

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LVI

No. 2

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

CONTENTS

Sri Aurobindo

O BEAUTIFUL BODY OF THE INCARNATE WORD (Poem)	... 89
A HELP OF CAPITAL IMPORTANCE	... 91
THE THREE DOERS OF ACTION	... 92

Arjava

LONELINESS (Poem)	... 93
-------------------	--------

Manmohan Ghosh

TO HIS MOTHER (Poem)	... 94
----------------------	--------

Sri Aurobindo

SOME LETTERS	... 95
THE EVOLUTIONARY SCALE	... 99
THE MOTHER'S GOING TO OTHER PLANETS	... 107

The Mother

THE MOTHER'S PRAYERS—A SELECTION	... 108
----------------------------------	---------

Ravindranath V. Ramdas

RISHI AUROBINDO: THE REVOLUTIONARY	... 113
------------------------------------	---------

Peter Heehs, Amal Kiran, Lalita

INTERVIEW OF 8 SEPTEMBER 1979	... 117
-------------------------------	---------

Nilima Das

A PAGE FROM THE MOTHER'S LIFE	... 120
-------------------------------	---------

R.Y. Deshpande

THE YAJNA OF NEW CREATION	... 122
THE BIRTH OF SAVITRI (Poem)	... 124

Richard Hartz

THE COMPOSITION OF SAVITRI	... 125
----------------------------	---------

Debashish Banerji

KEDARNATH (Poem)	... 129
------------------	---------

K. V. Raghupathi

SYMPHONIES FOR THE SOUL	... 130
-------------------------	---------

<i>Mary Helen</i>		
	ALL THINGS IN THEIR TIME... (Poem)	... 131
<i>Georgette Coty</i>		
	PROMISE ON THE SHORE (Poem)	... 132
<i>B. G. Pattegar</i>		
	A UNIQUE PRAYER	... 133
<i>Christel Delabouire</i>		
	JWALAPUR (Poem)	... 134
<i>Satadal</i>		
	THE FRESCOED MAP OF MOTHER INDIA	... 135
<i>Hemant Kapoor</i>		
	SUPPLICATION (Poem)	... 136
<i>Goutam Ghosal</i>		
	TAGORE AND SRI AUROBINDO ON MODERN POETRY	... 137
<i>Ranajit Sarkar</i>		
	THE RELATION BETWEEN THE POETIC ACT AND THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE	... 142
<i>K. N. Viju</i>		
	TWO POEMS (Poem)	... 144
<i>Shree</i>		
	AGONY AND BLISS	... 145
<i>Allan Stocker</i>		
	TWO POEMS (Poem)	... 149
<i>Sunil Behari Mohanty</i>		
	EDUCATIONAL IDEAS OF SWAMI DAYANAND	... 150
<i>M. S. Srinivasan</i>		
	RELEVANCE OF SRI AUROBINDO'S VISION FOR THE EMERGING TECHNOLOGICAL SCENE	... 154
<i>Kailash Jhaveri</i>		
	REMEMBRANCE OF THE MOTHER	... 157
<i>Shakuntala Manay</i>		
	A POINT TO BE! (Poem)	... 159
<i>Indra Sen</i>		
	SRI AUROBINDO AND MAYAVADA	... 160
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE		
<i>K. Balasubramaniam, R. Y. Deshpande</i>		
	<i>Review of</i> BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE MORAL PHILOSOPHIES OF NIETZSCHE AND SRI AUROBINDO <i>by</i> RANAJIT SARKAR	... 166
<i>R. Naga Raja Sarma</i>		
	<i>Review of</i> The Life Divine, Vol. 1. <i>by</i> Sri Aurobindo	... 173

O BEAUTIFUL BODY OF THE INCARNATE WORD

O BEAUTIFUL body of the incarnate Word,
Thy thoughts are mine, I have spoken with thy voice.
My will is thine, what thou hast chosen I choose.
All thou hast asked I give to earth and men.
All shall be written out in destiny's book
By my trustee of thought and plan and act,
The executor of my will, eternal Time.
But since thou hast refused my maimless Calm
And turned from my termless peace in which is expunged
The visage of Space and the shape of Time is lost,
And from happy extinction of thy separate self
In my uncompanioned lone eternity,—
For not for thee the nameless worldless Nought,
Annihilation of thy living soul
And the end of thought and hope and life and love
In the blank measureless Unknowable,—
Because thou hast obeyed my timeless will,
I lay my hands upon thy soul of flame,
I lay my hands upon thy heart of love,
I yoke thee to my power of work in Time.
Because thou hast obeyed my timeless will,
Because thou hast chosen to share earth's struggle and fate
And leaned in pity over earth-bound men
And turned aside to help and yearned to save,
I bind by thy heart's passion thy heart to mine
And lay my splendid yoke upon thy soul.
Now will I do in thee my marvellous works.
I will fasten thy nature with my cords of strength,
Subdue to my delight thy spirit's limbs
And make thee a vivid knot of all my bliss,
And build in thee my proud and crystal home.
Thy days shall be my shafts of power and light,
Thy nights my starry mysteries of joy
And all my clouds lie tangled in thy hair
And all my springtides marry in thy mouth.
O Sun-Word, thou shalt raise the earth-soul to Light
And bring down God into the lives of men;
Earth shall be my work-chamber and my house,
My garden of life to plant a seed divine.
When all thy work in human time is done,

The mind of earth shall be a home of light,
 The life of earth a tree growing towards heaven,
 The body of earth a tabernacle of God.
 Awakened from the mortal's ignorance
 Men shall be lit with the Eternal's ray
 And the glory of my sun-lift in their thoughts
 And feel in their hearts the sweetness of my love
 And in their acts my Power's miraculous drive.
 My will shall be the meaning of their days;
 Living for me, by me, in me they shall live.
 In the heart of my creation's mystery
 I will enact the drama of thy soul,
 Inscribe the long romance of Thee and Me.
 I will pursue thee across the centuries;
 Thou shalt be hunted through the world by love,
 Naked of ignorance' protecting veil
 And without covert from my radiant gods.
 No shape shall screen thee from my divine desire.
 Nowhere shalt thou escape my living eyes.
 In the nudity of thy discovered self,
 In a bare identity with all that is,
 Disrobed of thy covering of humanity,
 Divested of the dense veil of human thought,
 Made one with every mind and body and heart,
 Made one with all Nature and with Self and God,
 Summing in thy single soul my mystic world
 I will possess in thee my universe,
 The universe find all I am in thee.
 Thou shalt bear all things that all things may change,
 Thou shalt fill all with my splendour and my bliss,
 Thou shalt meet all with my transmuting soul.
 Assailed by my infinitudes above,
 And quivering in immensities below,
 Pursued by me through my mind's wall-less vast,
 Oceanic with the surges of my life,
 A swimmer lost between two leaping seas
 By my outer pains and inner sweetnesses
 Finding my joy in my opposite mysteries
 Thou shalt respond to me from every nerve.

SRI AUROBINDO

(Savitri, SABCL, Vol. 29, pp. 698-700)

A HELP OF CAPITAL IMPORTANCE

AN intellectual approach to the highest knowledge, the mind's possession of it, is an indispensable aid to this movement of Nature in the human being. Ordinarily, on our surface, man's chief instrument of thought and action is the reason, the observing, understanding and arranging intellect. In any total advance or evolution of the Spirit, not only the intuition, insight, inner sense, the heart's devotion, a deep and direct life-experience of the things of the Spirit have to be developed, but the intellect also must be enlightened and satisfied; our thinking and reflecting mind must be helped to understand, to form a reasoned and systematised idea of the goal, the method, the principles of this highest development and activity of our nature and the truth of all that lies behind it. Spiritual realisation and experience, an intuitive and direct knowledge, a growth of inner consciousness, a growth of the soul and of an intimate soul-perception, soul-vision and a soul-sense, are indeed the proper means of this evolution: but the support of the reflective and critical reason is also of great importance; if many can dispense with it, because they have a vivid and direct contact with inner realities and are satisfied with experience and insight, yet in the whole movement it is indispensable. If the supreme truth is a spiritual Reality, then the intellect of man needs to know what is the nature of that original Truth and the principle of its relations to the rest of existence, to ourselves and the universe. The intellect is not capable by itself of bringing us into touch with the concrete spiritual reality, but it can help by a mental formulation of the truth of the Spirit which explains it to the mind and can be applied even in the more direct seeking: this help is of a capital importance.

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 877-78)

THE THREE DOERS OF ACTION

THE tamasic doer of action is one who does not put himself really into the work, but acts with a mechanical mind, or obeys the most vulgar thought of the herd, follows the common routine or is wedded to a blind error and prejudice. He is obstinate in stupidity, stubborn in error and takes a foolish pride in his ignorant doing; a narrow and evasive cunning replaces true intelligence; he has a stupid and insolent contempt for those with whom he has to deal, especially for wiser men and his betters. A dull laziness, slowness, procrastination, looseness, want of vigour or of sincerity mark his action. The tamasic man is ordinarily slow to act, dilatory in his steps, easily depressed, ready soon to give up his task if it taxes his strength, his diligence or his patience. The rajasic doer of action on the contrary is one eagerly attached to the work, bent on its rapid completion, passionately desirous of fruit and reward and consequence, greedy of heart, impure of mind, often violent and cruel and brutal in the means he uses; he cares little whom he injures or how much he injures others so long as he gets what he wants, satisfies his passions and will, vindicates the claims of his ego. He is full of an incontinent joy in success and bitterly grieved and stricken by failure. The sattwic doer is free from all this attachment, this egoism, this violent strength or passionate weakness; his is a mind and will unrelaxed by success, undepressed by failure, full of a fixed impersonal resolution, a calm rectitude of zeal or a high and pure and selfless enthusiasm in the work that has to be done. At and beyond the culmination of Sattwa this resolution, zeal, enthusiasm become the spontaneous working of the spiritual Tapas and at last a highest soul-force, the direct God-Power, the mighty and steadfast movement of a divine energy in the human instrument, the self-assured steps of the seer-will, the gnostic intelligence and with it the wide delight of the free spirit in the works of the liberated nature.

SRI AUROBINDO

(Essays on the Gita, SABCL, Vol. 13, pp. 484-85)

LONELINESS

DEEP in a far green forest land
Is the shore of an inland sea:
No grey shingle or gleaming sand
Or wave's white ecstasy.

Only a moon-pale ledge of rock,
Lapped by that sullen waste
Of Limbo-drift where a shadowy flock
Of dream birds spaced

In the unquiet wideness of their loneliness
Are as that sky-line aimlessly empty of good.

September 20, 1934

ARJAVA

Sri Aurobindo's comment: Very beautiful, especially the second stanza is remarkable in its suggestive power and power of vision; the last line but one is also very fine.

Sri Aurobindo's Gayatri:

*tat savitur varam rūpam jyotiḥ parasya dhīmahi,
yannah satyena dīpayet.*

Let us meditate on the most auspicious (best) form of Savitri, on the Light of the Supreme which shall illumine us with the Truth.

N.B. The invocation in the Mantra is to the Sun-God *Savitṛ* (सवितृ). Accordingly in its English rendering the Word *Savitri* should be read in that context. —Ed.

TO HIS MOTHER

AUGUSTEST! dearest! whom no thought can trace,
Name murmuring out of birth's infinity,
Mother! like heaven's great face is thy sweet face,
Stupendous with the mystery of me.
Eyes, elder than the light; cheek, that no flower
Remembers; brow, at which my infant care
Gazed weeping up and saw the skies enshower
With tender rain of vast mysterious hair!
Thou at whose breast the sunbeams sucked, whose arms
Cradled the lipping ocean, art thou she,
Goddess, at whose dim heart the world's deep charms
Tears, terrors, sobbing things, were yet to be?
She, from whose tearing pangs in glory first
I and the infinite white heavens burst?

MANMOHAN GHOSE

Sri Aurobindo's comment: Manmohan's poem has a considerable elevation of thought, diction and rhythm. It is certainly a fine production and, if all had been equal to the first three lines which are pure and perfect in inspiration, the sonnet might have stood among the finest things in the English language. But somehow it fails as a whole. The reason is that the intellectual mind took up the work of transcription and a Miltonic rhetorical note comes in; all begins to be thought rather than seen or felt; the poet seems to be writing what he thinks he ought to write on such a subject and doing it very well—one admires, the mind is moved and the vital stirred, but the deeper satisfying spiritual thrill which the first lines set out to give is no longer there. Already in the fourth line there is the touch of poetic rhetoric. The original afflatus continues to persist behind, but can no longer speak itself out in its native language; there is a mental translation. It tries indeed to get back—

Eyes elder than the light; cheek that no flower
Remembers...

then loses almost altogether—what follows is purely mental. Another effort brings the eighth line which is undoubtedly very fine and has sight behind it. Then there is a compromise; the spiritual seeing mind seems to say to the thinking poetic intellect, "All right, have it your own way—I will try at least to keep you up at your best", and we have the three lines that follow those two others that are forcible and vivid poetic (very poetic) rhetoric—finally a close that goes back to the level of the "stupendous mystery". No, it is not a "splendid confusion"—the poem is well-constructed from the point of view of arrangement of the thought, so there can be no confusion. It is the work of a poet who got into touch with some high level of spiritual sight, a living vision of some spirit truth, but, that not being his native domain, could not keep its perfect voice throughout and mixed his inspiration—that seems to me the true estimate. A very fine poem, all the same.

1934

(The Future Poetry, SABCL, Vol. 9, pp. 345-46)

SOME LETTERS

(Continued from the issue of January 2003)

Yesterday something extra was in my midday dish and I sent it back. D came and told me that Mother said it should be taken. Then I asked him for her written note, which he showed to me. But afterwards I felt it was not very proper to ask for the note. Is it better to rely on someone's word when they say something in your name or to challenge it?

THE MOTHER: You cannot make a general rule for it. For some, like D, you can trust what they say. For others, for most, it is better to be cautious.

We do not find any mention of the terms "physical being", "vital being" or "psychic being" in any of the Darshanas or the Panchadashi or elsewhere. The Annamaya and Pranamaya koshas do not seem to fit well. Is Prajna or Kutastha similar to "psychic being"?

No—that is quite different. The kosha is not the same thing as the being—the vital kosha is what we call the vital body. The Taittiriya Upanishad however speaks of the physical, vital, mental, supramental and Anandamaya purushas. The psychic being is the chaitya purusha, perhaps.

10 March 1933

While reading Mother's prayers I feel as though I do not simply read the words or thoughts but receive something quite pleasant and formless behind them. Today, merely on seeing the "Prayers" I felt the atmosphere. Sometimes an atmosphere is felt around the Mother's signature.

Yes, it is so. The words are only a vehicle. When the consciousness opens one feels all that is behind the words.

In the subconscious there is still a vague attraction for human faces and vulgar images. How is it that these were not seen before the 21st? Was my aspiration more intense then or are these smallest details being brought out now for rejection or light?

It is the latter reason that is the fact. It is the things rising out of the subconscious vital-physical.

Why is wideness not apparent in the psychic, when purity, calm, love and joy are so marked?

The wideness comes when one exceeds or begins to exceed the individual consciousness and spread out towards the universal. But the psychic can be active even in the individual consciousness.

What is the nature of purity in Mother or Sri Aurobindo or in the Intuitive state or the Overmind? How does it differ from the purity in the psychic?

The purity is the same in quality everywhere. It is other things that vary—knowledge, power, range or height of consciousness.

11 March 1933

Is the subconscious vital-physical more in touch with the universal or the psychic?

It is not in touch with the psychic at all. It is full of obscurity, not conscient, entirely ignorant.

Is there anything like egoism in the psychic? Does egoism go away only after one has sufficiently exceeded the individual consciousness?

There is individuality in the psychic being, but not egoism. Egoism goes when the individual unites himself with the Divine or is entirely surrendered to the Divine.

Is it true that egoism remains, at least in the physical being, so long as the body remains?

No, it need not. It is so thought because the old Yogas did not care about the liberation of the body and other instruments, and thought only of the separation of the soul from the Prakriti. If you do not liberate the Prakriti, ego and other forms of bondage will naturally remain so long as there is any action of Prakriti.

Today during meditation I could go out into wideness and the purity of Mother and come back and bring them down to the lowest level. At the present stage, there is a wish for wideness and purity more than for bliss or joy or knowledge. Is it right to limit the aspiration thus?

It is a temporary movement according to the need felt; it does not imply a permanent limitation, so there is no harm in it.

12 March 1933

When does the veil between the outer and inner consciousness break? Does it happen by meditation and the attempt to go inward or in some more effortless manner?

It comes of itself with the pressure of the sadhana. It can also be brought about by specific concentration and effort.

Is it not harmful if this veil breaks before complete psychicisation takes place?

It is certainly better if the psychic is conscious and active before there is the removing of the veil or screen between the individual and the universal consciousness which comes when the inner being is brought forward in all its wideness. For then there is much less danger of the difficulties of what I have called the intermediate zone.

Once you wrote to me about the intuitive self. Is it something different from the psychic or the Spirit?

By the intuitive self I meant the intuitive being, that part which belongs to the intuitive plane or is in connection with it. The intuitive is one of the higher planes of consciousness between the human thinking mind and the supramental plane.

13 March 1933

A dislike for K has arisen in me for several reasons. First, before giving me some work to do, he worries about what I will feel; second, he usually gives a long explanation for something which could be said in a few words and more easily done than spoken; and third, he carries the whole weight of the work on his head and worries about it and never works smilingly. These things have brought about a mental disagreement with him and a dislike.

These things are not sufficient to justify dislike. These dislikes come from some vital feeling and these reasons put forward by the mind are excuses, not the real cause. The collaboration between the mind and the vital, the vital throwing up the wrong movement, the mind justifying it, is one of the chief difficulties in the way of getting rid of the vital deviations.

Today I experimented a little to see what effect looking at women would produce in me now and I found that there was no vital or physical effect. It was as if one were looking at inert material. But of course this may be a trick of the hostile to tempt the vital. It is too early to be confident.

It is a progress, but of course it must be confirmed again and again and always before one can be entirely secure.

If one progresses, if one opens, if one works with vigour, if one becomes egoless, if the psychic comes in front, it is due to the Mother, not to oneself. Where then lies the

scope for pride or egoism? But these ideas are not absorbed by the lower vital. How to get Light into it?

The lower vital is very slow in listening to reason—at least when reason is on the side of Truth; although it is very pleased to listen to the mind when the mind justifies the lower vital's wrong movements. In fact the lower vital moves on its own lines, not according to Truth or reason. It is only the insistence of a stronger Light that can enlighten it by changing it in its own substance of consciousness.

14 March 1933

At the moment there is a feeling of heaviness all over and an exhaustion in both the mind and body.

It is the *tamas* of physical Nature—be on your guard for when that comes, there is a tendency for small vital movements to rise up again.

G has shown me most of his letters from you. I have been feeling that all those experiences he had were not quite necessary and I would not wish to have them. There was nothing in them about the calm, wideness, purity and bliss or about being the transformed instruments of Mother and Sri Aurobindo. I was not interested in the experience of the cosmic consciousness in itself. My primary aspiration is to transform the lowest instrument in the smallest detail.

What you say about G is right. Haste and ambition lead to big attempts that are premature. People want to be cosmic and supramental without preparing the ground and then they stumble into confusion—or even delusion. You are right in your resolution.

What are the main difficulties in my Adhar?

None that you do not know of, I think. It is only that the habit of repetition especially from physical nature—which is full of old habits and repetitions and recurrences—has to be overcome.

15 March 1933

(To be continued)

SRI AUROBINDO

THE EVOLUTIONARY SCALE

I

WE shall see how the thought of God works itself out in Life. The material world is first formed with the Sun as centre, the Sun itself being only a subordinate star of the great Agni, Mahavishnu, in whom is centred the Bhu. Mahavishnu is the Virat Purusha who as Agni pours Himself out into the forms of sun and star. He is Agni Twashta, Visvakarman, he is also Prajapati and Matariswan. These are the three primal Purushas of the earth-life,—Agni Twashta, Prajapati and Matariswan, all of them soul-bodies of Mahavishnu. Agni Twashta having made the Sun out of the Apas or waters of being, Prajapati as Surya Savitri enters into the Sun and takes possession of it. He multiplies himself in the Suris or Solar Gods who are the souls of the flames of Surya, the Purushas of the female solar energies. Then he creates out of this solar body of Vishnu the planets, each of which successively becomes the Bhumi or place of manifestation for Manu, the mental being, who is the nodus of manifest life-existence and the link between the life and the spirit. The present earth in its turn appears as the scene of life, Mars being its last theatre. [See the next article, p. 107] In the Bhumi Agni Twashta is again the first principle, Matariswan the second, finally, Prajapati appears in the form of the four Manus, *catvāro manavaḥ*. Not in the physical world at first, but in the mental world which stands behind the earth-life; for earth has seven planes of being, the material of which the scenes and events are alone normally visible to the material senses, the vital of which man's *prāṇakośa* is built and to which it is responsive, the mental to which his *manaḥkośa* is attached, the ideal governing his *vijñānakośa*, the beatific which supports his *ānandakośa*, and the dynamic and essential to which he has not yet developed corresponding *kośas*, but only unformed nimbuses of concrete being. All the gods throw out their *linga-rūpas* into these worlds of earth and through them carry on her affairs; for these *lingas* repeat there in the proper terms of life upon earth the conscious movements of the gods in their higher existences in the worlds above Bhu. The Manus manifested in the manoloka of Bhu bring pressure to bear upon the earth for the manifestation of life and mind. Prajapati as Rudra then begins to form life upon earth, first in vegetable, then in animal forms. Man already exists but as a god or demigod in Bhuvanloka of Bhu, not as a man upon earth. There he is Deva, Asura, Rakshasa, Pramatha, Pishacha, Pashu or as Deva he is either Gandharva, Yaksha, Vidyadhara or any of the Karmadevas. For Man is a son of the Manu and is assigned his place in Div and Pradiv, in Heaven and in the Swargabhūmis. Thence he descends to earth and thither from earth he returns. All that will be explained afterwards. When the human body is ready, then he descends upon earth and occupies it. He is not a native of earth, nor does he evolve out of the animal. His manifestation in animal form is always a partial incarnation, as will be seen hereafter.

The animal proper is a lower type. Certain *devas* of the manasic plane in the Bhuvanloka descend in the higher type of animal. They are not mental beings proper, but only half-mental vital beings. They live in packs, tribes etc. with a communal existence.

They are individual souls, but the individuality is less vigorous than the type soul. If they were not individual, they would not be able to incarnate in individual forms. The body is only the physical type of the soul. The soul, if it were only a communal soul, would manifest in some complex body of which the conglomeration of the different parts would be the sole unity; say, a life like that of the human brain. The animal develops the tribe life, the pack or clan life, the family life. He develops *citta*, *manas*, the rudiments of reason. Then only man appears.

How does he appear? Prajapati manifests as Vishnu Upendra incarnate in the animal or Pashu in whom the four Manus have already manifested themselves, and the first human creature who appears is, in this Kalpa, the Vanara, not the animal Ape, but man with the Ape nature. His Satya Yuga is the first Paradise, for man begins with the Satya Yuga, begins with a perfected type, not a rudimentary type. The animal forms a perfect type for the human Pashu and then only a Manuputra or Manu, a human, a true mental soul, enters into existence upon earth, with the full blaze of a perfect animal-human mentality in the animal form.

These are man's beginnings. He rises by the descent of ever higher types of Manu from the Bhuvanloka,—first he is Pashu, then Pishacha, then Pramatha, then Rakshasa, then Asura, then Deva, then Siddha. So he ascends the ladder of his own being towards the Sat Purusha.

