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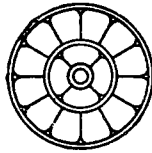
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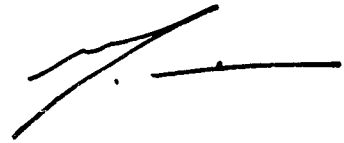
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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THE MOTHER'S REPLY TO A COMPLEX QUESTION

Dearest Mother,

10.5.67

The following is going round the Ashram as emanating from you. Is it authentic?

“4th May 1967 (4.5.67): the Supramental will start working on earth, but the working may start even a little earlier.

“I observe this day as the Supramental Manifestation day thus: this is the day of India's New Year, Earth's New Year and the whole Universe's New Year and all these three strangely coincide on the same day which may change the face of the whole universe.”

Love,

Amal.

It is all fancy!

AN OLD YET EVER NEW MESSAGE FROM THE MOTHER

PATRIOTIC sentiments are not incompatible with our Yoga—far from it—to will for the power and the strength for one's Motherland is a quite legitimate sentiment; the will that she may make progress and that more and more she may manifest in full freedom the truth of her being, is a beautiful and noble will which need not harm our Yoga

But one must not get excited, one must not plunge prematurely into action. One can and should pray, aspire and will for the victory of the truth and, at the same time, continue to discharge one's daily duties and wait quietly for the sign to come with certitude, indicating the action to be taken up

27.10 1962

IDEAS AND IDEALS

PASSAGES FROM SRI AUROBINDO

Compiler's Note

In India, as elsewhere, individuals, largely or wholly, depend upon the State for human progress, social welfare and community development. But the State, on its own part, fails to promote their aspirations either for want of will or competence or resources. The State is, more often than not, found to be lacking in moves towards individual growth and progress essentially because it has no will and consists of persons who have no interest in the development of the community. The State does not constitute a true representative of the people. Let us see what Sri Aurobindo reveals about the State idea and about the ideals before the State.—G.P. GUPTA

The Inadequacy of the State Idea

WHAT, after all, is this State idea, this idea of the organised community to which the individual has to be immolated? Theoretically, it is the subordination of the individual to the good of all that is demanded; practically, it is his subordination to a collective egoism, political, military, economic, which seeks to satisfy certain collective aims and ambitions shaped and imposed on the great mass of the individuals by a smaller or larger number of ruling persons who are supposed in some way to represent the community. It is immaterial whether these belong to a governing class or emerge as in modern States from the mass partly by force of character, but much more by force of circumstances; nor does it make any essential difference that their aims and ideals are imposed nowadays more by the hypnotism of verbal persuasion than by overt and actual force. In either case there is no guarantee that this ruling class or ruling body represents the best mind of the nation or its noblest aims or its highest instincts.

Nothing of the kind can be asserted of the modern politician in any part of the world; he does not represent the soul of a people or its aspirations. What he does usually represent is all the average pettiness, selfishness, egoism, self-deception that is about him and these he represents well enough as well as a great deal of mental incompetence and moral conventionality, timidity and pretence. Great issues often come to him for decision, but he does not deal with them greatly; high words and noble ideas are on his lips, but they become rapidly the claptrap of a party. The disease and falsehood of modern political life is patent in every country of the world and only the hypnotised acquiescence of all, even of the intellectual classes, in the great organised sham, cloaks and prolongs the malady, the acquiescence that men yield to everything that is habitual and makes

the present atmosphere of their lives. Yet it is by such minds that the good of all has to be decided, to such hands that it has to be entrusted, to such an agency calling itself the State that the individual is being more and more called upon to give up the government of his activities...

Theoretically, [the State] is the collective wisdom and force of the community made available and organised for the general good. Practically, what controls the engine and drives the train is so much of the intellect and power available in the community as the particular machinery of State organisation will allow to come to the surface, but it is also caught in the machinery and hampered by it and hampered as well by the large amount of folly and selfish weakness that comes up in the emergence. Doubtless, this is the best that can be done under the circumstances, and Nature, as always, utilises it for the best. But things would be much worse if there were not a field left for a less trammelled individual effort doing what the State cannot do, deploying and using the sincerity, energy, idealism of the best individuals to attempt that which the State has not the wisdom or courage to attempt, getting that done which a collective conservatism and imbecility would leave either undone or actively suppress and oppose. It is this energy of the individual which is the really effective agent of collective progress. The State sometimes comes in to aid it and then, if its aid does not mean undue control, it serves a positively useful end. As often it stands in the way and then serves either as a brake upon progress or supplies the necessary amount of organised opposition and friction always needed to give greater energy and a more complete shape to the new thing which is in process of formation. But what we are now tending towards is such an increase of organised State power and such a huge irresistible and complex State activity as will either eliminate free individual effort altogether or leave it dwarfed and cowed into helplessness. The necessary corrective to the defects, limitations and inefficiency of the State machine will disappear.

The organised State is neither the best mind of the nation nor is it even the sum of the communal energies. It leaves out of its organised action and suppresses or unduly depresses the working force and thinking mind of important minorities, often of those which represent that which is best in the present and that which is developing for the future. It is a collective egoism much inferior to the best of which the community is capable. What that egoism is in its relation to other collective egoisms we know, and its ugliness has recently been forced upon the vision and the conscience of mankind. The individual has usually something at least like a soul, and, at any rate, he makes up for the deficiencies of the soul by a system of morality and an ethical sense, and for the deficiencies of these again by the fear of social opinion or, failing that, a fear of the communal law which he has ordinarily either to obey or at least to circumvent; and even the difficulty of circumventing is a check on all except the most violent or the most skilful. But the State is an entity which, with the greatest amount of

power, is the least hampered by internal scruples or external checks. It has no soul or only a rudimentary one. It is a military, political and economic force; but it is only in a slight and undeveloped degree, if at all, an intellectual and ethical being. And unfortunately the chief use it makes of its undeveloped intellect is to blunt by frictions, catchwords and recently by State philosophies, its ill-developed ethical conscience. Man within the community is now at least a half-civilised creature, but his international existence is still primitive. Until recently the organised nation in its relations with other nations was only a huge beast of prey with appetites which sometimes slept when gorged or discouraged by events, but were always its chief reason for existence. Self-protection and self-expansion by the devouring of others were its *dharma*. At the present day there is no essential improvement; there is only a greater difficulty in devouring. A 'sacred egoism' is still the ideal of nations, and therefore there is neither any true and enlightened consciousness of human opinion to restrain the predatory State nor any effective international law. There is only the fear of defeat and the fear, recently, of a disastrous economic disorganisation; but experience after experience has shown that these checks are ineffective. .

The call of the State to the individual to immolate himself on its altar and to give up his free activities into an organised collective activity is therefore something quite different from the demand of our highest ideals. It amounts to the giving up of the present form of individual egoism into another, a collective form, larger but not superior, rather in many ways inferior to the best individual egoism. The altruistic ideal, the discipline of self-sacrifice, the need of a growing solidarity with our fellows and a growing collective soul in humanity are not in dispute. But the loss of self in the State is not the thing that these high ideals mean, nor is it the way to their fulfilment. Man must learn not to suppress or mutilate, but to fulfil himself in the fulfilment of mankind, even as he must learn not to mutilate or destroy, but to complete his ego by expanding it out of its limitations and losing it in something greater which it now tries to represent. But the deglutition of the free individual by a huge State machine is quite another consummation. The State is a convenience, and a rather clumsy convenience, for our common development; it ought never to be made an end in itself.

The second claim of the State idea that this supremacy and universal activity of the organised State machine is the best means of human progress, is also an exaggeration and a fiction. Man lives by the community; he needs it to develop himself individually as well as collectively. But is it true that a State-governed action is the most capable of developing the individual perfectly as well as of serving the common ends of the community? It is not true. What is true is that it is capable of providing the co-operative action of the individuals in the community with all necessary conveniences and of removing from it disabilities and obstacles which would otherwise interfere with its working. Here the real utility of the State ceases. The non-recognition of the possibilities of human co-

operation was the weakness of English individualism; the turning of a utility for co-operative action into an excuse for rigid control by the State is the weakness of the Teutonic idea of collectivism. When the State attempts to take up the control of the co-operative action of the community, it condemns itself to create a monstrous machinery which will end by crushing out the freedom, initiative and serious growth of the human being....

The business of the State, so long as it continues to be a necessary element in human life and growth, is to provide all possible facilities for co-operative action, to remove obstacles, to prevent all really harmful waste and friction,—a certain amount of waste and friction is necessary and useful to all natural action,—and, removing avoidable injustice, to secure for every individual a just and equal chance of self-development and satisfaction to the extent of his powers and in the line of his nature. So far the aim in modern socialism is right and good. But all unnecessary interference with the freedom is and can be harmful. Even co-operative action is injurious if, instead of seeking the good of all compatibly with the necessities of individual growth,—and without individual growth there can be no real and permanent good of all,—it immolates the individual to a communal egoism and prevents so much free room and initiative as is necessary for the flowering of a more perfectly developed humanity. So long as humanity is not full-grown, so long as it needs to grow and is capable of a greater perfectibility, there can be no static good of all independent of the growth of the individuals composing the all.... Always it is the individual who progresses and compels the rest to progress; the instinct of the collectivity is to stand still in its established order.... It is therefore quite improbable that in the present conditions of the race a healthy unity of mankind can be brought about by State machinery, whether it be by a grouping of powerful and organised States enjoying carefully regulated and legalised relations with each other or by the substitution of a single World-State for the present half chaotic half ordered comity of nations...

(*Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 15, pp. 278-84)

LIFE—POETRY—YOGA

SOME PERSONAL LETTERS

Q. Sri Aurobindo has said: “Where other Yogas end, my Yoga begins.” Will you please tell me briefly what this statement means?

A: This has not been said with any sense of depreciating other Yogas but simply as a matter of fact pointing out the difference of aims. The aim of the other Yogas is, in one way or another, liberation—the freeing of one’s self from the workings of physical, vital, mental nature. No doubt, a degree of purification of one’s nature was considered essential but no radical change of it was demanded. Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga seeks to go beyond liberation and achieve what he terms transformation. For this he calls, on the one hand, upon what he designates as the “psychic being”, the inmost soul-power and, on the other hand, upon the highest of a range of more-than-mental powers, which he names “Supermind”. This range he terms “overhead”—that is, beyond the level at which the Yogas of liberation ended: the *sahasrāra chakra*, “the thousand-petalled lotus”, on the top of the head.

In Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga, after reaching this level, one has to go further and get the light, consciousness, force and bliss of the highest “overhead” level to work in our mental-vital-physical levels with the collaboration of our psychic being in order to transform them into the Supermind-nature. Therefore Sri Aurobindo names his Yoga the Yoga of supramental descent and transformation. Thus, theoretically, it begins where the other Yogas end. In practical sadhana there could be an interplay of the other Yogas with the Aurobindonian and one may have several experiences of the latter before the liberation aimed at by the former is reached.

Sri Aurobindo aims at dynamising in our lives the Supramental Consciousness because he has seen that only in the Supermind there awaits the divine original of not only our mental and vital powers but also of our bodily existence. This would successfully counteract

the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to,

just as it would counteract the mind’s half-lit ignorance and the life-force’s striving incapacity. (1.4 1994)

*

Q. Sri Aurobindo has written: “To look existence in the face is to look God in the face.” Will you please interpret this statement?

A: To look in the face means to confront steadily. So to look existence in the face translates to approaching the world and life and their processes without any preconceptions and without any personal reactions but with the aim solely of coming into direct contact with the sheer fact of them as one interconnected whole. Doing this, one gets the feel of them as a challenging universal expression of some mystery that has its primal source and final aim beyond our mind's comprehension. I am reminded of a line in Nirodbaran's poetry which Sri Aurobindo has praised highly.

Life that is deep and wonder-vast.

Once such a sense is created in our consciousness about existence, we are in the presence of some ultimate Reality we have to come to terms with and be a part of. A wide calm, a quiet courage, a readiness to meet all contingencies, a faith in something or someone far greater than ourselves and yet not essentially alien to us who are included in "existence"—such are the result. This result is a new dimension in our attempt at a deeper self-realisation than our day-to-day experience.

(24 1994).

*

I have to ask your forgiveness for not replying to the several letters you have sent over the last few months. But be assured that your wish that I should appeal to the Mother to help you has always been answered.

You speak of losing vitality through contact with people. You have to develop a zone of protection around you. You can do this by a constant act of offering yourself to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and invoking their will to intervene in your life. An atmosphere of peace and light will then be created, holding you safe within it. Then nothing of outside forces can reach you against your own wish. You will be able to observe things as if from a distance and to deal with them without getting involved.

Being an astrologer, you are naturally inclined to give attention to predictions. You have to put a check on your mind. Otherwise you create a state of consciousness in which the things feared from the supposed action of so-called "inauspicious stars" (Shakespeare's phrase) assume a concreteness and a power to affect you. Carlyle once wrote: "Close your Byron and open your Goethe." He meant the putting aside of the sheer vitalistic urge and the romantic melancholy, and the developing of a mental detachment and an uplifted serenity which would see life as a whole—something of an Olympian temper patiently poised, rather than the Titan mood which runs to extremes. I advise you something similar—with the added touch of a devoted faith in the divine compassion and force with which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are ready to

invest your days. I will certainly continue to pray to them at the Samadhi on your behalf. But you have to put yourself in a condition of receptivity to them.

I am glad you don't pander to the common superstitions of your astrological clients—propitiation of godlings. It makes me happy to see that you will do nothing that "goes against the basic teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, even though it may cause loss of money".

You have raised the question: "Is the Mother's grace available only to those who have taken to the practice of the Integral Yoga or does it go to all who may have devotion to her and Sri Aurobindo but are not sufficiently prepared to tread their path?" You have mentioned the Gita's Krishna as listing the four types of people who worship him: "people who are in distress, people who want prosperity, people who want to know the truth of things and, finally, people who have realised the truth." Your feeling that the Mother's grace, just like Krishna's, answers to the needs of all seeking souls is right. Wherever there is earnestness, the sense of one's own poor show before the Infinite and the Divine, the capacity for gratitude to all that is beyond one's powers, the Mother's loving help responds. But one must understand what this grace aims at. No doubt, again and again it has saviour hands that turn the trend of adverse circumstances and bring a smile to faces that have looked with vacant eyes into the future. But one must guard against the sense one is liable to develop after the crisis is over that somehow it was one's own courageous and clever self that suddenly found a way out. The grace is not something one can substantially assess and prove: it does not leave footprints one can see as definite evidence. The ego in us is always ready to insinuate its own importance. It is essential that we keep our hearts aware of the help received and keep a deep "thank you" ringing after the fortunate turn to events that once foreboded disaster. Not that the Divine feasts on human thanks but the effacement of gratitude stands in the path of the next advent of succouring feet from the secrecies the mind cannot fathom but only the hidden soul suddenly feels. There is no set rule here. The grace may come in spite of recurring ingratitude, for here there is no businesslike balancing of accounts. A luminous wisdom that visions future possibilities and does not merely weigh past and present conditions is at work. Yet, by and large, we may say that we block the passage of the victor light with every complacent pat we give ourselves after we have come out delivered from hopeless-seeming situations. I would say that the grace, over and above pulling us out of such situations, aims at evoking a profound humility in us, ever sensitive to the contact of the superhuman with the human, so that we are mindful of the immensity of the unrealised and, in whatever mode possible, perceive the presence of some Perfection overarching our little days.

