. Why panic at an imaginary ghost?"

"Nothing such has happened, true. But what meaning was there in all that had happened? All the excitement and struggle about grade, promotion, supersedence etc. somehow seem today to have been efforts at wooing a phantom. From the present state of my mind my whole career stands devalued."

"Good God," exclaimed Mr. Mishra, "the same with me! And I thought that the feeling was peculiar to me! You cannot say I have lacked anything in life. Rather, I must admit, it's been a life full of rewards. Yet, often I feel as though the entire interior of myself was a desert. It is perhaps some sort of a sense of futility. Haunted by it, at times, I feel like weeping. I have, however, forgotten to weep. The inhuman treatment I used to receive from my stepmother in my childhood made me forget to weep. All my life I have laughed with a vengeance."

\* From *Short Stories* by Manoj Das, due to be published by the end of October, 1969, by Triveni Publishers, 9 Armenian Street, Madras 1.

Mr. Tapan, seated in the middle, suddenly made a sign of salutation looking at the roof. Mr. Mishra asked, "What does this mean, Tapan?"

"Nothing much. I just remembered Tukan Baba when you said something about weeping. The Baba is a great weeper. He weeps all the twenty-four hours."

"Really?" Mr. Lall dragged his chair nearer to Mr. Tapan.

"Weeps twenty-four hours! Thrilling!" said Mr. Khanna.

Mr. Jekyl said, "Baba? Mahatma? Though I am not a Hindu, I believe that a Baba is no joke. Maybe the very thing we feel we lack is the thing in which the Babas abound. After all, there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio... What do you say?"

There was no reply, perhaps because there was no Horatio. The watchman of the club house switched on the lights inside the room. The friends became conscious that it was getting cooler on the veranda. They retired into the room.

But they did not find any interest in any of their usual activities—card-playing, gossiping, or drinking. Mr. Khanna said, "Tapan, please tell us more about Tukan Baba." Mr. Mishra said, "Yes, yes, among us you are the only man with some knowledge of affairs mystic."

Mr. Tapan blushed. "I am as ignorant as you all are. But I must say that the most delightful and purposeful moment I have ever had in my life was the moment when Tukan Baba fixed his eyes on me. That was ten years ago. I never mentioned this to you lest you should laugh at me."

Mr. Tapan surveyed the visages of his friends.

Mr. Lall said, "Pity, Tapan, that you should have thought like that. Haven't we laughed and laughed at things? To what gain?"

Mr. Tapan narrated all he knew about Tukan Baba. Nearly two hundred miles to the north, Tukan Baba resided in a cave on a hillock inside the forest. While Mr. Tapan was the Director of the State Forestry, he had once the occasion to go near the cave where he was surprised to see an old classmate of his who, like a scholar gipsy, had disappeared in quest of the mysterious thirty years before. Meghananda, as he had been named by his guru Tukan Baba, took Mr. Tapan to the cave.

Tukan Baba shunned people and never came out of his cave—legends attributed many strange virtues to the cave—in daytime. He strolled in front of his cave at night. But not every night. It was only on full moon nights that he was sure to come out. Though very few people knew him and he lived in the heart of a dangerous forest, sometimes devotees collected before the cave on full moon nights to have a glimpse of the Baba.

The old bearded Baba always wept. He would look at the mountain and say, "God! How compassionate of you to become a mountain so that we the tigers, snakes, birds, Tukan Baba and his disciples could find shelter in you!" Then he would weep. He would look at the gathering cloud and say, "What a wonderful form you have assumed, O God, in order to quench the thirst of the earth!" Then he would weep. Observing a panic-stricken deer fleeing a tiger he would say, "How long will you

choose to run like this, God?" and weep. And then seeing the pursuing tiger he would say, "How long will you play like this, my God?" and weep.

"Couldn't we get an opportunity to have a glimpse of such a sacred phenomenon? Brother Tapan, please do something about it!"

"Yes, brother, please do," the rest insisted.

\*\*

From the untimely chattering of some birds and the transformation of the topmost leaves of the tall trees into tiny golden flames it was obvious that the full moon was very much there on the horizon. "When the moon will rise above the eastern rock, the Baba will come out of the cave. Usually he comes out weeping and sobbing. Don't you get upset at that. Prostrate yourselves before him and touch his feet. Let his compassion cure you of your ignorance," they were told by Meghananda.

"The Baba would come out weeping and sobbing! What a great soul!" said Mr. Tapan and commenced weeping. Mr. Khanna too brought out his hanky and applied it to his nose. Mr. Jekyl sat with his head down. But inaudible sobs were shaking his body. Others too were more or less given to weeping. Mr. Lall, who was somewhat unmindful, was admonished by Mr. Mishra, "Don't be silly. Can't you recollect having done anything to be able to weep now? What about the tortures you were so fond of perpetrating on your late lamented wife? Try to weep, you foolish boy. Do not forget that the Baba weeps all the twenty-four hours!"

Mr. Lall gave in.

By the time the big moon rose above the eastern rock and gave the hillock the appearance of a floating chunk of fairyland, the suppressed sobs of the seven old seekers, with the chirping of crickets around them, had developed into quite a distinct chorus.

A disciple hurriedly came out and removed certain things from the mouth of the cave.

Then slowly emerged the Baba, tall, emaciated and white, with a mound of knotted locks on his head and a long beard.

The friends stood up. Mr. Lall, who seemed drowned in weeping, was pulled up by Mr. Mishra.

But alas! Instead of a weeping face, the Baba's was a face as smiling as the moon. He looked at them as he strolled and his smile became even wider.

The seven old seekers stood immobile, like thunderstruck trees. Not only the inspiration for weeping instantly deserted them, but also they felt a severe earthquake in their interiors, shattering a very dearly built structure of expectation.