Manu, the first Prajapati, is a part of Mahavishnu Himself descended into the mental plane in order to conduct the destinies of the human race. He is different from the four Manus who are more than Prajapatis, they being the four Type-Souls from whom all human Purushas are born; they are Manus only for the purpose of humanity and in themselves are beyond this manifest universe and dwell for ever in the being of the Para Purushas. They are not true Manomaya Purushas. But Manu Prajapati is a true Manomaya Purusha. He by mental generation begets on his female Energies men in the mental and vital planes above earth, whence they descend into the material or rather the terrestrial body. On earth Manu incarnates fourteen times in each Kalpa and each of these fourteen incarnations is called a Manu. These fourteen Manus govern human destinies during the hundred *catyugas* of the Pratikalpa, each in turn taking charge of a particular stage of the human advance. While that stage lasts he directs it both from the mental world and by repeated incarnations upon earth. When Manu Prajapati wishes to incarnate in a fresh form, he has a mental body prepared for him by evolution of births by a human *vibhūti*, Suratha or another, and takes possession of it at the beginning of his *manvantara*. Each Manvantara is composed of a varying number of Chaturyugas according to the importance and difficulty of the stage with which it is concerned. Once at least in each Chaturyuga the Manu of the Manvantara incarnates as a man upon earth, but this never happens in the Kali Yuga. The seventh and eighth Manus are the most important in each Pratikalpa and have the longest reigns, for in their Manvantaras the critical change is finally made from the type which was completed in the last Pratikalpa to the type which is to be perfected in the present Kalpa. For each of the ten Pratikalpas has its type. Man in the ten Pratikalpas progresses through the ten types which have been fixed for his evolution in

the Kalpa. In this Kalpa the types, *daśāgu*, are the ten forms of consciousness, called the Pashu, Vanara, Pishacha, Pramatha, Rakshasa, Asura, Deva, Sadhyadeva, Siddhadeva and the Satyadeva. The last three are known by other names which need not be written at present. The Pashu is mind concentrated entirely on the *annam*, the Vanara mind concentrated on the *prāna*, the Pishacha mind concentrated on the senses and the knowledge part of the *citta*, the Pramatha mind concentrated on the heart and the emotional and aesthetic part of the *citta*, the Rakshasa is mind concentrated on the thinking *manas* proper and taking up all the others into the *manas* itself; the Asura is mind concentrated on the *buddhi* and in the Asura-Rakshasa making it serve the *manas* and *citta*; the Deva is mind concentrated on *vijñāna*, exceeding itself, but in the Asura-Deva or Devasura it makes the *vijñāna* serve the *buddhi*. The others raise mind successively to the Ananda, Tapas and Sat and are, respectively, the supreme Rakshasa, the supreme Asura, the supreme Deva. We have here the complete scale by which Mind ascends its own ladder from Matter to pure Being evolved by Man in the various types of which each of the ten principles is in its turn capable. To take the joy of these various types in their multifold play is the object of the Supreme Purusha in the human Lila.

II

A series of images and a number of intimations have been given yesterday in the *citra-dṛṣṭi* to illustrate the history of the first two Manwantaras and the vicissitudes through which the human idea has gone in the course of these unnumbered ages. It is not at all surprising that there should be no relics of those vicissitudes in the strata of the present earth; for the present earth is not the soil of the planet as it was in the earliest Manwantaras. The detritions, the upheavals, the convulsions, the changes that it has undergone cannot be estimated by the imaginative and summary methods of the modern geologists,—men who think themselves advanced and masters of knowledge, but are only infants and babblers in their own sciences. It is unnecessary to go at present into the scene or habitat of the incidents and peoples shown in the *dṛṣṭi*. The facts are sufficient.

The first image was that of a young and beautiful woman fleeing, holding two children by either hand, preceded by a third—though this was not clearly seen—and followed by a little child, a girl with her cloth in her hand. All are of the female sex. In their flight they have upset a handsome and well-dressed young man, who was also fleeing across the line of their flight and now lies sprawling on his back. Behind the woman and her girls an elderly and bearded savage, naked and armed with some kind of weapon, runs at a distance of not many yards and but for the accident of the upset would soon overtake the fugitives. The second image showed the young man still supine with the savage upon him threatening him fiercely with his weapon, but the *bhāva* shows that not slaughter, but prisoners and slaves are the object of the raid. The young man is evidently taken prisoner by the pursuer who has turned aside from the women to this, possibly, more valuable booty. In the third image the little girl of the first is seen captured by a young and handsome barbarian who has managed to comfort and soothe her and is

persuading her to lead him to the secret refuge of the fugitives. By this device, it is now indicated, he is able to discover this refuge and capture the whole colony of the civilised people. The success raises him to the rank of a great chief among his people, for it is his section of the raiders who make the victory really profitable. The *citra-lipi* "Indigenous" just given shows that these barbarians are the original inhabitants of the country, the others colonists and conquerors. It is intimated by the *viñāna* that both assailants and assailed are in the Pashu stage and people of the first or second Manu, but the civilised have reached a kind of Devahood of the Gandharva type, the savages are a reappearance of the Asura-Rakshasa type of Pashu brought back into a more advanced age in order to re-invigorate the over-refined type that has been evolved. The young chief of the image is a sort of Caesar-Augustus or Alaric of the barbarians. He takes the lead of their revolt which is at first a disordered movement of indignation (*lipi* "Indignation" alternating with "Indigenous"), systematises it, conquers and enslaves the Gandharvas, learns from them their civilisation and modifies it by the barbarian manners. The new race evolved finally dominates the then world and fixes the next type of the Pashu evolution.

But who are these Pashus? For this is not the first Pratikalpa of the Pashus, but the sixth of the Asuras, and it is indicated that none of these visions belong to any other Pratikalpa than the present. It follows that even these savages cannot be pure Pashus, but Asuras or Asura-Rakshasas starting from the Pashu stage, so far as the Asura can go back to that stage, and fulfilling the possibilities of a sort of Pashu-Asura before evolving his Asurahood in the higher types and arriving and shooting beyond the pure Asura. This is an important modification. It follows that each type of the Dasha-gavas goes, within the mould of his own types, through all the ten *gāvas* from the Pashu to the Siddhadeva. The Pashu-Asura will be different from the pure Pashu or the Pashu-Deva, because he will always be first and characteristically an Asura, but he will weigh from the *buddhi* on the bodily experiences as Pashu, on the *viñāna* experiences as Deva and so in each type according to its particular field of activity. The Deva will do it, instead, from the *viñāna*, and the difference of leverage and point of action will make an immense difference both to the character of the activity and its results in the field. Moreover it is clear that the Pashu-Asura goes also through the various types within his mixed Pashuhood and Asurahood before he passes to the Pishacha-Asura, who has to undergo a similar development. The great variety of types that will result from this evolutionary system, is evident.

The farther images seen in connection with this Pashu-Asura episode are three in number. First, the plain and desolate country with a hill in the distance, about which it is indicated by the *viñāna* that this was the appearance of the country not actually occupied by the barbarians before the colonists came in (by sea, it is suggested and then by movement from the coasts occupied to the inland tracts) and peopled it sparsely. The catastrophe came because of their haste to conquer the whole small continent before they were able to people all the unoccupied land and build themselves into a strong and irresistible power organised in great cities and populous nations. This haste was due to the superior fertility and attractiveness of the soil actually occupied by the barbarians who, being

poor agriculturalists, had settled only on rich soil not demanding a skilful labour and left the rest untilled. The contrast between the waterless soil first seen and the banks of the great river on which was the barbarian settlement is typical of the contrast between the two kinds of soil, utilised and unutilised. The premature attempts at conquest began with aggressions on the nearest barbarian villages and the raid seen was the first effective retaliation carried out in the absence of the fighting men of the colony, so that on the side of the attacked only women, children and peaceful unarmed men are seen fleeing to a habitual and secret place of refuge. For this colony was on the very borders of the barbarian country and always exposed to incursions. It is not clear why the colonist fighters were absent, whether on a raid on the barbarians or in a civil quarrel among themselves.

The second image, the fortified city on the plateau, shown by the terraces cut in the slope of the plateau and the subsequent separate *citra* of one of the city domes to be a civilised and magnificent metropolis, shows the final result of the amalgamation of barbarians and colonists. The original barbarian settlement was on the bank of the great river seen with one of its ghauts not far from the foot of the plateau, but after the raid, in order to safeguard themselves and their booty, the savages retreated at the instance of the young victorious chief, now by common consent their leader, to the plateau, then steep in its slope and difficult of access. Afterwards a great city was built on the site of this barbarian stronghold. The construction on the river in appearance like a house, but apparently standing on the water, can have been nothing but a houseboat or rather a house-raft, and it is moored to a *car* in the river, a fact which suggested the first erroneous idea that it was a house on an island in the river.

The third image, the large, high and spacious hut, built almost with elegance and with the great wide open door, was that of the chief and shows that the savages, in spite of their nakedness, were not on the lowest scale either of human immaturity or of human degeneration. The figure in clerical dress and hat is that not of a priest, but of an envoy, one of the elders of the colony come to negotiate for the restoration of the captives; the girl with whom he converses and from whom he turns in shocked despair, is one of the daughters of the woman seen in the earliest of this series of images, now a slave and concubine of the chief. At first, the colonists were unwilling to use violence lest the captives should be maltreated. The fact that one of the most important of them has already been subjected to irremediable indignity, has just come to the knowledge of the elder along with other facts, e.g. the unwillingness of the chiefs to make any reparation, and accounts for the action which indicates despair of peace or any fruitful negotiation. The series is not yet complete, but awaits the unfolding of farther events already very vaguely indicated by the *vijñāna*. The other image has no connection with these events but belongs to a later Manwantara, that of the Pramatha-Rakshasa, of the sixth Manu in one of its most perfect and brilliant stages. It has to be kept vivid in the mind for future interpretation.

III

The disposition of the Manwantaras may now be described. It will be remembered

that there are fourteen Manus and ten *gāvas* of the Dasha-gava. How are these divided among the Manus? In this Kalpa or rather Pratikalpa the type Pashu is the Vanara, but as in all Nature's movements, even in manifesting the Vanara, the others first make their appearance rapidly before the type "arrives"; those most germane to the matter are the lion, tiger, elephant, dog, wolf, cat, bull and cow, bear, fox, ass, horse, bee, ant, butterfly, fish, eagle (also kite, hawk and vulture), songbird, crow and cuckoo etc. In all these human egos readily incarnate and the human type absorbs them all. The first Manu takes all these totems and applies them to the general type of the Asura, driving at the evolution of a giant Vanara-Asura who has in him all these elements and combines them into an animal harmony dominated by curiosity, humour, adaptability and adaptiveness, the Ape virtues which bring that type nearest to man. This Vanara-Asura the first Manu hands on to the second, who takes the type, fulfils it and evolves it into the Pishacha-Asura. This he does by bringing the Ape curiosity uppermost and applying it to all the experiences of man's animal life, to play, work, domesticity, battle, pleasure, pain, laughter, grief, relations, arrangements etc. All the higher qualities, imagination, reflection, invention, thought, spirituality even, are turned towards these experiences and their possibilities,—cognitional not aesthetic,—exhausted so far as the human animal can exhaust them. This, however, is done only in the third Manwantara. In the second it is the Vanara who satisfies his humour, curiosity and adaptiveness in a far more elementary and summary fashion, but as he does so, he begins to refine and evolve in search of new sensations until the full Pishacha-Asura is born. This type is handed over to the third Manu to fulfil, and to it two Manwantaras are devoted; in the third the Pishacha-Pramatha of the Asura type evolves; in the fourth the Pishacha-Pramatha evolves into the full Pramatha-Asura. The curiosity ceases to be merely cognitional and practically scientific, it becomes aesthetic with an animal and vital aestheticism; the Pramatha seeks to extract their full emotional and aesthetic values, their full *rasa* out of everything in life, out of torture equally with ecstasy, death equally with life, grief equally with joy. That type is evolved by the fifth Manu into the Pramatha-Rakshasa of the Asura type, and by the sixth into the full Rakshasa-Asura. The Rakshasa it is who first begins really to think, but his thought is also egoistic and turned towards sensation. What he seeks is a gross egoistic satisfaction in all the life of the mind, *prāṇa* and body, in all the experiences of the Pashu, Pishacha, Pramatha and his own. But as this type is not a pure Rakshasa, but a Rakshasasura, the thought is there from the beginning, for the Rakshasa has already established it in the human mould in the fifth Pratikalpa. It now, however, in the Asura ceases to be subservient to the vital and animal instincts and becomes the instrument instead of a vigorous, violent and clamorous intellectual ego. As the main type is that of the Asura, there is always a tendency to subordinate the lower ego to the intellectual Aham, but the subordination is at first only a self-disciplining for a more intelligently victorious self-indulgence, like the *tapasyā* of Ravana. This type evolved is fixed in the character of Ravana and takes possession of its field in the Manwantara of the seventh Manu, Vaivasvata. In that Manwantara it evolves into the Asura-Rakshasa in which the intellectual ego and the emotional, sensational ego enter into an equal copartnership for the grand enthronement and fulfilment of the human

ahankāra. As the type of the sensational and emotional Rakshasa-Asura is Ravana, so the type of the more mightily balanced Asura-Rakshasa of the Asura type is Hiranyakashipu. In the eighth Manwantara this Asura-Rakshasa evolves into the pure Asura who serves his intellectual ego and subordinates to it all the other faculties. That type reigns with the ninth Manu and evolves into the Asuradeva of the Asura mould and in the tenth Manwantara into the Devasura who enthrones the *viññāna* and glorifies the Asura existence by the *viññānamaya* illuminations playing on the whole of the triple mental, vital and bodily life of man. In the eleventh and twelfth Manwantaras the Devasura evolves into the Sadhya, the Anandamaya Asura who at first with the pure Ananda, then with the Tapomaya Ananda, then with the Sanmaya Ananda dominates the reigns of the thirteenth and fourteenth Manus and completes the apotheosis of the Asura in man. With the Siddhadeva in the Asura the hundredth Chaturyuga of the sixth Pratikalpa comes to a glorious close.

IV

Certain farther images have appeared which seem intended to show the nature of the Kaliyuga civilisation evolved by the intermixture of the barbarian and the Gandharva Pashus. One is that of a very wide road climbing up a steep incline; the comparative height of the trees on one side show its great width. This picture seems to be intended to confirm the impression created by the ensemble of the city on the plateau, by the dome and by another *citra* of a part of the hill with a (private?) house roofed like a modern church, that this civilisation had a certain bigness, massiveness and sharply cut variety. A low type of the Pashu in this age was also seen, bearded, hatted and visaged like a low-class modern American of the West. These resemblances have created some doubt as to either the genuineness of these images or their right interpretation; but the doubt is not justified by its cause. For throughout the fourteen Manwantaras, variations, permutations and combinations of the same type are bound to appear. This is the law of Nature's development in clay, plant and animal and applies equally to man, his manners, ideas, appurtenances and institutions. Given the truth of the Manwantara theory any other feature than this varied repetition would be more surprising than the repetition itself and lead to more legitimate distrust. There are plenty of variations and signs of immaturity or different tendency. In the image of the river, it is noticeable that there are no modern vessels. The houseboat is a house-raft and entirely different in structure from the modern houseboat; the craft in which the man and girl in another image are seen crossing the river is also a raft and not a boat. The Gandharvas, when first seen, are robed differently in the males and the women; the former have dresses like the older styles of European dress, the latter wear loose and light classical draperies—an arrangement which is after all sufficiently natural and might easily evolve in an artistic and aesthetically minded race. The Teutonic element in the character and civilisation of the new type Pashus is a result of the blending of the graceful, slight and artistic Gandharva with the plain, forceful and robust barbarian; the latter predominates in the blend and the former merely tones down his force and

gives a few details of dress and manners much modified in the direction of rude and clear-cut plainness and strength, and is chiefly prominent but not predominant in the women as typified by the girl on the raft who has a native grace denied to the men of her blood. Their elegance is heavy and artificial, worn as a dress rather than possessed as a native characteristic. Sometimes the type goes very low as in the premature American; the ordinary type is higher but void of dignity or greatness, grace or beauty. They represent an early tendency towards the Asura-Rakshasa such as he manifests himself in the Kaliyugas of this Pratikalpa when he has compassed the first heavy self-restraint necessary for his evolution towards the Deva. In a later image the woman of the first, the captive of the barbarian Augustus, is seen in a later incarnation at the turning point when this type dissatisfied with itself is trying to recover the grace, humour, artistry, fantasy, liveliness of their Gandharva blood, so as to develop again in themselves the Pashu-Deva. This fixes the period of these incidents. It is in the Kali of the fourth *caturyuga* in the reign of the first Manu when the Rakshasa-Asura of the Pashu-Asura type reigns and is attempting to turn full Asura with occasional overshootings to the Pashu-Deva. Every race that thus overshoots its mark and goes a step farther than their immediate next pace in evolution aids powerfully that evolution, but becomes unfit for survival and has to disappear. For this reason the Gandharva race of the Pashus disappeared and the Asura-Rakshasa type reappeared, then took up something of the Gandharva and advanced one step towards the Asura-Pashu of the Asura type. By such overleapings and recoilings human evolution has always advanced.

V

There are certain images of animals dating from these early aeons which should be recorded here although they are not of the first Pashu period but fall before and after it. The first are images of a monstrous creature resembling the modern seal, but thicker and bulkier, seen in a region of ice; the other another animal of equally monstrous bulk, its skin a series of successive red and yellow bands, its face exceedingly long, rough, thin and snouted, a cross between bear, wolf and tiger in the face, rhinoceros-like, yet supple in the body, but in spite of its ferocious appearance, sufficiently harmless. These creatures, it is suggested in the *viññāna*, belong to the first *caturyuga* of the Pratikalpa previous to the appearance of man; for the fourteen Manus enjoy each a reign of seven *caturyugas* of varying lengths and the first and last of the hundred belong not to any Manu but the opening *caturyuga* to Brahma and Rudra, the closing to Kalki and to Shiva. Man in the first appears only tentatively at the end, in the last only as a survival at the beginning.

The third image is that of a bear leaping on a smaller animal which it keeps under its paw while it wrests from it and devours some eatable for which the victim was pursued. The male of the captive is near unable to help, unwilling to flee. It is a small deer, only one third the size of the modern fallow deer. Suddenly the head of the bear sinks. It has been killed, it would seem, by the arrow, spear or other weapon of a human hunter. This scene belongs to the second Manwantara of the Vanaras.

A fourth image is of a horse of the first Manwantara in one of its earlier *caturyugas*, a clumsy stiff-legged and long-eared animal squarish in its lines and most unlike the graceful modern equine species. The animal stands on the side of a river and with head raised and stretched sideways and ears pricked, listens to a sound amid the trees on the opposite bank. This image was preceded by another of a horse of the Pashu period in the later age when the civilised barbarian type was trying to recover the Gandharva. This type of horse, standing with a rider on its back and other human beings conversing near and at its head, is more equine, but is still stiff-legged and has not lost the asinine cast of head of its predecessor.

VI

Three images of the fourth in descent from the Chief of the Barbarians; the first showing him standing meditating on the great ghaut of the river, a figure and face like Napoleon's clad in a dress resembling the modern European; the second, his mother and step-mother, descendants of the captives of the first image; the third, the emperor again with his half-brother, irreproachably clad, Prefect of the city, consulting with regard to some palace intrigue in which the mother and step-mother are concerned. It is intimated that it is this fourth King of the line who establishes the dominance of the race in the then earth.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Sri Aurobindo: Archives & Research*, Vol. 3, No. 2, December 1979, pp. 182-93)

THE MOTHER'S GOING TO OTHER PLANETS*

Q: I have been wondering whether the Mother has been able to establish a direct connection with Mars or any other far off planet which is probably habitable and inhabited.

A: A long time ago Mother was going everywhere in the subtle body but she found it of a very secondary interest. Our attention must be fixed on the earth because our work is here. Besides, the earth is a concentration of all the other worlds and one can touch them by touching something corresponding in the earth-atmosphere.

13-1-1934

SRI AUROBINDO

(*The Mother*, SABCL, Vol. 25, p. 373)

* See the previous article, p. 99.

THE MOTHER'S PRAYERS—A SELECTION

Aditi—Adya Shakti—Universal Mother (May 21, 1914)

OUTSIDE all manifestation, in the immutable silence of Eternity, I am in Thee, O Lord, an unmoving beatitude. In that which, out of Thy puissance and marvellous light, forms the centre and reality of the atoms of matter I find Thee; thus without going out of Thy Presence I can disappear in Thy supreme consciousness or see Thee in the radiant particles of my being. And for the moment that is the plenitude of Thy life and Thy illumination.

I see Thee, I am Thyself, and between these two poles my intense love aspires towards Thee.

Sanction (June 14, 1914)

It is a veritable work of creation we have to do: to create activities, new modes of being so that this Force, unknown to the earth till today, may manifest in its plenitude. To this travail I am consecrated, O Lord, for this is what Thou wantest of me. But since Thou hast appointed me for this work, Thou must give me the means, that is, the knowledge necessary for its realisation. We shall unite our efforts: the entire individual being will consecrate in a constant call for the knowledge of the mode of manifestation of this Force, and Thou, supreme centre of the being, Thou wilt emanate the Force fully so that it may penetrate, transfigure and overcome all obstacles. It is a pact thou hast signed with the worlds of individual life. Thou hast made a promise, Thou hast sent into these worlds those who can and that which can fulfil this promise. This now demands Thy integral help so that what has been promised may be realised.

In us must take place the union of the two wills and two currents, so that from their contact may spring forth the illuminating spark.

And since this *must* be done, *this will be done*.

Our Call (August 13, 1914)

The being stands before Thee, with arms lifted, palms open, in an ardent aspiration.

O sweet Master, it is a Love more wonderful and formidable than any manifested so far which the earth needs; it is for this Love that it yearns.... Who will be capable and worthy of being its intermediary to it? Who? That matters little; but it must be done. O Lord, answer my call, accept the offering of my being despite its little worth and its limitations: Come.

More, always more; may the regenerating streams roll over the earth in beneficent waves. Transfigure and illumine. Work this supreme miracle so long awaited, and break all ignorant egoisms; awaken Thy sublime flame in every heart. Do not let us become benumbed in a tranquil serenity. We ought not to take any rest before Thy new and

sovereign Love is manifested.

Listen to our prayer; answer our call: Come!

Sadhak's Aspiration (November 3, 1912)

Let Thy Light be in me like a Fire that makes all alive; let Thy divine Love penetrate me. I aspire with all my being for Thy reign as sovereign and master of my mind and heart and body; let them be Thy docile instruments and Thy faithful servitors.

Consecration—I Shall be Thou (November 2, 1912)

Although my whole being is in theory consecrated to Thee, O Sublime Master, who art the life, the light and the love in all things, I still find it hard to carry out this consecration in detail. It has taken me several weeks to learn that the reason for this written meditation, its justification, lies in the very fact of addressing it daily to Thee. In this way I shall put into material shape each day a little of the conversation I have so often with Thee; I shall make my confession to Thee as well as it may be; not because I think I can tell Thee anything—for Thou art Thyself everything, but our artificial and exterior way of seeing and understanding is, if it may be so said, foreign to Thee, opposed to Thy nature. Still by turning towards Thee, by immersing myself in Thy light at the moment when I consider these things, little by little I shall see them more like what they really are,—until the day when, having made myself one in identity with Thee, I shall no more have anything to say to Thee, for then I shall be Thou. This is the goal that I would reach; towards this victory all my efforts will tend more and more. I aspire for the day when I can no longer say "I", for I shall be Thou.