Yes, along with the outflow of its unexpected charity, the Mother means to draw us subtly towards a keener realisation of her blissful and life-refining nearness. However, this mysterious aim has a certain side to it which is liable at

times to bewilder us. The Mother has said that her blessings are essentially intended to help the soul in us emerge more and more. And it is not always through success and prosperity and apparent fulfilment that the soul is served. Her blessings are ever benevolent but they may not in every instance bring about what our outer mind desires. Quite often this mind does not know what is good for us. The blessings may give it just the opposite of what it has prayed for. It must learn to receive with gratitude their action, no matter how contrary to its dreams be the appearance of their gifts. Generally we may aver that they have compassion for their recipient and, if one is not well on the way to the practice of spirituality, they may—as the colloquial idiom has it—pull their punches to a fair extent. But where an ardent pilgrim of Eternity is concerned they may serve occasionally to bring one's whole house crashing about one's ears. If one is sincere, one will understand on a back-look how a seeming disaster served to draw one closer to the Divine. It is not for nothing that even common parlance carries the phrase: "blessing in disguise." If one has whole-heartedly asked for the Divine's aid and discovers that a veritable thunder knocks one down, one should not want to "curse God and die", as the legendary Job thought of doing in the midst of his multitude of afflictions. One should offer inwardly even the blight to the Supreme and plead for a flash of light to open one's eyes to the concealed benefaction. Surely, if one's prayer is honest and humble, the revelation will not take long to be bestowed.

You have reported a rather frightening state of affairs: "Whenever I shut my eyes and go inward I see that a powerful force is trying to deflect my will (literally bending the will) making me incapable of doing the right thing and impelling me to all sorts of undesirable things. I do not know how to get rid of this force. I do not also know whether it is a force from outside which has taken possession of me or some Karmic influence from a previous life. Whatever be the case I would request you to pray to the Mother to drive out the force and give me health, strength and light and enable me to lead the life our Gurus want me to lead." After this paragraph you add: "My father who is very old is at present suffering from a skin disease and depression. His horoscope indicates difficulties to his wife (my mother), his children (my two younger brothers) and the whole family." This statement suggests that a force from outside you is at work.

I can't help saying that you must get rid of your horoscopic obsession. When you take Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as your Gurus, you have to clear your consciousness of all preconceptions. Their influence tends to pull you out of all past circumstances and outside forces operating at present. Those who are not wholly dedicated to their Yoga may not easily get free of all such factors but some genuine co-operation is surely possible from you. Most probably the obstructing force you speak of has something to do with the imps that are behind the deplorable habit which has been your regret for years. Medical opinion today has changed much from the catastrophic outlook of the early twentieth century but those who try to practise Yoga and take stock of subtle occult agencies

cannot afford to take so light a view. Not that we should be overburdened with guilt. We are not like the old-time moralists. We think in terms of weaknesses and not of “sins” or “depravities”. All the same, we must attempt to steer clear of aberrations.

Here the query you have raised about the idea of marriage becomes relevant. But such an idea has some complications when the prospective bridegroom is attempting to do Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga in whatever form he can. You have mentioned the difficulty of finding a suitable mate in the spiritual sense. I suppose that if you are in a mind to get married you can’t afford to be over-particular. If, on the other hand, you have no marked hankering for the married life it is better not to rush into it. In your latest letter you have spoken of the serious responsibility given you by your parents to find an appropriate match for one of your brothers. It’s a difficult commission to carry out. Perhaps in the course of meeting it you may stumble upon your own life’s partner. But if you do, don’t pass her on to your brother who may appreciate a less ethereal-minded bedfellow!

Reverting to the force which prevents you from going inward in the right frame of mind I would propose a simple experiment. Put in front of you the photographs of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and keep opening your eyes to them now and again when you practise inward-going. When you shut your eyes let a mantra take shape—the best I can offer is: “*Ma Sri Aurobindo sharanam mama*” (“Mother and Sri Aurobindo are my refuge”) I feel sure your way to the inner consciousness will be made smooth and the obstructing force take flight. Furthermore, during your meditation, let the image of Sri Aurobindo’s face and that of the Mother’s hang before you with all the associations they bear for you of the Avatar’s consciousness. Not only will the hostile influence disappear but there will be a deepening and widening of your being in spontaneous response to our Gurus’ look of profound calm and universal compassion. Maybe the right mood will be induced more easily if you can enter into the spirit of the following eight lines, the first four of which revive the greatest aspiration of the past and the next four conjure up the most comprehensive vision of man’s spiritual future.

A PRAYER FOR PERFECTION

Out of our darkness lead us into light,
Out of false love to Your truth-piercing height,
Out of the clutch of death to immortal space,
O Perfect One with the all-forgiving face!

From Your white lustre build the mind anew,
From Your unshadowed bliss draw the heart’s hue,
From Your immense bring forth a godlike clay,
O Timeless One self-sought through night and day!

When I sent these lines to the Mother with the words: "May I realise all this one day!", she wrote back in red ink: "One day will surely come " (8.3 1994)

*

It is stimulating to learn that you and your son have been to Kedarnath and seen the Himalayas. I too had a view of them from the hill of Mussourie where papa and mamma had taken their three kids. I rode on horseback the whole way up from Dehradun along with my father, a most thrilling adventure, all the more memorable because my defective left leg, strapped to the horse's flank, could allow me only to gallop and the gallop had to skirt precipices throughout the rising 8000 feet of narrow bridle-path. The rest of the family came by the safe conveyance of a sort of palanquin carried on a man's shoulder at either end.

When one compares my free movements of those days, and even the movements which were mine through the later years, with the sort of life I lead now, confined to a wheelchair for nearly eighteen hours a day and able to be no more than a "horizontal champion" for the remaining six, the spectacle is most unpleasant from the objective point of view. Still I am gloriously happy and I think my happiness is quite visible. Let me recount a little incident at the Samadhi two days back, which may be somewhat relevant.

I was meditating with eyes half shut. I could see the legs of someone standing near me to my left. I opened my eyes and saw a stranger standing and smiling in a very friendly way. He asked me where I had originally come from and how long I had been here. I told him I had come from Bombay long ago. He asked: "Did you come in search of peace?" I answered: "No, I came searching for God." He inquired: "Have you found Him?" I simply said: "Yes." He was silent for a moment and then said: "Your face shows it." I was amazed and kept quiet. Then he asked: "How old are you?" I replied: "Nearing ninety." He remarked: "Your face does not show this." I felt quite flattered.

When I think why people don't find me looking nearly ninety, I remember an observation made by that *grande dame*, whose life spanned 1620-1705, Ninon de Lenclos. At eighty she was courted by grandfathers and grandsons alike. She was a beauty untouched by age. I am quite aware that I am far from being any decorative piece but some non-superficial resemblance may be discerned. When asked what her secret was, Ninon replied: "Placidity of temperament."

With this precious mantra whispered in your ear I shall close. (16 4.1994)

*

I am very sorry that your earnest plea for a reply has remained unanswered so long. I can see that you are in right earnest about doing Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, but are not clear enough about certain points of practice.

You ask what exactly is meant by “aspiration” and whether it is a feeling or a thought. I would define it as an inner reaching out, by whatever is the most prominent part of your being, towards the sense you have of the Divine. You may imagine the Divine to be in front of you or above you or both and then turn your mind or heart or the two together towards the sacred Presence. You may do this with some aim in view—for instance, getting rid of a particular difficulty in your nature—or else simply as a gesture of love and self-consecration. In this way you put your imperfect human nature into contact with a nature which is calm, pure, compassionate, unlimited, unerring, unegoistic. It is best for you to figure this superhuman Consciousness as a Perfect Supreme Person.

Next you inquire about the “psychic Agni”: how does one kindle this soul-fire and throw one’s defects and difficulties into it? You have to start by imagining a luminous Presence within you, a Light which can purify everything. Then into its living flame you throw your weaknesses and troubles. I would add that you must cast in it your strengths and capacities too. For none of our good points are really free of limitations and egoism. All of yourself should go repeatedly into that secret purifying Presence. This means a dedication and offering of the whole self to the true representative of the Divine that is hidden in our depths.

You are right in saying that the Mother has spoken of a zone of silence above the head. To be aware of it you have to turn your consciousness upward as if to reflect what is overhead. Imagine that you have no skull and that there is a free open space instead. Then the descent of the silence from above will be facilitated or you will feel more easily drawn up into it. A great sense of freedom from life’s petty clinging cares and concerns will come. A preparation will be made for feeling that you are not a small limited individual but part of a wide existence. At its extreme, the experience will be of what a line from a poem of mine shadows forth:

Silence that, losing all, grows infinite Self.

Or else under the brooding silence the inmost soul in you, the psychic heart behind the emotional centre, finding that the common noises of the world have ceased, will emerge from its sacred solitude and make itself felt as

A Fire whose tongue has tasted paradise.

Another effect possible of the psychic being’s awakening under the over-arching stillness is a growing intensity by which the bounds of our small separate individuality recede until finally there is that liberating phenomenon:

The tense heart broken into widenesses.

Occasionally, as a result of experiencing the silence which the Mother speaks of, a command will be heard out of the seeming void at the top of the head or an urge will spell itself out from the deep heart—a heart not agitated but at peace. To get messages from these mysteries is a part of the Yogic process at its finest, a process of true self-discovery and true self-activation. The influence of such a play of hidden founts will refine and elevate your consciousness, making you a new and better person, a more genuine sadhika.

The sensations you have written about—a pressure in your chest and a tingling in your limbs—are not uncommon in the Yogic life. The former has been found to precede the opening of the heart-centre. Some time in the future you will feel as if a wall in your chest has broken down, setting free the wonder that is the psychic being, a source of self-existent bliss. The tingling may have something to do with the coming down of influences from overhead. I know of a case in which the face begins to tingle with the descent of a force and a joy from above. The most common result of overhead action is a pleasurable pain in the head, what a poet might call a heavenly headache. On occasion the Samadhi seems to start an action in several parts of the brain and through these apertures, as it were, a response is evoked from the heart's depth or else a pulling up of the consciousness can take place, detaching one from not only one's own body but also the very world to which that body belongs. There are people who feel a golden light pressing into them through the head. In the early days when I was a tyro and used to watch people doing meditation, I saw again and again my friend Purani's neck swelling on both sides as if to sustain the downward pressure of a tremendous force from overhead. The downward force can also be felt to enter the head like a bar of shining steel which could make one dizzy. But usually the divine power suits itself to the needs and capacities of the sadhak. In any case the Yoga proves to be a physical no less than a psychological working. But whether physical or psychological it will miss its aim if it does not bring about a change of one's common outer character as a consequence of a working on one's inner being. How much equanimity, how much serenity are established in one's day-to-day living?—how much of disinterested action is one capable of as an outflow of one's self-offering to the Divine—how far can one spontaneously communicate Sri Aurobindo's Himalayan height of eternal guardianship or the Mother's ever-bright flow of many-featured grace like a golden Ganges carrying its multitudinous laughter over miles and miles of lowland? Such are the questions that really matter.

I hope you have forgiven me for my inexplicable delay.

(23 4 1994)

AMAL KIRAN
(K.D. SETHNA)

TITBITS FROM MY CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO ABOUT MY BENGALI POETRY

Q: Guru, I am now getting disappointed with my new poetry. It seems I am writing whatever comes to me. Though at times it becomes a success, at other times it is a misfire.

A: When one develops a new kind of poetry or a new technique one must not mind having to find one's way.

Q: When people ask me about the meaning I have to make a foolish face from which people deduce that I am writing rubbish.

A: Why? Make a mystic face and say, "It means too much for owls." The difficulty is that you all want exact intellectual meaning for these things. A meaning there is, but it can't always be fitted with a tight and neat intellectual cap.

Q: You have a very easy way of escape by saying "surrealistic". Dilip-da also says, "If it is surrealist, I have nothing to say!"

A: My "surrealist" is a joke, but not a depreciatory one.

If you are going to listen to Dilip's contentions or be influenced by them, you can't go on writing these things. His standpoint is an entirely different one. What his mind can't understand is for him non-sense. He is for the orthodox style of poetry with as much coherence as possible, but not transgressing by its images the boundary of the orthodox. This poetry is a modern "heresy" and heretics must have the courage of their non-conformity.

Q: I have read your very interesting letter on surrealism, especially where it refers to me. At times I feel that I could go on writing interminably, at the same time haunted by a fear that the source may dry up.

A: Why fear? If it happens, you will start something new. Perhaps super-realism.

Q: What a disappointment, Guru! I thought my yesterday's poem was exceedingly fine.

A: Well, well, I thought I must reserve the adverbs or I shall have nothing to put in case you "exceed" yourself.

Q: Now, what the deuce is this Surrealism? I gather that Baudelaire was its father and Mallarmé its son. A small discourse on it will be helpful.

A: Dilip has asked practically for the same, but I will have to study the subject before I can do so.

Surrealism is a new phrase invented only the other day and I am not sure what it conveys. According to some it is a dream-poetry reaching deeper truth, a deeper reality than the surface reality. I don't know if this is the whole theory or only one side or phase of the practice. Baudelaire as a surrealist is a novel idea...

Q: Does surrealism indicate that new meaning should be always unintelligible?

A: This is the gibe of the orthodox school of critics or readers—certainly the surrealists will not agree with it. They would claim they have got at a deeper line of truth and meaning than the intellectual.

NIRODBARAN

A BOLT FROM THE BLUE

On the death of Joy Tagore

WHAT is this? If not a supreme
 Militancy on Thy part?
 Can we believe that cruel Thou art
 To blast from a control remote
 Far beyond our human rapport
 The fortress of a heart of 'joy'
 And whisk the soul away
 To whither our sense can hardly say!

We had an embodied 'joy' in our midst,
 A flower of flowers, a bird of freest air,
 Loved by all, a lover of all.
 What purpose did Thy militancy serve
 Oh, tell us, let us know it without reserve,
 So that our hearts' wound may endure hereafter
 This pain unbearable of an unbelievable departure.

"Joy-da of youngsters, a captain ideal of evergreen hue
 Is no more"—indeed a bolt, but let us not forget
 It comes from the highest Blue!

SATADAL

THE BOOK OF JOB

A NEW COMMENTARY

(Continued from the issue of June 1994)

Chapters 6 and 7 Job's reply to Eliphaz.

WHEN we study Job's replies to his friends a few facts emerge, facts we cannot afford to lose sight of. It has been observed that Job was right and his friends were wrong in so far as Job thought his suffering was not the result of any sin or unrighteousness on his part; God Himself made it clear when He spoke out of the whirlwind. The Book of Job does not relate sin and suffering.

But Job in pointing out that his suffering was not the result of his sin and the friends in asserting that he must have been wicked stood out as two sides of the same coin, relating sin and suffering! Both the parties were "religious", governed by mental notions.

Fortunately Job evolved during the course of the debate, however imperceptibly, whereas his friends became more and more entrenched in their self-righteous attitude, drawing upon themselves the Lord's condemnation.

His reply to the first discourse of Eliphaz begins with the same *tāmasic* state in which he uttered his lament earlier. But he could soon rise to a state of *rajas* and lash out at his friends. There are at least two moments when he touched the *sāttwik* state and tried to appeal to God. He returned to *tamas* to a degree but there was a distinct difference from his earlier state. The reply does reveal a movement in the direction of a positive progress.

The idea of evolution through suffering is hinted by Paul Scherer⁴⁹ in his "Exposition" of Job's reply (as elsewhere). He refers to the words of C.S. Lewis in his *Problem of Pain*,

C S Lewis calls it (the love that is at the heart of the universe (which) is a stern and splendid thing, deep and tragic) the intolerable compliment which God has paid us. We are something, he goes on, that God is making, and he will not be satisfied with anything less than he wants us to be.*

One may just add that God pays such a compliment especially to men like Job who could be led from a perfection to a higher level of perfection.

Chapter 6.

Verse 1

Job gave a reply to Eliphaz.

Verses 2 to 7.

In the first seven verses Job defended himself for what he had said after a week-long silence before his friends.

Verses 2 and 3.

He wished that the grief which he suffered and poured forth in his lament and the calamity which had befallen him were weighed on the two scales of a balance. The calamity far outweighed the grief and words could not sufficiently bring out its enormity. The calamity would be heavier than the sand of the sea. His words would be swallowed up, would become too insufficient to describe the extent of his misfortune.

RSV translates the last part of the verse 2,

therefore my words have been rash.

Terrien⁵⁰ renders the two verses,

... my grief and my calamity are to be weighed separately: either one of them would then be found heavier than the sand of the sea. That is a sufficient explanation and defence of Job's lament.

