

# THE ADVENT

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*A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of  
Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future*



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*The Advent*

New words are needed to express new ideas,  
new forms are necessary to manifest new forces.

THE MOTHER

# The ADVENT

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Even now great thoughts are here  
that walk alone.

SRI AUROBINDO



# THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - Sri Aurobindo.

## EDITORIALS\*

### THE MOTHER'S COMMENTARY

ON

### DHAMMAPADA

#### THE BRAHMIN

*O Brahmin! Struggle hard, seal off the stream, drive away desires.*

*Knowing that all elements of existence have dissolved, you will know the Uncreated.* (1)

*When the Brahmin has gone beyond the dualities, then he attains knowledge and all his bondages disappear.* (2)

\* Based on the Mother's Talks.

*Him I call a Brahmin for whom there is neither the shore nor the shoreless, for whom both are non-existent, one who is free from fear, free from attachment.* (3)

*Him I call a Brahmin who is given to meditation and is free from impurities, who has settled down and done what is to be done, the sinless who has attained the supreme Good.* (4)

*The sun burns by the day, the moon shines by the night, the warrior gleams in his armour, the Brahmin is luminous in his meditation, the Buddha sheds his effulgence day and night.* (5)

*He has cast away his sins, therefore he is a Brahmin. He has led the life of discipline, therefore he is a monk. But a recluse is he who is cleansed of all impurities.* (6)

*One must not hurt a Brahmin, nor should a Brahmin, when hurt, hit back. It is a disgrace to him who hurts a Brahmin, but a greater disgrace it is to the Brahmin who hits back.* (7)

*There is no greater good for man than to withdraw the mind from its cherished objects. The more the wicked mind quietens, the more the suffering ceases.* (8)

*Him I call a Brahmin who does not do wrong, whether by the body or by speech or by mind, who is self-controlled in all the three domains.* (9)

*Bow to him with reverence, whoever has taught you the doctrine of the Enlightened, even as a Brahmin does to the sacrificial Fire.* (10)

*Not by matted locks nor by pedigree nor by birth does one become a Brahmin. He is a Brahmin in whom there is the Truth, the Right, the who is free.* (11)

O fool! What for your matted locks? What for your robe of animal-skin? Within, you are a dense jungle, only in the outside you are trimmed. (12)

I name that living being a Brahmin who, even though clothed in dirty rags, the body reduced to mere veins, is solitary, in meditation, dwelling in the forests. (13)

I do not call him a Brahmin who is merely born in a Brahmin family, of a Brahmin mother and is rich and vain. One who possesses nothing, who is attached to nothing, him I call a Brahmin. (14)

I call him a Brahmin who has broken all bondages and has no fear, who has no attachment, who is free. (15)

I call him a Brahmin who has cut the thongs and straps and the chain with all its links, who has thrown off the yoke and is thus enlightened. (16)

I call him a Brahmin who bears without resentment blows and shackles, whose force is in forbearance and who possesses the strength of an army. (17)

I call him a Brahmin who is free from anger, who is true to his faith, true to his practice, faithful to the doctrine, who has self-control and, for the last time has taken a body. (18)

I call him a Brahmin who does not stick to a desire, even as water does not stick to a lotus-leaf or as a mustard-seed to the point of a needle. (19)

I call him a Brahmin who has in this life known the end of suffering, laid down his load and is free from bondages. (20)

I call him a Brahmin who is profound in knowledge, strong in intelligence, who can discern which is the Path and which is not the Path, who has attained the supreme Goal. (21)

*I call him a Brahmin who does not keep company with householders nor with wandering monks, who has no home and very few needs. (22)*

*I call him a Brahmin who refrains from hurting creatures, timid or strong, who does not kill nor cause to kill. (23)*

*I call him a Brahmin who is friendly among the unfriendly, calm among the violent, disinterested among the interested. (24)*

*I call him a Brahmin from whom passion and hatred and pride and pretence have dropped away even like a mustard-seed from the point of a needle. (25)*

*I call him a Brahmin who utters words that are smooth and instructive, offending none. (26)*

*I call him a Brahmin who does not, in this world, take anything long or short, small or big, good or bad, which has not been given to him. (27)*

*I call him a Brahmin who has no desire in this world or in the other, who has no longing, who is free. (28)*

*I call him a Brahmin who has no yearning, who has attained the highest knowledge, who is free from doubts, who has reached the profoundest immortality. (29)*

*I call him a Brahmin who has cast away the twin bonds of sin and virtue, who is free from grief, and free from impurity, who is pure. (30)*

*I call him a Brahmin who is like the Moon, stainless, pure, clear, serene, whose worldly cravings have withered away. (31)*

*I call him a Brahmin who has gone beyond this path of mire, hard to traverse, this round of worldly life, the delusion,*

*who has crossed over and reached the other shore, who is given to meditation, who is unmoved, free from doubt, free from needs, wholly withdrawn.* (32)

*I call him a Brahmin who has cast off all desires, has no home and wanders free, who has exhausted all hankering.* (33)

*I call him a Brahmin who has here below thrown out all thirst, who has no home and wanders free, who has exhausted all hankering.* (34)

*I call him a Brahmin who has abandoned ties human or heavenly, who is free from all ties.* (35)

*I call him a Brahmin who has rejected all attraction and repulsion, who has become indifferent, free from limitation, who has conquered all the worlds, the hero.* (36)

*I call him a Brahmin who has the perfect knowledge of the birth and death of all beings, who has no attachment, who is the Blessed and the Enlightened.* (37)

*I call him a Brahmin whose destiny is known neither to the Gods nor to the demi-gods nor to men, whose bonds have dwindled away, the Worthy.* (38)

*I call him a Brahmin who has neither the past nor the future nor the present, who owns nothing, who receives nothing.* (39)

*I call him a Brahmin who is puissant, the very best, the hero, the supreme sage who has conquered all foes, the Impassible, the purified, the enlightened.* (40)

*I call him a Brahmin who knows his previous lives, who sees heaven and hell, and thus having come to the end of births and become a sage, attained perfect knowledge, attained all perfection.* (41)

**S**UCH is the conclusion of the Dhammapada and if we have practised—to take up their image—only a mustard grain of all that has been taught us, well, we have not lost our time.

There is one thing which is not spoken of here, in the Dhammapada : it is a supreme disinterestedness and a supreme liberation to follow the discipline of perfecting oneself, the march of progress, not with a precise end in view as described here, the liberation of Nirvana, but because this march of progress is the profound law and the purpose of earthly life, the truth of universal existence and because you put yourself in tune with that, spontaneously whatever be the result.

There is a deep trust in the divine Grace, a total surrender to the Divine Will, an integral adhesion to the Divine Plan which causes things to be done that should be done without caring for the result. That is the perfect liberation. That truly is the abolition of suffering. The consciousness is filled with an unchanging delight and each step that one takes reveals a marvel of splendour.

We are grateful to Buddha for what he has brought for human progress and as I told you at the beginning, we shall try to realise a little of all the beautiful things he has taught us, but we shall leave the goal and the result of our endeavour to the supreme Wisdom that surpasses all understanding.

September 5, 1958

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

## STEAD AND SPIRITS

### I

CONSIDERABLE attention has been attracted and excitement created by the latest development of Mr. W. T. Stead's agency for communicant spirits which he calls Julia's Bureau. The Supposed Communications of Mr. Gladstone, Lord Beaconsfield and other distinguished politicians on the question of the Budget have awakened much curiosity, ridicule and even indignation. The ubiquitous eloquence of Lord Curzon has been set flowing by what he considers this unscrupulous method of pressing the august departed into the ranks of liberal electioneering agents, and he has penned an indignant letter to the papers in which there is much ornate Curzonian twaddle about sacred mysteries and the sanctities of the grave. If there is anything at all in the alleged communications from departed souls which have become of increasing interest to the European world, it ought to be fairly established that the grave is nothing but a hole in the earth containing a rotting piece of matter with which the spirit has no farther connection, and that the spirit is very much the same after death as before, takes much interest in small, trivial and mundane matters and is very far from regarding his new existence as a solemn sacred and mysterious affair. If so, we do not see why we either should approach the departed spirit with long and serious faces or with any more unusual feelings than curiosity, interest and eagerness to acquire knowledge of the other world and communication with those we knew and loved in this, in fact, the ordinary human and earthly feelings existing between souls sundered by time and space, but still capable of communication. But Lord Curzon still seems to be labouring under the crude Christian conception of the blessed dead as angels harping in heaven whose spotless plumes ought not to be roughly disturbed by human breath and of spiritual communication as a sort of necromancy, the spirit of Mr. Gladstone being summoned from his earthly bed and getting into it again and tucking himself up comfortably in his coffin

after Julia and Mr. Stead have done with him. We should have thought that in the bold and innovating mind of India's only Viceroy these coarse European superstitions ought to have been destroyed long ago.

It is not however, Lord Curzon but Mr. Stead and the spirits with whom we have to deal. We know Mr. Stead as a pushing and original journalist, not always over refined or delicate either in his actions or expressions, skilful in the advertisement of his views, excitable, earnest, declamatory, loud and even hysterical, if you will, in some of his methods, but certainly neither a liar nor a swindler. He does and says what he believes and nothing else. It is impossible to dismiss his Bureau as an imposture or mere journalistic reclame. It is impossible to dismiss the phenomena of spirit communications, even with all the imposture that unscrupulous moneymakers have imported into them, as unreal or a deception. All that can reasonably be said is that their true nature has not yet been established beyond dispute. There are two conceivable explanations, one that of actual spirit communication, the other that of vigorously dramatised imaginary conversations jointly composed with wonderful skill and consistency by the subconscious minds, whatever that may be, of the persons present, the medium being the chief dramaturge of this subconscious literary Committee. This theory is so wildly improbable and so obviously opposed to the nature of the phenomena themselves, that only an obstinate unwillingness to admit new facts and ideas can explain its survival, although it was natural and justifiable in the first stages of investigation. There remains the explanation of actual spirit communication. But even when we have decided on this hypothesis as the base of our investigation, we have to be on our guard against a multitude of errors; for the communications are vitiated first by the errors and self-deceptions of the medium and the sitters, then by the errors and self-deceptions of the communicant spirits, and, worst of all, by deliberate deceit, lies and jugglery on the part of the visitants from the other world. The element of deceit and jugglery on the part of the medium and his helpers is not always small, but can easily be got rid of. Cheap scepticism and cheaper ridicule in such matters is only useful for comforting small brains and weak imaginations with a sense of superiority to the larger minds

who do not refuse to enquire into phenomena which are at least widespread and of a consistently regular character. The true attitude is to examine carefully the nature of the phenomena, the conditions that now detract from their value and the possibility of removing them and providing perfect experimental conditions which would enable us to arrive at a satisfactory scientific result. Until the value of the communications are scientifically established, any attempt to use them for utilitarian, theatrical or yet lighter purposes is to be deprecated as such misuse may end in shutting a wide door to potential knowledge upon humanity.

From this point of view Mr. Stead's bizarre experiments are to be deprecated. The one redeeming feature about them is that, as conducted, they seem to remove the first elementary difficulty in the way of investigation, the possibility of human deceit and imposture. We presume that he has got rid of professional mediums and allows only earnest-minded and honourable investigators to be present. But the other elements of error and confusion are encouraged rather than obviated by the spirit and methods of Mr. Stead's Bureau. First, there is the error and self-deception of the sitters. The spirit does not express himself directly but has to give his thoughts at third hand; they come first to the intermediary spirit, Julia or another, by her they are conveyed to the human medium and through him conveyed by automatic or conscious speech or writing to the listeners. It is obvious how largely the mind of the medium and, to a smaller but still great extent, the thought-impressions of the other sitters must interfere, and this without the least intention on their part, rather in spite of a strong wish in the opposite direction. Few men really understand how the human mind works or fitted to watch the processes of their own conscious and half-conscious thought even when the mind is disinterested, still less when it is active and interested in the subject of communication. The sitters interfere, first, by putting in their own thoughts and expressions suggested by the beginnings of the communication, so that what began as a spirit conversation ends in a tangle of the medium's or sitter's ideas with the little of his own that the spirit can get in now and then. They interfere not only by suggesting what they themselves think or would say on the subject, but by

suggesting what they think the spirit ought dramatically to think or say, so that Mr. Gladstone is made to talk in interminable cloudy and circumambient periods which were certainly his oratorical style but can hardly have been the staple of his conversation, and Lord Beaconsfield is obliged to be cynical and immoral in the tone of his observations. They interfere again by eagerness, which sometimes produces replies according to the sitter's wishes and sometimes others which are unpleasant or alarming, but in neither case reliable. This is especially the case in answers about the future, which ought never to be asked. It is true that many astonishing predictions occur which are perfectly accurate, but these are far outweighed by the mass of false and random prediction. These difficulties can only be avoided by rigidly excluding every question accompanied by or likely to raise eagerness or expectation and by cultivating entire mental passivity. The last however is impossible to the medium unless he is a practised Yogin, or in a trance or a medium who has attained the habit of passivity by an unconscious development, due to long practice. In the sitters we do not see how it is to be induced. Still, without unemotional indifference to the nature of the answer and mental passivity the conditions for so difficult and delicate a process of communication cannot be perfect.

Error and self-deception from the other side of the veil cannot be obviated by any effort on this side, all that we can do is to recognise that the spirits are limited in knowledge and cabined by character, so that we have to allow for the mental and moral equation in the communicant when judging the truth and value of the communication. Absolute deception and falsehood can only be avoided by declining to communicate with spirits of a lower order and being on guard against their masquerading under familiar or distinguished names. How far Mr. Stead and his circle have guarded against these latter errors we cannot say, but the spirit in which the sittings are conducted, does not encourage us to suppose that scrupulous care is taken in these respects. It is quite possible that some playful spirit has been enacting Mr. Gladstone to the too enthusiastic circle and has amused himself by elaborating those cloudy-luminous periods which he saw the sitters expected from the great deceased Opportunist. But we incline to the view that what we have got in

this now famous spirit interview, is a small quantity of Gladstone, a great deal of Stead and a fair measure of the disembodied Julia and the assistant psychics.

## II

### STEAD AND MASKELYNE

The vexed question of spirit communication has been a subject of permanent public controversy in England. So much that is of the utmost importance to our views of the world, religion, science, life philosophy, is crucially interested in the decision of the question, that no fresh proof or disproof, establishment or refutation of this genuineness and significance of spirit communications can go disregarded. But no discussion of the question which proceeds merely on first principles can be of any value. It is a matter of evidence, of the value of the evidence and of the meaning of the evidence. If the ascertained facts are in favour of spiritualism, it is no argument against the facts that they contradict the received dogmas of science or excite the ridicule alike of the enlightened sceptic and of the matter-of-fact citizen. If they are against spiritualism, it does not help the latter that it supports religion or pleases the imagination and flatters the emotions of mankind. Facts are what we desire, not enthusiasm or ridicule; evidence is what we have to weigh, not unsupported arguments or questions of fitness or probability. The improbability may be true, the probable entirely false.

In judging the evidence, we must attach especial importance to the opinion of men who have dealt with the facts at first hand. Recently, two such men have put succinctly their arguments for and against the truth of spiritualism. Mr. W.T. Stead and the famous conjurer, Mr. Maskelyne. We will deal with Mr. Maskelyne first, who totally denies the value of facts on which spiritualism is based. Mr. Maskelyne puts forward two absolutely inconsistent theories, first, that spiritualism is all fraud and humbug, the second, that is all subconscious mentality. The first was the theory which has

hitherto been held by the opponents of the new phenomena, the second the theory to which they are being driven by an accumulation of indisputable evidence. Mr. Maskalyne, himself a professed master of jugglery and illusion, is naturally disposed to put down all mediums as irregular competitors in his own art; but the fact that a conjurer can produce an illusory phenomenon, is no proof that all phenomena are conjuring. He further argues that no spiritualistic phenomena have been produced when he could persuade Mr. Stead to adopt conditions which precluded fraud. We must know Mr. Maskalyne's conditions and have Mr. Stead's corroboration of this statement before we can be sure of the value we must attach to this kind of refutation. In any case we have the indisputable fact that Mr. Stead himself has been the medium in some of the most important and best ascertained of the phenomena. Mr. Maskalyne knows that Mr. Stead is an honourable man incapable of a huge and impudent fabrication of this kind and he is therefore compelled to fall back on the wholly unproved theory of the subconscious mind. His arguments do not strike us as very convincing. Because we often write without noticing what we are writing, mechanically, therefore, says this profound thinker, automatic writing must be the same kind of mental process. The one little objection to this sublimely felicitous argument is that automatic writing has no resemblance whatever to mechanical writing. When a man writes mechanically, he does not notice what he is writing; when he writes automatically, he notices it carefully and has his whole attention fixed on it. When he writes mechanically, his hand records something that it is in his mind to write; when he writes automatically, his hand transcribes something which it is not in his mind to write and which is often the reverse of what his mind would tell him to write. Mr. Maskalyne farther gives the instance of a lady writing a letter and unconsciously putting an old address which, when afterwards questioned she could not remember. This amounts to no more than a fit of absent-mindedness in which an old forgotten fact rose to the surface of the mind and by the revival of old habit was reproduced in the paper, but again sank out of immediate consciousness as soon as the mind returned to the present. This is a mental phenomenon essentially of the same class as our continuing unintentionally to write the date

of the last year even in this year's letters. In one case it is the revival, in the other the persistence of an old habit. What has to do with the phenomena of automatic writing which are of an entirely different class and not attended by absent-mindedness at all? Mr. Maskelyne makes no attempt to explain the writing of facts in their nature unknowable to the medium, or of repeated predictions of the future, which are common in automatic communications.

On the other side Mr. Stead's arguments are hardly more convincing. He bases his belief, first, on the nature of the communications from his son and others in which he could not be deceived by his own mind and, secondly, on the fact that not only statements of the past, but predictions of the future occur freely. The first argument is of no value unless we know the nature of the communication and the possibility or impossibility of the facts stated having been previously known to Mr. Stead. The second is also not conclusive in itself. There are some predictions which a keen mind can make by inference or guess, but, if we notice the hits and forget the misses, we shall believe them to be prophecies and not ordinary previsions. The real value of Mr. Stead's defence of the phenomena lies in the remarkable concrete instance he gives of a prediction from which this possibility is entirely excluded. The spirit of Julia, he states, predicted the death within the year of an acquaintance who, within the time stated, suffered from two illnesses, in one of which the doctors despaired of her recovery. On each occasion the predicting spirit was naturally asked whether the illness was not to end in the death predicted, and on each she gave an unexpected negative answer and finally predicted a death by other than natural means. As a matter of fact, the lady in question before the year was out, leaped out of a window and was killed. This remarkable prophecy was obviously neither a successful inference nor a fortunate guess, nor even a surprising coincidence. It is a convincing and undisputable prophecy. Its appearance in the automatic writing can only be explained either by the assumption that Mr. Stead has a subliminal self, calling itself Julia, gifted with an absolute and exact power of prophecy denied to the man as we know him,—a violent, bizarre and unproved assumption,—or by the admission that there was a communicant with superior powers to ordinary humanity

using the hand of the writer. Who that was, Julia or another, ghost, spirit or other being, is a question that lies beyond. This controversy, with the worthlessness of the arguments on either side and the supreme worth of the one concrete and precise fact given, is a signal proof of our contention that, in deciding this question, it is not a priori arguments, but facts used for their evidential value as an impartial lawyer would use them, that will eventually prevail.

(Karmayogin)

SRI AUROBINDO

## SRI AUROBINDO AND THE NEW AGE

### • CHAPTER IV

#### PAINTING (Contd)

##### • FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT

**B**AROQUE painting launched upon its sumptuous career in Bologna. It was gorgeous and imposing with its lavish decorations and a somewhat exaggerated incorporation of some of the characteristics of the Florentine, Mantuan, and Venetian styles. El Greco (1548-1615) the Spaniard, can be called a precursor of Baroque painting. He was a foreigner who had made Spain his home. His painting is distinguished by a deft delineation of feelings and emotions, and he did not scruple to sacrifice traditional technique in order to be able to give a swaying intensity to them in his pictures. His outlook on life had a strong strain of the tragic, and his artistic creations, which he undertook more to please himself than the world—though he was very popular in spite of his unconventional ways—vibrate with a depth of religious pathos. In him we find a blend of the old and the new. He was a follower of the old Byzantine and Venetian styles in painting, but a modernist in his unconventional, non-conformist manner, which made free with the accredited technique. He was a child of the past, having faith in the Catholic religion and a touch of mysticism, but his spirit rebelled against the technical extravagance of the Baroque tradition, and, breaking loose from it, forged new modes of self-expression. This born rebel in El Greco makes him one of the inaugurators of modernism.

Velasquez (1599-1660) presents a striking contrast to El Greco. He was little influenced by Italian painting, and had nothing of the religious or mystic vein of El Greco. He was a staunch realist, having his feet firmly planted on earth. His pictures have a perfection of line and colour, and reveal such a cold, matter-of-fact outlook on life

that he may be called a modern of the moderns. He had no poetry in him and little imagination, and in this he represents a more decided step of seventeenth century painting towards the manner of the moderns than did El Greco, and a more vigorous and definite swing towards modern realism. He portrayed the social life of Spain, and his realistic, objective approach, made even his religious pictures glow with an arresting vividness. That his fame has been reinstated in the recent years bears witness to the strong elements of modernity his genius embodied.

There was a great flowering of the art of painting in the Netherlands. This painting, called genre,<sup>1</sup> concerned itself not with the portrayal of the voluptuous luxury of the rich nobility and the higher strata of aristocratic society, but introduced a noteworthy tendency towards the life and manners of the middle-class men, men of trade and commerce, the manufacturers and the people of the towns. Though with a pronounced streak of sentimentality, genre painting was realistic, dealing with scenes of nature and appealing to the people through representations of the objects of every-day use.

Mention must here be made of the Haarlem school of painting which produced remarkable artists like Ruysdael and Frans Hals. Ruysdael was probably the greatest landscape painter of the Netherlands, next to Rembrandt. About his famous picture, "Mill near Duurstede", Henry S. Lucas says: "The placid stream, the sky mottled with patches of color, the town lying in deep shadow, and the tall mill near it lighted by straggling beams from the declining sun reveal the poetry of Dutch landscapes."<sup>2</sup> Frans Hals had a fluent brush, and he excelled in portrait painting, in which he showed an unflinching eye for the essential and the vivid. His method was impressionistic, and the Impressionists of the latter part of the nineteenth century were influenced by it. Another painter of eminence to influence the Impressionists of the modern times was John Vermeer, who had also an eye for the essentials, and a purely realistic style. The name most honoured in Dutch painting is however, Rembrandt (1606-1669) whose mastery of technique and consummate handling

<sup>1</sup> It was called "genre", because most of its motifs were realistic treatment of the scenes of everyday life.

<sup>2</sup> *A Short History of Civilisation* by Henry Lucas.

of light and shade geared to a thoughtful and poetic temperament made him one of the most universally admired painters in the West. He united in himself most of the qualities, psychological and aesthetic, which endow a painter with a harmonious greatness, and therein lies the secret of his influence on many of the modern painters. He painted portraits, landscapes and groups of people with such uniform excellence, such marvellous use of colour that, in his field of the realistic painting of the common scenes and objects of daily life, he stands unrivalled. But what he lacked was higher idealism, a flight of imagination, which invests some of the pictures of the Middle ages and the High Renaissance with an unearthly magnificence. His world was confined to the visible, the commonplace, and the homely. But he drew out of ordinary stuff such a meaning and significance, such an aesthetic appeal and charm, and achieved such a perfection of form by a harmonious blend of richness and restraint, simplicity and grandeur, vigour and delicacy, and the exceptional and the humdrum that his pictures have always met with universal appreciation. Not for him the radiant peaks and tapering spires of vision and experience, but the rolling plains of grey-green scenes, and the warmth and colour of common human life. His imagination, his psychological insight, and his idealism, in whatever measure he possessed it, are all harnessed to the service of the forms and interests of the phenomenal world of our daily experience. This is, indeed, the secret of his art, and it marks him as one of the most potent forces in the shaping and guiding of the modern creative mind in painting.

While the painters of the northern Netherlands were realistic in the secular sense, like Hals, Vermeer, and Rembrandt, those of the southern were realists with a pronounced strain of religiosity. The former were protestants with a rather dry, matter-of-fact sense of religious morality, but the latter were Catholics, not of the devout Mediaeval type, but those without any romance and higher idealism. Rubens (1577-1640) was a painter of outstanding merit. He was more secular, more of the earth earthy than Rembrandt. His religious pictures are at best only human figures drawn with a halo of myth and legend round them. He signalises another decisive step towards the secular, realistic, objective painting of the nineteenth century, which occupied itself exclusively with the outer appearance of

things. Rubens was remarkably prolific in artistic creation, and his exuberance was matched only by his unwearied enthusiasm. Excitement, agitation, wildness of movement, which in lesser artists might have resulted in a welter and confusion, lent themselves gracefully to the general harmony of his conception and scheme. He summed up in himself the main traditions of the Flemish painting, but he belonged to the future not only by his secular realism, but by his strong, active and pragmatic temperament, and his introduction of the commercial spirit into his art. He deserves the epithet of banal which Herbert Read bestows upon him; for, indeed, he took "the actual for the ideal," and thereby showed his basic affinity to the modern scientific spirit. He was a striking contrast to El Greco, and represents the modern tendency of revolt against the past, leading not to an unfettered scaling of the heights of idealistic vision of beauty and perfection, but to a masterful dealing with the visible factors of life in the interests of an art which has turned its back upon the spiritual and the intangible, and lavishes much of its devotion upon the concrete and the tangible.

RISHABHCHAND

*(to be continued)*

## READINGS IN THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

### DEATH

SO far regarding liberation from death. But what exactly is death ? Is it just a sudden happening, an event that comes to be at a particular moment and terminates the bodily existence ? No, says the Upanishad, death is not something that comes all of a sudden and ends everything. It is a continuous process of wearing down life and the body that houses it, and it is only the climax, the final precipitation into extinction of life that is known by the name. There is, in the life of man, a perpetual going forth and coming back of his energies on the impulsion of desire; the senses, through their organs, leap forth at every object that comes by, seize it and occupy themselves with it. Another object sails into view and again the same process of seizure and appropriation. According as the object is one of like or dislike, there is augmentation or diminution of the nervous energy. Either way there is a spending, a constant outflow that depletes the life-energy and sets afoot a movement of steady disintegration. Death is slowly preparing itself. What are the doors of this outflow of life-force, the senses and their instruments, and what are the objects that overpower our senses thiswise ? That is the question that is next asked of Yajnavalkya.<sup>1</sup>

Artabhaga, of the line of Jaratkaru, next, rises and asks :

Yajnavalkya, how many are the seizers and how many the over-seizers ? How many are the senses that seize the objects ? How many are the objects that overpower the senses and drag them to themselves ?