How many times a day, still, I act without my action being consecrated to Thee; I at once become aware of it by an indefinable uneasiness which is translated in the sensibility of my body by a pang in my heart. I then make my action objective to myself and it seems to me ridiculous, childish or blameworthy; I deplore it, for a moment I am sad, until I dive into Thee and, there losing myself with a child's confidence, await from Thee the inspiration and strength needed to set right the error in me and around me,—two things that are one; for I have now a constant and precise perception of the universal unity determining an absolute interdependence of all actions.

Crucible of Life (November 28, 1912)

The outer life, the activity of each day and each instant, is it not the indispensable complement of our hours of meditation and contemplation? And is not the proportion of time given to each the exact image of the proportion which exists between the amount of effort to be made for the preparation and realisation? For meditation, contemplation, Union is the result obtained—the flower that blooms; the daily activity is the anvil on which all the elements must pass and re-pass in order to be purified, refined, made supple

and ripe for the illumination which contemplation gives to them. All these elements must be passed one after the other through the crucible before outer activity becomes needless for integral development. Then is this activity turned into the means to manifest Thee so as to awaken the other centres of consciousness to the same dual work of the forge and the illumination. Therefore are pride and satisfaction with oneself the worst of all obstacles. Very modestly we must take advantage of all the minute opportunities offered to knead and purify some of innumerable elements, to make them supple, to make them impersonal, to teach them forgetfulness of self and abnegation and devotion and kindness and gentleness; and when all these modes of being have become habitual to them, then are they ready to participate in the Contemplation, and to identify themselves with Thee in the supreme Concentration. That is why it seems to me that the work must be long and slow even for the best and that striking conversions cannot be integral. They change the orientation of the being, they put it definitely on the straight path; but truly to attain the goal none can escape the need of innumerable experiences of every kind and every instant.

...O Supreme Master who shinest in my being and each thing, let Thy Light be manifest and the reign of Thy Peace come for all.

True Victory (July 14, 1958)

It seems to me that humanity has made some progress and the true victory must be won in life itself. You must know how to live alone with the Eternal and Infinite in the midst of all circumstances. You must know how to be free, with the Supreme as your companion, in the midst of all occupations. That is indeed the true victory.

Sublimation (December 7, 1912)

Like a flame that burns in silence, like a perfume that rises straight upward without wavering, my love goes to Thee; and like the child who does not reason and has no care, I trust myself to Thee that Thy Will may be done, that Thy Light may manifest, Thy Peace radiate, Thy Love cover the world. When Thou wilt I shall be in Thee, Thyself, and there shall be no more any distinction; I await that blessed hour without impatience of any kind, letting myself flow irresistibly toward it as a peaceful stream flows toward the boundless ocean.

Thy Peace is in me, and in that Peace I see Thee alone present in everything, with the calm of Eternity.

Thou Alone Art the Doer (December 11, 1912)

I await, without haste, without inquietude, the tearing of another veil, the Union made more complete. I know that the veil is formed of a whole mass of small imperfections, of attachments without number.... How shall all these disappear? Slowly, as the result of

countless small efforts and a vigilance not faltering even for a moment, or suddenly, through a great illumination of Thy All-Puissant Love? I know not, I do not even put to myself the question; I wait, keeping watch as best I can, in the certitude that nothing exists save Thy Will, that Thou alone art the doer and I am the instrument; and when the instrument is ready for a completer manifestation, the manifestation will quite naturally take place.

Already there is heard from behind the veil the wordless symphony of gladness that reveals Thy sublime Presence.

**Man to be the Bridge between the Unmanifested and Manifested
(August 29, 1914)**

What would be the use of man if he were not created to throw a bridge between That which *is* eternally but is unmanifested and that which is manifested, between all the transcendences and splendours of the divine life and all the dark and sorrowful ignorance of the material world? Man is the link between What must be and what is; he is the footbridge thrown across the abyss, he is the great cross-shaped X, the quaternary connecting link. His true domicile, the effective seat of his consciousness should be in the intermediary world at the meeting-point of the four arms of the cross, just where all the infinitude of the Unthinkable comes to take a precise form so that it may be projected into the innumerable manifestation....

That centre is a place of supreme love, of perfect consciousness, of pure and total knowledge. There establish, O Lord, those who can, who must truly want to serve Thee, so that Thy work may be accomplished, the bridge definitively established, and Thy forces poured unwearingly over the world.

**The Prayer of the Cells in the Body
(December 2, 1967—Physical Demonstration)**

Now that by the effect of the Grace we are slowly emerging out of inconscience and waking up to a conscious life, an ardent prayer rises in us for more light, more consciousness: O supreme Lord of the universe, we implore Thee, give us the strength and the beauty, the harmonious perfection needed to be Thy divine instruments upon earth.

Prayer Answered—Only Thou (April 10, 1914)

Suddenly the veil was rent, the horizon was disclosed—and before the clear vision my whole being threw itself at Thy feet in a great outburst of gratitude. Yet in spite of this deep and integral joy all was calm, all was peaceful with the peace of eternity.

I seem to have no more limits; there is no longer the perception of the body, no sensations, no feelings, no thoughts—a clear, pure, tranquil immensity penetrated with love and light, filled with an unspeakable beatitude is all that is there and that alone

seems now to be myself, and this “myself” is so little the former “I”, selfish and limited, that I cannot tell if it is I or Thou, O Lord, sublime Master of our destinies.

It is as though all were energy, courage, force, will, infinite sweetness, incomparable compassion....

Even more forcibly than during these last days the past is dead and as though buried under the rays of a new life. The last glance that I have just thrown backward as I read a few pages of this book definitely convinced me of this death, and lightened of a great weight I present myself before Thee, O my divine Master, with all the simplicity, all the nudity of a child.... And still the one only thing I perceive is that calm and pure immensity....

Lord, Thou hast answered my prayer, Thou hast granted me what I have asked from Thee; the “I” has disappeared, there is only a docile instrument put at Thy service, a centre of concentration and manifestation of Thy infinite and eternal rays; Thou hast taken my life and made it Thine; Thou hast taken my will and hast united it to Thine; Thou hast taken my love and identified it with Thine; Thou hast taken my thought and replaced it by Thy absolute consciousness.

The body, marvelling, bows its forehead in the dust in mute and submissive adoration.

And nothing else exists but Thou alone in the splendour of Thy immutable peace.

**Invocation to Mahalakshmi—Preparation for Supramental Descent
(October 14, 1914)***

Mother Divine, Thou art with us every day; Thou givest me the assurance and, closely united in an identity that grows more and more total, more and more constant, we turn to the Lord of the Universe and to That which is beyond in a great aspiration towards the new Light.

(Compiled by Arun Vaidya)

* This was given later by the Mother as a message for Lakshmi Puja day on 31 October 1955.

RISHI AUROBINDO: THE REVOLUTIONARY

“FOR what is a nation? What is our mother-country? It is not a piece of earth, nor a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty Shakti, composed of the Shaktis of all the millions of units that make up the nation, just as Bhawani Mahishamardini sprang into being from the Shakti of all the millions of gods assembled in one mass of force and welded into unity. The Shakti we call India, Bhawani Bharati, is the living unity of the Shaktis of three hundred million people; but she is inactive, imprisoned in the magic circle of Tamas, the self-indulgent inertia and ignorance of her sons....

We have to create strength where it did not exist before, we have to change our natures; and become new men with new hearts, to be born again.... We need a nucleus of men in whom the Shakti is developed to its uttermost extent, in whom it fills every corner of the personality and overflows to fertilise the earth. These, having the fire of Bhawani in their hearts and brains, will go forth and carry the flame to every nook and cranny of our land.”¹

Thus spake Sri Aurobindo in *Bhavani Mandir*, a pamphlet for the revolutionary preparation of the country.

Sri Aurobindo inherited the legacy of the freedom-struggle in Bengal initiated by his grandfather on his mother’s side, Rishi Rajnarayan Basu. It was this pioneer soul who started India’s freedom movement in Bengal by first conceiving and organising national fairs for the revival of arts and crafts and championing the cause of swadeshi not only in industry but in every aspect of national life. He was the first to develop revolutionary ideas and to form in 1876 a secret society called Sanjibani Sabha of which poet Rabindranath, then a young man, and several members of the Tagore family became members. It is said that there was a rule of the Sabha under which every member had to go through a mystic rite of sanctifying his pledge with his own blood.²

In August 1893, six months after his return from England, in the service of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda, Sri Aurobindo started contributing a series of articles for *Induprakash*, a weekly from Mumbai, edited by K. G. Deshpande, his friend at Cambridge. The articles severely criticised the Congress policies. The first two articles made a sensation and enraged Justice Ranade and other Congress leaders.

Sri Aurobindo wrote: “I say, of the Congress, then, this,—that its aims are mistaken, that the spirit in which it proceeds towards their accomplishment is not a spirit of sincerity and whole-heartedness, and that the methods it has chosen are not the right methods, and the leaders in whom it trusts, not the right sort of men to be leaders; —in brief, that we are at present the blind led, if not by the blind, at any rate by the one-eyed. ...the National Congress was not really national and had not in any way attempted to become *national*. ...journalists, barristers, doctors, officers, graduates and traders—who have grown up and are increasing with prurient rapidity under the aegis of the British rule: and this class I call the middle class... which Congress represents.”³

Ranade warned the proprietor of the paper that if this went on, he would surely be prosecuted for sedition. Sri Aurobindo recalls: “I remember when, back home from

England, fifteen years ago, I started writing in *Induprakash* of Bombay, strongly protesting against the Congress policy of prayers and petition, the late Sri Mahadeo Govind Ranade, seeing how these articles were acting on the mind of the youths, exhorted me from the moment I met him for two quarters of an hour to leave off such writing and take up some Congress work. He wished to entrust me with the work of jail reform. I was surprised and refused it.”⁴

In July 1894 Sri Aurobindo began contributing a series of seven articles on Bankim Chatterji to *Induprakash*.

Sri Aurobindo sent a young Bengali soldier of the Baroda army, one Jatin Banerjee to Bengal with the object of establishing secretly groups which would undertake revolutionary propaganda and recruitment throughout that province. Jatin succeeded in forming the first group in Calcutta, and also entered into relations with P. Mitter and other revolutionaries in other parts of Bengal. He was joined later by Barindra Ghosh, Sri Aurobindo’s younger brother.

Sri Aurobindo and Khaserao Jadhav went to the station to receive Sister Nivedita who was state guest of the Baroda state. Sri Aurobindo and Sister Nivedita spoke about politics and other subjects. Sri Aurobindo was highly impressed by her book *Kali—The Mother* and they spoke of that. Sister Nivedita said that he was a worshipper of *shakti* by which she meant that he belonged to the secret revolutionary party, like herself. Sri Aurobindo was present at her interview with the Maharaja whom she invited to support the secret revolution. Sister Nivedita told the Maharaja that he could communicate with her through Sri Aurobindo.⁵

Lizelle Raymond in her fascinating biography of Sister Nivedita says:

“Barindra’s work in Bengal was the organisation in the villages—even the most remote—of a chain of *samitis*, or youth organisations, which would meet under all kinds of pretexts, but with the real aim of providing a civic and political education and opening the eyes of the young to the “affairs of the nation”. Similar youth organisations had already been established in the Deccan under the leadership of the outspoken nationalist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak. In smoky little grainshops, on the terraced roofs of private houses, young men would meet to hear about the lives of Mazzini and Garibaldi, to read exhortations from Swami Vivekananda, to listen to the warlike incidents of the Mahabharata and to comments on the *Bhagwadgita*. The number of *samitis* increased daily.”⁶

Early in 1904, Sri Aurobindo came to Calcutta and tried to bring reconciliation between Jatindra and Barindra. After hearing both the sides he held that Jatin must continue to work but the final authority would rest in a council of five members, plus P. Mitter and Sister Nivedita.

One of the most capable men in these revolutionary groups was a Maratha named Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar who was an able writer in Bengali, his family being long domiciled in Bengal. He had written a popular life of Shivaji in Bengali in which he first brought up the expression “swaraj”. Sri Aurobindo frequently used the word swaraj in *Bande Mataram* as the one and immediate aim of Indian politics. Deuskar’s book made a great impression on the young men of Bengal and helped turn them into revolutionaries.

The book was banned by the government. Deuskar published a book *Deshar Katha* describing in exhaustive detail the British commercial and industrial exploitation of India. With a letter of introduction from Lokmanya Tilak, Barindra met Deuskar and acquainted him with the plan of Sri Aurobindo. Deuskar was an assistant editor of the Bengali newspaper *Hitavadi*. Deuskar was also one of those who used to deliver talks for Jatindra's group of Upper Circular Road on History and Economics.⁷

Among the others with whom Sri Aurobindo discussed his *Bhavani Mandir* scheme were Haribhau Modak, editor of *Rashtramat*, Kakasaheb Patil, a pleader of Vasai who were both members of the secret society but did not favour the spiritual aspect of the scheme. As the partition precipitated a crisis in the political situation of Bengal, the *Bhavani Mandir* scheme could not materialise. But the underlying idea was deeply embedded in Barindra's mind who tried to implement it in some form in his area of revolutionary work at the Maniktola Garden.⁸

Sri Aurobindo sent his friend Madhavrao Jadhav to England to get military training and learn to make bombs. In one of his letters to his wife Mrinalini, Sri Aurobindo writes: "I have to have money to send to Madhavrao. He has been sent to England on a special mission. I have spent a lot on the swadeshi movement and I have other work to do which needs lots of funds."⁹

The partition of Bengal came into effect on 29 September 1905. Sri Aurobindo regarded the partition of Bengal as the greatest blessing that happened to India. No other measure could have stirred national feeling so deeply or roused it so suddenly from the lethargy of earlier years. In August 1906 Sri Aurobindo took one year's leave and joined the Bengal National College as principal and professor of English on a small salary of Rs. 150 which was but one fifth of his salary at Baroda.

In a leading article in *Bande Mataram*, April 26, 1907, Sri Aurobindo exhorted: "The new movement is not primarily a protest against bad Government—it is a protest against the continuance of British control; whether that control is used well or ill, justly or unjustly, is a minor and unessential consideration. It is not born of a disappointed expectation of admission to British citizenship,—it is born of a conviction that the time has come when India can, should and will become a great, free and united nation."¹⁰

On April 30, 1908, at Muzaffarpur Khudiram Basu and Prafulla Chaki threw bombs at Kingsford. However, two innocents were hit. Kingsford, as the Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta awarded the most cruel punishments to political workers, young and old alike. The police began investigations and a miniature bomb factory was soon unearthed at Maniktola. This provided to the British Government the long awaited opportunity to arrest Sri Aurobindo on 2 May 1908, and he was sent to Alipore Jail.

Letters to Lord Minto in England from Andrew Fraser, the Lt. Governor, claim that a full account of Aurobindo had been gathered by the British intelligence in India by 1908. The information was that Aurobindo had been the ring leader of a band of anarchists as early as 1900, possibly as early as his assignment to the college post at Vadodara in 1893. The report sent to Minto claims that Aurobindo studied "works of a political character" and then returned to Bengal in 1902 to preach sedition. The report traces

Aurobindo to Calcutta in 1906 where he taught at the National College. The report continues: “He has ever since been the principal advisor of the revolutionary party and has been consulted and is in touch with their proceedings and crimes... It is of utmost importance to arrest his potential for mischief for he is the prime mover, and can easily get tools, one to replace another.”¹¹

The two assessors in the Alipore bomb case declared Aurobindo not guilty and the Judge acquitted him on 6 May 1909, while sentencing most of the other accused to various terms of imprisonment.

It was the Divine Will that led Sri Aurobindo first to Chandernagore and later to Pondicherry.

Sri Aurobindo noted in his Independence Day declaration: “India is free but she has not achieved unity, only a fissured and broken freedom.... the partition must go. Let us hope that that may come naturally, by an increasing recognition of the necessity not only of peace and concord but of common action, by the practice of common action and the creation of means for that purpose.... But by whatever means, in whatever way, the division must go; unity must and will be achieved, for it is necessary for the greatness of India’s future.”¹²

RAVINDRANATH V. RAMDAS

(Courtesy: *Organiser*, 18 August 1996)

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INTERVIEW OF 8 SEPTEMBER 1979

Participants: Peter Heehs (P), Amal Kiran (A), and Lalita (L).

(Continued from the issue of January 2003)

L: Coming to Pondicherry. Madras.

A: And we caught the night train—about 12 o'clock—and in the night she fell very ill, extremely ill.

L: I was dying, yes.

A: Then suddenly there was a turn.

L: No, we sent a telegram to the Mother. We sent a telegram to Sri Aurobindo.

A: We did?

L: Yes. And then after the telegram had reached them my health started improving and that cholera started vanishing. I had cholera but I had eaten exactly what others ate in the dining car. Later on I asked the Mother, “Mother, how is it I had cholera and others did not?” And she said...

A: It was an attack on her life...

L: She said, “The hostile forces did not want you to take to the spiritual life and didn't want you to come to Pondicherry, that is why they attacked you.” And when we came to Madras and I was very weak, I still said, “We will go to Pondicherry.” And we came. We had to wait for a long time for the train, because at that time the trains were not so frequent. We caught the night train and reached Pondicherry early next morning. And Pujalal had come to receive us.

A: Pujalal had come from Purani to receive us, because the Gujarat side was Purani's domain. So Pujalal came to receive us in the early morning and we got down and got into the famous push-push. In those days there was a vehicle current here called ‘push-push’ from the French *pousse-pousse*. You had a steering rod in front—a three-wheeled vehicle—and a man pushing the vehicle, so that *you* guide it. It was invented by a Frenchman whose wife was very jealous and wanted to know where he would go, so he hired a blind man to push him wherever he wanted to go.

L: And the first place that Mother gave us was where the embroidery department now is.

P: But wait. That very morning when you arrived at the station, you went in the push-push to...

A: To Purani's room.

P: To Purani's room in the guest house?

A: Pujalal took us to Purani's room in the guest house, the same room where Sri Aurobindo had stayed for nine years or something like that. Purani had stayed there for five or six years altogether.

P: What date?

A: It was the 16th December 1927, early morning. And when we went to Purani's

room and stood there the Mother had come on the roof of her house. She was taking a walk and that was our first sight of her, from the north window. And she looked so beautiful walking serenely there and I think she captivated both our hearts. We couldn't see any details of her but still the very apparition...

L: Later on you occupied that house.

A: Yes, after some time. Because I was given a whole big house. We stayed together in a house...

P: When did you first meet Mother and...?

A: We had an interview sometime later.

L: A few days later.

A: And we both met her in the old library room which is now the reading room in the Ashram.

P: What was that first interview like?

A: It was a very impressive interview. We both felt Mother to be somewhat strangely subtly luminous, that was the first impression we had—sort of a silvery light on her face.

P: You were there sitting in the room waiting and she came down?

A: Yes, we were sitting side by side and she came and sat on the opposite side of the table. She came and then she asked us how we were and what we were looking for and so on.

L: Then I made my pranam to her.

A: No, that you didn't do at that time. We talked with her and the famous statement I made was: "Mother, I have seen all of life, now I want only God and nothing else." She said, "How old are you?" I said, "Twenty-three." "At twenty-three you have seen all of life?" I felt so disappointed at her throwing such cold water on my enthusiasm. Then she said, "Don't be in a hurry. Stay here, look around, see how the life suits you and then you make your final decision."

P: Sort of accepting you, as a...

L: Yes, temporarily.

A: Many people were coming here whom she had accepted temporarily and we were asked to stay here, she had already engaged a house for us.

L: Embroidery Department.

A: Vasudha's house, the Embroidery Department, as it was called then.

L: Not where she is staying today.

A: No, not there. The Embroidery Department. It was quite... opposite the Ashram.

P: How many people were there in the Ashram and how many other such people who were staying on such a temporary basis?

A: There were only about forty people in the Ashram at that time.

P: And these were Ashramites?

A: Yes, they were all Ashramites. And then people used to come and go like us. I mean we came with the intention of becoming Ashramites.

P: Right. Sure. Can you give an idea of the community, the people who were there and sort of the shape of the community...

A: You see, the person whom we met the most was Purani. And he impressed us the most.

P: He had been assigned to look after you?

A: Well, in a way he was assigned to look after us. So we used to go out in the evenings with him, go to his room, he used to come to our place and talk with us and then after a short time Lalita and I separated. I wrote to the Mother, “Yoga seems impossible living with my wife.” We had just been married actually. A month or two after marriage we came here. A strange sort of marriage. And then the Mother put her in a house quite at a distance where the two first Americans—whom I thought were the first two Americans—were staying—the MacPheeters. Lalita was given a room downstairs.

L: It was a house near the Carpentry Department.

A: If we saw that house we would immediately recognise it. It is next to the Carpentry Department. And I was given the whole of the Embroidery Department, it was a job to look after that house,—closing the big doors and the windows every night. And so I wrote to the Mother, “I can’t manage this house. Give me just one room with a window opening to the sky, that’s all I want.” So after a time she moved Purani to the Ashram, to the room where he lived the rest of his life. And she shifted me to his room and there I stayed for nearly ten years. It was a fine room because I could see, from the north window, the Mother’s storeroom and the Mother’s own room. She used to open her door and pass along that passage to her storeroom. That we could see also from the old house where we were put, she was right in front of us. But even from here I could see her sometimes and she could see the light in my room. Then we had our first darshan. First we were in doubt whether we would be accepted for the darshan.

P: This is the...

A: 21st of February, 1928.

P: Now, I wanted to find out... now there would have been, seemingly, two darshans before then, the 15th August of 1927 and November, apparently, of 1927.

A: There must have been.

(To be continued)

A PAGE FROM THE MOTHER'S LIFE

NOTHING worthwhile is ever achieved without effort. This is particularly so in the spiritual life. Every major step calls for a concentrated effort. A casual attempt yields only a superficial result. The discovery of the Self within, for instance, involves a whole-hearted and exclusive effort. It has to be intensive.

The Mother recalls her own experience in this regard during her early days. As it is well-known, the Mother had no teacher. Indeed, she refers to her experiences in sleep between the age eleven and thirteen in which several teachers and adepts used to give her instructions on the inner path. But there was none in her life on the physical plane. When she started getting experiences at the early age of five (or even before), she found that there was nobody who could explain them to her; she kept the experiences to herself. She proceeded entirely on her own. At that time there were not even books which could guide her. All alone, she succeeded between the ages of eighteen and twenty in attaining a constant and conscious union with the Divine Presence in herself. It was a little later that a copy of Swami Vivekananda's Raja Yoga lectures in America came into her hands. It may be mentioned that there is in these lectures an authentic exposition of the principles and practice of Raja Yoga based upon the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali. There is a systematic treatment of the preliminary requisites by way of moral and spiritual purification, importance of physical postures in activating the hidden potential in the body, the discipline of the vital and psychic breath, withdrawal of the senses from their customary dispersion, concentration, meditation, the several stages of *Samadhi*, complete absorption in the self.

The Mother records how wonderful it was to her that somebody could explain these things and it helped her to realise in a few months what would otherwise have taken years. Obviously she found explanations to the inner phenomenon whose precise significance was not clear before and methodical direction helped matters in a big way. Then she recalls how when she was about twenty or twenty-one an Indian visiting Paris (Jnan Chakravarty) gave her a copy of a French translation (a very imperfect one) of the Bhagavad Gita. The Gita is an important work of seven hundred verses (in eighteen chapters) occurring in the epic Mahabharata. It purports to contain the discourse of the Divine Charioteer, Lord Krishna, to his princely disciple, Arjuna. The discourse is given when the great battle between the hosts of the Right and those of Evil is about to begin. It occurs at a moment of psychological crisis in the life of the famed warrior. There are many topics, philosophical, spiritual and yogic that are eternally relevant to man. The keynote, however, is the call to surrender to the Divine Lord mightily governing the many-tiered life-movement in the universe. While giving this sacred book to the Mother the Indian visitor also gave her the key (his key—the Mother remarks) to its reading. He asked her to regard Krishna as the indwelling Godhead, symbol of the immanent Divine. That was enough for her. Within a month, says she, the whole thing was done.

