

# MOTHER INDIA

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*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”*

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## OVER WIDE EARTH BROODED THE INFINITE BLISS

THE measure of that subtle music ceased.  
Down with a hurried swimming floating lapse  
Through unseen worlds and bottomless spaces forced  
Sank like a star the soul of Savitri.  
Amidst a laughter of unearthly lyres  
She heard around her nameless voices cry  
Triumphing, an innumerable sound.  
A choir of laughing winds to meet her came.  
She bore the burden of infinity  
And felt the stir of all ethereal space.  
Pursuing her in her fall, implacably sweet,  
A face was over her which seemed a youth's,  
Symbol of all the beauty eyes see not,  
Crowned as with peacock plumes of gorgeous hue  
Framing a sapphire, whose heart-disturbing smile  
Insatiably attracted to delight,  
Voluptuous to the embraces of her soul.  
Changed in its shape, yet rapturously the same,  
It grew a woman's dark and beautiful  
Like a mooned night with drifting star-gemmed clouds,  
A shadowy glory and a stormy depth,  
Turbulent in will and terrible in love.  
Eyes in which Nature's blind ecstatic life  
Sprang from some spirit's passionate content,  
Missioned her to the whirling dance of earth.  
Amidst the headlong rapture of her fall  
Held like a bird in a child's satisfied hands,  
In an enamoured grasp her spirit strove  
Admitting no release till Time should end,  
And, as the fruit of the mysterious joy,  
She kept within her strong embosoming soul  
Like a flower hidden in the heart of spring  
The soul of Satyavan drawn down by her  
Inextricably in that mighty lapse.  
Invisible heavens in a thronging flight  
Soared past her as she fell. Then all the blind  
And near attraction of the earth compelled  
Fearful rapidities of downward bliss.  
Lost in the giddy proneness of that speed,

Whirled, sinking, overcome she disappeared  
 Like a leaf spinning from the tree of heaven,  
 In broad unconsciousness as in a pool;  
 A hospitable softness drew her in  
 Into a wonder of miraculous depths,  
 Above her closed a darkness of great wings  
 And she was buried in a mother's breast.

Then from a timeless plane that watches Time,  
 A Spirit gazed out upon destiny,  
 In its endless moment saw the ages pass.  
 All still was in a silence of the gods.  
 The prophet moment covered limitless Space  
 And cast into the heart of hurrying Time  
 A diamond light of the Eternal's peace,  
 A crimson seed of God's felicity;  
 A glance from the gaze fell of undying Love.  
 A wonderful face looked out with deathless eyes;  
 A hand was seen drawing the golden bars  
 That guard the imperishable secrecies.  
 A key turned in a mystic lock of Time.  
 But where the silence of the gods had passed,  
 A greater harmony from the stillness born  
 Surprised with joy and sweetness yearning hearts,  
 An ecstasy and a laughter and a cry.  
 A power leaned down, a happiness found its home.  
 Over wide earth brooded the infinite bliss.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL, Vol. 29, pp. 711-12)

## A DIVINE LIFE IN A DIVINE BODY

*(Continued from the issue of July 2003)*

THERE is one problem raised by sex for those who would reject *in toto* the obligations imposed by the animality of the body and put forward by it as an insistent opposition in the way of the aspirant to a higher life: it is the necessity of the prolongation of the race for which the sex activity is the only means already provided by Nature for living beings and inevitably imposed upon the race. It is not indeed necessary for the individual seeker after a divine life to take up this problem or even for a group who do not seek after it for themselves alone but desire a wide acceptance of it by mankind as at least an ideal. There will always be the multitude who do not concern themselves with it or are not ready for its complete practice and to these can be left the care for the prolongation of the race. The number of those who lead the divine life can be maintained and increased, as the ideal extends itself, by the voluntary adhesion of those who are touched by the aspiration and there need be no resort to physical means for this purpose, no deviation from the rule of a strict sexual abstinence. But yet there may be circumstances in which, from another standpoint, a voluntary creation of bodies for souls that seek to enter the earth-life to help in the creation and extension of the divine life upon earth might be found to be desirable. Then the necessity of a physical procreation for this purpose could only be avoided if new means of a supraphysical kind were evolved and made available. A development of this kind must necessarily belong to what is now considered as the sphere of the occult and the use of concealed powers of action or creation not known or possessed by the common mind of the race. Occultism means rightly the use of the higher powers of our nature, soul, mind, life-force and the faculties of the subtle physical consciousness to bring about results on their own or on the material plane by some pressure of their own secret law and its potentialities, for manifestation and result in human or earthly mind and life and body or in objects and events in the world of Matter. A discovery or an extension of these little known or yet undeveloped powers is now envisaged by some well-known thinkers as a next step to be taken by mankind in its immediate evolution; the kind of creation spoken of has not been included among these developments, but it could well be considered as one of the new possibilities. Even physical science is trying to find physical means for passing beyond the ordinary instrumentation or procedure of Nature in this matter of propagation or the renewal of the physical life-force in human or animal beings; but the resort to occult means and the intervention of subtle physical processes, if it could be made possible, would be a greater way which could avoid the limitations, degradations, incompleteness and heavy imperfection of the means and results solely available to the law of material force.

In India there has been always from the earliest times a widely spread belief in the possibility and reality of the use of these powers by men with an advanced knowledge of these secret things or with a developed spiritual knowledge and experience and dynamic force and even, in the Tantras, an organised system of their method and practice. The

intervention of the Yogi in bringing about a desired birth of offspring is also generally believed in and often appealed to and the bestowal on the child so obtained of a spiritual attainment or destiny by his will or his blessing is sometimes asked for and such a result is recorded not only in the tradition of the past but maintained by the witness of the present. But there is here still the necessity of a resort to the normal means of propagation and the gross method of physical Nature. A purely occult method, a resort to supraphysical processes acting by supraphysical means for a physical result would have to be possible if we are to avoid this necessity: the resort to the sex impulse and its animal process could not be transcended otherwise. If there is some reality in the phenomenon of materialisation and dematerialisation claimed to be possible by occultists and evidenced by occurrences many of us have witnessed, a method of this kind would not be out of the range of possibility. For in the theory of the occultists and in the gradation of the ranges and planes of our being which Yoga-knowledge outlines for us there is not only a subtle physical force but a subtle physical Matter intervening between life and gross Matter, and to create in this subtle physical substance and precipitate the forms thus made into our grosser materiality is feasible. It should be possible and it is believed to be possible for an object formed in this subtle physical substance to make a transit from its subtlety into the state of gross Matter directly by the intervention of an occult force and process, whether with or even without the assistance or intervention of some gross material procedure. A soul wishing to enter into a body or form for itself a body and take part in a divine life upon earth might be assisted to do so or even provided with such a form by this method of direct transmutation, without passing through birth by the sex process or undergoing any degradation or any of the heavy limitations in the growth and development of its mind and material body inevitable to our present way of existence. It might then assume at once the structure and greater powers and functionings of the truly divine material body which must one day emerge in a progressive evolution to a totally transformed existence both of life and form in a divinised earth-nature.

But what would be the internal or external form and structure and what the instrumentation of this divine body? The material history of the development of the animal and human body has left it bound to a minutely constructed and elaborated system of organs and a precarious order of their functioning which can easily become a disorder, open to a general or local disorganisation, dependent on an easily disturbed nervous system and commanded by a brain whose vibrations are supposed to be mechanical and automatic and not under our conscious control. According to the materialist all this is a functioning of Matter alone whose fundamental reality is chemical. We have to suppose that the body is constructed by the agency of chemical elements building up atoms and molecules and cells and these again are the agents and only conductors at the basis of a complicated physical structure and instrumentation which is the sole mechanical cause of all our actions, thoughts, feelings, the soul a fiction and mind and life only a material and mechanical manifestation and appearance of this machine which is worked out and automatically driven with a figment of consciousness in it by the forces inherent in inconscient Matter. If that were the truth it is obvious that any divinisation or divine

transformation of the body or of anything else would be nothing but an illusion, an imagination, a senseless and impossible chimera. But even if we suppose a soul, a conscious will at work in this body it could not arrive at a divine transformation if there were no radical change in the bodily instrument itself and in the organisation of its material workings. The transforming agent will be bound and stopped in its work by the physical organism's unalterable limitations and held up by the unmodified or imperfectly modified original animal in us. The possibility of the disorders, derangements, maladies native to these physical arrangements would still be there and could only be shut out by a constant vigilance or perpetual control obligatory on the corporeal instrument's spiritual inhabitant and master. This could not be called a truly divine body; for in a divine body an inherent freedom from all these things would be natural and perpetual; this freedom would be a normal and native truth of its being and therefore inevitable and unalterable. A radical transformation of the functioning and, it may well be, of the structure and certainly of the too mechanical and material impulses and driving forces of the bodily system would be imperative.

What agency could we find which we could make the means of this all-important liberation and change? Something there is in us or something has to be developed, perhaps a central and still occult part of our being containing forces whose powers in our actual and present make-up are only a fraction of what could be, but if they became complete and dominant would be truly able to bring about with the help of the light and force of the soul and the supramental truth-consciousness the necessary physical transformation and its consequences. This might be found in the system of Chakras revealed by Tantric knowledge and accepted in the systems of Yoga, conscious centres and sources of all the dynamic powers of our being organising their action through the plexuses and arranged in an ascending series from the lowest physical to the highest mind centre and spiritual centre called the thousand-petalled lotus where ascending Nature, the Serpent Power of the Tantrics, meets the Brahman and is liberated into the Divine Being. These centres are closed or half-closed within us and have to be opened before their full potentiality can be manifested in our physical nature: but once they are opened and completely active, no limit can easily be set to the development of their potencies and the total transformation to be possible.

But what would be the result of the emergence of these forces and their liberated and diviner action on the body itself, what their dynamic connection with it and their transforming operation on the still existing animal nature and its animal impulses and gross material procedure? It might be held that the first necessary change would be the liberation of the mind, the life-force, the subtle physical agencies and the physical consciousness into a freer and a diviner activity, a many-dimensional and unlimited operation of their consciousness, a large outbreak of higher powers and the sublimation of the bodily consciousness itself, of its instrumentation, capacity, capability for the manifestation of the soul in the world of Matter. The subtle senses now concealed in us might come forward into a free action and the material senses themselves become means or channels for the vision of what is now invisible to us or the discovery of things

surrounding us but at present unseizable and held back from our knowledge. A firm check might be put on the impulses of the animal nature or they might be purified and subtilised so as to become assets and not liabilities and so transformed as to be parts and processes of a diviner life. But even these changes would still leave a residue of material processes keeping the old way and not amenable to the higher control and, if this could not be changed, the rest of the transformation might itself be checked and incomplete. A total transformation of the body would demand a sufficient change of the most material part of the organism, its constitution, its processes and its set-up of nature.

Again, it might be thought that a full control would be sufficient, a knowledge and a vision of this organism and its unseen action and an effective control determining its operations according to the conscious will; this possibility has been affirmed as something already achieved and a part of the development of the inner powers in some. The cessation of the breathing while still the life of the body remained stable, the hermetic sealing up at will not only of the breath but of all the vital manifestations for long periods, the stoppage of the heart similarly at will while thought and speech and other mental workings continued unabated, these and other phenomena of the power of the will over the body are known and well-attested examples of this kind of mastery. But these are occasional or sporadic successes and do not amount to transformation; a total control is necessary and an established and customary and, indeed, a natural mastery. Even with that achieved something more fundamental might have to be demanded for the complete liberation and change into a divine body.

Again, it might be urged that the organic structure of the body no less than its basic outer form would have to be retained as a necessary material foundation for the retention of the earth-nature, the connection of the divine life with the life of earth and a continuance of the evolutionary process so as to prevent a breaking upward out of and away from it into a state of being which would properly belong to a higher plane and not to a terrestrial divine fulfilment. The prolonged existence of the animal itself in our nature, if sufficiently transformed to be an instrument of manifestation and not an obstacle, would be necessary to preserve the continuity, the evolutionary total; it would be needed as the living vehicle, vahana, of the emergent god in the material world where he would have to act and achieve the works and wonders of the new life. It is certain that a form of body making this connection and a bodily action containing the earth-dynamism and its fundamental activities must be there, but the connection should not be a bond or a confining limitation or a contradiction of the totality of the change. The maintenance of the present organism without any transformation of it would not but act as such a bond and confinement within the old nature. There would be a material base but it would be of the earth earthy, an old and not a new earth with a diviner psychological structure; for with that structure the old system would be out of harmony and it would be unable to serve its further evolution or even to uphold it as a base in Matter. It would bind part of the being, a lower part to an untransformed humanity and unchanged animal functioning and prevent its liberation into the superhumanity of the supramental nature. A change is then necessary here too, a necessary part of the total bodily transformation, which would divinise the whole man, at



least in the ultimate result, and not leave his evolution incomplete.

This aim, it might be said, would be sufficiently served if the instrumentation of the centres and their forces reigned over all the activities of the nature with an entire domination of the body and made it both in its structural form and its organic workings a free channel and means of communication and a plastic instrument of cognition and dynamic action for all that they had to do in the material life, in the world of Matter. There would have to be a change in the operative processes of the material organs themselves and, it may well be, in their very constitution and their importance; they could not be allowed to impose their limitations imperatively on the new physical life. To begin with, they might become more clearly outer ends of the channels of communication and action, more serviceable for the psychological purposes of the inhabitant, less blindly material in their responses, more conscious of the act and aim of the inner movements and powers which use them and which they are wrongly supposed by the material man in us to generate and to use. The brain would be a channel of communication of the form of the thoughts and a battery of their insistence on the body and the outside world where they could then become effective directly, communicating themselves without physical means from mind to mind, producing with a similar directness effects on the thoughts, actions and lives of others or even upon material things. The heart would equally be a direct communicant and medium of interchange for the feelings and emotions thrown outward upon the world by the forces of the psychic centre. Heart could reply directly to heart, the life-force come to the help of other lives and answer their call in spite of strangeness and distance, many beings without any external communication thrill with the message and meet in the secret light from one divine centre. The will might control the organs that deal with food, safeguard automatically the health, eliminate greed and desire, substitute subtler processes or draw in strength and substance from the universal life-force so that the body could maintain for a long time its own strength and substance without loss or waste, remaining thus with no need of sustenance by material aliments, and yet continue a strenuous action with no fatigue or pause for sleep or repose. The soul's will or the mind's could act from higher sources upon the sex centre and the sex organs so as to check firmly or even banish the grosser sexual impulse or stimulus and instead of serving an animal excitation or crude drive or desire turn their use to the storing, production and direction towards brain and heart and life-force of the essential energy, *ojas*, of which this region is the factory so as to support the works of the mind and soul and spirit and the higher life-powers and limit the expenditure of the energy on lower things. The soul, the psychic being, could more easily fill all with the light and turn the very matter of the body to higher uses for its own greater purpose.

This would be a first potent change, but not by any means all that is possible or desirable. For it may well be that the evolutionary urge would proceed to a change of the organs themselves in their material working and use and diminish greatly the need of their instrumentation and even of their existence. The centres in the subtle body, *sūkṣma śarīra*, of which one would become conscious and aware of all going on in it, would pour their energies into material nerve and plexus and tissue and radiate them through the

whole material body; all the physical life and its necessary activities in this new existence could be maintained and operated by these higher agencies in a freer and ampler way and by a less burdensome and restricting method. This might go so far that these organs might cease to be indispensable and even be felt as too obstructive: the central force might use them less and less and finally throw aside their use altogether. If that happened they might waste by atrophy, be reduced to an insignificant minimum or even disappear. The central force might substitute for them subtle organs of a very different character or, if anything material was needed, instruments that would be forms of dynamism or plastic transmitters rather than what we know as organs.

This might well be part of a supreme total transformation of the body, though this too might not be final. To envisage such changes is to look far ahead and minds attached to the present form of things may be unable to give credence to their possibility. No such limits and no such impossibility of any necessary change can be imposed on the evolutionary urge. All has not to be fundamentally changed: on the contrary, all has to be preserved that is still needed in the totality, but all has to be perfected. Whatever is necessary for the evolutionary purpose for the increasing, enlarging, heightening of the consciousness, which seems to be its central will and aim here, or the progression of its enabling means and preserving environment, has to be kept and furthered; but what has to be overpassed, whatever has no longer a use or is degraded, what has become unhelpful or retarding, can be discarded and dropped on the way. That has been evident in the history of the evolution of the body from its beginning in elementary forms to its most developed type, the human; there is no reason why this process should not intervene in the transition from the human into the divine body. For the manifestation or building of a divine body on earth there must be an initial transformation, the appearance of a new, a greater and more developed type, not a continuance with little modifications of the present physical form and its limited possibilities. What has to be preserved must indeed be preserved and that means whatever is necessary or thoroughly serviceable for the uses of the new life on earth; whatever is still needed and will serve its purpose but is imperfect, will have to be retained but developed and perfected; whatever is no longer of use for new aims or is a disability must be thrown aside. The necessary forms and instrumentations of Matter must remain since it is in a world of Matter that the divine life has to manifest, but their materiality must be refined, uplifted, ennobled, illumined, since Matter and the world of Matter have increasingly to manifest the indwelling Spirit.

The new type, the divine body, must continue the already developed evolutionary form; there must be a continuation from the type Nature has all along been developing, a continuity from the human to the divine body, no breaking away to something unrecognisable but a high sequel to what has already been achieved and in part perfected. The human body has in its parts and instruments that have been sufficiently evolved to serve the divine life; these have to survive in their form, though they must be still further perfected, their limitations of range and use removed, their liability to defect and malady and impairment eliminated, their capacities of cognition and dynamic action carried beyond the present limits. New powers have to be acquired by the body which our present

humanity could not hope to realise, could not even dream of or could only imagine. Much that can now only be known, worked out or created by the use of invented tools and machinery might be achieved by the new body in its own power or by the inhabitant spirit through its own direct spiritual force. The body itself might acquire new means and ranges of communication with other bodies, new processes of acquiring knowledge, a new aesthesis, new potencies of manipulation of itself and objects. It might not be impossible for it to possess or disclose means native to its own constitution, substance or natural instrumentation for making the far near and annulling distance, cognising what is now beyond the body's cognisance, acting where action is now out of its reach or its domain, developing subtleties and plasticities which could not be permitted under present conditions to the needed fixity of a material frame. These and other numerous potentialities might appear and the body become an instrument immeasurably superior to what we can now imagine as possible. There could be an evolution from a first apprehending truth-consciousness to the utmost heights of the ascending ranges of supermind and it may pass the borders of the supermind proper itself where it begins to shadow out, develop, delineate expressive forms of life touched by a supreme pure existence, consciousness and bliss which constitute the worlds of a highest truth of existence, dynamism of tapas, glory and sweetness of bliss, the absolute essence and pitch of the all-creating Ananda. The transformation of the physical being might follow this incessant line of progression and the divine body reflect or reproduce here in a divine life on the earth something of this highest greatness and glory of the self-manifesting Spirit.

*(Concluded)*

SRI AUROBINDO

*(Essays in Philosophy and Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 13, pp. 547-57)*

# THREE LETTERS APROPOS OF MAYAVADA

## Shankara's Mayavada and Integral Yoga

I DO not base my Yoga on the insufficient ground that the Self (not soul) is eternally free. That affirmation leads to nothing beyond itself, or, if used as a starting-point, it could equally well lead to the conclusion that action and creation have no significance or value. The question is not that but of the meaning of creation, whether there is a Supreme who is not merely a pure undifferentiated Consciousness and Being, but the source and support also of the dynamic energy of creation and whether the cosmic existence has for It a significance and a value. That is a question which cannot be settled by metaphysical logic which deals in words and ideas, but by a spiritual experience which goes beyond Mind and enters into spiritual realities. Each mind is satisfied with its own reasoning, but for spiritual purposes that satisfaction has no validity, except as an indication of how far and on what line each one is prepared to go in the field of spiritual experience. If your reasoning leads you towards the Shankara idea of the Supreme, that might be an indication that the Vedanta Adwaita (Mayavada) is your way of advance.

The Yoga accepts the value of cosmic existence and holds it to be a reality; its object is to enter into a higher Truth-Consciousness or Divine supramental Consciousness in which action and creation are the expression not of ignorance and imperfection, but of the Truth, the Light, the Divine Ananda. But for that, surrender of the mortal mind, life and body to that Higher Consciousness is indispensable, since it is too difficult for the mortal human being to pass by its own effort beyond mind to a supramental Consciousness in which the dynamism is no longer mental but of quite another power. Only those who can accept the call to such a change should enter into this Yoga.

2-10-1938

## The Realistic and the Illusionist Adwaita

There is possible a realistic as well as an illusionist Adwaita. The philosophy of *The Life Divine* is such a realistic Adwaita. The world is a manifestation of the Real and therefore is itself real. The reality is the infinite and eternal Divine, infinite and eternal Being, Consciousness-Force and Bliss. This Divine by his power has created the world or rather manifested it in his own infinite Being. But here in the material world or at its basis he has hidden himself in what seem to be his opposites, Non-Being, Inconscience and Insentience. This is what we nowadays call the Inconscient which seems to have created the material universe by its inconscient Energy, but this is only an appearance, for we find in the end that all the dispositions of the world can only have been arranged by the working of a supreme secret Intelligence. The Being which is hidden in what seems to be an inconscient void emerges in the world first in Matter, then in Life, then in Mind and finally as the Spirit. The apparently inconscient Energy which creates is in fact the Consciousness-Force of the Divine and its aspect of consciousness, secret in Matter,

begins to emerge in Life, finds something more of itself in Mind and finds its true self in a spiritual consciousness and finally a supramental Consciousness through which we become aware of the Reality, enter into it and unite ourselves with it. This is what we call evolution which is an evolution of Consciousness and an evolution of the Spirit in things and only outwardly an evolution of species. Thus also, the delight of existence emerges from the original insentience, first in the contrary forms of pleasure and pain, and then has to find itself in the bliss of the Spirit or, as it is called in the Upanishads, the bliss of the Brahman. That is the central idea in the explanation of the universe put forward in *The Life Divine*.

### Shankara and Illusionism

*Q: In an article on Shankara's philosophy in "Prabuddha Bharata", the writer mentions, "not as understood by Sri Aurobindo". They think that Shankara's philosophy is so much misunderstood. Perhaps it is some Brahmavada or Bhaktivada that Shankara brings in at places in his writings that he thinks have been missed. But I don't think Vivekananda or Ramakrishna were so much for Shankara's philosophy in toto.*

A: They want to show that Shankara was not so savagely illusionist as he is represented—that he gave a certain temporary reality to the world, admitted Shakti, etc. But these (supposing he made them) are concessions inconsistent with the logic of his own philosophy which is that only the Brahman exists and the rest is ignorance and illusion. The rest has only a temporary and therefore an illusory reality in Maya. He further maintained that Brahman could not be reached by works. If that was not his philosophy, I should like to know what was his philosophy. At any rate that was how his philosophy has been understood by people. Now that the general turn is away from the rigorous Illusionism, many of the Adwaitins seem to want to hedge and make Shankara hedge with them.

Vivekananda accepted Shankara's philosophy with modifications, the chief of them being Daridra-Narayan-Seva which is a mixture of Buddhist compassion and modern philanthropy.