The Baba re-entered the cave after a minute or two.

Mr. Lall broke the silence, saying, "Pity!"

And this was followed by several observations:

"Not a drop of tears on his whole face!"

"I feel cheated, I must confess."

"To weep for twenty-four hours was not a matter of small sacrifice!"

"Have we not wept our utmost? Must be over an hour. I am out and out hungry. And pity, those muttons are in the jeep down the hill!"

"What nonsense you believed in, Tapan, poor chap!"

"Let us make a move. Enough of the weeping Baba."

They were about to descend when Meghananda appeared before them. "Are you satisfied, gentlemen?" he asked smilingly.

They hesitated a little and then Mr. Tapan said, "Well, I don't know how it happened, but unfortunately a smile was overflowing the Baba's face today. He did not weep even for a second." Then Mr. Tapan lowered his voice and added, "It was rather embarrassing!"

Meghananda looked ecstatic. He stood meditatively for a moment and then gave an enthusiastic hug to Mr. Tapan, and said, "My brother, you and your friends are really fortunate. The Baba smiling is an extremely rare and an extraordinary event. For some deep mystic reason, of which you won't understand anything, he smiles at intervals of several years. The last he had smiled was twenty years ago, in a similar full moon night. Anyone who touched his feet on such an occasion was destined to be splendidly rewarded. All his desires would be fulfilled."

"What!" the friends exclaimed. Mr. Tapan said, "But you see, brother Meghananda, we have not touched his feet..."

"How is that?" Meghananda stared at them. The friends did not answer his question, but said entreatingly, "Please, Mr. Meghananda, please get the Baba out once more. We would touch his feet..."

"And place our wretched heads on his feet."

"And kiss his feet."

"And place some money at his feet too."

But Meghananda's stern voice subdued theirs, "Impossible!" They entreated again and again. But Meghananda was not moved.

"In that case, Mr. Meghananda, we would be obliged to enter the cave ...," said one of the friends.

"How? You certainly do not mean forcibly?" asked Meghananda with contempt.

"Well...yes...rather forcibly, with devotion nevertheless. Please understand us. Place yourself in our position and think. How could we allow such an opportunity to slip through our fingers?" said one of them and another supplemented, "I am sure you understand that we are stronger than those three or four of you who are here."

Meghananda smiled and said calmly, "I welcome you into the cave then. And inside the cave there are also some different kinds of attendants. I can assure you that they too would welcome you, though for very different reasons."

Mr. Mishra and Mr. Khanna had already advanced up to the mouth of the cave. Looking into its dark interior they saw something like a few pairs of stars. Before they had time to think about it, a ferocious roar greeted them.

The roar was evidently of a tiger, or maybe of more than one. Messrs. Mishra

and Khanna bounced back. Their friends, without waiting for them, began to roll down the hill.

Mr. Tapan alone hung on to Meghananda. "What should we do?" he asked sadly. Meghananda said, "I do not know. But you can take your chance again after twenty years. In the meanwhile you could close the windows and doors of your club room for an hour every day and weep as much as you could. When you get over your passion for weeping, come to meet the Baba. Then you would not be intrigued by his smile, for whether he smiled or he wept was none of your business."

Mr. Tapan added twenty years to his present age and sighed and hurried to join his friends, bouncing and rolling, for the roar was heard again.

MANOJ DAS

---

## GIFTS OF GRACE

*(Continued from the July issue)*

### THE FEAR OF PAIN

THE one fear from which I suffered the most was of physical pain. A little pain anywhere in the body would unnerve me and almost every time the trouble would grow in intensity. Despite Sri Aurobindo's advice never to entertain fear, I felt helpless and didn't know how to exert my will to reject it. Emphasising the need of developing the will for rejection, the Master lays down:

"...One must awaken a will and consciousness in the body itself that refuses to allow all these things (the forces of illness) to impose themselves upon it."<sup>1</sup>

But how to do it, how to get over the fear of pain? Almost imperceptibly the fear infiltrated my consciousness and possessed it.

The first work of Yoga is to help one breathe free air. History shines with the glories of those whose minds remained unruffled even when subjected to inhuman torture. With, "Let Thy Will be done" on their lips, they bore all, as a gift of Grace. I cite two fascinating stories.

Sundar Singh was born on September 3, 1889 in Patiala. His mother used to say that one day he would turn out to be a sadhu. He had his education in an American school where the Bible was taught. This is the one book in the world which has been translated into 900 languages.

Sundar was a staunch Sikh and hated the Bible, even burnt it. His father dissuaded him from doing so as it was a great book. By chance one day Sundar came across a line, "Attain Ye the Kingdom of Heaven and everything shall be added unto you." This stirred him deeply and brought about a turning point in his life.

It is said he was blessed by the vision of Christ and this made him His true follower, to the bitter opposition of his father. The Divine Grace saved him from many persecutions till at last he was baptised by Rev. Redman in 1905. He even got the licence to preach but he did not feel himself bound by any church. In 1911 he fasted like Christ for forty days. But this did not give him the key to open "the locked doors" of his heart. His quest continued. Having recovered from the weakness caused by the fast he went to Tibet.

The Lamas of Tibet would not tolerate any intruder. He was persecuted to the point of death. He was sewn up in a yakskin and thrown into a dreadful well stinking of human flesh. Yet nothing was on his lips save "Let Thy Will be done." On the third day there rose a cry, "Lord, have you forsaken me?" and the saving

<sup>1</sup> *On Yoga*, Tome II, p. 656.

hand of Grace came to drag him out. He looked round to thank his deliverer but no trace of Him could be found.