We may observe in passing that this confirms the age-long tradition that when one is ready, the right guidance, the lead, comes in one form or another. The Divine is ever

watchful and seconds every effort from the human end. The point is, there must be an earnest application of body, life, mind and soul to the pursuit. The Mother narrates how once she found out there was a discovery to be made within herself, that became the sole occupation of her life, taking precedence over everything else. She called it fire of enthusiasm and strength of will which alone can break all barriers and achieve the objective.

NILIMA DAS

But the control of one's thoughts is as necessary as the control of one's vital desires and passions or the control of the movements of one's body—for the yoga, and not for the yoga only. One cannot be a fully developed mental being even, if one has not a control of the thoughts, is not their observer, judge, master,—the mental Purusha, *manomaya puruṣa, sākṣī, anumantā, īśvara...* it can be done; all developed mental men, those who get beyond the average, have in one way or other or at least at certain times and for certain purposes to separate the two parts of the mind, the active part which is a factory of thoughts and the quiet masterful part which is at once a Witness and a Will, observing them, judging, rejecting, eliminating, accepting, ordering corrections and changes, the Master in the House of Mind, capable of self-empire, *sāmrājya*.

...The principal business of our mind is either a response or acceptance or a refusal to these thought-waves (as also vital waves, subtle physical energy waves) or this giving a personal-mental form to thought-stuff (or vital movements) from the enviroing Nature-Force. It was my great debt to Lele that he showed me this. "Sit in meditation," he said, "but do not think, look only at your mind; you will see thoughts *coming into it*; before they can enter throw these away from your mind till your mind is capable of entire silence." I had never heard before of thoughts coming visibly into the mind from outside, but I did not think either of questioning the truth or the possibility, I simply sat down and did it. In a moment my mind became silent as a windless air on a high mountain summit and then I saw one thought and then another coming in a concrete way from outside; I flung them away before they could enter and take hold of the brain and in three days I was free. From that moment, in principle, the mental being in me became a free Intelligence, a universal Mind, not limited to the narrow circle of personal thought as a labourer in a thought factory, but a receiver of knowledge from all the hundred realms of being and free to choose what it willed in this vast sight-empire and thought-empire.

Sri Aurobindo

(*Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 24, pp. 1257-58)

THE YAJNA OF NEW CREATION

SRI AUROBINDO'S *Savitri* begins at the beginning of things. It opens with action in the Transcendental and the concern is that of the Evolutionary Soul of the Earth. It has by now emerged out of the darkness of inconscience and has stepped into the half-light of knowledge, of mental awareness. But it is an awareness bordering at best on the spiritual and obviously this partial attainment cannot be the culmination of its growth. Beyond the worlds of ignorance there are the worlds of luminous possibilities and they must become a part of the earth's life. This can happen only when a radical change takes place in its character and quality. The imperative is that the hesitant path turns into a path of progress in superconscience. There is however a great existential impediment standing across it and unless that is removed nothing divinely worthwhile can be achieved. The difficult problem of transition from ignorance into the richly growing domain of knowledge assumes an altogether new dimension as compared with the growth that until so far was taking place in ignorance.

It is a problem connected with the response and receptivity of the physical Nature, with its stiffly formed inconscient will. Locked in that will is the inflexible Law of Death which sprang up when Life entered into Matter. It is indispensable that the law of growing immortality replaces this regime of mortal existence. Right now the grave impediment is in the nature of the mind of the physical. If we go to the root of the cause we see that this mind was built by the powers of Darkness and has remained all along subject to them. It is the mind of Night standing as an obstacle across the path of the cherished event. If the mind of the physical receiving the supramental is the mind of Light, then we can say that the mind of the physical receiving the inconscient is the mind of Night. This physical mind, the mind of the obstinate physical, because it has already taken a form seems to be more tenacious, more ominous and threatening than a certain kind of plasticity that is otherwise there in the infinite Nothingness. Not the spirit of Night, the Purusha of Inconscience, but the grimly formed mind of Night with its refusal to change is what is to be recognized as the real occult difficulty. Which also means that it is inherently a difficulty of Nature, a material and not a spiritual difficulty. This mind of Night must open to the wonderful powers of Truth and Consciousness and Bliss and become the mind of Light. It is a long way but it must be taken. That is the immediate purport of the yogic *Savitri*. In it is set the problem and in it is given the solution also.

But the mind of Night cannot transform by itself. It is obdurate and enduring and bears the stamp of Inconscience. The change in the evolutionary course cannot happen of its own, although it does possess all the possibilities of the Spirit in it. Therefore there has to be a direct operative involvement of the Supreme in it, an involvement that should be twofold. Which means that the Supreme should incarnate himself as a full-bodied Avatar and do Yoga-Tapasya in the physical. The Vedic Rishis spoke of the body as an unbaked earthen vessel or *atapta tanu* in which so far no tapas has been done. In their marvellous pursuit they had arrived at this stage but got stuck because it is the descent of the Supermind that alone can bring about the miracle. The key for the descent of the

Supermind in the physical was not available to them and therefore the issue remained unresolved. Now the supramental Avatar comes here as Aswapati and does tapasya in the physical, makes ready the desired *tapta tanu*. By his Yoga-Tapasya is prepared, in the field of ignorant and stumbling Nature, the ground for his Executive's world-action. She shall then as Savitri take the mortal birth in the Will of the Supreme and do Shakti Yoga. With this double Yoga accomplished, in its Siddhi shall the Soul of the Earth step into the regions of Knowledge. A new and authentic felicity shall thus be established.

Savitri begins with the announcement of the death of Satyavan. This looks very dramatic, giving an impression that the poet is plunging without delay into the midst of the great cosmic action. In Narad's revelation in the *Book of Fate* also we have the assertion that Satyavan's death is a decreed death and that he must die. There is no ambiguity or indefiniteness in his pronouncement; in fact he is very categorical about it. Which means that in that decision is present the Transcendent's will and action, *samkalpa* and *kriyā*. In it Satyavan shall die to the past and abandon the paths of the old stumbling Nature. For this to happen on earth the incarnate with the help of the Gods must climb up the new peaks of ascent. But the Gods are still asleep and unless they awake this night's darkness cannot end; but it cannot end when the Doom stands there as her guard.

The Gods are the powers of the Divine promoting in cosmic action slow growth of the earth's soul and therefore they must fulfillingly participate in it. If Reality in the truth of Movement has set into motion this enterprise, then it must as well grow in it. An aspect of that transcendental Reality as manifesting Ritam in the dynamics of Becoming has also to emerge in the great rhythms of Time. Behind this creation is that Transcendent's *samkalpa*, the Will to be. This Will is the Cosmic Yajna upholding the vast Cosmic Action. But this Yajna cannot be performed when the divine forces are still asleep. Therefore the first task of the divine Being, Sat-Purusha, is to kindle this fire of sacrifice in the primordial darkness; for, it is he who performs it for the sempiternal good of this creation. That hour, Brahma Muhurta, to initiate the Sacrifice has now arrived and the offering or Ahuti of the inconscient past in the Yajna can be made. The boons of this Yajna shall be the plenitudes of immortality. That is how Yajna in its root sense becomes the dynamic creativity with the dawn, the sun, the wind, the year, the sky, the directions, the earth, the stars, animals and birds and men and the great gods participating in it.

Under the old Nature's sway Satyavan, the Divine incarnate as the Soul of the Earth, remained all along helpless and bound. He could not step into the eternal day, into the splendours of superconscience. At times something did stir on the remote border of dream and awareness, *swapna* and *sushupti*, but too feeble was the movement. Many wide-shining dawns of the Veda had since then come and returned without fulfilling the promise they had brought with them. The inflexible Night with all her antagonism yet prevailed and the effort had to begin once again. The Daughter of the Sun, the transforming Might rising from golden flames of the Supreme's cosmic Yajna must effectively deal with it. She must take the mortal birth, but even in that mortal birth she must possess the conqueror's power that knows no defeat. Now the moment has arrived and the Goddess incarnates herself as Savitri. Divine Savitri accepts the mortal's lot that has been

always full of pain and suffering; she accepts the challenge of Satyavan's death, the challenge posed to her by Yama the embodied Nothingness. The heroic undertaking is that this incorrigible and severe Yama's incumbency be terminated. Presently the Soul of the Earth, the divine Soul is in his possession and Savitri must claim it from him. This can happen only in the utter inevitability of the death of Satyavan, her consort in the heavenly creation on earth. After one year of their association in the cycles of Time he must die to it. The result shall be the transformation of the immortal God of Death into the supreme Benefactor of this mortal creation, this *mrityuloka* to which we belong.

When this is done a new Yajna shall be kindled. This shall be the Yajna of New Creation. In it not the early Purusha and Prakriti but Satyavan and Savitri shall tend the leaping golden flames. These shall bear the expression of the True. The luminous Gods and Goddesses shall attend the ceremony and receive a share of the offerings in the Yajna. In it then shall be born the Sun-God, Savitr. Savitri who in the Transcendental is the daughter of Savitr, the Sun-God, shall as a result prove on earth to be the mother of that Sun-God himself. The daughter thus becomes, somewhat paradoxically in the manner of the Puranas, the mother of her father. When this happens there is the beginning of the new creation. In it is the Endowment, the Boon of the Yajna.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

THE BIRTH OF SAVITR

HAPPY life rushed in bird and beast and tree
 And through dreaming quietude ran swift joys of men
 And the rishis in the forest felt a change,
 As though the past had vanished into fire
 Of the yajna kindled to make wide the world.
 Satyavan and Savitri tended the flames,
 Flames whose tongues can bear expression of the true,
 Hold in their leaping zest newborn greatneses.
 Moon-lotuses bloomed for the crimson bright
 And Soma and Indra and Agni and Vayu
 Came in their auspicious forms to celebrate
 The birth of Savitr in this creation.

Savitri: The Sun-God

R. Y. DESHPANDE

THE COMPOSITION OF SAVITRI

(Continued from the issue of January 2003)

Savitri and the Record of Yoga

6

If the smiling youth seen by Savitri as she falls towards the earth is Krishna and the dark woman is Kali, the manner in which the face changes from one to the other while remaining “rapturously the same” brings to mind the references in the *Record of Yoga* to Krishna-Kali-darshana, the unified vision of Krishna and Kali.¹ Not that a description like the one in *Savitri* actually occurs in the *Record*. Sri Aurobindo often recorded seeing symbolic forms with the subtle sight, including some instances of “images changing into each other”.² But the typically brief entries on the “darshana” of Krishna and Kali suggest rather an inner spiritual perception, as when Sri Aurobindo refers to seeing “Krishna with Kali in the purusha [man], Kali with Krishna in the *stri* [woman]”,³ distinguishes seeing “Krishna & Kali, not yet KrishnaKali in human beings”,⁴ or writes:

After a long struggle the covering consciousness has once more been removed & the Krishna Kali once more occupies all manifesting freely in all often with the intensity & directly, or else with the disguise of the form & mentality.⁵

Admittedly, this does not make it very easy to visualise what Sri Aurobindo saw. But the place of the experience in his sadhana can be established from the *Record* and its philosophical implications inferred with the aid of his other writings, shedding some light on the significance of the apparently related vision in *Savitri*.

In the *sapta catuṣṭaya*, which provides a framework for the systematic notations in the *Record of Yoga*, Krishna and Kali are listed as the first two elements of the fifth division, the *karma catuṣṭaya*. In the discussion of *dāsya* in a previous instalment,⁶ we have seen that the blissful submission of Kali, the Prakriti or Shakti, to Krishna, the Purusha or Ishwara, is the secret of true power. This is “Madhura dasya of the KrishnaKali relation”⁷ or “Kali-Krishna bhava in the personality; together, dasya of the Kali-prakriti as expressive of the Krishna-purusha”.⁸ It is the “subjective base”⁹ of *karma*, divine action in the world, which is the third member of the fifth *catuṣṭaya*;¹⁰ the fourth member is *kāma*, which here does not mean desire in the ordinary sense, but divine enjoyment, as Sri Aurobindo explains in *The Synthesis of Yoga*:

Whatever desire will remain, if that name be given, will be the divine desire, the will to delight of the Purusha enjoying in his freedom and perfection the action of the perfected Prakriti and all her members. The Prakriti will take up the whole nature into the law of her higher divine truth and act in that law offering up the

universal enjoyment of her action and being to the Anandamaya Ishwara, the Lord of existence and works and Spirit of bliss, who presides over and governs her workings.¹¹

In the *Record*, this taking up of the action of Prakriti into “the law of her higher divine truth” is termed *daivī prakṛti*, divine Nature, which is a name for the third element of the second or *śakti catuṣṭaya*. But until 1914 and occasionally even after that, Sri Aurobindo referred to this element of the *sapta catuṣṭaya* as *caṇḍībhāva*. Chandi, “the fierce one”, is an epithet of Kali, and *caṇḍībhāva* was defined as “the force of Kali manifest in the temperament”.¹² The intensity of the action of the divine Force when it enters into human nature to transform it perhaps explains why this Force in general, including various personalities of the Shakti, was designated by the name of Kali. Sri Aurobindo conveyed a sense of this intensity in one of his aphorisms:

Who can bear Kali rushing into the system in her fierce force and burning godhead?
Only the man whom Krishna already possesses.¹³

In recording the progress of the *śakti catuṣṭaya*, however, Sri Aurobindo usually referred not to Kali but to Mahakali and the three other aspects of *daivī prakṛti*. The importance of Mahakali, the Shakti of strength and swiftness, in relation to the other Shaktis is clarified in his last diary entry of 1912. After describing the meticulous method of Mahasaraswati, by which “the Yogasiddhi has been justified... by slow, small and steadily progressive processes”, Sri Aurobindo observed:

But, if continued, this method would render success in this life impossible. The method chosen for preparation has been Mahasaraswati’s, but the method chosen for fulfilment is Mahakali’s in the Mahasaraswati mould.¹⁴

By the time Sri Aurobindo wrote *The Mother*, around 1927, he seems to have arrived at a more even balance of Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati. Yet as late as in 1938 he wrote that “the combination of Krishna and Mahakali is one that has a great power in this Yoga”.¹⁵ This statement is reminiscent of the *Record of Yoga* in the importance it gives to Mahakali among the aspects of the Shakti, as well as in joining Kali, though here under the name of Mahakali, with Krishna.¹⁶

All this pertains to the manifestation of the divine Shakti in the nature and action of the individual Yogi—the *śakti catuṣṭaya* and *karma catuṣṭaya* in the system revealed to Sri Aurobindo as a programme for his Yoga. But there is also the question of how the rest of the world is perceived by such an individual, since his spiritualised existence in the midst of an incurably unspiritual universe could serve no purpose except to lead him to a door of exit from the meaningless drama in which he has somehow become entangled. Therefore, the fifth or *karma catuṣṭaya* depends on the sixth *catuṣṭaya*, the *brahma catuṣṭaya*, which is concerned with realisation of the omnipresent Reality, *brahman*.

Moreover, the vision of this Reality, called *brahmadarśana*, is incomplete unless it is filled with *Kṛṣṇa-Kālī-darśana*, that is, unless the perception of the unity of all includes the vision of the presence and working everywhere of the same Krishna and Kali, Ishwara and Shakti, whose manifestation in the internal being is the basis of a divine action. Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter in 1916, after explaining how an absolute equality makes us “able to hold consistently and vividly the settled perception of the One in all things and beings”:

When the Unity has been well founded, the static half of our work is done, but the active half remains. It is then that in the One we must see the Master and His Power,—Krishna and Kali as I name them using the terms of our Indian religions...¹⁷

In the *Record of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo had noted in an entry in 1913 the dependence of the *karma catuṣṭaya* on the full realisation of the “fourfold Brahman”—meaning the four elements of the *brahma catuṣṭaya*, whose formula is *sarvam anantaṁ jñānam ānandaṁ brahma* (Brahman as the All, as the Infinite, as universal Knowledge and as self-existent Delight):

Kali and Krishna are manifest, but not in their full power and being, and because they are not manifest in a sufficiently full power and being, therefore kama and karma linger. The fourfold Brahman, on which that manifestation rests, is realised subjectively, but not yet, except initially, in its objective effects.¹⁸

An entry written on 16 January 1917—a week after Sri Aurobindo resumed keeping his diary following the interruption during which he had begun *Savitri*—shows the relation between Brahmadarshana and Krishna-Kali-darshana. Here we see that Ananda Brahman, the last term in the fourfold realisation of the impersonal Brahman, is the foundation for the dual self-revelation of the divine personality as Krishna and Kali:

Brahmadarshana has become again & more firmly Anandabrahmadarshana and is now being refilled with Krishna-Kali-darshana.¹⁹

While Krishnadarshana or vision of the “Lilamaya personal-impersonality”²⁰ was for Sri Aurobindo a more integral consciousness than the impersonal Brahmadarshana, he considered Krishna-Kali-darshana to be a still higher realisation than simple Krishnadarshana:

The Krishnadarshan... often descends into the Saguna Brahman. At other times it rises to the KrishnaKali.²¹

(To be continued)

RICHARD HARTZ

Notes and References

1. See *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, pp. 77, 446, 767, 770; Vol. 11, pp. 781, 810, 813, 816-17, 830-32, 836, 851, 853-54, 872, 922, 979, 993, etc. Sri Aurobindo combined the names of Krishna and Kali in various ways:

“Krishna-Kali”, “Krishna Kali”, “KrishnaKali”, “Krishnakali”, “Kalikrishna”, etc.

2. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 11, p. 964. On 13 April 1914, Sri Aurobindo noted a cryptic vision of numbers, “10” changing into “11” without disappearing, so that in the second digit “1” was superimposed on the original “0”. According to the numerical symbolism explained in the entry of 21 August 1917 (*ibid.*, p. 997), but in use much earlier, 10 signified Krishna and 11 signified Kali. Sri Aurobindo interpreted this “lipi” (vision of writing) to mean that “the Deva, whose manifestation depends on the manifestation of the Devi... awaited the firm manifestation of the Mahakali personality before basing permanently in the vijnana its own manifestation.” (*Ibid.*, Vol. 10, p. 441.)

3. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 11, p. 993.

4. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 767. The inward nature of the “vision” of Krishna and Kali is suggested here, where Sri Aurobindo describes it as “pervading the extension of the Brahman in Akasha, Vayu etc” and comments: “It is the full joy & plenitude of the conscious existence illuminating also the inert & the void.”

5. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 11, p. 836.

6. *Mother India*, December 2002.

7. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 11, p. 931.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 1019.

9. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 734.

10. This is the usual order (see *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 11, pp. 997, 1478, etc.), but *karma* and *kāma* are reversed in one explanation of the *sapta catuṣṭaya*. (*Ibid.*, Vol. 10, p. 23.)

11. *The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 24, p. 696.

12. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 12.

13. *Essays Divine and Human*, CWSA, Vol. 12, p. 454.

14. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 170.

15. *The Mother with Letters on the Mother*, SABCL, Vol. 25, p. 75.

16. Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter in the 1930s: “Mahakali and Kali are not the same. Kali is a lesser form.” (*Ibid.*) But in the *Record of Yoga*, the distinction was different: Kali was the general name for the Shakti, of which Mahakali was the most prominent aspect. Only rarely in the *Record* is the name Kali used for an inferior form of this power, as in the entry of 2 August 1915 where Sri Aurobindo writes of the danger of “a relapse into the rajasic Kali”. On the other hand, the “golden Kali four-armed & weaponed, destroying the Asuras”, seen on 28 March 1914, fits the description of the golden Mahakali on the higher planes mentioned in his letters in the later period.

17. *On Himself*, SABCL, Vol. 26, p. 427.

18. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 355.

19. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 11, p. 922.

20. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 446.

21. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 11, pp. 853-54.

KEDARNATH

*(The soaring Himalayan glacier, veiled in dense fog, is the mysterious Presence.
It draws us towards it, it peers curiously into our depths, it surprises us.)*

ANT-LIKE the car's crawl up the giant hill
Close pressed around by skyward climbing peaks
Dressed with teeming dense and bristling forests
And plunging cataracts like white garlands,
The Mandakini snaking lazily far below.

In this desolate grandeur the awareness of a gaze
Brushing the shoulder like a soft benign touch
And surprised I turn to the blue mist ahead.

A hand has parted the veil
And towering in white magnificence
Kedarnath darshan—to behold and be beheld
A moment frozen, incandescent, immobile

Interminable. Then imperceptible, almost shy
The veil drawn back, the memory erased
The procession of peaks leading once more into the haze.

DEBASHISH BANERJI

SYMPHONIES FOR THE SOUL

I

AT this eerie hour of silence hardly a soul is found on this road cluttered by houses. Hardly a whining vehicle is stepping on it. Where has life gone to? I jump over the gate and stand in the middle like a free-standing sculpture in a museum, watch here and there through the rolling balls. I am soaked in moonlit darkness. Not a speck of memory pricks my soul. Not a sense of loss of identity touches my being. I stand there long trying to fathom my feelings and plunge deep into the recesses of the inner being of my body to unravel the mysteries of my own being. Soon I realise the loss of this moment, a great moment that comes rarely in one's life. However, I keep and pass with a longing heart.

II

I walk towards the north of the city leaving footprints on the raw earth. I see a cloud of red flowers decking the little pond bleeding into the turquoise water. A lonely place of assortment of trees and the green shooting plants are trembling in the cool wind like the sprung heads of dolls. I sense a hidden melancholy, the pain of the wounded gulmohar whose harmony is bulldozed by man. It spoke in such tone of complaint tinged with sorrow. I hear the flow of dark voice sinking into the earth. "This cannot happen, must not happen," the voice of the trees in chorus rented the air in shivers. Who am I to stop such cruelty? But I mourn, keep and pass with true love in my heart.

III

In the assiduous morning a brown eagle, like a true renouncer, is perching on the pole, like an edging rock on the cliff. A true renouncer,—unlike me! A born renouncer,—unlike me! It need not have to struggle like me to get the light of the sun and the light of the moon and stars. Is it a true yogi or a perfect Buddha or a shadow of the light? I watch it with envy. Soon it lifts its heavy body in the sky, like a voice from the minarets, and circles, deriding me. Is it a life or a phantom? I keep and move with true love in my heart.

IV

A flock of milky cormorants descend in the fields to feed. Wading through, they make no curious calls. It is a spectacle and a feast to the bird-watchers on a Sunday evening. Friends of farmers and philosophers to on-lookers, they are mapping the wild green fields with their unruffled whiteness. Even a painter wouldn't have missed the patterns. They become nervous at the slightest human movement near. They move to

another patch to create another set of wild patterns. Yet not a trace of their drawings with their gentle ploddings can be made. Such is human life to be made in living. Human paintings cannot be a match even as they lift their slender legs flapping their wings. I lose my 'self' in such scenes to gain the other world. I keep and pass with true love in my heart.

K. V. RAGHUPATHI

ALL THINGS IN THEIR TIME...

FALL again, and my mind
 Vagabond that it is
 Takes flight in ragged formation
 Like the dark shapes honking
 Across the clear ice-blue sky.
 Is it the natural sadness of vicarious death
 That haunts the chill days?
 Falling leaves remind us
 Of youth, past lives and loves,
 Forgotten paths, neglected dreams.
 The fleeting false securities of life
 Blind our inner sight and through our tears
 Seeing only scars we miss the dormant bud.