8-2-1935

SRI AUROBINDO

(*On Himself*, SABCL, Vol. 26, pp. 104-06)

## FAITH IN THE DIVINE SHAKTI

THE faith in the divine Shakti must be always at the back of our strength and when she becomes manifest, it must be or grow implicit and complete. There is nothing that is impossible to her who is the conscious Power and universal Goddess all-creative from eternity and armed with the Spirit's omnipotence. All knowledge, all strengths, all triumph and victory, all skill and works are in her hands and they are full of the treasures of the Spirit and of all perfections and siddhis. She is Maheshwari, goddess of the supreme knowledge, and brings to us her vision for all kinds and widenesses of truth, her rectitude of the spiritual will, the calm and passion of her supramental largeness, her felicity of illumination; she is Mahakali, goddess of the supreme strength, and with her are all mights and spiritual force and severest austerity of tapas and swiftness to the battle and the victory and the laughter, the *aṭṭahāsyā*, that makes light of defeat and death and the powers of the ignorance: she is Mahalakshmi, the goddess of the supreme love and delight, and her gifts are the spirit's grace and the charm and beauty of the Ananda and protection and every divine and human blessing: she is Mahasaraswati, the goddess of divine skill and of the works of the Spirit, and hers is the Yoga that is skill in works, *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*, and the utilities of divine knowledge and the self-application of the spirit to life and the happiness of its harmonies. And in all her powers and forms she carries with her the supreme sense of the masteries of the eternal Ishwari, a rapid and divine capacity for all kinds of action that may be demanded from the instrument, oneness, a participating sympathy, a free identity, with all energies in all beings and therefore a spontaneous and fruitful harmony with all the divine will in the universe. The intimate feeling of her presence and her powers and the satisfied assent of all our being to her workings in and around it is the last perfection of faith in the Shakti.

And behind her is the Ishwara and faith in him is the most central thing in the *śraddhā* of the integral Yoga. This faith we must have and develop to perfection that all things are the workings under the universal conditions of a supreme self-knowledge and wisdom, that nothing done in us or around us is in vain or without its appointed place and just significance, that all things are possible when the Ishwara as our supreme Self and Spirit takes up the action and that all that has been done before and all that he will do hereafter was and will be part of his infallible and foreseeing guidance and intended towards the fruition of our Yoga and our perfection and our life work. This faith will be more and more justified as the higher knowledge opens, we shall begin to see the great and small significances that escaped our limited mentality and faith will pass into knowledge. Then we shall see beyond the possibility of doubt that all happens within the working of the one Will and that that will was also wisdom because it develops always the true workings in life of the self and nature. The highest state of the assent, the *śraddhā* of the being will be when we feel the presence of the Ishwara and feel all our existence and consciousness and thought and will and action in his hand and consent in all things and with every part of our self and nature to the direct and immanent and occupying will of the Spirit. And that highest perfection of the *śraddhā* will also be the opportunity and

perfect foundation of a divine strength: it will base, when complete, the development and manifestation and the works of the luminous supramental Shakti.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 21, pp. 752-53)

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... There are deeper issues for India herself, since by following certain tempting directions she may conceivably become a nation like many others evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a powerful organisation of social and political life, an immense military strength, practising power-politics with a high degree of success, guarding and extending zealously her gains and her interests, dominating even a large part of the world, but in this apparently magnificent progression forfeiting its Swadharma, losing its soul.

Sri Aurobindo

(Message to Andhra University in 1948, *On Himself*, SABCL, Vol. 26, p. 412)

## SOME LETTERS

(Continued from the issue of July 2003)

*It is almost like penny wise and pound foolish—I marked carefully many details of the work and then missed the big heap that was disturbing traffic in the street. I did not even think of fixing bamboos and a lamp. If I had not lost the capacity to become angry at myself, I don't know what sort of depression would have resulted from the incident.*

It is a certain inattention on one side of the mind and a sort of half reasoning on the other that brings about these omissions. It is only either a great practice and experience or else a constant intuitive vigilance that can counteract this common defect of the human intelligence. It is good you have ceased to become angry with yourself; to note the mistake and be on guard in future is the better course.

*If one thought it is the universal forces that work in people, would one hold nobody responsible for all that happens? Would there not be a sort of fatalistic outlook?*

Yes—for that is only one side of the truth—there is also the part of the Purusha who can select among the universal forces, reject, admit, insist on new formations or transformation.

*How do the universal forces work in the vegetable kingdom?*

As physical forces and life forces.

*If the universal forces were there before embodied beings, what decided which forces would work in a person? How would love or desire enter a person if there was nothing in him when he was first brought into the evolution?*

You forget that the person follows the course of evolution—according to the scale of his development. When the mental being descends and creates man, there has already been a great play of physical, vital and rudimentary vital-mental forces at work and he inherits them and brings in the capacity for answers of a higher kind that descends from the planes of universal mind and becomes much more active in life and matter with him as its manifesting instrument.

*If the hostile forces of darkness were all thrown out from a person and from his environmental consciousness, would he receive only the forces of light?*

As things are, yes. But if there were no hostile forces and there were still the evolutionary world, there could be ignorance still but not perversity in the ignorance. All would be a



partial truth acting through imperfect instruments but for the best purposes of this or that stage in a progressive manifestation.

*What state is beyond the universal forces?*

The transcendent—which for the purposes of our universe would mean the Sachchidananda planes and the supramental as a link with the present manifestation.

Of course the absolutely transcendent would be beyond all planes altogether.

10 April 1933

*Yesterday a woman came and began to talk with the workmen. I was about to be curious about her when I became aware that it might be an attack on the sex-impulse, so I went a little inwards and began to think of the universal forces, etc. But there is no awareness of the environmental consciousness. Similarly, once or twice some girls were seen at a distance and there came a suggestion to look at them. This also I shut off at a distance and took refuge in thoughts of the environmental consciousness and the universal forces.*

You are doing what is done when things are shut off at a distance, but as yet without the concrete experience of the force coming and the environmental field through which it comes.

*Do the universal forces also act on the subconscious? How do they enter? Probably the subconscious catches them more rapidly?*

Yes, it is so. The universal forces act very often through the subconscious—especially when the force they send is something the person has been in the habit of obeying and of which the seeds, impressions, “complexes” are strongly rooted in the subconscious—or, even if that is no longer the case, of which there is a memory still in the subconscious.

*It seems that most egoism would disappear if it were firmly recognised by knowledge and solid experience that all physical energy and vital and mental capacity come from the universal forces. Perhaps a little egoistic joy at doing would remain.*

Yes, if there is the solid experience, the ego habit is much diminished, but it does not go altogether. It takes refuge in the sense of being an instrument and—if there is not the psychic turn—it may easily prefer to be the instrument of some Force that feeds the satisfaction of the ego. In such cases, the ego may still remain strong although it feels itself instrumental and not the primary actor.

*Where do the unembodied beings—the imps, fairies, ghosts, spirits of the psychical research workers—live? Is it in the environmental world or some other world?*

In different worlds—mostly the lower vital, subtle physical etc.—those nearest to the earth.

The environmental is not a world—it is an individual thing.

*Do the hostiles move or create universal forces or are they themselves moved by universal forces?*

No, they do not create universal forces; they are themselves moved by them and move them.

*How does receptivity to forces of the Light increase?*

By wider and wider opening and by constant *abhyasa*.

*Does something above and beyond the universal forces guide their movements?*

The universal forces move by their own force and the consciousness within them—but there is also the Cosmic Spirit who supports them and determines by his onlook and disposing will their play—although the direct action is left to the forces—it is the play of universal Prakriti with the universal Purusha watching behind it. In the individual also there is the individual Purusha who can, if he wills, not merely assent to the play of Prakriti, but accept or reject or will for its change. All that is in the play itself as we see it here. There is something above—but the action of that is an intervention rather than a moment to moment control; it can become a constant direct control only when one replaces the play of the forces by the government of the Divine.

11 April 1933

*Today there were some mild attacks of anger and the sex impulse, but I do not feel their effect because they were kept at a distance. Do even these slight attacks come because there is some opening for them in my vital nature?*

It shows that the hostile forces expect to get a response somewhere—or it may be there is the possibility of a response in some part of the being. But if no answer is given to their formations or suggestions, then the possibility begins to fade or diminish. In the end even they—in spite of their apparently inexhaustible obstinacy—have to admit their defeat.

*How does the psychic respond to universal forces entering one's environmental and personal consciousness?*

If the psychic is active—or in so far as it is active, there is something in it which is like an automatic test for the universal forces—warning against, (not by thought so much as by

an essential feeling) and rejecting what should not be, accepting and transmuting what should be.

*Is it possible to remain completely unmoved by the universal forces?*

Yes. It is the aim ordinarily of the Yogis. An absolute *samata* will bring that effect or an absolute peace and stillness or a complete absorption in the Divine.

12 April 1933

*(To be continued)*

SRI AUROBINDO

## WHITE-COMBING WAVES FROM A CLOUDLESS OCEAN

“That God has laid His fingers on the sky,  
That from those fingers glittering summer runs  
Upon the dancer by the dreamless wave.”

[Lines in W. B. Yeats’ “The Man who Dreamed of Faeryland.”]

WHITE-combing waves from a cloudless ocean  
Fall on a fairy shore:  
Faint rhythm of their unshadowed motion  
Beats evermore  
A sorrowless dream, drugged by their magical potion,  
Within Time’s core.

Marble-white in the summer’s glory,  
Foam-toss from sea to land:  
Mating their dance to a wordless story,  
Joy-silent band  
Of the ones whose locks can never be hoary  
Pass like flame on the sand.

November 24, 1934

ARIJAVA

Sri Aurobindo’s comment: Perhaps the last line [in the original it was with “Enchant that sand”] might be altered to avoid the triple repetition of the same sound without break. The rest of the poem seems to me perfect in rhythm and language.

## THE DIVINE MOTHER

*What is the “transcendent Mother”?*

DON'T you know that there are three principles: the transcendent, the universal and the individual or personal? No? —the transcendent which is above creation, at the origin of creation; the universal which is the creation, and the individual which is self-explanatory. There is a transcendent Divine, a universal Divine and an individual Divine. That is, one may put oneself in contact with the divine Consciousness within oneself, in the universe and, beyond all forms, in the transcendent. So these three aspects are also the three aspects of the divine Mother: transcendent, universal and individual.[...]

*The divine Mother is the divine Shakti, that is, the creative Force. She is identified with the cosmos. How can she have a transcendent aspect?*

But perhaps the divine Mother was there before the creation! She must certainly have existed before the creation, for she cannot be her own product. If it is she who has created, she must have existed before the creation, otherwise she could never have created.

*She existed in the Supreme, then, before the creation?*

“In” the Supreme.... It is a little difficult to speak of “within” and “without” when one is outside all forms! If you like, say that she is a movement of the Supreme (if that makes you understand better) or an action of the Supreme or a state of the Supreme, a mode... You may say what you like, what most gives you an understanding of the thing. You see, the human mind likes to cut things into little bits.... I am going to tell you a little story meant for children. The Supreme, having decided to create a universe, took a certain inner attitude which corresponded with the inner manifestation (unexpressed) of the divine Mother, the supreme Shakti. At the same time, he did this with the intention of its being the mode of creation of the universe he wanted to create, the creative power of the universe. Hence, first of all, he had to conceive the possibility of the divine Mother in order that this divine Mother could conceive the possibility of the universe. You are following? I tell you once again that it is not quite like that, but after all, it is meant for childish minds. So, we may very well say that there is a transcendent Divine Mother, that is, independent of her creation. She may have been conceived, formed (whatever you like) for the creation, with the purpose of creation, but she had to exist before the creation to be able to create, else how could she have created?

That is the transcendent aspect, and note that this transcendent aspect is permanent. We speak as though things had unfolded in time at a date which could be fixed: the first of January 0000, for the beginning of the world, but it is not quite like that! There is constantly a transcendent, constantly a universal, constantly an individual, and the transcendent, universal and individual are co-existent. That is, if you enter into a certain state

of consciousness, you can at any moment be in contact with the transcendent Shakti, and you can also, with another movement, be in contact with the universal Shakti, and be in contact with the individual Shakti, and all this simultaneously—that does not unfold itself in time, it is we who move in time as we speak, otherwise we cannot express ourselves. We may experience it but we can express it only by saying one word after another (unfortunately, one cannot say all the words at the same time; if one could say them all at the same time, that would be a little more like the truth).

Finally, all that is said, all that has been said, all that will be said, is always only an extremely clumsy and limited way of expressing something which may be lived but which cannot be described. And there is a moment, when one lives the thing, in which one sees that the same thing can be expressed almost with the same exactness or the same truth in religious language, mystical language, philosophic language and materialistic language and that from the point of view of the lived truth, it makes very little difference. It is only when one is in the mental consciousness that one thing seems true to you and another does not seem true; but all these are only ways of expression. The experience carries in itself its absolute, but words cannot describe it—one may choose one language or another to express oneself, and with just a very little precaution, one can always say something approaching the Truth in all instances.

I am telling you this not to throw you into confusion but simply to let you understand that there is a considerable difference between the truth of experience and the way of expressing it, whatever it may be, even the best.

7 May 1951

\*

*Mother, suffering comes from ignorance and pain, but what is the nature of the suffering and pain the Divine Mother feels for her children[...]?*

It is because she participates in their nature. She has descended upon earth to participate in their nature. Because if she did not participate in their nature, she could not lead them farther. If she remained in her supreme consciousness where there is no suffering, in her supreme knowledge and consciousness, she could not have any contact with human beings. And it is for this that she is obliged to take on the human consciousness and form, it is to be able to enter into contact with them. Only, she does not forget: she has adopted their consciousness but she remains in relation with her own real, supreme consciousness. And thus, by joining the two, she can make those who are in that other consciousness progress. But if she did not adopt their consciousness, if she did not suffer with their sorrow, she could not help them. Hers is not a suffering of ignorance: it is a suffering through identity. It is because she has accepted to have the same vibrations as they, in order to be able to enter into contact with them and pull them out of the state they are in. If she did not enter into contact with them, she would not be felt at all or no one could bear her radiance....

This has been said in all kinds of forms, in all kinds of religions, and they have

spoken very often of the divine Sacrifice, but from a certain point of view it is true. It is a voluntary sacrifice, but it is true: giving up a state of perfect consciousness, perfect bliss, perfect power in order to accept the state of ignorance of the outer world so as to pull it out of that ignorance. If this state were not accepted, there would be no contact with it. No relation would be possible. And this is the reason of the incarnations. Otherwise, there would be no necessity. If the divine consciousness and divine force could work directly from the place or state of their perfection, if they could work directly on matter and transform it, there would be no need to take a body like man's. It would have been enough to act from the world of Truth with the perfect consciousness and upon consciousness. In fact that acts perhaps but so slowly that when there is this effort to make the world progress, make it go forward more rapidly, well, it is necessary to take on human nature. By taking the human body, one is obliged to take on human nature, partially. Only, instead of losing one's consciousness and losing contact with the Truth, one keeps this consciousness and this Truth, and it is by joining the two that one can create exactly this kind of alchemy of transformation. But if one did not touch matter, one could do nothing for it.

9 December 1953

\*

But I could speak to you of a very old tradition, more ancient than the two known lines of spiritual and occult tradition, that is, the Vedic and Chaldean lines; a tradition which seems to have been at the origin of these two known traditions, in which it is said that when, as a result of the action of the adverse forces—known in the Hindu tradition as the Asuras—the world, instead of developing according to its law of Light and inherent consciousness, was plunged into the darkness, inconscience and ignorance that we know, the Creative Power implored the Supreme Origin, asking him for a special intervention which could save this corrupted universe; and in reply to this prayer there was emanated from the Supreme Origin a special Entity, of Love and Consciousness, who cast himself directly into the most inconscient matter to begin there the work of awakening it to the original Consciousness and Love.

In the old narratives this Being is described as stretched out in a deep sleep at the bottom of a very dark cave, and in his sleep there emanated from him prismatic rays of light which gradually spread into the Inconscience and embedded themselves in all the elements of this Inconscience to begin there the work of Awakening.

If one consciously enters into this Inconscient, one can still see there this same marvellous Being, still in deep sleep, continuing his work of emanation, spreading his Light; and he will continue to do it until the Inconscience is no longer inconscient, until Darkness disappears from the world—and the whole creation awakens to the Supramental Consciousness.

And it is remarkable that this wonderful Being strangely resembles the one whom I saw in vision one day, the Being who is at the other extremity, at the confines of form and the Formless. But that one was in a golden, crimson glory, whereas in his sleep the

other Being was of a shining diamond whiteness emanating opalescent rays.

In fact, this is the origin of all Avatars. He is, so to say, the first universal Avatar who, gradually, has assumed more and more conscious bodies and finally manifested in a kind of recognised line of Beings who have descended *directly* from the Supreme to perfect this work of preparing the universe so that, through a continuous progression, it may become ready to receive and manifest the supramental Light in its entirety.

In every country, every tradition, the event has been presented in a special way, with different limitations, different details, particular features, but truly speaking, the origin of all these stories is the same, and that is what we could call a direct, conscious intervention of the Supreme in the darkest matter, without going through all the intermediaries, in order to awaken this Matter to the receptivity of the Divine Forces.

The intervals separating these various incarnations seem to become shorter and shorter, as if, to the extent that Matter became more and more ready, the action could accelerate and become more and more rapid in its movement, more and more conscious too, more and more effective and decisive.

And it will go on multiplying and intensifying until the entire universe becomes the total Avatar of the Supreme.

28 May 1958

THE MOTHER

(*Questions and Answers*, CWM, Vol. 4, pp. 392-95; Vol. 5, pp. 388-89; Vol. 9, pp. 332-35;  
see also: A compilation by Georges van Vrekhem, *The Mother's Vision*, pp. 49-54)

### STORIES TOLD BY THE MOTHER

Part 1, 131 pp., Rs. 60.00, ISBN 81-7058-645-3

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Almost all of these stories have been culled from the Mother's "Questions and Answers", the English translation of her "Entretiens" in French. The anecdotes were published in French in 1994 under the title "La Mère Raconte", and are now brought out in English, in two volumes. The compiler's note states "These stories are not just stories; they are revelations of living truths conveyed to us by the Mother." "If they bring the reader closer to the Mother, their purpose will be well served."

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## THE DIVINE MOTHER ANSWERS

(5)

Mother Divine,

Perhaps it was a mistake on my part to hastily advance some proposals for the reorganisation of Sri Aurobindo Nilaya. You know best how to reorganise.

So I have now decided to wait quietly and be prepared to do whatever You ask me to do. In the meanwhile my concentration will be on the improve-ment of my physical health and on the growing peace and purity of the vital and the mind.

With loving and grateful pranams,

14-6-67

Your child  
ABANI

*That is all right.  
With my love and blessings,  
J.*

That is all right.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

(To be continued)



## INTERVIEW OF 8 SEPTEMBER 1979

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

*(Continued from the issue of July 2003)*

P: What do you mean to live in this consciousness, what do you mean by that?

A: To feel their presence all the time and make every act of ours an offering, that was what we were trying to do. To remember and offer, remember and offer.

P: But that's sort of copy-book, too.

A: That was the marvellous formula which we followed. You were talking about our experiences. If you talk about our experiences inside, that was a different thing. What we used to feel. As I told you the last time the opening of the heart centre, you see the concentration there all the time. Or you get out of your body and move about. Those were experiences; of course, one had other experiences too.

P: And they were common.

A: Yes, yes. The first experience I had here was at the pier. All the waves seemed to pass through my body, the whole rhythm of the ocean was not outside me, but there was a sort of swishing and washing right through my belly. I was surprised that such a thing could happen.

P: What did Mother say about this, did you speak to Mother about it?

A: Yes, yes, of course.

P: And what did she say?

A: I don't know, I don't remember what she said,—we used to write everything to her. Correspondence had started already.

P: I see.

A: The correspondence was going on.

P: In 1928.

A: Yes, yes.

P: And who would answer?

A: Sri Aurobindo used to answer and Mother also used to answer.

P: Later even though people would address them to Mother, Sri Aurobindo would answer...?

A: Yes, yes. Sri Aurobindo would answer. Here we would write either to Mother or to Sri Aurobindo directly. I've got two letters of Sri Aurobindo addressed to Kekoo. The second letter is dated 1998.

L: '98?

A: '98, yes. I've got it with me still, I can show it to you. And beautiful handwriting, you know, beautiful really.\*

P: I thought the correspondence didn't start until about '30?

\* The letter in question was written to Amal on 28.2.28, but the date at the end in Sri Aurobindo's hand looks like 28.2.98.

A: No, no, it started quite early. We started almost as soon as we came here. She used to have a notebook.

P: So every day you used...

A: Yes, every day, I used to have an envelope sent every day, or the sheet was folded three or four times and sent to Sri Aurobindo.

P: And he answered himself?

A: He answered himself, and it always used to come in an envelope back. Mother's handwriting mostly on the envelope and with pictures pasted on the envelope, all kinds of pictures.

P: What kind of stuff would you ask?

A: I mean, mostly it was literary stuff, poetry, etc. or sometimes some problem of sadhana.

L: About the light, perhaps I am mistaken. Perhaps because of the electricity consumption we were switching it off.

A: Maybe, because in my room there was no restriction at all.

L: No, but he had a... that's why I was using the hurricane lantern and Mother scolded me and she said, "You'll spoil your eyes if you do that" and many a time when I was sitting in her room and stitching the blouses when she used to come at 5 o'clock, she would say, "You can see?" she would ask like that. I said, "Yes, Mother, I can see very well." "Oh, then it's good," she said, "but now you fold up and go."

A: This reminds me that Mother in those days used to have a lorgnette. She used to press a button and the lorgnette would open up. She would look through it at certain things.

L: No spectacles, she never wore spectacles.

A: She gave up the lorgnette afterwards because I think she did something with her own eyes, they were very good later on. She never used anything.

L: And Sri Aurobindo also used a lorgnette?

A: He used a magnifying glass, I think, at times.

*(To be concluded)*

## REMEMBERING THE MOTHER\*

My association with Auroville has been from the very beginning. In fact there was a time when Auroville was to be started in 1965, and somehow or the other, I happened to be associated with it from the first day that the idea of Auroville was given by Mother to the world. But my association with Mother started still earlier although not so early as Aster's. My first darshan of Mother was in 1949. It was in February 1949, and next month after a few days it will be 52 years since I saw her first. I was a youth of 22 at that time and I do not remember having seen even Mother's photo before I came here but once I was here a relationship started growing between her and me.

In those days Mother used to come every morning about sunrise to the balcony. That was my first darshan of her and the figure resembled a face I happened to see sometimes at Calcutta. Not many times, just two or three times, nor have I any idea of what it was or what it indicated. But the moment I saw her at the balcony, the magnet started working.

I don't think I missed any balcony darshan of Mother whenever I was in Pondy. It was a good thing to start the day with: after the morning walk on the seashore to come and see a goddess arriving with the dawn, the first rays of the sun falling on her face. Sometimes it would be difficult to say who was more radiant, the sun or the Mother goddess before me. I was a young boy, a visitor; the sadhaks and inmates would be there under the balcony and I used to stand quite at the back,—but it didn't matter, it is not simply my experience, I think it is the experience of everyone that Mother looked into his eyes wherever he stood; everyone felt satisfied that he was attended to by Mother. And then slowly, when the time was up, Mother would retrace her steps back to her chamber, but still the aura would be there on the street and it was not easy to leave the place. Of course each one would leave slowly, I also, and the next morning I would again be there.

Not only that, in those days Mother used to give darshan several times in the Ashram during the day. Once she was coming in the morning at about ten or eleven, between ten and eleven,—it was called vegetable darshan. Some baskets of vegetables which would be used at the Ashram kitchen were brought before Mother and she would bless them with her gaze. A few persons would be standing there in front of her to receive her gracious look and blessings.