To cite one more instance:

So long as Akbar ruled India, he did not mind the growing influence of the Sikh Gurus. Rather he paid them due respect. The famous golden Temple of Amritsar was built on the site that was donated to Guru Ram Das's daughter, as a mark of the Emperor's visit to the Guru. The construction work of the Temple that was initiated by Guru Ram Das was accomplished by his son Guru Arjan Dev.

Jehangir had very little of his father. As a Mohammedan, he thought it was his duty to bring the infidels into the fold of Islam. Guru Arjan was ordered to be brought to his presence and tortured to death if he refused to embrace Islam. His Dewan made the Guru sit on red hot iron, and burning sand was poured over his bare body. But the Guru remained calm and poised throughout. He resigned himself completely to the Will of God and submitted cheerfully to the most agonising physical torture and said, "Sweet be Thy Will, my Lord, Thy Grace alone I beseech."

How many are there who can weave the experience of such fearlessness into their life? Such will-power cannot be acquired in one life. To use the words of Sri Aurobindo: "A life is only a brief episode in a long history of spiritual evolution."<sup>1,2</sup>

From where arises such inner strength? The Mother gives the clue:

"There are numberless legends and stories ..that illustrate the point.... If in the presence of a danger, an enemy or a bad will...you are able to see the Divine in everything, the danger will have no effect, the bad will will not be able to hurt you...it is a fact." (*Bulletin*, February 1961 p. 25)

A mere idea is not enough. One cannot play tricks with the Divine. The Mother herself says about seeing the Divine in everything: "...it must be a way of normal living, natural and effortless—then it is effective."<sup>3</sup>

To reach this stage is not a joke. There is no escape: one has to wait till the "light conquers" all that resists a change. This aspect of the thought is discussed in greater detail under the heading "Conquest of Fear".

(To be continued)

A DISCIPLE

<sup>1</sup> *On Yoga*, Tome I, p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> Each person follows in the world his own line of destiny which is determined by his own nature and actions—the meaning and necessity of what happens in a particular life cannot be understood except in the light of the whole course of many lives. Errors, misfortunes, calamities are steps in the journey.

*On Yoga*, Tome I, p. 469.

<sup>3</sup> *Bulletin*, February 1969, p. 27.



# THE SECRET SELF IN THE YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

## INTRODUCTION

SRI Aurobindo tells us that man is a transitional being; that is, he is evolving from the animal to the human, from the human to the spiritual, therefore there are various stages of his becoming what he is capable of becoming in a particular life—but we believe that all can attain to the Calm or Peace of inner Contentment which brings true happiness and which is the fundamental need, the basis of the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

It is this basis, this fundamental state of peace and equality that we are here concerned with. The Yoga one has to do oneself and according to one's own inner need, but we can perhaps state here, according to our experience, the principles which alone open the way to the first liberation.

There are, in all, twelve principles of the Yoga—like the Mother's symbol of the divine lotus, the petals open one by one towards the Light which gives birth, sustains and fulfils existence.

I suggest that the first six of these principles be practised in order to make ready the ground and bring about the flowering of the second six. The practice of the first six leads to the first liberation. The twelve principles would be:

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1) Truthfulness | 7) Perseverance |
| 2) Right Action | 8) Faith        |
| 3) Purity       | 9) Aspiration   |
| 4) Remembrance  | 10) Devotion    |
| 5) Gratitude    | 11) Sincerity   |
| 6) Humility     | 12) Surrender   |

The practice of the second six would bring about the second liberation which establishes one of the inner Roads to the Truth-Consciousness. These inner Roads are the Four Great Paths of Yoga-Sadhana which in this Purna Yoga are traversed together, either one and all at the same time or in sequence according to the need and capacity of the sadhak. They are the four inner petals of the lotus of the Mother's symbol which represent the four aspects of the Mother: imperial Maheshwari, formidable Mahakali, intoxicatingly sweet Mahalakshmi and perfect-working Mahasaraswati—the Roads of Knowledge, Power, Love and Works which must be traversed if one would enter into the Truth-Consciousness and live the Divine Life on this earth.

The Purpose of the Yoga-Sadhana presupposes that one understands the need for transformation. What would take perhaps many lives to accomplish is to be compressed into one. What would take centuries in the normal course of existence can

be compressed into perhaps a few years by lending oneself to the necessary Yogic disciplines.

The purpose of man is to evolve beyond his animal origins, transcend the instincts of the beast and the ancient longings of his primitive ancestors.

Today no one seriously denies the fact of evolution, nor that man has evolved from the animal. But it is perhaps not always so clearly understood that man's evolution is now psychological and spiritual and that such inner transformation alone can bring about any further anatomical or physiological transformation necessary to the future destiny of the race.

Since Mind first awakened in animal nature, finding its natural habitat in man, Man has been aware of the possibility of transcending his animal nature.<sup>1</sup>

That which makes man different from the animals is the fact that his "eyes" are open, he is "free", free to make the choice of returning to the animal from which he came or setting his feet upon the upward road of evolution and renouncing all that drags him back to his animal past with its urges, instincts, hungers and desires, so that he may truly enjoy the higher freedom of being liberated from their clamouring insistence and demand and come into the full heritage of his human dignity as an enlightened being.

## CHAPTER I

### TRUTHFULNESS

The attitude one has towards a certain principle of life depends upon one's state of consciousness and the type of person one is. But this is only a generalisation which may vary tremendously according to the *incidents of experience* which might easily happen quite contrary to one's type and in spite of one's state of consciousness—a kind of *deus ex machina* which intervenes and has nothing to do with the laws of astronomy or the principles of cosmic existence.

Truthfulness is a principle of individual, social, and moral life, which varies so greatly between one man and another that one often wonders if one is talking about the same thing or whether one is living in the same world.

However, we can see the principle of Truthfulness more clearly if we look to the very object of Truthfulness which is of course Truth.