Who was it said, "All things in their time..."
 Death is only life turned inside out;
 It's holding on, not dying, that brings pain.
 Let go and trust the gods to know the hour.

MARY HELEN

PROMISE ON THE SHORE

THE marble hall was empty, but for some virgins
holding their breasts toward the cool breeze.

I took the boy's hand and we walked toward the sea
and beheld a ship sailing toward the shore.
The boat was white, orange the baldachins,
the oarsmen sang a deep, throaty song—
they sailed on joy and song,
on windless sea they came.
As he moved just slightly so revealed
the King entirely gold, but for the Queen,
she was as white as diamond dropped on the snow
holding an infant on her knee.

Three sad Queens seated behind I saw,
why not as those others, I mused?

I spied a whirling, circling round ever inward go—
look, I said to the boy,
he is taking the light below,
see my arms turned golden, most marvelous a day!
But now the august company wished to depart...
King I cried, when I will call you, will you come?
Three times he called,
I will come, I will come, I will come,
and they were gone.

GEORGETTE COTY

A UNIQUE PRAYER

PRAYER to God is something that we naturally resort to when confronted with a serious problem, danger or illness, but not by way of a routine communion with the Creator. The devout among us may usually pray to God for health, wealth and success in life. It is only a rare unselfish few who pray for universal peace and well-being, like in the shlokas: *Sarveṣāṃ svastirbhavatu, sarveṣāṃ śantirbhavatu; sarveṣāṃ pūrṇam bhavatu, sarveṣāṃ mangalam bhavatu. Sarve janāḥ sukhino bhavantu, sarve santu nirāmayāḥ; sarve bhadraṇi paśyantū, mā kaścid duḥkhabhāḥ bhavet.* (May all be well with every one. May all enjoy peace. May all feel fulfilled. May all be blessed. May all enjoy felicity. May all be free from ill-health. May all be witnesses to auspicious events. May none have any share of unhappiness.)

Of the three categories of people with their typical prayers mentioned above, the first one, i.e., those who pray for relief when faced with physical or mental difficulty, danger or fear, are the most preponderant, and, if their prayer happens to remain unanswered, they don't hesitate to blame and curse God for His indifference. As Saint Kabir has sung, “*Dukh mein sumiran sab kare, sukh mein kare na koi.*” (Everyone remembers God when in trouble, but none in felicity.)

This being the general range of prayers, one cannot imagine that any human being could actively seek perils and difficulties in praying to God. But there indeed is such a startlingly unique prayer made to Lord Krishna by Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas.

After the cessation of the Mahabharata War, Yudhishtira was crowned King of Hastinapur. The Pandavas performed the purificatory rites for the departed souls. Yudhishtira successfully carried out three Ashwamedha Yajnas and now was the time for Lord Krishna to return to Dwaraka. At this stage, Kunti in her prayer to Krishna (*Srimad Bhagavata*: Skandha I, Ch. 8, shlokas 18-43) hymns, His praise, expresses her deep gratitude for all the support and protection that He provided to the Pandavas all through their life and makes the stunning request inviting perils on herself in the following shloka:

विपदः सन्तु नः शश्वत्तत्र तत्र जगद्गुरो ।
भवतो दर्शनं यत्स्यादपुनर्भव दर्शनम् ॥

O Teacher of all the worlds! Let peril face us ever and anon; for, it is in dangerous situations that we feel the presence of Thee, whose vision bestows freedom from repeated births.

This indeed is quite a unique prayer which none but the bravest of devotees, if ever, are capable of making.

B. G. PATTEGAR

JWALAPUR

JEWEL of fire
Bower of light
In an open air theatre
Magnificent central Star
Mother
Always you are talking to us
You are encouraging us.

Love, Love, Love
Beauty, Beauty, Beauty
Is life perfect?
“Perfect, Perfect,”
Answers the Mountains’ echo
Source of life
Threshold of the Divine Abode
You accept your Destiny
Or everything disappears
Moon and Sun
Water and light
Jwalapur
Garden of the world
Here the breath of your spirit
Animates the heart of the flowers
Which exhales the fragrance of your soul.

CHRISTEL DELABOUIRE

THE FRESCOED MAP OF MOTHER INDIA

ALL the readers of *Mother India* all over the world have seen the frescoed map of our beloved Mother India. But, I suppose, not all of them know who drew this map of our Mother in her integral form—the undivided country before partition—on the wall of the Playground of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. The Divine Mother herself drew this map! Because this is the map of Sri Aurobindo’s dream, it is the true map of India.

When Sri Aurobindo gave his message on 15th August 1947, the sadhak-poet Nishikanta wrote a small poem titled *Akhanda Bharat* in Bengali on that very day, being inspired by the message of the Lord. The poem consisting of sixteen lines in four stanzas was written on a small piece of paper. And this small piece of paper containing that priceless gem of *Akhanda Bharat* lay hidden inside the huge pile of manuscripts of Nishikanta for more than half-a-century—fifty-one years to be exact—and was discovered and first published in the Bengali journal *Bartika* of Sri Aurobindo Pathamandir, Kolkata, on August 1998.

On seeing this poem in *Bartika*, we—the Ashram poets—resolved to get it translated into Sanskrit, English and all the regional languages including the dialects and make this mantra of *Akhanda Bharat* available to a hundred crores of Indians all over the world. Poet Vishnulalit, a Sanskrit teacher of our school (Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education) translated it into Sanskrit—the mother of various Indian languages. Probably all of you are aware that the Divine Mother says emphatically that Sanskrit ought to be the national language of India. Poet Devdutt of the Dining Room translated it into Hindi, Dattatreya of Bakery into Kannada, Smt. Jyotsna Mohanty—another teacher—into Oriya, Thiru K. Balasubramanian—poet and musician and also another teacher—into Tamil, poet Shyamlalit of the Dining Room into Maithilee, and myself into English. After going through the English version our revered elder Amal Kiran (Editor, *Mother India*, and a poet par excellence) was happy to write a marginal note as under:

“It is a forceful translation—Nishikanta’s energetic vision is well-conveyed.”

Sri Ramakant Navelkar (Captain and in-charge of Table Tennis) got it translated by one of his friends Shri Prakash Padgonkar into Konkani (state language of Goa). Prof. V. Vaidyalinga Sharma of Mulakununnathukavu (Kerala) translated it into Malayalam. Prof. P. B. Mistri of Dharampeth (Nagpur) got it translated and printed beautifully in bi-colour and wrote to me: “The poem given by you is translated into Marathi. We have printed and distributed it to some people. I am sending some printed copies to you. We shall meet when I shall come to Pondicherry for February Darshan.” Then with the translation in Telugu by poet Nainaru Appaswamy, we covered the whole of South India.

Then we focussed our attention on North India. Very recently Sheikh Rashid ‘Nirmohi’ of Hurda (Bhilwara)—a spirited young Urdu-poet translated *Akhanda Bharat* into Rajasthani and is trying to get it translated into other languages and dialects and, incidentally, this young poet’s date of birth is 15 August 1970.

We are now trying to get it translated into Bhojpuri, Magadhi, Manipuri, Assamese and Bodo, Kumaoni and the languages of Himachalpradesh, Uttaranchal and Chhattisgarh.

Since *Mother India* reaches almost all parts of India, if not all, we may find people who, after reading this article, will come forward to get this mantra of *Akhanda Bharat* translated into the remaining languages as stated above.

When this work of translation is completed, then it will be possible to bring this mantra of *Akhanda Bharat* to all Indians all over the world in their respective mother-tongue. We have been doing this work all these years since 15 August 1998 with the translations in thirteen languages made so far as mentioned above through various groups and individuals in India as well as abroad. But why is so much importance given to one's mother-tongue? Because it appeals to the heart or the psychic centre where the Mother herself is seated. And when something appeals to the heart, it becomes living. I am sure, the day all Indians all over the world recite this mantra of *Akhanda Bharat* with their heart and soul and mind and body, they will be wonder-struck to see that Mother India has already manifested in Her integral form and the first dream of Sri Aurobindo has already materialised to set his other dreams on the way towards fulfilment.

O sons and daughters of Mother India! Shake off all *tamas* and inertia, be fully awake and arise—to live for the Mother, to sacrifice everything for Her sake so that She returns in Her radiant glory to save the world and humanity.

SATADAL

SUPPLICATION

I HAVE basked in the glow of Thy glory
 And felt myself a prince in victory.
 Now the cataract of grace has dried,
 Several times in vain have I tried,
 To invoke Thy compassionate smile.
 The antagonist forces still do beguile
 And a cloud of gloom has o'ertaken me,—
 Divine Master hast Thou forsaken me?

Where the mind is tranquil and free,
 And the heart is rid of despondency;
 Where the hostile forces are subdued,
 And in sunlit chambers do not intrude,
 For that magic touch of Thy uplifting hand's sleight
 Mind and heart in silent expectation wait.

HEMANT KAPOOR

TAGORE AND SRI AUROBINDO ON MODERN POETRY

BOTH our authors seem to have suspected the terms ‘modern’, ‘modernism’ and ‘modernity’. They were also not quite enthusiastic about modern poetry. While Tagore reacted with a sharp sophisticated sarcasm in his essay entitled *Modern Poetry* (a translation by Indira Devi Chaudhurani from Bengali), Sri Aurobindo was cool and disinterested when he wrote back to his disciples responding to their queries. Both of them expressed their views in the thirties, when post-modernistic qualities were already creeping into the world of poetry and putting a kind of pressure on them. Sri Aurobindo was not a public figure and as such he was less bothered about the changing fashions in the province of poetry. For him, poetry was either beautiful or inferior. He never characterized it as ancient or modern, except for some general references to ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ poetry, as we see in Chapter IV of *The Future Poetry*. He must have disliked the interference of intellect in the poetry of the 20s, 30s and 40s. But then, he stayed behind the curtain with his supreme confidence and belief that contemporary reputation was a fluke.

Tagore reacted more nervously and angrily, because of the distinct rise of post-modernism (it was mistakenly known as modernism till the 70s), which challenged his position and threatened to put a back-dated label on his high class poetry. Bishnu Dey, Buddhadev Bose, Achintya Kumar Sengupta and a few others were pushing him hard. The essay on *Modern Poetry* (1932) seems to have been an exercise in self-defence. The tone and implied gesture at the start cannot be overlooked.

Who defines the modern age in terms of the almanac?¹

For Tagore, any twist or turn in literature is modern. He recollects that the pre-Romantics and the Romantics like Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Coleridge and Byron were known as modern poets in his boyhood.

An individual’s measure of delight was, in those days, the sign of modernism. Wordsworth expressed in his own style the spirit of delight that he had realized in Nature. Shelley’s was a Platonic contemplation to which he had added a spirit of revolt against every kind of obstacle, political, religious or otherwise. Keats’s poetry was wrought out of the meditation and creation of beauty. In that age, the stream of poetry took a turn from outwardness to the inwardness.²

Tagore’s argument is quite clear and convincing. In the nineteenth century England, modernism meant subjectivism or self-expression. The 20s and the 30s did not wish to cling to that romantic mode. T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922) was a turning point. Tagore ironically refers to himself as an ‘old-fashioned’ poet contrasting with the stark realists:

Science has thoroughly examined every pulse beat, and declares that at the root of things there is no illusion; there is only carbon and nitrogen, there is physiology and psychology. We old-fashioned poets thought that the illusion was the main thing and carbon and physiology the by-products. We must confess that we had striven to compete with the Creator in spreading the snare of illusion through our rhyme and rhythm, language and style. In our metaphors and nuances there was an element of hide-and-seek: we were loath to lift aside that veil of modesty which adorns and does not contradict truth. In the coloured light that filtered through the haze, the dawns and evenings appeared in a beauty as tender as a bride. The modern violent realists, engaged in publicly disrobing beauty, is a sight we are not accustomed to.³

With this Tagore adds three questions, which I would like to stress, simply because they indicate the disturbed existence of a famous poet and explain his artistic stance. “Is it merely habit that makes us so uncomfortable; is there no truth in this sense of shame? does not Beauty become bankrupt when divested of the veil which reveals rather than conceals?”⁴ The ‘personal man’ in Tagore raises his voice against a dark aspect of science; it does not select in terms of the person, his need of the immaterial, his vision. Science does not care for building the ties of relationship:

It does not regard what ‘I’ want as the main consideration, but rather what the thing in itself exactly is, leaving ‘me’ out of the question. And without ‘me’ the need for illusion in over.⁵

Many have mistaken this glorification of the ‘I’ in Tagore for sheer egoism. Far from that, it is quite in harmony with Sri Aurobindo’s spiritual existentialism, which refuses to erase the personal consciousness of the yogi. The glorious ‘I’ of Sri Aurobindo’s sonnets is an evolution of the Tagorean ‘I’.

Both Tagore and Sri Aurobindo were aware of the quality of restraint and economy in the poetry of the post-1920s. In a letter, Sri Aurobindo disclaims his authority on the subject, but understands “that the turn there is to suppress emotion, rhetoric, colouring, sentiment and arrive at something very direct, expressive, recording either the thing exactly as it is or some intimate essential truth of the thing without wrapping it up in ideas and sentiments, superfluous images and epithets.”⁶ He reminds us—he has also spoken of another trend in his days in the last few chapters of *The Future Poetry*—that this is not the only sign in the poetry of his times. “It does not look as if all contemporary English poetry was like that, it is only one strong trend; but such as it is, it has not as yet produced anything very decisive, great or successful. Much of it seems to be mere flat objectivity or, what is worse, an exaggerated emphatic objectivity; emotion seems often to be replaced by an intensified vital-physical sensation of the object.”⁷ Sri Aurobindo’s opinion virtually supports the views of Tagore expressed in his *Modern Poetry*. Just a year before the publication of Tagore’s essay, Sri Aurobindo had observed and cautioned in a letter (June, 1931) :

I admit I have not read as much of “modern” (contemporary) poetry as I should have—but the little I have is mostly of the same fundamental quality. It is very carefully written and versified, often *recherché* in thought and expression; it lacks only two things, the inspired phrase and inevitable word and the rhythm that keeps a poem forever alive. Speech carefully studied and made as perfect as it can be without reaching to inspiration, verse as good as verse can be without rising to inspired rhythm—there seem to be an extraordinary number of poets writing like this in England now.... It is not the irregular verses or rhymes that matter, one can make perfection out of irregularity—it is that they write their poetry from the cultured striving mind, not from the elemental soul-power within. Not a principle to accept or a method to imitate!⁸

Tagore’s tone is different from Sri Aurobindo’s. As the makers of modern Indian tradition, the two culture heroes seem to have been quick to feel the emptiness of modern poetry. Tagore was more sarcastic. He was a public poet from the romantic school proper. That is precisely the reason behind his sarcastic reaction. It was a threat to his poetic fame:

In the process of economizing that is being carried out in the poetry of this scientific age any kind of adornment has become taboo. A fastidious selection in the matter of rhyme, rhythm and words has become almost obsolete. The change has been far from gentle, for in order to break the spell of the past it has become the fashion to repudiate it aggressively. It has been something like trying to arrange bits of broken glass in an ugly manner. A modern poet writes: ‘I am the greatest laughter of all, greater than the sun, than the oak tree, than the frog and Apollo.’ ‘than the frog and Apollo’ is where the bits of broken glass come in, lest someone might think that the poet is arranging his words prettily. If the word ‘sea’ were used instead of ‘frog’ the modernists might object to it as regular poetizing. That may be so, but the mention of the frog is also poetizing, of an opposing kind. That is to say, it is not introduced naturally but is like someone deliberately walking on your toes. That would be merely modern.⁹

The romantic in Tagore disapproves of the post-modern blend of the ugly and the beautiful, especially when the ugly is unnaturally placed by the pretty. The so-called impersonality in modern or post-modern poetry comes in for criticism. Also looking at life as a whole is not a new phenomenon in poetry. Therefore, Tagore refuses to accept it as a modern element. He goes back to Li Po, a Chinese poet who wrote more than a thousand years ago, and sees the same detachment and wholeness. The old eye could see things dispassionately. Quite relevantly Tagore refers to some examples from Li Po. Let us have a look at the first two to verify Tagore’s logic:

Why do I live among the green mountains?
I laugh and answer not, my soul is serene;

It dwells in another heaven and earth belonging to no man,
The peach trees are in flower, and the water flows on.¹⁰

Blue water... a clear moon ...
In the moonlight the white herons are flying.
Listen! Do you hear the girls who gather water-chestnuts?
They are going home in the night, singing.¹¹

The observations have little of the decorative stuff, which the modern poet hates. Tagore was also trying to show the magic of simplicity and the deeper sense lying beyond that apparently transparent exterior. In translation, Li-Po's lines are well up to our age. Antique or modern, poetry has to be beautiful—that is Sri Aurobindo's stance. Labels are useless; they do not mean much. However, Sri Aurobindo refuses to part with rhythm for the sake of a new trend. Rhythm is a necessity, not a luxury. In Chapter IV of *The Future Poetry*, while making a general reference to 'ancient' and 'modern' poetry, he asserts the value of rhythm:

Rhythm is the premier necessity of poetical expression because it is the sound movement which carries on its wave the thought-movement in the word; and it is the musical sound-image which most helps to fill in, to extend, subtilise and deepen the thought impression or the emotional or vital impression and to carry the sense beyond itself into an expression of the intellectually inexpressible,—always the peculiar power of music. This truth was better understood on the whole or at least more consistently felt by the ancients than by the modern mind and ear, perhaps because they were more in the habit of singing, chanting or intoning their poetry while we are content to read ours, a habit which brings out the intellectual and emotional element, but unduly depresses the rhythmic value. On the other hand modern poetry has achieved a far greater subtlety, fineness and depth of suggestion in style and thought than the ancients,—with perhaps some loss in power, height and simple largeness.¹²

This passage written between 1917 and 1920 probably meant by 'modern' the poetry since the 1890s. It shows a kind of balance between the 'ancient' and 'modern' poetry, an equal respect for the 'modern' by which he surely meant the poetry written between 1890 and 1917 at least, excluding poets like Yeats and Meredith, who cared very much for rhythm, while in his letters written in the 1930s, he was distinctly critical about the lack of rhythm in what may be called post-modern poetry. He was still using the term 'modern' for 'post-modern' poetry. The term matters little in this case. In a letter written around 1932, he is found thinking of Yeats and A.E. as the survivors in a new age, showing his unhappy awareness of the 'latest craze' in England:

The latest craze in England is either for intellectual quintessence or sensations of

life, while any emotional and ideal element in poetry is considered as a deadly sin. But beautiful poetry remains beautiful poetry even if it is not in the current style. And after all, Yeats and A.E. are still there in spite of this new fashion of the last one or two decades.¹³

He obviously meant 'post-modernism' without using the term. His silence on T.S. Eliot only confirms his indifference to post-modernism in poetry. Unlike Tagore, Sri Aurobindo was not entirely dismissive. He was less ironical than Tagore and more balanced in his letters written in the 30s and 40s. He accepted the fact that it was a new way of looking at things in poetry and saw the trend as an effort to see things directly and precisely. He was also quite tolerant of experiments, constructive in his comments and careful to detect the exact problems. Let us conclude the chapter with such a passage of constructive criticism, which we do not really see in Tagore's essay on modern poetry:

On the road that is being now followed there is also evident danger of decadence, through an excess of mere technique and artifice or through a straining towards the merely out-of-the-way or the perverse. But there seems to be no other door of progress than to make the endeavour.¹⁴

For Sri Aurobindo, the right endeavour in poetry is to shun the surfaces and move inward to investigate into the interior zones of the being. There are other trends in modern poetry, apart from surface realism, which he observes with curiosity, like mysticism and surrealism, impressionism and symbolism.

GOUTAM GHOSAL

Notes and References

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
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5. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
6. *SABCL*, Vol. 9, p. 441.
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8. *Ibid.*
9. Sisirkumar Ghose (ed.), *Angel of Surplus*, pp. 114-115.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 119-20.
12. *SABCL*, Vol. 9, p. 23.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 444.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 443.
15. See also *Kallole* by Goutam Bhattacharya, *Papyrus*, Calcutta, 1987, for a detailed picture of the Non-Rabindrian Movements beginning clearly from 1923 and gaining in intensity by 1930. Tagore's sarcastic essay on Modern Poetry came out in 1932.

THE RELATION BETWEEN THE POETIC ACT AND THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

(Continued from the issue of January 2003)

c. The Poetic Work

The poetic work, *kavi-karman*, is a product of the poetic imagination, *pratibhotbhavam*; its aim is not to teach but to evoke *rasa*-experience. Thus poetic work is opposed to *śāstra*, science, which is an invention of the intellect, *prajñopajñam*. This opposition between science and art is found also in the West. "Science signifies an order which we impose on nature; art, an emotion we experience facing that nature; that is the reason why aesthetic signs are images of reality."¹⁴ Here poetic work is thus the linguistic expression of emotions felt in the presence of nature.

The task of the poet ends with the poem. The poet has creatively transmuted natural objects into expressive words which, touched and energized by the poet's vision, have shed their limitedness. Words of poetry are not words of personal interests; they are universalized. This does not mean that the words are pale abstractions; on the contrary they are the word-forms of the most concrete experiences. They are symbols; they are *mantra*.

Language normally hides the truth of reality that the seer envisages; in his work the poet transforms language in such a way as to make it capable of bearing the burden of truth-experience, the direct encounter with reality which evoked *rasa* in the poet's heart. This language is different, as we have noted earlier, from the language of science, or discursive thought, *śāstra*. "The categories of language are, so to say, a diaphragm, an obstacle which comes between the reality and our consciousness. Whereas in ordinary usage this diaphragm makes its existence and influence felt, poetical language is devoid of these categories and therefore attains reality before its solidification into discursive thought. Thus poetical language is related to other extraordinary forms of expression, for instance, on the religious plane with mantras."¹⁵

The working of the mysterious power of creative imagination, *pratibhā*, may seem to eliminate or at least demean the poet. But that is not so, the poet remains the creator; we do not forget, even when the name or all biographical and historical data are lost, that there is behind this poetic act a man:

*apāre kāvya-samsāre kavir ekaḥ prajāpati*¹⁶

In this boundless world of poetry, the poet is the sole creator.

He is a man but one who possesses the poetic genius to manipulate the words and other linguistic devices so that they will carry within themselves the poetic essence, *rasa*, the creative and emotive potentialities inherent in the linguistic elements themselves. Nature, and the permanent sentiments dormant in nature which were internalized into the

poet's experience as an 'inner necessity' are now infused in the poetic work.

We may profitably compare this with the modern idea about the artist's involvement in his work as expressed by Mikel Dufrenne: "The artist," he writes, "engages himself entirely in his work, and it is on this condition that the work has meaning and expresses a world which witnesses the world..."¹⁷

Nature as it appears before us, in our daily encounter with it, is not generalized. It is the poet's immersion in the delight and beauty, *rasāveśā*, which makes the emotions universal. The poetic work, by its very nature—symbolic and iconic—is removed from the egoistic involvement; though we may find there reflections of our own personal feelings, and be touched and moved by them. This, however, is not the goal of the poetic work; for in this case we are not trying to have an aesthetic experience at all; we are only trying to use the poetical work as a surrogate for the natural world: "...if we experience actual horror, actual desire, actual disgust, there is no art.... If we did, we would only endure everyday, uninstructed, violent emotion.... We must never react to the art-made image as if it were a reality."¹⁸

When we consider the 'body' of Sanskrit poetry we find that it is very concrete and sensuous. What Sanskrit poetics means by 'universalization' is that these concrete images are not limited to any person and his egoistic interests, but point to a poetic reality which is common to all.