Then one could see her again when she would go to the tennis ground. That was another fine opportunity for her darshan. It was not meant to be a darshan for people; she would just come down, have the band put on her wrist—Pranab would do that—and walk to her car, but sitting in the car she would again cast a glance around and I would have the feeling that she looked at and blessed me.

Then when she would return from the playground that would be another opportunity to stand outside and have her darshan when she came out.

Finally, at night there would be a meditation. There was no fixed time, it would be

\* A talk given on 28 January 2001 at Savitri Bhavan, Auroville.

anytime after nine, sometimes ten, sometimes eleven. People would get mats from Haradhan and they would be sitting or lying stretched on mats in the courtyard. Although I was an early sleeper from my young days, I used to attend that meditation. Of course once I overslept on the mat—I had missed Haradhan’s voice “Mother comes”—and woke up only after the meditation was over.

Now, what is it that made me go for Mother’s darshan on all those occasions?

Was it because I was just attracted by her? Or because of my *samskara* that the darshan of a divine person is always helpful for one’s growth or prosperity? Or because I had nothing else to do in the day? I was just a visitor coming for one or two weeks, a few times a year.

There is one other possibility: something deep within my being was being worked upon by Mother. For Mother’s function in her embodiment on earth was to work on the inner being of each person who came into contact with her and to take that person through the psychic contact to the ultimate aim which is union with the Divine.

At the balcony darshan in the morning, I would say, Mother was a ‘parable of dawn’. That freshness, and that urge of dawn for a new churning, for a new chapter, that went on the whole day and the whole night, I could feel them after all those meditations.

It is a beautiful memory, a very precious one. For what reason do I remember it? For that also there can be several alternatives. But if I remember her for what she gave me, if I am grateful to her for what she has done for me, if I still look forward to what she continues to do for me, I think, I didn’t waste her time by making her look at me on all those different occasions.

When I would go back to Calcutta,—it was more than fifteen years after February 1949 that I settled down in the Ashram—her guidance was there always, her protection was there always with me.

Here I wish to make one thing clear. During the course of my visits these fifteen years the spoken words between Mother and me were hardly half a dozen sentences. I am speaking of the total number of sentences during those years. On my first visit when I went to Mother for pranam the day I was to go back—in those times when one went back, one could go to her for pranam—she just asked me, “Are you going?” After that for some years no words were spoken.

Then how did her guidance and her protection work? That, I think, every child of Mother knows.

Is it a miracle? I don’t believe in miracles like that. For her miracles were normal. It is only when we open to her that the miracle happens, and once we call it a miracle, I would say, we underestimate her for miracles are her normal action.

After settling in the Ashram I was doing miscellaneous work coming to me through others from Mother, and my correspondence with Mother started in 1968 or so. Before that I used to go to Mother on my birthday. Then a time came when I was received by her daily. All that also was in silence. The total number of spoken sentences during those visits would not be, I would say, more than a dozen.

Although I was associated with Auroville work from the beginning, as I have already

said, it was all through intermediaries. It was only in 1970 end that a direct contact regarding Auroville grew between Mother and me on the physical level when I asked questions and she answered.

In February 1971 Mother sent me a word to see her the next morning. From then on I was charged with the Auroville work. From February 1971 until May 1973 all the different problems of Auroville, the different matters Aurovilians wanted to communicate to Mother, also their personal questions, and things that I had to ask Mother regarding Auroville were put up by me before Mother daily. It was an interesting experience that reminds me of the Mahasaraswati aspect of Mother, of her patience, of her endurance, of her love for her children.

No imperfection of ours escaped her notice, and still she would point it out with so much love that we sometimes overestimated ourselves. At least for myself I can say that sometimes I felt that she loved me for something special in me. That may be the experience of most of us, her children. For Auroville she had the utmost love and great hopes for it. Auroville was getting most of her attention, so much so that sometimes some people would be jealous of me for while they were being pushed out—‘Mother is in a hurry... please don’t take time’—I was never brushed aside. Well, the thing went on, and as I have said, her Mahasaraswati aspect was a lesson that I should never forget.

Before parting today I would say that Mother laid great emphasis on the construction of the Matrimandir. This was the very first thing I was expected to report to Mother daily; what was the work done at Matrimandir the previous day and what was the next step. Similarly there were other things, and in a way all things were important, nothing small, nothing big, but Matrimandir had her special attention and was the first thing spoken of, Matrimandir being the soul, the centre of Auroville for which we all should collaborate. In those days everyone from the community was expected to work there at least once a week. Well, it was a labour of love, of joy; it had an atmosphere in which, I remember, we all from Auroville joined.

Similarly for other activities also at Auroville. And whenever Mother was told of an instance of collaboration, she was particularly happy.

And now when so many problems arise, as they are bound to arise, I still feel Mother is there, Mother is in Auroville, and we have great hope. When she entrusted me with the work of Auroville she said that it was a very difficult task with many problems, but I should put each matter before her, and in all her humility she said that she would try to help me.

Well, when she was in her physical body, she guided, protected and carried us through. And now when she is no more physically with us, those who carry her emanation with them, and all who are open to her, do get her protection.

That is all for today.

SHYAM SUNDER

## THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF THE FUTURE

SRI AUROBINDO was sitting in the Karmayogin office at 4 Shyampukur Lane in Calcutta. It was the evening of 14 February in 1910. His young associate Ramachandra Majumdar brought the information that the police had issued an arrest warrant for him. "Go to Chandernagore" was the quiet voice he heard. Sri Aurobindo stayed in the French colony of Chandernagore from 15 February to 31 March 1910. But the place was not safe enough. He again heard the voice telling him: "Go to Pondicherry."

Sri Aurobindo received the divine command to go to Pondicherry and soon he was there in the afternoon of 4th April 1910. This was the place chosen for him as the Cave of Tapasya to carry out the spiritual mission he had come to fulfil. It became also a foreordained meeting place when from Paris the Mother arrived here four years later. It was the high Destiny that had guided them and brought them together. They had a task to do and the calling was upon the possibilities of the spirit entering into the dynamics of life. About it Sri Aurobindo wrote in an early letter that it was a severe and painful work. But it is to that that he had committed himself, unmindful of any hardship or difficulty. God-given and God-won was his strength and in it he attempted all and achieved all. He did what he had come to do.

Two great events had preceded this arrival of Sri Aurobindo here in Pondicherry. He had just in one year experienced both the passive and active aspects of the Brahman, something that takes years and years of yogic sadhana. The first was during his brief visit to Baroda in January 1908 when he was actively engaged in the independence movement of India. Here the Yogi Vishnu Bhaskar Lele gave him some instructions about silencing the mind. Within three days he had the realization of the static Brahman. The other happened not too long afterwards in Alipore Jail. Sri Aurobindo was charged for acts of sedition and from May 1908 was an under-trial prisoner for one year. In the jail he had the experience of the dynamic nature of the Brahman. During the same period something more remarkable happened. The spirit of Vivekananda visited him for a fortnight. Sri Aurobindo came to know the working of the Higher Consciousness leading to the Supermind.

It was in the jail that Sri Aurobindo saw Vasudeva everywhere, in trees, plants, men, in the prisoners, in the court, in all. Here the Gita was placed in his hands and here he received the spiritual guidance. This incarceration had for a while shaken his faith in the protection he believed he unfailingly had while he was in the midst of his political activities. But an assuring voice advised him to wait and see. In truth, however, there was something else that was foreseen and planned for him. He grew calm in that reassurance. He was to renounce all self-will and become the Divine's passive and faithful instrument. It is in that total submission that his tapas-will began to grow. It became an intense flame blazing in the day as much as in the night. The course of his life was now chartered for a different purpose altogether.

Not too long after his arrival in Pondicherry, and perhaps before 16 January 1912, a detailed programme of Yoga was given to him. This was called Saptā Chatusthaya or

the Seven Tetrads,—a system consisting of twenty-eight elements put in seven groups. In their natural and logical order these Chatushtayas are the Chatushtayas of Samata (Equality), Shakti (Force or Power), Vijnana (Truth-Knowledge), Sharira (Body), Karma (Action), Brahman (Reality), and Siddhi (Accomplishment or Perfection). Later in the *Arya* these seven Chatushtayas were briefly presented in the Yoga of Self-Perfection forming the fourth part of *The Synthesis of Yoga*. But as the Yoga-Tapasya of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother started to arrive at the nitty-gritty of the physical transformation, the Will of the Divine in the active dynamics became more and more luminously assertive. However, there was always the sense of robust pragmatism in the whole approach. For instance, in his notation dated 13 November 1913 of the *Record* we have rather a baffling statement of far reaching consequences. While on the one hand it clearly foresees great possibilities of the Avataric work, on the other there is also an unambiguous definition with regard to the results. Sri Aurobindo writes:

A clear distinction must now be made between the vidya-avidya-siddhi [Siddhi of Knowledge-Ignorance] which is constituted by the seven chatushtayas and the higher Amrita [Immortality] in which all limitation is removed and Death etc entirely cease. Only the first will in this life be entirely accomplished.

This could as well imply the limitation of the Seven Chatushtayas in so far as the higher Amrita is concerned. But that was specifically the problem both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were addressing in their long yogic pursuit.

In this connection we may also recall the note Sri Aurobindo had written on 28 October 1934 apropos of his book *The Yoga and its Objects* which was first published in 1921. He clarifies that it represents just the early stage of sadhana and “only a part of it is applicable to the Yoga as it has at present taken form.” As this book and the Seven Chatushtayas belong to the same period 1912-1921, we should be cognizant of the historical perspective of these yogic formulations. We should also be aware of the fact that the sadhana of transformation was actually waiting for the Mother’s final arrival at Pondicherry. For the larger collective sadhana involving the difficulty of the lower nature and in view of the hostility that is there all around, it is very necessary that the psychic being emerge as its unfailing guide.

Belonging to the same early period we have a particularly significant prayer of the Mother, which is dated 15 December 1911. This was quite before she met Sri Aurobindo. The prayer is an aspiration soliciting the Sun of Truth, the Supreme Light to

... pervade us entirely and illumine with its great brilliance our minds and hearts, all our thoughts and our actions.

It is remarkable that even before Sri Aurobindo and the Mother met, in the afternoon of 29 March 1914, there was already an identity of objective in their divine undertaking. As Sri Aurobindo writes in one of his letters, they were in material and spiritual contact with



each other since his coming to Pondicherry. But the identity was in fact at a much deeper level. Even before the actual meeting took place she was significantly speaking of “us” in a few contexts. Thus we have the Mother’s revealing prayer of 11 January 1914:

I know that a day will come when Thou wilt transform all those who come to us; Thou wilt transform them so radically that, liberated completely from the bonds of the past, they will begin to live in Thee an entirely new life, a life made solely of Thee, with Thee as its sovereign Lord.

Again, on 11 August 1914 the Mother speaks of *their* being sent upon earth to prepare the Unknown’s ways. The Unknown One, she says, is waiting for the propitious hour of manifestation in which His Will will be done. Indeed, behind their coming together there was the Divine Will itself. It was in that Will, in that high *sankalpa* that everything was going to be worked out. In it was to be born the propitious hour. The gleaming foundation of the Integral or Purna Yoga is present in it. It is the Yoga that aims at divine perfection in this evolutionary creation and it is for that they had come. It is for that they passed through the portals of death, that there be life not governed by death but by the manifesting truth.

It means that as more and more the Tapas-Will of the Divine Yogi grew in the course of the Sadhana, more and more did the Divine Shakti pour her transcendental powers in the dynamics of the work. Not Knowledge, which in reality was already there, but Action of the luminous executive Force was what had to be brought into the operational mechanics. All his Siddhis including even those of the early days truly pertain to this aspect of Action.

If in these Siddhis of Sri Aurobindo we see an ascending series, then we also begin to get an idea about the nature of the Integral Yoga of the Future itself. To make ourselves ready for the freer and greater functioning of the Divine Shakti in us is what we should be occupied with. Our life, life that is presently governed by Ignorance and Death, has to become an expression of the truth-conscious Being who is also the Being of Ananda. This has to happen even to the last bit of our physical existence. Even as we go from death to immortality, so too must that immortality rush into a thousand workings of this creation. Not the Vedantic power as the giver of liberation nor the eminent Tantric force to get mastery over nature, but the conscious superintendent Energy has to take charge of our being and our becoming, our *swabhāva* and *swadharmā*.

We may mention here en passant what Sri Aurobindo wrote to Motilal Roy sometime in the middle of 1913. “Tantric Yoga is not yet of the first importance for us, the perfection of the basis of Vedanta is the one thing supremely important; for that cannot be perfect until this has been developed at least to a certain point.” But it is also true that control over the occult gives a definite precision to the spiritual. While the Mother herself acquired those siddhis of the occult, her own approach was towards the psychic coming forward and taking charge of the sadhana. Later in the deeper context of the physical transformation the luminous occult had to be dealt with when the spiritual siddhi could provide the



needed support or *ādhār*. Ultimately it is the Shakti who is going to do the alchemic miracle of the physical transformation. She has to be allowed to work in us.

There are of course conditions for this to happen. We have to do a long and arduous preparatory tapasya. Our triple effort of aspiration for all that is divinely greating, rejection of whatever comes in the way of the higher working, and surrender of our thoughts and feelings and movements, of our soul and our spirit to the Shakti has to go on until we become truer instruments for her unhindered action in us. As shall the tapas-yajna grow, and the golden flames leap up, so will she herself descend into it and carry it forward in that brightening wideness, into those operating regions of the truth, the right, the vast where are present the Spirit's immensities. Our will shall become an effective part of the Divine's Will. By the power of tapas-sacrifice, of offering ourselves to it, or complete surrender or *samarpana* to it, shall our aspiration gain the speed that the Vedas speak of. It shall bring to us the plenitudes of truth and consciousness and bliss. We shall thus become the possessors of the treasure which, as Vamadeva says, is in heaven and is on the earth, they enriching each other. The Rishi spoke of the golden body of Agni that is free from evil and so shall be ours.

When the Fire of Tapasya is set ablaze this way, the Radiant Power herself emerges from the flames, ready with the boons to transform our mortality into the beatitude of life. Indeed, our life first becomes the Shakti-Yajna itself, a sacrifice offered to the Mahashakti. Then it can grow into the Yajna of Transformation. Then from the fire of this sacrifice emerges the radiant Goddess ready to grant boons to the aspirant soul. We have an example of this in the tapasya of Aswapati as presented in the legend of Savitri, a legend that is at the same time a pregnant symbol also.

Aswapati is issueless and desires to have a son to perpetuate his ancestral line. In that way would the continuity of the Vedic Yajna be assured. In fact it becomes an aspect of the dharmic duty itself and Aswapati wishes not to fail in it. It is in the dharma alone that the order of the society can be maintained and he is keen to uphold it. Thereupon Aswapati retires to the forest and engages himself in the worship of Goddess Savitri. He is devout in nature and is firmly established in the truth. Everyday he offers one hundred thousand oblations to her. Observing all the vows of the sacrifice, he does arduous tapasya for eighteen long years. The Goddess is immensely pleased with him and grants him a boon, the boon of a radiant daughter who will be born to him soon. She also tells him that the boon has the sanction of the Creator-Father Brahma himself. The birth of a radiant daughter or *kanyā tejasvinī* is therefore already marked by a high intention. It carries in it the Supreme's Will itself. In this narrative the birth of the Shakti from the Yajna-Fire under the high sanction has all the yogic elements present in it and we can well link them with the Integral Yoga of the Future. We should also mark the fact that Aswapati, even before he undertook the Yajna for invoking the Divine Birth, was firmly established in the Truth. There was already present the *ādhār-siddhi* or the needed spiritual support.

Incidentally, it is pertinent to note that Aswapati's daughter Savitri in the original story as given to us by Vyasa is described as an adept in the Yoga of Meditation, *dhyānyogaparāyaṇā*. Thus, for instance, just before going to the forest on the fated day

when Satyavan was to die as foretold by Narad, she pays her obeisance to the Tapasvins and receives their gracious benedictions. By entering into that Yoga of Meditation she fixes their Word of Truth deep in her soul. Indeed, Savitri is now in possession of the occult power of that Truth-Word with its yogic efficacy for the forthcoming action. It is to the merit of this Truth-Word that victory against all unfriendliness and antagonism can be won. To be open to the Truth-Word and prepare oneself for its dynamism in action is something which has to become a part of the Integral Yoga of the Future.

About the effectiveness of the Yajna, we may take one specific example from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*. This pertains to Savitri's encounter with Death when all her assertions of the Truth seem to fail against his hostility. It marks a major stage in her attempt to win back the soul of the deceased Satyavan:

Intent upon her silent will she walked  
 On the dim grass of vague unreal plains,  
 A floating veil of visions in her front,  
 A trailing robe of dreams behind her feet.  
 But now her spirit's flame of conscient force  
 Retiring from a sweetness without fruit  
 Called back her thoughts from speech to sit within  
 In a deep room in meditation's house.  
 For only there could dwell the soul's firm truth:  
 Imperishable, a tongue of sacrifice,  
 It flamed unquenched upon the central hearth  
 Where burns for the high house-lord and his mate  
 The homestead's sentinel and witness fire  
 From which the altars of the gods are lit.

As a result of this kindled Yajna in her deep meditation's house, at once there takes place a sudden change in the course of the events:

The mortal led, the god and spirit obeyed  
 And she behind was leader of their march  
 And they in front were followers of her will.

Along with the witness Fire we also witness the power of Sacrifice, of the Vedic Yajna that is going to give winning strength to Savitri. In it is going to be decided the fate of her mission and with it the uncertain fate of the evolutionary travail itself upon the earth.

The occult Fire that burns in the central hearth in Savitri's House of Meditation is the eternal Yajna itself, the Yajna being performed by the Sat-Purusha as the house-lord with his mate Chit-Shakti seated along with him for the great Action. Although a small Yajna is constantly being performed in the heart of each one of us, this Yajna of Savitri is unique, primordially extraordinary. Hers is the transcendental Yajna in which is the power to dissolve ignorance and death, that divinity inhabits this death-bound life. And the

wonder is, this is the very possibility that the Divine as luminous Death has himself now opened out in this earthly existence of ours. When we live in the flaming spirit of her Yajna, then all these thousand Yajnas of ours also get kindled. In them there is the prospect of the golden body or *hiraṇya tanu* of the Vedic Agni being born.

Savitri steps into that House of Meditation and her “silent will” joins with the Will of the Divine. Such again is the nature of the Vedic Yajna going on in her deep heart where the individual’s will becomes one with the Supreme’s Will. Indeed, in that identification we also possess the rightful free will for all action. In it we can make our own choice because it is then a choice in the possibilities of the Truth and hence bears an authenticity as bright as that Truth itself. “In our activities is expressed the conscious Will or Shakti of the Spirit. To know that will in ourselves and in the universe and follow it to its divine finalities” becomes the truest culmination of Yoga. As the tapas-will grows in us so too it produces its own realizations. There is the related heightening of our lower nature. It gets illumined and energized by the descending powers of the Divine. God as the manifesting Self or Spirit, Nature as his executive Power, Soul in the play of the divine multiplicity,—each then finds its corresponding term in our life’s fulfilment.

As the tapas-yajna grows in intensity we gain more and more faith in the divine Shakti herself working in us. When this happens in a settled way the Spirit’s omnipotence finds a wider expression not only in us but also in the world. Nothing then stands against its reaching out what is willed to be accomplished. In it knowledge, strength, divine skill of the work, love and delight begin to bring to Nature the perfection of the Spirit. Indeed the divine Shakti then “carries with her the supreme sense of the masteries of the eternal Ishwari, a rapid and divine capacity for all kinds of action. The intimate feeling of her presence and her powers and the satisfied assent of all our being to her workings in and around it is the last perfection of faith in the Shakti. And behind her is the Ishwara and faith in him is the most central thing in the Shraddha [Faith] of the integral Yoga.”

When this is done the powers of the Spirit start entering into the sacrificial flames of life. Even as the supramental Mahashakti “brings pouring down her luminous transcendences from the ineffable ether”, the human nature changes into dynamic divine nature. Indeed, in that great transformation we acquire in a thousand ways the freedom of the Spirit itself. Our will becomes participative in its free will. There cannot be conflicts between the two and in the rhythm of the Truth, in the free play of the possibilities each will and each action is allowed to run its course of delight. When we exercise such a free will of ours in harmony with the truth-nature of things, we become truer centres of activity founded in the Will of the Supreme. Our tapas-will becomes a part of this Tapas-Will in which takes birth a new creation. Brahma created these countless worlds by doing Tapas, say the Puranas. So can our tapas-will become participative in the glory of its manifestation.

Let us take an example of it from *Savitri* which is the spiritual autobiography of the twin supramental Avatar, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It is a grand revelation of what he has done for this mortal creation.

The divine protagonist in the epic comes as Aswapati to do Yoga-Tapasya in the world of men. The objective of this Yoga-Tapasya is to take the present evolutionary pro-

cess to the next decisive stage with the divine Real-Idea or Vijnana as its foundation. After the mental being who has been here for all these dull millennia here must now arrive the race of gnostic beings. A new creation progressing in the wideness of the Real-Idea is inevitable in the scheme of things and it must be established. There are two aspects of it. The first is to do the needed occult-spiritual work, that this creation be formed in the transcendental region of the Spirit. The second aspect is to make it a living reality upon earth. In order to achieve the first, Aswapati the Yogi par excellence does the difficult triple sadhana consisting of the individual, the universal, and the transcendental,—Jiva Yoga, Vishwa Yoga, and Uttama or Paramochcha Yoga. He experiences a wide immortal hush that was present even before the gods were born and awaits the definitive decree of the veiled One. In response to his call the heavenly power of Love and Sweetness in all her wisdom founded in the Divine leaps down and accepts the travail of the world. In it is won the Spirit's ultimate victory. In that tremendous moment a new and marvellous creation in the House of the Spirit takes shape:

... from the trance of that tremendous clasp  
 And from the throbbings of that single Heart  
 And from the naked Spirit's victory  
 A new and marvellous creation rose.  
 Incalculable outflowing infinitudes  
 Laughing out an unmeasured happiness  
 Lived their innumerable unity;  
 Worlds where the being is unbound and wide  
 Bodied unthinkably the egoless Self,  
 Rapture of beatific energies  
 Joined Time to the Timeless, poles of a single joy;  
 White vasts were seen where all is wrapped in all.

It is a new creation overflowing in the expressive joy of the transcendental Spirit. A possibility in the omnipresent reality was willed and it is that which got actualized in it. It is not that this creation was already there, pre-existent in the domain of the Truth as are the hierarchical worlds, that he simply stared upon a distant peak in Darien, or that for the first time a new planet in the upper sky came into his sudden view. It indeed sprang out of the very Tapasya of Aswapati. He willed it and created it. In it are the worlds of beauty, love, sweetness, joy, harmony, knowledge, power and

In these new worlds projected he became  
 A portion of the universal gaze...  
 His mind answered to countless communing minds,  
 His words were syllables of the cosmos' speech,  
 His life a field of the vast cosmic stir.  
 He felt the footsteps of a million wills  
 Moving in unison to a single goal.

Aswapati's *samkalpa* has borne a rich and beautiful fruit. To creatively exercise one's will in the Divine's Will is an act of yogic greatness and is fully in consonance with the dynamics of the Truth. By this deed what was not there has been brought into existence. The possibility has become manifest in the Spirit. The joy of creation is the most intense joy and it finds its freest and most vast play when one lives in the rhythm of the widening Real-Idea.