He provides an alternate explanation, giving importance to the word *together* (in the KJV; the RJV omits the word):

... my grief, rather my vexation, "my impatient irritation" should be estimated, criticised, and perhaps be condemned only if it is compared in the same scales as my calamity (. . . "my fall", "gulf", "chasm", "abyss", "hell") Since the latter is intolerable and of unheard-of proportions, Eliphaz should recognize the reason for which my words have been wild.

The Exegete must have very good reasons for underlining *together* (from KJV) even while using the RJV reading *rash* instead of the rendering *wild*

Verse 4.

Job described the nature of the calamity he was subject to in terms of the Almighty's arrows piercing within him and His poison being drunk by his spirit. Terrors of God set themselves in an array against him. Job used the terms to present the psychological as well as the physical suffering he underwent.

Verses 5 to 7

In three pointed questions Job tried to objectify the kind of torture he spoke of in the earlier verse.

Does the wild ass bray when he has grass or an ox low with his fodder before him? No one would complain if one had what one wanted. It was not enough to have something. It must be to his taste.

Therefore he asked if one could eat the unsalted, unsavoury food? (We speak of salt of life, don't we?)

The next part of the verse and the verse that follows read in KJV:

or is there any taste in the white of an egg? The things that my soul refused to touch are my sorrowful meat.

RJV renders the one and a half verses:

or is there any taste in the slime of the purslane? My appetite refuses to touch them: they are as food loathsome to me.

(The footnotes in the Version brings out the uncertainty and obscurity of the original in Hebrew. It is obvious that the KJV endeavours to bring out the essential meaning of the passage)

One thing is obvious. Job was talking of something more than of food. But the fact he mentioned food indicates that in that state he could actually eat little and taste or relish nothing. But Life itself had lost all relish (*rasa*) and meaning to him.

Terrien³¹ paraphrases what the other Commentators say indicating the possible secondary and additional meaning of the words:

“Do you think,” Job indirectly asks Eliphaz, “that I can accept your tasteless consolations and repugnant advice?”

He rightly adds the comment.

According to this exegesis, Job is no longer on the defensive, as in verse 5, but challenges the right of a prosperous friend to comfort him by reprimand. (Verses 6 and 7) His full anger is expressed a little later. In what follows, he relapses to *tamas*.

Verses 8 to 13.

In the verses Job returned to the state of consciousness with which he had cried out in despair longing for death. The *tāmasīc* longing must be clearly distinguished from the *sāttwīk* vision of death as a felicity. We may remember Hamlet's words to Horatio:

Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain...

Verses 8 and 9.

Job wished that God had granted his request and given him what he had longed for by destroying him, by cutting him off.

Verse 10.

In that case he could yet have some comfort. (RJV reads, “consolation”). If God would not spare him he would harden himself in the midst of his sorrow. (RJV reading “exult in pain” points out that the original Hebrew is obscure.) Till then he had concealed (RJV “denied”) the words of the Holy One. If he lived longer he might be led to do it.

Verses 11 to 13.

He had no longer any strength to hope for what was better nor any goal to continue to live for. He was not made of stones; his flesh was not brass. The only help within himself, his wisdom (his proverbial Edomitic wisdom) was driven away from him by his suffering.

Verses 14 to 20

Job stated in the verses the fact of his friends failing him. The verses act as a fine transition from the *tamas* to the *rajas* of the next section.

Verse 14.

The KJV reads,

To one who is afflicted pity should be showed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.

If the Exegetes did not show all their ingenuity it would not have been what Terrien⁵² calls a *crux interpretum*.

All that Job meant was that the afflicted person needed pity from his friend but the friend abandoning his reverence of the Almighty forgot his duty to his friend.

The RSV differs from the KJV only in the wording but not in the meaning. It makes clear that the person who does not show kindness to a friend

forsakes the fear of the Almighty.

One need not go into all the scholarly endeavours to complicate what is simple and straightforward. The question raised by Terrien,

What is the sequence of thought between the two lines arises only because the scholars do not think the person who does not pity the

friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty Contrary to all that the Commentators say Job meant that it was Eliphaz who forsook the fear of the Almighty by not showing sympathy towards him.

Verses 15 to 20.

In the six verses Job compared his friends whom he called his brethren to a deceitful brook and pointed out that like the stream of brooks they would pass away. Such brooks (in winter) appear blackish because of ice with snow hidden beneath When they grow warm (in spring) they disappear. When it is hot (in summer) they are completely consumed: they are no longer seen. (No one would know where they existed.) They completely perish with the changing of the paths they flowed in. Job gives the example of troops of Tema and companies of Sheba (Saba), who are accustomed to cross such brooks being misled and feeling ashamed because of their disappearance.

Verses 21 to 28.

After describing his friends and their nature Job turned directly to them, especially Eliphaz, and scolded them to their face His indignation was roused, he gave up the inertia of grief for the moment and he showed them up for what they were

He told them, rather Eliphaz in particular, that they were nothing, they were zeroes. They saw his fall and were afraid (he expected something from them). Did he ask anything of them? Did he ask them to free him from the enemy's hand or redeem him from the powerful? He asked them to "teach" him where he erred and he would not talk any more If right words were spoken they would carry force What was it that Eliphaz tried to rebuke by his arguments? Did he imagine he could blame the words and speeches of a desperate man which were no more than mere blowing of the breath (wind)? Yes, they (the friends who were up to anything) could ruin orphans, dig a pit for their friend. Then, for that reason, he asked them to be content and look upon him (his face). It was (would be) evident if he lied.

With an abrupt transition the verses that follow give us to understand that the friends, irritated by what Job said, were about to leave him. It has been noted (*vide supra* comment on 5. 1-7) that abrupt transitions are not uncommon in Scriptures.

Verses 29-30.

In the words in which Job asked Eliphaz and the others not to leave him, there is a complete change of tone. He seemed to rise from *rajas* to *sattwa* for a moment. Anger had left him. He prayed them to return. He did not want them to think it wicked of him and leave him. There was righteousness in what he said, according to him.

He asked them if there was wickedness in his tongue. Playing on the word “tongue”, he asked if his taste could not discern what was right or wrong.

Chapter 7.

As indicated in the discussion of the previous chapter Job did relapse into a sense of despair, but with a difference. It was not a mere cry of agony gushing forth from sensation and feeling. There was, in howsoever little a measure, the operation of the mind, an attempt to think.

Verses 1 to 11.

Job described vividly his psychological and physical condition in the first eleven verses.

After requesting his friends not to go away he asked them if there was not a fixed time to man upon earth resembling the number of days fixed for a temporary wage-earner (as different from a servant who is part and parcel of the household)? Job knew that a servant longed for the shadow of the evening for respite from his work as the wage-earner looked for the wages (reward) for the work done by him. Like them he was made to possess months of vanity. (The RJV “emptiness” makes the meaning clear. Else, we could have thought the word to refer to his former prosperity.) Tiresome nights were “appointed” to him. (It was his lot to suffer nights wearily).

When he lay down he asked himself when the night would be gone. He had no respite (that the servant expected when he desired for the shadow of the evening) from dusk to dawn: he had only tossings to and fro.

He described the skin disease he was the victim of. (*Vide supra* Comment on 2:7.) His flesh was “clothed” with worms and clods of dust. Worms and clods of dust covered the body like a garment: one wonders if the friends did not have the eyes to see his condition! His skin was “broken” because of the free passage of worms. Naturally, poor Job felt it disgusting.

There was no wonder Job felt that his days were swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, a boat-shaped wooden piece in the handloom which was swiftly moved to weave thread into cloth. His days were spent without hope.

He asked his friends to remember that his life was like the passing wind (breath that is about to blow off). His eyes would not see good again.

He who saw him then would not see him any longer.

Job must have turned from the friends to God when he said,

Thine eyes are upon me and I am not.

Even like the cloud that was consumed and vanished for ever he that died never came back. (It appears needless to give any philosophical import to Job’s words and speak of his conception of death.)

The dead man would not return again to his house nor his house know him (remember him) any more

For that reason he would not restrain himself from speaking out the anguish of his spirit freely. He would complain in the bitterness of his soul.

Verses 12 to 21.

His complaint is apparently blasphemous. What is of interest to us at this stage is not so much what he said as what it indicated about his evolution. The very fact that he addressed God reveals his inwardly (though unconsciously) preparing himself for the theophany. The complaint was more *rājasic* than *tāmasic*. He was nearer the truth than his friends as God Himself would show at the end.

Verse 12.

Job asked God if it were the sea or the whale that He should set to watch over him.

Terrien⁵³ has a very informative and useful comment to make on the passage:

The sea is the primeval ocean which the Creator has to keep within bounds in order to maintain security and peace in the inhabited world.... (Taking the *whale* of the KJV) rendered by RJV as the *sea monster* to be equivalent to the Leviathan the scholar says, Job's query reveals a touch of satirical humour which is not without a touch of grandeur at the time of his spiritual extremity. A tortured man is here in effect saying to God, "Art thou afraid of me? Am I so important and powerful a hero that I risk endangering the whole universe?"

Verses 13 to 16

Job told God that when he expressed his need for a comfortable bed and couch that would ease him in the context of his skin trouble He terrified him with dreams and visions. He was led therefore to think of means of putting an end to his life. He loathed his life and did not want to live for long. He wanted to be left alone by God (by not being troubled with terrible dreams and visions).

Verses 17 to 19.

Job asked God why of all creatures God should give such importance to man and show special interest in him. Why should He visit him every morning and test him every moment? How long would He not allow him to be left alone, not allow him even to swallow his spittle?

Most commentators see in these words of Job echoes of the Psalms assuming that they antedate the Book. The words,

What is man that thou shouldst magnify him, that thou shouldst visit him every morning...?

echo the words,

What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man thou visitest him? Ps. 8 vs. 4.

It is the irony of Job's that charges the words with an entirely different meaning from the pious Psalmist's. The words "swallow down my spittle" in vs 19 is a proverbial Arabic expression not without a parallel in Indian languages.

Verses 20 and 21.

In the last two verses of his reply to Eliphaz Job remembered the accusation that he must have sinned and that his suffering was a direct result of it. He asked God what he should do granting he had sinned. And why should God make him his target making him a burden to himself. Or why not pardon his transgression and remove his wickedness? For he would perish, sleep in the dust. God would not find him if he sought in the morning

James Strahan, whom Paul Scherer⁵⁴ quotes, sees in the words of Job a passing vision of the God of Grace. In the context, however, it appears that all that Job felt was the certainty that he did *not* sin and that God was hostile to him. Even granting that he sinned, the fact that God could not pardon him but allow him to sleep in the dust only showed God's wrath against him which he did not deserve.

Job's evolution was a slow process. That it had begun is what gives meaning and significance to his first reply.

(To be continued)

K.B. SITARAMAYYA

Notes

49 P 956

* Cf Pain is the hammer of the gods to break
 A dead resistance in the mortal's heart,
 His slow inertia as of living stone
 If the heart were not forced to want and weep,
 His soul would have lain down content, at ease,
 And never thought to exceed the human start
 And never learned to climb towards the Sun
 Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, p 443

50 P 953

51 *Ibid*

52 P 955

53 P 964

54 P 969

THE TRUE NATURAL PRINCIPLE

I HOLD onto the after-effects of the dawn,
 Allowing them to linger and stay
 And spread their energy and presence within me
 As I go ahead tackling headlong
 The pros and cons of another new day,
 Weaving my way through life's innumerable situations,
 Bypassing the alluring short cuts, facing the prescribed path,
 Exploring, experimenting, grasping and experiencing
 From my responses and reactions,
 Learning to constantly keep myself aware
 Of the foundation that the Divine leads the way
 Which I can experience only when I surrender
 And thus be in a state of freedom
 From my own ego's bondage
 And practically implement the true natural principle:
 Let Her Will be done and not mine.

ASHISH PALANDE

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of May 1994)

WE have seen in previous articles that during the months of March and April, 1908 an atmosphere of tension and crisis was building up. In the eyes of the Moderates, Sri Aurobindo and his fiery writings in the *Bande Mataram* were the major obstacles on their path of slow, orderly, constitutional “Progress”. According to the bureaucracy, Sri Aurobindo was a public enemy—all the more dangerous because he had a hypnotic hold on his numberless young followers. His writings were seen as diabolically clever and often covering up anti-government propaganda in the language of *Vedanta* or *Tantra*. He talked of India resurgent. He spoke of individual salvation and of national freedom. He was the author of that political dynamite, *Bhawanî Mandir*. Did he not cause the split at Surat? And Sri Aurobindo did not even hesitate to preach insurrection. The language of warfare and revolution came as second nature to him.

The man was infernally clever, too terribly in earnest, and utterly unpredictable and uncontainable. Danger was the name of the man. The Moderates and the bureaucracy thought that he had to be silenced and put out of the way.

Sri Aurobindo never went beyond the law when he edited the *Bande Mataram*. It preached freedom but within the bounds of peace as far as possible. Its goal was Passive Resistance. But during that time the *Jugantar* opened all the masks of the British Government and initiated the fire of propaganda for nearly two years.

In the *Jugantar*’s view rebellion could come about only when the minds of the people had been prepared by radical propaganda. The youth of the country had to be willing to devote themselves to the cause, scorning hardship, imprisonment, even death.

The *Jugantar* could openly preach revolt:

“War or a revolution is an infinitely better thing than the peace under which mortality is fast rising in India. If even fifty millions of men disappeared from India in an attempt at deliverance, would even that not be preferable to death in impotency and peace? Why should he who was born a man and of a man die like a worm? Has the Almighty provided no means of deliverance for him who cannot prove himself a man and act as such in his life? He has. *If you cannot prove yourself a man in life, play the man in death.* Foreigners have come and decided how you are to live. *But how you are to die depends entirely upon yourself.*”¹

Nolini Kanta Gupta, who was a member of the Manicktolla organisation, reported in his *Reminiscences*: “It was only after the *Jugantar* group had decided that the time had now come for action and not propaganda alone that there came to be established the centre at the Manicktolla Gardens in Muraripukur. The

section entrusted with real work and the people concerned with propaganda were to form two distinct groups; one was to work in secret, the other out in the open. Hence the work of *Jugantar* was entrusted to the propaganda group. The gentleman who took charge was named Taranath Roy. Those who had hitherto been on the staff of the paper left it and joined the Manicktolla Gardens for intensive training and work. It was however agreed that here too there would be two groups, one for regular work and the other for propaganda. Only, the propaganda here would be of a different kind, for here it would not be possible to speak openly of armed revolt as that would be to draw the attention of the authorities to the regular workers. It was therefore decided to have a paper in Bengali with a policy analogous to that of *Bandematararam*. A paper named *Navashakti* was already there, owned and conducted by Sri Manoranjan Guhathakurta. It had a house rented in Grey Street (North Calcutta). An understanding was reached between the parties so that the spirit and letter of *Jugantar* could continue in and through *Navashakti*. The house was built more or less on the pattern of the one we had later at Shyamapukur. There were two flats. The one in front was used as the *Navashakti* office; Sri Aurobinodo occupied the other with his wife, Mrinalini.”²

“The editors of *Jugantar* went so far as to promote the formation of ‘bands’ of young men who would direct local thought and effort towards independence.”³

“Such boldness could not long go unnoticed. Even a vernacular paper, *Jugantar* was prosecuted for sedition five times in 1907 and 1908. Each time the ‘Editor’ was imprisoned, another man took legal responsibility for the paper and was imprisoned in his turn.”⁴

Some past events which were caused by the repression, prosecutions, even killing of political agitators by the British Government had been moving swiftly to what seemed to be their preordained configuration and conclusion. Such men as Curzon had divided Bengal, and injured and insulted a great nation, and, by a strange irony of history, his successor Minto was called upon to face the consequence. As Sir Pratap Singh, a titled dignitary during that time, put it with charming words, “Lord Curzon has strewn Lord Minto’s bed with thorns, and he must lie on them.”⁵

The promiscuous prosecutions and barbarous sentence continued with mounting ferocity. The arrest and trial of the saintly Brahmbandhab Upadhyaya and his death while in detention at Cambell Hospital had sent out a wave of resentment all over Bengal, all over India. “His declaration in Court and his death,” wrote Sri Aurobindo, “put a seal upon the meaning of his life and left his name stamped indelibly on the pages of history as a saint and martyr of the new faith.”⁶ Vivekananda’s youngest brother Bhupendra Nath Dutta did not defend himself and went to jail. And so, Printers, Publishers, Editors, Contributors, Workers—anyone almost ran the risk of sudden apprehension and going to jail

even on the slightest pretext. Apropos of the endless trials and heavy sentences passed for sedition Morley said "we must keep order but excess of severity is not the path of order. On the contrary, it is the path of the bomb."⁷

The burning anger of the people was particularly directed against the Lieutenant Governor, the Governor Andrew Fraser, the District Magistrates Allen and Kingsford, the Mayor L. Tardivel of Chandernagore.