Truth is the Divine and we only attain to it by union with the Divine.

We aspire to Truth through Truthfulness; which means, at its highest conception, Truthfulness *in all the parts of our being*.

Sri Aurobindo makes a clear distinction between the three main parts of the being, *i.e.*: Mind, Vital and Physical, and it is Truthfulness in all three that is required if we would practise the discipline of the Integral Yoga.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Genesis* 11.7: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked..."

Each of these three parts of the being has its own mind-centre which controls its various movements and it is through these mind-centres that we can knowledgeably insist on a more effective Truthfulness than the vague attitude towards truthfulness of the average person.

Most of the difficulty of acquiring an integral Truthfulness lies in the mixture of the mental and the emotional processes, the emotional and the physical ones; the mixing agent usually being *attachment, hunger, desire, fear*.

If we know where to look for the trouble we can obviously deal with it more effectively, providing we really do want to deal with it.

For example, the vital may crave something or crave to do something; the mind of the mental being may try to control or censor the craving, but the vital mind comes in with excuses to support the craving—"it is a benefit, even a need for the physical being"; in this way soliciting the backing of the physical, and so eventually the higher parts have to give way to the lower pull of the vital and physical nature.

These arguments of the minds of the three parts of the nature are so apparently rational that man easily gets into the habit of taking it all for granted as the only possible attitude and play of life—over which he, sadly, has little or no control. But this is an error of the ignorance.

As Sri Aurobindo says:<sup>1</sup>

"...for this error, not to know thyself,<sup>2</sup> is the fountain of all thy grief and the cause of all thy stumbling."

Why do we turn away from knowing ourselves?

It is mostly the fear lest we should not accomplish what may be demanded of us, the fear that we might look foolish in the eyes of men. Or the fear that we might be forced on to a difficult path, be compelled to make an effort beyond the comfort and security of our present state of consciousness; and be coerced to leave the 'known', to enter the 'unknown.' That is perhaps the 'negative' side of the difficulty, but there is of course the more positive side, which is taken up by the ego. *Self-assertiveness* is another kind of mixed-idea-with-emotional-feeling attitude which, in our times, has much rational support. It is almost an accepted fact that to get what you want in this world you have to assert yourself over others either by intellectual brow-beating or by the will of the vital ardour or by physical force of intimidation. All of which involve the use of *violence* whether mental, vital or physical.

The mixture comes in when we bring any of these assertive attitudes to support our want or the point we wish to make or to fulfil some personal desire, however momentary, as the one and only side of the truth. This mixture is carried into the field of moral right, *i.e. my moral right*; personal prestige, *i.e. my personal prestige*; national pride (patriotism), *i.e. our national pride*, etc. These become accepted standards of social and national behaviour, irrespective of whether they are true or not.

<sup>1</sup> *The Hour of God* ("The Divine Superman"), p. 9

<sup>2</sup> The words "Gnothi Seauton" were inscribed over the entrances of Greek temples in ancient times; the meaning is "Know Thyself."

The most blatant examples, of course, are to be found in the history books of the world, written with a definite national bias by historians who more, apparently, than most other writers seem to be carried away by a national zeal for their subject, so as to always put their particular country in the more favourable light. It seems to them quite justified, but it has little relation to truth.

Truth is to be found according to our state of consciousness, and according to whether our being is divided or united with itself.

Sri Aurobindo says<sup>1</sup> that the first definite step towards self-mastery is to be aware of one's central consciousness and to know the action of the forces.

The psychic being, behind the heart-centre, is the central consciousness and, when it acts as the main power, it repels all falsehood. It is the true unifying factor of our being and, when allowed, acts as the inherent power and delegate of the Divine.

The cosmic forces here (on earth) whether good or bad are forces of the Ignorance. Above them is the Truth-Consciousness that can only manifest when ego and desire are overcome—it is the force from the Divine Truth-Consciousness that must descend; the higher Peace, Light, Knowledge, Purity, Ananda must work upon the cosmic forces in the individual so as to change them and substitute the Truth-Force in place of the ordinary working.<sup>2</sup>

The Truth-Force tends always towards oneness, not division; towards unity, not separation; towards a rhythm of harmony and a concord of movements and away from the clamour and discords which seem to make up the "fugue" of modern life.

*(To be continued)*

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

<sup>1</sup> *Letters 4th Series*, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

## EARTH'S EARLIEST MANLIKE CREATURES IN INDIA

IN British India a generation ago, scientists unearthed two small fossils that consisted of no more than partial jawbones and a few teeth. For many years, they gathered dust—one in London's British Museum, the other in the Calcutta Museum. The ancient bones were largely ignored by professionals and the public alike. That oversight may have been one of paleontology's biggest bloopers. After carefully studying those neglected fossils, two Yale investigators have now become convinced that they are rare remnants of the first manlike creatures on earth.

The bones belonged to an extinct primate that paleontologists call *Ramapithecus* (the Latin word for ape, with a bow to the Indian god Rama). Scientists already knew that the creature lived in Asia and Africa 8,000,000 to 15 million years ago. But they have never known exactly where to place him on the evolutionary ladder. Did he belong to the family of apes? Or was he already a member of the family of man? The questions puzzled Yale paleontologist Elwyn L. Simons, and his former student, David R. Pilbeam, both of whom had strongly suspected for some time that *Rama* was really more man than ape.

To test their theories, they engaged in some shrewd detective work. Not only did they go through the usual painstaking steps of precise measurement, but they also ingeniously used the tiny fragments to reconstruct the creature's habits and habitats. Teeth, in particular, lend themselves to such paleontological probing.