Now this actualized possibility in the Transcendent has to become a realized part of the earthly evolution. But this is a work not of the Divine Being or Purusha but of the Executive Force or Prakriti. It is the work of Shakti and the Yogi-Tapasvin has to approach her for its fulfilment. This is what Aswapati does. He offers his prayer to her and persuasively beseeches her to incarnate herself here. He knows that it is she who alone can do it. However, she has reservations in the beginning and cautions Aswapati not to force the issue. Truth born too soon might shatter the very structure on which he wants to build something divinely superior, she advises him. She tells him to let things happen in the natural course of Time. But Aswapati is not happy with what he is told and instead makes another proposal. While the advice is one aspect of the high Wisdom, there is also the merit of asserting one's will when it is well-founded on that Truth itself. In that sense Aswapati is not disregarding the counsel given to him, but in the freedom of the Spirit that upholds a thousand possibilities he is putting forward another possibility. The boon is granted to him and the Shakti herself takes birth to make the new world a reality here. His will compels her mortal birth. Creating a new world by his Yoga-Tapasya and insisting upon her to incarnate herself here, that what was created be realized upon earth, are the two mighty acts of his will carried out in the freedom of the Spirit's Will. Aswapati's will has given to evolution a new turn.

We may therefore affirm that in the Integral Yoga of the Future we have freedom, true freedom to exercise our free will which can also get recognized as a possibility in the Possibilities of the Infinite. Freedom of Action in the Truth,—that is the compelling element of the Yoga of Tomorrow. It is by Tapas that Freedom itself grows in the Delight of the Spirit and to make it grow even in the measures of Time gives a valid meaning to this manifestation. But the aspect of the will to open out a new possibility is only its first term. The matching aspect of a firmer realization is as important.

*(To be concluded)*

R. Y. DESHPANDE

# TAGORE AND THE MOTHER

## Some Information

W. W. PEARSON acted as a link between Tagore and the Richards (Paul and Mirra) in Japan in the year 1916. On 11 June 1916, Tagore gave a talk at Tokyo University. When Tagore spoke, Mirra sat in the audience sketching his portrait. Later, she did two sketches in ink following the one drawn in the lecture hall. All the three are reproduced in *The Mother: Paintings and Drawings*, 1992, pp. 51-53.

Tagore was impressed by the personality of Mirra Richard and requested her to come to Santiniketan to take administrative responsibility. She declined politely explaining that her responsibility lay elsewhere. It was 1916. The Mother had already been to Pondicherry in the spring of 1914 and had worked with Sri Aurobindo on the *Arya*. It may be interpreted that the Mother was not willing to join the school of an aesthete, leaving a spiritual Master. As a collaborator in bringing out Sri Aurobindo's major prose works she had already known that nothing should come between her and the Divine.

GOUTAM GHOSAL

## References

1. *Rabindrajiboni, Vol. II*, Probhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay.
2. *Rabijiboni, Vol. VIII*, Prashanta Kumar Paul.

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## COLLECTED WORKS OF THE MOTHER

A second edition of the Collected Works of the Mother in a uniform library set of 17 volumes is currently under publication. The format will be as follows:

Number of pages: 420 pages per volume on the average

Size: 9.5" × 6.5" (24 cm × 16 cm)

Typeface: Sabon, 11 point

Paper: acid-free

Cover: cloth-bound in hard cover, with handmade paper jacket wrapped in PVC plastic

**The set will be available some time in 2004.**

Contact Address: SABDA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India

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## NIRODBARAN'S SURREALIST POEMS

*(Continued from the issue of July 2003)*

### **Unborn Flower**

For Prayag's water-pilgrimage, a hundred thousand persons!  
Bearing an inflorescence of unfulfilled desire  
Proceeds the tireless pilgrim.  
The one who slew Mura, who grew up in Gokul  
Blows his maddening flute seated in seclusion  
Where the three crystalline currents merge.  
The Purna-Kumbha festival of First and Last's union  
Sets up a hundred shops of rare goods.  
Light's thousand-flame-crested shore<sup>1</sup>  
Gazes unblinking at the infinite distance.  
From night-end's stalk the unborn flower  
Pours the blood-red kumkum of trance  
Onto the leaves of the Colourless:  
From the renunciant-sun-body did a light-splinter  
Give birth here to its footprint-inscription?

*(To be continued)*

DEBASHISH BANERJI

1. The shore of Light's thousand-flame-crested ocean

# THE YOGA OF THE BODY

(Continued from the issue of July 2003)

## Transfer of Power to the Body's Cells—Evident Immortality

THE MOTHER experienced that during her Yoga of Body Transformation a transfer of power within the physical self was taking place. She narrated:

The cells, the whole material consciousness obeyed the inner individual consciousness—most often the psychic or the mental... But now this material mind is busy organizing itself like the other or rather like all the others, like the mind in all the states of being....

But this change of initiating power, ...this transfer of power, has had upon me the effect of a unique experience, of something that had never taken place before. ...the experience has left a kind of certitude in the body—it is less uncertain of the future.... If that remains, it is evident immortality.<sup>1</sup>

This was the pivotal point in getting to the heart of the issue—who controls. With the establishment of sovereignty of the cellular mind, transformation of the body can become a focused process and the body's cells can dynamically participate without hindrance from the mind proper, the vital mind or the subconscious. This was the fundamental reason for Sri Aurobindo's preference to focus on the physical mind receiving the Supramental light. This was also the key to the ability to prolong life indefinitely.

## Physical Mind's Role for the Supermind to Manifest Permanently

The Mother narrated her experience of the Yoga of the Body, with her Vital and Mind-proper already gone:

...something written by Sri Aurobindo... for the Supramental to manifest upon earth the physical mind must receive it and manifest it—and it is just the physical mind... the body-mind, the only thing that remains in me now. And then, the reason why only this part has remained became quite clear to me. It is on the way to being converted in a very rapid and interesting manner. This physical mind is being developed under the supramental Influence. And it is just what Sri Aurobindo has written, that this is indispensable so that the Supramental can manifest itself permanently upon earth. ...

Sri Aurobindo has said that if the physical mind were transformed, the transformation of the body would follow *quite naturally*.<sup>2</sup>

The Mother carried out the mission, as specified by Sri Aurobindo in principle as



well as in specificity, with her body and within her body cells. What was considered she made happen. What was envisioned she experienced. Her experiences were concretizing the accomplishments permanently for earth's evolution. Because of her Avataric fortitude, to expedite the feasibility of physical transformation, she was left without the Vital and Mind-proper and was left with the Physical Mind only, which was the focus of transformation and the essential supportive factor for the permanency of the Supramental on earth. However, without the Vital and Mind-proper any other individual would either face death or become insane. She had frequently and emphatically warned of such dangers to refrain anyone from attempting to do so.<sup>3</sup>

She had opened the door for the earth's supramentalisation in 1956, which was the first phase: DESCENT. Her march continued. By the end of 1971, the second phase: TRANSFORMATION was on the verge of becoming a reality. All along, according to the Mother's numerous narrations, in a subtle physical form Sri Aurobindo continued to be her companion and collaborator as he had promised to ensure her victory. On January 15<sup>th</sup> 1972, she proclaimed, "Hold fast, it is the moment of winning the Victory." She stated that this proclamation came from her "psychic and through it from above..."<sup>4</sup>

### Some Revelations

Repeatedly the Mother's body, all her cells experienced intense agony and those experiences instilled in the cells' consciousness the intense and total aspiration for the Divine. The experiences of moment to moment life or death were directly linked with this aspiration. What the Mother referred to as the Truth and *only* remedy is a revelation of her body-aspiration as narrated by her on June 9<sup>th</sup> 1971:

To exist only for the Divine.  
 To exist only through the Divine.  
 To exist only in the service of the Divine.  
 To exist only... by becoming the Divine.<sup>5</sup>

One cannot help appreciate the enormity of the Mother's mission. She was the only one who could have attempted and succeeded in such a mission. She explained this on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1971:

As for the body, it is being trained to live only through the Divine, on the Divine, for everything—everything, everything, everything without exception.<sup>6</sup>

Who else could ever make such a claim? Who else could live up to such requirements? It is of capital significance to note that the total aspiration for the Divine is the precondition of the Yoga of Physical Transformation! May be this could give pause to all those who are preoccupied with the intense desire for the cellular transformation. Could the age-old desire for immortality be the motivation for the rush to the cellular

transformation? What is essential to recognize from the Mother's experiences of the Yoga of Physical Transformation is that as the integral transformation process became increasingly focused on the body, the requirement of the aspiration for the Divine became more precise and absolute. The creature-man is never going to be immortal, only the integrally transformed human into complete Overman will be able to extend life at will and only the Supramentalised Beings will be immortal as they will in the ultimate sense be the manifestation of the Truth-Divine and thus in Oneness with the ONE.

As the physical mind of the Mother became receptive to being the vessel of the Supramental, in late December 1971, her range of experiences made milestones of utmost significance in the cosmological sense. These were not mere thoughts; they were her concrete lived experiences. Some of them are narrated in her words:<sup>7</sup>

Everything is a phenomenon of consciousness...

"...everything exists in relation to the Divine, in the Consciousness of the Divine... It is not that one feels a joy nor that one feels... it is not that, it is the Divine who is there. And that is the *only* solution. And it is towards that that the world is moving: towards the Consciousness of the Divine—the Divine who does, the Divine who is, the Divine....

"The world is the same—it is seen and felt in an absolutely opposite way.... It is like death. Well, it is a transitional phenomenon... when you have this Divine consciousness, ...things become almost instantaneous, you understand....

"The Truth is... the Divine as the totality—the totality in time and in space. And that is a consciousness which the body can have, for this body had it (momentarily, for moments), and so long as it has it, everything is so much... well, it is not delight, it is not pleasure, it is not happiness, it is nothing of the kind... a kind of blissful peace... and luminous... and creative.... It is magnificent. Only, it comes, it goes, it comes, it goes....

"All that happens is necessary for the full unfoldment of the goal of the creation. One might say: the goal of the creation is that the creature must become conscious like the Creator. There!... The goal of this creation is this Consciousness of the Infinite, the Eternal who is Omnipotent—Infinite, Eternal, Omnipotent... beyond time; each individual particle possessing this Consciousness, each individual particle containing this same Consciousness.

"It is division that has created the world and it is in division that the Eternal manifests itself."

### **Something is happening...**

The worldly implications of these mysterious revelations are discussed in the subchapter, *Convergence of Spirituality and Science* of the present work.

The initial thrust of such experiences can be traced to late August of 1968, when the Mother's physical mind wanted to know:

- Origin: How was Matter formed?
- Creator: How did the Supreme manage to manifest Himself in Matter?
- Domain: Since when has the earth existed?
- Birth: Since when has man come into existence?

Yes, the physical mind of the Mother had reached the level of consciousness where it could inquire about its own origin, its creator, its domain and its birth! This was just before her experience of the intense and prolonged penetration of Supramental forces into her body, everywhere at the same time during the nights of August 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> 1968. On December 31<sup>st</sup> 1968, the Mother experienced the “Overman” consciousness descending. The “Transition” was secured!

The Mother had received the Supramental Light in 1950 from Sri Aurobindo upon his withdrawal to commence the Yoga of Physical Transformation. In late August of 1968, the Supramental Force was descending into the physical body of the Mother – the next step after receiving the Supramental Light into her physical-mind in 1950 from Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo had stated the precondition of receiving the Supramental Light into the physical-mind for its eventual settlement into the transformed physical body permanently. This was now accomplished in 1968 by the Mother. When in 1950, Sri Aurobindo opted to withdraw in to the subtle physical, the baton had passed to the Mother to go to the next round of Descent and Transformation and that part of the “relay race” was now nearing its definitive point, if not the conclusive phase. With the penetration of the Supramental Light into her body, the physical transformation process had reached the pivotal milestone to enable her to accomplish the “Transition (Overman)” leading to the final “Transformation (Supramental Being)”.

*(To be concluded)*

ARUN VAIDYA

### *References*

1. *Notes on the Way*, CWM, Vol. 11, pp. 16-18.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 279-80.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 259.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 269.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 286-89.

# THE COMPOSITION OF SAVITRI

(Continued from the issue of July 2003)

## *Savitri and the Record of Yoga*

### 12

In the second book of *Savitri*, as Sri Aurobindo once explained, Aswapati ascends through the worlds “as a typical representative of the race to win the possibility of discovery and possession of all the planes of consciousness”.<sup>1</sup> In Book Two, Canto Thirteen, he has realised in this way the universal Self as the impassive witness of the action of cosmic Nature. This is depicted as a state of freedom, knowledge and a kind of impersonal power attained on a high and illumined level of spiritual mind—whence the canto’s title, “In the Self of Mind”.<sup>2</sup> A similar condition of cosmic consciousness is described in many places in Sri Aurobindo’s writings, as in this sentence in *The Synthesis of Yoga*:

Absolved in the cosmic wideness, released from ego, his personality reduced to a point of working of the universal Force, himself calm, liberated, deathless in universality, motionless in the Witness Self even while outspread without limit in unending Space and Time, he can enjoy in the world the freedom of the Timeless.<sup>3</sup>

Yet this great realisation is, in Sri Aurobindo’s view, not enough for the integral Yoga. He went on to point out its limitations:

In the cosmic consciousness there remains at the end a hiatus, an unequal equation of a highest Knowledge that can liberate but not effectuate with a Power seeming to use a limited Knowledge or masking itself with a surface Ignorance that can create but creates imperfection or a perfection transient, limited and in fetters. On one side there is a free undynamic Witness and on the other side a bound Executrix of action who has not been given all the means of action.<sup>4</sup>

This is the central problem that Sri Aurobindo set out to solve in practical terms in his Yoga. Spirituality has long been content with a “Knowledge that can liberate but not effectuate”—or else, if it concerned itself with effectuation, as in Tantra, it has tended to lose sight of the highest knowledge. We have seen that the thing Sri Aurobindo intended to establish, as he wrote in the *Record of Yoga*, was “the perfect harmony of Nivritti & Pravritti”,<sup>5</sup> of peace and equality (*santi, samata*) with force and effectuating power (*sakti, tapas*). He discovered gradually that it was necessary for this purpose to rise to higher and higher planes of a supra-intellectual consciousness, *vijnana*. He wrote in his diary on 24 June 1914:

The vijñana of Knowledge & Power is the crux. So long as it is not entirely justified, the perfect finality of Samata & Shakti in the adhar & its environment is not possible. For Error & Defect mean persistence of the vrana [wound] in the active Brahman & where there is a wound there will be suffering. The only other escape is into the shantam Brahma in Mind where activity ceases in a silent & impartial Delight that does not fulfil, but only escapes from the necessity of harmony. It is only in the ritam that the Shantam becomes the Active & Nivritti & Pravritti are perfectly reconciled.<sup>6</sup>

Ritam, “ordered truth of active being”, spontaneously emerging out of Satyam, “static truth of essential being”,<sup>7</sup> in the Brihat or vast self-extension of the Brahman: this is the inalienable law of things only in the supramental Truth-consciousness, according to Sri Aurobindo’s experience. It is here that “the Shantam [Silent Brahman] becomes the Active [Brahman] & Nivritti & Pravritti are perfectly reconciled”. This plane is reached in Book Three, Canto Three of *Savitri*, “The House of the Spirit and the New Creation”:<sup>8</sup>

There Oneness was not tied to monotone;  
It showed a thousand aspects of itself,  
Its calm immutable stability  
Upbore on a changeless ground for ever safe,  
Compelled to a spontaneous servitude,  
The ever-changing incalculable steps,  
The seeming-reckless dance’s subtle plan  
Of immense world-forces in their perfect play.<sup>9</sup>

But Aswapati has still to pass through several intermediate stages before he will arrive at “this vast outbreak of perfection’s law”<sup>10</sup> (*brhad ritam*). Meanwhile, he is prevented from lingering too long in a lesser realisation. The falling of the “luminous finger” has shown his experience of the witness Self to be a “part-experience” which “fragmented the Whole”.<sup>11</sup> This defect inherent in the very nature of mind has vitiated Indian spiritual seeking for centuries, according to Sri Aurobindo. In an early draft of this passage, written in the late 1930s, he spoke of a “contradiction” that “cut in two the One Reality”. Transcribed as it was first written in that manuscript, before being revised, the sentence in question reads:<sup>12</sup>

A contradiction of opposing Truths  
Imposed its huge dilemma on the Mind,  
And cut in two the One Reality  
Leaving to the spirit an intolerant choice,  
A cosmic bondage to creative Power,  
And liberation in immobile Peace,  
A void recoil of Self from Time-made things;

Deep peace was there, but not the nameless Force,  
 The fathomless rapture of the Infinite  
 And the white passion of God-ecstasy  
 That laughs in the blaze of the boundless heart of Love.

Sri Aurobindo's solution to the "huge dilemma" was presented briefly in the sequel to this passage and elaborated in subsequent versions which turned into Book Two, Canto Fourteen, "The World-Soul". This solution has two parts. The first involves not an ascent to a higher plane than the one Aswapati has already reached, but a movement inward to discover a deeper truth behind the world itself and its appearance of a "cosmic bondage". He is led to find another principle concealed by the imprisoned or self-imprisoning mind, an ensouling entity described in the same manuscript as

A seed from which the Eternal can be born,  
 A flame lit in the secret heart of things....<sup>13</sup>

The presence of this potentially divinising entity in embodied beings gives rise to the possibility of a transformation of the works of the creative Power (Prakriti). She may then be revealed as a mask of the "nameless Force", whose "fathomless rapture" does not abrogate the immobile peace of the Self. The vision of this rapturous Force, seen as One at whose feet Aswapati surrenders himself, foreshadows "The Book of the Divine Mother" and suggests the second part of the solution of the world-problem. At the same time, in the scheme of "The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds", this stunning flash of revelatory experience represents the plane of Intuition, through which Aswapati passes on to Overmind in the last canto of Book Two.

The Intuition, as we have seen, has already intervened as the "luminous finger" falling from above on the plane below it. Now it seems to change into a "beckoning finger", summoning the traveller of the worlds into another dimension:

As if a beckoning finger of secrecy  
 Outstretched into a crystal mood of air,  
 Pointing at him from some near hidden depth,  
 As if a message from the world's deep soul,  
 An intimation of a lurking joy  
 That flowed out from a cup of brooding bliss,  
 There shimmered stealing out into the Mind  
 A mute and quivering ecstasy of light,  
 A passion and delicacy of roseate fire.<sup>14</sup>

The words "joy", "bliss", "ecstasy" and "passion" in this sentence all indicate the essential nature of the soul hidden deep within ourselves and the world. This is the part of us whose origin is the principle of Ananda or infinite Bliss and which is always attracted

towards its pure divine source as if it were drawn by an invisible magnet. Sri Aurobindo wrote with regard to this part of our being that it is

in a special sense the soul,—that is to say, the psychic principle which is not the life or the mind, much less the body, but which holds in itself the opening and flowering of the essence of all these to their own peculiar delight of self, to light, to love, to joy and beauty and to a refined purity of being.<sup>15</sup>

(To be continued)

RICHARD HARTZ

### Notes and References

1. *Savitri* (1993), p. 778.
2. According to the interpretation of this canto put forward in the last instalment, Aswapati realises the Self on the plane of Illumined Mind. A similar experience is possible on a lower or higher plane, but would have a somewhat different character. On a higher plane, the term “Self of Mind” might be inapplicable, since Sri Aurobindo considered Illumined Mind to be the highest plane of cosmic Mind; this is shown by a letter where he wrote that “above the higher planes of cosmic Mind there is the Intuition” (*Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 24, p. 1157). That the attainment of cosmic consciousness on this plane is a condition for reaching Intuition is suggested by the next sentence in the same letter: “In order to live in the Intuition plane (not merely to receive intuitions), one has to live in the cosmic consciousness because there the cosmic and individual run into each other as it were, and the mental separation between them is already broken down, so nobody can reach there who is still in the separative ego.”
3. *The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 23, p. 258.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 259.
5. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 174. Sri Aurobindo reportedly defined Pravritti as “Nature’s tendency or impulse to action” and Nivritti as “Withdrawing from that tendency or impulse to action” (*ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 1462).
6. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 513.
7. *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol. 18, pp. 115, 117.
8. See the instalment of the present series where this canto was discussed in *Mother India*, February 2001, pp. 106-13.
9. *Savitri*, p. 324.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 287.
12. Sri Aurobindo crossed out the first few lines of this sentence in the manuscript and did not include them in subsequent versions.
13. Cf. *Savitri*, p. 291, for the final form of these lines.
14. *Savitri*, p. 289.
15. *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol. 18, p. 220. The occurrence of “psychic” in this passage, originally published in the *Arya* in June 1916 and slightly revised in 1939, is one of the earliest in Sri Aurobindo’s writings where the word refers to the soul in the “special sense” defined here. Another instance is found in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, where in a chapter published in the *Arya* in January 1920, Sri Aurobindo wrote: “The pure psychic being is of the essence of Ananda, it comes from the delight-soul in the universe” (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 24, p. 737). Otherwise, “psychic” in Sri Aurobindo’s writings up to and including the period of the *Arya* rarely had this sense in which by the 1930s it was one of the distinctive terms of his psychological system and central to his Yogic teaching. It is worth noting that in Part Three of *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “The Yoga of Divine Love”, which was published in the *Arya* in 1918 and never revised, the word “psychic” does not occur at all (though “soul” occurs dozens of times); yet Sri Aurobindo later defined *bhakti* as “a state which comes when the psychic being is awake and prominent” (*Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 23, p. 776). In the *Record of Yoga*, “psychic” is often interchangeable with “sukshma” (subtle), as in the expressions “psychic body” and “psychic

prana”; or it means “occult”, as when Sri Aurobindo notes that “orange is the symbol of psychic knowledge & power” (*Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 421)—cf. his later statements: “Orange often indicates occult power” and “Orange is the colour of occult knowledge or occult experience” (*Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 23, pp. 894, 964). The influence of the psychic being, in the later sense, is referred to in Sri Aurobindo’s diary in its effects such as *dasya* (surrender) and *sraddha* (faith). The part of the being that is the source of these movements is described there as the “soul which is secretly anandamaya,—full of the sama ananda [equal delight] in all things” (*Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 4).

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## SAMADHI OFFERINGS

WE aspire through the medium of flowers  
 And on the marble coping lay our prayers  
 Attending not the minutes nor the hours  
 Or all the pressing needs of life’s affairs.

We kneel and raise our fragrant offerings  
 Solemnly among the incense spires  
 And ask in human ways for human things  
 Healing of the ill, the heart’s desires,

Decent of peace into our fractured breasts  
 Or strength to face finalities of fate.  
 In a hundred tongues our calls like fiery crests  
 Arise and in each body re-create

The plenary consecration and the Flame  
 To lift the spirit on devotion’s wings,  
 In every form and face invoke the Name,  
 The Presence that a true surrender brings.

We dwell in that pellucid atmosphere  
 Free from the burden of the ages’ toil  
 In silence rapt the mystic voice to hear  
 And God’s soft tread upon our mortal soil.

NARAD (RICHARD EGGENBERGER)



## SUPREME IRRESPONSIBILITY

WAY back in 1951 I was a young man of 25, just out of college and a few months into my first job. I had no great interest in religion or God and had no taste for or understanding of philosophy or spiritualism.

One day I was reading the novel by the Chinese author Lin Yutang, titled *Two Leaves and a Bud*. All of a sudden, my attention was arrested by a sentence I came across in it which read, “Do nothing and everything is done.” (A Taoist aphorism)

I could not make head or tail of the import of the sentence, because I just could not see how anything could be done without somebody doing it. It was therefore quite a mystifying statement to me; nevertheless it has stuck in my mind all through the years that have gone by since then.