We have thus a situation here similar to that which we have seen in relation to the world of poetry. The poem's concrete form, words and meaning, the rhetorical devices, become, like the objects of the natural world, stimuli, *vibhāva*, etc., which through the power of suggestion, *dhvani*, break through the barrier of ordinary egoistic interests and penetrate the heart of the reader. Here begins the final process of aesthetic experience.

(To be concluded)

RANAJIT SARKAR

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TWO POEMS

The Seed of Light

ALL that I brought from the skies above,
Was a seed of light wrapped in clouds.
All that I planted on earth's barren soil
Was a lone seed of that sunlight.

All that the years did, was drip drop
A lonely dewdrop once a while.
All my expectations now—
The sprouting of that single seed.

The Valley beyond Mountains

He came with the sun, one morn—
The birds in the skies sang, the wind
In the bushes stirred, a slow figure he
Came, beyond him the purple skies.

“I am the traveller, from the valley
Beyond the mountains,” he said.
I looked amused, his soft words, shy smile,
Wind-shaken tresses, grey beard,
All mellowed, weather-beaten to a softness.

But the cynic in me awoke—
“Many came before, claiming the valley
Beyond the mountains. How do I know,
You come from there, you speak the truth?”

His smile vanished, a slight anger
Spread from the eyes shadowing his face:
“You ask for proof... doubt is cureless...”
His wandering feet moved on.

As he left, the birds in the skies cried,
And the wind in the bushes sighed; I knew
I had turned him away, the one
Who came from the valley beyond mountains.

K. N. VIJU

AGONY AND BLISS

It was on the morning of 15 August in 2001, the spiritually most significant day that the adverse forces started attacking S. In fact, he was to preside over a public function arranged at 10 a.m. to celebrate the birthday of Sri Aurobindo at Sri Aurobindo Complex, J.P. Nagar I Phase, Bangalore for which Shri Ko. Chennabasappa, a retired judge and long-standing devotee of the Mother was the Chief Guest. S had to regrettably forego the function due to stomach-pain which started suddenly about an hour before the function. After sometime the pain subsided; S had his lunch and rest; he became fit and drove to the Complex in the evening, climbed up and down the two staircases at the Meditation Hall and School, went round the premises along with the caretaker and resident engineer, had his evening stroll in the beautiful landscaped garden in the Complex and returned home. Soon after he had his light dinner the stomach-pain revived; S closeted himself in his meditation-cum-bedroom, prayed to the Lord and the Mother for protection and lay on the bed. By midnight the pain round the navel was unbearable; his second son AN called the family doctor R on the mobile; the doctor responded sympathetically, prescribed a suitable painkiller and promised to visit S at home by around 8 a.m. next day. Soon after examination, the doctor suspected appendicitis (not a serious ailment as all know) and advised admission to a known nursing home about 3 kms away wherein the doctor's wife herself had already undergone an appendectomy hardly a week before. S and his family members decided to abide by the doctor's advice. On admission into the nursing home, S was examined by the experienced F.R.C.S. surgeon P in the presence of the family doctor R and confirmed that it was severe appendicitis in the advanced stage and that a major operation of an hour was a must which the patient of 72 years age was quite fit to undergo.

S who was on a controlled light diet was admitted into the O.T. at 8.30 p.m. on 16th August 2001. He had a beautiful small photograph of the Mother and a 'Blessing packet' which he had insisted on keeping with him. The surgery was successful and the unconscious patient was taken back from the O.T. to his special ward by around 9.45 p.m. Two elder sons of S AJ and AN and their wives (who are so dear to S and his wife) were meticulously attending on him. Another close relative GP who was Mother-sent assisted the two sons and took equal meticulous care.

The adverse forces resumed their mischief and began to play havoc on the operated patient. Further events with full play of adverse forces on the unconscious patient are furnished as only points in the order of sequence from 9.45 p.m. of 16th August to around 5.30 p.m. of 17th August when the patient regained consciousness. The intervening happenings were narrated at length by his son AN only on 20th August evening.

Sequential happenings:

- Postoperational bleeding started as oozing through the usual side drain by around 10 p.m. of 16th August.
- Bleeding reached its acme in two hours—drenching cotton packs and bedsheets after bedsheets, rendering the patient highly anaemic and skeletonlike.

- F.R.C.S. Surgeon at wit's end and after insistence by the said three youths (two sons and Mother-sent GP), he directed them to get about 4 litres best quality of O group blood along with plasma and platelets-packets from the noted blood-banks. It was at about 0.30 hrs after midnight with heavy monsoon rains outside.
- AJ and GP drove in different directions in their cars to different blood-banks to procure the requisite blood and brought packets after packets between 1 a.m. and 7 a.m. of 17th August; AN full of tears was attending on his unconscious father.
- Dr. P consulted another expert surgeon L from another hospital; arranged ultra-sound scanning by around 1 a.m. in the presence of surgeon L to find out the reason and spot of bleeding; attempts failed.
- Dr. L arrived again on the scene by around 7.00 a.m. and one more ultra-sound scanning was arranged. This time, it was revealed that the blood vessels near the operated appendix were torn out which were not stitched after the completion of the first operation of appendix by the first surgeon P.
- Surgeon L warned and advised Dr. P and the relatives of the patient to admit the latter to a separate N.H., well equipped with I.C.U. and make him fit to undergo a second major operation without further loss of time.
- Meanwhile, blood transfusion to the patient's anaemic body continued from 1 a.m to about 7.30 a.m. on 17th August intermittently as and when the necessary blood packets and platelets-packets were received.
- A suitable and worthy N.H. was not so easily available as some noted hospitals were not ready to admit the already operated patient for the second uphill task. Hence, the indecision continued.

The Mother's Miracle Starts

- A close friend of AJ casually spoke of a young physician Dr. V, an expert in handling the failing patients in Intensive Care Unit (I.C.U.), now at Bangalore after his long stay in the U.S.A. GP immediately referred to his digital diary; called Dr. V with all urgency at about 8.30 a.m. on 17th August. He appeared on the scene within a few minutes, hugged his friend, abused him profusely and intimately, asked everybody including the first surgeon P to keep quiet, examined the fastly sinking patient's unconscious body and declared with a grim face that it is "a gone case", with a life margin of few minutes and not hours. After repeated appeals by the attending three noble souls acting as angels, Dr. V took up courage, phoned the I.C.U. of R nursing home, dictated to his assistant doctors the various medicines and the elaborate arrangements to be made in the most noted I.C.U. of the R hospital (incidentally and fortunately situated close to Sri Aurobindo Complex, J.P. Nagar, Bangalore), talked to the expert surgeon L, requested him to be ready for the second major operation by assuring him that the patient would be made fit within 3 hours to undergo the second surgery failing which the patient would succumb.
- Fast implementations began; the patient was shifted through ambulance carefully to the second Nursing Home. Various medicines were pushed into the unconscious body

without resistance and lo! miraculously the failing patient responded, the operated skeleton-like and anaemic body was rendered fit in the expert hands of Dr. V to further undergo the second major stomach surgery.

- Starting at 12.30 p.m. in the O.T., which was 15 hours after the first operation, a 9-inch cut in the central stomach was made by the second expert surgeon L from above the navel down up to plexus level of the patient. More than 2.5 litres of clotted blood was removed. The bleeding spot at mesentery near the operated portion of the intestine was soon identified and the torn portion was stitched firmly with silken threads, etc., etc., promptly and then the 9"-cut was stitched.
- After the grand success of the second surgery on the earlier fast sinking patient the concerned doctors found the latter miraculously recovering, more promptly than expected.
- The patient regained consciousness by around 5.30 p.m. on 17th August after about 21 hours from the start of first operation. Without any pain, he found himself in the I.C.U. of some other Nursing Home than the first; a doctor, assistants meticulously watching over, feeding injection, oxygen and glucose drips in the presence of patient's two sons and GP—S saw them all in a relieved mood and with smiles.
- Due to the prompt and miraculous healing, the patient was shifted to the special ward from I.C.U. after 3 days on 20th August; shocked wife of S, sons and other closest relatives surrounded him and took meticulous care for his faster recovery. All the working staff and devotees at the Sri Aurobindo Complex were purposely kept in the dark to avoid having too many visitors, upsurge of sentiments, emotions, etc.
- It was the second son AN who for the first time enquired of the operated patient whether he was aware that he had undergone two major operations within 15 hrs, from 16th night to 17th August afternoon. When S replied in the negative with great surprise and anxiety on his face AN burst into tears and narrated all the above facts with minute to minute happenings.
- It was only after the narration that S imagined the agony he underwent unconsciously, wept at length by holding the Mother's Feet closely in his heart. It was Her Grace, Her Grace, Her Grace that brought him back to life. Now, suddenly, the agony was transformed into bliss. This divine moment extended for nearly 45 minutes while verbal discussions took place between him and his Gurus.

*

First, the Mother appeared in the same pose in which she had given S and his three family members the first Darshan on 14 May, 1969 at about 11 a.m. for 14 minutes in Her beautifully decorated room on the 2nd floor at the main building of Sri Aurobindo Ashram. She had received all these members with Her heavenly smile. When S had given the flower bouquet and touched Her lotus feet with his forehead, She had caressed him just as his physical mother used to do in his childhood; S had wept in joy for nearly 8 hours on that day in silence, without explaining to anybody. The same bliss was repeated after

about 32 years in this nursing home, after the said rebirth.

The discussion was intuitive from the deepest recesses of the heart and nothing mental. Very briefly, and in the human language it can be explained inadequately as follows:

S: Mother divine, why did you bring back this small and thin being when it has completed 72 years and has rendered its completely dedicated services at your feet for the last 30 years with all its human ignorance and ego? This being could have been glad to pack off and rejoin you on this earth for your 'Life-divine' work in its green shorts as a child!

M (with all smiles): My dear child, you have still some progress to make both inside and outside, with full faith and surrender.

S: Can I adequately serve you with this small physical stature with all endurance required for physical and vital austerities in Integral Yoga?

M: Why not? Between ant and elephant, which is stronger and more enduring?

(She laughed heartily in Her usual way. Discussion went on regarding the completion of Sri Aurobindo Complex Project and She assured Her abiding Grace.)

S: Mother divine, can I have a little talk with my Lord?

M: Why not? Are you afraid?

S: Yes, Mother, I am scared. I am an anthill and He is the Himalayas!

M: Genuine sadhaks of the Integral Yoga, should never be afraid of anything!

(Soon, with his kindled aspiration and elevated consciousness, he saw through his inner vision his Lord Sri Aurobindo with a powerful golden aura around his head and with all smiles.)

S: Lord, do you still ensure that life on earth shall be divinised despite all the present human resistance and global chaos? If so, how?

Sri Aurobindo: Don't forget my last statement given to the world on 24 November 1950: "The Supramental is a truth and its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable."

Then, some more discussion took place which I do not remember now. Lastly, to my query regarding the Integral Progress of India in her inner and outer consciousness, He gave His and the Mother's blessings and full help for all the sincere collective progress. India shall lead the world towards perennial peace, harmony and concord.

Thus the initial agony ended in bliss by Her abiding Grace and S is again in the saddle, with rebirth in the same body, in Her service all the time.

SHREE

About 'Shree'

'Shree' (alias S. V. Sabnis) who founded in 1973 an organization called 'Friends of Auroville Group, Karnataka', unique in India, with the Mother's written approval and strong support of some senior departmental engineers of absolute honesty and integrity, later founded in 1988 'Sri Aurobindo Complex' at J. P. Nagar, Bangalore with the support of Sri Aurobindo Society soon after his retirement from the State Government service as a senior superintending engineer. From the inception, he is rendering his entirely dedicated services silently in the Mother's cause at the

Sri Aurobindo Complex as Vice Chairman of the Karnataka State Unit of Sri Aurobindo Society, as Managing trustee of Sri Aurobindo Complex Trust and as the Chairman of a full fledged C.B.S.E. school thereunder. The said Sri Aurobindo Complex wherein the sanctified Relics of Sri Aurobindo are enshrined in a spacious and serene Meditation hall, 88 feet high, has been beautifully evolving like a fragrant flower by the Mother's abiding Grace and is attracting more and more people. Apart from other activities encouraging integral development, Shree has recently built a grand Guest House open to devotees and members under the auspices of Sri Aurobindo Society.

TWO POEMS

GOBBLE UP THE NIGHT

QUIET. Nothing to say.
 The stars are silent, too.
 They just wink at me mysteriously;
 They must know this secret, too.

Silent. No thought at all.
 The sun slipped into my shirt.
 It won't come out!
 It gobbles up the night in me, nothing can be hidden.

With this bright companion, will anything be left of me?
 Nothing, but quiet now, and a steady, silent roar,
 That leaves no room for rumination—
 There's too much living left to do.

A TRICKLE

The raging torrents of the rapids
 Are reduced to a slow, steady flow in the river,
 So wide, the other shore nearly disappears.
 All this is but a trickle to the ocean.

ALLAN STOCKER

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS OF SWAMI DAYANAND

Introduction

SWAMI DAYANAND was an exponent of the ancient Indian philosophy of education. A large number of Dayanand Anglo Vedic institutions have been established in his honour. Swami Dayanand was born in 1824 at Tankara of Morvi State of Kathiawada. Karashanji Lalji Tripathy was his father and Rukmaniba, the mother. His parents had named him as Dayaram. The name assigned to him in his horoscope was Mool Shanker. He had adorned the name Sudha Chaitanya, as a Brahmachari. Swami Dayanand had his education in Gujarati and Sanskrit. Being affected by the death of his sister and great uncle in 1846, he left home at the age of 22 and wandered in search of God. At the age of 33, Purnanand Saraswati initiated him into sannyasahood. In 1860 he became a disciple of Swami Virajananda, who was a great grammarian and also a Vedic scholar. He passed away on 30 October 1883 at Ajmer. Swami Dayanand was a great scholar and had a large number of followers. He brought back glory to Indian national character through his lectures and writings, during a period when the country was reeling under foreign rule, and the Hindu religion was facing problems both from inside, from Brahmins and from outside. *Satyartha Prakash*, his famous book was published first in 1875. Other books were *Gokarunanidhi* (1883), *Ved Bhasya*, *Rigvedadi Bhasya Bhumika*, *Vyavahar Bhanu*, etc. Swami Dayanand worked hard for improvement of the society by establishing institutions at various places. Various educationists and reformers have praised Swami Dayanand. According to Sri Aurobindo, Swami Dayanand exposed the true power of the Vedas and brought back an old Aryan element into the national character.

Arya Samaj

Initially Swami Dayanand established Prarthana Samajs. In January 1875, the Rajkot Prarthana Samaj was converted into Arya Samaj. The Bombay Arya Samaj followed it. Swamiji did not take up any official position in the Arya Samaj, and functioned as an ordinary member of the Samaj. His membership serial number was 31. The foundation day of Bombay Arya Samaj (10th April) is observed as the foundation day of the Arya Samaj. The members of Arya Samaj have much regard for the Vedas and accept the Brahmin literature to the extent that it is in tune with the Vedic literature. According to them, God is formless. They do not believe in idol worship. They are expected to be philanthropic and truthful. Each member of the Samaj is expected to contribute at least one per cent of his/her earnings towards Arya Samaj fund. A member is also expected to donate to Arya Samaj at the time of his/her family functions.

Ten Principles of Arya Samaj

- God is the primary source of true knowledge and of all that is known by its means.

- God is Existent, Conscious, All Beatitude, Formless, Almighty, Just, Merciful, Unbegotten, Infinite, Unchangeable, Beginningless, Incomparable, the Support of all, the Lord of all, All-pervading, Omniscient and Controller of all from within, Ever-mature, Imperishable, Fearless, Eternal, Holy and Creator of the Universe. To Him alone worship is due.
- The Vedas are the scriptures of all true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of all Aryans to read them, to teach them and to hear them, read, and to recite them.
- All persons should be ever-ready to accept truth and renounce untruth.
- All acts ought to be performed in conformity with Dharma, i.e. after due consideration of right and wrong.
- The prime object of Arya Samaj is to do well to the world, i.e. to ameliorate physical, spiritual and social standards of all men.
- All ought to be treated with love, justice, righteous and due regard to their merits.
- Ignorance ought to be dispelled and knowledge to be disseminated.
- No one should remain content with his or her own well-being but on the contrary should regard his or her well-being in consonance with the well-being of others.
- In matters affecting the well-being of the society an individual should subordinate his or her personal liking while in matters affecting him or her alone he or she could do with freedom of action.

Nature of Human Life

According to Swami Dayanand, human life is divided into 4 stages—Brahmacharya, Grihastha ashram, Vanaprastha and Sanyasashram. The *samskar* contributes to physical, mental and spiritual development in an individual. Every human being has five sheaths or *koṣas*. These are: Physical, Vital, Mento-motor, Mento-sensory and Spirituo-emotional system. The physical *koṣa* refers to the physical body. The vital *koṣa* refers to nervous forces. Mento-motor *koṣa* refers to the principle of volition and principles of action, particularly, grasp, locomotion, reproduction and excretion. Mento-sensory *koṣa* refers to the principle of judgment and memory and five principles of sensation—sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. The spirituo-emotional system refers to prakriti—love, cheerfulness, happiness, etc.

Stages of Growth of Human Beings

According to Swamiji, there are four stages in the growth of human beings. These are: pre-adolescence, adolescence, manhood, and maturity. Pre-adolescence period starts at birth and continues up to 16 years of age. Adolescence period covers the age range from 16-25 years and manhood 25-40 years. Maturity is from 40th year onward.

Importance of Vedas

Swami Dayanand put much stress on study of the Vedas. He said: “Vedas are a plenary

revelation of religious, ethical and scientific truth.”¹ Sri Aurobindo has also stressed the role of the Vedas. He said that the Vedic religion is a national religion, and it embraces in its scope all the various activities of the national life.” According to him, the truth of modern physical science was available in the Vedic hymns.

Importance on Vedic Dharma as a Universal Religion

Swami Dayanand did not accept the rites and rituals which had brought many divisions into the Hindu religion. He gave great emphasis to the universality of Vedic dharma. It embraces all principles which have always been accepted as true by mankind.

Recitation of Gayatri Mantra

Swami Dayanand emphasised the recitation of Gayatri Mantra.

Stress on Upanayana

Swami Dayanand recommended Upanayana. According to him, the first Upanayana should take place at the home of the child, at the age of nine years and the second Upanayana should take place at school.

Stress on Observation of Celibacy (Brahmacharya)

Swami Dayanand put stress on observation of celibacy. He was of the opinion that there are three types of Brahmacharya: Lowest, Intermediate, and Highest. The shortest period for which a student should observe Brahmacharya is up to 24 years of age.² By virtue of this type of Brahmacharya, the vital forces called “Vasus” are fully developed and mastered. The intermediate Brahmacharya extends up to 44 years of age and leads to attainment of Pranas or vital forces called Rudras. The highest Brahmacharya goes up to 48 years of age and leads to perfection in knowledge, physical strength, wisdom and development of good qualities, nature and character. Brahmacharya aims at attainment of all-round perfection in man. In case of men, the shortest period for which Brahmacharya has to be observed is 24 years. However, the ideal is 48 years. In case of women, Brahmacharya should be at least up to 16 years of age. In line with the above thinking, he suggested minimum marriage age for men to be 25 years.

Control of Speech

Swami Dayanand stressed control of speech. Everyone should not engage in loose talk. Everyone should develop control over the tongue, so that one speaks only what is desirable.

Importance of Meditation

Swami Dayanand laid stress on meditation. According to him, accessories of meditation were bath, achamana and marjana. Meditation consisted of pranayama, angamarshana, manasa parikarmana, upasthana and stuti. Meditation was to be undertaken at a lonely spot.

Stress on Liberation of Women

During the days of Swamiji, marriage of girl children was rampant. He was against child marriage. According to him, the minimum age for girls to marry should be 16 years of age. There should be a considerable gap between the ages of the husband from the age of the wife. Various possible bride and bridegroom ages were: 16-25, 17-30, 18-36. 20-40, 21-44, and 24-48. Accepted principles do not support this type of difference. As per the present Government norm, the minimum age for marriage of girls is 18 years. At that time, widow marriage was inconceivable. He preached for remarriage of widows. He even argued for *niyoga*—temporary sexual union for the purpose of begetting children.

(To be concluded)

SUNIL BEHARI MOHANTY

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RELEVANCE OF SRI AUROBINDO'S VISION FOR THE EMERGING TECHNOLOGICAL SCENE

(Continued from the issue of January 2003)

Bio-technology

THE other frontier technology with a tremendous potential for doing good or harm to humanity is bio-technology. If IT can be described as a technology of knowledge Bio-technology is a technology of Power, an awesome power for altering the DNA structure of an organism, or “the blueprint of life” as the modern biologist calls it. So through bio-technology, human beings for the first time in human history get the power to “Play God” at the physical level. Bio-technology gives the power to alter, modify, or “re-engineer” biological matter at an essential level. Until now man took whatever Nature has given and used it as it is or modified it to suit his needs. But with the advent of bio-technology, human beings acquire the power to persuade Nature to produce according to their specifications and needs or, in other words, convert Nature into some sort of a “bio-factory”. According to an article on recent trends in bio-technology in *Technology Review*, one of the commercially promising areas of future research in bio-technology is “to redraw the genetic blueprints and redirect the metabolic pathways of many common crops” and “rewire plants into cheap production units that can grow everything from modified foods to human vaccines to commodity chemicals.” And the type of questions which the futuristic bio-tech researchers are asking are, “Why make synthetic dyes for cotton using highly toxic chemicals... when the plants themselves could be genetically engineered to produce coloured fibres. Why not turn plants into chemical factories?”¹ The potential benefits and dangers of bio-technology and its ethical implications are now being discussed extensively in scientific as well as popular journals. Bio-technology, it is said by experts, can bring enormous benefits to humanity in agriculture and food production, in fighting diseases, especially cancer and genetic disorders, in new drug discovery, and many others. On the flip side of bio-technology there are ominous possibilities; for example bio-tech research can intentionally or unintentionally release deadly microorganisms for which there is no antidote; a recent news item describes a rather fearsome possibility of “biological weapons that would attack one ethnic group but leave others untouched.” But the crucial issue in bio-technology is much deeper than its immediate short-term material benefits or dangers to humanity. The real question is whether it is right to alter the “blueprint of life” drawn by Nature and that too for commercial considerations which will convert Nature into a factory for serving the commercial interests of businessmen. Such questions acquire enormous importance because the changes effected by bio-technology are not mere superficial technological modifications; they are done at the deepest and essential levels of biological Nature where universal Nature has drawn the entire blueprint for the biological life of our planet. But Nature in the spiritual perception of Indian sages is not an inert material energy.

Nature in the Indian conception is the universal creative Intelligence and Energy of the spirit or the divine Reality, which gives birth to the whole cosmos, not only the physical universe, but also the worlds of life, mind and spirit. So the “blueprint of life”, in whatever level of universal existence it be—physical, biological, psychological or spiritual—is drawn by the universal Wisdom of Nature in the light of Her cosmic vision of the unity, oneness and wholeness of all existence. Here comes the importance or relevance of one of the fundamental philosophical issues involved in bio-technology which we have indicated earlier. Is it right to tamper in an ad hoc manner with the DNA of individual organisms without knowing the blueprint for the whole of the physical and biological life and the long-term consequences of such tampering for the totality of terrestrial life?