Almost immediately, Simons and Pilbeam noted that the jawbone lacked the large overlapping canine teeth that are characteristic of all apes. Thus, *Rama* could grind his food with manlike side-to-side movements. Apes, on the other hand, mostly chomp up and down on their food, since their canines prevent lateral motion of the jaws. The Yale investigators also decided that *Rama*'s molars had emerged one after another, as in man, rather than almost simultaneously, as in apes. From this evidence they drew two important conclusions: (1) *Rama* probably ventured into open country to forage for tougher foods than were available to apes ("the lotus eaters of the primates"), who stayed behind in the forests; and (2) he matured more slowly than apes, and more as human youngsters do, thus gaining valuable additional time to learn more skills during childhood.

In making their persuasive case for *Ramapithecus* as the first hominid, Simons and Pilbeam dispute a competing claim by the Kenyan anthropologist, Louis Leakey. Two years ago Leakey announced that 20 million-year-old fossils that he had discovered near Africa's Lake Victoria and dubbed *Kenyapithecus africanus* belonged to the earliest known manlike creature (TIME, Feb. 3, 1967). After applying their dental tests to casts of Leakey's prehistoric fragments, the Yalermen decided that *Kenyapithecus* lacked the characteristics of early man. Though Leakey still insists that *Kenyapithecus* is a hominid, most other scientists now believe that he is an ape.

The identification of *Ramapithecus* has even more profound implications. If he is indeed a hominid, *Rama* would be the direct predecessor of a creature called *Australopithecus* (southern ape), who, in turn, has long been accepted by scientists as being man's most immediate ancestor among the primates. Unlike the apes who lived with him in East Africa, the short (just over 4 ft.) heavy-jawed man-ape, *Australopithecus*, stood erect, ate meat as well as fruits and vegetables, and was probably the first creature to make and use tools of stone.<sup>1</sup> Until recently, most paleontologists were certain that *Australopithecus* lived no more than 2,000,000 years ago—or at least 6,000,000 years after *Rama*. The Yalamen's discovery thus creates a huge gap in man's history between *Australopithecus* and *Rama*.

As it happens, new fossil finds made by other investigators, operating quite independently, are closing the gap by showing that *Australopithecus* is really much older than has been thought—in fact, as much as 6,000,000 years.

The evidence comes, in part, from Africa's Omo River Basin, a fossil-rich area where the borders of Ethiopia, Kenya and the Sudan meet. There, a University of Chicago expedition has found 40 prehistoric teeth and two jawbones buried in volcanic ash that is perhaps 4,000,000 years old. The expedition's leader, Anthropologist F. Clark Howell, is convinced that the creatures are members of the *Australopithecus* family, even though they must have belonged to a branch that probably did not eat meat or make tools. Despite their proximity to various ferocious neighbours in the fossil bed, says Howell, these man-apes were apparently able to survive with no other weaponry than their wits.

A few miles west of Kenya's Lake Rudolf, Harvard Paleontologist Bryan Patterson discovered the fragment of a jaw that he reckons is 5,000,000 years old. In roughly the same area, the University of London's William Bishop found a lone primate tooth that may be several million years older. Most tantalizing of all, jaws and teeth dating back 6,000,000 to 8,000,000 years have been uncovered in Southern Europe and mainland China.

The discoverers have not yet acknowledged their finds in formal reports to scientific journals, perhaps because the bones upset too many old theories. Their scientific caution is understandable. In a few short years, man's fossil record has been extended from less than 2,000,000 years to possibly more than 14 million. Yet even that startling leap back into the past amounts to only a few moments in the 4.5 billion-year history of the earth. Three billion years before man's ancestors took their separate evolutionary path from the apes, life already existed and flourished. Despite the new paleontological evidence, man remains a mere infant.

(With acknowledgements to *TIME*, August 29, 1969, p. 58, "The Age of Man")

<sup>1</sup> He was also close kin to a pygmy-sized creature called *Homo Habilis*. Last week Leakey's anthropologist wife, Mary, unveiled the most intact *habilis* skull ever found. It was dug up in Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge, and is about 1,750,000 years old.

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

### **Sri Aurobindo Circle (Special Number: Twenty-fifth Anniversary—1969)**

Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, pp. xii+164, Price Rs. 9.

WE feel great pleasure in reviewing this latest issue of the well-known periodical that is annually published under able editorship to mark the occasion of the anniversary of the Mother's second and final arrival at Pondicherry. This number, true to the tradition of this annual, brings to its readers a richly variegated intellectual fare that is sure to appeal not only to their heads but to their hearts as well. Apart from the regular features such as the publication of a bunch of as yet unpublished letters of Sri Aurobindo (this time the letters centre upon themes like "Psychology and Yoga", "Psychology of Sex", "Scientists, Psychologists and Occult-Spiritual Phenomena", etc.), also the publication in facsimile of some of the Mother's answers to questions recently put to her on subjects like "The Gods of the Religions", "On Remaining Young", "Sadhana and Mental Work", the present number of the "Circle" contains between its covers almost a dozen well-written papers contributed by eminent men of letters.

In "The Opening Scene of 'Savitri'", the mystic writer Nolini Kanta Gupta, in his inimitably direct but profound style, lays bare before the reader's comprehension the inner occult-spiritual import of the 'Symbol Dawn' that Sri Aurobindo portrays in the opening canto of his poetical *magnum opus*, *Savitri*. We may mention in this connection that this first Canto of the first Book of this epic poem, figuring the Symbol-Night turning into the Symbol-Dawn, presents an almost insuperable barrier to the uninitiated reader who seeks to approach *Savitri* for the first time. But, deeply versed in the Vedic and Upanishadic lore of spiritual India, Nolini Kanta brings to bear his added gift of penetrating insight to elucidate the mystic content of lines like "It was the hour before the Gods awake." His short essay of barely one and a half pages is indeed a marvel of condensed splendour.