Every time I was faced with a difficult situation or problem and I did not know how to deal with it, I remembered the sentence and somehow, almost miraculously, the problem seemed to ease or get solved. Slowly and progressively the real import of the enigmatic statement also became clear to me.

The meaning of the statement, as I understand it now, is that it is man’s ego which makes him think that he is the doer. *Aham karomiti vrthābhimānam*. (It is sheer vanity to believe that “I” am the performer of actions.) The reality is that in all activities man is merely the Divine’s instrument and that is how everything is “done”. If man can have this clear understanding in regard to all his actions, then, not only all that he does will be pure and unselfish, but also he will remain in a conscious state of “actionlessness”.

A state of “actionlessness” is not the same as inactivity or non-performance of actions. “Not by non-performance of actions does man attain the state of actionlessness.” (Gita: 3.4) Because, “Verily, none can ever remain, even for a moment, without performing action; for, everyone is impelled to act helplessly indeed, by the qualities (gunas) born of Nature.” (Gita: 3.5) “All actions are performed, in all cases, merely by the modes (gunas) of Nature. He whose mind is deluded by ego thinks that he alone is the doer.” (Gita: 3.27)

Therefore it is man’s ego with its desires that drives him to activities with the aim of satisfying the desires; it is also the ego which makes him assert that he is the doer.

Then how does one get over the sense of the “doer” and achieve the state of actionlessness? What is the secret? Again the Gita says (4.20): “The person, who, abandoning all attachment to the fruits of action, ever contented, depending on nothing, though fully engaged in action, does not do anything.” “The knower of Truth, though engaged in all kinds of activities like seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, singing, breathing, etc., firmly believes that ‘I do nothing at all’, convinced that it is only the senses contacting the sense-objects.” (Gita: 5.8 & 9)

So, abolition of the ego together with being established in the Self is the condition for actionlessness. “The man who delights solely in and is fully satisfied and content with the Self, for him there exists no work that needs to be done. For him, there is here no personal interest whatever in what is done, or what is not done; nor does he depend upon any being for any object to be gained. Therefore, perform ever the work that is to be done

without attachment; for, by performing action without attachment, man attains to the Supreme.” (Gita: 3.17,18 & 19)

Again, “He who recognises inaction in action and action in inaction is wise among men; he is a Yogi and a many-sided universal worker.” (Gita: 4.18) “One who is totally free from attachment, who is liberated, with his mind, heart and spirit firmly established in Self-knowledge, performs actions as a sacrifice; then all his actions are dissolved.” (Gita: 4.23) “He who, abandoning attachment, performs actions as offerings to Brahman, is not stained by sin, just as water clings not to the lotus leaf.” (Gita: 5.10)

Thus an attitude of complete impersonality and non-involvement while performing actions, in the firm belief that it is the Divine who impels the action, and offering to Him all thoughts, feelings and action with its fruits, whether sweet, sour or bitter, is the real secret of “doing nothing”. The responsibility for all actions and their fruits is therefore that of the Divine.

We are all familiar with the art of “passing the buck” or “finding the scapegoat”. In a manner of speaking, the principle behind “doing nothing” is passing the buck to God. Therefore, it is nothing short of supreme irresponsibility!

B. G. PATTEGAR

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## THE SWAN ATTAINS MANASAROVAR

THE swan attains Manasarovar  
Why wander in pools or moors now?

Got a gem and tied on my sleeves,—  
Why untie that knot now?  
When mind swirls intoxicated  
Of what avail the words now?

When the balance tilted one way  
Need there was to load again.  
Now it pauses, balanced still,  
Why load the scales now?

When mind swirls intoxicated  
Of what avail the words now?

(Translated by K. M. Viju)

KABIR

## IN THE PERENNIAL GODAVARI

HERE stands my huge holy banyan tree  
like Bahubali  
overlooking the campus  
studded with the painted green trees  
with heavy hanging roots mating with the ground.

Its monumental boughs  
like the chiselled hands of Kali;  
Its green dome  
like the painted pagodas;  
Its huge trunk  
like the ancient pillar,  
as if holding the crumbling sky;  
Its magic of enlightenment  
I realize its spell  
dwarfed in awe  
to reorient my mind  
that wanders like a snake let off from a basket.

Here the past, present, future for ever sealed  
in the rhythmical swayings of chiming leaves in wind  
and their stillness in wintry evenings.  
In that holiness unexplored by man  
I trace my own way like a lone beetle  
to absorb the stillness  
and maintain the only umbilical relation, I wish  
till the flow dries in the perennial Godavari.

K. V. RAGHUPATHI

## REMEMBRANCE OF THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of July 2003)

I REMEMBERED that once when Norman Dowsett had asked me to prepare a film script on the Ashram and the International Centre of Education, I had asked the Mother and the Mother replied that I could do it provided I did not take help from anybody. This indicated that she wanted me to depend only on Sri Aurobindo's and her help.

Also, once while making cards for her, I had included a prayer to her, taking it from the book *The Mother*. "When she is allowed to intervene in her strength, then in one moment are broken like things without consistence the obstacles that immobilize or the enemies that assail the seeker." This card was painted with a *Victory* flower in front and with the *Supramentalised Friendship with the Divine* on the back and sent to her on the Kali Puja Day. She returned the card, writing on it: "To Kailas. My love, force and blessings are with you." So, I knew it was the stroke of Kali who destroyed my ego completely, pointing to my negligence in not referring this matter to the Force of Sri Aurobindo as I usually did for His guidance.

Once Dr. Adiseshiah had come to Delhi and I felt that I should go and meet him. I had no idea of the work to be done, but the feeling was very insistent. So, I wrote to the Mother. The Mother approved and said that it was quite all right. So, I went to Delhi and stayed in the same hotel as Dr. Adiseshiah. The following morning Nanda, who was a disciple of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and worked at the Television section of Door-darshan, came to see me and said: "Kailas, do you know that Mrs. Satpathy (who was then the Minister of Information and Broadcasting) has arranged an interview of Dr. Adiseshiah with Dr. Melville de Mello on Auroville tomorrow?" I said: "No! But would you do me a favour? I would like to write the questions for this interview. Would you give them to Dr. de Mello?" He laughed. He asked: "Do you know that de Mello is a very famous interviewer who has done many interviews with diplomats and dignitaries like Nehru? I would be considered a fool to take questions prepared by you or anybody else for that matter." I said: "I know all that. But first of all, if anybody would be considered a fool, it is I who would be so considered and not you. And would you not do it for the Mother?" He said: "I would do it if you so insist, but I don't think it would work." I said: "That's a different matter. I will give you the questions tomorrow morning." On this note we parted.

You will not believe it but I had an absolutely silent mind and ten questions came pouring down. I got them typed with two copies. When he came, I gave him the paper, and asked him: "If you would kindly do me another favour, I would be very thankful. Could you ask Dr. de Mello if I could be present at the interview?" He laughed again. Naturally. Before these two great men I was nothing and nobody. But he agreed.

Now, when the car came to pick up Dr. Adiseshiah, it picked me up too. And I was sitting with Dr. de Mello across from Dr. Adiseshiah with a glass partition between us. Dr. de Mello asked every question I had put without a change of a single word except

adding the word of address to Dr. Adiseshiah. The Mother's Force was concretely felt as he answered the questions.

Now, at the end of the interview, I asked Dr. de Mello if I could have a copy of the tape of the interview. He was surprised at my request and said: "But, my dear, we do not let anyone have a copy before it is broadcast." I said: "I would play it only before the Mother, I promise." He relented, but said: "We have to edit it. When are you leaving?" I said: "Day after tomorrow." He asked: "Are you coming to Mrs. Satpathy's party tonight? I will see if I can have it edited and bring it there for you." I said: "Yes." And we parted.

He brought the tape and gave it to me. My heart was filled with gratitude for the Mother's concrete help. You can understand my relief and my delight. For, to do the Mother's work perfectly, my mind had to be completely silent and absolutely open to their Force. I had to act as I was directed from within, without questioning anything and with confidence. I was blessed by the Mother and given the capacity to do it. That is why the Mother approved of my contacting any dignitary, director or chairman of any high-placed organization.

Now, I wanted to play the tape before the Mother and asked her for an interview. She significantly called me on Mahasaraswati's day. Richard and I went with a tape-recorder and the tape to her and played the tape. She listened to it attentively and even smiled as she heard the tape. She held my hands and said with a pleasant look in her eyes: "Kailas, do you know what I felt when I listened to the interview?" I was anxiously waiting to hear what she had to say. She said with great force: "A very powerful being came down and tied Auroville to the ground. It was needed and he did it. Now, Auroville will be a reality and the world will see it." I could not be happier. I remained there for a few moments. She gave us roses and said: "Au revoir." And we left. This interview was to be broadcast on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1969. It appeared later in *Mother India*.

Now, I will mention a few miscellaneous comments of the Mother. Once when I had a terrible pain in my knee, I wrote to the Mother, asking her to relieve me of it. She wrote: "It is no use suffering if you can be relieved soon. Go to Sanyal and do what he says. In any case, my love and blessings are with you."

On another occasion, I wrote to the Mother: "Prembhai and Usha thought that if I could paint for you, I could paint for the department too. So, they brought me a scarf to paint. But I felt that when I do something for you, I do it by an inner impulsion as a spontaneous expression of love, joy and gratitude. Naturally, my whole being is concentrated and is in a natural state of harmony. On the other hand, when I do it for the department, I am told that it is for a commercial purpose. And I become at once aware that I have no training as an artist. Besides, I have perceived that I cannot do a thing with a motive. I can do it only when I feel like doing it or I cannot help doing it, because something in me urges me to do it. This seems to me the natural law of my being, since I was very young. Is this a result of being brought up in an atmosphere of extraordinary freedom?"

"I put all this before you so that you may correct me wherever I am wrong in my attitude or conduct. Mould me in such a way that everything in me down to the smallest

element of my being is in harmony with the law of thy divine truth. Pray, guide me. I await your guidance.”

The Mother replied: “You are quite right. Your feeling is true. Do not go against it. Love.”

Then, Navajata wanted me to go to different states for fund-raising. I did not feel like going. So I asked the Mother. The Mother replied: “You are quite right. It is much better that you remain here quietly. You can use my letter as a reply. Love and Blessings.”

Some other proposal for work had come to me. So, I wrote to the Mother, saying: “I wonder if this is my work though a few years ago, I would have jumped at it. But now, somehow I feel very much cramped and limited by it. Why is it so?” The Mother replied: “Because your consciousness has much progressed towards the Truth.”

I had also asked if, as an Ashramite, I should do some work for one of the departments. She replied: “Not necessary.” But to my proposal for the compilations from the writings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo on particular subjects, she wrote: “This is quite all right.”

Once I wrote to her: “I understand that the guidance is there equally for everybody whether one takes cognizance of it or not. But what I want to know is whether there is anything really hostile and does not serve the Divine’s Purpose? I ask this because many a time I feel very strongly the presence of a conscious Power governing my life, governing everything, and even the hostile forces seem to me to be only stooges of this Power, which is the Master of all events and chooses the details according to Its omniscient vision and will to perfect the instruments as well as to serve the Cosmic Purpose. I would be grateful for your clarification and the enlightenment of my understanding.” The Mother’s reply was: “Your understanding is quite good. Love and blessings.”

Also I remember to have written something to the Mother and she remained silent. So, I wrote to her again, saying: “You are silent, Mother Divine, and to me your silence too is sweet. For, with it you lift me up above the realm of thoughts and forms into a state of bliss of still purity. Let all that I was be forever expunged in its white flame. But let there be some Word arising from its depths so that I may know and understand and manifest this Bliss! I lay my all, all without reserve, at thy feet. All is thine. Accept my offering, O sweet Mother of being, and remake my consciousness into the Consciousness of thy Truth, in the way of the Divine, so that I may enter into thee and know thy Will and thou alone may live in me forever!” She wrote on the back of this letter one decisive Word: “Yes” in bold print. “With love and blessings.”

It was an important date, 4. 5. 67. I had designed a gown with the flowers of *Godhead* for the Mother to be given by Dr. Kamuben, which she embroidered and offered to the Mother. But I had nothing to offer except the gold of the watch that I was wearing. So, I wrote to her saying: “This is the watch worn by you and sent to me when I was in New York in 1960. It has kept a constant watch over me with your puissant Force while I wore it constantly for almost twenty-four hours of the day all these seven years. Today, may I offer its gold, whatever its value, to you for your use? This is the symbol of my troth. I am Thine, Thine without reserve, altogether and absolutely Thine. Do what thou wilt of me.”

She wrote on the back of my letter: “My very dear child, your offering is accepted; but now I ask you to let this watch continue to protect you and, wearing it, take it as a symbol of my presence with you. With love and blessings.”

When the Nursing Home was again going to be used as such, I was asked to move to the suite next to Udar’s house; as the Mother said that it was the only decent place available near the Ashram. The only disadvantage of it was that it was rented by the Ashram for a Russian lady called Tatiana and every year that she came to pay a visit, I was obliged to shift to another place with all my bags and baggage. Of course, every time I moved, I had the privilege of seeing the Mother. Well, I went to see her before this move. And she gave me a vase with the flowers of *communion*. This place, where I stayed for ten years, had really become my place of intense communion with the Mother. The first shift was to Chandanbala’s apartment, opposite to the side of the Ashram atelier. It was terribly noisy with banging going on all day. Still, it was a lovely suite. And the Mother sweetly said: “You know, I can see you from my window!” What a Grace! The second time, I was moved to the most beautiful suite on the first floor with a huge terrace with a partial view of the sea and the Mother gave me a meditation.

The third time when I was asked to move, I wrote to the Mother, asking her whether Tatiana could not be placed somewhere else since the furniture service and I had to go through the trouble of packing and shifting all my things including my furniture. The Mother saw my point and asked Tatiana to find a suitable place for her stay. Tatiana got mad and wrote a nasty letter to the Mother. The Mother wrote to me a short letter on a beautiful card with the painting of flowers of *obedience*: Kailas, it seems to be a competition of obstinacy. Do you want to be more obstinate than Tatiana? Love.”

She sent the letter with COUNUMA, who explained to me that the Mother denies only those whom she considers to be very close to her. I said: “It is perfectly all right. I will write to her. Do not worry.” And I wrote to her: “Mother, I will certainly obey your will with joy.” And she graciously replied: “And I will fill your joy with my love. Come and see me.” It was a delight to see the Mother because usually she gave me a meditation. And I was again shifted to Reg’s Good Guest House, where I painted a gown for her with the flowers of *Beauty of Supramental Love* for the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1967.

Once I was informed that a letter was sent with the Mother’s approval to U Thant, U.N. Secretary General, asking them to accept Auroville University as a world university and to send their committee of experts to draw up with us a plan for Auroville University. I sent my note with Kireet: “I pray for your forgiveness for any transgression in this note, but I write it because I fail to understand your intention in this approval inasmuch as to me, it seems to be a rather precarious approach and may invite unnecessary interference. Besides, our direct action may place us as one among many applicants for the U.N. project.

“I would rather let Unesco make this proposal to the U.N. through Sat in the interest of the world, which would give our project its due perspective and importance and at the same time leave our hands free to work out our own plan.

“But I trust in your Wisdom and Will and will be grateful for your enlightenment on



the subject so that my own actions may be harmonious with your Will.”

The Mother agreed with me and said on the subject of the committee of experts: “This is horrible. I did not know that N was to give this letter. It should be stopped.” And to my suggestion that a letter should be sent to S and he should present it to the U.N., the Mother said: “That is better.”

Sometimes, she used to give me private or personal guidance, which was not to be revealed.

During the war between the East and West Pakistan, Mrs. Gandhi was waiting for an international opinion before taking action. I was being haunted by a strong imperative as follows though I did not know its source. So, I wrote to the Mother: “India must take the lead without worry or care for international opinion and help this movement for liberation of East Bangladesh and pave the way for unity. If it is allowed to be crushed, this opportunity might be lost.”

“In view of your advice to everyone to keep quiet, I am at a loss.”

The Mother answered by marking the last line of my letter with a series of question marks, ending with three exclamation marks. I felt that she indicated an approval for me to go ahead with my inner feeling in spite of her general advice.

Once Purnaprema came to me asking if I had any letter for the Mother since the Mother had been asking her. I wrote to her concerning Ahi’s proposal for working in his project of Auroville International. I explained to her as follows: “I have always found it difficult to work in the rigid framework of any organization, nor can I work for any person. I have tried but I feel cramped and suffocated. I can work only for you and for you I am prepared to do anything at all. I know that you are present in all but it is not the same for me as working for you directly. The only thing that really engages my heart, mind and soul is the vision of Sri Aurobindo and its translation in life and its activities. I no longer feel myself to be suited for the routine of any office. So, I do not know what is my place in this organization nor do I know how can I be useful in your service. But I put all this before you in total surrender and pray that you may decide for me what is best in your vision of Truth. And I will accept whatever is your Will.”

She replied: “A has spoken to you without informing me about it. Otherwise, I would have told him that you did not like much this kind of work. He told me that you had accepted which astonished me and that is why I asked Françoise to speak to you about it. So, now it is quite all right and you need not bother about it. If A writes to you, I shall tell you what to answer. With love and blessings.”

I once wrote to the Mother: “I feel that each one carries an aspect of Truth and serves the Lord’s purpose in some way. But I aspire for the total Truth to be embodied in my life and actions, my feelings and thoughts; my mind has not lost its habit of searching. So, I ask: Is it possible to combine all these aspects in oneself and live the total Truth?”

To this the Mother replied: “Each one is meant to represent one aspect of the Truth which realizes itself by the perfect union of all the aspects. But each individual has the possibility of becoming, by a conscious union with the Supreme, conscious of His



Consciousness, and thus to know at once the part he has to play and the whole of the Play. This is the Supreme Realisation.”

I used to write a prayer for my birthday on the 11th of June and the Mother would return it with her blessings. The Mother always called me for my birthdays, writing a note herself beforehand and she usually saw me last so that she could give me enough time and meditate with me. The cards she chose for me had messages from *Savitri* and sometimes had special blessings for “a luminous and progressive Year” or for the fulfilment of my aspiration. When I went to her she said: “You have asked for a New Birth and I grant you the New Birth.” So saying she blessed me on my head three times.

*(Concluded)*

KAILAS JHAVERI

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## CAN YOU HEAR?

CAN you hear?  
 Can you hear  
 The music my heart hears  
 When everything is still?  
 And do you feel,  
 Do you feel  
 The harmonies my life feels  
 In the touch of love  
 When everyone is silent?  
 And is there a melody being played  
 Among changing keys  
 In hidden scales of our experience,  
 That opens our lives to beauty and to wonder?  
 Is this hearing more than a dream?  
 And is this dreaming stronger than a hope?  
 Can you hear?  
 Can you hear  
 The music my heart hears  
 When everything is still?

ROGER CALVERLEY

# MAN, ANGEL AND GOD\*

## RAINER MARIA RILKE'S POETIC VISION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

### I

WHEN Orpheus raised his whole self into his voice and began to sing it was the song of his soul with which he gripped men, animals and the dead. He sang what he himself was and, as all existence swayed in him, feelable and inward, all could become through him pure song. It has not been recorded whether he knew about his secret, about the overcoming of Nature in his own heart which united him with the Divine. But his song testifies that he did live out such self-exceeding into the deepest inwardness of the soul. And what else is this song except the revelation of the Orphic spirit, an ever-flowing fountain spurting up from the being to a continual new-becoming; as the fulfilment of a truly human nature shaping itself towards perfection under the inmost assent of the heart? It is because Orpheus was so purely, so deeply man that those who named themselves men, yet knew not what the name signified, worshipped him as a god.

To Rilke also he was a god, as he fulfilled this being human in its essentiality for which the poet strove life-long. Orpheus is the ensouled symbol, the shining goal of Rilke's personal striving for realisation. And thus Rilke himself becomes an announcer of true existence—a summoner to real humanhood. The "little rust-coloured sail of the sonnets to Orpheus" which were "written down in one single breathless obedience between the 2nd and 5th of February 1922 without any word having been in doubt or having needed to be changed" "feasted" this mode of being, this active consciousness that man "dwells poetically", as Hölderlin has said. But what is it that happens in the poem? How does it come about that this occurrence of saying and singing concerns man so essentially?

At the outer margin of true being goes on the "Here-ing", as Rilke puts it—the field of unreal man. "Here all is distance", seeming "possession" and "fate". The surroundings step back into a great distance and, even if we place them in our proximity and press them against our own body, we cannot win them for ourselves. They remain far from us by that distance which separates us from our own inner being. Therefore they can never become a possession to us. But instead of this holding and preservation, it may happen that we once become aware of the relatedness which joins us with all worlds in a deeper layer of our being. "Instead of possession one learns the relatedness"—the relatedness to something more essential, the relatedness into a greater unit. And at last fate: is it really something properly human, this "being confronted and nothing but this and always confronted"? Must we be "always turned towards the creation", "spectators always, everywhere... and [can we] never get out? It overfills us. We arrange it. It falls to pieces. We arrange it again and ourselves decay."

\* *Mother India*, October 1955.

We never have, not on a single day,  
 the pure space before us in which the flowers  
 infinitely unfold. Always it is world,  
 and never No-where without Nought: the Pure  
 Unwatched that one breathes and  
 infinitely *knows*, and desires not.

Does not this “pure space”, of which there is already so much known, contain in itself a new, more real life-possibility? In what relation do we find ourselves to it whose superiorities shadow the world?

Through all beings extends one single space:  
 World-inner-space.

A deeper region opens to the “Here-ing”, a new dimension, the essential one, of the deepness of being. There is, if this “pure inner space” can be understood as a comprehensive whole, a unity in which every existence is related, in which “the flowers infinitely unfold”, in which the animal, superior herein to man, sees everything “and itself in everything and healed for ever” and which to the “loving ones”, if there “would not be the other who blocks the view”, is “as though by mistake... opened behind the other”.

Rilke has given many names to his vision. It is for him the “deep being”, the “open”, the “averted side of life”, the “other relatedness”, the “free” whose mirroring is the creation,—the “unsayable”. He has experienced this inner space, “when the call of a bird outside and in his<sup>1</sup> own inwardness was there in accord, while it in a certain manner did not break at the border of his body, [but] took both together to an uninterrupted space in which, secretly protected, remained only one single place of purest deepest consciousness... and from all sides the Infinite passed into him so intimately that he might believe he felt the soft resting of the stars, which had entered in the meantime, within his breast.” At another time he was leaning on a tree in the garden of the castle of Duino, it was to him “as if from inside the tree almost unnoticeable vibrations passed into him... he thought he had never been filled with softer movements, his body was in some manner treated as a soul and put into a condition to receive a degree of influence which by the normal concreteness of bodily circumstances could properly not have been sensed.... Attempting to give himself always an account, especially of the softest, he asked himself urgently what was happening there to him and well-nigh immediately found an expression which satisfied him, speaking to himself: he had come to the other side of nature.... Everywhere and always more equal-filled with a crowd reappearing in strange inward intervals, his body became indescribably heart-felt and only useful to stand there in him pure and careful.... Slowly looking around himself... he recognised everything, remembered it... [knew] that he had only *returned* to all this here.”