Yajnavalkya : Eight are the seizers and eight the over-seizers.

Artabhaga : What then are the eight that seize and the eight that over-seize ?

Yajnavalkya : Prana, Breath,<sup>2</sup> is the seizer; and fragrance that

<sup>1</sup> III.2

<sup>2</sup> standing for smell, organ of smell.

is wafted on the breath that brings it<sup>1</sup> is the over-seizer. It is the fragrance that attracts the sense of smell and impinges itself upon it through the incoming breath. This is the first.

Speech is the seizer; Name—and what is denoted by name—is the over-seizer. For by Speech, indeed, are the names i.e. words (and their meanings, *artha*) expressed. This is the second.

The tongue is the seizer; taste is the over-seizer. By the tongue, indeed, one knows the tastes. This is the third.

The eye is the seizer; form is the over-seizer. By the eye, indeed, one sees the forms. This is the fourth.

The ear is the seizer; sound is the over-seizer. By the ear, indeed, one hears the sounds. This is the fifth.

The mind is the seizer; desire is the over-seizer. By the mind, indeed, one cherishes the desires.

The hand is the seizer; action is the over seizer. By the hands, indeed, is action done. This is the seventh.

The skin is the seizer; touch is the overseizer. By the skin, indeed, one feels the touches. This is the eighth.

These are the eight that seize and these the eight that over-seize.

If such are the constituent agents of death,—and they are ubiquitous—, is Death the final truth? Or is there anything that is greater, what can overpower and swallow Death itself? Evidently there is Something. Otherwise life would not preponderate over death. That is the next question that Artabhaga addresses to Yajnavalkya.

Yajnavalkya, if all this is food for Death, what Deity is that to whom Death itself is the banquet?

Yajnavalkya replies that Death which swallows all is indeed Agni that consumes all. And even as this Agni is swallowed up by waters, so too Death is contained by the Waters of Life, streams of the Consciousness-Energy in which all creation is afloat. And he who meditates upon this truth and realises that death is not the last but that beyond it is Immortality which is in the keeping of the pure Waters of the Divine Consciousness, conquers further death.

<sup>1</sup> *apāna*, *apāniyatvāt*.

What happens, in such a case of liberation, to the senses, to the personalities that are formed round them ? This is the next question of Artabhaga. Do they go forth with the person when he leaves ?

No, replies Yajnavalkya. They are all dissolved here itself in the embodiment. All the dead weight is left in the material body and only the liberated being, the soul goes to its destination, leaving solely his Glory behind.

But what of the ordinary man in ignorance ? Surely, all is not dissolved. There is something that persists and summons the soul back to mortal existence. Asks Artabhaga :

Yajnavalkya, when on his death, his speech attains to its universal Cause—the stuff from which it derives—Agni; when his prana attains to the wind; the eye to the sun; the mind to the moon; the ear to the quarters; the body to the earth; the ether in the heart to the skies; the hairs of the body to the annual herbs; the hairs of the head to the trees; blood and semen to the waters; where does the soul, the purusha remain ?

Too profound a question to be discussed in the public,—so feels Yajnavalkya and takes Artabhaga by the hand elsewhere. And in secret they deliberate. We only know what they conclude upon : the soul rests on its *karma*, in the folds of the lasting, potent impressions gathered during its life-time. And according as this *karma* is good or evil, meritorious or sinful, so will his next embodiment be, good or evil, meritorious or sinful.

Artabhaga, of the line of Jaratkaru, had no more questions. He remained silent.

M. P. PANDIT

## SPACE AND TIME

Space and Time constitute the boundaries of our daily lives. They are the enclosures within whose confines our mental, vital, physical life can move and have its freedom, but not beyond. We are often inclined to trace the source of our unhappiness to this limitation which seems to baulk our efforts and stall our progress whether in the material or in the spiritual field. It is a far cry in Space between this world of Ignorance and the transcendent kingdom of Knowledge and Bliss; it is a far cry in Time between our aspiration for Knowledge and our realisation of it in life. Have we not often felt how happier we would be if we could only be freed from our subjection to Space, Time and Causality? It is therefore not surprising that in our frustration we come to regard Space and Time, if not as instruments of torture, as elements which are inimical to our peace, progress and happiness!

But is this denunciation justified? Can we not, on the contrary, point our accusing finger at the limitation of our own perception, of the receptivity of our own senses? For example, our senses as constituted in us can see the world in a three-dimensional space only, but conceivably Space may have more dimensions than three, of which our senses due to some inherent limitation of their own are unaware. Let us take the case of a being in a single-dimensional world. To that being whose perception does not extend beyond sensations, the whole universe appears as the Line; going beyond the Line would seem to the being as if going into nothingness. It is only aware of a series of emerging points on the line; one point comes into view, disappears; another point then issues forth, disappears, so on. The points that disappear are described as the past and the points that are yet to emerge as the future. All the dimensions other than the Line appear to that being as a mysterious movement in the category of Time. If this being can rise to the domain of two-dimensional space, it will perceive that what appeared in the lower status as a movement into the past and movement from the future is now a higher dimension of Space. Its perception and movement are now bounded by the

length and breadth of the plane, but the dimension of 'above and below' and 'the right and the left' is shrouded in mystery; so are the sections of the plane which appear to come from the future and disappear into the past. When this being of two-dimensional world rises beyond its plane it will see the object as we see it in our three-dimensional space. But are we certain that the view of the objects as perceived by our senses is the whole and real view and is not itself a sectional view of some other mysterious entity of which we are quite ignorant? In other words, is not our Time-perception an intimation of a yet higher dimension of Space of which we may become aware if we increase the receptivity of our senses? Time then may be regarded as invisible Space; when the visibility of Space increases, the sphere of Time becomes smaller and smaller.

Is Time then an illusion? Pragmatically at any rate it is real to us. The young tree in the backyard was a sapling about a year ago and in the fullness of Time will grow into a giant tree. Time's influence is very much in evidence. When we reflect how we have been adding years to our age, Time is poignantly real to us. It may be that what has passed away is here with us in a higher dimension of Space, but since we do not possess that higher dimensionality, Time is quite real, but its reality is derived from the limitation of Space-perception. Is Space then real? Judged by its reference to Time it does appear to be intrinsically real. But we have seen that the dimensions of Space have no fixity as they depend upon the scale of observation which the observer brings to his act of perception. Theoretically we can go on increasing the dimensions of Space, with their corresponding Time-relation, to infinity, or we can equally postulate Space without dimensions. And what is Space without dimensions or Space with infinite dimensions? Have we arrived somewhere? Are we knocking at the gates of Something, an Absolute, a Reality, which is spaceless and timeless or which is itself Space and Time?

When we attempt to reach the root of any aspect of the manifest world we are led to suppose that beyond its form, beyond its appearance, there must exist some sort of causal state, some undifferentiated continuum, of which that particularised form would be an apparent development. The first of the continua underlying all perceptible forms appears to be Space. The Indian philosophy defines Space as

a limitless, undifferentiated indivisible continuum and relative space as imaginary divisions built in it. Similarly Time is called an 'indivisible rod' (*akhaṇḍa-daṇḍāyamāna*) and is the second perceptible continuum. The absolute Time which is ever-present eternity seems inseparable from Space. Relative Time results from the apparent divisions of Space. The third continuum is Thought. The visible universe is looked upon as a form of Thought of its creator. Whenever we go to the root of anything we find behind substance a form, a concept whose nature is identified with that of Thought.

If we regard the cosmos as the manifestation of a conscious power then there must be a conscious substratum for each of the three perceptible continua of Space, Time and Thought. The substratum of Space is Existence (*Sat*), the substratum of Time is Experience or Enjoyment (*Ananda*) and the substratum of Thought is Consciousness (*Cit*). Before there can be location, place, dimension, there must be something to locate, some sort of existence. Hence Existence must pre-exist Space. The principle of perception pre-exists Time. The first principle of experience is said to correspond to pure, absolute Bliss the innermost nature of Existence. Says the Upanishad : "From Bliss alone are these creatures born and being born they live by Bliss and to Bliss they go hence and return." The substratum of Thought is Consciousness and implies someone conscious of the existence of Thought. Therefore Consciousness as the fundamental substratum of Thought is linked with the notion of individual existence, or self, or being. Behind the individual is yet a further substratum, a formless Immensity, which appears as the innermost nature of things and can be realised as the Self, Soul, Atman.

The soul is thus the unity that links up all individual beings. It is the indivisible Continuum in which beings appear as individual conscious units. Everything existing contains a part of the universal Soul, just as every form encloses a part of Space and every duration a part of Time. The individual soul is at no time really separated from the Atman. The three continua of Space-Time-Thought can be considered to be different aspects of one further, still more subtle causal substratum. This is called the Absolute, Brahman. It is the ultimate state in which Existence, the source of spatial form, Consciousness of knowledge, the basis of thought, and eternity of duration, the basis

of Experience or Enjoyment, are united. This ultimate principle is beyond reach of form, of thought and experience. It is beyond all categories of manifestation, beyond divisible time, beyond divisible space. "There sight attaineth not, nor speech attains, nor the mind. We know not, nor can we discern. How one should teach that?"—says the Upanishad. This Immensity, this Unknown, this Absolute is the innermost nature of everything.

Space and Time lend themselves to divergent approaches and different view points. We can so visualise Space as to make Time appear either unreal or as only a dimension of Space. Or we can deal with Time exclusively assigning a secondary status to Space. Or we can conceive of a many-sided relationship of Space and Time and derive widely differing interpretations of their nature and function. All this is possible or even inevitable because Space and Time are intimately related to Being and Consciousness. Now Being is one, Consciousness is one; in fact, at the summit both Being and Consciousness are inseparably one. In certain aspects Being is in the front, Consciousness behind; in some other aspects Consciousness takes the lead keeping Being in obscurity. Being and Consciousness are the fundamental aspects of the one omnipresent Reality. This Reality in its unmanifest state is the spaceless and timeless Absolute of which our mind can know nothing. It is indefinable and ineffable by our mental thought and mental language, and is only seizable in its fundamental aspects and manifested powers by a spiritual consciousness and a spiritual knowledge by identity.

The Absolute manifests itself in two terms, a Being and a Becoming. Being is the fundamental reality and Becoming the effectual reality. Being informs, inheres and constitutes Becoming and is always present in it. But such is the magic of the Infinite that Being and Becoming appear to our view as if they are two and separate. This distinction can be so striking that it is possible in one case to affirm the reality of Being, treating Becoming as an illusion or only phenomenally real, or, in the other case, to identify with Becoming exclusively by denying the reality of Being. The truth of Being and Becoming is that Being goes into hiding (or seeking) itself in Becoming in a descending order of involution and Becoming in turn seeks after Being in an ascending order of evolution. Becoming knows itself

fully when it knows itself as Being. To realise Being in Becoming and at the same time possess Becoming in the plenary freedom of Being is the true self-knowledge, the true aim of our terrestrial life.

Where Being is, Consciousness is there too, for one is the expression of the other. And when Being starts wearing disguises and going places in Becoming (in the Eternal's game of hide and seek), Consciousness follows suit. The Superconscient descends into an involutory self-forgetfulness at various levels of consciousness reaching an apparent negation of Itself in utter Inconscience; and the evolutionary return journey commencing from Inconscience courses progressively through the lower terms of Matter, Life and Mind and then through the higher term of Supermind to the summit of Superconscient Sachchidananda.

Space and Time can now be related to Being and Consciousness. There is the immobile status of an eternal Reality which is spaceless and timeless. In this status there is no time movement or time experience of a past, present and future. All is held unmanifested, in essence, in an eternal unity, in a supreme timeless Existence. It is the Spirit looking at itself, indrawn, self-absorbed in its essence and principle of being. In another poise of the same Reality, that which is unmanifested in the timeless status, that which is intended to be brought forth into manifestation, appears in Time in movement. It is now the Spirit looking at itself in the dynamism of its essence and principle. The Spaceless and Timeless and Space and Time are therefore one and the same Eternal in a two-fold aspect. The Unmanifest, the Absolute, the Spaceless and Timeless enters manifestation to discover Itself, so to say, in relativities and in Space and Time. Space and Time are the name we give for the self-extension of the one Spàceless and Timeless Reality. If we regard Space as a static extension in which things stand or move in a fixed order, and Time as a mobile extension, and relate both to the one Reality, then Space would be Brahman in self-extended status and Time would be Brahman in self-extended movement. Or if we regard Space not as something static but as something that is constantly moving, the constancy giving the impression of stability and mobility creating the sense of time-movement in a stable space, very much like a moving train appearing stationary to the traveller inside it engrossed in

witnessing the rushing landscape, then in this view Space and Time would not be separate self-extensions but a dual aspect of one and the same self-extension of the cosmic Eternal.

In the dynamism of its movement the Spirit may take its poise in different gradations of consciousness with corresponding views of Space and Time appropriate to each gradation. Each status of consciousness has its own Space and Time and even within each status different Space and Time exist. A purely physical Space might be regarded either as a self-extension of material Energy or its self-formed existence-field in which it formulates its action and creation. Time would be either itself a course of this movement or a division or continuum maintaining the continuity of the movement and at the same marking off its succession, as in the analogy of a running man in which each step that he takes is separate but there is something that takes the step and yet makes the movement continuous. Or Time would be a dimension of Space necessary for the complete action of the Energy but not recognised by us as such because it is not perceived by our senses in the same way as the other dimensions of Space are perceived but is seen by our consciousness subjectively. As Matter has its field of Space, Mind too has its own. Mind Space, however, is subtler than the physical Space; it is not a material but a spiritual Space in which Mind lives and moves. Beyond Mind there is the pure spiritual Space into which all movement seems to disappear. These gradations are, however, not trenchantly separated or insulated one from the other. There is an interpenetration. Mind, for instance, while moving in its own subtler Space can effectuate a movement in the Space of Matter even at a distance.

As with Space, so with Time. Each state of consciousness has its own Time-relation. Physical consciousness has its own sense and measure of Time; Mind consciousness and Mind Space have their own. As being in one plane can act on the consciousness of other planes and vice versa, it is perfectly possible to have variable time-relations of different statuses and co-existence of different time-movements. In a dream, for example, Time appears to be stretched; events seem to occur in long sequences and yet the dream may have taken not more than a few seconds of physical time. To sum up in the words of Sri Aurobindo : "...a given Time or Space or any

given Time-Space as a whole is a status of being in which there is a movement of the consciousness and force of the being, a movement that creates or manifests events and happenings; it is the relation of the consciousness that sees and the force that formulates the happenings, a relation inherent in the status, which determines the sense of Time and creates our awareness of Time-movement, Time-relation, Time-measure. In its fundamental truth the original status of Time behind all its variations is nothing else than the eternity of the Eternal, just as the fundamental truth of Space, the original sense of its reality, is the infinity of the Infinite.”

Sri Aurobindo refers to the three different states of consciousness which the Being can have with regard to its own eternity. First, in the immobile status of its essential existence the Self is wholly turned upon itself; there is no development of consciousness in movement. This is the timeless Eternity. In the second state, the Being's whole-consciousness is turned towards a simultaneous view of what we call the past, present and future—a total vision of Time eternity without division or distinction; it is a vast spiritual bird's eye view, so to speak, in which the three times coalesce into a single panorama. This is the stable Consciousness knowing itself in Time indivisibly and embracing all the mobile experience of the Time-self on the foundation of the immobile timeless Self. In Sri Aurobindo's terminology, this is the 'simultaneous integrality of Time.'<sup>1</sup> In the third state, the Consciousness-Force works out in successive movements and relations, i.e. in Time-movement, all things seen by it in the static vision of the Eternal. Thus the Consciousness can observe the whole Time-movement itself uninvolved in it, or it can take a stable position within the movement and see the three times simultaneously in a fixed or destined succession, or it can move with Time-movement from moment to moment and see the events that have happened recede into the past and those yet to happen coming from the future, or it can concentrate on the moment itself and see nothing but what is in the present. This simultaneous vision or experience is not only possible but perfectly normal and consistent to the being of the

<sup>1</sup> This triple knowledge of Time, *trikāla dṛṣṭi*, is not the normal awareness of our ordinary consciousness although we can attain to that consciousness through appropriate yogic disciplines.

Infinite. To the finite consciousness, on the contrary, this simultaneity of vision far from being logical and consistent presents an unbridgeable opposition or a contradiction. But what appear as contraries to the finite reason are indeed complementaries to the higher consciousness. It is because the normal function of the mind is to deal with finite things as finite, but when it comes to the question of spiritual experience which is itself the whole or contains the whole in itself the mind has a penchant to carry its segmenting reason there too and cuts a line of section between the Infinite and the finite. No wonder it runs into contradictions and irreconcilable oppositions. To understand the Infinite and the Eternal the consciousness must consent to pass beyond its finite reason to a larger reason, from a finite sense to a spiritual sense.

Again we do not possess this integral vision because we are limited in our consciousness and being. In our normal awareness we are neither the eternal Superconscious nor the utterly Inconscious, although both these extreme terms exercise a definitive influence on us. In the middle term of our separative existence, bounded by the limitations of Space and Time, we live a life of many-sided Ignorance mistaking our first view of things as the whole view, our surface living for the whole truth of our existence. We are absorbed in the present moment and capable of acting only in the present. The past has streamed away from us never to return or be re-lived except for a modicum of memory which does duty for us by recalling the past, not the whole past for that matter, but only a conceptual shadow of it. Of the future we know not all for it is not in the present and therefore for us not in existence. But to the true consciousness which is within us the past is very much in existence, it is as much active, living and productive as the present can be. The future too is an open book to it for somewhere in our inner being there is a field of cognition to which is open the knowledge of "perspective as well as a retrospective Time-sense, Time-vision, Time-perception," in which we can live indivisibly in the three times containing all their apparent division.

In Ignorance, we live in ego from moment to moment within the confines of our individual body, life and mind. To rise beyond Ignorance is to awaken to a concrete sense of our eternal self-existence

beyond the mutations of physical births and deaths, beyond our transitory existences in this and other worlds. The realisation of Spirit's timeless existence is the true immortality. There is also a secondary term of this immortality which has its truth; it is the perpetual continuity of some intermediate term which exists from life to life, from world to world, which is not the timeless Eternal but which expresses itself in perpetuity in eternal Time. This intermediate term is what is called our true being, the true spiritual individual within us, which is distinct from our superficial ego with whom we are identified in our surface consciousness and movements. By the knowledge of self in Non-Birth and Non-Being we attain to the realisation of our timeless immortality. By the knowledge and birth and becoming we realise the time-immortality of our spiritual being through all changes of mind and life and body. It is 'Timelessness translated into Time manifestation.' The first realisation frees us from the bondage to births and deaths; the second realisation in conjunction with the first confers a free possession, with right knowledge, the experiences of the spirit in its successions of time-eternity. Then shall we exist consciously in eternity and not in the bondage of the hour and the succession of the moment, and, at the same time, shall possess and govern from that inner eternity of being the course and process of the becoming, a dynamic condition with a spiritual self-possession and self-mastery.

Man need not remain in the finite mind tied to a moment-to-moment vision; his life and movement need not be restricted to the confines of a narrow physical Space and Time-vision. He has at his disposal well-tried spiritual disciplines whose aids he can seek in transcending his present imperfect human consciousness and gaining the heights of spiritual consciousness. He possesses in himself the necessary equipment to cross the frontiers of Ignorance and enter the realms of plenary Knowledge.

The crux of the problem, therefore, is Ignorance in which man finds himself today. But Ignorance is only a stage in the human evolution, the soul's brief halting place in its long arduous journey from the depths of Inconscient from which it has risen to the heights of the Spirit, its original home. Man can ill afford to make what is only a stage as his terminus and remain 'an insect crawling among

other ephemeral insects on a speck of surface mud' in the immensities of Space, and be carried helplessly, as it were, along the stream of Time more a slave than a master of his life or circumstance. He cannot rest content with an awareness of a modicum of his past, unable to look beyond his nose, let alone the distant future, and live in a few fleeting moments of the present. The evolutionary Force which has picked him from the mud and has carried him on its crest so long will not allow him to rest by the wayside indefinitely, or permit him meandering in the bypaths of Ignorance looking for will-o'-the-wisp. It is sure to carry him on its journey into the main stream of a higher evolutionary endeavour but if the tempo is to be stepped up man must become a conscious participant in this high purpose. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have assured us that this higher evolutionary trend is in the direction of an ascent from Mind to Supermind followed by a descent of the Supramental Consciousness and Force into the being effectuating a radical transformation of Mind, Life and Matter. That is the ideal set before us. It is a supreme adventure to be undertaken, a supreme goal to be reached. For to reach, possess and be possessed by Supermind is to possess a dynamic Truth-perspective of the Man, the Universe and the Transcendent, a totality of an integral Vision in which the Spaceless and Space, the Timeless and Time are telescoped.

KESHAVAMURTI

## LIFE DIVINE : SOME ASPECTS

### III

#### MATERIAL, ECONOMIC ORGANISATION AND ETHICS IN THE COLLECTIVE LIFE

“What the modern spirit has sought for is the economic social ultimate,—an ideal material organisation of civilisation and comfort, the use of reason and science and education for the generalisation of a utilitarian rationality which will make the individual a perfected social being in a perfected economic society.”<sup>1</sup>

“At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny...”<sup>2</sup>

“REASON, science and education” are the means by which the modern spirit wants to create individual and collective perfection. What remains of the old spiritual values is “moralised humanitarianism” and “Social ethicism”: these are to replace the old religious spirit and spiritual idealism.

Granting that the economic stress has a legitimate place in any scheme of reconstruction of collective life, the need to consider the adequacy of the psychological means, which modern man proposes to employ, remains.

“Reason and Science” as psychological means can only help but are not sufficient to solve the problems now facing humanity. This is, perhaps, being granted even by votaries of reason and Science now after the experience the world has had during the last forty years.

I want to deal particularly with the item, “Social ethicism”—in fact, with ethics as an effective means to solve human problems.

It is very likely that the beginning of ethics was the sense of recoil

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 932.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 933.

that even the primitive man felt from painful experiences of life. Then the growth of the sense of good and evil—particularly the sense of evil—was connected with the mind of desire; that is to say, good and evil had sensational value, what gave pleasure was good and what was painful was bad or evil.

Then the sense of good and evil advanced from the field of individual experience to society and acquired a utilitarian value; what was considered beneficial to Society was 'good' and its opposite was 'bad'.

Really speaking the sensational and utilitarian views of good and evil can hardly be called 'ethical'. When reason intervenes and tries to determine some principle or law of ethics, then the idealistic value of ethics comes into being. There is even a religious basis of ethics, declaring on the authority of religion what is good and what is bad. Conceptions of Truth and righteousness are determined by religion. For those that have a spiritual bent the Upanishad draws the distinction between 'Preyas', the pleasant, and 'Shreyas', 'what is conducive to welfare'. The rational approach gives only the relative value to ethics because mind can only be selective. What is 'good' for one mind is 'bad' for some other mind. Besides, the mind gives ethics a form in thought and in action of life which becomes more or less an artificial construction, not a spontaneous expression. Still, with all its limitations, ethics, the sense of moral values of good and evil, is an indispensable stage in evolution. It arises from the perception of possibility of a higher idealistic—intellectual—harmony instead of the prevalence of a lower movement in man's nature—the movement that he inherits from the animal and from the inconscience from which he has evolved. The aim of ethics is, really speaking, not to destroy the parts of nature that are wedded to the lower harmony, but to convert them—by first controlling them—"to lesson, to tame, purify and prepare to be fit instruments" for the higher harmony which the mind and heart of man perceive as necessary for perfection.

There is in fact a deeper basis of ethics, apart from the relative and selective basis of intellect, an inward sanction, and intuitive sense or a psychic tact which is traditionally known as 'Conscience'.

Morality has thus to do more with the will than with any other power of human psychology. But there are some thinkers who believe that morality gives knowledge. It is true in a certain sense,

within certain limits : it gives one the knowledge of the world which is its conscient, it brings one in contact with the elemental powers of the subconscious and the lower vital nature. Secondly practice of ethics or morality tends to purify the ordinary nature and may serve as the beginning of dissolution of the ego which is a great obstacle in man's inner progress towards Truth. Ethics establishes active impersonal values in man's nature which require the subjugation of his ego. In the process of man's evolution out of Ignorance ethics is an indispensable stage.

At the basis of ethical endeavour there is "Will to attain perfection" in inner and outer life. Seeking for Truth, Good and Beauty is the sign that the will to perfection is awake. There are people who think that the duality that obtains in ethics—good and evil, truth and falsehood, etc.—is eternal, that there are two eternally conflicting forces at the root of cosmic manifestation and man's progress lies in constantly choosing one against the other. But a little thinking will show that there is no reason to grant an eternal antinomy in the working of the cosmos. Duality, in fact, is only in the mind as a necessary mode for its action. But the opposites of Truth, Good and Beauty have no eternity about them. Of course, so long as one is in the mind, Good and Truth are also relative; but there is the absolute of Truth, the absolute of Good and of Beauty beyond Mind where there is no possibility of falsehood or evil. It is like darkness whose existence depends upon light but the contrary is not true.

Besides, though the first awakening to the sense of Truth, Good and Beauty generally comes to the mind, yet at its root it is much deeper. It is the soul of man that turns to these things because they are of its nature. In fact, awakening to ethical values—the attraction towards Truth, Good and Beauty, towards nobility, sacrifice and service, etc.—is the machinery provided by the Supreme Wisdom so that the all-pervading ignorance may slowly turn to the light of knowledge. Its ultimate aim is not merely to bring about a moral perfection but to lead the human being towards the Infinite. None of these great realities can be fully realised within the limits of mental consciousness. It is the curing of the split-existence that is the remedy.

Sometimes an undue stress is given to external action in the practice of ethics. As a social and conventional rule there may not be much to say against it. But from the point of view of a deeper psychology one has to accept that action is not what it appears—it is the resultant of energy of being and there are many kinds of energies at work in producing a particular action. Action is the result of a very complex play of many forces. And we see that Nature admits strength, power, efficiency as elements in bringing about results in life. The value of action depends upon its source in the being, for, externally the same action may be result of quite contrary forces.