The purport of Prof. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's paper, "Sri Aurobindo as Poet", is to show that the Master-Seer was not only 'a great patriot and revolutionary', 'a daring thinker', 'the grand metaphysician of *The Life Divine*', 'the subtle interpreter of the Veda and the Gita', 'the superb technologist of Purna Yoga'; as a poet too "Sri Aurobindo was on a level with the other peaks of his life's manifold achievement". In his poetry we thrill to encounter at every turn 'shafts of mystic realisation' clothed in 'memorable pieces of poetic recordation'. And so far as his epic poem *Savitri* is concerned, "reading *Savitri* in a true mood of absorbed imaginative attention and inner concentration could be both *kāvyañubhava* and *yogasādhana*" (p. 69). For, as the perceptive author has pointed out, "*Savitri* is not simply sublime poetic reportage or prophecy by an omniscient 'outsider', but a participant's recording of his soul's voyage

of discovery and his spirit's comprehension of the contours of future possibility" (p. 69).

In a long essay bearing the significant title "But thought nor word can seize eternal Truth", Jugal Kishore Mukherji tries to show that, notwithstanding the arguments commonly advanced by some philosophers of language against the mystics' claim of verbal inexpressibility and incommunicability of the really lofty and profound spiritual experiences, there exist indeed orders of mystical knowledge, perfectly cogent and clear in themselves, which would defy all attempts at formulation in any known or unknown or even imaginable human speech.

If genius is really nine-tenths hard work, then Prema Nandakumar amply deserves the title. Her paper "*The Divine Comedy and Savitri*" is a monument to painstaking research and careful craftsmanship. After pointing out certain significant parallelisms met with in the lives of Dante and Sri Aurobindo, she goes on to make a close comparative study of the two masterpieces "quintessentially poetical and beautifully structured" (p. 127). Her interest in undertaking this elaborate study covering over fifty pages arises from the fact that "these two poems...contain all that we know and all that we want to know, and need to know; and, above all, they embody and ensoul images of infinity like Beatrice and Savitri" (p. 98). Also, "*Savitri* gains in significance when it is read alongside of *The Divine Comedy*, which may be described as something of a European foretaste of *Savitri*, a first approximation to the 'cosmic epic' ideal that finds its complete fulfilment in *Savitri*" (p. 81).

In fulfilment of the reviewer's unpleasant duty, may we point out to the learned authoress that her statement on pp. 127-28 that the "Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, as a result of involution or descent, became matter, life and mind in the phenomenal world" is not altogether correct? As Sri Aurobindo has so explicitly stated in the first six paragraphs of the chapter "The Sevenfold Chord of Being" of *The Life Divine*, the third divine principle of infinite Bliss has for its projection not mind, which is a subordinate power of Supermind, but the soul or the psyche that comes into manifestation at the nodus of mind, life and body.

G.K.Dave's "The Pursuit of Values" offers us an illuminating analysis of the content and nature of the contemporary challenge of Logical Positivism to the validity and significance of spiritual-ethical principles. The regard for reality or truth as against the mind's habitual preoccupation with arbitrary ideas, as found in contemporary thought, and the necessity felt by it for the transition from ideas to reality is, according to the author, surely a step further in the right direction. But he hastens to point out:

"The distinction between 'what ought to be' or the ideal and 'what is' or the actual does not necessarily imply the unreality of the former....The world-existence, rightly understood, is a dynamic and growing entity whose sole truth is only partially manifested in its present state. That which is hidden is unactualised potentiality, but on that account is not less real than the actual.... It would be more appropriate to appreciate and understand the actual in the light of the real rather than to limit or reduce the real to the actual" (p. 160).



In his lucidly composed paper "Integral Immortality," Prof. Aravinda Basu disengages the widely different connotations that the terms 'soul', 'immortality' and 'eternal existence' have acquired in different spiritual cultures and traditions and goes on to elaborate what these words stand for in the Yoga-Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. He brings into focus the essential preconditions for the physical conquest of death and concludes his paper with these words:

"The complete integration of the personality with the inner Person, the transformation of mind, life and body in such a way that in their nature and action they may become perfect instruments of the Spirit, is the sign of the conquest by the Divine of the material Inconscience and mental Ignorance. This is the firm foundation of the Life Divine, of integral immortality" (p. 78).

Prof. Basu would not mind, we hope, if we venture to suggest a few further points for his theme. To the conditions he mentions for the attainment of durability by the outer mental and the outer vital may be added an integral plastic 'openness' to the progressive action of the Infinite so that the soul no longer needs to dissolve the old forms of mind and vital and create instead new ones in order to progress (see *The Life Divine*, American edition, pp. 731-32). Again, in the context of the discussion on the removal of the actual physical causes of the body's decay and disintegration, we may draw attention to the following words of Sri Aurobindo: "Even if Science—physical Science or occult Science—were to discover the necessary conditions or means for an indefinite survival of the body, still, if the body could not adapt itself so as to become a fit instrument of expression for the inner growth, the soul would find some way to abandon it and pass on to a new incarnation."<sup>1</sup>

The present number of the "Circle" continues the serial publication of K.D.Sethna's long thesis, "The Inspiration of *Paradise Lost*." One of the important things about the poet-critic Sethna *alias* Amal Kiran or the 'Clear Ray' (a name given him by Sri Aurobindo) is that, armed with an exceptionally sharp discernment, a fine sensibility and a vibrant marshalling of probative evidences, he rarely fails to make a brilliant assault on the readers' inertia. The result is always a highly rewarding intellectual feast for all those who happen to read him.