1. Rilke, in this experience and in the next, speaks in the third person.

This “open”, “pure” being, “averted from life”, is for Rilke the home of the “dead”, whose existence is “laborious and full of retrieval, that one may slowly feel a little eternity”. But everything depends on “reading the word ‘death’ *without* negation. Like the moon, life has just as certainly a permanent aspect averted from us, which is *not* its opposite but its complement of perfection, the completeness of the real, the healed and the full sphere and ball of *being*. One should not be afraid that one’s force would not be sufficient to bear any death-experience, be it the next, the most terrible; death is not *beyond* our power, it is the scale-mark at the top of the vessel; we are *full* as often as we reach it and being full means (for us) being heavy<sup>1</sup>... this is all.” Rilke is only concerned with the unity of all being. “Our effort (this has become to me ever more clear with the years, and my work perhaps has only this *one* significance and mission, to give witness, impartial and independent,... seerlike perhaps if that does not sound too proud,... of this insight which overwhelms me often so unexpectedly),... our effort, I mean, can *only* tend towards presupposing the *unity* of life and death, so that it may prove itself in us little by little.... Life always says at once: Yes and No. He, death, (I conjure you to believe it,) is the proper Yes-sayer. He says *only*: Yes. Before eternity.” “*Life-and-Death-confirmation proves to be one....* To admit the one without the other [is]... finally a limitation excluding all the infinite... we must try to labour at the greatest consciousness of our being which is at home in *both limitless spheres, inexhaustibly nourished by both....* The true life-figure extends through *both* spheres, the blood of the greatest circular course flows through both: *there is neither a Here nor a Beyond but the great Unity....* We the here-ers and today-ers are not satisfied for a single moment in the time-world, more bound in it; we constantly pass over and over to the earlier ones, to our origin and to those who seem to come after us. In that greatest ‘*open*’ world, *are* all, one cannot say ‘at once’, because just the falling away of time conditions that they all *are*. The transitoriness plunges everywhere into a deep being. And so all configurations of the Here-ing are not only to be used in a time-limited way, but, as far as we are able, to be placed in those superior significances in which we share.” “So outspread the ‘Outward’ is, it bears with all its sidereal distances hardly a comparison with the dimensions, *with the depth-dimension of our inward* which does not even need the spaciousness of the universe to be in itself well-nigh immeasurable. When therefore the dead, when therefore the future ones need an abode, *which* refuge should be more agreeable and more offered than this imaginative space? It presents itself to me more and more, as if our current consciousness were inhabiting the apex of a pyramid, whose base in us... goes so completely into breadth that the further we see ourselves able to let ourselves down into it, the more generally we appear to be related into the given-ness of the earthly, of the, in the largest conception, *worldly* being which is independent of time and space. I have felt since my earliest youth the presumption (and I too have, where I was sufficient for that, lived according to it), that in a deeper layer of this consciousness-pyramid the simple *being* could become an event to us, that inviolably present and being at once of all that which is at the upper ‘normal’ apex of the self-

1. The German word “schwer” means both “heavy” and “depressed”.

consciousness only permitted to be experienced as ‘succession’.”

Behind the “Here-ing” the inwardness has opened itself. There “it’s real” and essential; and into this essentiality all our roots are reaching; from it we are “inexhaustibly nourished”. “For our own heart surpasses us still.” To become conscious of this inner world, to include it ever more knowingly and actively into our own “being-here”, is for Rilke a most urgent demand. For he recognises that from there his “action grows out”, the creation,—the Singing. Therefore it is necessary to be at home in “both limitless spheres”. Only then the “Infinite passes from all sides so intimately” over into us, that we experience even the farthest and most foreign as our own. This is, so Rilke knows, reachable through the perfection of feeling. Which feeling? Certainly not the vitalistic whose proper nature it is to be imperfect and to swing between the opposites of aversion and adoration, hate and love, suffering and joy, desperation and hope. It exists only between the poles of antithetical extremes. Outside of these tensions alone can the perfection take place and not till it has accomplished a certain unconditionedness will it be possible to overcome harmoniously the polarity from within. Hence the perfection must be realised in a still more inward region of our being, a region which, although not named by Rilke, one finds to be presupposed by many of his utterances, insofar as his words carry it in themselves and their contents point us to it. Without accepting its absolute significance so spontaneously and securely that nothing bars the revelation of an immediate relatedness between it and the poetic expression, it is impossible to do justice to the depth-meaning of Rilke’s work, and every attempt to understand the poet, wherever all depended for him on the expression of the last profundity possible to him, is condemned to fall short of the poetic vision. This region is the Soul, a third depth of being in whose in-standing intensification the absolute meaning of man fulfils itself. Beyond the “world-inner-space”, at the bottom of the “consciousness-pyramid”, all existence passes over into a state pure and without contradiction, which unifies in itself all opposites. Beyond heaven and hell there is a pure nameless Being to whom the soul belongs as an eternal part. Here in the essential Self of man, whose quality is experienced at first in feeling, reigns that undisturbable peace which alone makes the perfection of the vitalistic nature possible. To become conscious of this Self is a first step towards real humanhood; to live it constantly, its fulfilment. Therefore Orpheus had appeared to men as god: his existence accomplished itself out of this divine part of his being, which they did not know. He was the poet of his soul whose visions he sang. Like all pure real poetry, his songs were the expression of a most inward seeing. Through the senses a thing of delight may set aflame the Soul deep in us. But the Soul which has before it not only the world of our images but, from the unconscious up into the highest superconscious, the whole immeasurable region of the “world-inner-space” where things unveil their true being, where they are related one to another through the entire reality of their universal existence,—the Soul urges the delighted one to say and to sing its vision, the essence of that which sublimely steered our senses—

Between the hammers endures  
our heart, as the tongue

between the teeth remains  
still the praiser.

Rilke's later poems, especially his sonnets and elegies, are an Orphic chant. He was, the moment in which he created them, truly Man. For, in this we prove ourselves—that the soul should determine our action and that the ego should learn to serve our Soul. "Song is existence," because it wells forth from the heart, and because existence is "the constant pure exchange of one's own being for world-space", the "counterbalance" of my own heart, "in which I happen rhythmically". For this exchange, this constant becoming and unbecoming, which is the fate of my whole outer personality happening before the soul, can only accomplish itself "purely" if it happens according to the most inward laws without my trying to direct it by a wilful striving. It should be like the "breathing" that I let happen to me, because I intuit a deeper consciousness which controls it. Rilke's poetry is the invocation to man to pass over behind his fate into his soul, to be there alive from his self, his most inward being and to sing, to announce this being-there.

*(To be continued)*

JOBST MÜHLING

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BEHIND life and death  
In sleep and wakefulness  
Between these titanic waves,  
Around space and time,  
The original Real  
Reveals its face.  
Its felt vision is a timeless light,  
Its presence is a seamless robe.  
Mortality's day of drunken darkness  
Suffers its little boundary.  
The true steps forward.  
Inert existence is filled with exuberance,  
The keyless door exits ignorance.  
What was strange and far  
Suddenly was felt living within.  
A tongueless silence descends  
An identity of truth to truth.  
A breath comes from nowhere,  
From the source unknown-known.  
One ascends on the pathless path.  
Brighter than the stars above,  
Stronger than the colossal night  
It knew itself,  
A flame-fire burning,  
With no beginning, no end!  
Then it took another birth  
In joy, the cause to be.

SHAKUNTALA MANAY

## TAGORE AND SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of July 2003)

### Tagore's Poetry: The Psychic and the Great Foreknowledge (1)

APART from his frequent access to the psychic province, Tagore seems to have a prescience of supernature. There is a wonderful guesswork in the poem entitled *Premier Abhishek (Love's Coronation)*.

There I stay full of Light  
like a god of eternal youth,  
there my beauty is boundless,  
there you've offered me your nature  
O, the Lover of all things!  
There I've as my companions  
the Sun, the Moon and the Stars.  
Wearing new clothes they sing to me  
newer and newer songs  
with newer and newer meanings,  
O my eternal friend, who lies everywhere!<sup>1</sup>

How could Tagore anticipate this wonderful realisation? Sri Aurobindo's explanation in *The Life Divine* tells all about that foreknowledge.

"An aspiration, a demand for the supreme and total delight of existence is there secretly in the whole make of our being, but it is disguised by the separation of our parts of nature and their differing urge and obscured by their inability to conceive or seize anything more than a superficial pleasure. In the body-consciousness this demand takes shape as a need of bodily happiness, in our life-parts as a yearning for life-happiness, a keen vibrant response to joy and rapture of many kinds and to all surprise of satisfaction; in the mind it shapes into a ready reception of all forms of mental delight; on a higher level it becomes apparent in the spiritual mind's call for peace and divine ecstasy. This trend is founded in the truth of the being; for Ananda is the very essence of the Brahman, it is the supreme nature of the omnipresent Reality."<sup>2</sup>

Quite often, Tagore expresses the pleasure of his mind and body, feels the thrill and surprise as a borderline poet. And what expressions! He catches the moments in the form of mystic poetry, as a prescience of the Ananda of tomorrow.

Sri Aurobindo uses the prophetic future tense for the commoner, the aspirant soul slowly moving towards the Infinite. Tagore uses the future tense as his own foretaste of the all-fulfilling peaks of supernature. Let me attempt a translation of a few lines from his *Gitimalya*:



One day  
 thousands of lotuses  
 will release their petals,  
 the great Honey cannot be hidden  
     for ever.  
 Whose eye will wake up  
     in the vast sky  
 calling me out  
 into the wide silence?  
 Nothing will be there  
 between you and I  
 the great death under your feet  
 will bring me the supreme reward!<sup>3</sup>

In poem after poem, from the beginning of his life till its close, the flame goes on burning with short-lived diversions here and there on small things of material life. His poetry speaks mostly of a sweet or painful separation, and even when he speaks of women or nature or human sorrows and joys, there is a refined aestheticism on most occasions. Tagore seems to have been a fallen god in the form of a visiting poet on earth with the mission of changing man's attitude to earth. There are times when his poetry reveals his technique of spiritual practice, Sadhana, the technique of constant remembrance. Poetry then becomes an accompaniment to Sadhana.

I'll utter your name under various pretences,  
 alone I'll speak within under the shadows.  
 I'll speak without speech,  
 without hoping for a return,  
 with the smiles and tears.

I'll utter your name  
 without thinking of its utility;  
 that will make me full,  
 like the child who calls his mother  
 being intoxicated by the name,  
 who calls his mother  
 because he is glad that he can call.<sup>4</sup>

The psychic sadness has taken wonderful shapes in Tagore. It is everywhere in Tagore's songs, in the shorter and longer lyrics, and also in the songs inside his 'vital' plays and dance dramas. He wishes to see the Divine's face before he goes, in the evening twilight, in the light of this life or he wishes to chase Him like young Aurobindo in life after life with the memory that he had failed to seize Him in the previous life. Tagore

knows that it is not always a sweet game, but there is no indifference from the other side as the blows are frequent. He pines for a love that will link him up with the divine. He greets the thorns in the hope of a bright blossoming in the future. He dreams that all pains will wake up to a colourful rose. The light spread across the sky makes him eager for an inevitable union. Then there are strange sad moments when he feels that much before his destination the lamps had gone out and most of the flowers had fallen down from his tray. Every now and then, a deep sense of gratitude wells up from the fountainhead of the Spirit. Even when the Luminous has left him, as in the later poems, memories come back to him in different shapes and contours.

*(To be continued)*

GOUTAM GHOSAL

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1. Translated by Goutam Ghosal, 1<sup>st</sup> Vol. *Rabindra Rachanabali* (1980), W.B. Govt., p. 566.
2. *SABCL*, Vol. 19, pp. 989-90.
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## INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR\*

Mislike me not for my complexion,  
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun!

These words, spoken as if from some spontaneous compulsion in a voice low and thrilled that itself seemed to glow, caused all the class of school-boys to turn their heads. At the back of the room, behind the rest, sat a young Indian with thick hair falling about his forehead, and dark lustrous eyes. It was he who had startled us with his impassioned tones. Where had he come from? How had he mysteriously joined us? Perhaps I deceive myself, but to my memory this was my first sight of Manmohan Ghose—an unaccountable apparition from an unknown hemisphere. The legendary East seemed suddenly to have projected a fragment of itself into our little world of everyday things and humdrum studies, disturbing it with colour, mystery, romance. No doubt I should not have been moved as I was had not the new-comer spoken the rich lines in a voice that betrayed the capacity to be intoxicated by poetry: and of such capacity I had found no trace in my class-mates. I felt immediate sympathy, and besides anyone foreign who brought a breath from a world outside the world of habit ever attracted me.

It must not be supposed that the words of Shakespeare were spoken out “of the blue,” deliberately challenging an interval of silence. They came with startling aptness, but they came in response to a question. The school was St. Paul’s, then lately removed from its ancient quarters in the City, which I myself still perversely lamented, for what amplitude of play-fields could make up for those solitary rambles about the by-ways of Cheapside, the towers and spires, the shipping in the Thames, the crowds and animation, the sense of history, of being in the centre of things, the deep-toned bells of the Cathedral sounding down the smoky air, the little seclusions of peace in the churchyard, the glory of the spaciousness beneath the dome? These had been my dreamy haunts. We had been transferred to Hammersmith and prose. I was then in the seventh form, under the Sur-Master, Mr. Lupton, who on this occasion was reading with us the *Aeneid*. With the perhaps laudable aim of enlarging our vocabulary, he would press upon our reluctant or apathetic taste a choice of poetical epithets, such as Tennyson (whom, like everybody among our elders, so far as my experience went, he idolised) would employ to dress up his thoughts in. Thus we were enjoined to speak of steeds rather than horses; not a sword, but a falchion; and on this particular occasion, he suggested that livery might be a more sumptuous, Virgilian word than clothes or dress. Could not one of us recall such a use of the word in our classics? He paused for a reply, expecting no doubt that, as usually happened, he would be reduced to supplying the apt quotation himself. But the reply came, and I think he was just a little disconcerted when the Prince of Morocco’s appeal vibrated with such intensity of tone through the silent and astonished class room. Its dramatic emotion was something un-English! We were not used to such things.

Manmohan Ghose and I made friends, and by degrees disclosed to each other our

\* This is an introduction to *Songs of Love and Death* by Manmohan Ghose; publisher Basil Blackwell, 1926.

secret ambitions. We had long walks and talks together, discussing everything in heaven and earth, after the manner of youth, but especially poetry and the poets. My home was indifferent to the arts, my school fellows also, so far as I knew them: and it was a delight to expand in these talks on the subjects I cared for most. We had enough difference of taste to salt our conversation with arguments and dispute. At that time I was in the stage of an ardent worship of Browning, but I think he never shared this enthusiasm.

He lived in lodgings with two brothers, but what his actual circumstances were when he came to England, and how he came to be at St. Paul's, I do not think I ever inquired. As to the School, the High Master, a notable and formidable personality famous for his prescience in judging of a boy's future capabilities, would at times, for his own reasons, insert a promising pupil into one of the upper forms without notice, and in the middle of the term: hence my unconsciousness of having ever set eyes on Manmohan Ghose till all our heads were turned to the strange new-comer on that particular morning is not so improbable as it may seem. But of Ghose's background I knew scarcely anything. His enthusiasm for literature sufficed my curiosity. He was well read in the English poets, better read than I in the Elizabethans and the older lyrists. But what struck me most was his enthusiastic appreciation of Greek poetry, not so much the books prescribed in the school as those which he had sought out on his own account. Theocritus, Meleager, above all Simonides, were his special favourites. I had imagined that an Oriental's taste must of necessity be for the luxuriant and ornate, and was surprised that he should feel so strong an attraction to the limpid and severe. Yet many of us are attracted to arts and literatures remote from our own traditions and just because of qualities in them which these have not. Why should not an Indian feel a parallel attraction? Manmohan Ghose never forgot the Greeks, and to the end his delight was in European literature and European art.

I still remember the pleasure I had when he showed me this little poem: an echo from the Greek, but made his own.

Over thy head, in joyful wanderings  
Through heaven's wide spaces, free,  
Birds fly with music in their wings,  
And from the blue rough sea  
The fishes flash and leap;  
There is a life of loveliest things  
O'er thee so fast asleep.

In the deep West the heavens grow heavenlier  
Eve after eve; and still  
The glorious stars remember to appear;  
The roses on the hill  
Are fragrant as before;  
Only thy face of all that's dear  
I shall see never more.

Though not such a brilliant scholar as his younger brother, Arabinda, who has become famous in other fields than the classics, Manmohan won an open scholarship at Christ Church and went up to Oxford in 1887. I remained at school for another year. He had rooms in Peckwater Quad, at the top of his staircase: and there, on my going up to Trinity, I would find him sitting over the fire with a book, ever ready for animated discussion, which a friend from his own college would sometimes come in to join. I suppose he subsisted on an allowance, but he seemed to float in an atmosphere to which material things were strange. One day at the beginning of the term he called on me to borrow a postage stamp, in order to write home for funds which he had forgotten. He had arrived in Oxford with a florin and some coppers on which to start the term, and having given the florin by mistake to a porter, he had nothing but twopence to give the driver of his hansom on alighting at Tom Tower. He explained this to the cabman with some philosophic consolations, which left him too astonished to expostulate.

I recall an evening in the rooms of Percy Dearmer, at Christ Church, when there was a large gathering, chiefly to entertain some members of Frank Benson's Company, who were acting at the theatre. My cousin, Stephen Phillips, then remarkably handsome, was one of them. Lionel Johnson, curiously small and neat, was there; and his nervous mouth, the pallor of his face, the intent eyes, as of one who never slept, the air of dominating intellect and learning combined with the extreme youthfulness of his person, made a singular impression. And I can still hear Manmohan Ghose standing up to read a poem in the crowded room; his long hair fell half over his eyes; as he read he detached one of his dark locks, and pulled at it with outstretched hand: oblivious of his surroundings, lost in the poem, he appeared almost convulsed in the emotional effort of its delivery.

In the summer term of 1890 Mr. Blackwell published a little volume bound in brown paper for which Selwyn Image had made an exquisite design. It was called *Primavera*, and was the joint production of Stephen Phillips, Manmohan Ghose, Arthur Cripps, of Trinity, and myself. It was received with the indulgence often accorded to such youthful efforts, and was soon in a second edition.

Addington Symonds reviewed us kindly and, at length, in the *Academy*. Oscar Wilde in the *Pall Mall Gazette* was no less favourable, and had particular praise for the "young Indian of brilliant scholarship and high literary attainment who gives some culture to Christ Church." Mr. Ghose, he said, ought some day to make a name in our literature. Not long after this, I think, Ghose went down to live in London. As we were at different colleges, and were not of the same year, I had seen much less of him at Oxford than at school, and now for some time he was largely lost to view, for my home was in the country. We exchanged poems and criticisms, and on visits to London I met him in company with artists and men of letters, whom he had come to know through Lionel Johnson, Ernest Dowson, and others of our contemporaries. At one time he thought of seeking a post of some kind in England, but nothing came of such projects. Not all his time was spent in London; he knew something of the more beautiful parts of England and of Wales, and cherished the memory of them. Yet he could not forget that he was an exile.

Heaven be in thy sails, O unknown vessel,  
 Till those heavenly shores grow into view,  
 See my spirit, with no storm to wrestle,  
 Follows, goes on wind-wings thither too.

For long miles into the heart of morning,  
 Miles and miles, far over land and seas,  
 Past enchanted regions of forewarning,  
 Dawns at last the land that dims all these.

So he cried in a poem written in these last years before leaving England for ever. Alas! it was not long before he was to feel that his spirit had exchanged one exile for another. During the last year of this period, being now settled in London, I saw him frequently. He was unoccupied, I think, except for verse-making, and would drift into my room at odd hours, and stay talking till late into the night.

The ship which in the autumn of 1894 bore Manmohan Ghose down the Thames estuary and the Channel on his journey home was named, I recall, *Patroclus*. It seems traditional with ship-builders to christen their grimy-funnelled iron monsters with such legendary names. But in this case there seemed something symbolic in the attachment of a name, breathing of bright Hellas and the Tale of Troy, to the efficient product of a practical civilisation made with sole thought of use and comfort. There went gliding the big liner, a prodigious piece of throbbing mechanism, the modern West's achievement and pride; painted on her bows was a relic of old poetry and lettered tradition, just as our restless civilisation still carries with it, hoarded in a few brains, cherished in a few imaginations, the heritage of Greece, no more to the multitude than a painted name with the dimmest of associations; and on board was an Indian poet, to whom the *Iliad* and the name of Achilles' friend meant more perhaps than to any of his English co-voyagers; a young Indian returning to an unknown home, for whom the English cliffs and the roar of London and the whole hurried stream of western life were inextricably to be mingled in memory with the glory of the classics of Europe.

"I arrived on October 25th, and have since been staying at a beautiful country place called Baidyanath, in my grandfather's house, all among the mountains and green sugarcane fields and shallow rivers. My own people I found charming and cultivated folk, and spent an extremely pleasant time among them. This, I think very fortunate indeed—to find at once friends, and that of one's own blood, so congenial and interesting as soon as I landed."

Such was Manmohan's first happy impression, on his return to his own country. The one drawback he lamented was that he had forgotten his own tongue, Bengali, and had to learn it afresh. But I imagine that all his life he thought in English. He soon obtained a post as Professor of English Literature at Patna College. It was dull, fatiguing, ill-paid work. His consolation was in the country and the climate. A letter of the following year speaks for itself.

“We have a few holidays, for the festival in honour of the Goddess Durga. Hinduism is a curious thing. I never realised what mediaeval Europe was like till I came to India. It stirs a strange curiosity in one to live surrounded by these morbid and corroding superstitions. Autumn and the rains are nearly over, with a sky washed for the light to revel in. The seasons, at any rate, are forever beautiful, in spite of man and his diseases. After the parching heat of June and the delicious rain of August, the earth seems possessed with a passion for verdure. It is like April in England, only more wonderful. Green things are indeed wonderful here, but brown things (that is, man!) are absurdly out of sympathy with me, at least socially: from the outside, I confess they are full of interest; so that in the midst of all this plenitude of bloom, I often remember dingy London and then  
*Surgit amari aliquid quod in ipsis floribus angat.*”

From a letter of 1896:

“Yes, the pestilence we had here in early summer was truly dreadful. I used to walk out to the Ganges at dusk, when college was over, to escape from the hot city and breathe the pure almost mountain-sweet air that comes across such a vast sheet of water. But it was vain to seek escape from men and mortality. Here all along the softly washing banks of the river, a myriad fires appeared in the summer night, where the dead bodies were burnt—lovely flames in the distance, merely, if you could but stop yourself from approaching them. Near at hand, it was indescribably tragic and wonderful; groups of figures in the darkness, luridly revealed or in shadow; men standing in a dreadful silence, women hanging passionately over the dead or shrilly wailing; the swathed white corpses on the ground, some lifting them on the pyre, others applying the torch—every variety of attitude that expresses grief, desolation and despair.”

In February, 1897 (he had now been transferred from Patna), he writes: “You ask how I like Calcutta. All peopled places are wonderful, and this not the least so. After the silence of Bankipore, there is a little stir here—a rumour of some great world beyond the moon, and ship-masts in the river. One of my pupils (Indian boys are most imaginative) goes down every morning with me to see those wonderful ship-masts, and his eyes light with ecstasy at the magic sound of Europe! The vast river too has followed me here, as broad and shining as ever. Often I go at day-break to stand and see the sun rise out of mist and water, drinking the silence of the fresh air, the divine earliness of morning, ἡὼς ἠριγένεια. But then, too, I get tired of all this, and long insatiably for some intellectual excitement, to have someone to talk about poetry with. There are people, of course, and plenty of charming enthusiasm (I have never been amongst a race so sensitive to poetry), but there is no true understanding of things.”

“The magic sound of Europe!”

Sharp indeed was the contrast between this strange land which was yet his own, and the western country of his memories, still so recent. England had given him much, and to the best she had to give a singularly receptive spirit had responded with delight. Her poetry glorified England for this stranger from the East. Was her last gift to be the

cruel gift of estrangement from his people? No doubt with passing years he grew to be more at home in Indian life: he made it one of his objects: but for long there were frequent moments of keen repining.