Ethics accepts the position that life is a becoming and that there is a Truth of becoming which man must realise. In that process of becoming through which the human soul evolves, the duality of good and evil, true and false, etc., belongs to the mind. The call on the human soul is of the infinite, the human being has to rise to the consciousness of Infinity. On that higher plane—the supermind—the soul rises above duality, because it goes beyond Mind and its ignorance. Ethics as the ultimate remedy is imperfect.

#### IV

#### THE ORIGIN OF IGNORANCE

It would be daring and even presumptuous to think that the problem of the origin of Ignorance would be finally and satisfactorily solved by exposition. I do not propose to make the attempt. Certain viewpoints may be suggested to help the seeker find the solution of the problem.

It must be emphasised at the beginning that Sri Aurobindo arrives at the solution of the problem on the basis of his spiritual experience. That is to say, it is not a metaphysical solution,—though it resorts to the method of metaphysics.

Attempts have been made to explain the origin of Ignorance on the basis of religious belief: accept a Satan, an Ahriman, or a Mara, as against God, Ahurmuzd, or Buddha, and you have an explanation of the origin of Ignorance, especially if you do not inquire as to who

created Satan and his Compeers. Then, there is an eternal duality at the basis of creation, a power of good beneficent, all-knowing and a power of Evil, malevolent, obscuring.

It is also possible to explain Ignorance on the basis of monistic philosophy. According to it an Infinite Reality is the cause of the universe. Then the question how Ignorance could have originated from That remains to be answered. The general explanation is that Ignorance has no place in the Infinite Reality which is One. But then from where did Ignorance come? Somehow or other, a principle opposed to the nature of the self-existent Reality, all-conscious and all-blissful, has succeeded in pervading the creation of that Reality: it is something "Anirvachaniya"—"indescribable". But the human being is bound to feel his Ignorance—it is an inescapable experience. Another important aspect of this experience is that man does not, and cannot, feel himself at home with Ignorance, it is not felt as native. There is a constitutional revolt against it from his nature and sometimes an active effort to eliminate it.

Monism posits an Absolute and Infinite as the only reality and it says that in it, this phenomenon of Ignorance has no place. It amounts to saying that the experience of ignorance is unreal.

But then the question remains: who experiences this Ignorance. Philosophical schools of so-called absolute monism assert that this unreal experience of ignorance is one due to the Mind, and Mind has no place in the Absolute, the ultimate Reality. Mind, according to them, is the creation of Maya, the power of Illusion, which imposes itself, somehow, on the Infinite. So, to get rid of Ignorance man must get rid of his mind. It is like proposing to a patient that he has to get rid of his limb by amputation in order to cure his malady. It may appear to be a short-cut but it is not easy, and its efficacy is not certain. One can always ask if that is the best method of cure.

Sri Aurobindo sees an Omnipresent Reality as the basis of this Universe. In terms of it he explains the phenomenon of Ignorance. At once the question arises: how can an all-wise, merciful, omnipresent, omniscient God inflict ignorance on his creation? But Sri Aurobindo finds that this question is wrongly put, because the Reality being omnipresent does not inflict ignorance upon anybody else. Itself it assumes ignorance: God or the Omnipresent Reality

has managed, on one status of Himself, to become ignorant. He has submitted Himself to a process which we feel as ignorance. This feeling of ignorance and of its infliction is the protest of the Divine in man.

So the question is : how has this self-division taken place in the One : how has the Divine become ignorant, subject to sorrow, suffering and pain and evil ?

We have to note that Consciousness is the fundamental fact of the cosmos. Consciousness is not simple, it is complex; it has a subconscious level which ends in the Inconscient, a waking outward-turned consciousness which is capable of partial knowledge and a superconscious level which is the attainable potentiality. The infinite Brahman holds all of these in its integral being—it holds both Knowledge and Ignorance, Vidya and Avidya. At one pole of its being the Alone, the Timeless Self, the One immutable, is present with its dazzling Light. At the other pole is the broken light and mist, the mutable many, the One Self throwing itself in Mind and Life, in Time for adventure. Thus we can say in the words of Sri Aurobindo : "Ignorance is the limited separative consciousness striving to become an integral consciousness."<sup>1</sup>

If the Omnipresent Reality is the basis then the phenomenon of ignorance cannot be something unknowable, or something that came about by an accident, or something which is non-existent. The dynamic character of Supreme is Omniscience, Omnipotence and Omnipresence. Ignorance, therefore, must be the result of the will of the Supreme. In fact, the Upanishad speaks of the Divine will as the creator of the world—and therefore of Ignorance. The character of this Ignorance in man is the separation of the knower from the object of knowledge—separation of the many from the One of whom they are only variations based on fundamental unity. This division of the subjective consciousness has no place in Sachchidananda because nothing but the One exists in it, it is also not present in the Self because the Self is always identical with the One, the Infinite. The division of consciousness which is the root of human ignorance exists in Mind, it exists in Life and on the plane of the Body.

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*.

Cosmic Ignorance is created by an act of concentration of the One in Prakriti : it has an essential concentration as Silence which becomes Inconscience in Nature; it has an integral concentration as Sachchidananda which becomes the Supermind creative of the cosmos; it has a multiple concentration which becomes the one overmind which gives rise to Mental, Vital and Physical worlds; it has a separative consciousness which becomes what we as individuals experience as Ignorance.

This Ignorance is due to exclusive concentration : that is, concentration which puts forward a part of self and holds back the rest of the self-knowledge behind. Thus a self-limitation takes place which gives rise to Ignorance, the true Being is not clouded but kept behind by the exclusive concentration. In fact, this exclusive concentration is purposeful and is within the exercise of freedom of the Self.

A similar phenomenon takes place—on a much smaller scale, of course, in the mental consciousness of the human being.

Generally the human being is exclusively concentrated in his outward personality and is oblivious of the Subliminal, the Sub-conscious and Superconscious and Psychic being. Even apart from these levels of consciousness, we find a temporary self oblivion, putting forward a personality and pushing behind the rest of the being, is often necessary to secure the highest effectivity of a particular aspect. For instance, a poet, an actor, or a soldier when concentrated on the task in hand becomes totally oblivious of his other parts and personalities : it is then that he gets his highest efficiency. Such an exclusive concentration, which is ignorance of the total self, is the condition for its highest effectivity as a personality. If the exclusive concentration and the resulting self-loss became permanent, that would give us some idea of the phenomenon of Ignorance in which the human being is the result of an exclusive concentration of the Infinite. The Infinite Brahman puts forward its power and knowledge only as a blade of grass and puts behind the rest of its infinity in order to manifest itself as a blade of grass.

Besides, the Supreme has not closed itself in the walls of Ignorance inescapably. He has kept and provided means of escape; only, the return to the Divine Self cannot be done without effort,

without training.

Thus, Ignorance is not a blunder and a fall (as is ordinarily supposed), but a purposeful descent; "not a curse but a divine opportunity." (Ignorance pervades only Prakriti, it is not in the true self, it is not in the whole of our being, it is active only in the Mind.)

A. B. PURANI

XV

MENTAL EDUCATION—IV

In order to have a complete control of our actions, we have to acquire a thorough control of our thoughts and as a means of perfecting and consolidating the control of thoughts, the Author advances the following method. For the purpose it is good to set apart every day some time when one can quietly go over one's thoughts and put under their control. Once the habit is acquired, you can maintain your control over thoughts even during work and action and you will be able to let any come to the fore that is not useful to the thing undertaken. This method of going over one's thoughts and putting under one's mental synthesis can be more easily done if one has developed the power of concentration and sustained attention. The thoughts that are admitted or allowed in this state of concentration become all the more powerful and effective, for it is the habit of concentration that impoverishes the power of thought. When concentration deepens and becomes intense it is found much easier than before to silence the mind altogether and open to the higher light of knowledge. Here, the Author proposes a subject which has not been touched or if at all, only superficially touched by Western thought on education. Since of the mind has been taken to belong to the relative province of consciousness or spiritual life. It has been thought that the province of action like cannot be kept in gear if the mind remains either or absent. This is one approach to education which has failed human culture and civilization in the present sorry plight stemmed, a few centuries ago, from the wrong idea that education was mere learning. In the beginning, training

## THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER

### EDUCATION

#### XV

#### MENTAL EDUCATION—IV

**I**N order to have a complete control of our action, we have to acquire a thorough control of our thoughts; and, as a means of perfecting and consolidating the control of thoughts, the Mother advocates the following :

“For that purpose it is good to set apart every day some time when one can quietly go over one’s thoughts and put order into one’s synthesis. Once the habit is acquired, you can maintain your control over thoughts even during work and action and you will be able not to let any come to the fore that is not useful to the thing undertaken...”<sup>1</sup> This method of going over one’s thoughts and putting order into one’s mental synthesis can be more easily done, if one has developed the power of concentration and sustained attention. The thoughts that are admitted or allowed in this state of concentration becomes all the more powerful and effective, for it is the desultory or discursive habit of the mind that impoverishes the power of thought.

When concentration deepens and becomes intense, it is found much easier than before to silence the mind altogether and open to the higher light of knowledge. Here, the Mother broaches a subject which has not been touched, or, if at all, only superficially touched by Western thought on education. Silence of the mind has been taken to belong to the exclusive province of contemplative or spiritual life. It has been thought that the springs of active life cannot be kept in gear if the mind remains silent or vacant. This wrong approach to education which has landed human culture and civilisation in the present sorry plight, stemmed, a few centuries ago, from the wrong idea that education was mere learning. In the beginning, learning

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo and *The Mother on Education.*

meant learning the classics and whatever else was included in the omnibus term 'humanities'. But later, it came to mean an elaborate drill in scraps of information. With the overriding domination of technology in the recent years, learning has meant the learning of the 'know-how' (not the 'know-why'), the learning of the knowledge of the parts and processes of the phenomenal Nature and the mechanism of material things. Matter and its constituents, life and the various play of its energies and the stages of its evolution as manifested in the vegetable kingdom and in animals and men, and the surface operations of the mind accessible to our perception in the long spectrum of animal and human psychology, have been considered the only field of learning. All this is, no doubt, to the good. Matter and life and mind have, indeed, to be known, and known fully and profoundly, if knowledge is held to be the goal of education. But the question, which is being insistently posed by the distracting confusion of ideologies and collapsing cultural values, is : What is knowledge ?

Knowledge does not mean a mass of shallow conceptions, derived from observation and experiment. It does not mean a tissue of ideas and postulates based ultimately on sense-data and subject to frequent revision and rejection. It does not mean a swarm of blear-eyed hypotheses, milling round a single aspect of truth. Knowledge means a direct, immediate, revealing vision and perception of the Truth, the omnipresent Reality, which is indivisible even in its apparent parts and divisions, and organic and unified even in its infinitely multiplying diversities. The incorrigibly hypothetical nature of human knowledge has been causing a growing concern among the intellectual elite of today. They are waking more and more to the fragmentary, atomistic, derivative and uncertain character of the knowledge the diverse sciences and arts, in their increasing isolation, impart. The whole is not known, and, therefore, nothing is known for certain. We see only its phases and aspects, but know not the total Reality.

All human knowledge is thus afflicted with imperfection and incompleteness. Why is it so? Why does not our education furnish us with the knowledge which is complete and abiding, and effective in restoring us to our own psychological health or wholeness? It is because man's mind, being inveterately divisive and analytical, a breathless hunter of parts and parcels, is incapable of conceiving and

receiving the whole, the undivided unity of existence. Its syntheses and aggregations are but a clumsy attempt to realise the infinite Reality in its own terms. What is needed is to release our consciousness<sup>1</sup> into the Infinite, to silence the mind and pass out of it into the higher reaches and dimensions of Truth, or receive its influx into a hushed mind. Silence is the gate of exit and the portal of reception. The value of silence is, therefore, infinitely greater than that of the thinking, reasoning and concluding mind. The very object of education will be defeated, as it has been so long, if silence is not prescribed and practised both for the exploration of the higher domains of unifying knowledge and giving an assimilative and restorative relaxation to the active mind. An education that encourages constant mental activity only and does not teach the art of silencing or relaxing the mind produces but feeble brains and stunted and addled intellects.

It has been admitted by advanced scientists that there is a faculty in man which operates intermittently in poets and artists and scientists, and more steadily in mystics and prophets, and which is capable of revealing to us larger and surer truths than our mind, even in its highest flights, can ever apprehend. This faculty is called intuition, though the term is mostly used rather loosely and obscurely. It is also sometimes called inspiration. But, how do the poets, artists or prophets receive it? We know from a large mass of authentic records that whenever, in intense moments of creative effort, their mental thought falls silent in an upward or inward tension of consciousness, there is an infiltration, an afflatus. Something from beyond the normal horizons of the mind comes with a flash of light or a thrilled accent of its own, a strain of unearthly melody or the blazing glory of a divine form. The vision or experience is undeniable and transporting. This creative faculty can be systematically cultivated by, among other means, a habit of silencing the external mind and diving into a state of an intent, aspiring, and receptive concentration. For, it is an age-old truth that concentration is the key to all knowledge. In education it should be an integral part of the method of teaching to inculcate the habit of silence. It is not that all thinking has to be stopped or

<sup>1</sup> Consciousness and mind are not synonymous. Mind is only a limited and specialised field of consciousness.

discouraged, but the student must learn to acquire the power to suspend his mental thought from time to time, even as he acquires the power to control it, and glide into the depths of his consciousness. The result of this cultivation of silence will be a golden harvest of raptures and radiances of knowledge of which the human mind has no conception. Thought itself will then become luminous, spontaneous, and revealing—stamped with a suprarational authenticity of its own. It will not derive from a laborious process of reasoning, nor find itself clashing with other thoughts. Each thought will enter naturally and gracefully into the swelling harmony of a calm mind.

As I have said above, mental silence is a great restorative power. "...in most people who have a somewhat developed and active mind, the mind is never at rest. During the day, its activity is put under a certain control, but at night, during the sleep of the body, the control of the waking state is almost completely removed and the mind indulges in excessive and often incoherent activities. This creates a great tension ending in fatigue and diminution of mental faculties."<sup>1</sup>

The art of giving sufficient rest to the mind, as we give rest to the body, has to be taught to the student. Some rest can be given to the mind by changing the subject of thought, but it is only in silence that the mind can have full and health-giving repose.

To sum up, silence is indispensable for two reasons : for affording repose and relaxation, and through rest and relaxation, health and tone to the mind and its faculties, and for creating a congenial atmosphere for the infiltration of intuition and inspiration. The alarming increase in psycho-neurosis among intellectuals today, ending sometimes in partial or complete insanity, is the logical consequence of unrestrained mental activity. Books, periodicals, newspapers etc. are multiplying at such a staggering speed that there is no time for their readers to devote to deep and sustained reflection. Superficiality, atrophy of the creative faculties like intuition and imagination, and the "diminution of mental faculties" of which the Mother speaks are the doleful outcome. Great intellects can only be an exception in such a cramping age of mediocrities.

The Mother further says that if one knew how to remain in a

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education.

receptive silence of the mind, all mental problems would be easily solved. Agitated or hurried thought is confused and impotent, and it is only in an intent calm that the light of higher knowledge can manifest and "open new horizons to man's capacity." Reason, fully developed, can be transcended in silence, and the doors of intuition opened.<sup>1</sup>

(To be continued)

RISHABHCHAND

As I have said above, mental silence is a great restorative power. It must be noted that people who have a somewhat developed and active mind, the mind is never at rest. During the day its activity is put under a certain control, but at night, during the sleep of the body, the control of the waking state is almost completely removed and the mind indulges in excessive and often incoherent activities. This causes a great tension, leading in fatigue and exhaustion of mental faculties. The art of giving sufficient rest to the mind, as we give rest to the body, has to be taught to the students. Some rest can be given to the mind by changing the subject of thought, but it is only in silence that the mind can have full and health-giving repose. The mind and attention is indispensable for two reasons: for effort and for relaxation and through rest and relaxation, health and tone to the mind and its faculties, and for creating a congenial atmosphere for the induction of intuition and inspiration. The increasing interest in psycho-physiology among intellectuals today, coming sometimes in part from complete ignorance, is the logical consequence of unregulated mental activity. Books, periodicals, newspapers, etc. are multiplying at such a staggering speed that there is no time for their readers to reflect to deep and sustained reflections. Superficiality, a type of the creative faculties like intuition and imagination, and the "distraction of mental faculties" of which the Aesthetic spirit and the holistic outcome. Great teachers can only be an exception to such a common use of mental faculties.

It is the office of reason to distinguish and define. The infinite, therefore, cannot be ranked among its objects. You can only apprehend the infinite by a faculty superior to reason, by entering into a state in which you are your finite self no longer—in which the divine essence is communicated to you...It is the liberation of your mind from its finite consciousness."—Plotinus

## NATIONALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM IN LITERATURE : INDIAN OUTLOOK\*

INDIAN literature is one of the oldest in the history of the world, mirroring some of the wisest thoughts and grandest dreams of man. For instance, the Rigveda, which is the most ancient book of hymns, tells us that truth is one, though learned men may speak of it in varied manner (*Ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*).

In Yajurveda, we read about the noblest dream of man 'in which the whole Universe becomes one nest' (*Yatra viśvam bhavati ekanīdam*).

The concepts of nationalism and cosmopolitanism as understood to-day were, however, unknown to ancient India and there are, therefore, no corresponding terms in ancient Indian literature. Of course, the word 'Rashtra' meaning a nation to-day does occur many times in Vedic literature, but it was then conceptually linked up with monarchy and it meant a kingdom rather than a nation, in the context of the social and political conditions of those times. Similarly, the term 'Vishva' meaning the Universe is as ancient as 'Rashtra' but it has nothing to do with the concept of cosmopolitanism as such, although it hinted a more broadbased concept.

India is, as is well-known, a very vast country, described as a sub-continent, with wide variations in geography and with a baffling diversity of language, religion and culture. It was not an easy thing to build her into one national unit. The history of ancient and medieval India is by and large the history of small and big kingdoms competing with each other for power and pelf, though occasionally attempts were made to build up empires, holding sway over the whole or most parts of India. One such empire was built up by emperor Asoka, nearly 300 years before Christ. A philosopher king as he was, he not only ruled over vast territories, but also ruled the hearts of the people by his deep interest in their well-being and by his policy of religious tolerance. The vision of nationalism and cos-

\* (Paper read at the IV Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association at Fribourg, Switzerland, on 2nd Sept. 1964)

mopolitanism had come very near realisation in the India of his time. Generally speaking, however, it was regionalism and loyalism rather than nationalism which inspired and motivated the Indian people in the course of their long history. Politically India was not united as one nation, but culturally she strove to maintain a kind of unity, which was a source of strength to her and an admirable phase of Indian life and tradition. This cultural unity was visualised by the poets, saints and mystics of India right from the Vedic times and was voiced forth in the literature of the different languages of India. There are at least three broad aspects of Indian literature of the past, which are common to the rich and varied literary heritage in the Indian languages and they are : (1) Inspiration from and indebtedness to Sanskrit language and literature for vocabulary and for themes, ideas and forms, chiefly to the great national epics viz. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata as well as to devotional and philosophic works like the Bhagvadgita and Bhagavata. (2) Religious and saintly utterances and songs, which transcend the barriers of caste and creed. (3) Folk-lore and folk-drama expressing in popular style the highest principles and ideals, embodied in Indian culture. Some of the languages of India are Aryan and derived from Sanskrit and some others are Dravidian, not derived from Sanskrit but nourished by it to a smaller or greater extent. And yet when one thinks of the similar urges and common factors in the different literatures of India, one is deeply moved by the alluring image of the same grand music played on different instruments in a rare sort of orchestra. On the whole, the ideal of unity in diversity, which is the underlying principle in the concomitance of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, did prevail in Indian life and literature in the ancient and historical times and in a sense, paved the way for the realisation of a new synthesis in the modern setting.

Besides, there are any number of wise sayings and epigrams in the Indian epics, works of Indian polity and codes of conduct, which lay down what may be regarded as wise courses of action when there are divided loyalties or conflicts in respect of loyalty. In one of them it is said that one should sacrifice one's good for the good of the family, the good of the family for the good of the village, the good of the village for the good of the country but sacrifice the

whole world for the good of his soul (*ātmarthe pṛthivīm tyajet*). This suggests that smaller loyalties must be sacrificed for the sake of larger loyalty and the largest loyalty should be to oneself i.e., to one's soul, to one's intellectual honesty and moral and spiritual integrity. It is clear from such utterances that the Indian people were taught from time immemorial to love the family, the village, the nation and the universe, but to sacrifice smaller loyalty for the larger one in the event of a conflict. Love of one's nation and love of the world can go together and need not necessarily conflict with each other. But when love of one's nation is carried to an extreme and results in hatred of other nations, it has to be sacrificed for the sake of a larger loyalty—loyalty to the world at large. Of course, this does not mean that the legitimate interests of a nation should be ignored or sacrificed. But love of the world should help to curb the extreme forms of nationalism. It will thus be seen that Indian literature of the past has laid the foundations of a proper synthesis of nationalism and cosmopolitanism without actually using any of the terms, in their modern connotation.

Nationalism in its modern sense dawned in India with the impact of the western type of education, imparted in British regime in the 19th century. Educated Indians read more of the world's history and literature, had their horizons widened and derived inspiration from the nationalist movements in the rest of the world, based on the principles of freedom and democracy. The movement for the liberation of India from foreign domination under the leadership of great leaders like Tilak and Gandhi gave a strong impetus to Indian nationalism. At times it went to extremes under the intolerable conditions created by the foreign rule. But towering personalities, whose nationalism was unquestioned and whose culture was broadbased, tried to hold the balance between nationalism and cosmopolitanism in life and literature.

Among such personalities, the name of Sri Aurobindo stands out pre-eminently as that of one of the intellectual and spiritual giants and poet-seers of modern India. He took part in active politics for a brief period and went to Pondicherry for the realisation of his spiritual ideals. In his voluminous writings which came from him like a torrent of heavenly Ganges, he put forth the highest ideal

of spiritualising the whole of humanity. His nationalism was an essential and complementary aspect of his world vision. He believed that every nation had not only a culture of its own, but a soul of its own, which it must realise, so that it will make its distinct contribution to the spiritual progress and perfection of the entire world. He felt that 'Bande Mataram' (Salutations to the Mother)—the song which Bankim Chandra, the great Bengali novelist was inspired to write for his novel 'Anandamath' was not a mere song, it was 'the reviving mantra, which is creating a new India'. As a writer puts it, 'For him, India was no mere geographical entity, no mere physical and material land mass, no mere intellectual concept, but a Goddess incarnate, a mighty Mother, who for centuries had cradled and nourished her children, and who, at that time, was groaning under the yoke of the foreign oppressor—her pride shattered, her glory ground to the dust' (Karan Singh : *Prophet of Indian Nationalism*, p. 70). According to Sri Aurobindo, the nation is not a mere mass of land. He writes : "What is a nation ? What is our mother country ? It is not a piece of earth, nor a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty Shakti (Power), composed of all the Shaktis of all the millions of units that make up 'the nation'. He has waxed eloquent and risen to poetic heights while describing his patriotism in another context : "The feeling of almost physical delight in the touch of the mother-soil, of the winds that blow from Indian seas, of the rivers that stream from Indian hills, in the hearing of Indian speech, music, poetry, in the familiar sights, sounds, habits, dress, manners of our Indian life, this is the physical root of that love. The pride in our past, the pain of our present, the passion for the future are its trunk and branches. Self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, great service, high endurance for the country are its fruit. And the sap which keeps it alive is the realisation of the Motherhood of God in the country, the vision of the Mother,... the perpetual contemplation, adoration and service of the Mother" (Sri Aurobindo : *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, pp. 83-84).

Nationalism has a highly religious and spiritual basis according to Sri Aurobindo. He said : "Nationalism is not a mere political programme; Nationalism is a religion that has come from God; Nationalism is a creed which you shall have to live." (Sri Aurobindo :

*Speeches*, p. 6). It is rightly called spiritual nationalism. In other words, it is a vital part of a comprehensive world-vision, in which divine life in its perfection is envisaged in minute detail. That is why 'he looked upon India's emancipation as only an essential vantage point from which she could fulfil her destiny as the spiritual guide of humanity at large. His nationalism thus develops logically into an internationalism that has as its goal the elevated ideal of human unity' (Karan Singh : *Prophet of Indian Nationalism* p. 76).

Rabindranath Tagore is another outstanding personality, who has left an indelible mark on the life and culture of India. He was a creative genius of a very high order. There was no branch of art or form of literature, which he touched and did not adorn by his creative richness and newness. He was both a dreamer and builder. In his great educational and cultural institution called Shantiniketan i.e. the abode of peace, he revived the old Ashram type of education and modernised it. He called it Vishwabharati, i.e. the culture of the world as reflected in India. The name was coined by him to signify the fine balance which he had achieved in his personality between nationalism and internationalism. He wrote a number of songs and poems, which held up the ideal of Vishwabharati. In one of such songs, full of feeling and word-music, he addresses his heart to rise to welcome people of all races and countries, who are gathered on the soil of India. He says 'Oh my heart, rise slowly on the vast shore of the ocean of humanity that is India, the holy land. Here I stand with both hands stretched to bow to the god in man and sing his praise with great joy flowing in rich rhythm. Look at this sacred land, where the mountains are rapt in deep meditation and the plains are counting the beads in the rosary of rivers.'

In his book on Nationalism, he has clearly stated: 'Neither the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism, nor the fierce self-idolatry of nation-worship, is the goal of human history'. (Rabindranath Tagore : *Nationalism*, p. 5). Every person has his roots somewhere in some part of the earth. He is born and brought up in certain milieu and he owes his first loyalty to the land of his birth and upbringing. If in the name of liberalism, he takes pride in being a cosmopolitan, a citizen of the world without having anything to do

with his immediate surroundings, he will be living in an unreal world. That is 'the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism.' If on the other hand, he worships his nation and detests other nation, that will lead to 'the fierce self-idolatry of nation-worship.' It must be remembered that Tagore expressed such views and tried to put them into practice, at a time when India was carrying on a desperate fight for freedom and nationalism was in the ascendant. Speaking of nationalism in India, Tagore stresses the need for a broad, humanistic approach to the problems facing India. According to him, 'India has never had a real sense of nationalism. It is my conviction that my countrymen will truly gain their India by fighting against the education which teaches them that a country is greater than the ideals of humanity' (Rabindranath Tagore: *Nationalism*, p. 106). Comparing the Indian situation with the situation in Europe, he says : 'Her problem was the problem of world in miniature. India is too vast in its area and too diverse in its races. It is many countries packed in one geographical receptacle. It is just the opposite of what Europe truly is, viz. one country made into many. Thus Europe in its culture and growth has had the advantage of the strength of the many as well as the strength of the one. India, on the contrary, being naturally many, yet adventitiously one, has all along suffered from the looseness of its diversity and the feebleness of its unity. A true unity is like a round globe, it rolls on, carrying its burden easily, but diversity is a many-cornered thing which has to be dragged and pushed with force. (Ibid, p. 114).