We now come to the paper, "Two Cultures?" from the pen of Sisirkumar Ghose. The prodigious growth of scientific knowledge in recent times has tended to create between scientists and writers an increasing gulf of mutual incomprehension bordering at times upon open hostility and dislike. As a result, "the intellectual life of the whole society is increasingly being split into two polar regions"—a fact forcibly underlined by Sir C.P.Snow in his Bede Lecture at Cambridge in 1959.

But how to remedy the multifarious ills issuing from this undesirable polarisation which is after all "a sheer loss to us all"? Snow's prescription, as paraphrased by Professor Ghose, would amount to "giving the literary intellectuals heavy doses of

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine* (Am. Ed.), p. 732.

scientific information and knowledge” and at the same time giving “the scientists...a course of non-scientific Great Books” (p. 132).

But, so argues Prof. Ghose, the apparent dichotomy of knowledge and culture cannot be healed, nor can the unity of being be brought about by such a banal and over-simple procedure. “Today we seek a larger and completer affirmation, one that will solve the apparently discrete laws and demands of matter and spirit, perhaps also resolve the conflict of ends and means. This is what we have to find out and the time grows ripe to make it real in the life of the thinker as well as the race” (pp. 134-5).

A few printing mistakes have inadvertently crept into this otherwise well-produced volume; e.g. (i) *kvya* for *kāvya* (p. 69, last but one line); (ii) VLII for VIII (p. 70, footnote 1); (iii) ...*somāmṛta...avadām* for *somamamṛtā...avidāma* (p. 70, line 1); (iv) symboilic for symbolic (p. 96, last line);<sup>1</sup> (v) *upakhyāna* for *upākhyāna* (p. 126, § 2, l.8); (vi) most probably sect for “soot” (p. 134, § 2, l.9); (vii) loose for lose (p. 159, § 3, l.2); (viii) consistantly for consistently (p. 160, § 2, l.9).

But these trifles do not in any way detract from the total worth of this Special Number which all book-lovers would like to treasure.

LJAG KORESHI

<sup>1</sup> *Editor's Note:* “Symboilic”, though incongruous here, could elsewhere be an apt accidental coinage in face of work where images erupt all over without significant form or connection, like a crop of boils at odd places.

**SRI AUROBINDO BIRTH CENTENARY LIBRARY**  
**SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM : PONDICHERRY 2 : INDIA**

**FOCUS**

**11. 'Bankim Chandra Chatterji'**

Last month we wrote about *New Lamps for Old*, a series of nine articles which had appeared in the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay during 1893-94. Until recently this was supposed to be the very first available prose writing of Sri Aurobindo.

*Babu Bankim Chandra Chatterji (by a Bengalee)* was the second series of seven articles which appeared in the same weekly from 16 July to 27 August 1894. It was signed *Zero* for some reason. Along with *New Lamps for Old* it was also typewritten some time in the 'thirties from the original *Indu Prakash* files. This copy had the same kind of mistakes as those which occurred in the first series and they were carried over into bookform in 1954 and again in 1965. But now this series has also been corrected after being compared with the original *Indu Prakash* issues.

All the checking and scrutinising was made possible only through the valuable help rendered by the authorities of The Asiatic Society Library, Bombay, and we express our sincere thanks to them.

# *Students' Section*

## **A NEW OUTLOOK ON EDUCATION**

THE concept and need of education are as old as human civilisation. But in spite of the mighty strides education has taken since its birth, it has not yet been able to tackle man in his entirety and thus much remains to be done in this most significant domain. We have gained much in the cumulative experience of centuries; our knowledge of the basic factors of human conditions, environment, heredity, intelligence, adaptability and the process of growth has enriched our concept and yet at every step our ideas break down and we have to begin as if from scratch. This only shows that we have not tackled the problem as we should and that we have left some loophole somewhere; or it may be that our knowledge of educational psychology is not profound enough. We shall attempt to estimate our past defects, so that a new and more workable outlook on education may be arrived at.

The prime condition is the educator, one who is worthy of imparting knowledge by not only words but his own life and experience. Anybody cannot be a teacher; he or she must live out the dictums taught and make them living flames of example to the child. For, education is not confined to the classroom or an institution; it is not confined to one particular part of our life; nor is stuffing the child's brain with heterogeneous information about facts or thoughts education. True education is a life-long and continuous process which must be lived and practised. Thus, before embarking on educating children, parents and teachers must educate themselves. They must attain the minimum degree of the fourfold education which we envisage here.

The second basic factor is humility in the teacher. A true humility which breaks down the unnatural barriers between the teacher and the taught. By humility the teacher himself learns while he is imparting knowledge. Let not the teacher consider himself a superior being, because he has been granted a superior position. This position is only formal and not actual; for, both student and teacher are embarked on the same journey of adventure or discovery. In this journey, the teacher is merely a helper in the discovery. This is because the teacher is better equipped or has made himself so, owing to his age, experience and conscious awareness of the factor of growth.

A teacher must be plastic. He must not work under any preconceived notion or theory; a fixed attitude is very harmful and deters the creative impetus in the child, the growth of which is one of the main factors of education.

Lastly, the teacher must be equipped with tireless patience. The information, the knowledge, the fact, the idea, take time for the growing and inexperienced mind to seize and to digest. The teacher must not lose patience; losing patience is the most visible sign of defeat for the teacher.

So far for the teacher. But we have yet to ask a fundamental question: Why education?