The members of the Manicktolla Gardens group gave up militarism and turned towards directly terrorist methods.

The anger of the people was strongly directed against one D.H. Kingsford, the District Magistrate of Calcutta who tried the case against Upadhyaya and who was even otherwise known for his drastic sentences against the patriots and who had especially earned infamy by ordering the flogging in the court of a boy of fifteen, Sushil Sen, till he fell down unconscious bleeding all over. For his atrocity he had to be transferred from Calcutta to Muzafferpore (Bihar).

In order to take the lives of the British Government's officials, Barin's Secret revolutionary group consisting of Ullaskar, Hem Chandra, Bibhuti, Nolini and Prafulla Chakrabarti took drastic steps and plunged into the Bomb-making scheme to kill Sir Andrew Fraser, Kingsford and Chandernagore's Mayor L. Tardivel.

After the split of Congress, Barin accompanied Sri Aurobindo to Baroda. "During his stay in Baroda, he made a bomb using a formula Ullaskar had given him. Before leaving town he passed the formula on to Chhotalal Purani, a local revolutionary. Returning to Calcutta by mid-January, Barin found things at the garden in high gear. Upen, Ullaskar and company were back from Nepal and recruitment was going on apace."⁸

"Ullaskar Dutta was the group's principal bomb-maker until Hem Chandra Das returned from Paris where he had learned political theory and explosive chemistry from the Russian Nicolas Safranski and others."⁹

"As the weapon of choice of European anarchists, the hand-held bomb had come to symbolize violent revolution. Months before real bombs were used against real victims in India, Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya had written in the *Sandhya*:

"It is a matter for great rejoicing that an excellent kind of bomb is being manufactured. This bomb is called *Kali Mai's* bomb (the bomb of Mother Kali). It is being experimented on, and if it comes out of the test successfully it must be kept in every house. This bomb is so light that one can walk with it in one's hand. It has not to be set fire to: it explodes with a loud noise and shakes the earth if it is thrown on the ground with some little force.... A son is wanted from every family who must practice the virtues of the *Khatriya* (warrior). Let them play with Kali Mai's bomb."¹⁰

"In a statement given to the police in 1908, Barin said that he never thought political murders would bring about the regeneration of the motherland. But he

felt that they were an important ‘means to educate the people up [*sic*] for facing death and doing anything for their country’s sake’ There was, he said, ‘a wide and persistent demand all over India for one successful political murder in order to stiffen the back of the people and satisfy their spirit of vengeance’. Or as Upen more graphically put it: the jailing of the editors of *Jugantar* and *Sandhya* and the outrages done by the police so enraged people that everyone seemed to be saying, ‘No. This can’t go on. We’ll have to blow the head off one of these people.’ Since no one else was up to it, Barin and his friends were ‘compelled, unwillingly, to take up the task as slaves of the nation’.

“In later statements Barin and Upen dealt with the subject less rhetorically. If they and their friends were slaves, the real masters were the society’s supporters. These men demanded assassinations, advancing specific amounts towards the death of specified officials After the resignation of Fuller the target of choice became Sir Andrew Fraser, the lieutenant-governor who had helped to partition Bengal. Towards the end of 1907 a meeting was held at which it was decided that Fraser must be killed.”¹¹

(*To be continued*)

NILIMA DAS

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SRI AUROBINDO'S *PERSEUS THE DELIVERER*

CRITICS have attempted a political interpretation of Sri Aurobindo's *Perseus the Deliverer*.¹ Sri Aurobindo was more of a spiritualist than a politician and believed, as we all know, that India's greatest need was spiritual salvation. His idea of spiritual salvation involves a complex process of inner evolution and if the play is interpreted in the light of his ideas about the process, it will also become more meaningful.

The prologue, which is highly suggestive, sets the action of the play in motion. The ocean in tumult suggests, in the Shakespearean manner, the discord, the ensuing upheaval in the kingdom of Syria. The prologue is in the form of a dialogue between Athene and Poseidon. Athene is the Goddess of Wisdom whose pleasure is to guide man. She tells Poseidon—

Me the Omnipotent
Made from His being to lead and discipline
The immortal spirit of man, till it attain
To order and magnificent mastery
Of all his outward world.²

She advises Poseidon not to demand blood at his altar—

O iron King,
Desist from blood, be glad of kindlier gifts
And suffer men to live.³

When her suggestion to Poseidon of desisting from blood-demand gets rejected, she asks for the sending of champions—

Then send thy champion forth to meet my champion,
And let their conflict govern ours, Poseidon.⁴

Athene's champion is Perseus. So the conflict between Cepheus, the king and Polydaon, the priest, in the play is ultimately the conflict between Athene and Poseidon. Cepheus, Cassiopea, Andromeda and Polydaon are rather the instruments through whom the conflict is revealed.

Andromeda's sacrilege against the Sea-god and Polydaon's wrath represent the conflict between intellectual progress and evil customs. The introductory note in the book touches on psychological history when it says, "the subject is an incident in [the race's] passage from a semi-primitive temperament surviving in a fairly advanced outward civilization to a brighter intellectualism and humanism... and the first promptings of the deeper and higher psychic and spiritual

being which it is [man's] ultimate destiny to become.⁵

In the Volume *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, there occurs the passage:

Life is the first step of a release of consciousness involved originally, in Matter; Mind is the second step. Evolution does not finish with Mind. It awaits a release into a consciousness which is spiritual and supernatural. The next step in evolution is the development of Super-Mind and Spirit in Conscious Being. This cannot be done at once and many preliminary steps have to be taken. Many intervening stages are indispensable in the process of Sadhana (Self-discipline) bringing about the ultimate result—an emergence into what has been called the Cosmic Consciousness.⁶

So the different stages in the evolution are, Matter to Life. Life to Mind and Mind to Super-Mind with various intervening stages. The citizens of Syria at large, including the priest, represent the earliest phase, leading the material life. Andromeda represents the second phase, the life of Mind, the awareness of a certain spiritual consciousness. She is the psychic being. Perseus symbolizes Super-Mind, a supernatural consciousness by which alone human nature can be transformed and uplifted.

The play ends with a striking note on the integrated awareness of the Universe.

Cassiopea: How can the immortal gods and Nature change?

Perseus: All alters in a world that is the same.

Man most must change who is a soul of Time,

His gods too change and live in larger light.

Cepheus: Then man too may arise to greater heights,

His being draw nearer to the gods?

Perseus: Perhaps.

But the blind nether forces still have power

And the ascent is slow and long is Time.

Yet shall Truth grow and harmony increase.

The day shall come when men feel close and one

Meanwhile one forward step is something gained,

Since little by little earth must open to heaven

Till her dim soul awakes into the Light.⁷

Sri Aurobindo was of the belief that "by conscious effort, humanity must proceed inwards into a knowledge of secret principles of Nature and outward and upward towards a cosmic Being. The salvation of humanity henceforth lies not in transcending the World but in transfiguring it so as to make the universe fit

for the Descent of the Supra-mental”⁸ The erection of Athene’s altar in place of Poseidon’s is thus very significant. Andromeda tells Perseus:

Let the dire cult
For ever cease and victims bleed no more
On its dark altar Instead Athene’s name
Spread over all the land and in men’s hearts.⁹

Andromeda represents in a way the Adhyatma Yoga, one of the ways of attaining Salvation. The Adhyatma Yoga involves three stages: (a) Sankalpa of Atma-samarpana i.e. determination to submit oneself to God (the act of self-consecration) or putting oneself in His hands (‘Surrender to the Divine’). (b) Watching stoically the working of the Divine in oneself, a standing apart from the *Adhara* through self-knowledge so that the soul ceases to identify itself with the outer nature’¹⁰ (c) In the third phase, one is able to perceive God in everything one comes across. It means a belief that ‘Prakṛti’ is doing all our actions at God’s bidding. ‘Surrender of the fruits of action and action itself to God.’¹¹

Andromeda submits herself to the cause of Athene despite the latter’s warnings.

But dost thou know that thy reward shall be
Betrayal and fierce hatred? God and man
Shall league in wrath to kill and torture thee
Mid dire revilings.¹²

And again,

Thou fear’st not then? They will expose thee, child,
To slaughter by the monsters of the deep
Who shall come forth to tear thy limbs.¹³

But Andromeda asks her only one question:

‘Wilt thou love me?’¹⁴

And Athene’s reply ‘Thou art my child’¹⁵ is enough to make Andromeda resolve to surrender herself to Athene who also symbolizes the Divine Shakti. Athene disappears and Diomedes the playmate of Andromeda returns to the stage and her remark is—

‘What is this light around you! How you are altered,
Andromeda.’¹⁶

This light around Andromeda signifies the Descent of the Divine Shakti into her on the human's surrender to the superhuman. This marks the first phase of the Adhyatma Yoga. The second phase begins with the working of the Divine Shakti in Andromeda. She feels urged to go in person and release the prisoners. She releases Smerdas and becomes a little bit disappointed to see the other prisoner already freed.

I grudge your rescuer the happy task
Heaven meant for me of loosening your chains.
It would have been such joy to feel the cold
Hard irons drop apart between my fingers!¹⁷

This second phase is often accompanied by doubts and disturbances and Andromeda is also not free from those ordeals. Her body is demanded by the sea-priest Polydaon and she is consequently chained to the rocks of a cliff to be devoured by the sea-monster. Her mind is full of doubts about the propriety of her deed—

. . . for by my act
My father and my mother are doomed to death,
My kind dear brother, my sweet Iolaus,
Will cruelly be slaughtered, by my act
A kingdom ends in miserable ruin.¹⁸

And in the same passage she says—

... the deaf
And violent Ocean roars about my feet,
And all is stony, all is cold and cruel
Yet I had dreamed of other powers. Where art thou,
O beautiful still face amid the lightnings,
Athene? Does a mother leave her child?
And thou, bright stranger, wert thou only a dream?¹⁹

But all these doubts and disturbances wither away at the sight of Perseus, and Andromeda cries out:

Forgive, Athene, my lack of faith. Thou art!²⁰

She attains the state of quiet mind, an indispensable phase in the system that leads the Sadhaka toward perfection. By quiet mind Sri Aurobindo means 'a mind free from disturbances and trouble, steady, light and glad so as to be open

to the Force that will change the nature.²¹

The third phase of the Yoga begins in the case of Andromeda slightly before the second phase is over. In this phase the Yogin sees God's manifestation in all objects, animate and inanimate, a belief in the concept 'all that is, is God; besides Him nothing else exists.'

I think that even a snake in pain
Would tempt me to its succour, though I knew
That afterwards 'twould bite me! But he is a god
Perhaps who did this...²²

As Morwenna Donnelly informs us.

But though such an experience, as an abiding condition of our consciousness, lies at the summit of the Yoga, the guidance of the Divine in the *Sadhana* is not dependent on its attainment and may be realized before the preparation of the nature has been finished, provided there is trust and confidence in the Divine, and the will to surrender.

Such a taking up of the *Sadhana* by the Divine, says Sri Aurobindo, involves not only this perfect trust and confidence in Him and a progressive self-giving, it also involves putting oneself into His hands and ceasing to rely on one's own efforts alone 'It is the perfect principle of *Sadhana* that I myself followed and this is the central process of the Yoga as I envisage it.'²³

The similarity between the process of *Sadhana* followed by Sri Aurobindo and that followed by Andromeda makes one feel that Andromeda is none else than a projection of Sri Aurobindo's own spiritual experience and this belief is further strengthened if his Uttarpara Speech, which describes his mystic experience in the Alipour Jail, is related to the story of Andromeda:

I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no, it was Vasudeva who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell, but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sri Krishna whom I saw standing there and holding over me his shade.... It was Narayana who was guarding and standing sentry over me Or I lay on the coarse blankets that were given me for a couch and I felt the arms of Sri Krishna around me, the arms of my Friend and Lover. This was the first use of the deeper vision He gave me I looked at the prisoners in the jail, the thieves, the murderers, the swindlers, and as I looked at them I saw Vasudeva, it was Narayana whom I found in these darkened souls and misused bodies.²⁴

The reader has only to recall the two instances, one of Andromeda chained

to the rock and Perseus coming to her rescue and the other of Sri Aurobindo in the Alipur jail with his Narayana coming to his rescue from the worldly prison. But this aspect needs an elaborate treatment which is rather beyond the scope of this small article.

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THE PERFECT TREE

RISING out of the forgotten seed of the Unknown
 It grows at night as by the light of the day
 Gathering colours from the sun
 And sparkling flowers from the stars,
 Drenching itself in the showers from on high
 It cleanses itself with the beauty of the moon.
 Taking the perfect curve of the vault above
 It radiates the delight of Being.
 Standing firm on the rocks of life
 It speaks to God in the language He alone understands.

JAYANTILAL

ESSAYS ON THE MAHĀBHĀRATA (III)

(Continued from the issue of June 1994)

Psychological, Philosophical and Legal Aspects of the Game of Dice

To continue the story of the game of dice. After having convinced Duryodhana that it would not be wise to fight the Pāṇḍavas in an open battle, Śakuni makes the fatal suggestion to the prince: “The Kaunteya (Yudhiṣṭhira) loves to gamble but does not know how to play. If the lordly king is challenged, he will not be able to resist.”⁶ We seem to have some evidence here that Yudhiṣṭhira in spite of all his virtue was attached to dice playing. On the other hand, when Vidura came to invite Yudhiṣṭhira on behalf of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the Pāṇḍava was anything but enthusiastic about the proposal.

“At a dicing, Steward, we surely shall quarrel
Who, knowing this, will consent to a game?”⁷

Yudhiṣṭhira is shocked to hear that Śakuni and other cunning players will be present. However, he agrees to accept the challenge in accordance with *dharma*: the invitation was sent by Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and Yudhiṣṭhira is obliged to accept it under the rules of the family law. Moreover, he seems to be under an oath to take up any challenge made to him, and thirdly, a sense of Fate, a sense of the inevitable overcomes him.

.. this world obeys the Creator's design—
I do not refuse now to play with those gamblers.
It is the King Dhṛtarāṣṭra's behest,
So I will not refuse, sage, to go to the game
A son will always respect the father:
I shall, Vidura, do as thou tellest me.
I am not unwilling to play Śakuni;
If I were, he would recklessly challenge me
In that hall .. Once challenged I will not refuse,
For so I have sworn for eternity ⁸

Since Yudhiṣṭhira is known to be truth-speaking, we can assume that he was not moved by his passion in following the invitation, as Śakuni had anticipated, but he rather saw with his calm rational mind that he simply had to face the challenge. It is a real dilemma: he knows with his reasoning mind that he is acting against reason. A higher factor has superseded the mental conclusion. Fate.

Fate [*daivam*] takes away our reason
 As glare blinds the eye.
 Man bound as with nooses
 Obeys the creator's sway ⁹

This verse spoken by Yudhishthira is probably the final answer to the question as to why he chose to accept Dhṛtarāstra's invitation. As in later situations, which we will analyze in the same way, Yudhishthira is actually trapped by his own strict interpretation of *dharma*. Dhṛtarāstra is to be obeyed, even though his intention is obviously evil, if not disastrous, because this is the family *dharma*. He cannot escape the situation and therefore calls it *daivam*.