India was extremely fortunate in securing the leadership of eminent persons in her struggle for freedom and in her efforts to build up the nation after the attainment of freedom. The names of Gandhi and Nehru stand out among those, who have guided India's destiny in recent history. Gandhi was a saint-politician and a very practical one at that. With his stress on the high principles of truth and non-violence, he led the freedom movement and taught the people to resist foreign domination but not to hate the foreigner. He loved India fervently and he loved other countries and other peoples with equal fervour. In his speeches and writings, he preached nationalism as well as universal brotherhood and practised what he preached.

Following in the footsteps of Gandhi and yet keeping his own steps, Nehru occupied the centre of the stage in Indian politics as a great visionary and statesman. He not only worked and suffered in the cause of India's freedom and nation-building, but he also strove to lay down the principles of peaceful co-existence for all the nations of the world. He was a world-figure, a mighty force on the side of peace. In his writings, which reveal his extra-ordinary grasp of world history and Indian heritage, he has proved himself to be as much of an internationalist as a nationalist.

If we now turn to the modern literatures in the different languages of India, we shall be agreeably surprised to find some common urges and similar traits in all of them. They have all been influenced by Western literature and thought and they have sooner or later adopted the modern forms of literature like the lyric, the short story, the novel and the essay. Modernist poetry also has had its strong influence on Indian poetry. Among the trends in Indian literature, we find a strong wave of patriotism which swept over the Indian mind and produced some of the best creative writing in almost all the major languages of India. In the context of the fight for freedom, some of the writers spat fire and were as it were swept off their feet. There are, however, poets and authors who possess the large vision of Sri Aurobindo and Tagore and have combined nationalism with cosmopolitanism and who are less known to the world because of the less known character of the language in which they wrote and are writing even now.

Bengal was the first province in India, which came under the influence of British thought and British way of life. Though some educated people went to the extreme of blind imitation and adoration of their masters, some others grew up to be admirers of Indian culture, ready to assimilate the best in Western culture. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was among the first stalwarts, who heralded the new era. Bankim Chandra came on the scene as a very staunch nationalist, preaching his creed through some of his novels. Reference has already been made to his song—'Bande Mataram', which has become one of the most stirring patriotic songs of India. Besides Tagore, there were other nationalist poets like Nazrul Islam, who wrote patriotic poetry in their very blood as it were. Assam, which is nearer to Bengal,

caught the spark early enough but did not blaze like fire as early as Bengal. The name of Phukan, a contemporary of Raja Ram Mohan Roy is mentioned as a pioneer in nationalist type of journalism. Some stirrings of the new consciousness were seen in the lyrics of Kamalakanta Bhattacharya. It is said that his 'Chintanala' published in 1890, contains the outpourings of warm patriotic sentiments. Chandra Kumar Agarwalla, founder of a nationalist weekly, called 'Assamia', is remembered as a writer of delicate lyrics.

In Gujarati, Narmad was one of the early poets, who sang of the love of motherland. Nanalal, who is regarded as the greatest poet of the age, sang in tune with the time spirit. Gandhi in his inimitable prose spread his gospel of broad-based nationalism among Gujarati people. Munshi roused the feelings of patriotism by his historical novels and plays. There are some other eminent poets, who have written patriotic poetry. Coming to Hindi literature, we learn that Bharatendu Harishchandra, who lived in the last decade of the 19th century, is regarded as the father of modern prose and pioneer in patriotic writing. In his poems, essays and plays abounding in wit and humour and vigorous expression, he has revealed himself as a strong nationalist. In the later period, poets like Maithili Sharana Gupta, Nirala, Sumitranandan Pant have made a singular contribution to nationalist poetry. They roused the people from torpor and created a national consciousness. Particular mention must be made of the poem 'Bharat bharti' of Gupta, which is one of the best works in the line.

In Urdu, Iqbal, who is regarded as the greatest poet of the modern times, wrote poems and songs, which were intensely patriotic and thrilling. In Kashmiri, Mahjir is known for patriotic fervour in his writings.

In Marathi, the language of Tilak and Gokhale, some very powerful patriotic prose and poetry have come to be written. Among prose writers, S. M. Paranjape was an inspired patriot, who turned every-day journalism into spontaneous outburst of nationalist emotion. Among poets, Keshavsut and Kusumagraj have sung of the new spirit in India and the world. Savarkar, the most daring patriot of India, has written some of the most moving patriotic poetry while he was undergoing a life-sentence under unbearable conditions in a

far-off island.

In Oriya, Pândit Gopal Bandhu Das, a celebrated national leader of Orissa, wrote patriotic poetry in the form of a long poem called 'Bandir Atmakatha' (Confessions of a prisoner) and expressed his intense desire to sacrifice his all at the altar of freedom. 'Aswana' a book of poems by a woman writer, Kuntala Kumari Devi by name, was proscribed for its fiery national utterances during the British regime.

Coming to the Dravidian family of languages, Tamil, which is the oldest in literary heritage, is proud of Subramanya Bharati, the great patriot-poet of India. He wrote 'Swadeshgeetam', some of which constitutes a high level of patriotic poetry. In Malayalam, Vallathol is claimed as a great national poet, who started writing poetry on the model of Tagore. K. M. Panikkar and Sankar Kurap are among other prominent poets in the language. In Telugu, Rayaprola Subbarao, a pioneer of lyrical poetry, was greatly influenced by Tagore's writings. He was followed by other poets who made lyrics popular and sang of nationalism.

In Kannada, nationalist writing in prose and poetry got into stride in the twenties of the present century. Some of the eminent poets like Bendre and Kuvempu rose to rare heights in patriotic self-expression. Bendre wrote his poem 'Thirty Crores and Three', depicting in a dramatic manner the tragedy of thirty-three crores of Indians, groaning under foreign subjection. His poem 'the bag of the belly' gives a glaring picture of the agony of India's poverty. His another poem 'The Bird is on its wing' works out the symbol of the bird as the time-spirit, with a profound insight into world situation. He is a great thinker-poet with a cosmic and synthetic vision and his profound lyrics belong to a category of their own. Lovers of poetry in the modern world will find it worth while to read his poetry and feel its magic even in English translation. Kuvempu is also a lyricist of high order, more attuned to nature poetry. In one of his poems, he proclaims that Mother India is the only deity that one should worship with an intensity of passion.

We have so far tried to take a rapid survey of Indian literature, both old and modern, with a view to assessing its contribution to nationalism and cosmopolitanism. It must have been clear from this

survey that the Indian outlook is generally broad-based and synthetic, dreaming of the lofty ideal of unity in diversity not only for India but also for the entire world. It is profoundly spiritual and forward-looking. In Indian life and literature, nationalism and cosmopolitanism are taking deep roots and presenting a singularly Indian poise and balance, thanks to the great traditions of the past and the broad inspirations of the present age.

### R. S. MUGALI

The Dravidian family of languages, Tamil, which is the oldest in history, has a proud of Subramanya Bharuti, the great poet of India. He wrote 'Swajayantam', some of which contains a high level of patriotic poetry. In Maharashtra, Vallabhi is claimed as a great national poet who started writing poetry on the model of Tagore, K. M. Parikar and Sanjay Kulkarni are among other prominent poets in the language. In Telugu, R. V. S. Subramanyam, a pioneer of lyric poetry, was greatly influenced by Tagore's writings. He was followed by other poets who made lyrics popular and sang of nationalism.

In Kannada, nationalist writing in prose and poetry got into stride in the twenties of the present century. Some of the eminent poets like B. K. Shivarama Murthy and K. V. Kulkarni rose to give heights in patriotic self-expression. B. K. Shivarama Murthy wrote his poem 'Tiruvu Chakra and Tiruvu', depicting in a dramatic manner the tragedy of thirty-three crosses of Indians, groaning under foreign subjection. His poem 'the day of the bell' gives a striking picture of the agony of India's poverty. His another poem 'the bird is on its wing' works out the symbol of the bird as the time-spirit with a profound insight into world situation. He is a great thinker-poet with a cosmic and synthetic vision and his prominent lyrics belong to a category of their own. Lovers of poetry in the modern world will find it worth while to read his poetry and feel its magic even in English translation. Kulkarni is also a lyricist of high order, more turned to nature poetry. In one of his poems, he proclaims that Mother India is the only deity that one should worship with an intensity of passion.

We have so far tried to take a rapid survey of Indian literature, both old and modern, with a view to assessing its contribution to nationalism and cosmopolitanism. It must have been clear from this

## REVIEWS

**Divine Dwellers in the Desert** by *Gurdial Mullik*. Publishers : Gram Bhavan Prakashan, Patti Kalyana (Karnal). P. 113. Price Rs. 1.25

IT is said that when God created Man—a being unique in all His creation—He summoned all the angels and archangels and required them to bow before the Man. But Satan refused and walked out of heaven, saying, “Sir, my love for you forbids this”. He forsook the Paradise rather than compromise his Love. And that is why Shah Latif calls Satan ‘the greatest lover of God’. Narrating this legend in his account of the Sufi saints of Sindh, Sri Gurdial—himself a kindred spirit—serves in these pages a delightful fare of history, myth, philosophy and mysticism.

Love, says the author, is the heart of Sufism and Love is not the exclusive contribution of any one religion or country. It is as old as Creation—if not older—and the speciality of Sufism is its emphasis on Love as the sole means to realise God. Sufism<sup>1</sup> is “the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love” (Inayat Khan).

To the Sufi all life heaves on the bosom of one Love and therefore there is an underlying Unity of base. One begins to perceive this oneness of life as one awakens to Love, love for God and love for God in the fellow-creatures. Through Love the barriers of separativity crumble down: “The more a man loves, the deeper he penetrates the divine purposes. Love is the astrolabe of heavenly mysteries, the eye-salve which clears the spiritual eye and makes it clairvoyant.” (Jalaluddin).

How to awaken this element of love? By appeal to Beauty.

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of the origin of the *Sufi*, Sri Gurdial is not inclined to accept its usual derivation from the Persian *sawwof* or the Greek *sophos* meaning wise, or from *soof* (wool) referring to the woollen garment of the original Sufis. He recalls, instead, the legend “which says that the term is derived from *suffa* (sofa in English) which means ‘bench’, for so the story goes, the beggars who in the days of the Prophet sat on a bench, placed outside the mosque at Mecca, were called Sufs. For, may it not be that the people who sat on the bench outside the mosque sat there not with a view to asking for alms at the hands of the charitably inclined, but in silent protest against the sin of limiting the Limitless, God, within the four walls of a house of clay?” (P. 20)

Beauty, the Mother has said, is the characteristic form for the manifestation of the Divine in the physical, the material world, and to look upon Beauty—and all that derives from or sustains upon it—as opposed to the Spirit of God, a temptation and a snare, is a perversity that plays into the hands of the Adversary. Says the author with an understandably hurt regret: “That is why to the true Sufi, the rags of pseudo-poverty are what a red rag is to the bull, the ochre-coloured robe is a mockery of beauty, and the unkempt appearance and the mien of mendicancy as if the besmearing of the Divine Face!”

And Beauty, Love, Unity are to be searched for not in the forests away from life, away from the variegated creation of God. The whole world, says the Sufi, pulsates with the breath of Love. It is not elsewhere in some beyond, but “here and now, in our human world and in the company of our family and friends”, that the Love is to be realised. God the Beloved is to be greeted in this world which “is the pageant, panorama and playground of His Love.”

Consequent to this Doctrine of Love the Creator, continues the writer, the Sufis believe in a wide diversity of approaches to God,<sup>1</sup> and in the uniqueness of the individual, each with his own stress of nature in the manifestation of God. As put by a Sufi, “None can travel on another’s ticket. Such is the journey of the seeker after Truth.”

The Sufis on this path of Love-Illumination look upon Silence as the real Teacher. To them, “The Great Silence is not a vacuity; it is full of harmonies and hues, of visions and whispers; the sky is full of invitations issued by God; and these invitations are being wafted by the wind and when the individual receives his invitation, his soul is awakened from her sleep of self-sufficiency and she sets out on her journey to the home of the Beloved, whom she had forgotten while staying in the City of the senses.”

<sup>1</sup> The Sufis often quote the story of Moses to underline the truth of tolerance. “It is said that one day Moses overheard a shepherd praying in this wise, ‘O Lord, I will wash thy robes and comb thy hair’, and he took him to task for making of God, so to say, such a personal affair. The shepherd was pained at this shock to his simplicity of faith in, and intimacy of affection for and association with, God to such an extent that thereafter he ceased to pray. Then Moses heard a voice from heaven telling him that he had done grievous wrong to God’s beloved shepherd, and added, ‘Words are nothing to me. I regard the heart.’”

There are three factors that lead to this Silence : solitude, pain—the pain of longing and insufficiency—and fellowship with all orders of life. To the votary of Divine Love the search is a natural Quest which grows on one; he has no fixed laws or rules to be followed. The ascetic Sufis, however, speak of the search as a Journey regulated by distinct stages : *shariat*, in which the seeker lives in the letter of the scripture; *tarikhat*, when he wakes up on the quickening of his intelligence through the effect of the sacred Word; *marfat*, when he is thrown into the pangs of doubt; *hakikat*, when the doubt has completed its task of bringing down the mental constructions and the Truth of oneness dawns upon him.<sup>1</sup>

These two are not the only kinds of Sufis, 'unitive' and 'ethical'. There is a third kind, which is a blend of both, and these have a discipline to thin and eventually dissolve the little self, the ego; it consists of an initial period of service to fellowmen, followed by a retirement in oneself in order to find and serve God; and once the Truth of life is found and the rhythm of it discovered, the seeker is called upon to return to active life. A happier modification among these Sufis is of beneficent activity during the day and communion within oneself during the night.

The author then draws further distinctions between the two types of Sufis whom he has called the 'Unitive' and the 'Ethical' : "The unitive Sufi is one who lives in the world and yet is not of the world. To him silence and work are the obverse and reverse of self-same coin. The ethical Sufi, however, hovers between law and love till he finds the fulfilment of all laws in the expansive affectionateness of his heart.

The unitive Sufi sets no store by ecstasy and miracles. It is the ethical Sufi who is impatient to attain to a state of ecstasy.

The unitive Sufi is often a poet, while the ascetic or ethically minded Sufi is a philosopher."<sup>2</sup>

Then follows a historical account of the arrival of the first Sufis

<sup>1</sup> These Sufis, it may be noted, lay special stress on the purification of the self, "which consists of *nafs* (the separative soul), *ruh* (the spirit), *qalb* (the heart) and *aql* (the intelligence), for they say that unless this is done the little self will persist in accompanying the aspirant or the lover when he goes to the tryst to meet the Beloved." (P. 30)

<sup>2</sup> It is said once two great Sufis, Ibn Sina and Abu Said, met each other and were engaged in a long conversation. After they had parted they were asked by their respective disciples to

in Sindh from Baghdad in the 14th century A.D. and the impact of their unorthodox ways for the fulfilment of the Quest of man which is nothing less than the effacement of the ego and a total abandonment of the soul in the arms of God, the Beloved All.

According to the teaching of these Sūfis of Sindh, the first necessity is to have a *Murshid*, Teacher. Man passes through three stages of development: the first stage in which he identifies himself with everything—*I am*. It is the stage of *kasrat* (variety) when the individual is lost in the Many (*tilsam*).

The second stage is when man awakens to the fact that he is really not what he seems to be; he realises that he is not his body, mind etc.—*I am not*. This awakening comes as a result of meditation on the Great Word, *ism-e-azim*, communicated by the Teacher.

The third stage comes when he suddenly strikes into identity with the All—*I am All*. "The seeker when he is under the sway of his self says, 'God is nowhere', but when he has become one with the Truth, he says, 'God is now here'. The phenomenal world remains as before, it is the eye which has been 'winged' with the vision of the One." (P. 49)<sup>1</sup>

We then read in this book, accounts of Shah Latif, the greatest mystic-poet of Sindh,<sup>2</sup> who sang of human love as a stepping-stone to the Divine Love,<sup>3</sup> of the Tavern-Keeper 'who gives the cup only when one's head is offered as a price'. We read of Sāchal who was seized by the Reality in its manifestation of Beauty and Love and spoke of his illumination in the memorable phrase:

give their estimates of each other. Said Ibu Sina, "What I know, he sees," and Abu Said observed, "What I see, he knows". (P. 23)

<sup>1</sup> I burn with Love.

The Centre is within me, and its wonder

Lies as a circle everywhere about me. (Attar).

<sup>2</sup> Shah was a lover of the Beautiful; yet in conformity with the obtaining practices, he used to tell the beads of the rosary. "He continued these practices for some years when one day he was shaken out of the slough of conformity by the conversation between two milk-maids, which he overheard. One milkmaid said to the other, 'I have met my lover so many times; how many times have you?' The other answered, 'Sister, why keep an account of one's meeting with one's lover?' Thereupon Shah threw away his rosary, saying: 'Indeed, why keep an account with our lover?' " (P. 56)

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* also:

A lover may hanker after this love or that love,

But at the last he is drawn to the King of Love. (Rumi)

*It was like the coming of the sea into the pitcher.*

Sachal it was who when asked when he was born, replied, "I do not know when I was first born. I feel I have always been living." The author's summing up of the message of this mystic-poet is gripping :

"Sachal has served the cup of love divine to not a few who dwell in the desert and outside. And those who have drunk deep of it have felt in some mysterious manner that they have themselves been transformed into so many cups, from out of each of which one day the Eternal Thirsty Traveller, when He passes by their houses on the road, might just take a sip and slake His thirst. All of us have to become cups—be it even broken cups—for to drink out of such cups has been the undying longing of our Divine Fellow-Traveller ever since we shook off our feet the fragrant dust of Paradise. Let us, then, keep our cups ready, for who knows when He might knock at our doors and say, 'Give me a drink'. And woe to us if on the day on which He comes we turn Him away because we have no cups in the house."

Indeed, "unhappy is the man or the nation which, when the divine moment arrives, is found sleeping or unprepared to use it, because the lamp has not been kept trimmed for the welcome and the ears are sealed to the call. But thrice woe to them who are strong and ready, yet waste the force or misuse the moment; for them is irreparable loss or great destruction." (Sri Aurobindo)

A book with vision, feeling and purpose.

M. P. PANDIT

**A Plea for Creative Rethinking in Indian Philosophy** By  
*Dr. K. C. Varadachari.*

In this his presidential address to the Religion and Philosophy Section at the All India Oriental Conference 1965, Dr. Varadachariar expresses his gratification at the work that is being promoted in this field, especially in bringing to light old manuscripts and in the

publication of critical editions of the *Darśana* texts. He sounds a needed note of caution against overdoing the 'historical' presentation in ancient Indian Philosophy and rightly pleads for an organic view in these studies so as to give due importance to the experience and the mystical tradition that has imparted a special flavour to the genuinely Indian contribution to the subject. He refers to attempts at fresh interpretations of the Brahma Sūtras and the Upanishads in the light of this tradition and records Sri Aurobindo's work in the exposition of the Vedic hymns.

M.P.P.

Indeed, 'uniqueness' is the mark of the nation which, when the divine moment arrives, is found sleeping or unprepared to use it, because the lamp has not been kept trimmed for the welcome and the ears are sealed to the call. But since we are men, we are always ready to wait for the dawn of the morning; for there is no such thing as a free lunch. (Sri Aurobindo)


A book with vision, feeling and purpose. — M. P. P. P.

A Plea for Creative Retaining in Indian Philosophy. —

During his presidential address to the Religion and Philosophy Section at the All India Oriental Conference 1954, Dr. Varadachari expressed his gratification at the work that is being done in the field, especially in bringing to light old manuscripts and in the



*The Advent*



The Divine is indeed what you expect of Him  
in your deepest aspiration.

THE MOTHER

# The ADVENT

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The greatest force is born out of the greatest  
difficulty.

SRI AUROBINDO



# THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - Sri Aurobindo.

## EDITORIAL

### THE SITUATION OF TODAY

(I)

**I**T is not of today, not of yesterday, but also of the day before yesterday and the day before and the day before. The story is as old as human consciousness itself. Whether it will be the same tomorrow remains to be seen.

It is the fate of all spiritual endeavour to raise in its wake a contrary movement that declares and demands its negation. The Buddha says, surrounded as we are by enemies, let us not be inimical to them. The Christ, as we all know, when being led with a crown of thorns on his head and the cross on his back, heaved a sigh and prayed to the Lord to pardon all those who did not know what they were doing. In the early centuries of the Christian era when Rome sought to spread her gospel of Christendom and extend its frontiers, the vandals rose up against it and from their barbarian soil of Germania swept through

the countries like a hurricane, laying waste everything before them till they reached the Holy City itself pillaging and ravaging it, desecrating the basilica,—leaving their name as an immortal legacy to mankind for such deeds of theirs. And centuries later, the little maid of Orleans, Jeanne D'arc, was burnt alive, because she said that she saw the angels and heard their voices and conversed with God. And Mahammad—whose glory today rings reverberant in all the four corners of the globe—in his day was tracked from place to place like a hunted animal. Since then the situation seems to have worsened, not improved; for even as late as the enlightened nineteenth century, towards its end, we find a poignant picture, by the great dramatist Ibsen, of the social crisis of today, how the people, the masses, are not capable of recognizing their own secular good—not to speak of any higher spiritual welfare—and one who does or tries to do a really good turn to them is dubbed “An Enemy of the People”.

Today the opposition is infinitely greater. The call now to humanity is for an infinitely greater change—an inner change in the consciousness and an outer change in life and material existence. Also the change is to be a radical change, that is to say, from the very root, not merely a superficial reform. The aim is not to leave the world as it is or just a little better in some way, if possible, but to remould it in the very substance and constitution of the Spirit. And the ultimate goal of earthly life is not the Divine's crucified body, but the perfected glorious body.

Naturally the old habits, the millennial forces, the ignorant and obscure movements of instinct and tradition cannot suffer such an upsetting. Earthly creatures, wherever they are, cannot bear the light that descends to illumine the earth. Its impact is too strong: the beings that abide in cool shades or cosy darkness struggle and wriggle, they fear to be dissolved; they desire no change. But the decree has gone forth. And earth moves...towards the Light.

(2)

Sri Aurobindo founded the Ashram to give a form to the descending light, to make of man an angel, not leaving him to remain an animal or half-animal as he now is,

The Mother's dream from her childhood was to find a place upon earth where men would be free, happy, wise, pure, one in love, above want, dwelling in the plenitude of prosperity, both inner and outer. She was building up, she is building up a structure in that direction, naturally under the restrictions and conditions of prevailing circumstances, seeking to open them out for the play of a higher order of consciousness, a superior status of being, a luminous mode of life.

Opposition from the stagnant order, opposition from domains that do not want man to be free from his past and present and become a being of the future, is inevitable in the nature of things. Opposition is also meant to be a tool, a test and a training for perfection. Through troubles, tribulations, through whatever accidents and incidents happen, we move unfailingly to the Divine Fulfilment.

Trials and tribulations are not new to the Ashram. From the first day Sri Aurobindo planted the seed here more than half a century ago, it has been buffeted by bad weather. He was advised to quit, offered a cosy retreat in the Himalayas by the Imperial British. The French regime offered him an equally agreeable resort, a peaceful haven on the Mediterranean coast of Africa. And even among well-wishers here, some were eager to take him out for a joy ride to...an unknown destination. But Sri Aurobindo had made his choice. This is the holy spot, this is the seat for his sadhana and siddhi—*Pīṭhasthān*. The Mother has not abjured his choice, she continues.

Even so the Buddha had taken his seat under the Bo-tree and declared : I am here and I do not move. Let my body dry up, *ihāsane śuśyatu me śarīram* I sit firm and go through, to the end.

The passage to heaven, Sri Aurobindo says, lies through hell. Here is his warning and beckoning :

Here must the traveller of the upward way—  
For daring Hell's kingdoms winds the heavenly route—  
Pause or pass slowly through the perilous space,  
A prayer upon his lips and the great Name—

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Where the red Wolf waits by the fordless stream  
And Death's black eagles scream to the precipice.

The nether forces can never divert or deflect the Divine Decree. That alone is carried out and fulfilled. And in His Will is our peace.

When a mountain surges up, lifts its peak high in the heaven, an opposite movement is generated that seeks to drag it down and bring it to the original level ground—the result being formidable glaciers and cataracts and land-slides hurtling down. But through these accidents and incidents—they are no more than that—the mountain remains firm, the living structure that is to be there abides in its integrality and greatness, although the accidents look like a tearing and a mauling of its body.

Through all contraries and adversities, through all that are broken and torn, through all that pass and disappear grows slowly and irrevocably that which the Supreme wills towards the final consummation. And one day we all shall see

Built is the golden tower, the flame child born.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

## A TASK UNACCOMPLISHED

THERE is no question so vital to the future of this nation as the spirit in which we are to set about the regeneration of our national life. Either India is rising again to fulfil the function for which her past national life and development seem to have prepared her, a leader of thought and faith, a defender of spiritual truth and experience destined to correct the conclusions of materialistic Science by the higher Science of which she has the secret and in that power to influence the world's civilization, or she is rising as a faithful pupil of Europe, a follower of methods and ideas borrowed from the West, a copyist of English politics and society. In the one case her aspiration must be great, her faith unshakable, her efforts and sacrifices such as to command the admiration of the world; in the other no such greatness of soul is needed or possible;—a cautious, slow and gradual progress involving no extraordinary effort and no unusual sacrifices is sufficient for an end so small. In the one case her destiny is to be a great nation remoulding and leading the civilization of the world, in the other it is to be a subordinate part of the British Empire sharing in the social life, the political privileges, the intellectual ideals and attainments of the Anglo-Celtic race. These are the two ideals before us, and an ideal is not mere breath, it is a thing compelling which determines the spirit of our action and often fixes the method. No policy can be successful which does not take into view the end to be attained and the amount and nature of the effort needed to effect it. The leader of industry who enters on a commercial enterprise, first looks at the magnitude of his field and intended output and equips himself with capital and plant accordingly, and even if he cannot commence at once on the scale of his ideal he holds it in view himself, puts it before the public in issuing his prospectus and estimating the capital necessary, and all the practical steps he takes are conceived in the light of his original aspiration and ordered towards its achievement. So it is with the political ventures of a nation. To place before himself a great object and then to shrink in the name of expediency

from the expenditure and sacrifice called for in its pursuit is not prudence but ineptitude. If you will be prudent, be prudent from the beginning. Fix your object low and creep towards it. You fix your object in the skies, it will not do to crawl on the ground and because your eyes are sometimes lifted towards the ideal imagine you are progressing while you murmur to those behind, "Yes, yes our ideal is in the skies because that is the place for ideals, but we are on the ground and the ground is our proper place of motion. Let us creep, let us creep". Such inconsistency will only dishearten the nation, unnerve its strength and confuse its intelligence. You must either bring down your ideal to the ground or find wings or aeroplane to lift you to the skies. There is no middle course.