The aim of education is the pivot upon which the whole issue stands. Early educators aimed to create God-fearing creatures. Communists and socialists want social beings, useful to society. There is an ethical aim, a political aim, a national aim and a spiritual goal. The first three have become obsolete due to the failure in their results. To elaborate: ethics is no longer a moving power amongst men and nations. Ethics has failed to uplift man, civilise him and endow him with patience, humility, tolerance and nobility. It has touched only one part of his nature. And thus ethical education is partial education. The defects of ethics vitiate its system. Restricted to the mental side of human nature, it fails to uplift man because mind itself is not powerful enough to either direct or change life-elements. What is true of ethics is true of other systems as well. More so, because man is becoming more and more complex as he develops. The needs and fulfilling elements of yesterday do not apply today. Today man needs a greater truth than either religion or science; religion makes man fanatic and one-sided while science makes him arrogant. Both these attitudes are opposed to truth. The truth lies in spirituality. A true education is a spiritual education. When education becomes a vehicle to live a spiritual existence, there emerges its true and living value.

Spiritual education is not a utopian concept; it is the most concrete system, where the entire being is taken up in the light of the spirit. That is, nothing is left out and no single side of the being is given exclusive predominance. But this system of education is most difficult to impart, and most difficult to be made effective. For, a true spiritual education can be imparted only by a perfected individual: one perfect in mind, life and body and with a perfect sincerity in aspiration and development.

Here let us posit a foundational truth. We cannot teach a child what is not already innate or inborn in him. All knowledge is there within; it is the work of the teacher to open the secret door and let the indwelling fire awake. But what is inborn knowledge and what is factual information? The exterior facts are not innate in a child. Only those which appear to be useful must be presented interestingly. The organising of these elements would be done spontaneously according to the receptivity and growth of the child. The real knowledge, we all know, is knowledge by identity and these are the basic things of creation. These are inborn. If we tap this source of knowledge, we shall get at the root or essence of existence, mentality, corporeality. To do this a new consciousness, a new awareness, the sense of another kind of value must emerge. Such a process is opposed to the knowing of facts from without which the common teacher provides. We aim to know the inner laws, functions and actions and reactions, a unity that is there behind all apparently divergent manifestations. This is true knowledge which can be attained by discipline and a great aspiration for truth.

But spiritual education having multiple facets, of body, life, mind and soul, it is not possible for one teacher to deal with all these divergent elements. A group of

teachers, having the same goal of consciousness and a common spiritual ideal, must work as a unified team to make education a reality and a success.

Again, each child must be taken as a distinct individual and not as a part of a heterogeneous collectivity. There must be a direct and special relation between each teacher and the student. It is this harmonious relation which can open the way to knowledge which is not confined to the textbook or the schoolroom.

There is another great stumbling block: the question of freedom and discipline. A true education can be conducted only under the conditions of entire freedom. At the same time freedom may well mean license in most of the cases. And to impart education to an unruly child is well-nigh impossible. On the other hand, if we impose discipline from without, it can become coercion or worse; this too falsifies our aim and our ideal. Lastly, we must remember that a child is a formative being and, since it is in the process of formation, his will and self-control are yet in the making. We cannot all at once give full rein to freedom for such a being.

We must attempt to give the child a strong example not by sermons but by actually living out our ideals and patiently inducing him to follow us. And by and by the consciousness will grow and the child will learn that discipline does not hamper freedom or curb free growth. Right choice, right action, right thought and right judgment would then come from within to a person who has disciplined his unruly desires and passions and caprices, his arbitrary and illogical thinking, and formed a true discernment. Yet such a being is not a merely rational entity with a stern puritanical look on life. He bases his entire existence on his soul, his true being from where come nobility, height, cheerfulness, harmony and, last of all, freedom.

Here we are brought to the culminating point of education—the point where no human being can be the teacher. It is the touching of our central being, which we have already mentioned above and living in its light and making it our sole guide. This itself is the highest endeavour and is education in its most essential form.

This alters the entire concept of things, their value and meaning. This alters the nature of our life thought, our whole system and constitution. It may be objected that the process is one of yoga and not of education. But, regarded from the real spiritual standpoint, it is yoga alone which is true education. It is the most all-embracing system, it is the most creative and fast-moving process. When yoga becomes universally accepted as an educational process, things will take a different course in the world. Unless we change our concept of education, there will never be any lasting peace in the world. Which brings us to the issue: What then shall be our system of education? The answer is being worked out by the Mother in her Education Centre. It is for us to be channels of her force and make the manifestation of a true education quick and perceptible. We have a greater goal before us, the Supramental education where the growth is not an ascent from below but a descent from above as a splendid outflowering culminating in a new creation.

ROMEN

# EYE EDUCATION

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. The vision in my son's eyes is failing owing to Retinitis Pigmentosa. Doctors of India and abroad give no hope and the boy is supposed to become blind in due course of time. Is there any hope by your methods?

A. Yes, your son can improve but cannot be cured.

Q. My eyesight is normal. What should I do to keep it so?

A. Read an Eye-chart at a twenty-foot distance and read fine print daily.

Q. If the letters of the Eye-chart can be seen more distinctly with the eyes partly closed or a little screwed, is it advisable to read that way?

A. No, it is not advisable. Look at the letters of the Eye-chart with gentle blinking.

Q. Can a patient, while practising your method, carry on his work as usual?

A. Yes, most patients continue their work just the same and find time to practise palming several times a day and, during all their activities, they do gentle blinking.

Q. Is looking at the green grass or the blue sky helpful to the eyes?

A. Yes, because there is nothing to stare at.

Q. Instead of palming, can I sit in a dark room or cover my eyes with a black cloth or bandage them?

A. No, it does not serve the purpose of palming.

Q. I am suffering from glaucoma and early cataract. Can your methods help me?

A. If your eyesight is defective apart from these diseases, it can certainly be improved in spite of them. As for these diseases, each case is individual and we have to try out our methods to see what results they may have. According to Dr. Bates, cataract-opacity of a certain kind—one due to contraction of the lens—is curable by his methods of eye-relaxation.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL  
School for Perfect Eyesight