We may venture the question here whether *dharma* as such, in a most general sense, as the total balance of justice, is really protected by such a literal adherence to a specific *dharma*, the rule of family obedience in this case. To put it more trenchantly, if an elder member of the family asks a junior member to do something wrong, should the junior obey? This is an ethical question with many implications.

Before Duryodhana got his father to arrange for the Game of Dice, he had to struggle a good deal to overcome the resistance of the blind ruler who preferred to consult with Vidura first. Duryodhana then threatened with suicide

The Steward will turn you down, if he comes in on this! And when you are turned down, lordly king, I shall kill myself! Let there be no doubt! When I am dead, be happy with your Vidura, king. Surely, you shall have the pleasure of all earth why bother about me?¹⁰

These two verses give us the essence of the relationship between Dhṛtarāstra and his jealous son. And Dhṛtarāstra yields, as always. The subsequent consultation with Vidura is only a formality. Dhṛtarāstra is quite sure of himself, and he too speaks of destiny: "The Gods in heaven will surely lend us their grace. Holy or unholy, beneficent or maleficent, the family game of dice shall proceed, for certainly it is so destined."

Nevertheless, the blind king in his typical way later on changed his mind, after having given the orders for the construction of the gambling hall, and tried to convince his son to follow Vidura's advice. This makes Duryodhana react with a long monologue on the unbearable envy he was suffering when seeing the grandeur of the Pāṇdavas. At the end he states in unambiguous terms his own philosophy of Machiavellian *Machtpolitik*:

The baron's way, great king, is to be devoted to victory, let it be Law or Unlaw (*dharma, adharma*)... as long as it is his way! .. Discontent is the root of fortune. That is why I want to be discontented. Only he who reaches

for the heights, king, is the ultimate politician. Should we not pursue selfish ways when we have power or are rich?¹¹

Dhṛtarāstra's mind is helplessly swayed under the combined impact of Śakuni's and Duryodhana's arguments. At the end he gives his final consent, unwilling though, and predicting trouble to his son. This following verse too gives the essence of his character. He is knowingly permitting his son to tread the path of *adharma*, but too weak to resist him.

The word thou speakest I do not like,
But be done as it pleases thee, king of men.
Thou shalt suffer hereafter, recalling your word,
For no such word shall prosper the lawful.¹²

(To be continued)

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Notes

- 6 Mahabharat 2 44 18
- 7 Mahabharat 2 52 10
- 8 Mahabharat 2 52 14-16
- 9 Mahabharat 2 52 18
- 10 Mahabharat 2 45 43-44
- 11 Mahabharat 2 50 15, 17-18

TO PĀṆINI'S TIME FROM PĀṆINI'S PLACE

HIS GEOGRAPHICAL POINTER AT HIS HISTORICAL PERIOD

1

MANY approaches have been made to the problem of dating Pāṇini, the greatest ancient Grammarian, but we are still short of a chronological consensus. It would seem that all possible directions of historical thought have already been followed—except just one. Even here the starting-point has been found, yet there has been no proper progression from it. We may try to go as far as we can and see how much certainty can be arrived at.

The path we have in mind may be considered the shortest cut. For, it begins nearest home—Pāṇini's home. Pāṇini's native-place was Śālātura, which A. Cunningham¹ has identified with Lahur, a small town four miles north-west of Ohind, in the angle of the river Kabul meeting the Indus in the province that in antiquity, including Pāṇini's time, was known as Gandhāra. Our approach to his time is with the double question: "What does he say of Gandhāra and into what age of history does his account of its political position fit?"

V.S. Agarwala, who—after asking some other questions—assigns² Pāṇini to c. 450 B.C., tells³ us: "Pāṇini mentions both the Vedic form Gāndhārī as the name of the *janapada* and its people in *sūtra* IV.1.169, and its later form Gandhāra in the *ganās* to IV.2.133 and IV.3.93. Two towns of Gandhāra are mentioned, *viz* Takshaśilā, its eastern capital, and Pushkalāvati, the western. The latter occurs in a *gana* as the name of a river on which the town stood. Pāṇini knows Gāndhārī as a kingdom (IV.1.169). It seems that soon after the death of Darius Gandhāra became independent as would appear from the manner of its mention as an independent *janapada*."

Agarwala is referring to the Achaemenid emperor of Persia, Darius I, who ruled from 522 to 486 B.C. In his very first inscription, the one of Behistun (c. 520-518),⁴ Darius mentions "Ga(n)dara" as a province of his empire; his later epigraphs of Persepolis and Naksh-e-Rustam (c. 518-515)⁵ add the province of "Hi(n)du", that is whatever was called Sindhu by the natives of that province in his day. Thus Gandhāra was a *janapada* dependent on Persia from at least 520 to 515 B.C. That, along with Sindhu, it continued to be so not only up to the end of Darius's reign but even beyond can be gathered from what we learn about his successor Xerxes (486-465 B.C.). According to Herodotus (VII.65.6), "Gandarians" as well as "Indians" fought in Xerxes's army against Greece. With his father's conquests as the background, we have no reason to suspect, as does R.C. Majumdar,⁶ that these might be mercenaries rather than regular subjects. Besides, we have epigraphic evidence to go by.

S. Chattopadhyaya⁷ directs us to the Persepolis Inscription of Xerxes, dis-

covered in 1936 “In it Xerxes gives the names of the countries under his rule. The list includes.. Gandhāra and ‘Hindu’.” Chattopadhyaya⁸ further writes: “. after giving a list of the subject countries, Xerxes states in his Persepolis inscription: ‘And within these countries was (another) where formerly Daivas were worshipped. Afterwards by the will of Ahura Mazda I destroyed the place of Daiva (-worship). And I proclaimed: Daivas thou shalt not worship Where formerly Daivas were worshipped there I worshipped Ahura Mazda and the divine fulfilments.’ The references to Daivas or Devas seem to point out that the religious revolution took place in some part of the Indian districts of the Achaemenid empire ”

H.C. Raychaudhuri⁹ comments on the same passage: “Xerxes refers to the suppression of religion in lands ‘where, before, the Daivas were worshipped; then, by Ahuramazda’s will, of such temples of the Daivas, I (the King) sapped the foundations.’ The Daiva-worshipping lands may have included the Indian satrapies.”

A.T. Olmstead¹⁰ has a different vision. He notes two new peoples in the list of Xerxes. One is the tribe of “the Dahae beyond the Araxes”, inhabitants of what in medieval times was called Dahistan, east of the Caspian (History knows of them as a Scythian nation’ Olmstead¹¹ himself so characterises them) The other additional satrapy is “that of the men of the Mountain Land (Akaufaka), which must be located north of Kabul in modern Afghanistan”, equivalent to medieval Kohistan. Olmstead¹² then takes us to what Xerxes says at the end of his list. “Xerxes goes on to tell us that ‘within these lands was a place where formerly the daevas were worshipped...’.” After quoting Xerxes on how the daeva-worship was suppressed, Olmstead¹³ concludes: “Obviously, the land in question must be on the Iranian border, where the supremacy of Ahuramazda had not yet been acknowledged; in the daeva-worshippers we must therefore see the hitherto unconquered Dahae ”

The conclusion does not inevitably follow. If Olmstead considers the Akaufaka no less than the Dahae country as an additional conquest, why restrict the daeva-worship to the latter? Further, are we to believe that in each satrapy of the empire the supremacy of Ahuramazda had to be acknowledged? It is impossible to think that all the nations mentioned in Herodotus’s famous Army Roster of Xerxes—the Arabians, Ethiopians, Libyans, Paphlagonians, Syrians, Phrygians, Lydians, etc.—were followers of Ahuramazda. We cannot even think of the Scythian tribes other than the Dahae as having been so. Ahuramazda would be asserted only against those with whose religion he might be particularly in conflict. We know that the Zoroastrian cult was to a great degree a forcible break-away from the Vedic. Although retaining the cult of fire, it stressed more than ever the Irānian reversal of the meaning of the Vedic word “deva” and, with a larger insistence, made it signify “demon” instead of “god”. Conversely we see in the Vedic cult the gradual degradation of the word “asura” whose

Irānīan form is “ahura”. Some anti-“asura” resurgence in districts between Persia and India may have fanned the flames of the anti-“deva” attitude of Zoroastrianism whose champion Xerxes was. The satrapies of “Ga(n)-dara” and “Hī(n)du” were the only ones likely to provide a field for the Achemenid emperor’s religious zeal to turn fanatic

Perhaps the men of the Mountain Land (Akaufaka) come into the picture not because they were freshly conquered but because within an already conquered region belonging to one of these satrapies they constituted a community in which his religious zeal was directly challenged. And, when we read what Olmstead says of “Gandara” under Darius, we cannot help taking “Akaufaka” to have been that part of it which was now picked out and temporarily set off on its own. “Administratively,” writes Olmstead¹⁴ of “Gandara”, “it was joined to Bactria, and it was not until shortly before 508 that it was organized as an independent satrapy, not under its ancient Iranian name of Paruparaesanna but with the native form of Gandara... In the tenth year of Darius (512 B.C.) a Babylonian slave woman was called Bahtarian (Bactrian)...; four years later (508) she was more accurately known as the Gandarian. ” “Gandara” thus extended right up to Bactria and in another direction towards Herat, on the way to which, as Agarwala¹⁵ informs us, were the “low peaks.. which in Irānīan geography were called *Uparisaena*, ‘The Falcon’s Perch’, and by the classical writers Paropamisus, with special reference to their low height”. In its extension towards Bactria—Pāṇini’s “*Bāhlīka*... in the extreme north of Afghanistan”, as Agarwala¹⁶ says—“Gandara” runs up to the dividing mountain-line¹⁷ “in the north-east of Kabul called Hindukush”¹⁸—“Hindukush and its martial tribes occupying the valleys of Kohistan-Kafiristan”¹⁹.

So Xerxes’s “Akaufaka” (—Kohistan) was definitely a part of Darius’s “Gandara” and no new territory. What was new was its isolation as an administrative unit. And the isolation was most probably due to the daeva-worship becoming anti-Irānīan and, through religious rampage, a force of political disruption.

If we realise what land Akaufaka was immediate neighbour to, we shall be more inclined to see some upset there. Olmstead²⁰ quotes from the same inscription: “Says Xerxes the king When I became king, there was within these lands which are written above one which was restless. Afterwards Ahuramazda brought me help. By the favour of Ahuramazda I smote that land and put it in its place.” Olmstead²¹ explains. “The restless land was Bactria. At the accession of Xerxes, his brother Ariamanes had set forth from that satrapy to contest the throne...” It is very probable that Akaufaka caught from Bactria the contagion of restlessness and tried to take religio-political advantage of the Bactrian situation.

In any case, the administrative isolation of Akaufaka by Xerxes spotlights the presence of “Gandara”. We may assuredly take, for several reasons, both

Gandhāra and Sindhu to have remained in Achaemenid hands till 465 B.C., the close of Xerxes's reign. Agrawala²² too admits this. But then we are pretty near his date for Pāṇini. Can it be shown that "soon after" 465 B.C.—within the next 15 years or so—Gandhāra shook off the Persian yoke and Pāṇini could characterise it as an independent kingdom?

The successor of Xerxes was Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.). Herodotus (c. 484-431) was his contemporary. Here we may listen again to Chattopadhyaya. Glancing at N.C. Debevoise's *Political History of Parthia* (p. 6), he²³ writes: "It is generally believed that the tribute list, as preserved in the account of Herodotus (III.89-95) is clearly from his own time, that of Artaxerxes I..., not, as he states, from the time of Darius." In that list also we find "Gandarians"—within the empire's seventh province.

From Olmstead we get a glimpse of some of the reasons why Herodotus is considered to be reflecting conditions under Artaxerxes I. The Behistun Inscription gives twenty-three satrapies whereas Herodotus makes Darius I administer only twenty.²⁴ "When compared with the six satrapal lists published by Darius, the list of Xerxes, and his army roster, the official list incorporated by Herodotus shows decided administrative changes."²⁵ The larger number of Darius is reduced by the union of some hitherto separate satrapies and there are some signs of territorial loss. For example, Arachosia is absent.²⁶ Among the instances of reorganisation are "two satrapies.. united in the case of the Sattagydiens, Gandarians, Dadicae, and Aparytae"²⁷

With the "Gandarians" vouched for we are already past Agrawala's date for Pāṇini: c. 450 B.C. So Pāṇini could not have lived between 520 and 424 B.C.

Can we even declare that "soon after" Artaxerxes I Gandhāra regained its liberty? Indeed, Olmstead,²⁸ with his eye on the tribute-list of Herodotus, asserts: "The Gandarians thus make their last appearance as Persian tribute-paying subjects in the lists of Artaxerxes, though the land continued to be known under the name of Gandhara down to classic Indian times. The Indians of Hindush nevertheless remained loyal to the reign of the last Darius, who recognized their loyalty and their fighting ability by placing them next to the Thousand Immortals who guarded his person."

Olmstead's view of Gandhāra's history is very much at fault. It is even difficult to understand when we look at his location of Hi(n)du or "Hindush". At the end of the above passage he²⁹ writes in reference to Herodotus's knowledge of the Indians: "There is, however, no mention of the chief city of Hindush, Taxila, which was rapidly taking the place of Peucela, the former capital of Gandhara." Olmstead's Hindush is the Punjab east of the Indus—as his first Map, "Satrapies of the Persian Empire", makes perfectly clear. It is actually what at one period in antiquity was a part of Gandhāra itself: Gandhāra lay on both sides of the Indus, with Pushkalāvati (Olmstead's "Peucela") its principal city to the river's west and Takṣaśilā ("Taxila") its main one to the river's east.³⁰

It is possible that in Achaemenid times as certainly in some later periods³¹ Gandhāra lay wholly beyond the Indus, the river forming its eastern boundary. But, if Hindush was the Punjāb, Gandhāra east of the Indus would practically be its gateway. Was it not at Ohind, four miles south-east of Pāṇini's Gandhāran native-place Śalātura, that Alexander crossed the Indus to march towards Taxila? With Gandhāra lost, how could the Achaemenids after Artaxerxes I hold Hindush and command its loyalty?

Besides, Gandhāra—in Olmstead's Map—is bounded on all sides and not only on its east by the Achaemenid empire. It has Thatagush (Sattagydia) to its south, Haraiva (Areia) to its west, Bakhtrish (Bactria) to its north-west and Saka Haumavarga (Scythians) to its north and north-west. If all these satrapies, over and above Hindush, were intact, could Gandhāra become independent or, having somehow revolted, keep its independence long?

Finally, Olmstead is not quite correct in telling us that we hear no more of Gandhāra in relation to the Achaemenids. It appears once again on the South Tomb at Persepolis, "usually assigned to Artaxerxes II (404-359 B.C.) on artistic grounds," as Chattopadhyaya³² observes. Exactly as in the Tomb Inscription of Darius I we get "Ga(n)dariya" no less than "Hī(n)duviya".³³ Majumdar³⁴ protests: ". . . though the inscription may belong to the time of Artaxerxes II..., the list of peoples is copied *verbatim* from the inscription of Darius. No sure inference can therefore be drawn from this record .." Majumdar's objection, by itself, is hardly conclusive. And, in any case, he is really concerned to doubt the inclusion of "Hī(n)duviya" in the post-Darius Persian empire: he has particularly in mind the question of "Indians" east of the Indus anywhere whatever and not only in the region of Taxila and in his opinion the "Indians" of "the last Darius" were mercenary troops: he does not expressly exercise scepticism over "Gandarians" who would be west of the Indus. But indeed no scepticism at all is warranted in any respect about either satrapy although a study of history shows, as we shall see, a state of great instability and even of disintegration in many parts of the empire during the reign of Artaxerxes II, proving a strong element of empty brag in his inscription.