This brings us to one of the greatest discoveries of Indian spirituality which Sri Aurobindo describes with a beautiful brevity: “All are linked together by a secret Oneness.” Indian sages and yogis perceived that the world in which we live, from the physical to the spiritual level, is an interconnected unity. Modern science is rediscovering this ancient Indian discovery at the physical and biological level. The New Physics has come to the conclusion that the apparently solid world we perceive dissolves or resolves into a unified web of dancing energy at the essential subatomic level. According to modern physics there is nothing like an independent “thing” or object; there is only an indivisible and unified flow of process and relationship of energy; each “thing” exists only by its relationship with other things. Modern ecology has perceived that the biological life of the planet is an intricate and delicate web of symbiotic relationship between the multitude of organisms of Nature. Sri Aurobindo while explaining this “connectedness” of cosmic existence from the spiritual perspective writes, using the example of a tree, as follows:

“The tree and its process [which makes the tree] would not be what they are, could not indeed exist, if it were a separate existence; forms are what they are by the force of the cosmic existence, they develop as they do as a result of their relation to it and to all its other manifestations. The separate law of their nature is only an application of the universal law and truth of all Nature; their particular development is determined by their place in the general development.”² So, if this law of interconnected unity is such an all-pervading law, then we can safely presume that it operates at the DNA level of biological matter,

This means the DNA of each individual organism is related to the DNA of all other organisms or, in other words, the DNA of each organism is determined by the DNA of all other organisms; the law of evolution or development of a particular DNA or organism is determined by the law of evolution of all the other DNAs and the universal law which governs the gene pool or bio-diversity of biological Nature.

What are the consequences of these insights for bio-technology? Tampering with the DNA of a particular biological organism may have consequences and repercussions for the entire biological world of earth; it will have consequences for the health of human beings because our human body is made of biological matter. Do we have at present sufficient insight or foresight to predict or understand the nature of the long-term consequences of tampering with the “blueprint of life” of individual organisms for the

life of the whole planet? Nature has designed the world to be a Great Interconnected Harmony and Rhythm. Tampering with a note of this harmony may disturb the whole rhythm. If the tampering is only at the superficial level of matter the consequences may not be significant. But if the tampering is at the deeper and essential level of matter, as in bio-technology or nuclear technology, then its long-term consequences for the material world may be substantial. This is because the law of unity works much more powerfully and intensely at the deeper levels than on the surface. For example, if we break a stone its consequences for the material world may not be very significant. But when we break an atom there is such a tremendous release of energy, it may have a substantial impact on the whole material world. We still do not know the consequences of all the atomic explosions on the material world. In fact the Mother is reported to have said in a private conversation with one of her disciples, that all these atomic explosions had a very adverse impact on the world of Matter. Does this mean eastern spiritual vision or Sri Aurobindo's vision is against bio-technology? Does it counsel abandonment of bio-technology? No. For change, evolution and transformation are also a part of Nature. Nature permits change, modification and transformation as long as they do not go against some of her fundamental and universal laws governing the totality of life or her evolutionary aims. Violations of Nature's laws are not always harmful and are sometimes even beneficial. Nature permits these violations even among her own creation. We must also remember that all the laws of Nature are not eternal and immutable. They are laws which evolve along with the evolution of Man and the Universe. As British biologist Rupert Sheldrake puts it: "A lot of my work is based on the assumption that the so-called Laws of Nature may not have been fixed through all time. In an evolutionary universe, why shouldn't they evolve?"³

In periods of radical evolutionary transitions in which Nature wants to establish new laws it may be necessary to break old laws. In these periods, Nature may permit radical violations of her older laws.

(To be continued)

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REMEMBRANCE OF THE MOTHER

I WOULD like to begin this talk by invoking the Presence of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother with a prayer so that each day may bring us a greater light by a series of splendid and opulent images of its Lord, the marvelous Sun, the supramental Sun.

“O splendid Sun! You are infinite in being, unobstructed in Knowledge, all-powerful in action, Immortal in mortals, constant and invariable in Bliss. Yet, you are also seated within us as the godhead of our being whose Divine Flame has been kindled by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. You are the rapturous priest, Agni, the sleepless envoy of our aspiration, the ever-wakeful Master of our house. You are the ceaseless, untiring worker in us, the Divine Child, the leader of our march on the sunlit path of the Integral Yoga, the invincible warrior on our journey, piercing all darkness and removing all obscurities. You are the Vast, the flaming Sun of the Truth, the discernor with divine perception of the steps of our journey. Uplift us from our limitations, deliver us from our ignorance and falsehood. Bring us the true victory and lead us safely to our goal, the Integral Transformation and the manifestation of the godhead seated within.

“May your indestructible Light illumine us on this path with your Divine Truth and our life be blessed with the bliss of the living Presence of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.”

I hope you will understand me if I include Sri Aurobindo in my talk on Remembrance of the Mother, because my contact with the Mother came through Sri Aurobindo. For, when I was studying for my B.A. (hons.) in Philosophy, my professor, the late Dr. J.N. Chubb, then head of the Philosophy Department in Elphinstone College, Bombay asked me to read *The Life Divine* and *Essays on the Gita* of Sri Aurobindo, saying that he would not only answer all the questions I had, but also help me to write critical appreciations of all the philosophies I was required to study, from Descartes to Kant and Thales to Plato. I thought it would be easy. Of course, Sri Aurobindo does not deal with these philosophers directly, but his vision and experience being universal and integral, he treats the most important subjects of the total Reality and hence we can receive his Light on the problems dealt with by these philosophers. I went to a bookshop to buy the books.

As I looked at the contents of *The Life Divine*, I was happy that not only did it touch upon the questions I had, but contained new subjects I had not even thought of. I opened the first chapter. The two lines from the Rig Veda captured my heart and soul, reverberating through my being. “Become high-uplifted, O strength, pierce all veils, manifest in us the things of the Godhead.”

These lines went on repeating as the chant of a mantra. And I went on further. Two phrases again caught my attention: the search after pure Truth and unalloyed, unmixed Bliss. Wasn't it that that I was searching for?

As I read further, my soul heard the call: “To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilight or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of

mechanical necessities, to discover and realize the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation,—this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution.” So far from the reality of our present condition and yet Sri Aurobindo makes us feel that all is within our reach, here and now.

The words—God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality—found a responsive chord within me. I knew I had found my guru who promised me all that I was seeking and more: Delight of Existence on this very earth. It was a two years’ course, which with Sri Aurobindo’s help, I did within a year and got my B.A. (hons.) also. I wanted to meet Him and study at His feet.

I asked for permission to see Him for 24th November Darshan in 1950. But I was told that he was not well, and I should wait for February Darshan. But he left his body in December 1950. I read in the papers that his body would be kept as long as the supramental light was visible on it.

I wanted to pay my homage to him. So, I decided to fly to Madras. I got my ticket on the night of the 8th and was entrusted to two Bengali gentlemen who were coming to Pondicherry. From the plane, before it landed on the 9th morning, I saw the most glorious sunrise. The whole sky was radiant with red, orange and gold without a single cloud. To this day, I have never seen such an uninterrupted unique splendour. It is still vivid.

Well, we arrived by train in the evening around seven o’clock when the body of Sri Aurobindo was already interred. I took my bath and joined the line of people at the head of the Samadhi, offering earth to make the Samadhi. Tears uninterruptedly rolled down, but my aspiration became stronger and my prayer as intense. It was all offered to him, my guru and the Lord. I did not see him physically, but he has always been with me, guiding and helping me whenever needed. And this was confirmed by the Mother, in several events, which I shall narrate as I recount my remembrances of Her.

People told me: “You can see the Mother. For, she has the same consciousness as Sri Aurobindo.” I did not understand, nor did I know anything about the Mother. But I had read a little booklet, *The Mother* as presented by Sri Ramakrishna’s disciples, based on the sayings of their master. It had so much impressed me that a sort of longing had seized my heart. I too was searching as intensely for the direct vision of the Divine Mother. So, I waited.

The Mother gave blessing on 12th Day of Sri Aurobindo’s passing. I waited in the queue not knowing what awaited me, but aspiring as intensely for that golden moment. When I stood before the Mother my eyes were captured by looking into her eyes. Neither of us blinked. I knew nothing else. I was transfixed. I could not move, till the Mother nodded with a smile and handed me the card with Sri Aurobindo’s last photo. I moved on still looking into her beautiful eyes as if they followed me wherever I went.

Then, I saw her at the Balcony darshan, in the Tennis-ground and the Playground. I stayed for three more days watching her and the Ashram activities. I bought her *Prayers and Meditations*, and the twin photos of the Mother in her Japanese kimono and young Sri Aurobindo in his forties.

It was time for me to leave. I went to the Playground to inform her. I did my pranams

and told her that I was leaving. She said with a look of surprise: “Oh, you are leaving!” I said: “Yes, Mother. I have to finish my M.A.” She nodded mysteriously and gave me a rose. I again bowed at her feet and left. This was my first contact. But she had bound me heart and soul. She, unknown to me, never left me since.

(To be continued)

KAILASH JHAVERI

A POINT TO BE!

AMIDST disorderly discord,
 Amidst earthly powerful egos,
 Amidst the clashing, crashing forces
 Quiescence steals through,
 A scene of transparent truth unrolls,
 A golden light, a formless form.
 Unyielding nature responds,
 Vibrates to the tunes of many-sounding Hush;
 A living concord sets in,
 Inert stuff yields its hidden light.
 The Conductor is here now,
 His presence the drumbeat of silence,
 The infinite in the finite.
 A rhythm, subtle, gentle ripples forth;
 The inner becomes the outer,
 Unsightly discords dissolve,
 Become light beautiful and good.
 “I am that”—
 O the joy of perfection,
 O to be the gathered point!

SHAKUNTALA MANAY

SRI AUROBINDO AND MAYAVADA

[The Indian Philosophical Congress celebrated its Silver Jubilee and brought out a special volume of its proceedings in 1950. Beginning with the present issue of *Mother India*, we shall serialise four articles of the symposium dealing with Sri Aurobindo's refutation of Mayavada. Sri Aurobindo had sent his blessings for the success of the Session. —R.Y.D.]

I

THE word 'Māyā' is as ancient as the R̥g-veda, but Māyāvāda as a philosophical school came into being with Śaṅkara in the 9th century A.D. The author of this *Weltanschauung* was a most dynamic personality and even during his lifetime, which was exceedingly short, his thought had become fairly dominant in this vast subcontinent. The succeeding centuries witnessed a growth in the power and influence of it and the philosophers who appeared on the stage of Indian life during this time, on the whole either accepted him and wrote elaborative commentaries on his works or rejected him and wrote refutations of the view that the world is *māyā*, an illusion, *mithyā*, false, and *asat*, non-existent or *vyāvahārika*, purely empirical and phenomenal. However, it continued to be the major and the dominant trend of Indian thought, with of course many vicissitudes, until about the middle of the 19th century, when primarily through impact with the West a new ferment started in Indian life. A reaction appeared against the idea of Māyā and the world and life-denying attitude and thinkers and leaders of Indian life, one after the other, emphasized action and the value of life in the world. Under this changed cultural atmosphere the old Māyāvāda or illusionism itself tended to become more or less a Sattāvāda, a positive creativity justifying life in the world.

The classical critics of Śaṅkara have often called him a 'Pracchanna Bauddha', a disguised Buddhist, meaning that he was virtually reaffirming the same Buddhist position regarding the world process, with the difference that he affirmed a Supracosmic Absolute too, regarding which Buddha had chosen to remain silent. This is, however, only a historical antecedent of Māyāvāda, which is hardly of any direct significance in considering the philosophical value of the doctrine.

We have said that since the middle of the 19th century, thinkers and leaders of Indian life have repeatedly rejected Māyāvāda and stressed life and world-affirming attitude. However, a fullfledged philosophical system, which offers a complete *Weltanschauung* involving a revaluation of Māyāvāda has found expression in Sri Aurobindo. But a refutation of Māyāvāda is no essential objective of his. His *leitmotiv* and the first formulation of the philosophical question is: How is divine life, a full life of the Spirit, possible on earth? How can Spirit be reconciled to Matter? These are the two practical and theoretical issues of his philosophy, which receive a comprehensive ontological, epistemological and axiological treatment at his hands. Obviously there are some assumptions here, but were there no assumptions in Kant's question: How is

knowledge possible? Or Hegel's fundamental affirmation that reality must be rational. It is not necessary for us to go into the validity or otherwise of the assumptions involved. What we wish to show is that Sri Aurobindo's philosophizing starts independently with an original question of its own and in seeking to work out its answer the refutation of Māyāvāda becomes an incidental circumstance, virtually an aid to evolve a fuller Monism free from the necessity of a negativist attitude towards any sphere or part of experience. The positive part of the system, its fundamental philosophical approach and the substantiation and correlation of its constituent elements have reinforced this refutation with a constructive alternative. Now assuming that the doctrine, as traditionally represented, is still held by some we can consider and discuss: "Has Sri Aurobindo refuted Māyāvāda?" or rather "How Sri Aurobindo's philosophy refutes Māyāvāda?"

Māyāvāda is essentially an expression of a sense of inexplicability, *anirvacanīyatā*, in the presence of a contradiction between, on the one hand, the normal experience of the world or multiple finite objects and, on the other, the supernatural spiritual experience of an undifferentiated infinite existence. The quality and the intensity of the latter, its undifferentiated unity in contrast to the multiplicity of the normal experience and a rigid adherence to the logical law of contradiction are sufficient to show Māyāvāda as an intelligible philosophical consequence. Unity being undifferentiated, in fact absolutely featureless, and then more intense as an experience, multiplicity must naturally become unreal and illusory. Yet the multiplicity does exist, our practical life is intimately bound up with it, we cannot deny it altogether. Therefore it exists, but only as *vyāvahārika sattā*, a practical and empirical reality. Now this must somehow be related to the real reality, the transcendental or the *pāramārthika* reality. That is obviously the crux of Monistic philosophy, which, in essential impulse and character, Śāṅkara's system is and, in fact, one of the best known to the history of thought. Now the Māyāvāda's solution of this critical issue is that the world only appears to be, actually it is not. The world is no more than the jugglery of the juggler, the snake in the rope or the silver in the shell. It is like the dream, which appears to be real while it lasts but on waking we know it definitely as unreal. The world too we come to know as absolutely unreal when we awaken to the reality of the Brahman, which is the supreme, undifferentiated Unity, one and sole, without a second.

This world of variety and colour is an *adhyāsa*, a super-imposition, on the one and the uniform reality of the Brahman. But how does this come about? On account of 'Māyā'. But then what is 'Māyā'? This proves to be a very uncomfortable question. Māyā is supposed to be the solution of the greatest difficulty of Monistic philosophy, that of the relation between the apparent 'many' and the real 'one', yet it in itself becomes a more serious problem. Metaphysically it cannot be admitted as another principle of existence besides the Brahman, therefore it cannot be said to be real. Yet unreal it is not. Therefore it is declared as real as well as unreal, *sat* as well as *asat*.* It is in fact *anirvacanīya*, inexplicable. Epistemologically it determines our ordinary cognitions, which being of

* The Advaita view is that Maya is neither *sat* nor *asat*. —Ed.

the apparent 'Many' involving relational judgements are all false. The cognition of the absolute undifferentiated 'One' alone can be knowledge, which is an intuition.

A most wonderful crop of dualisms was the result of the great Monistic sowing of Śaṅkara. Yet it answered to the metaphysical needs of the people of those times in such an abundant measure that it found a ready acceptance with them. The spiritual reality of the Absolute Brahman afforded such a great satisfaction that the difficulties due to 'Māyā' were ignored. Or perhaps 'Māyā' and the unreality of the world were themselves positive satisfactions to the people nursed on the Buddhist view of life. But this general satisfaction did not last long and the dualism so sharply brought into play by Śaṅkara's Monism and, in particular, his concept of 'Māyā', as it were, provoked new orientations of Vedantic thought. Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Vallabha and Madhva are the chief of such creators and they uniformly reject the idea of Māyā. To all of them the world is real. None of them resorts to the idea of illusion to explain one or the other part of experience, whether normal or supernormal. Rāmānuja (12th century), in particular, evolves a powerful philosophy and a more powerful religion, which is also the more dominant trend of contemporary Hinduism. His philosophical approach to reality is truly Monistic, i.e. all-embracing and all-inclusive. He accepts the experience of the 'one' as well of the 'many' as equally real and then proceeds to reconcile them in a whole-hearted manner. It can be said that his account of unity is rather weak but he is not prepared to achieve a unity by rejecting plurality as illusory. His seven arguments, *Saptavidhānupapatti*, against 'Māyāvāda' constitute the classical and the most authentic criticism of the doctrine. He asks for the locus of Māyā or *Avidyā* (Ignorance) and says that it cannot be the human individual, because he is himself the product of it. Nor can Brahman be the locus, because it is absolute self-luminosity in which there is no ignorance. Avidya can also not hide away the Brahman, which is absolute knowledge. It can also not be a third thing from existence and non-existence. It can also not be a positive factor, since ignorance means want of knowledge. And if we admit it as positive, then it will be impossible to destroy it. Lastly, an Avidya-beset universe contradicts moral effort and religious aspiration, because it negates human individuality and offers for an ideal an impersonal existence. Nimbārka (13th century) urges one special argument, i.e. "If the world were not real, it could not be superimposed on another."¹ And Vallabha (16th century) insists that "those who accept the force of Māyā as the explanation of the world are not pure Advaitins, since they admit a second to Brahman."²

The Māyāvāda thus became an issue for centuries but in spite of all the polemic raised against it, it continued to be influential. However, the successors of Śaṅkara, whether in consequence of the criticisms levelled against Māyāvāda or independently, felt obliged to modify their position in a number of ways. With the author of the *Śaṅkṣepaśārīraka*, for example, the 'Māyā' becomes "a *modus operandi* (*vyāpāra*) which coming itself from the material cause (Brahman) brings about the material product, i.e. the world."³ In connection with the *Īśvara*, a concept accepted by Śaṅkara, Māyā is even for him the power which creates the world. Māyā as creative power, on the whole, acquired emphasis during this later period.

Some contemporary interpreters of Śāṅkara too have either been much struck by some special passages in his commentaries or otherwise felt inclined to give new meanings to old terms and passages but in every case the result is that Śāṅkara's abstract non-dualism tends to be changed into a concrete Absolutism.⁴

However the Śāṅkara of these contemporary exponents is not the Śāṅkara known to and accepted by his classical exponents or critics. Sri Aurobindo accepts the classical Śāṅkara and regard his Māyāvāda a legitimate philosophical alternative and examines it as such. As we have said before, he uses it often to develop and state his own position. Now the most fundamental and crucial attack of Sri Aurobindo against Māyāvāda consists in his formulation of the philosophical problem itself. Spirit and Matter are to him the two undeniable decisive facts of experience and, therefore, to reconcile them is the proper philosophical issue. And, says he, "True reconciliation proceeds always by a mutual comprehension leading to some sort of oneness."⁵ The same thought is stated in a variant form like this: "As in science, so in metaphysical thought, that general and ultimate solution is likely to be the best which includes and accounts for all so that each truth as experience takes its place in the whole."⁶ A unification of Spirit and Matter or the discovery of that "ultimate solution" which "includes and accounts for all" becomes the aim of philosophical inquiry. Such unification has to proceed by a systematic "mutual comprehension" or intimate inter-relatedness so that in the end the whole of experience becomes perfectly intelligible. Here the attitude towards all experience is one of acceptance and seeking to interpret and explain it.

Śāṅkara's approach to the philosophical problem was much different. He sought for the "foundational" in experience, which, he thought, must be eternal, unchanging and uniform. He came to regard the "undifferented consciousness alone" (*nirviśeṣacinmātram*) as real and then naturally the rest became unreal and illusory. Here too a unity is achieved, but as Sri Aurobindo says, "Illusionism unifies by elimination."⁷

It is hardly necessary to comment on the relative merits of the two approaches, as we now regard it as almost axiomatic that to interpret experience is the proper business of philosophy and that means really to account for all the principal facts of experience. Anything given in experience is existent and not illusion or unreal and surely illusion is no valid form of explanation either. Our sole concern regarding each fact of experience is to determine the nature and the character of its reality in the scheme and the unity of the whole, for truly are "all problems of existence essentially problems of harmony."⁸

Now the one general consequence of this difference of attitude is that, while both Śāṅkara and Sri Aurobindo are Monists by philosophical seeking, the one constantly dichotomizes while the other always reconciles, in the one you suffer divisions, rejections and eliminations, in the other enjoy growing orientations and ever larger harmonies.

Obviously, according to Sri Aurobindo, illusion will be an illegitimate term to be applied to any fact of experience. If so, falsehood can only be partial truth. Rāmānuja had rightly stressed against Śāṅkara that error cannot exist and this indeed threatened to knock the bottom out of the case of Māyāvāda, because it would make illusion impossible. But Rāmānuja had overstated his case. When he said that all knowledge is true (*yathārtham*

sarva-vijñānam) he failed to see that even if all things admitted to be composed of the same constituents, they might yet differ in the relations of those constituents. *Anirvacanīya-khyāti-vāda* of Śaṅkara and *Sat-khyāti-vāda* of Rāmānuja, both have their respective shortcomings. The one theory of error ends in inexplicability and the other in the affirmation that even in the so-called illusion, the real appears. Virtually error is best explained as ‘relative in nature’ dependent on the ‘perversion’ and ‘contradiction’ of Truth⁹ and as ‘an indispensable step or stage in the slow evolution towards knowledge.’¹⁰ It is a consequence of the cosmic ignorance conceived as a self-limitation of its absolute knowledge so as to produce the divided action of the mind and the ego.

Now if absolute falsehood or error does not exist then we should be obliged to consider and examine his principle of non-contradiction (*abādhitatva*), which rests upon a complete opposition of truth and falsehood and which governs his thought from one end to the other. The experience of a snake in the rope is false, because our normal experience of the object contradicts it. Things seen in the dream are untrue, because waking life does not confirm them. And our entire normal waking experience of the world is invalid because experience of spiritual intuition (*anubhava*) contradicts it. Firstly, it can be questioned whether there is really a contradiction between the experience of ‘a snake in a rope’ and that of ‘a rope as a rope’. Is there not a continuity and link between the two which makes the relating possible and hence the perception of the difference possible. Similarly, if there were really no relation between the world and the Brahman, the apparent and the real, the relative and the absolute, it could not have been possible to think of the two together as we actually do. The illusory appearance is surely not absolutely contradictory of the real object. That is a psychological impossibility. The terms ‘dream’, ‘illusion’, ‘jugglery’, etc. connote unreality in the very limited sense of practical objectives of life. As facts and phenomena by themselves they are not unreal. And a right use of them as analogies (even though the best analogies are no reasons to prove a thing) cannot suggest unreality but only a different order of reality.

Secondly, whether the law of contradiction can have a valid application to questions of total reality, which by its essential nature and concept involves inclusion and affirmation of all facts rather than exclusion and rejection of any, which is the necessary method of this logical principle. Sri Aurobindo argues that “A law founded upon an observation of what is divided in Space and Time cannot be confidently applied to the being and action of the indivisible: not only it cannot be applied to this spaceless and timeless infinite, but it cannot be applied even to a Time Infinite and Space Infinite”.¹¹ The lesson of the Eleatic Zeno must come back to our mind in this connection. From discrete moments of rest a unitary process of motion cannot be produced. A logic which is at home in dealing with discrete finite objects gets entangled in contradictions when it attempts to take up the infinite as its subject-matter. Positively delineating the scope of the law of contradiction Sri Aurobindo trenchantly says that “the law is necessary to us in order that we may posit partial and practical truths, think out things clearly, decisively and usefully, classify, act, deal with them effectively for particular purposes in our divisions of Space, distinctions

of form and property, moments of Time”.¹²

(To be continued)

INDRA SEN

Notes and References

1. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 753.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 756.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 571.