*(To be concluded)*

LAURENCE BINYON

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NOTE: The complete text of "Record of Yoga" was brought out serially in the "Sri Aurobindo Archives and Research" journal. This is the first time that it has been brought out in book form (in both soft and hard cover). This material did not appear in the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (SABCL) set. Those who already have the SABCL set of 30 volumes may prefer procuring the hard cover editions as they are bound in cloth, light cream in colour, with PVC jacket and match the colour and binding of the SABCL set. However the size (14cm x 22cm) is smaller than the SABCL volumes.

In writing his diary Sri Aurobindo used a special terminology which included words from Sanskrit and other languages, as well as abbreviations, symbols and markings. The special terminology is explained in a separate glossary which will be issued later.

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## SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

*(Continued from the issue of July 2003)*

To give the true vision of the future poetry Sri Aurobindo devoted a few chapters to it in his book *The Future Poetry*. He brought a new and a detailed consideration of the ‘five powers’—Truth, Life, Beauty, Delight and Spirit. These five powers do not obey the conventional techniques of the poetic rules. He was convinced that future poetry would not depend upon the mere dry intellect but only the truth of the Spirit.

What is truth? What is the Sun of Poetic Truth? Sri Aurobindo does not flinch from the task of answering the question:

Truth, as she is seen by us in the end, is of an infinite goddess, the very front and face of Infinity and Aditi herself, the illimitable mother of all the gods. This infinite, eternal and eternally creative Truth is no enemy of imagination or even of free fancy, for they too are godheads and can wear one of her faces or one of her expressive masks, while imagination is perhaps the very colour of her creative process, her births and movements are innumerable, her walk supple and many-pathed, and through all divine powers and universal means she can find her way to her own riches, and even error is her illegitimate child and serves, though wantonly, rebelliously and through many a giddy turn, her mother’s many-formed self-adaptive world-wide aim. Now it is something of this infinite Truth which poetry succeeds in giving us with a high power, in its own way of beauty, by its own opulent appointed means. The channel is different from those of her other activities because the power is of another kind. Infinite Truth has her many distinct ways of expressing and finding herself and each way must be kept distinct and the law of one must not be applied to the law of another form of her self-expression; and yet that does not mean that the material of one cannot be used as the material of another, though it must be cast by a different power into a different mould, or that all do not meet on their tops. Truth of poetry is not truth of philosophy or truth of science or truth of religion only, because it is another way of self-expression of infinite Truth so distinct that it appears to give quite another face of things and reveal quite another side of experience.<sup>1</sup>

This is not given to everybody, a leap of inspiration, a surge of intuition is called for “The poet,” says Sri Aurobindo, “his eyes fixed on life, shows us as if by accident the seed in our normal nature which can grow into the prodigious spiritual truth of universal love. He has to do it in his own way in the mould of poetic beauty and delight, and if we judge by such instances, we shall say that so only he has to do it, to cast as if casually the seed of the beauty and delight of some high mood of life and nature into the mind and pass on leaving it to its work on the soul’s reflecting emotional experience, perhaps hardly himself knowing what he has done since he is absorbed in sight and satisfied with the joy of beautiful creation.”<sup>2</sup>

The Sun of Poetic Truth is a phosphorescent splendour, beauty, and delight in an ecstasy of wedded bliss. It is not knowledge, not doctrine, and the “life” on which the Sun of Poetic Truth should shine is not the complex or outward actualities alone but, more importantly, all—all the invisible worlds below and above that may lie behind our apparent material life.

Sri Aurobindo says: “What man sees and experiences of God and himself and his race and Nature and the spiritual, mental, psychic and material worlds in which he moves, his backlook upon the past, his sweep of vision over the present, his eye of aspiration and prophecy cast towards the future, his passion of self-finding and self-exceeding, his reach beyond the three times to the eternal and immutable, this is his real life.”<sup>3</sup>

Such a total or integral vision of life would not reduce actuality of our earthly life but heighten it rather, make it more real and rich. The Sun of Poetic Truth shining on the Greater Life—which is also the totality and oneness of life—sees in it the Soul of Beauty and thrills with Delight at the sheer *rasa* and quintessential aesthesis of discovery. About the bliss and delight Sri Aurobindo describes:

But this Ananda, this delight, this aesthesis which is the soul of poetic beauty works like other things, like poetic truth or the poetic breath of life on different levels, in different provinces of its actions with the same law that we have observed in the rest, of the emergence of a richer and profounder face of itself the more it gets inward and upward from the less to the more occult powers of its revelation. This finer soul of delight throws itself out on the physical mind and being, takes up its experiences and turns them by its own innate and peculiar power into things of beauty, fuses into itself the experiences of the life soul and transmutes to beauty their power and passion in the surge of its poetic ecstasy, takes up all life and form into the reflective thought-mind and changes them in the beauty and rapture of thought discovering and embodying new values of soul and Nature and existence. And in all its working there is felt its own essence of an intuitive delight which acts in these moulds and gets into them whatever it can of its own intimate and eternal delight values. But when that intuitive mind self-finding, self-seeing, self-creating in a higher power of light and vision than is possible on the intellectual or other levels gets out into full play, and now there is some sign of this emergence, then we come nearer to the most potent sources of universal and eternal delight and beauty, nearer to its full and wide seeing, and its all-embracing rapture. This inner mind is the first native power of the self and spirit dropping its lower veils and the very life and aesthesis of the spirit in its creation is a life of self-experiencing spiritual delight and a luminous Ananda.<sup>4</sup>

Sri Aurobindo’s conviction is that the future poet would not be satisfied with the mere beauty of the senses, would seek something newer and deeper and truer, seek to realise the deeper beauty and delight of existence and the taste of the Bliss of Brahman. Accordingly the future poet would break the rules of technical bounds of the poems, such as relating to the theme, language, form and rhythm. Sri Aurobindo has said:

The one thing that man sees above the intellect is the spirit, and therefore the developed intellect of the race, if it is at all to go forward, must open now to an understanding and seeing spirituality, other than the rather obscure religionism of the past which belonged to the lower levels of the life and the emotion and which has had its bounds broken and its narrownesses condemned by the free light of intellectual thought: this will be rather an illumined self-knowledge and God-knowledge and a world-knowledge too which transmuted in that greater light will spiritualise the whole view and motive of our existence.<sup>5</sup>

The new poetry would shatter the older poetic forms and would turn to a natural movement of the spirit and would bring a new change in lyrics, drama and epic.

About the language of this poetry Sri Aurobindo has said: “As for the language, the tongue in which the poem comes or the whole lines from above, that offers no real difficulty. It all depends on the contact between the creative Power and the instrument or channel, the Power will naturally choose the language of the instrument or channel, that to which it is accustomed and can therefore readily hear and receive. The Power itself is not limited and can use any language, but although it is possible for things to come through in a language unknown or ill-known—I have seen several instances of the former—it is not a usual case, since the *saṁskāras* of the mind, its habits of action and conception would normally obstruct any such unprepared receptiveness; only a strong mediumistic faculty might be unaffected by this difficulty. These things, however, are obviously exceptional, abnormal or supernormal phenomena.”<sup>6</sup>

The future poetry would mean for the future man in Sri Aurobindo’s words: “It is in effect a larger cosmic vision, a realising of the godhead in the world and in man, of his divine possibilities as well of the greatness of the power that manifests in what he is, a spiritualised uplifting of his thought and feeling and sense of action, a more developed psychic mind and heart, a truer and a deeper insight into his nature and the meaning of the world, a calling of diviner potentialities and more spiritual values into the intention and structure of his life that is the call upon humanity, the prospect offered to it by the slowly unfolding and now more clearly disclosed Self of the universe. The nations that most include and make real these things in their life and culture are the nations of the coming dawn and the poets of whatever tongue and race who most completely see with this vision and speak with the inspiration of its utterance are those who shall be the creators of the poetry of the future.”<sup>7</sup>

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

#### References

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2. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
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7. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

# INTEGRAL PHILOSOPHY

## Introductory Lecture

It is customary to begin lectures on philosophy by attempting at a definition of philosophy. I shall, however, postpone this difficult task to a later stage. For when we have actually entered into some of the philosophical problems and arrived at some conclusions, the task of defining our subject matter will be less abstract and more interesting. Perhaps one of the best ways of learning a subject is to plunge into it first and swim about freely and leisurely, look into its various aspects, enjoy them until our interest is awakened and our consciousness becomes concentrated on the subject. Then we shall be able to penetrate and enter into the very heart and core of the subject. I propose to do something of the kind. I shall raise some questions, deal with them a little, leave them for the moment and turn to some others leading to still others. It will be a kind of a philosophical excursion which may perhaps awaken in you a real interest for the subject; and once that interest is there, the task is half done.

Let us begin with a most intimate and personal question; one of the best means to initiate philosophical thinking is to ask sincerely and earnestly this question to oneself: What is my place and function in the universe? An answer to this question depends upon the answer that we give to the question of the reality and significance of the universe; for the universe may be looked upon either as a mere material existence devoid of all sense or significance or as an unfolding of some Conscious Power aiming at some End. If the first alternative is true, the question of one's place and function in the universe has no significance; for then life may be lived in any way one likes and that would make no difference with regard to its ultimate value. But if we accept the second alternative, our life becomes significant with respect to some goal or value. In that case, we may have to find out this goal with a great deal of precision and further relate our own life and its multitudinous movements to it. For then only can we attune our life to the universe and move along with the end-seeking movement of the universe.

But how to be sure as to which of these two alternatives represents the true truth of the universe and our individuality? And there are still more alternatives, although they are intermediary and therefore less imposing. Now, if you read Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*, you will find there a detailed discussion of all these alternatives and their relative value; you will also find how Sri Aurobindo approaches each point of view and shows with convincing definiteness and certainty its truth and value and limitation, if any. Sri Aurobindo as you know stands for divine life on earth and it is a view which is not easy to hold; there are many opposing views and philosophies, each armed with forceful logic and arguments. All these have to be met, thoroughly discussed and refuted if we are to arrive at a definite conclusion.

Now, in this introductory lecture, I do not propose to enter into the battlefield of controversy and argumentation; but in order that we may be able to appreciate Sri Aurobindo's arguments better when we come to study *The Life Divine*, I will just mention

some of the standpoints to which Sri Aurobindo very often refers.

We may begin with scepticism. Scepticism is a view according to which it is impossible to be certain about anything; there is, according to it, no proposition which can be definitely stated to be true or false. It is not possible to present this standpoint in any detail, but we may state one or two of its aspects which may show its plausibility. Let us take its epistemological aspect. (Epistemology is an enquiry into the conditions and limitations of knowledge and its validity. The chief problem of epistemology can be stated in the form of the following questions: What is the true nature of knowledge? Is it possible to know at all? What is the true object of knowledge? Is it possible to be certain as to the validity of what we can and do know?) The argument of the sceptic may run as follows: We perceive objects and believe we know them. But a little reflection shows that this belief is irrational. For we find that two given percepts concerning the same object are sometimes so opposed to each other that if one is true, the other must be false. For instance, imagine yourself under the conditions of darkness where you cannot see things clearly. Now you find on your way some wavy, thin and long object, and you pronounce to yourself: "It is a snake." But later on, you find that was merely a rope. This kind of error is quite common. But if so, we may go a step farther and ask: What guarantee is there that we are not committing this kind of error with respect to all our percepts? For it is quite possible that all that we are perceiving is false and therefore all our so-called knowledge of things is no knowledge at all.

"Or, if we do not go to such an extreme, we may arrive at an intermediate kind of doubt; we say we perceive objects as they are; but if we observe our percepts we find that they change according to the position that the observer or the subject takes with respect to the object of perception. And this gives rise to a doubt whether percepts do not depend entirely upon the percipient. To reiterate this doubt, we find again that although we perceive objects we do not perceive the necessity of their existence. How then can we say of any object that it must exist and therefore it must be existing even when we do not perceive it?"

We shall leave this problem at this stage with only this remark that the problem that this argument raises is not easy to solve and therefore it is worthwhile to try to understand it and ponder over it seriously.

The next standpoint that we shall take up is that of the rationalist. A rationalist is one who believes that reason is the highest instrument of knowledge available to man. He further holds that Reason demands to postulate the existence of an Absolute, transcendental and unifying reality but it cannot and does not know the real nature of this transcendental reality. Man, therefore, cannot, according to this view, know the Highest Reality. This attitude is also called Agnosticism.

In one of the formulations of this rationalist philosophy, we find the view that the world of our experience, that is to say, the world of change, causality, relation, quality, Time and Space, is self-contradictory and therefore cannot be real. The arguments given in this connection are at once important and interesting; they are famous in the history of philosophy, and besides they will give good training and exercise to our minds. Let us

therefore state some of them.

We may take the argument regarding Causality. Causality may first of all be defined as the necessary relation between events so as to explain the phenomenon of change. Whenever we see or hear of anything, it does not stand to our reason unless we are told the cause of it. Thus, Causality is a necessary concept of Reason. And yet, when we reflect upon it, it has been held, it turns out to be self-contradictory, unintelligible, unreal and impossible. It has been argued that Causality is a rational attempt to show the necessity of the occurrence of an event or change; but since everything in the world which we may regard as a cause of another is an event, we are led to postulate a Cause or Determiner which is itself uncaused and therefore free. For if we do not postulate a Free Cause, it is argued, we are led to infinite regress resulting in failure to show the necessity of the event in question and thus proving the absurdity of the idea of Causality. But on the other hand, so the argument continues, if there is a Free Cause, there will be a beginning of the causal series to begin which there will be a first act unpreceded by any previous act or necessity. And this, it is held, contradicts the idea of Causality according to which there is always a previous necessity to cause an event. It is concluded therefore that Causality is an antinomy (antinomy is a proposition from which two contradictory conclusions can be drawn) implying at once the necessity and impossibility of the beginning of the causal series, a self-contradiction, unintelligible and therefore something that cannot be.

There is a similar puzzle regarding the nature of Change. It has been argued that the very conception of change implies the existence of a permanent to which change belongs; for if we do not postulate a Permanent Substance, it is argued, we would be obliged to say that there is nothing which changes and thus prove the absurdity of the idea of change. But, on the other hand, if there is a Permanent Substance, so the argument continues, change must belong to it since otherwise it would fall outside it and thus be unreal. But if it belongs to the Permanent Substance, the latter will be affected by it and thus cease to be permanent. It is concluded, therefore, that Change is an antinomy implying at once the necessity and impossibility of a Permanent Substance, self-contradiction, unintelligible and therefore something that cannot be.

Lastly, we may state the dilemma regarding the nature of Time. It has been argued that Time is a succession of diverse moments, the before and the after, to reconcile which we have to postulate a relation which, however, is undiscoverable; for whatever relation we might discover will present itself as a third diverse element needing a further reconciliation by a further relation, and so on *ad infinitum*. It is concluded therefore that Time is an antinomy implying at once the necessity and impossibility of succession, a self-contradiction, unintelligible and therefore something that cannot be.

If you feel interested in pursuing these arguments we shall do so at a later stage. At the moment we may only remark that if these arguments are valid and irrefutable we have a strong case here for holding the world to be a mere appearance, a position opposed to that of Sri Aurobindo.

(To be concluded)

ANONYMOUS



## THE NATURE OF TRUTH\*

In discussing the nature of Truth, we have to realize that 'Truth' does not mean the same thing on all occasions that the word is used. The meaning of 'Truth' is determined in the context of our search for Truth, that is, it depends on the nature and purpose of our enquiry, on the type of result or satisfaction that we seek, the kind of value that we are trying to embody in our experience. 'Truth' in metaphysics must, therefore, *prima facie* have a different connotation from 'Truth' in science or in the popular usage. 'Truth' in the latter case means correspondence or accordance with facts. What we *mean* when we say that a given assertion is true is that things are as we assert them to be. There is of course the familiar distinction between the meaning and the criterion of Truth to be considered. The question of the criterion is concerned not directly with the nature of Truth, but with the method or methods employed to obtain it. It deals with the question, by what sign do we come to know or are reasonably assured that a particular belief may be taken as true, i.e., as in accordance with things as they are? I do not wish to discuss the problem of the criterion, since in this paper I am concerned with the nature of Truth as it should be understood in metaphysics and in spiritual experience.

It may be a strange thing to say, but I believe the logical positivists have shown a certain amount of insight in their negative attitude towards metaphysics, in so far as they hold that metaphysical statements are unlike scientific statements though bearing a syntactical resemblance to them. Their position is that metaphysicians who believe that their statements are like scientific statements though about a higher or trans-empirical Reality, that metaphysics is, in other words, a super-science, are merely the dupes of language; and they go on to dismiss metaphysics as 'nonsense' or as serving the very limited purpose of teaching us the use of words. I do not wish to examine logical positivism in this paper. I certainly think they are talking nonsense (both in their technical as well as in the popular sense of the word) when they dismiss metaphysics as nonsense, and are being rather foolish when they assert with condescension that metaphysicians do not always talk nonsense, but occasionally, though unconsciously, show a certain amount of 'linguistic penetration' and should be read for the lessons we can learn from their writings about the use of words.<sup>1</sup> I am concerned with the only genuine, though partial penetration they have shown, *viz.*, that metaphysical propositions are not like scientific propositions, differing from them only in that they are about a super-sensible reality. As to what they actually are, however, I do not think they have any idea at all.

Let us return to the question of the meaning of 'Truth'. The truth of a scientific proposition consists in its correspondence or accordance with the fact other than and outside itself. My contention is that a proposition like 'God exists' or 'Reality is timeless' is very different in kind from a proposition like 'Sea monsters exist' or 'Camels are herbivorous'. The logical positivist asserts that the proposition 'Reality is timeless' resembles, syntactically, the proposition 'Camels are herbivorous' and thus creates the

\* The paper was presented at The Indian Philosophical Congress 1950.

1. The philosopher who holds this view is, by a strange irony, named "Wisdom"!

illusion that there is something corresponding to the word Reality, about which we predicate timelessness just as there is something corresponding to the word camel, of which we predicate herbivorousness. But in what sense, he asks, can the former proposition 'Reality is timeless' be said to be significant? With what experience or fact does it correspond? The significance of a proposition like 'Camels are herbivorous' lies in the fact that we can put it to the test. It has the power to carry us beyond itself to some discoverable fact. Can we show in a similar way, that the proposition 'Reality is timeless' is significant? It is not enough that we should understand the words which we use in the proposition. It seems to me that the nerve of the logical positivist's critique of metaphysics is that metaphysical statements appear to end in themselves, and lack the power to carry us beyond themselves or to suggest a way whereby we may go beyond them and confront an actual situation which they purport to describe. It would perhaps have brought out the real point of their criticism, if the logical positivists had described metaphysical statements not as meaningless, but as barren or futile, unless they had intended to identify the significant with the useful. The question therefore hinges on this point. Are metaphysical statements self-enclosed, i.e., does all their significance begin and end in themselves? Or are they dynamic in carrying us beyond themselves to the Reality which they claim to describe? In other words are we confined within the circle of ideas or is it possible to pass from ideas to existence? Kant, it may be recalled, rejected the possibility of metaphysics, because he thought that in metaphysics we could not pass beyond the charmed circle of ideas, in the same way as the idea of a hundred dollars in our pocket cannot magically produce its actual existence therein. The Idealists, joining issue here, would answer that Truth is always ideal, that being its essential nature and that the truth as well as the significance of an idea consists in its self-consistency, there being no further need for establishing a bridge between the ideal and the real.

The position which I have taken in this paper differs both from Idealism on the one hand and the Kantian and Positivist critique of metaphysics on the other. On this view, to be truly significant, a metaphysical proposition implies a bridge from idea to existence, but this transition from idea to existence and the relation between the actual situation or reality described and the description of it are radically different in the case of metaphysical propositions from what they are in the case of scientific propositions. The difference may be expressed by saying that the truth of scientific propositions is verifiable, whereas that of metaphysical propositions is *to be realised*. Thus the sphere of the meaningful or the significant should be extended beyond that of the verifiable and include also the realizable. If it can be shown that a metaphysical proposition does not terminate within itself but points to a Reality which is to be realized, then it seems to me that the main Positivist objection to metaphysics would be removed. Propositions like 'Reality is timeless' would cease to be a jumble of words with an illusory glow of meaning imparted to it by the meaningfulness of its separate elements, but would possess a vibrant significance far richer than that contained by empirically verifiable propositions.

We must now consider the difference between the 'verifiable' and the 'to be realized' as two species of the significant. The main differences are two: (1) In the case of the



verifiable the situation described is on the same level as the description; in the case of the realizable the situation and the description are on totally different levels. (2) In the former case there is no fundamental change in the tone and structure of consciousness when we pass from description to fact or from idea to existence. In the latter case the passage is made possible only through a radical transformation of consciousness. In verification the self discovers a fact comparable to the other facts already within its own experience; while in the latter case the self discovers, not a new fact, but *itself*. Further, this self-revelation is absolute and unique, with which no part of the experience of the natural self, even when taken at its highest and best, is comparable. The second point needs no explanation to those who are acquainted with the mystical and religious tradition in philosophy. The perception of absolute truth is possible only through a complete transformation or regeneration of consciousness, the reason being that the knowledge of the ultimately real is synonymous with the discovery or revelation of the self to itself. This is I think the significance of the Upanishadic saying, "To know Brahman is to become Brahman". This means that the knowledge of Truth is in the end Self-knowledge.

I shall explain the first point, *viz.*, that in metaphysics the Reality described is not on a level with the description of it. This point may be made clear by an analogy. It is possible to explain what a poem means by giving a prose paraphrase of it, but the paraphrase itself is not poetry. The poem and its paraphrase are clearly not on the same level. To one who does not know at all what poetry is the paraphrase may kindle the desire to read and appreciate the poem *as a poem*. Assuming that his desire is satisfied, the poem will come to him as a revelation, as something not experienced before, and not merely as a confirmation or verification of what he had already grasped in and through the prose-paraphrase. We do not therefore state the essential truth of the relation between the paraphrase and the poem if we say that the former corresponds to or accords with the latter. At the level of the paraphrase the poem should be regarded not as something that is to be verified, but more adequately as something that is to be realized.

A similar relation holds between a metaphysical statement like 'Reality is timeless' and the actual fact which it claims to describe and which is discoverable only through a total regeneration of consciousness. The passage from the mere description to the actual fact (discovered in mystical or spiritual experience) is always accompanied by a sense of novelty, of uniqueness and of indescribability. Though in a sense the mystical experience is a confirmation of the metaphysical judgment, and so to that extent corresponds with it, we cannot say that the truth of the metaphysical judgment means correspondence. The mystical experience is at the same time a confirmation as well as a denial of the corresponding metaphysical judgment. Just as the actual experience of the poem *qua* poem confirms the prose paraphrase and at the same time cancels the anticipated idea, formed by a reading of the paraphrase alone, of what poetry is, in the same way, though in a much more radical sense, the mystical experience confirms and cancels the anticipation of Truth generated by metaphysical speculation alone. "The Tao that is the subject of discussion," says Laotze, "is not the true Tao."<sup>2</sup>

2. Cf. also St. Thomas. After receiving the beatific vision he described the wisdom contained in all his writings as foolishness.

What then is meant by saying that the metaphysical judgment is true? Truth here is not correspondence, though this does not mean either, lack of correspondence. The notion of correspondence and its opposite ceases in this case to be adequate. Truth in the case of metaphysics means adequate symbolization. I shall explain what this means.