It is precisely because of Olmstead's historical knowledge that he has made that sweeping assertion about the "Gandarians". He is aware of the inscription we are discussing. In three places he³⁵ refers to it and, in one, passes his judgment:³⁶ "The tombs of Xerxes, Artaxerxes I and Darius II at Naqsh-i-Rustam were without inscriptions; Artaxerxes II returned to the practice of Darius I, but only to copy untruthfully the names and reliefs of the subject peoples who supported the throne of his more powerful predecessor." Olmstead accuses Artaxerxes II of untruthfulness because the empire under him suffered "numerous revolts"³⁷ and the "subject peoples" could never have been quite the same as under Darius I. But in all of Olmstead's recital of those revolts there is no mention of any hostile stir in Gandhāra. And, in his general summing-up of

the period the unfavourable vicissitudes are not allowed to weigh too heavily against achievements. He³⁸ introduces a balancing note: "Artaxerxes was reaching the end of his long and, despite numerous revolts, moderately successful reign." There were no such conditions in 404-359 (or 358) B.C. as might lead us to suspect, even in the teeth of a complete lack of supporting facts, that Gandhāra had revolted.

Some historians, persuaded by a yet darker vision of the period, have gone yet further than Olmstead without any grounds. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*³⁹ informs us of "the rebellion of certain provinces under the later Achemenids": "Under Artaxerxes I and Darius II (423-404) these insurrections were still rare. But when the revolt of the Younger Cyrus against his brother (401) had demonstrated the surprising ease and rapidity with which a courageous army could penetrate into the heart of the empire . then indeed the imperial impotence became manifest. After that the revolts of the Satraps in Asia Minor and Syria were of everyday occurrence .. When in 400 Xenophon marched with the mercenaries of Cyrus from the Tigris to the Black Sea the authority of the King was nonexistent north of Armenia, and the tribes of the Pontic mountains, with the Greek cities on the coast, were completely independent. In Paphlagonia the native dynasts founded a powerful though short-lived kingdom, and the chieftains of the Bithynians were absolutely their own masters. The frontier provinces of India were also lost. Egypt finally asserted its independence in 404 .. Thus the reign of Artaxerxes II ended in 358 B.C with a complete dissolution of the imperial authority in the West "

True, in the very next breath the article tells us "His successor, Artaxerxes III Ochus, succeeded yet again in restoring the empire in its full extent... At his death in 338, immediately before the final catastrophe the empire in all appearance was more powerful and more firmly established than it had been since the days of Xerxes." Yes, the black period was only from 404 to 358 B.C. and we must infer from this article that—contrary to Olmstead's view—Gandhāra no less than Sindhu was restored to the Achemenids and remained in the empire till "the final catastrophe", the defeat of "the last Darius" by Alexander the Great. But, by throwing in "the frontier provinces of India" among the losses suffered, the article prompts the idea that for some years during 404-358 B.C. Gandhāra enjoyed independence and could make room for Pāṇini's date, though nearly half a century later than Agrawala's estimate. How wrong the idea is can easily be brought home in more than one way.

The conclusion of the tale of defections speaks of "the complete dissolution of the imperial authority in the West " Why is the East omitted? And, if it is omitted, what is the basis of the previous pronouncement on the frontier provinces of India? That they are added with sheer gratuitousness is revealed the moment we turn to the *Encyclopaedia's* own detailed article⁴⁰ on Artaxerxes II. There we have not only a closing picture less gloomy and more in conformity

with Olmstead: "When the long reign of Artaxerxes II came to its close in the autumn of 358 the authority of the empire had been restored almost everywhere." We have also an utter reticence on the frontier provinces of India: not the slightest hint is there of any loss; they are not on the scene at all. And towards the end we read: "About the history of Artaxerxes II we are comparatively well informed from Greek sources" Then the various sources are named. Evidently, none of them breathes a word suggesting the defection of Gandhāra or Sindhu.

Among the sources the author most in a position to report such an event was Ktesias, who spent seventeen years at the Persian court and was physician to Artaxerxes II.⁴¹ "He wrote a treatise on India, fragments of which alone have survived in the writings of later authors."⁴² Ktesias's *Indica*, no doubt, is described by Rawlinson as being "full of extravagant stories of monstrous people and strange animals" and as adding "practically nothing to our knowledge of India".⁴³ But the significant fact is that, sitting in Persia at a time of trouble for the empire, he could collect materials for his book. A.W. William Jackson⁴⁴ cites this as one of the proofs of a "close and continued connexion" between Persia and its Indian dominions: "Ktesias, who was resident physician at the Persian court about the beginning of the fourth century B.C., could hardly have written his *Indica* without the information he must have received regarding India from envoys sent as tribute-bearers to the Great King or from Persian officials who visited India on state business as well as from his intercourse with travellers and traders of the two countries."

We may add: "The direct touch with tribute-bearing envoys and returned Persian officials and persons moving to and fro between suzerain Persia and subject Gandhāra and Sindhu need not be called in question just because it is from Ktesias' work that, in Majumdar's words,⁴⁵ 'the grotesque legends about India, which were favourite topics of many classical and medieval authors, are mostly derived'. These legends are not necessarily inventions without roots in India itself. Megasthenes whom Seleucus Nicator sent as ambassador to Sandrocottus (Chandragupta) of Palibothra (Pātaliputra) has also been blamed for purveying fantastic tales. Yet nobody denies his actual stay in India over years, his day-to-day contact with Indians. And we may say of Ktesias what we can assert about Megasthenes. All the strange stories of Megasthenes can be traced to Indian literature. Even the 'gold-digging ants', in relation to which the most serious charge against him has been framed, are, as E.R. Bevan⁴⁶ observes, 'mentioned in the Mahābhārata'."

Nor is it true that Ktesias has communicated nothing of historical value. A statement of his on some presents received from India by his royal patron is of considerable importance—especially to our inquiry. D.H. Gordon,⁴⁷ asking how far back in time goes the presence of iron in India and remarking that archaeologically Indian iron is not very ancient, brings in a counterbalance: "it

does seem likely, if certain early writers are to be believed, that iron must have been known in India prior to the earliest evidence yet found.” Then Gordon⁴⁸ discusses the testimony of Herodotus and Ktesias. They are the earliest writers to make indisputable mention of iron in connection with India. “In the case of the iron-tipped arrows mentioned by Herodotus as being carried by the Indian contingent of Xerxes’s army, these of course could have been produced anywhere, though probably made in India; on the other hand Ktesias makes a point of stressing the excellence of the two swords of Indian steel presented to Artaxerxes Mnemon, which looks as though the reputation for good quality of steel that was to bring an important trade in iron and steel with the West to the Cheras (Seres) was already in a fair way to being established. In view of all this, unless it can be shown that the iron arrowheads of Xerxes’s Indians were acquired by them in foreign parts, and that when Ktesias spoke of swords of Indian steel, he did not know what he was talking about, iron must have been in use by 450 B.C. in all the more civilized urban centres of India, in spite of the negative evidence obtained so far by excavation.” Finally, Gordon⁴⁹ pronounces: “It is... not known from what part of India the Ktesias swords came, and it is possible that they came from the North.”

For our purposes we may assess Gordon’s information in three steps: (1) the “presents” to Artaxerxes II, named Mnemon, of Indian manufacture have the appearance of a tribute; (2) their being “swords of Indian steel” links them to Xerxes’s Indian contingent’s “iron-tipped arrows”; (3) just as those weapons came as a mark of service to Xerxes from Indian subjects, so too these weapons seem to have come from the same subjects as a tribute to Artaxerxes II.

All things considered, the Achaemenid sway over “the frontier provinces of India” must be considered intact right down to 358 B.C. And, when we are told that under Artaxerxes III Ochus the empire was restored in its full extent, we may well believe that not only till the end of this king’s reign in 338 B.C. but also till the end of the last Achaemenid Darius III in 330 B.C. did “the frontier provinces of India” stay under Persian rule. All the more must we think so on learning from Arrian (*Anabasis*, III, 8) of the troops Darius III had massed against Alexander the Great. One detail we have gathered through Olmstead. Some more are there. Among those troops were “the Indian tribes on the Bactrian border”, along with the Sogdians and the Bactrians, all under the command of the satrap of Bactria.⁵⁰ In addition, there were “the Indian hillmen”, with the Arachosians, commanded by the satrap of Arachosia.⁵¹ Then, again, “the Indian troops from the hither side of the Indus” were present with some fifteen elephants.⁵²

It may be objected: “The name ‘Gandarian’ does not figure in Arrian’s history. Whatever else of ‘the frontier provinces of India’ may still be serving the Achaemenids as subjects, Gandhāra has disappeared.”

The point of this objection is obviously at work also in the mind of

Olmstead, leading him to that remark of his: "The Gandarians .. make their last appearance as Persian tribute-paying subjects of Artaxerxes [I]... The Indians of Hindush nevertheless remained loyal to the reign of the last Darius."

There are three slips in the objection. In the first place, to include the Persian subjects of "Hī(n)du" in Arrian's list and omit those of "Ga(n)dara" is to render meaningless the clear-cut phrase of Arrian "the Indian tribes on the Bactrian border." Of Gandhāra Olmstead himself has recounted how "administratively it was joined to Bactria" before 508 B.C. and how a Babylonian slave-woman who was called Bactrian in 512 was redesignated more accurately as a Gandarian four years later when Gandara was organised as an independent satrapy. Gandhāra is proved to have touched Bactria under the Achemenids. So "the Indian tribes on the Bactrian border" must be inhabitants of Gandhāra in the extreme north-western part of that province. Perhaps there was an overflow of Gandhārans beyond the Hindukush and these constituted Arrian's first category. By no stretch of the geographical imagination can the people of "Hī(n)du" be located on the Bactrian border. In Olmstead's own vision,⁵³ "Hindush" lies to the east of the Indus, with Taxila its capital.

In the second place, to charge Arrian with ignoring the "Gandarians" is to miss the import of his "Indian hillmen". We can specifically identify these from two sources. One source is Achemenid epigraphy itself. We have gathered from Olmstead that the people to the north of Kabul in modern Afghānistān and in what was in medieval times Kohistān, were named by Xerxes in his Persepolis Inscription "the men of the Mountain Land (Akaufaka)" and we have shown that, if Darius's "Ga(n)dara" extended right up to Bactria, these men who can be equated with Arrian's "Indian hillmen" must belong to Gandhāra. Our second source is Pāṇini. Agrawala⁵⁴ writes: "Pāṇini refers to a number of *Saṅghas* as *āyudhajīvin* (V.3 114-117), meaning those who lived by the professions of arms. . The most advanced *āyudhajīvin Saṅghas* belonged to the Vāhika country (V 3.114), which comprised the region from the Indus to the Beas and Sutlej. . These were the Yaudheyas, Ksudrakas, Mālavas, etc. A very important group of martial *Saṅghas* comprised those occupying *Parvata* [(IV.3 91)] or some mountainous region in the north-west. . Evidently this *Parvata* region must have been outside the plains of the Vāhika country, which brings us to the highlands of the north-west as the home-land of the *āyudhajīvins*. The *Kāśikā* mentions the *Hṛdgolīyas* of Hṛdgola, probably Hī-lo of Yuan Chwang (modern Hīḍḍa south of Jalalabad); *Andhakavartīyāh* of Andhakavarta, perhaps Andhkui, a district in the north-east of Afghanistan (*Imp. Gaz.*, Afghanistan, p. 80), and *Rohitāgirīyas* of Rohitāgiri, which last is important as reminiscent of Roha, old name of Afghanistan. All this portion of the country is up to the present day peopled by hardy and warlike mountaineers... Arrian mentions these mountainous Indians as fighting in the army of Darius against Alexander the Great... It was these *Parvatīya Āyudhajīvins* that offered stout resistance to Alexander in Bactria

and Gandhāra The approximate location of these Parvatīyas should be in the region of the Hindukush on both sides of it Roha, of medieval geographers, Rohitāgiri of Pāṇini, the ten *mandalas* of Rohita (Sabhā, 24.16) and Rohitā girīyas of the *Kāśikā*, all together point to the mountainous regions of central and north-east Afghanistan as being the *Parvata* country, which name survives in Kohistan."

One wonders why Agrawala brings in both sides of the Hindukush instead of only one and couples Bactria with Gandhāra. Pāṇini's *Ganapātha* (V.3 117) gives Parśvādi as among the Āyudhajīvin Sanghas and the *Kāśikā* mentions Bāhlika (Balkh, Bactria) as one of the twelve people of Parśvādi⁵⁵ but it is not called Parvatīya. It is central and north-east rather than north Afghānistān that constitutes the mountainous country which stoutly resisted Alexander as well as fought in the army of Darius III. But the occurrence of Arrian and Gandhāra in Agrawala's treatment of mountainous Indians implies that Gandhāra was still in Persian hands when Alexander attacked the last Achemenid.

Here is a puzzling implication in view of Agrawala's assertion that "soon after the death of Darius (I) Gandhāra became independent". Here Agrawala would seem to contradict himself and unconsciously advance an argument against his own dating of Pāṇini

Thus Arrian is proved to mean the "Gandarians" as having been the subjects of Darius III and having fought for him not just in one batch but in two.

Perhaps even the third batch—"the Indian troops from the hither side of the Indus", with some fifteen elephants—hailed from Gandhāra. There is a regular geographical succession, from the Bactrian border through central and north-east Afghānistān to the region immediately west of the Indus This region below Kohistān is the limited Gandhāra most commonly known to history. If, as Olmstead conceives, "Hi(n)du" lay to the east of the Indus, Arrian's third batch has necessarily to be "Gandarian". Then we have to think that either "Hi(n)du" had broken away from the Achemenid empire or it received no summons from Darius III. But, if Olmstead's idea is wrong, "the Indian troops from the hither side of the Indus" could be from "Hi(n)du", a region which might be more closely linked to the river and therefore directly namable as its western "side". It would not be below Kohistān but elsewhere along the river.

To guess at its location we may advert to a phrase in the Susa Inscription of Darius I, which can make Arrian's "elephants" a geographical pointer. After saying that for the construction of his palace he got "teak" from "Ga(n)dara", Darius tells us that "ivory" came from "Hi(n)du".⁵⁶ "Hi(n)du" must be a country of elephants to be specified as a supplier of "ivory". And its precise situation may be illuminated by the fact that, along with "Hi(n)du", Darius mentions "Arachosia" as sending "ivory"⁵⁷ To the east and south-east of Arachosia was the lower Indus valley which, as Majumdar⁵⁸ observes, "was specifically known as Sindhu and was mentioned as such in *Baudhāyana*

Dharma-Sūtra.. ” This Sindhu, adjoining Arachosia, may well constitute with the latter a source of ivory for Darius. Besides, do we not have from Herodotus (IV.44)⁵⁹ as Darius's specific accomplishment in Indian territory that he had the Indus explored down to the sea and that he “subdued the Indians” in the course of his project for “regular use of the southern ocean”?

To return once more to our proper theme: in the third place, Arrian's omission of the name “Gandarians” is nothing strange in the historians of Alexander's invasions. Cunningham⁶⁰ has emphasised: “The district of Gandhāra is not mentioned by Alexander's professed historians.” But it is certain that they knew of the district; Arrian⁶¹ himself names several times the chief Gandhāran city Puṣkalāvati as Peucelaitis near the river Cophen (ancient Kubhā, modern Kābul). A century earlier than Arrian, Pliny⁶² unmistakably indicates that “Indian” implies “Gandarian”. He has the phrase. “The river Cophes and Peucolaitis, a city of India.”

Thus we have no grounds to speak of the defection of Gandhāra from the Achaemenid empire at any time from practically the start of the reign of Darius I (522 B.C.) to the termination of that of Darius III (330 B.C.). And we should be fully justified to endorse Chattopadhyaya's explanation⁶³ of “one curious fact” out of which some historians have made capital. He writes: “When Alexander crossed the Hindukush, he met no Persian officials east of the mountain and this has led to the theory that the Indian provinces were finally lost to the Achaemenians in the reign of Artaxerxes II. The Persians seem to have left the native states on the Indian borderland and the Punjāb to retain their autonomy evidently on the condition of payment of tribute and the satraps represented the imperial personage on the Indian soil. So long as these Indian chiefs obeyed their suzerain, there was no necessity of Persian officials, and the offices of the satraps were worked evidently by the Indian staffs. Buhler has pointed out this state of affairs long ago, and it was to this Indo-Persian intercourse that he ascribed the birth of the new script of Kharosthī.”