We believe that this nation is one which has developed itself in the past on spiritual lines under the inspiration of a destiny which is now coming to fulfilment. The peculiar seclusion in which it was able to develop its individual temperament, knowledge and ideas;—the manner in which the streams of the world poured in upon and were absorbed by the calm ocean of Indian spiritual life, recalling the great image in the Gita,—even as the waters flow into the great tranquil and immeasurable ocean, and the ocean is not perturbed;—the persistence with which peculiar and original forms of society, religion and philosophical thought were protected from disintegration up till the destined moment;—the deferrings of that disintegration until the whole world outside had arrived at the point when the great Indian ideal which these forms enshrined could embrace all that is yet needed for its perfect self-expression, and be itself embraced by an age starved by materialism and yearning for a higher knowledge;—the sudden return of India upon itself at a time when all that was peculiarly Indian seemed to wear upon it the irrevocable death sentence passed on all things that in the human evolution are no longer needed;—the miraculous uprising and transformation of weakness into strength brought about by the return;—all this seems to us to be not fortuitous and accidental but inevitable and preordained in the decrees of an overruling Providence. The rationalist looks on such beliefs and aspirations as mysticism and jargon. When confronted with the truths of Hinduism, the experience of deep thinkers and the choice spirits of the race through thousands of years,

he shouts "Mysticism, mysticism !" and thinks he has conquered. To him there is order, development, progress, evolution, enlightenment in the history of Europe, but the past of India is an unsightly mass of superstition and ignorance best torn out of the book of human life. These thousands of years of our thought and aspiration are a period of least importance to us and the true history of our progress only begins with the advent of European education ! The rest is a confused nightmare or a mere barren lapse of time preparing nothing and leading to nothing. This tone is still vocal in the organs of the now declining school of nineteenth century some of which preserve their influence in the provinces where the balance in the struggle between the past and the future has not inclined decidedly in favour of the latter. In Bengal it is still represented by an undercurrent of the old weakness and the old want of faith which struggles occasionally to establish itself by a false appearance of philosophical weight and wisdom. It cannot really believe that this is a movement with a divine force within and a mighty future before it. The only force it sees is the resentment against the Partition which in its view is enough to explain everything that has happened, the only future it envisages is reform and reversal of the Partition. Recently, however, the gospel of Nationalism has made so much way that the organs of this school in Bengal have accepted many of its conclusions and their writings are coloured by its leading ideas. But the fundamental idea of the movement as a divine manifestation purposing to raise up the nation not only for its own fulfilment in India but for the work and service of the world and therefore sure of its fulfilment, therefore independent of individuals and superior to vicissitudes and difficulties, is one which they cannot yet grasp. It is a sentiment which has been growing upon us as the movement progressed, but it has not yet been sufficiently put forward by the organs of Nationalism itself, partly because the old idea of separating religion from politics lingered, partly because the human aspects of the Nationalist faith had to be established before we could rise to the divine. But that divine aspect has to be established if we are to have the faith and greatness of soul which can alone help us in the tremendous developments the signs of the time portend. There is plenty of weakness still lingering in the land and we cannot allow it to take shelter under the cry of expediency

and rationality and seek to kill the faith and force that has been born in the hearts of the young. The Karma Yoga has taken its stand on the rock of religion and its first object will be to combat these reactionary tendencies and lead the nation forward into the fuller light for which the Bandemataram and other organs of the new faith only prepared; the gospel of Nationalism has not yet been fully preached; its most inspiring tenets have yet to be established not only by the eloquence of the orator and inspiration of the prophet but by the arguments of the logician, the appeal to experience of the statesman and the harmonising generalisation of the scientist.<sup>1</sup>

SRI AUROBINDO

<sup>1</sup> From the *Karmayogin*

## THE IDEAL OF THE KSHATRIYA

AS for the past one thousand years the progressive ideal in India has been that of Brahminhood, so in the age upon which we are entering, the progressive ideal will be that of the Kshatriya or Knight. Purity will be accepted as implicit and courage will be demanded. The Rajput will be the type of aspiration rather than the saint. The whole preoccupation of society will be with manliness and strength rather than with subtle shades of refinement and social prestige. Criticism will be on the great scale, and the small uneasiness of the village circle will be put on one side as fit only for old wives' gossip.

This will not mean that Hinduism will have changed its goal, but only that the path marked out for the individual will be different. Infinite are the paths that lead to a single centre. Then as now 'Mukti, Freedom, will be held the supreme good. But heroism, fearlessness and blazing energy will be the forms in which that Mukti shall be worshipped : "What is manliness" said the Swami Vivekananda in a private talk, "It is to know instinctively what should be the glory of a man."

The manly man knows when to strike. He also knows when to obey. There are times when disobedience is mere insubordination, mere unfitness for co-operation. There are times when obedience is cringing serfdom. No man should be able to count on me to aid him in doing wrong ! No man should be able shamelessly to speak of wrong in my presence. Even the Brahmin may have courage to strike : the Kshatriya knows also the moment when it comes.

But fearlessness and being feared though essential to the Knightly character, is only its foundation, not its crown. The last is found in the hatred of injustice, in the passion of pity and protection, in readiness instantly to give up life for the sake of the right. Herein lies the freedom of the Kshatriya, that he is free from fear for self. His own life is the pawn that he will cheerfully spend for the banner under which he fights. He will die with a shout of triumph. Nothing gloomy or resentful will mar the sun and serenity of his temper.

He is as generous as he is brave. He is as free from suspicion as from faintheartedness. He knows nothing of jealousy, nothing of mean exultation. His greatest joy is in the glory of his comrades. His own modesty protects him from a degrading ambition. Honour is his Dharma and the protection of the weak his Mukti. Only in the hearts of the sons of kings can the companion of the Avatars arise !

The true Knight is unflinching in his austerity. Great generals sleep hard and eat sparingly. In armies the common soldiers are first served; their officers last. Even for games and sport, the play of Knighthood, the body has to be carefully trained. Ease and luxurious living soften the muscles and corrode the will. The Kshatriya keeps his sinews like iron, his armour bright, and his spirit ever tense for the ideal. Even in sleep his hand is on the sword-hilt, and his ear open for the cry that may ring forth at any hour, "Awake ! Arise ! Fight ye, and cease not till victory is won !" Loyalty to leader and comrade, devotion to banner and cause; the love and expectation of greatness and truth in others; the pride that makes noble; the playfulness of him who can never be selfish and narrow; these are the qualities of the ideal Knight.

The Kshatriya looks for strength, and not weakness, in woman. He seeks in her a comrade, not a toy. He reverences her soul, has regard for her highest aspirations, and never dooms her to feebleness or ineffectiveness because she is not man. Yet he worships at no false shrine, accepts no unreal subterfuge for greatness. Above all, he knows that woman, like man, has the right to self-sacrifice in some great cause. He looks to her for a clear vision of the goal, and makes her free to suffer and be strong. He supports her highest will with his thought and knowledge. But he offers no homage to mere vanity or weakness. He meets her with no idle flattery or weak indulgence. Hand in hand, he treads with her the roadway of their common labour and common hope, in her eyes a noble sincerity, in his a tender reverence and unflinching purpose. Highest of all the women of the past were the Satis who eagerly died for the sake of the beloved. Highest of those of the future will they be who live and die for the ideal itself, happy if in this they hold communion with their comrade's soul.

Lifted\* high above the Maya of manhood and womanhood is the life of the ideal. Ideals are not accidents. They are the fruit of long tapas and of many lives. Human life is made great in proportion to their intensity. Few indeed are the souls who can live for an idea. In the age that is now dawning, the ideals of the past will not be cast aside. On the contrary, they will now, for the first time, find their true fulfilment. It is because of the great purity and sweetness of the Indian home that men can develop the strength and courage its defence requires. Only the perfect man is the true Kshatriya, and the perfect man is priest as well as Knight.

Let us think reverently of the task that is before us. Never in history has there been a greater age than now. Nothing in the past is too high for the present. Sannyas was not greater than the public service. No form of Iswara could be higher than Bhumi Devi. This Devi we have to realise. Her Worship we have to establish. And we may remember that in the form of Gandhari she sings still to the Duryodhanas of this day, as of another long ago: "*Yato dharmastato jayah*!"<sup>1</sup>

SRI AUROBINDO

<sup>1</sup> From the *Karmayogin*

# SRI AUROBINDO AND THE NEW AGE

## CHAPTER IV

### FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT

#### ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

**A**RCHITECTURE in Europe from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment follows the same curve of transition as painting. It was a gradual unmooring from the religious preoccupation of the Mediaeval age and a vigorous drive to the scientific and secular outlook of the modern times. There were the same swings and pulls between two contrary polarities, the past ideals and the new emergent tendencies. The past was seeking to perpetuate itself and affirm its vital truths, and the forces of modern culture, fired with a new spirit of adventure and initiative, forged ahead towards a future of unfettered freedom for man and an uninterrupted progress for his individual and collective life. I shall not take the reader through the unfamiliar terrain of technical details, but indicate only the main steps of transition and the essential achievements of the major architects who, each in his own way, contributed to the development of what we know as modern architecture.

The first trend of Renaissance architecture was towards the revival of the ideas which had inspired and informed Roman buildings. But the Gothic influence remained a persistent element in it—the Mediaeval tradition refused to be treated as stone dead. Filippo BRUNELLESCHI (1377-1446) was a Florentine who studied the Roman technique of construction. He built the dome of the Cathedral of Florence, the Foundlings Hospital, Sto Spirito, the Pazzi Chapel, the sacristies of San Lorenzo etc. which proclaim his greatness. In most of his constructions there is a mingling of many styles, Byzantine, Roman, Gothic, and his own, which was original and scientifically modern. Mathematics, which had been

from the beginning of the Renaissance, stamping its importance on the minds of the scientists, began also to colour and even control all artistic creation. Science and art joined hands in adopting the rule of the perspective, and the perspective gave to architecture the laws of anatomy and a scrupulous regard for precision and proportion in terms of scientific Naturalism. Naturalism as we know, was at bottom a drive towards individualism, which was the animating centre of Renaissance Humanism. It broke or ardently sought to break free of all trammels of frozen conventions and launch upon a career of adventure and enterprise. It determined the course and configuration not only of science but of all art, architecture and sculpture of the post-Renaissance times. It was the germinating seed of the subjectivism which has penetrated into the thought of the elite of the modern age. And it is this subjectivism which, with whatever aberrations and perversions incidental to its initial growth, will bring in the new age of unity and harmony so passionately dreamt of by mankind even in its hour of agonised darkness.

Brunelleschi pioneered the architectural Renaissance and Michelozzo di Bartolommeo developed a new architectural style of palace construction in terms of that renaissance. The Medici palace, constructed by Michelozzo combines mediaeval inheritance with a pronounced Renaissance character in which the proportions are designed with mathematical order and simplicity.

The architect who gave a decisive classical turn to Renaissance architecture and applied Humanistic scholarship and archeology to the problems of building was Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472). A universal genius, he stands supreme for the perfectly harmonious proportions of his buildings and the introduction of the mode of central plan, which imparts an impressive homogeneity to all their parts. Alberti wrote extensively and with authority on the problems of Renaissance architecture, and many of his successors are indebted to him for expert guidance on the details of construction. Renaissance architecture, in thus being a symmetrical whole and confining the expression of might and mass to the human scale, achieves the distinctive humanised character which was the dominant trend of the times. Its conception, design and execution revolved round man

as the centre. Its perspective respected the bounds of time and space. But Gothic architecture, inspite of its flamboyancy and decorative excess, left ample scope for the spirit of man to soar beyond the confines of time and space and reach out towards the Eternal. Not man, but the Eternal, the Transcendent, was its centre of gravity. Its aspiration soared high in a vertical manner, whereas the fiery dream of the Renaissance extended horizontally, cherishing man, not God.

An architect who is ranked with or just next to Alberti is Donato Bramante (1444-1514). He is particularly renowned for bearing a hand in the construction of St. Peter's Church in Rome, the most magnificent building in all Christendom. Influenced by Leonardo and the Milanese school, he brought into his art the massive greatness, the solemnity, and the harmony of classical art. Raphael, the great painter (1483-1520), was also an architect of no mean calibre. He followed Bramante in patterning his architecture upon ancient Roman style and steering clear of all religious or supernatural bias. The delicate grace and subtle suggestiveness of Gothic architecture which were, it is true, often buried under a load of pompous decoration, were gone, and in their place came the solemn sobriety, the austere atticism, and the impressive but static volume of the art of antiquity. The sense of movement, of aspiration and progress towards transcendental heights, of self-projection into a the Invisible were replaced by an immobile stateliness, a magnificence, not of celestial but of the classical grandeur of Roman palaces and Roman baths. The brilliant sun-set glow of Renaissance architecture is best exemplified in the art of Palladio of Vicenza (died in 1580). In his architecture we find the order and balance of the classical model admirably knitted to lavish ornamentation, which catered to the luxurious taste of the closing phase of the Renaissance art. His buildings appealed to the popular mind which was tending more and more towards an atavistic return to the Gothic extravagance, not only in its ideas and inclinations, but in its life and habits.

Michelangelo, one of the supreme painters and sculptors of the High Renaissance, tried his hand at architecture and constructed the dome of St. Peter's Church. He disregarded the motif and

manner of Bramante and Raphael who had worked on the same Church before him, and constructed the dome and back of the church in his personal angular style, which reflected his towering genius, and had elements of the Roman, Gothic and late Renaissance styles fused together in it. He, like Bramante, is considered as a precursor of the Baroque architecture which was to be the vogue of the next generation.

Carlo Maderna (died in 1629) and Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) are among the outstanding names in this age of art and architecture. The classical gravity and structural rigidity of the previous style relax in the new manner into a sunny openness and smiling aesthetic freedom. The art of Bernini brings in the breath and breadth of Northern Italy. Baroque style now established itself with its colourful profusion and rich emotional appeal. Venetian and North Italian architectural techniques were adopted by other lands with certain regional modifications, though not without some conservative wobbling, and the humanistic mind of the epoch revels in a curious mixture of Roman balance with a love of exuberance and expansive enthusiasm, characteristic of the social life of the times.

### SCULPTURE

Unlike painting, Renaissance architecture and sculpture in Florence had the signal advantage of deriving direct inspiration for their ideals, motifs and even styles from the large body of Roman ruins still extant. And yet they could not at once get rid of the ties of the Gothic tradition. It was only much later that the pure Renaissance manner emerged and established itself.

Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455) showed in his sculpture a remarkable gift of Naturalism. His work glows with the idealistic humanism of Roman art set out with a delicious decoration. He knew the rule of the perspective and used it to a great effect in his art. His masterpiece was the double bronze eastern doors of the baptistry in Florence which are so magnificent in conception and craftsmanship that even Michelangelo, who was habitually chary of high praise, characterised them as "fit to adorn the entrance to heaven."

Donatello (died 1466) was the most "significant sculptor" of the fifteenth century in Italy. He was much influenced by classical ideas and strove to infuse them into his art, but he was not totally untouched by the growing realism of his times. His work unites humanism and realism in an exquisite manner. His equestrian portrait of Gattamelata is an impressive example of it. He imparted vitality and energy to sculpture which was lacking in the works of many of his contemporaries. He opened many a path of creative execution consistent with the realistic norms of the modern age, and many of his successors did nothing but follow him and mimic his style. The tendency to scientific realism prevailed and seemed to triumph over Gothic idealism.

Michelangelo can be called the greatest sculptor of the Renaissance. But his ideas were his own and his style followed no traditional model, neither Roman nor Gothic, nor of the Renaissance. His vision mounted beyond the reach of the classical ideal and his art took liberties with Nature. What he strove to do was to make his work express psychological truths of his own perception. His art can, therefore, be called distinctively individual. Massiveness, vigour and vitality, and a vivid sense of movement are the specific traits of his creation in sculpture as well as in painting and architecture. His colossal genius disdained to bow to any set ideas or canons, ancient, Gothic or modern. But genius without humility tends to become craggy and angular. And yet his work represents a landmark in Renaissance art, and even suggests the first figuration of the Baroque style.

Baroque sculpture revived something of the Gothic religiosity, the mediaeval exaltation of the saints, and the greatness of the church. The ghost of the old overshadowed for a moment the youthful secular ardour of the Renaissance spirit. But only for a moment. The young spirit emerged again with its love of the world, love of the present, love of man and Nature and its confident reliance on the reason as the architect of human destiny and the leader of life's march. The dream of scientific humanism was to make earth the peer of the heaven of the mediaeval man.

Bernini was a sculptor as well as an architect and is considered the chief inspirer of the Baroque style. There is a throbbing in-

tensity of emotion is his art which contrasts with the cold rationalism of scientific humanism. His statue of Apollo and Daphne is a veritable tour de force. Bernini employed decoration, but the florid and ornate extravagance of the Baroque tradition has been slashed away by his keen sense of balance and harmony. His successors follow in his steps with more or less success, and Baroque decoration, toned down by him and combined with classical restraint and the geometric simplicity of scientific humanism, continues well into the eighteenth century. The transitions of art from the Early Renaissance to the Rococo period make an interesting study, showing as they do, how chequered was the course of the modern age, emerging from the criss-cross of antique, mediaeval and Renaissance traditions. Scientific rationalism had to pass through severe struggles before it could come off with flying colours.

*(To be continued)*

RISHABHCHAND

## VEDA, UPANISHADS AND GITA

### VEDA

IT is not possible to deal with the three subjects at length; for each of them might easily require a life-time for study. It is Sri Aurobindo's interpretations of these that can be attempted in outline; for even a detailed exposition of one subject, like the Veda, would be outside the scope of the attempt. On the Veda alone he has written two Voluminous books : "On the Veda" and "Hymns to the Mystic Fire". It would be possible only to indicate in what particular respect Sri Aurobindo's interpretation is marked by his own Vision.

How Sri Aurobindo came to the study of the Veda :

Sri Aurobindo is not a scholar who takes up the work of interpreting the Veda; his entry in the Vedic literature is best given in his own words :

"First, it seems to me advisable to explain the genesis of the theory in my own mind so that the reader may the better understand the line I have taken or, if he chooses, check my prepossessions or personal preferences which may have influenced or limited the right application of reasoning to this difficult problem".<sup>1</sup>

### I

"Like the majority of educated Indians I had passively accepted without examination, before myself reading the Veda, the conclusions of European Scholarship both as to the religious and as to the historical and ethical sense of the ancient hymns. In consequence, following again the ordinary line taken by modernised Hindu opinion, I regarded the Upanishads as the most ancient source of Indian thought and religion, the true Veda, the first Book of Knowledge..."

<sup>1</sup> *On the Veda*, p. 42

“My first contact with Vedic thought came indirectly while pursuing certain lines of self-development in the way of Indian Yoga, which, without my knowing it, were spontaneously converging towards the ancient and now unfrequented paths followed by our forefathers. At this time there began to arise in my mind an arrangement of symbolic names attached to certain psychological experiences which had begun to regularise themselves; and among them there came the figures of three female energies, Ila, Saraswati, Sarama, representing severally three out of four faculties of the intuitive reason—revelation, inspiration and intuition. Two of these names were not well known to me as names of Vedic goddesses, but were connected rather with the current, Hindu religion or with old Puranic legend, Saraswati, goddess of learning and Ila, mother of the Lunar dynasty. But Sarama was familiar enough. I was unable, however, to establish any connection between the figure that rose in my mind and the Vedic hound of heaven, who was associated in my memory with Argive Helen and represented only an image of the physical Dawn entering in its pursuit of the vanished herds of Light into the cave of the Powers of darkness. When once the clue is found, the clue of the physical Light imaging the subjective, it is easy to see that the hound of heaven may be the intuition entering into the dark caverns of the subconscious mind to prepare the delivery and out-flashing of the bright illuminations of knowledge which have there been imprisoned.”<sup>1</sup>

## II

“It is my stay in Southern India which first seriously turned my thoughts to the Veda. Two observations that were forced on my mind, gave a serious shock to my second-hand belief in the racial division between Northern Aryans and Southern Dravidians. The distinction had always rested for me on a supposed difference between the physical types of Aryan and Dravidian and a more definite incompatibility between the Northern Sanskritic and the Southern non-Sanskritic tongues.... I could not, however, be long in Southern India without being impressed by the general recurrence of northern or “Aryan” types in the Tamil race...”

<sup>1</sup> *On the Veda*, pp. 42-43

“But what then of the sharp distinction between Aryan and Dravidian races created by the philologists? It disappears.”

“...On examining the vocables of the Tamil language, in appearance so foreign to the Sanskrit form and character, I yet found myself continually guided by words or by families of words supposed to be pure Tamil in establishing new relations between Sanskrit and its distant sister, Latin and occasionally, between the Greek and the Sanskrit.... And it was through this Dravidian language that I came first to perceive what seems to me now the true law, origins and, as it were, the embryology of the Aryan tongues’.<sup>1</sup>

“It was, therefore, with a double interest that for the first time I took up the Veda in the original, though without any immediate intention of a close or serious study. It did not take long to see that the Vedic indications of a racial division between Aryan and Dasyus and the identification of the latter with the indigenous Indians were of a far flimsier character than I had supposed. But far more interesting to me was the discovery of a considerable body of profound psychological thought lying neglected in these ancient hymns.”<sup>2</sup>

### III

“I was helped in arriving at this result by my fortunate ignorance of the commentary of Sayana. For I was left free to attribute their natural psychological significance to many ordinary and current words of the Veda, such as *dhī*, thought or understanding; *manas*, mind, *matī*, thought, feeling or mental state; *manīṣā*, intellect, *ṛtam*, truth; to give their exact shades of sense to *Kavi*, seer, *manīṣī* thinker, *vipra*, *vipaścīt*, enlightened in the mind and a number of similar words;...<sup>3</sup>

### IV

“On one condition this transformation—into psychological complexion—is frequently complete, the condition that we should

<sup>1</sup> *On the Veda*, p. 45

<sup>2</sup> *On the Veda*, p. 45

<sup>3</sup> *On the Veda*, p. 46

admit the symbolic character of the Vedic sacrifice. We find in the Gita the word Yajna, sacrifice, used in a symbolic sense for all action, whether internal or external, that is consecrated to the gods or to the Supreme... I found in the Veda itself there were hymns in which the idea of the yajna or of the victim is openly symbolical, others in which the veil is quite transparent..... If the yajna is the action consecrated to the Gods, I could not but take the yajama as the doer of the action?...Yajamana must be the soul or the personality as the doer. But there were also the officiating priests, *hotā, ritwij, purohit, brahmā, adhvaryu*...I found that the gods were continually spoken of as priests of the offering and in many passages it was undisguisedly a non-human power or energy which presided over the sacrifice.”<sup>1</sup>

## V

“...The Angirasa legend and the Vritra mythus are the two principal parables of the Veda; they occur and recur everywhere;...when we determine their sense, we have determined the sense of the whole Rik Samhita.”<sup>2</sup>

“We have concluded that the Angirasa Rishis are bringers of the Dawn, rescuers of the Sun out of the darkness, but that this Dawn, Sun, Darkness are figures used with a spiritual significance. The central conception of the Veda is the conquest of the Truth out of the darkness of Ignorance and by the conquest of the Truth the conquest also of Immortality.”<sup>3</sup>

“The seven divine Angirasas are sons or powers of Agni, powers of the Seer-Will, the flame of the divine Force instinct with divine knowledge which is kindled for the victory.”<sup>4</sup>

## THE RIG VEDA

I. Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the Veda is psychological and spiritual. It unveils the mystic import of the Vedic symbols on

<sup>1</sup> *On the Veda*, pp. 49-50

<sup>2</sup> *On the Veda*, p. 277

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277-278

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278

the basis of internal evidence. Sri Aurobindo argues that corresponding to the school of Vedic mysteries there were such schools in Egypt, Greece and Asia Minor.

II. That Sayana's Bhashya—commentary—is not the sole undisputed authority on the meaning of the Vedic hymns is amply proved by Yaska's Nirukta, the first attempt at preserving the Vedic knowledge current in Yaska's time. Yaska is prior to Sayana, and he admits triple interpretation of every hymn—*ādhibhautika*, *ādhidivika*, *ādhyātmika*—and in the course of his exegesis mentions more than twenty schools and individuals who give different interpretations of the hymns.

Yaska in his introduction admits ten unknown—*anavagatam*—categories showing clearly the uncertainty that prevailed in his times about the meaning of the Veda.

The Western scholarship almost entirely relies on *Sāyana* and it is not so much interested in finding the meaning of the hymns as in interpreting the meaning assigned to them by *Sāyana*. But as I have just shown the meaning of the hymns had become vague and uncertain even in Yaska's time. *Sāyana's Bhāṣya* could hardly be accepted as their most authoritative exposition. Besides the Western Schools are more interested in finding the history, social customs, institutions in the Vedas which might support their hypothesis of a primitive Indian world.

III. Much has been made of the word 'Arya'—by foreign scholars and their Indian followers. The word 'Arya' occurs 33 times in the Rig Veda : 22 times it is applied to Indra, 6 times to Agni. The remaining five references do not indicate any racial conflict. The *Dāsa* occurs 80 times, and *Dasyu* 70 times.

IV. Sri Aurobindo's interpretation is based on :

1) Internal evidence of the Vedic hymns. He regards Veda as of one piece; even a cursory glance would show that all the Mandals deal with one subject-matter, and have a common form. It must therefore lead to one significance.

2) There are special words used in the Veda which are the keywords and have a double-meaning; this has grammatical justification.

3) Metrical development of the hymns indicates a high degree of cultural advance.

4) All through the Veda symbols are used profusely—even the ceremony of sacrifice, *yajña* is symbolic including even the participants and the materials.

5) The psychological words used in the Veda indicate a highly developed society, at least an intellectual oligarchy.

6) The gods and their functions are symbolic and psychological.

7) The legends in the Veda are also symbolic and capable of psychological interpretation.