A metaphysical judgment is the result of thinking. Now in thinking we may make assertions that are intended to be taken literally or assertions that state a truth in a symbolic or analogical form. One thought content is here symbolic of another. The point which I wish to make is that thinking itself as an experience may be symbolic of a higher experience, and that just as one thought content is symbolized as another, so in metaphysics the higher or spiritual experience is symbolized as a thought process or a judgment. To put it differently, Reality which is a Presence and is realized as such in mystic experience is at the metaphysical level symbolized as a Problem to be resolved. Union with a living Reality can be understood only by those who have achieved it, but to others it may be presented *as if* it were the solution of a problem. To turn Reality into a problem and then attempt a solution of the problem is the result of the intellect's way of dealing with and paraphrasing in its own terms a Reality that can only be known in a supra-intellectual experience. This I think, though I am not sure, is the significance of the Christian doctrine that our knowledge of God is *analogical*. Thought is capable of paraphrasing at its own level, but never of grasping the essential nature of God's Being. The Truth of metaphysics then is the truth that is contained in an adequate paraphrase, adequate here meaning in accordance with the laws and conditions that govern the thinking mind and in conformity with the *śāstra* (understood either as revealed literature or as the word of a living Guru).

We have discussed the meaning of Truth at the level of metaphysics, but since metaphysical judgments are only a symbolic form of a higher experience, they do not contain in themselves Truth *per se*. They contain, as Sri Aurobindo says, not the substance but the figure of Truth. St. Thomas expresses this by saying that in philosophy we know God in essence but not essentially. Truth in its essential nature, therefore, is not found at the level of metaphysics. We have then yet to ask what Truth essentially is, the meaning of Truth as Truth, not as coloured and distorted by the limitations of the unregenerated mind. This implies a discussion of Truth at the level of a direct supra-rational experience.

First a word about the relation between Truth and Reality. Essentially they are identical. Truth is the verbalized but direct experience of Reality. As an instance we may take the statement 'All this is Brahman'. In asking in what sense this statement is true we must remember that we are now discussing the matter from the point of view of one who no longer needs to speculate but gives direct utterance to a directly perceived Truth. Obviously then Truth cannot here mean correspondence, because the direct experience is not so much an experience of what is true as itself a Truth-experience, even as the experience of pain is itself a painful experience.

In scientific and metaphysical knowledge there is a process of objectification—the knowledge is about an *object*, about something other than the process of knowing. But the knowledge of Truth is the knowledge of the Spirit, that which is ever the Subject. The Spirit can never be known through a process of objectification, otherwise it is not the

Spirit that we know but some object that falls short of the absolute Subject. In true knowledge, the knower, the knowing and the known (*jñātā, jñāma, jñeya*) must be one. Knowledge of the Spirit must be self-luminous, or as Sri Aurobindo puts it, it must be 'knowledge by identity', otherwise it is not knowledge but only opinion or belief, or rather the paraphrase and reduction of knowledge to the level of belief.

Since here the knowledge and the known are identical, the Truth of the knowledge cannot be said to consist in a relation of correspondence. What then does Truth mean from the point of view of one who knows Truth as Spirit and not as Object? At this, the highest level, the meaning of Truth changes completely. In order to understand what Truth means we have to ask why at this level there is Truth at all. We have to enquire into the function it performs or the purpose it serves. Why does the sage give utterance to his experience and so convert Reality into Truth? The spiritual experience being self-contained, does not need to be expressed in order to complete itself. It is full and complete without the verbal expression. Obviously the verbal form serves the purpose of establishing communication between the enlightened and the unenlightened. The sage speaks, not to fulfil himself or satisfy an inner need, but in some way to establish contact between himself and those who are conditioned by Ignorance (*Avidya*). What is the function of speech at this level of consciousness? It cannot be to communicate knowledge, because knowledge cannot be communicated through words or through a thought process, however subtle. Had this been possible, enlightenment would have been within the reach of those with the capacity for merely listening to the words of the enlightened, or at best of understanding with sufficient intellectual clarity the meaning and implications of the spoken words. Nor can the purposes of speech at this level be merely to give delight. Language at this level has a totally new function to perform. It is neither to instruct nor to delight but to awaken. In other words language here is pure *mantra*. The function of *mantra* in the proper sense of the word is precisely this: to build a bridge between one level of experience and another or to make possible a transition from the lower to a higher level. It is the first stage in the process of reaching the Truth, for without it the mind cannot conceive the possibility of an experience transcending mind or be seized with an aspiration to reach out to that which transcends its own nature. In the Indian tradition thinking (*manana*) must, to be fruitful, be preceded by the hearing of the inspired word (*śravaṇa*). And it is precisely because the word thought about is a *mantra* that the process of inquiry into Truth does not stop at the level of thinking but passes into the next higher stage of meditation (*nididhyāsana*). The *mantra* performs a function similar to that of the *avatāra*. It descends to a lower level in order to help the beings conditioned to that level, to rise to its own. Truth therefore, in its essential nature, is a *mantra* or an *avatāra* of the Reality, whose function is to knock at the doors of our flesh-bound consciousness and convey to it a suggestion or a whisper of the Reality beyond. A consequence of great importance for philosophy, regarded as systematic thinking, follows from this view of Truth. It is taken for granted and followed universally in practice even in India, where the importance of spiritual experience is so clearly recognized, that philosophy is by its very nature polemical, and that to establish a philosophical system carries with it the obligation of

refuting other rival philosophical systems. The great Acharyas of this country, for instance, have carried on a wordy warfare against each other or their disciples. Evidently they believed that there is only one true way of systematic presentation, at the intellectual level, of the contents of spiritual experience. I wish to suggest that this uncompromising dialectical warfare among the Acharyas is not in keeping with the real spirit of Indian philosophy. If, as I said, the essential nature of Truth is *mantra*, then the very notion of Truth alters radically and passes beyond the sphere of controversy and debate. Truth is *mantra* and so the truth of a *mantra* consists in its efficacy to awaken ignorant souls to the Reality concealed within themselves. It is conceivable that different people may need to be awakened by the use of different *mantras*. Not only is it conceivable but actual practice of *sadhana* for the realization of Truth demonstrates and confirms the need for more than one *mantra*. Fundamentally there are three supreme *mantras* though each may have an indefinite number of subordinate modes. They are (1) Reality is transcendental and ineffable (*neti neti*), (2) Reality is impersonal (*nirguna*), (3) Reality is personal (*saguna*). What they have in common is the understood or expressed condition that this Reality is yet *to be realized*. What we call a philosophical system, e.g., Advaita, Vishishtadvaita, etc., is merely an intellectual paraphrase of one of these three *mantras*. If this is clearly understood, then the harmony that holds the three *mantras* together as alternative ways of accomplishing the same result, viz., the awakening from ignorance, should descend also into their intellectual counterparts and make them tolerant of each other. It may still be asked whether the two *mantras*, Reality is personal and Reality is impersonal do not contradict each other, or at least precipitate a conflict at the level of the intellect; or if they do not do even this, whether they are not both mere aspects of a Truth that includes and goes beyond them, in which case, each being incomplete, can be contradicted and corrected in a more complete philosophical system. The question raises a very large issue and at the close of this paper I can only indicate where I think the true answer lies. The answer, I think, is that in the ultimate vision of things the notion of whole and parts, or aspects has no application as we understand it. In relation to the whole presented to or constructed by the mind we may still for the sake of convenience talk of the personal and impersonal as being aspects of Reality. But the truth is that the Transcendent or the Ineffable which is *indivisible*, may reveal itself either as a personal or as an impersonal reality, or as both. Each revelation contains the whole Reality, and not a part or aspect thereof. One who has received the revelation of Reality only as personal, will, if he turns philosopher, construct a theistic system. One who has experienced the impersonal alone, will, like Sankara, become a Mayavadin. As each revelation contains the indivisible Transcendent, the logic of each system will also be correspondingly complete and self-contained. That is why, as centuries of polemical literature have shown, no system of thought based on Spiritual experience, i.e., no *Darśana*, can be refuted at the level of logic. The mistake of the Acharyas consisted, not in thinking that their particular system presented the complete Truth, albeit at the considerably impoverished level of ideas, but in refusing to recognize that the complete, i.e., indivisible Truth could also be presented as an alternative system of ideas. It is at this level of understanding and not at

the level of polemical logic that the limitations of the different Acharyas can be corrected and overcome. This, I believe, is the method and approach adopted by Sri Aurobindo in his dealing with different and seemingly conflicting systems of philosophy.

J. N. CHUBB

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# THE INDIAN APPROACH TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## An example from Indian History and its Lessons for the Future

HISTORY is sometimes considered or rather dismissed as a useless story of the past. But not many recognise in this flow of events, personalities and ideas in time the great story of human evolution with valuable lessons for the future, especially for human development. One such great epoch in Indian history with important lessons for the future of India is the age of the Guptas, called the “Golden Age”. This epoch was full of brilliant achievements and important contributions to the progress of Indian civilisation and culture. But it also had some major drawbacks. Both its achievements and failures have some important lessons for human development, especially in the application of Indian ideals of social development to the collective progress of Nations. The present study examines this great epoch of Indian history in the light of Sri Aurobindo’s vision.

### The Indian Ideal of Social Development

To assess rightly the achievements of a great epoch in history, we should have a clear understanding of the ideals which inspired the age. The Indian collective ideal is based on the concept of Dharma. We need not go into the philosophical intricacies of the ideal of Dharma. As applied to the problem of social and political development, the ideal resolves itself into two collective aims.

The first aim is the balanced and harmonious development of all the four orders or organs of the society—culture shaped by the Brahmanas working for the intellectual, moral, aesthetic and spiritual elevation of the community; polity led by the Kshatriyas providing the military, administrative and political leadership to the community; economy organised by the Vaishyas creating wealth and working for the prosperity of the community; and, finally, the Shudras serving all the others and the community with their work and labour. The Indian social thinkers conceived the ideal society as one in which each individual or organ of the society grows in harmony with the inborn self-law, *swadharma*, of his or its psychological and typical nature and in doing so, is spontaneously and unconsciously in harmony with that of other organs and individuals of the community and all contribute together co-creatively to the well-being and progress of the community as a whole. The other major intuition behind this Indian ideal is that all the capacities and energies of the community have to be integrally developed. As Sri Aurobindo explains:

The nation or group is not like the individual who can specialise his development and throw all his energies into one line. The nation must develop military and political greatness and activity, intellectual and aesthetic greatness and activity, commercial greatness and activity, moral sanity and vigour; it cannot sacrifice any of these functions of the organism without making itself unfit for the struggle for life and finally succumbing and perishing under the pressure of more highly organised



nations. The purely commercial State like Carthage is broken in the shock with a nation which has developed the military and political as well as the commercial energies. A purely military state like Sparta cannot stand against rivals which to equal military efficiency unite a greater science, intellectual energy and political ability. A purely aesthetic and intellectual state like the Greek colonies in Italy or a purely moral and spiritual community like the empire of Peru are blotted out of existence in the clash with ruder but more vigorous and many sided organisms. No government, therefore, can really be good for a nation or serve the purposes of national life and development which does not give full scope for the development of all the national activities...<sup>1</sup>

The second aspect of the Indian ideal is an emphasis on the cultural progress of the community with the highest encouragement and motivation to the self-expression of the cultural genius and values of the nation in every department of national life.

The great empire builders of ancient India made a sincere and persistent attempt to live out this philosophy in the collective life. And this attempt reached its grand finale in the "Golden Age" of the Guptas. The Gupta empire is one of the few empires in world-history where economic prosperity, commercial progress, political stability, military strength, administrative efficiency, social well-being and cultural development were successfully pursued simultaneously and went together.

It would be interesting and rewarding to examine briefly this achievement of the Gupta sovereigns and see what lessons it can teach us for the future.

### **India's Golden Age: The Achievements of the Gupta Empire**

It is now recognised by most of the leading Indian historians that the architects of India's Golden age were the Gupta Emperors. It was primarily the work of two great Kshatriya personalities: Samudragupta, the great conqueror, warrior and military genius who established the empire and Chandragupta-II or Vikramaditya, the great organiser who consolidated the empire.

The most striking achievement of the Gupta empire was organisation. The political unity, strength and stability of the nation was maintained by a strong and efficient military and administrative organisation. A strong and well-organised defence kept aggressors at bay, repeatedly repelling the powerful barbarian invasions and gave to the people a sense of security, peace and stability which are the indispensable foundations for the economic and cultural progress of the nation.

The military achievements of the Guptas in this task were especially noteworthy when we consider the fact that barbarian tribes, the Huns, who were trying to invade India during this period were a powerful, cruel and ruthless race. And if the Huns had succeeded in invading India in this period when her cultural values and ideals were in the process of taking a new form suitable to the age and getting established in the consciousness of the masses, it would have been a great setback for the progress of Indian civilisation

and culture. And finally when Skandagupta inflicted a crushing defeat on the invading barbarians, broke the back of the menace and thereby prevented its recurrence for nearly another half a century, the Indian soul must have heaved a sigh of relief. The eminent Indian historian R. C. Majumdar brings out the crucial importance of the military prowess and genius of the Gupta emperors in saving the Indian civilisation:

We know, however, definitely that some time during his reign Skandagupta had to encounter the invasion of Hunas who had already proved themselves to be a formidable power and a terror to both Europe and Asia... Skandagupta had once saved the empire while he was yet a crown prince. This new danger, perhaps a graver one, again put his military prowess to a severe test. But he was equally successful on this occasion as well. The verse describing his conflict with Hunas though mutilated leaves no doubt that the struggle was severe but he won a complete victory. The utter discomfiture of the Hunas is also borne out by the fact that for nearly half a century the Gupta empire was immune from their depredations... it was a great achievement for which Skandagupta may well go down in history as the saviour of India. The full significance of the great task performed by him can only be understood against the background of contemporary events. Shortly before Skandagupta ascended the throne, the Hunas had established supremacy in Europe and the Roman Empire quailed before these barbarians... shortly after their defeat by Skandagupta, they overwhelmed Persia and killed its King. Wherever they went, they carried devastation by fire and sword and the most prosperous towns and villages were reduced to utter desolation. If we remember all this, we can well realise the value of the great victory of Skandagupta over them.<sup>2</sup>

Any other civilisation with such formidable invaders at its borders would have become an autocratic military state, like Sparta. But the Gupta emperors trained in the enlightened and benevolent traditions of Indian polity still faithfully upheld the ideal of Dharma.

Regarding social life, the Gupta regime humanised and liberalised the penal code and made it the most liberal and lenient ever among ancient civilisations. It allowed the loosening of the caste-system and permitted a freer and more flexible mobility among the different classes; the judicial system was also restructured and systematized on a more enlightened basis. In this process the Gupta government incorporated all the progressive tendencies of the thought of the age coming from both the Buddhist and the Hindu thinkers. The Chinese traveller Fa Hsien's observations on the Gupta age indicate a healthy, peaceful, contented, vigorous and prosperous society. The following remarks by an American scholar of history on the Gupta empire are interesting: "Fa Hsien who had no reason to bestow unmerited praise (he does not even mention the name of the great king Vikramaditya) described the government as just and beneficent. The roads, he indicated, were well maintained, brigandage was rare, taxes were relatively light and capital punishment was unknown. He testified to a generally high level of prosperity,



social contentment and intellectual vitality when the nations of western Europe were sinking into semi-barbarism.”<sup>3</sup>

In the economic sphere, a general and all-round prosperity is maintained by an efficient land and revenue administration and a flourishing internal and international trade. The main feature of the ancient Indian commercial system is the growth of autonomous trade-guilds of the merchants and artisans. Each such corporate guild was not only an autonomous economic unit but also a social and cultural unit which managed its own affairs according to its own self-evolved laws. The other unique feature of these trade guilds was their mobility and flexibility of functioning. These guilds were often mobile, moving from one place to another in order to improve their trade prospects. And the members of a guild were not necessarily of the same trade or profession but given the full freedom to pursue the business of their choice or even a profession other than business like religion or astrology etc. The third unique feature of these trade guilds was their philanthropic spirit, spending their wealth generously in public works like hospitals, roads, charity for the poor etc. The Gupta regime’s economic policy can be described as supportive and encouraging non-interference. The governmental role is to provide a safe, secure and encouraging environment and the necessary infrastructure for the free and manifold activity of the business community.

At this time India was the centre of an intercontinental market and had a flourishing international trade with the outside world, especially the Roman Empire in the West. It was said that the trade balance was so decidedly in India’s favour that Roman emperors became alarmed at the drainage of gold to the East and tried to curtail the use of silk for wearing apparel. We must also note here that the Indian export to other countries was not merely raw materials but “value-added” products like jewellery, handicraft, fine muslin cloth, silk garments, etc. which required intricate artistry, craftsmanship and manufacturing skill.

And the bulk of the economic resources which flowed to the government treasury in the form of taxes and revenues from the land-owners and the business community was diverted to the cultural progress of the community in the field of education, arts, religion, learning and literature. The Gupta emperor patronized several centres of education and a large number of individual teachers. As a matter of fact, education seems to have been regarded as an essential part of the state administration. The Gupta sovereigns evinced special interest in the proper functioning and progress of the educational and cultural centres of the nation like the ashramas and the universities. They considered it their principal duty to create for those centres conditions of security and well-being and a special officer was appointed for the purpose. But the most remarkable feature of the Gupta policy towards culture was that they saw to it that the cultural energy of the nation was not confined to a few elite centres but widely diffused throughout the society. As the eminent indologist Dr. Dandekar writes in his insightful study of the Gupta age: “The Imperial Guptas were renowned for the large numbers of grants and endowments. Several Indian sovereigns, in other periods of history were also equally, if not more, famous for their munificent gifts. But as can be seen from the Yajnavalka smṛti, there must be a

distinct philosophy underlying the charities of the Guptas. They gave gifts not to all and sundry but only to the true apostles of culture; not in order to show off their munificence, but with a view to promoting the cultural activities of their dominions; not in a spirit of patronising condescension but in respectful humility. They founded several agraharas all over the country so that these selfless missionaries of Hindu culture should be enabled to carry on their work in the remotest parts of the empire without any financial anxieties to worry them. True charity is intended for securing economic independence for the votaries of culture without in any way undermining their independence in cultural matters. It was this ideal sponsored by the Yajnavalka-smṛiti which guided Samudragupta and Vikramaditya and their successors and which eventually helped the propagation of Hindu culture in the Gupta empire.”<sup>4</sup>

Thus the favourable economic, social and political conditions created by the Gupta sovereigns released the cultural genius and energy of the nations. The unique and inherent spirituality of the Indian soul expressed itself through the intellectual, aesthetic and ethical temperament of the Indian mind with a prolific creative elan.

The other unique feature of the cultural life of the Gupta period is the exceptional degree of religious tolerance. Indian monarchs are well-known for religious tolerance. But Gupta emperors, though most of them were staunch Hindus, displayed rare maturity in allowing the two great religions, Hinduism and Buddhism—without showing any special favouritism to either of them—to flourish side by side and enrich the cultural life of the nation. In the Gupta regime both these religions lived in perfect harmony and reached heights of creative excellence. In fact Buddhism, with its incomparable masterpieces of art and the spread of Mahayana Buddhism, reached its height of creative excellence during the Gupta period.

Now what are the lessons we belonging to the modern world have to learn from these achievements? The achievements of the Gupta emperors is a classic example to show what a strong and benevolent political leadership and an enlightened policy of national development can do for the all-round progress and prosperity of a nation. It also shows that economic prosperity, social well-being, political stability, military strength and cultural progress can be pursued simultaneously without sacrificing any one of these aims for the sake of others. The development of a particular organ of the community and its aims may have to be given prominence in each stage of collective evolution but this can be done without neglecting the development of the other organs.

The third lesson we have to learn from the Gupta emperors is that as long as there are strong, aggressive and hostile neighbours surrounding the national borders a strong defence is indispensable for national progress. As long as national egoism, especially of the economic and political kind, exists and remains as the primary actuating force of nations, all talk of “disarmament” is moonshine and humbug. For example, look at the shameful hypocrisy with which the advanced nuclear powers of the world are trying to impose the nuclear test ban treaty (NTBT) on India and other countries. There is very little progress in “disarmament” precisely because there is no sincerity in the motives of those who talk about it. We must remember here that in the present conditions of the

world, to create a weapons-free earth demands a tremendous amount of moral courage, sincerity and sacrifice from the so-called “superpowers” of the world. For true “disarmament” requires foregoing the economic and political advantage which come from military strength. We must also keep in mind that much of the Western economy depends on the weapons industry and a complete disarmament of the world may lead for some time to a serious economic depression in the West. At present none of the major western powers are ready for these sacrifices. All this shows how dangerous it is to follow a policy of naive pacifism in the present moral conditions of the political life of humanity. As long as the Law of the Jungle prevails in the world, the sword of the Kshatriya is needed to protect, nourish and enforce the higher ideals and values of the Brahmana and the Truth has to speak from a platform of strength to make herself heard.

*(To be continued)*

M. S. SRINIVASAN

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Born in 1923 in a poor Brahmin family of priests-cum-teachers in a remote village in southern Orissa, the author indeed travelled a long way, from a lower primary school where the children had to learn the shape of alphabet by moving their fingers on the sand, to becoming the first Ph.D. in the Utkal University on Education. His has been a dynamic life—a model teacher in schools and colleges, his creative energy overflowed the vocational channel and enriched several cultural and educational streams of his time.

Appropriately entitled *The Pilgrimage*, the autobiography is a faithful record of the vicissitudes through which the author struggled to reach the fulfilment of his aspirations. But the facts are followed by observations that are significant. Here is an example: At the early phase of his education he had to depend on patronage extended to him (no doubt because he deserved it) by institutions and the benevolent feudal chief of his region. He was lodged in a room adjacent to a temple. “We slept on a mat and the mattress was stitched with old torn clothes. The mid-day and the night Prasad were served as two principal meals—lunch and dinner. A little watered rice saved from the night Prasad taken with a piece of pickle served as breakfast. These two meals consisted of rice, soured soup water (*Charu*) prepared with dried mangoes, a little *dal* and a little curry—nominal. We talk of nutritive diets nowadays. One can imagine the nutrition we derived from the food served to us in the temple. Peace, contentment and happiness provided us all the necessary nutrition for the growth and maintenance of the body.”

Said a certain philosopher, “Chance is the pseudonym of God which He uses when He does not wish to put down His signature.” This proved absolutely true in regard to the author coming in contact with the Mother. He was a teacher at Koraput when one day in the first week of August 1954 he received a letter from Shri K. C. Pati (well known as Prapatti in the Ashram which he joined a few months later), then a lecturer in Philosophy at Jeypore, to sing an invocatory song at a meeting to be held to celebrate Sri Aurobindo’s Birth Anniversary at Jeypore. The author knew nothing of Sri Aurobindo except that he had been a great leader of the nationalists out to achieve the freedom of the country in the first decade of the 20th century. He even did not know Shri Pati, though the latter had heard of him as a gifted singer.

The author responded to the invitation. At the meeting he saw the pictures of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for the first time. The event was to mean a new birth for him.

The vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother began moulding his lifestyle and activities. He had the privilege to meet the Mother several times and to obtain Her Blessings. As he says so candidly, “Sri Aurobindo came to me through the best part of my being—music.”

The disarmingly frank narrative is not just a chronology of the author’s life and an account of his worthy wife and brilliant children, it sheds light on several matters such as the social conditions prevailing in rural Orissa in his childhood, the problems faced by thinkers like him out to introduce new concepts in education, so on and so forth. He also records his valuable impression of some of the remarkable personalities in the Ashram and musings on several contemporary issues. The work has a charm of its own.

MANOJ DAS