We may make a supporting comment: “The appointment of Indian satraps for political or administrative reasons was practised also by Alexander. Mookerji⁶⁴ writes “He divided Greek India into six Satrapies, three on the west side of the Indus, and three on the east. The three western Satraps were Greeks, but not the eastern Satraps who were all Indians.”

Now to sum up. in the period from 522 to 330 B.C. Pāṇini's independent kingdom of Gandhāra is impossible.

Can we put it later than 330 B.C.? Almost immediately after this date Alexander took over the Persian possessions. And, among the satrapies to the west of the Indus, the name “Paropamisadae” is, as Mookerji⁶⁵ tells us, “the Greek equivalent of Babylonian *Parruparaesana* = Old Persian *Gandāra* = Sanskrit *Gandhāra* with its capital at Puṣkalāvati.” After Alexander's death in June 323 B.C., Paropamisadae passed into the hands of one of his generals,

Seleucus Nicator. Seleucus, in c 305 B.C., struck a treaty with the Indian king Sandrocottus, whom modern historians identify with Chandragupta Maurya, and transferred this satrapy, along with the others in his charge, to that emperor.⁶⁶

With the Mauryas on the throne of Magadha, the chance of an independent Gandhāra in the period after c 305 B.C. is nil. Aśoka whose accession is usually dated to 269 B.C., claims in his Rock Edicts V and XIII Gandhāra as a part of his dominion—and Aśoka reigned up to 233 B.C. After this point Pāṇini is unthinkable. In fact, nobody has even dreamt of placing him lower than 300 B.C. At present, according to Agrawala's own survey⁶⁷ of the opinions of scholars, "the range of Pāṇini's date is . . . limited to a period of three centuries between the seventh and the fourth century B.C." And Agrawala has himself taken care not to violate the lower limit. He is there at one with Raychaudhuri⁶⁸ who judges that Pāṇini must have lived after the Persian conquest of Gandhāra but before the fourth century B.C. and that all the evidence accomodates itself with a date in the fifth century. A.A. Macdonnell,⁶⁹ who had once gone so far as to give Pāṇini c. 300 B.C., later revised his estimate to 450.

What has led Western scholars to put the grammarian so late was his use of the term *Yavanānī*, which *Kātyāyana* and *Patañjali* interpreted as *yavanānilipi* or "Yavana script" and which those scholars understood as "Greek script" because "Yavana" or its Prākṛit form "Yona" has often connoted "Greek" in Indian literature and is strongly believed to mean the same in Aśoka's Edicts. But it has been realised that the Behistun Inscription of Darius I also employs the term "Yauna", from "Ionia", to denote the Achaemenid emperor's Greek subjects and that, through his possession of Gandhāra, this term could have passed on to Pāṇini the Gandhāran and got Sanskritised in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (IV.1.49). Hence the willingness all around to go beyond Alexander's time yet stay on the hither side of Darius's inscription. But must *Yavanānī* relate to the Greeks? We shall discuss the question later. In the meantime, as we have seen, the hither side of the Behistun Inscription has no room for the Gandhāran grammarian. The approach to his time from his place carries us beyond Darius I. How much earlier can we go to discover Gandhāra, *à la* Pāṇini, as a "kingdom", "an independent janapada"?"

(To be continued)

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Notes

1 *Ancient Geography of India*, edited by S N Majumdar (Calcutta, 1924), pp 66-7

2 *India as Known to Pāṇini* (Lucknow, 1953), pp 455-75

3 *Ibid*, p 49

- 4 R K Mookerji, "Foreign Invasions", *The Age of Imperial Unity* edited by R C Majumdar and A D Pusalker (Bombay, 1953), p 41
- 5 *Ibid*
- 6 "The Achaemenian Rule in India", *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol 25, p 157
- 7 "The Rule of the Achaemenids", *ibid*, p 196
- 8 *Ibid*, p 202
- 9 *An Advanced History of India*, edited by R C Majumdar, H C Raychaudhuri and Kalinkar Datta (London, 1946), p 64
- 10 *History of the Persian Empire* (Phoenix Books, Chicago, Third Impression, 1960), p 231
- 11 *Ibid*, p 515
- 12 *Ibid*, p 232
- 13 *Ibid*
- 14 *Ibid*, p 144, with fn 37
- 15 Agrawala, *op cit*, pp 40-1
- 16 *Ibid*, p 447
- 17 *Ibid*, p 48
- 18 *Ibid*, p 40
- 19 *Ibid*
- 20 Olmstead, *op cit*, p 231
- 21 *Ibid*
- 22 Agrawala, *op cit*, pp 467-8
- 23 Chattopadhyaya, *op cit*, p 196
- 24 Olmstead, *op cit*, pp 110, 291
- 25 *Ibid*, p 291
- 26 *Ibid*, p 292
- 27 *Ibid*
- 28 *Ibid*
- 29 *Ibid*
- 30 B N Barua, *Asoka and His Inscriptions* (Calcutta, 1946), Part I, p 93
- 31 *Ibid*
- 32 Chattopadhyaya, *op cit*, p 197
- 33 *Ibid*
- 34 Majumdar, *op cit*, pp 164-5
- 35 Olmstead, *op cit*, p 229, fn 50, p 424, with fn 18 In fn 50 of p 229, there is a printing mistake III instead of II is put after "Artaxerxes"
- 36 *Ibid*, p 424
- 37 *Ibid*, p 422
- 38 *Ibid*
- 39 Edition 1960, Vol 17, pp 555, 556
- 40 Vol 2, pp 448-9
- 41 Olmstead, *op cit*, p 380
- 42 *The Classical Accounts of India*, edited by R C Majumdar (Calcutta, 1960), Introduction, pp xi-xii
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- 48 *Ibid*
- 49 *Ibid*, p 163
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- 52 *Ibid*
- 53 Olmstead, *op cit*, pp 144, 145
- 54 Agrawala, *op cit*, pp 434-5
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- 56 Chattopadhyaya, *op cit*, p 195
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- 59 *Herodotus The Histories*, translated by Aubrey de Séincourt (The Penguin Classics, Harmondsworth, 1960), p 256
- 60 Cunningham, *op cit*, p 56
- 61 *Anabasis*, IV xxii, xxviii, *Indica*, I, IV
- 62 *Natural History*, VI, 17 (21) See *The Classical Accounts*, p 341
- 63 Chattopadhyaya, *op cit*, pp 202-3
- 64 *Chandragupta Maurya and His Times* (Madras, 1943), p 45
- 65 *Ibid*, p 59, fn 1
- 66 *Ibid*, pp 59-60
- 67 Agrawala, *op cit*, p 456
- 68 *Early History of the Vaishnava Sect*, 1936, p 30
- 69 *India's Past* (Oxford, 1927), p 138

A TREASURY OF ANCIENT TAMIL LEGENDS

(Continued from the issue of June 1994)

33. CUT OFF MY HEAD AND BECOME RICH

THAT was the time when the entire land of the Tamils was speaking of the glory of a man. He had vowed to drive away poverty from the land. He was Kumanan, chieftain of the Mudhiram Hills in Kongunadu (covering the present districts of Salem, Coimbatore and Nilgiri Hills). Kumanan made everybody happy. Whoever went seeking his help received to their satisfaction from his ever-giving hands.

“Ask Kumanan and it shall be given,”—a saying gained currency, and made someone in the Tamil Country unhappy. He was Elangkumanan, Kumanan’s younger brother.

Jealousy gnawed at his heart and Elangkumanan became restless whenever anyone spoke highly of the Giver. Jealousy, having killed his sleep, began to sow seeds of evil thoughts in him.

Gathering an army by paying the soldiers through his nose, he threatened his brother, drove him out of the land and usurped the throne.

As we know, one evil thought begets another, the usurper turned a tyrant. Unable to bear his people still speak highly of the Giver, he made his men beat the tom-tom and announce in public that whoever brought Kumanan’s head would be rewarded with a thousand pieces of gold.

Everyone cursed the tyrant behind his back and murmured: “No one endowed with a human heart would ever think of doing such a thing even if the royal treasury is placed at his feet.”

It was during this time that a poverty-stricken poet named Parunthalai Satthanar happened to hear of Kumanan the Giver. Since the man who passed on the information to the poet wasn’t aware of the present state of things in the Mudhiram hills, Satthanar with great hopes of putting his poverty to flight began his long and arduous journey on foot.

Several days later he reached the Mudhiram hills. Dog-tired with the uphill journey, he sat on the pail of the very first house he came across. Attracting the attention of the old lady in the house, he asked for water.

The old lady quenched his thirst. “You must be a poet, I am sure,” said she.

“Yes! I am,” replied the poet beaming. “But how did you find out?”

The old lady chortled. “Your sorrow-laden face, your lean and haggard body and your dreamy eyes speak of you as a poet... Well then! I have not seen poets for a long time. What brought you here, to the hills?”

“I’m here to meet Kumanan. I’m sure he would reward me amply for my panegyrics on him.”

The old lady shushed him and said in a hushed tone: "Kumanan is no more the chieftain. His brother usurped the throne and drove Kumanan out. Don't go anywhere near the present chieftain. He'll hack you to death if he knows that you are a poet. He believes that poets are useless fellows and they exploited his brother's magnanimity."

"But then I must by all means see Kumanan. Tell me, grandma, where I can meet him."

"The woodcutters told me that they had seen Kumanan in the jungle."

Satthamar dashed off to the jungle. Days of wandering in the thick jungle brought him to a hut.

"Your Majesty," called Satthamar. Out came Kumanan. He smiled at the poet, hugged him with all respect and led him inside the hut.

"Your Majesty! My wife and I have not eaten for several days. Our suckling daughter uselessly sucks her mother's teats. Toadstools have sprouted in our unused oven... Hence I have come a long way to seek some favour from you."

A couple of tear-drops trickled out of Kumanan's eyes. He said, "It's a pity that you didn't seek my favour when I had everything. But now when I am thrown off my throne, all that I have with me is only my sword and a few wild fruits and roots." Satthamar ate the latter to his stomach's fill and belched with satisfaction. Then Kumanan, as if some idea had dawned on him exclaimed, "Wait a minute. I've a thousand gold pieces in the future for you. All that you have to do is to cut my head off my neck and carry it to my brother. He will make you rich."

Shocked stood Satthamar.

"Don't hesitate... I'm of no use to anyone here. Loneliness is killing me. And before I die let me make you rich," Kumanan said, offering his sword to the poet.

The poet's hands began to tremble as he took the sword. He wondered at the magnanimity of Kumanan. "Truly, this man deserves the title 'Giver'," he mumbled.

Sword in hand he shouted, "Long live Kumanan, the Giver." He repeated it several times and made ready to journey back to the hills.

"Oh, Poet! What use would that sword be to you, when you have a mightier weapon than that," Kumanan asked.

Satthamar lent a deaf ear as he started to walk at a great speed.

On his way he killed a rabbit, sprinkled its blood all over his face and torso, and smeared it on the blade of the sword.

"Long live Elangkumanan... I've killed Kumanan with his own sword. Here is his sword. Let me have my one thousand pieces of gold", said the poet jubilantly as he entered the chieftain's court.

The very sight of the blood-stained sword made Elangkumanan nervous. He examined the sword. A sudden darting pain crept into his heart. There was a

sudden transformation in him. He knelt down and cried, "This is certainly my brother's sword. But I never expected that anyone could kill him." Hot tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Anybody can kill anyone provided there is no resistance," remarked Satthānar casually.

While Elangkumanan blinked, Satthānar continued, "Can you name anything on earth that is of permanent value? What is this life if not a bubble destined to burst at any time? The good that we do to others lives after us... It is our good deeds that turn our ephemeral life into an eternal one. And I approached your brother in the jungle and told him of my penury. At first he shed tears for he had nothing to offer me. But then he gave me his sword and told me of the reward that awaits his head. He helped everyone while he was alive. And in his death too he helped someone. Truly he is Kumanan, the Giver .. His name is bound to become a synonym for 'givers'.

Elangkumanan wept aloud: "Oh! What have you done to my brother, who was more than a brother to me? You've exploited my brother's magnanimity."

"Yes! I did as you have done earlier," straight came the reply.

"What a fool am I to announce a reward for my brother's head? I wish my brother were back again on his throne so that I might follow him in all his deeds "

"What? You wish your brother to be back again? The sword that killed Kumanan will bring him back alive. If you want I can bring him back from the land of the dead."

"Yes! Please do... I'll give you double the amount for which you killed my brother "

Satthānar led Elangkumanan to the jungle.

Elangkumanan jumped for joy at the sight of his brother who was alive.

Kumanan hugged him forgetting all the atrocities he had done to him. The tyrant in Elangkumanan died. He descended the throne for Kumanan to ascend.

Satthānar's unused oven became active once again

34. ORI, THE MASTER ARCHER

Van Paranar had his own troupe of singers. People thronged to hear them sing to the accompaniment of their musical instruments. In fact, everyone invariably said that it was Van Paranar who made them realize that they had ears.

But no one had heard the troupe sing ever since it had returned from the Kolli Hills.

"It is quite disappointing."

"What? Have they all become lazy?"

“They are professional singers. Who’ll feed them if they don’t sing?”

“What really has happened to them?”

Several such questions circulated among the people. Since no one knew what was on the minds of the singers, they couldn’t arrive at any conclusion.

One evening when Van Paranar went for a stroll, someone told him of the doubts he and his troupe had raised in the minds of the public “I would like to know why,” he said

Van Paranar smiled broadly. He said: “That’s a story. . the story of how we were made lazy.”

“Well! Let me hear you speak, if not sing.”

Van Paranar began

“My troupe and I having heard of the magnanimity of the master archer Ori, the chieftain of the Kolli Hills, desired to see him at least once in our lifetime.

In order to reach the Kolli Hills we had to pass through a thick forest. The trumpeting sound of an elephant that shook the entire forest sent a chill down our spines. We hid ourselves behind broad-trunked trees and thick bushes. But we were curious to know what was going on.

Our vigilant eyes witnessed an elephant caught between two hunters. One was a tiger, crouching and getting ready to pounce on it, and the other was a broad-shouldered archer sitting in a tree and aiming his arrow at it. The big animal’s plight was akin to that of an ant on a stick with both ends aflame.

The panic-stricken elephant moved a few steps to the front and then to the back. Its restless movements disappointed both the hunters for fear that they might miss their aims.

Yet at one unexpected moment an arrow whizzed past us swishing the air. The elephant trumpeted, and the tiger growled, for the last time in their lives.

The archer climbed down the tree, looked at the two dead animals, guffawed and moved a few yards away. A dead deer was bleeding through a wound made by his arrow, and close by was a dying boar bleeding profusely from the deep cut his arrow had made.

I was simply flabbergasted. What a powerful man is this archer? What a good shot is he to kill four animals with a single arrow?

As I continued to wonder if he was human or divine, my eyes followed him.

The archer stooped down. His hand held the shaft of his arrow sticking out of a carcass. My God! That must be the fifth one his arrow had killed. Curiosity drove me to rush towards the archer. My entire troupe followed suit.

He pulled his arrow out of a monitor lizard, half the size of a crocodile.

I looked at the man as if he were from another world.

The archer cleaned the arrowhead on his garment made of tiger’s skin and slipped it into his quiver.

“When all other animals were unable to hold my arrow, this strong-willed

allow, monitor-lizard, did not let it go out of him,” the archer said and smiled.

My joy knew no bounds for who could that archer be if not Ori, whom we had come all the way to see.

I burst into a song, chorused by my troupe to the accompaniment of melodious musical instruments.

Elated, Ori cut the deer he had killed, cooked the venison and served that delicious dish to the entire troupe.

Happy at the first dinner, we entertained Ori with song, dance and music.