Special words with philological justification

*go*; *aśwa*; *vṛtra*; *Vṛka*; *Vāmadeva*; *dīrghatamas*; *Parāśara*; *Angirasa*; *Angirastama*; *Gaviṣṭhira*; *Gotama*; *Viśwāmitra*; *Vaśiṣṭha*; *Bharadwāja*; *Bhaga*; *Dhenu*; *Vana*; *Dasyu*; *Vala*; *Paṇis*; *Vṛṣan*; *Brahma*; *Bṛhat*; *Barhi*;<sup>1</sup>

Ex : *go* means both 'cow' and ray of light'; Parashara is regarded as a proper name; but in the hymns it carries its root-meaning—"one who overcomes the enemies". It is used as an adjective of Indra in the hymns. *Gotama* means "One most full of light". *Dīrghatamas*, "One, who is or was long in darkness". *Vṛtra* "One who covers"; *Vṛka* "One who tears"; *Viśwāmitra* "The friend of all" "Universal friend"; *Paṇis* "The trafficker"; *Dhenu* "One who nourishes".<sup>2</sup>

Sacrifice—*yajña* —, in the Veda is symbolic. Sacrifice really is a means of interchange between men and the gods. Sacrifice in the Veda is *Adhwara*, a pilgrimage, and a battle. The officiating priests : *hotā*, one who calls; *Adhwaryu*, the priest of the journey; *ṛtvik*, one who sacrifices at the right season according to law; *Brahma* the voice of Rhythm—the reciter, of the word of creative power welling from the soul.

The fruits of the sacrifice—*go*, *aśwa*, *rayi*, *ratnam*, *Vīra*, *prajā*, *tanaya*—also are symbolic.

The offerings — *ghṛta*, *soma*, *puroḍāśa* — are also symbolic."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Dwibarhi'—"One who is nourished or increased by two worlds" Sayana X.116.1; (At times even Sayana stumbles into correct symbolic sense)

<sup>2</sup> For further clarification refer to *Studies in Vedic Interpretation* by the author, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Benares.

<sup>3</sup> III.32. *Yajna* is symbolic. In I.163 *Ashwa* is symbolic—the whole Sukta being dedicated to *Ashwa* e.g.

"The Horse has the horns of gold and feet of steel, it has the speed of mind—he was like another inferior Indra". *Soma* is Symbolic in IX.113.

## VI

A small list of psychological words<sup>1</sup> used in the Rig Veda showing clearly that the Vedic Rishis were far from a primitive state of culture.

<i>Satyam</i>	: Truth of being
<i>ṛtam</i>	: Truth of movement, of action, a law
<i>Bṛhat</i>	: Vast, all-pervading
<i>Dhī</i>	: Intellect
<i>Mati</i>	: Thinking
<i>Maniṣā</i>	: Mentalising
<i>ñā</i>	: To know
<i>Budh</i>	: To be aware, to awake
<i>Cetana</i>	: Consciousness
<i>Cit</i>	: To be conscious
<i>Citti</i>	: Consciousness
<i>Acitti</i>	: Unconsciousness
<i>Dhā</i> with <i>Ava</i> :	To place (the mind) upon (something)
<i>Man</i>	: To think
<i>Vicetas</i>	: One supremely conscious
<i>Sumna</i>	: One with a happy state of mind or thought
<i>Śiva</i>	: The beneficent
<i>Kalyāṇa</i>	: Welfare, state of spiritual attainment
<i>Dhīra</i>	: One who has the calm intellect
<i>Vipra</i>	: One who is illumined
<i>Medhāvi</i>	: One who is a genius (of quick comprehension)
<i>Vicarṣaṇi</i>	: One who has the illumined sight

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Pressed out by the Truthful speech, by Truth, by faith and by Tapas. O Indu—flow for Indra's sake.

Where the light is unfailing, in the plane wherein the Heaven (of mind) is established, where the peoples are full of light—there, O Soma, make me immortal.

'go' is symbolic in III.30.10; cows here are identical with light, and light is one with 'rivers' and with vani, speech :

Vrishabha—the Bull is symbolic :

VII.101.6. He is the Bull that gives the seed, the Bull of Immortality, in whom rests the self the moving and the unmoving. 'Ghrita' is symbolic. Even Sayana at times accepts the symbolic sense e.g.

VI.55.1 Sayana : III. 26-1.

Words formed from *ghṛta* showing the various symbolic applications,

<i>Vipaścīt</i>	: One whose consciousness is illumined
<i>Pracetas</i>	: One whose consciousness is expanded, active
<i>Kavi</i>	: The Seer
<i>Kratu</i>	: Will
<i>ṛṣi</i>	: One with a vision
<i>Dakṣa</i>	: One with will or power
<i>Hṛdaya</i>	: The heart
<i>Mayas</i>	: Bliss
<i>Bhādrām</i>	: Happy beauty
<i>Rayi</i>	: Delight
<i>Ratnam</i>	: Shining joy
<i>Moda</i>	: Sweet—intoxicating—delight
<i>Pramoda</i>	: More intoxicating delight
<i>Vid</i>	: To know
<i>Vidwān</i>	: The knower
<i>Swasti</i>	: Happy state of being
<i>Vāma</i>	: Delight
<i>Vana</i>	: Delight
<i>Sumati</i>	: Happy state of mind

The use of these words containing various psychological functions and even shades e.g., *Dhi*, *Mati*, *Cetana* etc., shows the advanced state of the Vedic seers.

## VII\*

Vedic gods and their functions, psychological and symbolic.

The first Sukta of the third Mandala (iii.1) of Vishwamitra is symbolic; there the relation between Agni, Rivers and Waters is stated indicating the symbolic nature of the god Agni as well as that of the Rivers and the Waters.

In I.26.2 Agni is said to be *Sadā Yaviṣṭha manamabhiḥ* "Eternally, the most youthful by thought-forces", In I.73.2 Fire is said to be *Satyā manma* "One with truthful thoughts".

\* A monogram on the Vedic gods has been written by Sri Aurobindo. It is now the foreword to the Hymns to the Mystic Fire.

In IV.39. 1-6 Dadhikravan has only spiritual functions. So also in IV. 40 Dadhikaravan, a form of Agni, is spoken of as performing the functions of the Gods. In IV.40.5—the last Rik; Dadhikravan is so openly symbolic as to leave no doubt in the minds even of the most reluctant.

Saraswati, either the river or goddess, or both, is *Sādhayanti Dhiyam nah* “perfects our intelligence”; Usha, the goddess Dawn, is *Yuvatīḥ purāṇī* the “sempiternal young beauty”; and Agni, the god of Fire—representing the Divine Will—is “the Divine guest in the mortals”.

III.32.12 Vishwamitra says to Indra : “The sacrifice becomes thy increaser, O Indra, and the sacrifice in which Soma is pressed is dear to thee; thou, worthy of sacrifice, protect the sacrifice by the sacrifice; may this sacrifice guard thy thunderbolt in the killing of the coverer”.

Also in I.31.1 Agni is not the material fire; “Thou, O Fire, art the original Angirasa Seer, thou, a God, hast become the beneficent comrade of the gods”. Further in I.31.7. The Rishi says “O Fire, thou upholdest the mortal in the highest status of immortality for inspired hearing day after day; for him who desires the double birth, thou makest for him, the seer, delight and enjoyment”.

“O Fire, thou art easy to sacrifice to for men, thee the Bhrigus established among men for (attaining) divine birth, beautiful like delightful wealth” I.58.6

Here the aim of the sacrifice is clearly stated to be the attainment of “divine birth” which would make man realise Immortality, the “Delight of the Eternal”.

In I.62.2 the Rishi exhorts the gathering “to hold up powerfully a great surrender—a salutation; by that—surrender—our ancient forefathers, the Angirases, knowers of the path, discovered the Ray-Cows”. Here the effectivity of the salutation—surrender—to Indra is stressed and the Angirases found out—not the animal—cows—but the Ray-Cows by pursuing the path he knew.

It has been argued sometimes that the Veda speaks of the gods but not of the One, Infinite, the Brahman, therefore the schools of monistic Vedanta are not really founded on the Veda, though they offer to the latter lip homage. This is not true—though it must be

emphasised that as the Vedic Seers are not laying down any school of philosophy, they speak not primarily about the One. But there are clear statements to show that to them the multiplicity of the gods was not a dividing bar, they hold that all the gods were the names and aspects of the One :

*ekam sat Viprā bahudhā vadanti, I. 164.46*

*Tat ekam, V.62-7*

*Rtam Bṛhat IX.101.8*

*mahaddevānām asuratvam ekam III.55.1*

*eka evāgnir bahudhā samiddhaḥ VIII.58.2*

*ekam vā idam vibabhūva sarvam VIII.58.2*

## VIII

### LEGENDS

The Vedic legends at first sight appear to be historical or a mixture of myths and history, but on closer examination they are found to contain symbolic sense. The Angirasa legend, in particular, is one such.

<sup>1</sup> In IV.3.11 Angirasa seers are said to break open the hill—(mountain)—by the truth ! and they united themselves with the Ray-Cows; the heroes happily sat round the Dawn; when Fire was born then Heaven (higher mental world) became manifest.

The breaking open of the hill or mountain by the Truth indicates the symbolic nature of the mountain and that the action of the Angirasa seers.

<sup>2</sup> In V.1.8. Agni is clearly symbolic and so is Vrishabha, the Bull. "The purifier, he is rubbed bright and pure, he who is proclaimed by the seers, one who is the dweller in his own house, and is our benignant guest; the Bull of the thousand horns because thou hast strength of That, O Fire, thou predest in puissance all others".

In VIII.9.4. The Rishi says that the Ashwins became concious of Vritra—the Coverer—by the sweet (or honied) Soma drink ! Thus Vritra and Soma must bear symbolic significance.

<sup>1</sup> & <sup>2</sup> These translations are from the *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*.

III.39.5 says "Indra with the ten Dashagwa Rishis found out the Sun living in darkness—That Truth". Here the finding of the Sun is the finding of that Truth.

In X.62.3 The Angirasa seers "make the Sun ascend in heaven by the Truth"—*Riten sūryamārohayat āivi*". In VII.23.3 Indra is said to "have killed many Vritras" and he obstructs by his might both heaven and earth.

## IX

### SOME HYMNS THAT BEAR SYMBOLIC SENSE

It may be of interest to point out, in conclusion certain hymns that evidently bear a spiritual or symbolic significance.

I.163. This whole Sukta dedicated to Ashwa—the Horse is openly symbolic. The Horse rises from the sea, and is swift like the hawk, he is Yama, and also Aditya. It is Horse with golden horns and steel hooves, it has speed of mind, the Horse is like inferior Indra !

I.50.10. "Looking beyond the darkness, we saw the Light beyond, higher still we entered (went to) the godhead, the Sun, the Highest Light among the gods".

This is, clearly, the expression of the experience of the ascent of human consciousness to the Light above the mind.

V.15.2. "By the Truth they hold the Truth that holds all, in the might of the Sacrifice, in the Supreme ether, they who reached the gods seated in the Law that is upholder of heaven, reached by the godheads born the unborn".

V.19.1. "State upon state is born, covering upon covering has become conscious and awake, in the lap of the Mother he sees".

V.62.1. "There is a Truth covered by a Truth, where they unyoke the horses of the Sun; the ten hundreds stood together, there was That one; I saw the greatest (best, most glorious) of the embodied gods".

VIII.58.2. It is only one Fire that is kindled in many ways, one Sun that dominates over all; one Dawn that makes all this shine, it is the One that has become various by all this.

I.115.1. "The Sun is Self of all that is moving and unmoving".

I.20.1. "This hymn of praise is made for the divine birth—for the birth of the god."

II.6.7. "O Fire, thou movest within having knowledge of both the Births".

## APPENDIX

### WHY THE WAY IS HIDDEN

"The World lost its proper course, and the course it took only led it further astray. The World and the Way, being thus lost to each other, how could the men of the Way bring it again to the World? And how could the World rise to an appreciation of the Way? Since the Way had no means to make itself Conspicuous in the World, and the World had no means of rising to an appreciation of the Way then, though sagely men might not keep to the hills, and forests, their virtue was hidden—hidden, but not because they themselves sought to hide it. The sages were under the compulsion of their times. When these conditions shut them up entirely from such action as they could do, they struck their roots deeper in themselves, were perfectly still—and they waited. It was thus they preserved the Way in their own persons".<sup>1</sup>

... "The hypothesis I propose is that the Rig-veda is itself the one considerable document that remains to us from the early period of human thought of which the historic Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries were the failing remnants, when the spiritual and psychological knowledge of the race was concealed, for reasons now difficult to determine, in a veil of concrete and material figures and symbols which protected the sense from the profane and revealed it to the initiated. One of the leading principles of the mystics was the sacredness and secrecy of self-knowledge and the true knowledge of the Gods. This wisdom was, they thought, unfit, perhaps even dangerous to the ordinary mind, or in any case liable to perversion and misuse and loss of virtue if revealed to vulgar and unpurified spirits. Hence they

<sup>1</sup> Chuang Tzu XVI, 3 volume II No. 8, May 1954

favoured the existence of an outer worship, effective but imperfect, for the profane, and inner discipline for the initiate, and clothed their language in words and images which had, equally, a spiritual sense for the elect, a concrete sense for the mass of ordinary worshippers. The Vedic hymns were conceived and constructed on this principle. Their formulas and ceremonies are, overtly, the details of an outward ritual devised for the Pantheistic Nature-Worship which was then the common religion, covertly the sacred words, the effective symbols of a spiritual experience and knowledge and a psychological discipline of self-culture which were then the highest achievement of the human race. The ritual system recognised by Sayana may, in its externalities, stand the naturalistic sense discovered by European scholarship may, in its general conceptions, be accepted; but behind them there is always the true and still hidden secret of the Veda—the secret words, *nīnyā vacāṃsi*, which were spoken for the purified in soul and the awakened in knowledge. To disengage this less obvious but more important sense by fixing the import of Vedic terms, the sense of Vedic symbols and the psychological functions of the Gods is thus a difficult but necessary task, for which these chapters and the translations that accompany them are only a preparation”<sup>1</sup>.

“Their aim was illumination, not logical conviction, their ideal the inspired seer, not the accurate reasoner. Indian tradition has faithfully preserved this account of the origin of the Vedas. The Rishi was not the individual composer of the hymn, but the seer (*draṣṭā*) of an eternal truth and an impersonal knowledge. The language of Veda itself is *śruti*, a rhythm not composed by the intellect but heart, a divine Word that came vibrating out of the Infinite to the inner audience of the man who had previously made himself fit for the impersonal knowledge. The words themselves, *dr̥ṣṭi* and *śruti*, sight and hearing, are Vedic expressions; these and cognate words signify in the esoteric terminology of the hymns, revelatory knowledge and the contents of inspiration.

In the Vedic idea of the revelation there is no suggestion of the miraculous or the supernatural. The Rishi who employed these faculties, had acquired them by a progressive self-culture.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *On the Veda*, p. 89

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11

"We have, at any rate, the same notions repeated from hymn to hymn with the same constant terms and figures and frequently in the same phrases with an entire indifference to any search for poetical originality or any demand for novelty of thought and freshness of language. No pursuit of æsthetic grace, richness or beauty induces these mystic poets to vary the consecrated form which had become for them a sort of divine algebra transmitting the eternal formulæ of the Knowledge to the continuous succession of the initiates."<sup>1</sup>

"It is even possible that its most ancient hymns are a comparatively modern development or version of a more ancient<sup>2</sup> lyric evangel couched in the freer and more pliable forms of a still earlier human speech. Or the whole voluminous mass of its litanies may be only a selection by Veda Vyasa out of more richly vocal Aryan past. Made, according to the common belief, by Krishna of the Isle, the great traditional sage, the colossal compiler (Vyasa), with his face turned towards the commencement of the Iron Age, towards the centuries of increasing twilight and final darkness, it is perhaps only the last testament of the Ages of Intuition, the luminous Dawns of the Forefathers, to their descendants, to a human race already turning in spirit towards the lower levels and the more easy and secure gains—secure perhaps only in appearance—of the physical life and of the intellect and the logical reason."<sup>3</sup>

"The Rig veda is one in all its parts. Whichever of its ten Mandalas we choose, we find the same substance, the same ideas, the same images, the same phrases. The Rishis are the seers of a single truth and use in its expression a common language. They differ in temperament and personality; some are inclined to a more rich, subtle and profound use of Vedic symbolism; others give voice to their spiritual experience in a barer and simpler diction, with less fertility of thought, richness of poetical image or depth and fullness of suggestion. Often the songs of one seer vary in their manner, range from the utmost simplicity to the most curious richness. Or there are rising and fallings in the same hymn; it proceeds from the most ordinary conven-

<sup>1</sup> *On the Veda*, p. 12

<sup>2</sup> The Veda itself speaks constantly of "Ancient" and "Modern" Rishis, (*pūrva . . . nūtanāḥ*) the former remote enough to be regarded as a kind of demigods, the first founders of knowledge

<sup>3</sup> *On the Veda*, pp. 13-14

tions of the general symbol of sacrifice to a movement of packed and complex thought. Some of the Suktas are plain and almost modern in their language; others baffle us at first by their semblance of antique unity of spiritual experience, nor are they complicated by any variation of the fixed terms and the common formulae. In the deep and mystic style of Dirghatamas Auchathya as in the melodious lucidity of Medhatithi Kanwa, in the puissant and energetic hymns of Vishwamitra as in Vashishtha's even harmony we have the same firm foundation of knowledge and the same scrupulous adherence to the sacred conventions of the Initiates."<sup>1</sup>

"The internal evidence of the Riks themselves establishes that this significance is psychological, as otherwise the terms lose their fixed value, their precise sense, necessary connection, and their constant recurrence in relation to each other has to be regarded as fortuitous and void of reason or purpose.

"We shall find that the whole of the Rig-veda is practically a constant variation of this double theme, the preparation of the human being in mind and body and the fulfilment of the godhead or immortality in him by his attainment and development of the Truth and the Beatitude."<sup>2</sup>

"The Rishi next passes to the Vishvadevas, all the gods or the all-gods. It has been disputed whether these Vishvadevas form a class by themselves or are simply the gods in their generality. I take it that the phrase means the universal collectivity of the divine powers; for this sense seems to me best to correspond to the actual expressions of the hymns in which they are invoked"<sup>3</sup>.

"They are fosterers or increasers of man and upholders of his labour and effort in the work, the sacrifice—*omāsaḥ carṣaṇīdhṛtaḥ*. Sayana renders these words protectors and sustainers of men. I need not enter here into a full justification of the significances which I prefer to give them; for I have already indicated the philological method which I follow. Sayana himself finds it impossible to attribute always the sense of protection to the words derived from the root *av*, *avas*, *ūti*, *ūma*, etc. which are so common in the hymns, and is obliged

<sup>1</sup> *On the Veda*, p. 67

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99

to give to the same word in difference passages the most diverse and unconnected significances.”

“Similarly, while it is easy to attribute the sense of “Man” to the two kindred words “*carṣaṇi*” and *kṛṣṭi*” when they stand by themselves, this meaning seems unaccountably to disappear in compound forms like *vicarṣaṇi*, *viśvacarṣaṇi*, *viśvakṛṣṭi*. Sayana himself is obliged to render *viśvacarṣaṇi* “all-seeing” and not “all-human”. I do not admit the possibility of such abysmal variations in fixed Vedic terms. *av* can mean to be, have, keep; contain, protect; become, create; foster, increase, thrive, prosper; gladden, be glad; but it is the sense of increasing or fostering which seems to me to prevail in the Veda. *carṣ* and *kṛṣ* were originally derivate roots from *car* and *kr*, both meaning to do, and the sense of laborious action or movement still remains in *kṛṣ*, to drag, to plough. *carṣaṇi* and *kṛṣṭi*, mean therefore effort, laborious action or work or else the doers of such action. They are two among the many words, (*karma*, *apas*, *kara*, *kri*, *duvas* etc.) which are used to indicate the Vedic work, the sacrifice, the toil of aspiring humanity, the *arati* of the Aryan.”<sup>1</sup>

“The number seven plays an exceedingly important part in the Vedic system, as in most very ancient schools of thought. We find it recurring constantly—the seven delights, *sapta ratnāni*; the seven flames, tongues of rays of Agni, *sapta arcīṣaḥ*, *sapta jvālāḥ*; the seven forms of the Thought-principle, *sapta dīhtayaḥ*; the seven Rays or Cows, forms of the Cow unslayable, Aditi, mother of the gods, *sapta gāvah*; the seven rivers, the seven mothers or fostering cows, *sapta mātaraḥ*, *sapta dhenavaḥ*, a term applied indifferently to the Rays and the Rivers. All these sets of seven depend, it seems to me, upon the Vedic classification of the fundamental principles, the *tattvas*, of existence. The enquiry into the number of these *tattvas* greatly interested the speculative mind of the ancients and in Indian philosophy we find various answers ranging from the One upwards and running into twenties. In Vedic thought the basis chosen was the number of the psychological principles, because all existence was conceived by the Rishis as a movement of conscious being. However merely curious or barren these speculations and classifications may seem to the

<sup>1</sup> On the Veda, p. 100

modern mind, they were no mere dry metaphysical distinctions, but closely connected with a living psychological practice of which they were to a great extent the thought-basis, and in any case we must understand them clearly if we wish to form with any accuracy an idea of this ancient and far-off system."<sup>1</sup>

"The antique view of the world as a psycho-physical and not merely a material reality is at the root of the ancient ideas about the efficacy of the *mantra* and the relation of the gods to the external life of man; hence the force of prayer, worship, sacrifice for material ends; hence the use of them for wordly life and in so-called magic rites which come out prominently in the Atharva Veda and is behind much of the symbolism of the Brahmanas.<sup>2</sup> But in man himself the gods are conscious psychological powers. "Will-powers, they do the works of will; they are the thinkings in our hearts; they are the lords of delight who take delight; they travel in all the directions of the thought.' Without them the soul of man cannot distinguish its right nor its left, what is in front of it nor what is behind, the things of foolishness or the things of wisdom; only if led by them can it reach and enjoy 'the fearless Light.' For this reason Dawn is addressed 'O thou who art human and divine' and the gods constantly described as the 'Men' or human powers (*manuṣaḥ, naraḥ*); they are our 'luminous seers', 'our heroes', 'our lords of plenitude.' They conduct the sacrifice in their human capacity (*manuṣvat*) as well as receive it in their high divine being. Agni is the priest of the oblation, Brihaspati the priest of the word. In this sense Agni is said to be born from the heart of man; all the gods are thus born by the sacrifice, grow and out of their human action assume their divine bodies. Soma, the wine of the world-delight, rushing through the mind which is its "luminous wide-extended" strainer of purification, cleansed there by the ten sisters, pours forth giving birth to the gods."<sup>3</sup>

"The Veda is a book of esoteric symbols, almost of spiritual formulae, which masks itself as a collection of ritual poems. The inner

<sup>1</sup> *On the Veda*, pp. III-12

<sup>2</sup> This is the real secret of the external sense of Veda which is all that the modern scholars have been and so imperfectly understood. Even the exoteric religion was much more than a mere Nature worship.

<sup>3</sup> *On the Veda*, pp. 548-549

sense is psychological, universal, impersonal; the ostensible significance and the figures which were meant to reveal to the initiates what they concealed from the ignorant, are to all appearance crudely concrete, intimately personal, loosely occasional and allusive. To this lax outer garb the Vedic poets are sometimes careful to give a clear and coherent form quite other than the strenuous inner soul of their meaning their language then becomes a cunningly woven mask for hidden truths. More often they are negligent of the disguise which they use, and when they thus rise above their instrument, a literal and external translation gives either a bizarre, unconnected sequence of sentences or a form of thought and speech strange and remote to the uninitiated intelligence. It is only when the figures and symbols are made to suggest their concealed equivalents that there emerges out of the obscurity a transparent and well-linked though close and subtle sequence of spiritual, psychological and religious ideas. It is this method of suggestion that I have attempted".<sup>1</sup>

"Confronted with the stately hymns of the ancient dawn, we are conscious of a blank incomprehension. And we leave them as prey to the ingenuity of the scholar who gropes for forced meanings amid obscurities and incongruities where the ancients bathed their souls in harmony and light."<sup>2</sup>

"The Vedic language as a whole is a powerful and remarkable instrument, terse, knotted, virile, packed, and in its turns careful rather to follow the natural flight of the thought in the mind than to achieve the smooth and careful constructions and the clear transitions of a logical and rhetorical syntax. But translated without modification into English, such a language would become harsh, abrupt and obscure, a dead and heavy movement with nothing in it of the morning vigour and puissant stride of the original. I have therefore preferred to throw it in translation into a mould more plastic and natural to the English tongue, using the constructions and devices of transition which best suit a modern speech while preserving the logic of the original thought; and I have never hesitated to reject the bald dictionary equivalent of the Vedic word for an ampler phrase in the English where

<sup>1</sup> *On the Veda*, p. 315

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 416

that was necessary to bring out the full sense and associations. Throughout I have kept my eye fixed on my primary object—to make the inner sense of the Veda seizable by the cultured intelligence of today.”<sup>1</sup>

“Who in this Age of Iron shall have the strength to recover the light of the Forefathers or soar above the two enclosing firmaments of mind and body into their luminous empyrean of the infinite Truth? The Rishis sought to conceal their knowledge from the unfit, believing perhaps that the corruption of the best might lead to the worst and fearing to give the potent wine of the Soma to the child and the weakling. But whether their spirits still move among us looking for the rare Aryan soul in a mortality that is content to leave the radiant herds of the Sun for ever imprisoned in the darkling cave of the Lords of the sense-life or whether they await in their luminous world the hour when the Marut shall again drive abroad and the Hound of Heaven shall once again speed down to us from beyond the rivers or Paradise and the seals of the heavenly waters shall be broken and the cavern shall be rent and the immortalising wine shall be pressed out in the body of man by the electric thunder-stones, their secret remains safe to them.”<sup>2</sup>

“Our life is a horse that neighing and galloping bears us onward and upward; its forces are swift-hooved steed, the liberated powers of the mind are wide-winged birds; this mental being or this soul is the upsoaring Swan or the Falcon that breaks out from a hundred iron walls and wrests from the jealous guardians of felicity the wine of the Soma. Every shining godward Thought that arises from the secret abysses of the heart is a priest and a creator and chants a divine hymn of luminous realisation and puissant fulfilment. We seek for the shining gold of the Truth; we lust after a heavenly treasure.