4. (1) “There are in the world many samanyas with their viseshas—both conscious and unconscious. All these samanyas in their graduated series are included and comprehended in one great samanya, i.e. in Brahman’s nature as a mass of intelligence.” (Sankara bhashya on Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, ii, 4.9. *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 534)

(2) *Tajjanyatve sati, tajjanyaajaniako vyāpārah*. Maya is only a modus operandi (*vyāpāra*), which coming itself from the material cause (Brahman) brings about the material product, i.e., the world. (*Sankshepasārīraka—ibid.* p. 571)

(3) *Yathā kāranam brahma trishu kāleshu sattvam na vyabhicarati, tathā kāryam api jagat trishu kāleshu sattvam na vyabhicarati*. Just as the Brahman as cause is eternally real, so is the world as effect eternally real. (Sankara bhashya on Brahma-sutra, *Outline of Indian Philosophy*, Chatterjee and Datta, p. 425)

5. *The Life Divine* (First Edition), Vol. I, p. 39.

6. *Ibid.*, Vol. II (1), p. 265.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 3.

9. *Ibid.*, II (1), p. 474.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 491.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

THE MOTHER

By Sri Aurobindo, with the Mother’s Comments, pages 213, Rs. 60.00.

ISBN 81-7058-671-2

This book contains *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother’s spoken comments on passages from that book, made during her evening classes at the Ashram Playground. The first set of comments were made in 1951 and the second in 1954. The publisher’s note says, “These comments do not form a systematic commentary on Sri Aurobindo’s work, but are rather explanations of certain passages, phrases and words. The Mother usually began the class by reading out a passage from the book, then commented on it or invited questions from those gathered around her.”

Available at SABDA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry 605 002

Please see “New Publications” for ordering information.

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Beyond Good and Evil: A Comparative Study of the Moral Philosophies of Nietzsche and Sri Aurobindo by *Ranajit Sarkar*. Published by Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. Price: Rs. 80.00; pp. 187.

1

ALL comparisons are odious, more so between Sri Aurobindo and others whatever may be their claim to intellectual fame. The book *Beyond Good and Evil*, a title taken from Nietzsche's works, highlights and affirms the profundity and supremacy of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy as compared to that of Nietzsche. The author admirably explains the totally different connotations that the title signifies. He says, "The solution of one (Nietzsche) was a drastic denial of the dualism, of the other (Sri Aurobindo) a reconciliation by transcendence." Nietzsche's obsession with "will to power" is Asuric in nature whereas Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary urge for Superhumanity is the inevitable outcome of a process willed by the Divine and not by man.

The author in his introduction admits candidly that Nietzsche's influence on Sri Aurobindo is very minimal and there is no comparison whatsoever between the Avatar and the Antichrist. The justification of a comparative study (it is more a study in contrast) stems from the fact that Sri Aurobindo describes Nietzsche as a man with "gleaming intuitions that came marked with the stamp of an absolute truth and sovereignty of Light". Nietzsche's vision is a perverted vision, a turbid and distorted vision of a seer who enthrones absolute power for absolute domination and vitalistic self-aggrandisement. This is the ground from which Hitlers are born.

Problems of morality are essentially problems of evil and good. Nietzsche's castigation of the two moralities, religious and philosophical, the former formulated by Christianity which is his favourite whipping-boy, and the latter as set forth by Socrates is of a piece with some of his thoughts as stated below:

(i) The moral implications of good and evil must be rejected because they do not allow a human being to become a personality.

(ii) Life is will to power and there is no such thing as will to life.

(iii) All moral and ethical values that have been so painstakingly nurtured by religions, especially Christianity, must be mercilessly jettisoned in favour of the healthy and strong men brought about by selective breeding or Eugenics. These will be the masters of the future where there will be no God nor the duality of good and evil.

(iv) A new set of values must be established by revaluation which is first an inversion of all the values of Life where the "Self" came first, a thing unstable and flexibly determined by its deeds which now gains predominance over "Self". These deeds are shorn of all moral values and solely determined by the perfectly effective application of will, a will to power. Since there is no Divine or God there is no Divine Will that man has to obey. It is his sole personal will initiating and performing action for which he has no

responsibility. The very willing liberates him from the thralldom of old values.

(v) The gifted man or Superman who has will to power will, in the course of evolution, overcome other men but this is not the purpose of evolution. It is the process itself which will “by chance” develop the Superman.

These are some startling ideas that Nietzsche propounds and the author in his scholarly and brilliant fashion sets Sri Aurobindo’s views in juxtaposition as well as in opposition to the Nietzschean theories which sometimes pale into insignificance before the brilliance, comprehensiveness, and unity of vision of Sri Aurobindo. The author has devoted many pages to Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy to bring out the inadequacy of Nietzsche’s vision of the Superman and they should not be overlooked as *déjà vu* but must be looked upon as the essential elements of this venture of comparison and contrast.

In the last two chapters before the conclusion the author brings out the utterly irreconcilable differences between the conceptions of Nietzsche and Sri Aurobindo vis-à-vis Evolution and the evolutionary goal. The shockingly irrational idea of Nietzsche about absolute fatalism causing eternal return without change under a compulsion over which one has no control is set against the Aurobindonian view of Evolution which presupposes involution of Sachchidananda and the subsequent evolution which is a pre-determined process by which heightening, widening and transformation of Consciousness is achieved. Nietzsche does not envisage any issue or goal for evolution unlike Sri Aurobindo who emphatically asserts the inevitability of the emergence of the “Superman”, a spiritual being, naturally divine, transcending good and evil, a part of a Gnostic society where harmony is the keynote. Witness the stark contrast with the “Superman” of Nietzsche, a glorified vital man, lording his power over others, eternalising the dichotomy of master-morality and slave-morality, even not hesitating to mercilessly cut down anyone daring to contend with him without any moral qualm or scruple and the contrast is complete.

As a fitting finale to his scholarly exposition, the author in his concluding chapter “Eugenics or Yoga” marshals enough facts to acquaint the readers with the subtleties and niceties of modern evolutionary theories with genetics as one of its cornerstones which Nietzsche accepted to formulate his idea of emergence of the “Superman” liberated from the “chiaroscuro” of the dualities (good and evil, truth and falsehood, etc.) and living an amoral life of dominance of the lesser mortals. He then gives a sumptuous account of Aurobindonian theory of Evolution which is Yoga of man or Yoga of Nature culminating in the embracing and transforming of the physical life and revealing the inner Godhead in all its plenary effulgence as the Ishwara, Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent.

This is an eminently readable and reasonably priced book and the author must be congratulated for adding to the existing literature of comparative study of Sri Aurobindo’s thought with that of eminent philosophers of both East and West. This book will leave an atheist profoundly disturbed and shaken while the theist will be again reassured about the eternal good triumphing over evil, for the Superman of Nietzsche, despite his “deification”, is an Asura and his destruction an inevitability guaranteed by the Supreme Lord.

Though the author has thoughtfully included notes and references, an index would have enhanced the value of the book.

K. BALASUBRAMANIAM

(Courtesy: SABDA Newsletter, December 2002)

2

“It is a tribute to Nietzsche that the interpretation of his books,” says a reviewer, “seems to present to each new generation of readers a defining temptation and test. Indeed, there may have been as many major interpretations of Nietzsche since he slipped into insanity at age 44 in the winter of 1889 as there have been generations who have sought to understand him.” Peter Berkowitz was reviewing one of the recently published books on the radical thinker who lived just a little more than a hundred years ago. (*The Washington Post*, 18 August 2002) Nietzsche’s thoughts as propagated by his “unscrupulous sister” after his death had a powerful hold on German soldiers when they read his books even in the trenches. And in the world of philosophy we ascribe to him notions which would have “profoundly disgusted the philosopher himself”. Martin Heidegger speaks of Nietzsche as “the last metaphysician of the West”. Walter Kaufmann takes him as a “Socratic questioner” or else a “Goethean man of controlled passion.” Now there is a tendency of considering him to be one beyond morality in the act of self-creation. New aesthesis is getting formed around him. In fact it is even doubted whether in the conventional sense he should be considered a philosopher at all. For Sri Aurobindo he was more a seer than a thinker with a touch of intuition in his philosophy, paradoxically with something leading to Titanic egoism. According to Nietzsche war is an aspect of life and man as a warrior, as a “lion-man”, with the will-to-be has to come in order to exceed himself.

Nietzsche believed that he had grasped the reality of the underlying chaos or void; that God was dead; that nihilism, the process by which “the highest values devalue themselves” was upon us. (*The Will to Power*) That became the basis of all his thought, taking him to dangerous extremes. But, then, what is this will-to-power for? It is the freedom for the maximisation of our faculties to acquire control over things and events and to create what Nietzsche called the *übermensch* or the “overman”. This need not come as an unnatural concept when it is recognised that through will-to-power we should promote all our faculties to their extremes. But then we should also immediately add that it will be a mistake to equate this German “übermensch” with the generally understood English “superman”, particularly so when we are concerned with Sri Aurobindo’s evolutionary being as the next radical step beyond the present man. Ranajit Sarkar, the author of *Beyond Good and Evil* now under review, points out that “the word *übermensch* was coined by Goethe. Nietzsche took it up and made it one of the basic themes of his philosophy.” (p. 130, ref. 384) In it man is conceived of as fully living with all his senses and possibilities. He has the power and he can do what he might will to do, has the satisfaction of carrying out exactly what he might want to carry out. But then this also sounds ominous. The unfettered or unregenerate will-to-be can, as a consequence, get so much

aggrandized that there might arrive amongst us the monstrosity of a vital being. In its advocacy “cultural control has gone, be that religion, law, custom or what we have,” rightly but cautiously indicates Berkowitz.

This is a pretty hazardous situation and before accepting it the question of good and evil in the scheme of things must be weighed in terms of its deeper implications. Not that religion had always been a happy promoter of man’s genuine good, nor were so the great traditions of philosophy, including the Kantian idea of wisdom as its noblest foundation; not much did these avail in the pragmatics of our common life. Therefore Nietzsche “in order to understand what is truly questionable was to an extent right in questioning energetically everything.” The want of will-to-be and not the waning of the creative spirit of man are seen as the reason for man’s collapse. Arguably, therefore, a Nietzschean justifiably mulls over the march of history in the light of such a doctrine and reinterprets differently the past failures and gains. Empires were built in the will-to-be and empires declined and fell when that will-to-be weakened. The lack of vitality had been the cause in their bowing out of existence. Even the degeneration of Wagner’s later music is attributed to the disappearance of that will-to-be. A shift from materialism to vitalism had taken place, but in its wake it also brought greater perils on a collective scale.

“...Nietzsche, the most vivid, concrete and suggestive of modern thinkers” was “an apostle who never entirely understood his own message,” says Sri Aurobindo. (*The Supramental Manifestation*, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 344; p. 275) In fact, his was an imperfect awakening and not an awakening to our real highest self and nature. We are not that real highest self as yet, but we have to become that real highest self. It is that which will use the mental being we already are. In the sequel the aim and action of our vital and physical nature will be directed by the spiritualised mental being; they will be transformed by a spiritual ideality. “... this is the formula of man in his highest potentiality, and safety lies in tending towards our highest and not in resting content with an inferior potentiality. To follow after the highest in us may seem to be to live dangerously, to use again one of Nietzsche’s inspired expressions, but by that danger comes victory and security. To rest in or follow after an inferior potentiality may seem safe, rational, comfortable, easy, but it ends badly, in some futility or in a mere circling, down the abyss or in a stagnant morass. Our right and natural road is towards the summits.” (*Social and Political Thought*, SABCL, Vol. 15, p. 225)

Making the unguarded German philosopher’s will-to-be as the unbridled driving force towards supermanhood, and not bringing into play the possibilities of opening to the higher and nobler creative spirit of man, can prove to be disastrous. In fact in this respect, instead of comparing the “moral philosophies” of Nietzsche and Sri Aurobindo, we can more significantly put them in a sharper contrast. In *Beyond Good and Evil* we have some discussion of these aspects. It is an erudite study adopting the approach of a mature rationalist and should be appealing to the modern secular mind. We may not appreciate much the author’s bringing down the revelatory writings of Sri Aurobindo to the level of “moral philosophies”, in howsoever dignified a way the phrase be taken, but nor can we deny him the right to be an objective student of thought. It also means that the

urge to see “resemblances”—even if this seeing were for oneself—between the two important “poet-philosophers” would be somewhat superficial, if not misplaced. There are rewards no doubt but the general gains for an Aurobindonian seem to be somewhat suspect.

The genesis of the work is explained by the author in the preface as follows: “In 2000 were commemorated the 100th death anniversary of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and the 50th death anniversary of Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950). Both Nietzsche and Sri Aurobindo are prophets of the future superman but the visions of the two great thinkers differ vastly. In August of that year suddenly the idea of a comparative study of their moral philosophies took root in my mind.” Ranajit Sarkar is quite frank in saying that his study is free from what is generally taken as “professionalism and academism”. That is not to say that there is a lack of competent tightness and penetrative acumen in his presentation. In fact, the overall robustness of discussions makes the work valuable in its own right. However, the Aurobindonian perspective perhaps makes us view it somewhat differently. Let us take an example or two from the book.

The first example could be the evolution of consciousness supported by the evolution of form in the terrestrial process. Ranajit Sarkar is very right in stating that Nietzsche has a problem in the context of the Darwinian theory of biological evolution. While his “intuition” of the will-to-power says that the fittest must survive, the solution is not in the species but in the survival of the “sovereign individuals” who, “day after tomorrow”, will be the “victorious supermen”. For this to happen the religious sense of charity and virtue should go. That also negatively implies that, according to Nietzsche, the possibility of a greater life is sacrificed when is renounced war. (p. 77) In contrast to this, Sri Aurobindo sees a purpose behind the evolutionary process with the “dynamism of growth which should make it possible for the future man—the superman—to possess the world and enjoy it.” (p. 79) This is perfectly acceptable but to hold that “Sri Aurobindo has drawn his inspiration not only from the true Vedanta, but also from the modern scientific world, principally from Darwinism” (p. 78) comes as a surprise to us. This virtually dismisses the knowledge Sri Aurobindo received from his yogic practices. If the source of his inspiration lies in the discoveries of science, then his claims also become as shaky as the discoveries of science. After all, a good scientific theory should, according to the criteria of Popper, be falsifiable. If the falsification of Darwinism is implied in it, then à la science, what certainty is there that in the evolutionary course will arrive Sri Aurobindo’s supramental being? In that eventuality his long and arduous occupation with the transformation of human nature itself will turn out to be of uncertain value. We may see at best the current findings of science as corroborative approximations of truth-principles, but never were these the guiding precepts in pursuit of the avataric objective.

From a psycho-spiritual point of view we have to understand that the evolution is a double process. If on the one hand there is the urge to grow from below, a kind of compulsion pushing itself up, there is also the pressure from above, the higher stepping into the lower and lifting it up. If this is true then we also see the possibility, perhaps even a necessity, of a willed yogic action in this great transformative effort. Which means that

the role of an Avatar, which no Nietzsche can visualize, also enters into the dynamics of operation. Ranajit Sarkar discusses in considerable detail the two types of transformation as visualized by “our two philosophers”. In Nietzsche is the march of the camel-man, the lion-man and the child-man. In the last metamorphosis the child-spirit “can create freely, and its creation is without any goal, a free expression of its will-to-be, its will to live and enjoy without any after-thought... it is a new beginning and a new movement... it is wheel that runs by itself... There remains for it only the free affirmation of itself... it does what it wills.” (p. 108) Here is the arrival of the perfect individual, the Nietzschean superman. But does he fill the bill, satisfy us as one in whom we can repose our faith and our hopes? Can he be called the grand finale of the evolutionary effort?

Let us look at this superman not merely as a thought-product, even if it were touched by intuition, but as an aspect of evolution of the spiritual being. In the Aurobindonian idiom, drawn from his epic *Savitri*, we may identify the three types of Nietzsche approximately as the three aspects of the soul-force, just the three occult personalities Savitri the Yogini meets in the inner countries en route to the secret dwelling-place of her soul. If this is so then hardly can these three metamorphoses be compared with the three stages of the psychic, the spiritual, and the supramental transformation we have in the operative dynamics of Sri Aurobindo, these not only for the individual but also for the larger collectivity. Here we are on a cosmic-transcendental dimension and not just at the entry-point of the inner world, the courtyard of a shrine where is only the diffuse light and wherefrom scarcely can we get a glimpse of the deity seated deep within.

Nietzsche left the appearance of his superman wholly at the mercy of Chance. If this is acceptable, we may then as well say that there is a good likelihood even for the donkey of Sancho Panza to become one in the course of long time. It could be so but perhaps not convincing, for the simple reason that by the same process the superman could also just disappear. As Sancho’s creature turns up suddenly from nowhere and goes into nowhere, our superman too would become a product of untrustworthy ways of destiny. But that would amount to being unaware of the workings of the evolutionary process. What was being done until now through the mechanism of Nature has to be promoted by conscious will of the evolving soul in its effort to progress on the path of the triple transformation. The conscious will turning into an intense yogic effort to bring about such a change is entirely beyond the comprehension of any philosophic mind howsoever rich it be. Indeed, it is here perhaps that we understand why Sri Aurobindo took the practical step of first opening out the prospects for establishing the intermediate race, the race of the true Overman* governed by such a consciousness. In this scheme of operation the presence of the Mind of Light, the physical receiving the supramental light, is the decisive stage in the final arrival of the Superman proper. Sri Aurobindo had established it in himself and gave it to the Mother as a parting gift when he withdrew on 5 December 1950. In less than six years after this, the great event of the supramental descent

* This is the appropriate rendering of the Mother’s *surhomme* conveying the sense of “the intermediary between the human and the supramental being”. For a detailed discussion, reference may be made to Georges van Vrekhem’s book entitled *Overman* published by Rupa & Co., 2001.

in the earth's subtle physical took place. *Beyond Good and Evil* coming from an Aurobindonian institution should have presented this aspect without dismissing it as too esoteric a matter even if the author were addressing it primarily to the Man of Reason.

As an Ashram publication there should have also been a more careful proofreading of the quotations from the writings of Sri Aurobindo. Unfortunately it is not so as I checked cursorily a few *Savitri* quotations, suspecting them to be somewhat ambiguous in sense. Otherwise for a book of this size and the quality of its production the price fixed is extremely attractive. If that can help the volume reach a wider readership, and it must, I will be particularly glad to see that the scholarly yet evocative nature of the discussions will bring another richness to us all. Let us expect that it happens.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

The Life Divine, Vol. I. Omnipresent Reality and the Universe, by *Sri Aurobindo*. (Arya Publishing House, College Street, Calcutta. Rs. 6.)

The articles contributed by Sri Aurobindo Ghose to *The Arya* from August 1914 to October 1916 on the fundamentals of the Advaita Vedanta have now been published in a separate volume, "thoroughly revised and enlarged", of twenty-eight chapters of varying length. Sri Aurobindo's is the Advaita thesis. The One Supreme Reality has *somehow*—the rock on which all varieties of Monistic Metaphysics should find themselves wrecked sooner or later manifested Itself as the Evolving or Expanding Universe, as Eddington and others would have it, of multiplicity revealed in organized and unorganized matter and spirit. Individual life is such a manifestation. This marks a Descent. The goal of life is, however, Ascent. Finite selves have to work their way up the Ascent till they enjoy the bliss of Oneness. This glorious spiritual destiny is the birthright of all—not the monopoly of any sect or section or even of the select few.

There is no need to refer in detail to the development of arguments in support of the main thesis. Students of Advaita and such readers of *The Aryan Path* as have had access to the old volumes of *The Arya* are bound to be familiar with them. It should, however, be pointed out that terms like "Supra-cosmic", "Overmind", "Supermind", etc. are used plentifully, the effect being mystification of the simple, but by no means clarification of the obscure. I shall cite a typical sentence which amply justifies the charge that modern philosophical expositions hide eternal verities in endless verbosity.

The rending of the veil is the condition of the divine life in humanity; for by that rending, by the illumining descent of the higher into the nature of the lower being, and the forceful ascent of the lower being into the nature of the higher, mind can recover its divine light in the all-comprehending supermind, the soul realise its divine self in the all-possessing, all-blissful Ananda, life repossess its divine power in the play of omnipotent Conscious-Force and Matter open to its divine liberty as a form of the divine Existence.

The complaint that the sentence has been torn from its context cannot be entertained for, right through, such sentences occur which *in situ* enhance the effect of needless mystification.

Another fact deserves emphasis. The one Supreme Reality *somehow* (if that usage be adopted) fell. Then arose the Many or the appearance of the Many. The goal of Man's spiritual endeavour is realisation of basic Oneness with the Supreme Reality. Is there any definite method by which the goal may be reached? In the chapter on "The Methods of Vedantic Knowledge", there is no straightforward answer to this question. Or again, is the method fool-proof? Is it the special monopoly of the *Adhikari*? Expressions like "Divine Descent", "Forceful Ascent" may be found by no means helpful. The volume will, however, be welcomed by all students of Indian philosophy.

R. NAGA RAJA SARMA

A Note: The first part of Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus *The Life Divine* was brought out by the Arya Publishing House, Calcutta in November 1939. This was reviewed by *The Aryan Path* in its April 1940 issue. That there was great reluctance in accepting Sri Aurobindo's philosophy right from the beginning is obvious from the above review. The Advaitic schools of metaphysics coming under the dubious sway of S. Radhakrishnan got stuck to the Shankarite tradition and failed to understand the new revelation given to the world by *The Life Divine*. Bringing into discussion scientific theories such as of Eddington is another pretentious exercise which does not arrive at anything valuable while dealing with matters spiritual. Even after sixty years or so the situation in India has not changed much and the academic circles continue to go round and round the revered Acharyas. The cosmic sweep of *The Life Divine* is altogether beyond the comprehension of a narrow professional mentality. And its many-hued and many-strained music can be heard only in the silence of mind and warm feeling hush of the soul. Otherwise its language and thought appear many-winding, complicated, mystifying.

How to read and try to understand *The Life Divine*? This is what the Mother says about it: "To read what Sri Aurobindo writes is more difficult because the expression is highly intellectual and the language is much more literary and philosophic. The brain needs a preparation to be able to truly understand and generally a preparation takes time, unless one is especially gifted with an innate intuitive faculty." (*CWM*, Vol. 12, p. 205) Obviously our reviewer lacks the last. The Mother also says that the attention should become as still and immobile as a mirror. Then there is the minimum of distortion and later what is read manifests with its full power of comprehension. (*CWM*, Vol. 10, p. 7) About the nature of the language in *The Life Divine*: "... all language is a language of ignorance. Our entire way of expressing ourselves, everything we say and the way in which we say it, is necessarily ignorance. And that is why it is so difficult to express something which is concretely true; this would require explanations which would themselves be full of falsehood, of course, or else extremely long. This is why Sri Aurobindo's sentences are sometimes very long, precisely because he strives to escape from this ignorant language." (*Ibid.*, pp. 103-04) At the same time the Mother says that "Sri Aurobindo had a genius for expressing the most extraordinary experiences in the most ordinary words, thus giving the impression that the experiences are simple and

obvious.” (*Ibid.*, p. 338) Reference may also be made to the following: *CWM*, Vol. 9, pp. 14, 224, 231, 249-50. But then what is most important is “the intensity of the aspiration and the sincerity of the inner opening” (*Ibid.*, p. 407) which alone can give value to the reading of *The Life Divine*. We do not expect these things from careerist philosophers à la Radhakrishnan and, after dismissing them, it is good to keep them aside.

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