The next day Ori led us to the Kolli Hills. On his way to his palace he showed us *Kolli Paavai* (*Paavai*=puppet; a charming woman).

Kolli Paavai was an aesthetically designed woman chiselled out of stone. It had a specially built-in device that brought the puppet to life when necessary.

She became alive as soon as she suspected any stranger upon the Kolli Hills. When alive she was an attractive woman with raven tresses and large luminous eyes. She sported a smile as charming as a crescent moon. And when she smiled that smile no stranger could resist the temptation of hugging her. She too would respond and embrace the stranger so tightly that his lungs would burst.

But to the natives of the Kolli Hills she was a guardian deity. Everyone in the Hills worshipped her. She forecast the coming danger by shedding tears. When anyone saw tears trickling out of the puppet's eyes, they brought it to the notice of their chieftain who took immediate steps to avert the oncoming danger.

We were delighted to see such a thinking puppet before we moved into Ori's palace.

We sang and danced for Ori's people, stayed with them for a couple of weeks. And when we took leave of Ori, he gave everyone of us a couple of elephants and a lot of gold and precious stones. Our visit to the Kolli Hills made us so rich that we have more than enough to support ourselves and our progeny.”

Van Paranar stopped

His doubt cleared, the inquirer envied Van Paranar and his troupe.

“Do you understand now, why we sing no more?” asked Van Paranar with a sigh. Feigning anger he added: “It's Ori who has made us lazy. We won't entertain him again, for if we do, he will make us lazier.”

(More legends on the way)

P RAJA

BALKRISHNA PODDAR

BALKRISHNA with his vibrant enthusiasm is no more with us physically. His one-pointed efforts were directed most sincerely and honestly towards spreading the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in every possible nook and corner of this earth.

At times it was felt that if possible he would have taken these beloved books of his Gurus even to the moon and other planets.

SABDA and its working were his whole-hearted concern. The very last sentence he spoke a few minutes before he breathed his last on 12th May 1994 was, "Please tell Uday to look for a good worker for SABDA."

*

She Kept Her Promise

We would like to share with our readers a beautiful incident. Some time in 1970 when Balkrishna went to see the Mother on a Sunday morning (as he did each Sunday in connection with books—publishing and organising the sales), the Mother asked him, "Where is your beard?"

Balkrishna was greatly surprised and said, "Mother, I never had a beard."

"But, mon petit, I have always seen you with a beard."

Balkrishna looked at her, not knowing what to say to her very emphatic statement. Then Champaklalji, who was always around, came very close and said, "Mother, Balkrishna has never kept a beard."

The Mother shook her head and once again said, "But I have always seen him with his beard. Never like this."

Balkrishna was too amazed to venture any question. But Champaklalji in his typical endearing way asked, "Then, Mother, what does it signify—your seeing him with a beard always?"

"Maybe I am seeing him in some previous birth of his."

"Who?"

"I don't know the name. Maybe it will come. I will tell you some day."

And she kept her promise. After November 1973 Balkrishna used to often wonder aloud in his prayers, "Mother, whom did you see in me with the beard?"

After 20 years, in 1994, in the Ashram Nursing Home, a friend came to see him. He talked of a dream-vision of his. He had seen the Mother and some other persons; amongst them was Balkrishna. But the Mother called him by another name.

The friend did not quite remember the name, he had only a faint recollection. "Madhu. . . Madhu something, a poet in South India or some Saint or. . ."

"Madhuchhandas? a Vedic rishi?" Balkrishna asked.

“Yes, that is the name!”

“Ah... ah... after 20 long years the Mother has revealed her secret.... Ah, the Mother is taking care of me, she has not left me, she is so kind... all these years, she heard my prayer, ‘Whom did you see in me?’ She kept her promise, she kept her promise.”

*

Balkrishna was born in 1933, Navajata’s youngest brother. A brilliant commerce-graduate, while still doing his studies of Law he had an intense eagerness to join the Ashram. The Mother gave him permission and asked him to bring the SABDA account-books from Bombay with him

The day he arrived, the Mother saw him and, giving him the SABDA account-books, asked him to start SABDA, Pondicherry, at the age of 20. And he put every part of himself into this task given to him by her. In the early years she guided him step by step, even personally signed the monthly accounts and the postal money-order coupons of SABDA.

We are sure her Presence, along with his own enveloped by hers, will go on leading from success to success this glorious enterprise.

SUNANDA

LET ME NOT OFFEND THEE

I QUESTION Thee sometimes, O my Lord:

Let me not offend Thee

With what high hopes

Thou must have bestowed

Thy jewelled-spark-soul upon me!

An innocent fool I fathom

High seas in search of That,

Who abides blithely in my own depths.

Lead me to Thy Fire-cavern

Where I’ll see Thy golden Face

And will be drawn inexorably by Thy gaze

To emerge in Thy argent Dawn,

To merge in Thy pure Bliss.

SHYAM KUMARI

THE NAME OF THE LORD

ON the waters, mountains and the infinite sky
Without letters inscribed is the Name of the Lord—
Mantra is that Name.

By its power through the ages the force of tapas
Brightly burns in millions of hearts.
A touch of that spark kindles the fire of sacrifice
In the altar of the body.

The lotus dances to the rhythm of the Lord's Name
Even in the turbid mire;
Piercing through the hard stone gush the fountains;
The desert smiles in the red lilies;
And the funeral pyres sing the song of new life.

The lifeless stone temple can light
The steadfast flame of faith
In the heart's dark shrine—
Only because it bears in its womb
The beauty of that Eternal Name
Its touch transforms the pale ashes
Into brilliant diamonds.

May thy ineffable Name, O Lord,
Ring forever on the lyre of my soul
And blossom anew my life's dry bowers
Seared by the lust of the senses.
May thy nectar turn, O Lord,
All poison into sweet goodness.

JYOTSNA MOHANTY

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Nirodbaran, Sadhak and Poet, 119 Pages, Price Rs. 35, Edited by Arabinda Basu and R.Y. Deshpande. Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1994.

Here is a bouquet of beautiful and ever fragrant flowers by the lovers of Nirodbaran. This multi-authored collection is not only an expression of gratitude to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for giving us Nirod-da as an example to emulate and making it possible for us to be in his ambience of spiritual joy and peace. It also contains sincere and intimate descriptions of what he is, howsoever inadequate that description may be. I have said inadequate because what Sri Aurobindo has said about his own biographies applies to “the beloved of the Lord” too—that their true life is hardly on the surface.

The book starts with a brief life-sketch by Sudha. This is followed by two delightful discussions between Sri Aurobindo and his student-disciple on the art of poetry and by four poems of Nirodbaran with the Master’s comments. On page 22 of this section there is a remarkable comment by Sri Aurobindo, “An inexhaustible original fecundity is a thing you have to wait for—when you are more spiritually experienced and mature.” What a wonderful impossible-seeming aim to aspire for!

We have then an excerpt from Amal Kiran’s Foreword to *Fifty Poems of Nirodbaran*—a rare exception Amal Kiran has made to his rule not to write a foreword to a poetic or any other collection. Here is another aspect of Nirod’s personality as well as that of Sri Aurobindo’s well summed up in the last paragraph of this excerpt, “The work of patient empathic correction carried on by Sri Aurobindo is a lesson to all aspirants towards what he has called ‘the Future Poetry’—and it is a lesson taught repeatedly with a lavish yet most apposite humour. This humour is one of the outstanding merits of Nirodbaran’s book and its effect on the receptive reader may well be hit off by that charming line of his:

Figures of infinite beauty laugh like Dawn.. ”

Most of the other authors have chosen poetry and humour as the main aspects. The article by Srinivasa Iyengar tries to take up many aspects and is a well rounded description, necessarily restrained because of the limits to length. R Y. Deshpande has chosen an interesting approach and he gives us different portraits of Nirod drawn by mainly Sri Aurobindo, Amal Kiran and himself. In between is interspersed a beautiful intimate rose-bud, “Nirod-da, my teacher” by Jhumur.

Prema Nandakumar echoes my sentiments in her article, “Nirodbaran, the Splendid Questioner” When I first visited the Ashram the “Correspondence”

by Nirodbaran was the first book I bought and read and I was hooked and hooked line and sinker. I can never thank Nirod-da enough

There is a delightful personal touch in the article by Satadal and then there is an illuminating article by M. Nadkarni the subject of which, as the editors say, is apparently dear to Nirodbaran though it has hardly much to do with Nirodbaran's personality.

As the title suggests, the authors have tried to restrict themselves to Poetry and Sadhana. One thing that strikes me as missing is Nirod-da's love of sports; not only was he a good football player, look at his calves even now, but he brought out some exquisite aspects of the Mother by his love of tennis and encounters with Her because of the same. Whenever possible he loves to watch excellent tennis matches. This is bringing Sadhana into every beautiful aspect of life.

Nirodbaran also wrote in Bengali. Thanks to Arabinda Basu's "I chant his name" it is now possible for non-Bengali people like myself to get a glimpse of Nirod-da's Bengali poetry and his inner sadhana so vividly expressed therein. I hope that one day a translation of all his Bengali poems becomes available.

Much more expressive than all the words is the frontispiece photograph of Nirod-da in his aspect of the thinker and writer.

As I said at the beginning, this collection is a little bouquet of flowers, an expression of love and our delight that he is now 90 years young. Do not miss this collection, it is a joy to read it again and yet again.

DINKAR D. PALANDE

Eliot's Plays: Religious Idea and Dramatic Design, by *C.R. Visweswara Rao*. Copies can be had from: Ananda Book Depot, "Acton Lodge", 38, McNichols Road, Chetput, Madras-600 031. Pages xii+200. 1989. Price: Rs. 50/—(HB).

There was a time when Eliot's works were looked down on. They were even branded "pastiche of quotations", and dismissed as "not worth the trouble". But Time is the best judge of literature. A glance at the twenty-six page Bibliography appended to this book serves as ample testimony to the fact that Eliot is one among the much studied, discussed and written about writers. And in India a lot of research work has been (and is being) done and the present book based on the author's PhD. thesis attempts a study of Eliot's plays in the light of religious idea and dramatic design.

"The present study of the poetic plays of T.S. Eliot examines his dramatic achievement in terms of his life-long quest for the poetic drama in the twentieth century which was, in effect, an attempt to bring about, or, more precisely, to recover, the inter-relatedness of dramatic art and religious feeling and idea," writes Dr. C.R. Visweswara Rao in his 'Preface' to this book.

By tracing the growth of the Poet-playwright's mind and art, the subject of the first chapter, Mr. Rao succeeds in showing the whole poetic-dramatic career of Eliot "alongside his life-long ambition of realising the idea of poetic drama, an astonishing sense on his part for experiment, accommodation and assimilation". In the second chapter, the author highlights some governing ideas and formative influences found in the works of Eliot. It is quite natural that the poet-critic who wrote the much read and digested essay "Tradition and Individual Talent" through a surrender to tradition gains access to the whole literature of Europe in a conflation of the past and the present. These two chapters prepare the readers to know more about Eliot as a playwright.

Devoting a chapter to each one of Eliot's plays—*Murder in the Cathedral*, *The Family Reunion*, *The Cocktail Party*, *The Confidential Clerk*, and *The Elder Statesman*—Dr. Rao argues how these plays give an outline of Christian reality in terms of poetic incarnation and how a conflation of the pagan and the Christian is achieved. These chapters also attempt to study these plays in various other aspects like symbols, images and characterization and thereby make the book another important secondary source in understanding the plays of Eliot.

A word about the content of the book: Scholarly. A word about the printing and get-up of the book: Excellent

P. RAJA

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

Special Thirtieth Annual Conference

8 August 1993

WHAT IS THE RIGHT WAY FOR INDIA TO MEET THE PRESENT CHALLENGE OF THE INVASION OF EUROPEAN INFLUENCES?

Speech by Arvind Akki

THE subject chosen for this Conference is of paramount importance at the present moment. In olden days wars and battles were the common method of nations trying to swallow one another. In modern times the situation is not the same. The political invasion has been largely replaced by the cultural invasion whose consequences can be far more disastrous if one does not counter them effectively in the right manner. The gulf between the East and the West is shortened by the rapid advancement of science and technology. As a result the swift rush of western ideas and forces have made a considerable impact upon the Indian mind

In spite of the influx of all these foreign influences India has never stopped producing her great leaders during her renaissance and other periods of upheavals. Swami Vivekananda went to the West to give the message of Hinduism. But he was never carried away by the Western material glamour or its scientific developments. When asked what he thought of poor India as compared with all the wealth and luxuries of the West, he said that the very dust of India was holy to him. But even today we keep on blindly imitating the West like little children without knowing what we are up to. We play with the dolls of Western science, politics, art, music, literature and all the innumerable material conveniences. Imitation brings no solution to our burning problems of life. Do we think that by wearing a tiger's skin we can become like a tiger? Imitation is a mockery of our own self. Sri Aurobindo asserts: "India can best develop herself and serve humanity by being herself and following the law of her own nature."¹

The British Empire plundered our wealth and also ruined us culturally. In our blind effort to recover from the temporary downfall from the glorious ancient culture, we fell a prey to their industrialisation, their educational system and their political institutions. All these have brought us some good as well as many bad results. But we cannot take only the good and reject the bad because

¹ *The Renaissance in India* (Centenary Edition, Vol 14), p 432

both are closely intertwined. When we accept Western industrialisation, for example, we cannot do away with its utilitarian attitude in acquiring knowledge.

Total rejection of the ideas, influences and forms of Western culture is not the right solution, nor should we accept its forms indiscriminately but, as Sri Aurobindo points out, we must, "go back to whatever corresponds to it, illumines its sense, justifies its highest purport in our own spiritual conception of life and existence, and in that light work out its extent, degree, form, relation to other ideas, application."¹ And he further stresses: "To everything I would apply the same principle, to each in its own kind, after its proper Dharma, in its right measure of importance, its spiritual, intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, dynamic utility."²

This should not be difficult to do because India had the capacity of all the knowledge which the West seems now to boast of. Recently we hear many well-known historians, psychologists, philosophers and thinkers saying that they firmly believe that India in ancient times had discovered the basic truths of human life and existence in all the inner and outer spheres and clearly formulated them for future mankind.

According to Sri Aurobindo, any kind of political system will not help man in his quest for developing all his faculties by spontaneous and natural growth. Sri Aurobindo left politics not because he was afraid to face British imperialism. He knew that his physical presence was not necessary. He said that there is a spiritual power by which one can work much more effectively and concretely than by external means. It is by that invisible spiritual power that he worked to solve the world's problems. He left politics not because it was a hindrance to his attaining the supreme Peace and Calm but to exercise more effectively his spiritual power on the world-movements in all the spheres so as to lead them towards their destined goal.

At the present crucial moment in the world's history the war is between these two forces, the material and the spiritual. Which of the two will succeed over the other? One is visible, another is invisible. This is the choice at the present hour. Sri Aurobindo proclaims, "Materially you are nothing, spiritually you are everything."³ If India takes its base and stand upon spirituality and proceeds from there, then we can march fearlessly like the hero-warriors of the future towards our spiritual destiny.

Sri Aurobindo has made it very clear that "India preserves the truth that preserves the world." And the Mother has repeatedly said that India will be the Guru of the world. The youth of India have now the opportunity to be the pioneers in this great upward march.

Today what we need is a spiritual culture which alone can solve the problems of the world. Spirituality is, "... man's seeking for the eternal, the

¹² *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (Centenary Edition, Vol. 14), p. 389

³ *The Ideal of the Karmayogin* (Centenary Edition, Vol. 2), p. 20

divine, the greater self, the source of unity and his attempt to arrive at some equation, some increasing approximation of the values of human life with the eternal and the divine values.”¹ This is the greatest challenge and the divine task assigned to India. Now the time is opportune to flood the spiritual light everywhere in the world. This is the sanction of the Supreme that India has to be the Guru of the world and no power on earth can prevent its fulfilment.

¹ *The Renaissance in India* (Centenary Edition, Vol 14), p 427