“The soul of man is a world full of beings, a kingdom in which armies clash to help or hinder a supreme conquest, a house where the gods are our guests and which the demons strive to possess; the fullness of its energies and wideness of its being make a seat of sacrifice spread, arranged and purified for a celestial session.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *On the Veda*, p. 420

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 421

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 439

The *Rig-veda* arises out of the ancient Dawn a thousand-voiced hymn lifted from the soul of man to an all-creative Truth and an all-illuminating Light. Truth and Light are synonymous or equivalent words in the thought of the Vedic seers even as are their opposites, Darkness and Ignorance. The battle of the Vedic Gods and Titans is a perpetual conflict between Day and Night for the possession of the triple world of heaven, mid-air and earth and for the liberation or bondage of the mind, life and body of the human being, his mortality or his immortality. It is waged by the Powers of a supreme Truth and Lords of supreme Light against other dark Powers who struggle to maintain the foundations of this falsehood in which we dwell and the iron walls of these hundred fortified cities of the Ignorance."<sup>1</sup>

A. B., PURANI

<sup>1</sup> *On the Veda*, p. 525

VEDAS, UPAKSHADAS AND GITA

THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER  
EDUCATION

XV

PSYCHIC AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

**N**OW we come to a subject which the modern enlightened educationist will shrug off as an antique irrelevance. That there can be such a thing as psychic and spiritual education he is loath to concede. And that it can ever be regarded as the most important part or the hub of education he cannot bring himself to believe. He is content to treat the very idea with a sneering incredulity.

But the Mother considers psychic and spiritual education to be at once the core and crown of any integral system of education. The triple method we have already dealt with—physical, vital and mental—concerns purely human faculties. It contributes to the development of the normal potentialities of human nature. But, it is quite evident, even the perfection of this triple method does not lead to the perfection of man or to the integration of the various parts of his being. It does not engender a dynamic harmony in him. An absence of balance, of equilibrium, of a concerted and coordinated working in the nature is the all too common result of the education we provide for our children. An unstable and confused action of the three gunas, sattva, rajas and tamas, and of the faculties of the mind, life and body creates a split personality in the child which becomes a prolific source of internal conflict and unhappiness. An artist or a poet leading a lax, bohemian life; a scientist developing the swelled head over his discoveries, or exploiting them for disreputable political or commercial purposes; a philosopher in his ivory tower turned indifferent or even callous in his attitude towards his fellowmen; or a moralist crassly stupid

in the rigidity of his puritanic nature, or ridiculous in his habitual priggishness, is not a rare example of the want of psychic and spiritual leaven in education. Disinherited of all higher values of life, despoiled of all sense of discipline and self-control, and innocent of all cohesive principles of human relations, modern man presents a sad picture of disintegrating humanity and a steady approximation to the beast. It is high time the soul of man, his psychic, was sought and discovered, and the spirit in him asserted its supremacy, if he is not to fall a victim to perpetual darkness and rampant anarchy.

The three lines of education, physical, vital and mental, help a child to develop his personality and create in himself a distinctive individuality out of the "amorphous subconscious mass" from which he has evolved. He is no longer an indistinguishable unit among myriad units, like a stone among stones, a tree among trees, or an animal among animals of the same species. He is an individual man, separate and clearly distinguishable from all other men. But the centre of his individuality is an ego, a creation of Nature which divides itself from all others and accentuates a separatist attitude in its dealings with them. His individuality is a prison in which he is self-enclosed and debarred from realising his unity with all. The triple education develops this egoistic personality of man, but does not help him to surpass it and recover his unity with all other beings—it does not lead him to his own universal consciousness. But his universality, too, is not the terminus of his self-expansion. He has to realise his world-transcending existence, his utter, absolute infinity. The triple education falls pitifully short of these consummations, concerning itself, as it does, only with the changing, ephemeral personality of man. It brings him no message of immortality.

But life is no mere existence. Fugitive appearances are not the eternal Reality. Ignorance and suffering are not the permanent seal of human birth, and death is not its goal. There is a great meaning and transcendental purpose in human life, and a glorious culmination. The rush-light of reason is not the final achievement of our evolution on earth. Man is not what he seems to be.

The Mother's system of education offers a solution to this transcendental problem of life. It does not equip the child only for earning his livelihood, or pursuing some socio-economic ideal. It

does not only inspire him with the ambition to conquer and control physical Nature or explore the other material ranges of existence which have so long eluded our scientific observation and knowledge. It does, indeed, all this. It sets a great store by the development of the scientific spirit, the sharpening of the powers of accurate observation and scrupulous experiment, and the patient and persevering scrutiny of the secrets of Nature. It is more modern than the most modern of educational schemes in its grasp of the fundamentals of the material existence. But it stoutly denies the sole reality of this existence, and refuses to equate man with the petty round of his earthly career and crib him within the small orbit of reason and the bounded horizons of his mental vision. It opens doors upon vast, immeasurable expanses of consciousness and the invisible, infinite existence. It teaches us how to soar beyond time and space and annex to our consciousness and existence all the infinitudes that stretch beyond. It guides us to the discovery of our soul which is the real pilot of our pilgrimage to Reality. To constrain education to the mental plane and consider intellectual development as its summit achievement is to deprive the child of his spiritual birth-right and condemn him to a death-beseiged life of dusky knowledge and rankling discontent. To teach him how to learn the truth of his being and awake to the real purpose of his birth in the material world, to help him master himself and master his environment, to lead him to a dimension or dimensions of consciousness where ignorance and suffering melt away into knowledge and bliss and life becomes a dance of delight and death a mere passage to another existence of blessedness, is the true and highest function of education.

“Every human being carries within him the possibility of a greater consciousness beyond the frame of his normal life through which he can participate in a higher and vaster life.... What the human mind does not know and cannot do, this consciousness knows and does. It is like a light<sup>1</sup> that shines at the centre of the being radiating through the thick coverings of the external consciousness.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “. . . the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs. . . it is not a faculty but a light. . .”—Emerson

<sup>2</sup> *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education*

This luminous consciousness is the crucial discovery to which the Mother's scheme of education is designed to lead. This is the unborn, ageless and undying consciousness to which the child has to be awakened within himself. Once it is uncovered and put in command, it takes charge of the life and nature of the child and makes of his evolution a natural outflowing of all the potentialities of his being. It raises his life above struggle and groping and leads it from light to light and harmony to harmony.<sup>1</sup>

In some children, the Mother says, this light is not completely covered up in the beginning. It gleams out across their outer nature. It manifests in movements of faultless insight and simple, spontaneous instincts—"high instincts", as Wordsworth calls them. It is the "Eye among the blind". But their parents do not understand and appreciate them. They want to mould them to their cherished social patterns. The child's visionary gleam is thus blindly quenched, his heaven-born freedom is chained by an enforced conformity to custom and convention, and his heart and mind are freighted with the trivial cares of a mere physical existence. All the education which most of the parents in their ignorance of their children's true nature, *svabhāva*, seek to impart end by eclipsing their inner perception and deadening their high instincts and subtle sensibilities. It is the greatest, though unsuspected, tragedy of a child's education, and the most brutal outrage upon his divine heritage. His soul is bartered away for a mere mess of pottage.

(To be continued)

RISHABHCHAND

<sup>1</sup> A man is the façade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is, which, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue, when it flows through his affection, it is love." — Emerson

## THE CONCEPT OF THE SECULAR STATE WESTERN AND INDIAN

THE controversy over the question—Is India Secular?—has arisen largely because of the prominence accorded to the principle of secularism by the architects of our constitution and our policy makers. The declaration that our state is secular has naturally led to the question of how far it is effective in practice. Especially is this true when secularism is itself a controversial term which is capable of different interpretations in different contexts. Secularism, like democracy, ought to be regarded as a habit and value to be developed through the history of societies. They may not even be deliberately conceived ideals of growth, but gradual and largely unconscious products of a nation's evolution.

In the West the church-state controversy is now outmoded and no one would think of reviving it now. With us, however, the question of secularism, a modern version of the medieval controversy, is regarded as topical. The secularism of the West is a historical result of various forces active since the beginning of the modern age. "The ideal of human and social happiness, as proclaimed by the prophets and leaders of the French Revolution, has continued in the intervening period to mould the temper not only of the French bourgeoisie but also of larger and larger groups in all countries, Protestant and Catholic, who are resolved that mankind shall strive by the most enlightened methods at its disposal to establish the maximum of social justice and welfare in this world. The power of this secularised type of idealism derives in large part from its connection with science; and in this union of social and scientific secularism the movement which since the middle ages has been gathering increasing momentum finds its logical climax."<sup>1</sup>

An eminent political thinker has contrasted the ancient and the Modern State thus: "All theocracy is repellent to the political

<sup>1</sup> B. Groethuysen — "Secularism" — in *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*.

consciousness of modern nations. The modern State is a human constitutional arrangement—its politics aim at the welfare of the nation (commonweal), understood by human reason, and carried out by human means.”

“The modern State does not consider religion a condition of legal status (Recht). Public and private law are independent of creed. The modern State protects freedom of belief, and unites peacefully the different churches and religious societies...”<sup>1</sup>

The nature of the problem of Secularism in relation to India can be understood only in the background of Indian History. We may say that secularism, like all social or political values must be understood not as finalities or absolutes but as relative to particular times and societies. It is true that in modern times India has been exposed to western influences of a diverse character. If these influences alone could be trusted to work without resistance secularism as understood in the West might now have been an incontrovertible feature of our State. That it is still the subject of controversy shows that historically there are certain factors resisting the emergence of secularism in our country.

The connection of secularism and the scientific spirit in the West rendered the separation of religion and the State inevitable—modern Western civilization being the triumph of the scientific outlook on the world. To look upon western civilization in this historical light does not necessarily make one a supporter of the contrast between the “Spiritual East” and the “Materialistic West.”

The problem in India has been complicated by the fact that (1) the foundations of Indian culture were spiritual—to be precise, culture, religion and spirituality were the several facets of the single life of the community; (2) that in recent times the Indian political problem was one of the relations between different communities—especially Hindu and Muslim. How much of it was a genuine religious problem one cannot easily establish. Religion was combined in proper proportions to render a political question so intractable as to make partition of the country the only solution. After partition the new State called itself Pakistan and adopted Islamic

<sup>1</sup> J.K. Bluntschli — The Theory of the State — Page 61-62.

principles as the basis of the policy. The Preamble to the Constitution of Pakistan lays down that Pakistan should be a democratic State based on Islamic principles of social justice; that the principles of democracy, freedom equality, tolerance and social justice, as enunciated by Islam should be fully observed; and that Muslims of Pakistan should be enabled, individually and collectively, to order their lives in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam. The Preamble of the Indian Constitution, on the other hand, speaks of Liberty of thought, Expression, belief, faith and worship for all its citizens. Article 25 (1) of the constitution lays down that all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion. Article 26 assures every religious denomination or any section thereof the right, (subject to public order, morality and health,) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes and to manage its own affairs in matters of religion. The State restricts its role to regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity associated with religious practice.

Does this mean that India abjured its connection with religion the foundations of its traditional culture? As religion was not institutionalized in India in the way it was institutionalized in the West, Secularism could not come to mean separation of State and Church. It acquired, on the other hand, the meaning of tolerance of faiths; the attitude of regarding various faiths as different pathways to a single Godhead.

यं शैवाः समुपासते शिव इति ब्रह्मेति वेदान्तिनो  
 बौद्धा बुद्ध इति प्रमाणपटवः कर्तेति नैयायिकाः ।  
 अर्हन्तित्यथ जैनशासनरताः कर्मेति मीमांसकाः  
 सोऽयं नो विदधातु वाञ्छितफलं त्रैलोक्यनाथो हरिः ॥

He who worshipped as Shiva by the Shaivites, as Brahman by the Vedantins, as Buddha by the Buddhists, as Karta by the Naiyayikas (logicians) versed in reasoning, as Arhat by those who are devoted to the teachings of Jinas, as Karma by the Mimamsakās—may that Hari, the Lord of the three worlds, fulfil our desires.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Altar Flowers — (Advaita Ashrama). Page-1

Preserving such broad minded tolerance, there should be no danger to secularism even if India called herself a Hindu State. Danger of fanaticism and persecution could be visualized only when there is a powerful institutional religion to which the State could lend its arm. The spirit of our traditional policy could be regarded in this light. Its foundations were in Dharma—broad, tolerant and extensive. Instead of equating Dharma with religion in the narrow sense it would be more proper to regard it as constituting a body of moral and spiritual principles capable of universal (मानव) application and of enduring value and truth (सनातन). “That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal.”<sup>1</sup>

“The Secular State is built on substantial historical foundations. The Hindu State of ancient, medieval or modern times was, not a narrowly sectarian State in any sense.”<sup>2</sup> In the Indian context the debate on the question of secularism has to be related to the problem of the values for which the State may stand in the background of its history and culture rather than to the relation or want of relation between the State and religion in its institutional form. The alliance between State power and sectarian, institutional religion which is against modern sentiment and the relation between State and religion in the wider sense of Hinduism or Dharma may not be regarded as identical. Even in the most secular State the question of national character may be discussed and if it should be discussed in the Indian context one would realize how intimately it is connected with the cultural and religious problem.

The Church-State controversy of the West has therefore no parallel in our history. The result of the controversy in the West was the delimitation of the spheres of the State and the church and a State indifferent to or without direct and active interest in religion. Later the question arose as to whether the State ought to promote ethical and moral life, if not a “religious” life and there again the difficulty was to arrive at a universally acceptable moral standard which could be enforced by the State. The conclusion

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo — Uttarpara Speech

<sup>2</sup> D.E. Smith. India as a Secular State. Page. 493

of the problem was that the State should refrain from attempting to improve the morality of the community. The result is a Secular State without direct and active interest in the promotion of religion and morality.

The question with us would be whether we want secularism in this sense or whether we want a State maintaining its historic continuity with the Hindu tradition, a State without an established church following the ideal of tolerance or positive Secularism or a State uncommitted to religion and benevolently neutral in matter of faith.

G. N. SARMA

## SAVITRI, THE MOTHER

THE personality of the Avatar is a mysterious blending of humanity and divinity. At one pole of her being she is one with the Eternal Lord, the Blissful Infinite, Anandamaya Brahman, while at the other pole of her being she is one with the tangled coil of the evolving human consciousness. The identification with the human and the divine is so complete that the actions of the Incarnation baffle the logical intellect with its insistence on the one or the other as the sole possibility. Indeed man's conception of an expectation and demand from the divine embodiment is a series of miraculous fireworks violating or cancelling the laws of physical and psychological Nature. 'Man wants to be dazzled in order to be impressed'. No miracle, no divinity ! But a miracle is only a sudden and temporary intervention of a higher consciousness into this world of ours resulting in the suspension of the norm of the consciousness established here. But it is neither normal nor natural. The Avatar comes not to perform miracles only. These could be done by extraordinary individuals who have got an opening to the Higher consciousness. Very often the powers and personalities, especially in the vital worlds, intervene in the actions of this world through mediums open to them. The Advent of the Divine here is not simply for the demonstration of the existence of the higher, more powerful levels of consciousness and their mastery of the forces of Nature. Magicians, white and black, filling the history of the world have done it too well indeed. She comes to make divinity natural and normal in humanity. Her work is to help the evolution of man and even when she brings about or uses a revolution or miracle, she makes it eventually a permanent part of the consciousness here. All revolutions by the Divine contribute to and become part and parcel of the evolutionary ascent. Identifying herself completely with the human consciousness, she starts with the powers in man and pushes them inward and upward towards the divinity. Identifying herself with the Divine

Consciousness, she brings divinity close to humanity. This commerce between divinity and humanity bridges the gulf between the two and macadamizes the path to the Supreme. She experiences life as man experiences it, passing through the whole gamut with all its width and depth only to tune it to the rhythms of the Eternal.

The power of widening one's consciousness and identifying it so completely with another as to ultimately become one with the other in an indissoluble union or separation on the basis of that union only to enjoy the union all the more intensively and extensively and again the power of being so absolutely passive and open to another as to make the other flow into oneself and permeate and pervade all of oneself till the other lives in one—these are the two aspects of that greatest of the faculties in man—the faculty of Love. This essential and profound faculty is the unique gift of the Lord for the otherwise weary, stale and unprofitable uses of this world rooted in Inconscience. Here is the lever for transforming man and making him and the world in which he lives move in another orbit of harmony. But as with all the powers here on earth this power of Love is evolutionary and unless it is deepened and heightened, it becomes a victim of the iron law of determinism. Moments of felicity Love can always give at whatever level or part it manifests, but these splendid isolated glimpses of Light only serve to intensify the agony of life in darkness. 'The fiery hour of love' gives place to 'tragic hours of solitude'. The force of union is overshadowed by the force of division. Love is devoured by Death. So the Romantic Lover tries to mitigate the agony of mortality by his dream of an eternal paradise of Love and Lovers in a Heaven beyond. The Platonic and the Christian Lovers identify themselves completely with the immortal soul and become ready to reject the mortal parts in Death so that they can live eternally in communion with the Impersonal Love and Beauty or the Superpersonal, All-Beautiful Lover. And there is the call of the ascetic to pass beyond all life, Love or relationship or the possibility of it in the extinction of Nirvana or Moksha. Not here on earth on this bank and shoal of Time is the field for Eternal Love. Amaranth is an exotic blossom which can never be transplanted in the earthly soil. The greatest Art of Life is the Art of Dying and the best life is thanatoid. These are the solutions (!) suggested and worked out with tremen-

dous enthusiasm and patience by the complicated human wisdom. Savitri in her all-embracing humanity passes through all these experiences without committing herself to any of them exclusively but her divine intuition knows and prepares man's consciousness for the advent of the luminous simplicity of the Divine Grace waiting ready to act in the receptive vessels for the conquest of Death and Division by Divine Love and Harmony. "Above all the complications of the so-called human wisdom stands the luminous simplicity of the Divine's Grace, ready to act if we allow It to do so."

## II

The physical and psychological members of man's being are accustomed to and capable of only a limited degree and quantum of excitement either by way of pleasure or pain and every experience of such excitement has to be followed by a period of relaxation or neutrality to make the being ready for another bout of the same kind. But when the daemon of Love possesses man, it would insist not only on an unusual intensity of ecstatic rapture but also on its being sustained for an almost unlimited duration. The result of this extraordinary impact is the feeling of a Flame burning and consuming his members. Again, Love itself is an intense Aspiration for union, eternal and all-embracing, and so is a kind of subtle Fire, Sukshma Agni which burns away all the dross of gross desires and itself burns with a greater intensity by this process. But the feeling of the heat and the scorching is only the reaction of the outermost parts of the personality, for the inner being which welcomes this Flame and nourishes it, experiences the joy of identity of consciousness, a reflection of the Ananda on the emotional level.

"A fusing of the joys of earth and heaven,  
 A tremendous blaze of nuptial rapture passed,  
 A rushing of two spirits to be one,  
 A burning of two bodies in one flame.  
 Opened were gates of unforgettable bliss :  
 Two lives were locked within an earthly heaven  
 And fate and grief fled from that fiery hour."

This Agni is a great purifying Force which cleanses the doors of perception when it is active and grants them the visionary glimpse of the Delight which permeates all creation all the time and for all time, 'the Joy that is in widest commonalty spread'. This vision of the Bliss interpenetrating Nature is a quite objective realization and should not be mistaken for the projection of a subjective mood of psychological ecstasy. Love bestows vigils of contemplation of the secret Beauty embodied in every aspect of Nature. 'All its voices are birds of happiness and all its scenes a smile of rapture's lips.'

"There was a chanting in the casual wind,  
 There was a glory in the least sunbeam;  
 Night was a chryso-prase on velvet cloth,  
 A nestling darkness or a moonlit deep;  
 Day was a purple pageant and a hymn,  
 A wave of the laughter of light from morn to eve."

The film of familiarity and custom which had bedimmed all the lustre and dried up the sparkle and the dew-drops, has been removed and the visionary gleam and glory in Nature are revealed.

In the presence of the Beloved, one feels the overmastering impact of His personality on all the parts of one's spacious being and on every object associated with oneself. The world within oneself, the world that one is and the whole world outside are dominated by the luminous consciousness and beauty and power of the Beloved. In the absence of the Lover, the memory of the experience of the contact with the Beloved remains an inexhaustible treasure to brood upon and imaginatively reconstruct and recapture.

"His absence was a dream of memory,  
 His presence was the empire of a god."

In this great vision of the god in man to the exclusion of the human and the all too human elements, one feels so completely liberated and emancipated from subjection to the iron law of determinism and Karma. One becomes a free spirit escaping from the cage of fate and grief.

## III

But this is only an escape and a very transient escape. The lyric of the inner being of love and bliss is interrupted by the voice of the mortal human members. The summer's ardent breath is disturbed by the titan voice of the storm, the thunder's fatal crash and the long unsatisfied panting of the wind.

• “The grief of all the world came near to her :  
Night's darkness seemed her future's ominous face.  
The shadow of her lover's doom arose  
And fear laid hands upon her mortal heart.  
The moments swift and ruthless raced; alarmed  
Her thoughts, her mind remembered Narad's date.”

This is the greatest ordeal of the foreknowledge of Death which makes one's life an agonising torture. All lovers have to face Death but Death usually takes them by surprise and therefore the pang is felt towards the very end of their lives. The life of Satyavan is not only short, only one more year. Ignorance of this terrible Fate might have been a bliss till the hour of Death. Savitri experiences the footsteps of the hours as dreadful.

“Each day a golden leaf torn cruelly out  
From her too slender book of love and joy.”

The natural and human solution sought in this dire context is to plunge deeper and deeper into the source of joy one has got and try to forget the agony. But every attempt of this kind only intensifies the anguish.

• “Vainly she fled into abysses of bliss  
From her pursuing foresight of the end.  
The more she plunged into love that anguish grew;  
Her deepest grief from sweetest gulfs arose.”

Her life is now an alternation between strong gusts of happiness and

foreboding's sombre waves. The agony becomes all the greater because it is not something which she can share with her fellow mortals. It is lodged deep within her solitary breast. It is no doubt true that all mortals are subject to the terrible fate of Death but most of them are blissfully unaware of the tragedy of human life. It would be the utmost cruelty to disturb this somnolent life of fellow human beings, for a mere knowledge of the problem without an awareness of the solution would only increase the pang. She saw

“The ignorant smiling world go happily by  
Upon its way towards an unknown doom  
And wondered at the careless lives of men.  
As if in different worlds they walked, though close,  
They confident of the returning sun,  
They wrapped in little hourly hopes and tasks,—  
She in her dreadful knowledge was alone.”

In her infinite mercy and compassion, the Mother enduring all the agony of mortal life finds out and builds a way out for man in obscurity, secrecy and solitude. The secret hours of the ecstasy of the union in love give place to the tragic hours of solitude and lonely grief that none could share or know. In fact she presents before her fellow-beings the same personality of light, love and beauty of an unearthly divine kind. Foregoing the poise of the silent witnessing consciousness of the Atman, her heart experiences to the full the mortal agony by complete dynamic identification with the human consciousness. But, ‘these she controlled, nothing was shown outside.’

“She was still to them the child they knew and loved;  
The sorrowing woman they saw not within;  
No change was in her beautiful motions seen :  
A worshipped empress all once vied to serve,  
She made herself the diligent serf of all,”

‘A strange divinity shone in all her acts. She could bring into the simplest movement a oneness with earth's glowing robe of light, a lifting up of common acts by love.’

"All-love was hers and its one heavenly cord,  
Bound all to all with her as a golden tie."

The Avatar 'works, struggles, suffers, hopes, endures, wills all, attempts all, prepares and achieves all for us' in solitude and obscurity keeping us, her fellow-beings all the time in an atmosphere of love and even laughter.

#### IV

Inwardly battling with grief and fate but outwardly presenting a mask of 'still, sweet and calm visage and graceful daily acts', Savitri leads a 'strange divided life'. Her outer acts are no longer radiant manifestations of her inner being as before but acts of compassion wrought by a kind of momentum gathered by the past without the will or the passion of the individual supporting them. When grief pressed too close, these things 'seemed meaningless to her, a gleaming shell, a round mechanical and void. In the arena of her heart two great combatants are struggling for mastery—Love and Fate, the principle of Bliss and the principle of Grief. Her Love is now of the inner emotional level. So it tries to answer for every onslaught of Grief by a greater and more intense possession of the Beloved.

"Her spirit like a sea of living fire  
Possessed her lover and to his body clung,  
One locked embrace to guard its threatened mate."

'Hanging over the sleep-bound beauty of his brow, laying her burning cheek upon his feet, clinging her lips at morn endlessly to his, unwilling to lose his body from her breast'—these are some of the attempts at possession. They are the external manifestations of the inner desire to 'build a little room for timelessness even in mortal time by the deep union of two lives'.

"Intolerant of the poverty of Time  
Her passion catching at the fugitive hours  
Willed the expense of centuries in one day  
Of prodigal love and the surf of ecstasy..."

But how can an hour hold Eternity and how can the palm hold Infinity ?

“After all was given she demanded still...”

She cannot express her need of revealing the foreknowledge of Fate to her lover though in her intense passion she often feels like doing so.

“She pressed the outsurging grief back into her breast  
To dwell within silent, unhelped, alone.”

But Satyavan understands sometimes by a dim clairvoyance ‘the unplumbed abyss of her deep passionate want’. All the time he could spare after discharging his duties to his blind father and his own work in the forest

“He gave to her and helped to increase the hours  
By the nearness of his presence and his clasp,  
And lavish softness of heart-seeking words  
And the close beating felt of heart on heart.”

In spite of these intimacies of love ‘All was too little for her bottomless need.’

“If in his presence she forgot awhile,  
Grief filled his absence with its aching touch,  
She saw the desert of her coming days  
Imaged in every solitary hour.”

The usual solution of romantic lovers is that of ending one’s life simultaneously with the Beloved in the glorious act of suttee so that both become...‘glad travellers/ Into the sweet or terrible Beyond’. Savitri rejects this...‘vain imaginary bliss/ Of fiery union through death’s door of escape’,

“For those sad parents still would need her here  
To help the empty remnant of their day.”

The love of Savitri has always included society unlike the exclusive love of the romantics. In fact her own sorrow appears to her as the quintessential and crystallised form or symbol of the collective human sorrow through the ages, the still sad music of humanity.

“Thus in the silent chamber of her soul  
 Cloistering her love to live with secret grief  
 She dwelt like a dumb priest with hidden gods  
 Unappeased by the wordless offering of her days,  
 Lifting to them her sorrow like frankincense,  
 Her life the altar, herself the sacrifice.”

A picture of extreme excruciating agony without any possibility of solution or termination except by the extermination in and by Death.

## V

But the Fire of Love is the immortal in mortals and grows in stature by the very pressure of circumstances and the challenge of mortal Grief and Fate.

“Although life-born, an infant of the hours,  
 Immortal it walked unslayable as the gods:”

The grief at the absence of the beloved only calls forth the power of extension and widening of consciousness in the subtle-physical level, of love. With the development of this new power Savitri could feel the presence of Satyavan even in his so-called physical absence.

“Her conscious spirit walked with him and knew  
 His actions as if in herself he moved;  
 He, less aware, thrilled with her from afar.  
 Always the stature of her passion grew;  
 Grief, fear became the food of mighty love.”

Every challenge from the world outside is a call for a response from the depths. The greater the challenge, the deeper the response needed

to meet it. The proper requisites for bringing out the deepest response are a refusal to accept or succumb to the easy escapes or evasions from difficulties, a patient endurance of the agony consequent on the impact of the difficulty on the surface heart, mind, will, senses and body, and finally being passive and ready to allow the deeper or the higher consciousness to act. The power of the love born at first at the inner emotional level grows in stature by the opening of the deeper levels of consciousness, widens and heightens itself and even reaches the level of the highest Supramental divinity when it gets a power greater than the evil now dominating the world, the evil of Death.

“Her spirit stretched measureless in strength divine  
An anvil for the blows of Fate and Time:”

Savitri feels the need for opening to the depths and heights of her consciousness and thereby increasing the power of Love. Here is the first step in the process—the power of widening the subtle-physical consciousness. Even this has its effect on grief.

“Or tired of sorrow’s passionate luxury,  
Grief’s self became calm, dull-eyed, resolute  
Awaiting some issue of its fiery struggle,  
Some deed in which it might for ever cease,  
Victorious over itself and death and tears.”

Sorrow in the evolutionary scheme has only one purpose of turning the consciousness inward and upward and once this process of lateral penetration and vertical ascent has begun, its utility ceases and it has only to wait for the hour of descent of the Grace from above and behind to dissolve the last trace of its own precarious and temporary, though terrible and grim, existence.

The hour of struggle and battle now gives place to one of neutral, sombre waiting. Thunder and storm no longer rage. Grey, slow-drifting clouds shut in the earth.

“So her grief’s heavy sky shut in her heart.  
A still self hid behind but gave no light :

No voice came down from the forgotten heights;  
 Only in the privacy of its brooding pain  
 Her human heart spoke to the body's fate."

This is the hour of transition to the search for the deeper soul and the entry into the inner countries. Love human has to be transformed into Love Divine by the process of Integral Yoga in order that Death might be faced and conquered. The work of Savitri, the Avatar, is to build the Yogashakti for the growth of humanity into the divinity, even the Supramental Divinity of Love.

Reference : *Savitri*, Part Two, Book VII, Canto I.

M. V. SEETARAMAN

#### REVIEW

**Kashmir Saivism** (English). **Sivasutragalu** (Kannada).  
**Pratyabhijna Hridaya** (Kannada) by *J. Rudrappa*, 112 Gandhi-nagar, Bangalore 9.

SAIVISM in India is much more than a religion. It is not a sect. It is a way of thought, belief and practice that is spread in large portions of the country, as Saiva Siddhanta in Tamilnad, as Virasaivism in Karnatak and as Kashmir Saivism in the North. While there are enough books on the first two forms of Saivism, intelligible works on Kashmir Saivism are not as many as one would desire. There are of course plenty in Sanskrit but they need a good deal of explaining. Sri Rudrappa's books on the subject are most welcome in as much as they are a popular presentation of an abstruse philosophy, replete with helpful quotations from allied works and analogies from modern science.

The key work of this system is the *Sivasutras* said to be revealed to Vasugupta. They lay down the main principles of this Realistic

Idealism and also give a practical method of realising the truth of this teaching in one's life. The origin of Creation, the gradation of the manifestation, the three types of *mala*, impurity, that bind the soul to ignorance of its own true nature and the three *upāyas*, means, whereby one awakes to the truth of one's real being as none other than the Lord Himself, are expounded systematically by Sri Rudrappa, both in his elaborate introduction and his explanations.

*Pratyabhijnā Hrdayam* is a later work by Kshemaraja epitomising the teachings of the seers that followed Vasugupta, viz., Kāllata, Utpaladeva, Abhinava Gupta and others. The central topic is the Doctrine of Self-recognition, 'I am He'. It consists of only 20 sutras but they are terse and the present author has drawn upon all the extant commentators in his exposition. A close study of both these works would show how our ancients reconciled conflicting philosophies. As the writer points out : "We find here the psychological practices of *yoga*, *ākhyāti* of the Mimamsakas, i.e., voluntary limitation of one's own powers, *monism* of the Upanishads, *pragmatism* and *realism* of *nyāya-vāiśeṣika* and the twenty-five categories of *Sāṅkhya*. We find the implications of qualified monism, admitting the attributes of the Supreme Being. Finally admitting absolute reality in the subjective and objective creation of this endless universe, it reconciles the opposition between being and becoming and the One and the many."

These books deserve a wider circulation than possible in their present garb of a regional language. We strongly urge upon the writer to render them in English so as to reach a larger circle of readers both in India and abroad. The little booklet on *Saivism* (in English) holds out a promise in this direction and we look forward to its fulfilment.

M. P. PANDIT



*The Advent*

It is the heart that has wings, not the head.

THE MOTHER

# The ADVENT

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# THE ADVENT

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August, 1965

To approach God by love is to prepare oneself  
for the greatest possible spiritual fulfilment.

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# THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - Sri Aurobindo.

## EDITORIALS

### NOTES

**I**GNORANCE is usually equated with innocence. A child is ignorant, therefore he is innocent. Although it is said that ignorance of law is no excuse. Spiritually however, ignorance does not mean innocence. Ignorance or unconsciousness or inconscience—different degrees of the same thing—that is to say lack of consciousness, mean, at bottom, falsehood. It is through the ignorance that Maya, the great illusion, was born. Ignorance is false apprehension, it begins with the sense of separation, "I am other than the Divine." That is how Jiva is born in or through the ignorance. The world is separate from the Divine. That is how Matter is born as or in inconscience. And the creation appears as evil. This sense of separation is a falsehood for in reality nothing is separate from the supreme Consciousness, all is That.

To regain the Truth-sense, to move upward in the cycle of ignorance and falsehood towards this Truth-sense is the world-labour and also human labour.

Even in the state of separation under conditions of the inconscience and falsehood, in spite of all appearances the Unity, the Truth-consciousness remains intact behind. It is never effaced or obliterated.

The sense of earthly evolution is the gradual unfolding of the Divine, the Supreme Consciousness in and through the gradations of consciousness from the inconscience through unconsciousness and consciousness to supraconsciousness—Matter wholly transmuted into Light.

\*  
\*\*

God is not only above or beyond the creation. He is also here within the creation. He is not only over our head looking down upon us. He is within our heart inspiring us, enlightening us, loving us. This is the dynamic Divine, the Supreme Consciousness concealed within the apparent inconscience of the material existence. It is that which pushes creation upward in its evolutionary course. It is that which lies behind man's ignorance purifying his obscurity leading him to a more and more luminous revelation.

In the Vedic image above shines Surya, here below burns Agni. Both are aspects of the same Truth.

\*  
\*\*

The body is composed of cells, living cells. These cells from the standpoint of consciousness are desire-cells, that is to say particles of desire, concrete and consolidated packets of hunger and thirst. A string of such innumerable packets of hunger and thirst is life—the Buddha said. The cells are to be emptied completely. Emptiness of cells is Nirvana.

Not necessarily. For one may empty the cells of their obscure contents but replenish them with something of a purer order. This is a possibility we envisage which we are working for. The Divine life empties the cells of desire but fills it with the energy of solar Light.

\*  
\*\*

Education is organisation. Mind's education means organisation of mental faculties. Organisation naturally involves development. The faculties in the normal and natural state are an undeveloped disorganised lot, a confused mass,—unformed ill-formed ideas, notions, thoughts, form a jumble. They have no purpose, no direction, no common impulse or end, each runs in its own way. The mind's faculties such for example as attention, memory, discrimination, reasoning, cogent thinking have to be clear and efficient and learn how to work harmoniously for a common objective. In the process and for that purpose they have to be developed, that is to say each of them has to be strong, able, ample, concentrated. They have to present a united front and function towards an ever-increasing consciousness and knowledge.

As for the mental faculties so for the faculties of the vital. The normal vital being in man is in a greater and perhaps more dangerous chaos. The impulsions, emotions, upsurges that belong to this domain have not so much to be developed or increased as to be purified, made conscious, yoked together in a common drive towards a harmonious dynamic realisation in life and life's achievements. And lastly the organisation in the physical body. The limbs of the body have not even growth, they do not move together in a balanced and rhythmic way. Some are unhealthy, some do not work, some others are overworked. These too have to be co-ordinated, each set in its place and made to function in unison with others. That is physical education and that too means perfect organisation.

We have said that organisation means working for a common end and common purpose. That comes from an opening into a deeper and higher level of being. We name it the soul. The soul's purpose, the soul's destiny has to be achieved and fulfilled. An organised and educated mind and life and body means to be the best and the most perfect vehicle for the expression upon earth of the soul's consciousness.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

## THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER

### EDUCATION

#### XV

#### PSYCHIC AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

**T**HE psychic or soul being the immortal reality in us, it behoves us to learn what the Mother means by the term. Her description of it conveys, as far as human language can convey such subtle truths, something more than the sense usually attached to the word. In Vedanta, it is the jivatman or antaratman that is meant by it, and its individuality is taken to be illusory. It is Brahman itself envisaged in the separative ignorance of the human mind as an individual jiva. And, it is affirmed, when the mind is hushed and transcended, the illusion of separate individuality vanishes and with it all ideas of bondage and liberation; the Brahman consciousness shines out in its immaculate purity. According to Samkhya, the jiva is the Purusha, individual and immortal, suffering a reflection of the tangled play of Prakriti or inert Nature upon its consciousness, and passively identifying itself with that reflection and its constant reactions. When it awakes to its own unconditioned freedom and purity, it withdraws its sanction from the play of Prakriti and breaks the false identification through reflection. This crucial step releases it from the thrall of Prakriti—it is its kaivalya or moksha. It is only in the diverse forms of Vāishnavism that some kind of persistence of the individual soul and its eternal relation with the Divine is envisaged, and personal liberation is not aimed at, at least in theory, as the highest attainment. The highest attainment is for them an eternity of nearness to and intimacy of the relation of love with the 'Divine Beloved. This relation is one which the human mind cannot comprehend—it is an ineffable simultaneity of union and difference, achintya bhedabheda. But even the Vaishnavic conception is not wide and flexible enough to embrace all the significance and potentialities of

the soul and the purpose of its descent into terrestrial birth. That is why, in spite of regarding the world not as Maya, but as Lila of the Divine, the orthodox Vaishnava turns his back upon the world and prefers to live the life of a recluse. Even Chaitanya donned the garb of a sannyasi and was ascetically stern with some of his disciples on certain occasions of social intercourse. The Vaishnava shrinks from free participation in the thrilling delight of the diversity of his Lord's Lila, in all the multiplying interests and activities of earthly life. He longs to remain absorbed in the inner union and communion. The less his contact with the outer world and the less the world's impact upon him, the more, he thinks, will be the depth and intensity of the inner union. Life with all its evolutionary purpose and flowering possibilities is rigorously renounced, so that it may not distract him from the unutterable ecstasy of Rasa<sup>1</sup> in his heart's Brindavana. Tantra, too, whatever its insistence on its objective of self-empire and world-empire, and its reliance on the Power or Shakti of the Divine, tended towards the relinquishment of worldly life and oriented towards merger in the Brahman. In fact, all these schools of Yoga walked under the banner of the Vedanta, though they were often in revolt against its cardinal doctrines. None of them fully succeeded in shaking off the spell of Mayavada and uphold the integral ideal of the persistence of the individuality of the soul even in the midst of the rapt union with the Divine, sayujya, and its dynamic participation with its Beloved in the rapture of His evolutionary, purposive, cosmic game.

The Mother's conception of the soul or psychic fills up all these gaps. It restores the wholeness of the conception we glimpse in the Vedas and the Upanishads. What is there implicit and cryptic, has been seized in its full body, held up in the clear light of intelligence, and rendered in modern intellectual—one could say, scientific—terms. It has even been amplified and elaborated in certain directions in the light of expanding spiritual experience.

The Mother means by the soul "the divine spark within oneself, a spark of the divine consciousness." She says that "out of this spark will slowly emerge an independent conscious being which will have its

<sup>1</sup> Dance of the gopis or human souls with Sri Krishna.

own action and its own will."<sup>1</sup> The spark is what the Mother calls the psychic presence or what Sri Aurobindo calls the psychic entity.<sup>2</sup> This spark, when it evolves in Nature, becomes an independent conscious being and is called the psychic being. "The progress of the psychic consists in its formation, building and organisation. It grows into a conscious individuality through successive lives; for there can be progress only upon earth in the physical world; it is not possible everywhere."<sup>3</sup> Birth on earth—and not one birth, but many—is the indispensable means by which the psychic being grows, builds and organises its existence. But when it is fully evolved, "fully individualised, fully master of itself" and its destiny, birth is not obligatory; whether it will take birth or not depends upon its choice and the will of the Divine in it. If it feels that it has some work to do here, some mission to fulfil, some divine purpose to accomplish, it incarnates. But it is not then "bound to circumstances or surroundings or heredity like ordinary human beings."<sup>4</sup> It is born free; it is, in a sense, *jivanmukta*. Not in one life alone, but in many it can pursue, unattached, the same mission or any other which the Divine Will in it ordains. It belongs to the *nitya mukta* class, as Sri Ramakrishna says.

We understand, then, that the psychic being is originally a spark from the Divine Consciousness, and it evolves into a conscious individuality through the experiences of successive births. It has a will, it has an action, and it determines the field, scope and nature of its mission in accordance with the Will of the Divine who dwells in it. Its progress, can therefore, be twofold. It may progress towards the full recovery of its unfettered self-existence of termless bliss and beauty, its liberation from the chameleon modes of the lower Nature. And if, at this stage, it has an aspiration for a traceless self-extinction in the Brahman, or an ecstatic immersion in the love and joy of the Divine, it is free to do it. But, if it seeks to serve the Divine and fulfil His evolutionary creative Will on earth, it may progress towards "capacity to work, to organise and execute the work, to express and embody the will of the Divine." "As long as the world continues,

<sup>1</sup> *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo* by Nolini Kanta Gupta—Part Nine.

<sup>2</sup> It is also called the spark-soul.

<sup>3</sup> *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo* by Nolini Kanta Gupta—Part Nine.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

as long as he chooses to work for the Divine, he will continue to Progress. But if he wishes to withdraw into the psychic world and gives up or refuses to work for the divine Plan, then he can remain in the static state beyond the range of progress.”<sup>1</sup> This dynamic aspect of the earthly life of the psychic is not envisaged in the post-Upanishadic Vedanta, Vaishnavism or Tantra. The Mother’s conception of the psychic brings into a focus the essential nature, evolution and mission of the psychic in the physical world. What is, then, the fundamental nature of the mission for which the psychic has launched upon this eventful adventure of earthly life and the long exploration of the dense obscurity of Matter ?

“The psychic is like an electric wire that connects the generator with the lamp; the lamp being the body, the visible form. Its function is of a similar nature, that is to say, if the psychic were not there in Matter, it could have no direct contact with the Divine. It is because of the psychic presence that there can be a direct contact between Matter and the Divine.”<sup>2</sup> The psychic is, as we now see, a bond of union between Matter and Spirit. And its presence in Matter, which is a direct result of the descent of the Supreme Purusha into the Inconscience here below, called Purushayagna in the Veda, and His dynamic and creative immanence in the unrelieved darkness of the Inconscience, described in the Nasadiya Sukta of the Veda, which is the pledge of the ultimate manifestation of the Divine on earth. “And every human being can be told : ‘You carry the Divine within you, you have only to enter within yourself and you will find Him’. It is a direct, special, transmuting infusion into the most inconscient and obscure Matter to awaken it once more step by step to the Divine Consciousness, the Divine Presence and finally the Divine Himself.”<sup>3</sup>

We have understood the essential mission of the psychic. Each psychic being, it is true, has an individual role to play, a specific work to accomplish, but this is the general basic purpose of the birth of the psychic in the material world. It establishes the truth, long eclipsed by Nihilism and Illusionism, that the material world

<sup>1</sup> *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo* by Nolini Kanta Gupta. Part Seven.

<sup>2</sup> *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo* by Nolini Kanta Gupta. Part Nine.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

has been created in order that, by the self-infusion of the Divine Consciousness in the form of the psychic into Matter, it may be washed of its murk, purified, illumined, and transmuted into the very substance of the Spirit. Matter is destined to unite with the Spirit, because it is That in its imperishable essence, and the transcendental splendour of the Spirit will be poured upon the material existence. Earth, so passionately spurned by the ascetics, will live in the Light and Bliss of the Heaven of the Spirit. God will manifest here, and human life will be a resurrected life in a transformed body. And all this glorious dream of the aeons, which no amount of atheism, scepticism or materialist denial has been able to wipe out of human consciousness, will be realised only by the instrumentality of the psychic or the soul. It is an exceptional privilege of man, which even the gods lack. Man is born, not to realise his soul and retire forever into it, or into the absolute Brahman, or the infinite, gaping Void, but to reveal God in himself, in his transfigured mind, life and body, and fulfil His creative Will and evolutionary Purpose on earth.

We shall now proceed to a consideration of the central role the psychic being plays in the Mother's system of education.

*(To be continued)*

RISHABHCHAND

## THE RESURGENCE OF ASIA AND AFRICA

*(These notes are compiled from Sri Aurobindo's writings in the 'Karmayogin' under the title: 'Facts and Opinions'. They were written in 1909. —Ed.)*

### The Dying Race

Dr. U. N. Mukherji recently published a very interesting brochure in which he tried to prove that the Hindus were a dying race and would do well to imitate the social freedom and equality of the still increasing Mahomedans. Srijut Kishorilal Sarkar has gone one better and proves to us by equally cogent statistics that not only the Hindus but the Mahomedans are a dying race—even if the Hindus be in some places a little more rapid in the race of extinction than the followers of Islam. With all respect to the earnestness of these two gentlemen we think it would have been well if they had been less strenuous in their discouraging interpretations and chosen a less positive title. The real truth is that, owing to an immense transition being effected under peculiarly unfavourable conditions, both communities, but chiefly the more progressive Hindu, are in a critical stage in which various deep-seated maladies have come to the surface, with effects of an inevitable though lamentable character. None of these maladies is mortal and the race is not dying. But the knife of the surgeon is needed and it is to the remedy rather than the diagnosis that attention should be pointedly directed. The mere decline in the rate of increase is in itself nothing. It is a phenomenon which one now sees becoming more and more marked all the world over and it is only countries backward in development and education which keep up the old rate of increase. The unfit tend to multiply, the fit to be limited in propagating. This is an abnormal state of things which indicates something wrong in modern civilisation. But, whatever the malady is, it is not peculiar to Hindus or to India, but a world-wide disease.

## National vitality

Nothing is stronger than the difference presented by Europe and Asia in the matter of national vitality. European nations seem to have a brief date, a life-term vigorous but soon-exhausted; Asiatic races persist and survive. It was not so in old times. Not only Greece and Rome perished, Assyria, Chaldea, Phœnicia are also written in the book of the Dead. But the difference now seems well-established. France is a visibly dying nation, Spain seems to have lost the power of revival, Italy and Greece have been lifted up by great efforts and sacrifices but show a weak vitality, the Anglo-Saxon race is beginning everywhere to recede and dwindle. On the other hand, in Asia life pulsates victoriously, Japan has risen at one bound to the first rank of nations; China untouched by her calamities renovates her huge national life. The effect on India of an accumulation of almost all the conditions which bring about national death has been a new lease of life and a great dynamic impulse. Of the Mahomedan races, not a single one is decadent. Persia rises from her weakness full of youthful enthusiasm and courage though not yet of capacity. Arabia in her deserts surges with life. Egypt after calamities is undergoing new birth; as far as Morocco the stir of life is seen. And to-day Turkey, the sick man, has suddenly risen up vigorous and whole. What is the source of this difference? Is it not in this that Asia has developed her spirituality and Europe has turned from it? Europe has always tended to live more in the matter and in the body than within; and matter when not inert is always changing; the body is bound to perish. The high pressure at which Europe lives only tends to disintegrate the body more rapidly when the spiritual forces within are not resorted to for stability.

## The spirit in Asia

A spirit moves abroad in the world to-day upsetting kingdoms and raising up new principalities and powers the workings of which are marked by a swiftness and ubiquity new in history. In place of the slow developments and uncertain results of the past we have a quickness and thoroughness which destroy in an hour and remould in a

decade. It is noteworthy that these rapid motions are mostly discernible in Asiatic peoples.

### The Persian Revolution

The Persian Revolution has settled with a swiftness and decisiveness second only to the movement of Turkey the constitutional struggle in Iran between a reactionary Shah and a rejuvenated, eager and ardent nation. The weak and unstable promise-breaker at Teheran has fallen, mourned by a sympathetic Anglo-India but by no one else in the world. Since the late Shah under the pressure of passive resistance yielded a constitution to his people, the young nationalism of Persia has been attempting to force or persuade his son to keep the oaths with which he started his reign. Some deeds of blood on both sides, some sharp encounters have attended the process but the price paid has been comparatively small. Like other Asiatic States in a similar process of transformation Persia has rejected the theoretic charms of a republic; she has set up a prince who is young enough to be trained to the habits of a constitutional monarch before he takes up the authority of kingship. In this we see the political wisdom, self-restraint and instinct for the right thing to be done which is natural to ancient nations who, though they have grown young again, are not raw and violent peoples new to political thought and experiment.

### Persia's Difficulties

A great and difficult task lies before the newly-risen nation. No other people is so difficultly circumstanced as the Persians. Weak in herself, long a stranger to good government, military strength and disciplining financial soundness and internal efficiency, Persia has to evolve all these under the instant menace from north and south of two of the greatest European empires. The threat of Russia to act herself if the new government does not instantly guarantee security on its borders, a threat made on the morrow of a violent *coup d'état* and before there has been time for the Regency to cope with any of the immediate difficulties surrounding it, is typical of the kind of

peril which this proximity is likely to produce. Self-restraint and patience towards these doubtful friends and unbound energy and decision within are the only qualities by which the statesmen of Persia can surmount the difficulties in their path and satisfy the claims posterity makes upon them. The internal re-organisation of Persia and the swift development of military strength are the first needs. Till then Persia must bear and forbear.

### **The new men in Persia**

It is worthy of notice that Sipahidar and Sardar Assad, the Bakhtyari leader, who have effected this revolution, are men who in their youth have studied in Europe. They should know the springs of European politics and thoroughly understand the way in which European powers have to be dealt with as well as the necessities and conditions of internal reorganisation. The problem for all Asiatic peoples is the preservation of their national individuality and existence while equipping themselves with the weapons of the modern struggle for survival. A deep study of European politics, a strong feeling for Asiatic institutions and ideals, a selfless patriotism and immense faith, courage and self-restraint are the qualities essential to their leaders in these critical times. It is reassuring to find Persians high in praise of the self-denying and lofty character of the new Regent. In the absence of a patriotic king like the Mikado such a man alone can form the centre of a national construction.

### **The Growth of Turkey**

The article on young Turkey and its military strength, extracted in our columns this week from the *Indian Daily News*, is one of great interest. Behind the deprecation of Turkish Chauvinism and Militarism we hear the first note of European alarm at the rise of a second Asiatic power able to strike as well as to defend its honour and integrity against European aggression. The fact that it is the army in Turkey which stands for free institutions, is the greatest guarantee that could be given of the permanence of the new Turkey, for it assures a time of internal quiet while the country goes through the delicate

and dangerous process of readjusting its whole machinery and ways of public thought and action from the habits of an irresponsible autocratic administration to those which suit free institutions and democratic ideas. No doubt, the support of the army veils a Dictatorship. But that is an inevitable stage in a great and sudden transition of this kind, and suits Asiatic countries, however perilous it may have been in other times to European countries when men could not be trusted not to misuse power for their own purposes to the detriment of their country. In Europe the present high standard of public spirit, duty, and honour was the slow creation of free institutions. To Asiatics, not yet corrupted, as many of us in India have been by the worst part of European individualism and an unnatural education divorced from morality and patriotism, a high standard of public spirit, duty and honour comes with the first awakenings of a freer life, for the Asiatic discipline has always been largely one of self-effacement, the subordination of the individual to a community and the scrupulous adhesion to principle at the cost of personal predilection and happiness. As in Turkey now, so in Japan, it was a few strong men who, winning control of the country by the strength of great ideas backed by the sword, right supported by might, held the land safe and quiet while they revolutionised the ideas and institutions of the whole nation, forged a strength by sea and land no enemy could despise and secured from the gratitude of their race for their wisdom, selflessness and high nobility of purpose that implicit following which at first they compelled by force. The complaint that the young Turks ignore the necessity of civil reorganisation, commerce and education is a complaint without wisdom, if not without knowledge. The circumstances of Turkey demand that the first attention of her statesmen should be given to military and naval efficiency. The revolution plucked her from the verge of an abyss of disintegration. The desperate diplomacy and cunning of Sultan Abdul Hamid had stayed her long on that verge, but she was beginning to slip slowly over when the stronger hand of Mahmud Shevket Pasha seized her and drew her back. Even so, the deposition of the cunning and skilful diplomatist of Yildiz Palace might have been the signal for a general spoliation of Turkey. Austria began a rush for the Balkans, Greece tried to hurry a crisis in Crete. The shaking of Turkish sword in the face of the Greek and the rapid

and efficient reorganisation of army and navy against Europe were both vitally necessary to the safety of the Empire. They were the calculated steps not of Chauvinism but of a defensive statesmanship.

### The Cretan Difficulty

The foreign affairs are as a rule lightly and unsubstantially dealt with by Indian journals. This is partly due to the want of the necessary information, partly to the parochial habit of mind encouraged by a cabined and subject national life which cannot enlarge its imagination outside the sphere of these immediate and daily events directly touching ourselves. And yet the happenings of today in Asia, Europe and Africa are of great moment to the future of India and full of encouragement and stimulus to the spirit of nationalism. The recent events in Turkey are an instance. It is not the methods of the young Turks which have any lesson for India. The circumstances are too dissimilar to warrant any fanciful theories of that kind. It is rather the character of the party of freedom which bears a lesson to all struggling nationalities. The dominant qualities of the democratic leaders—and these are the qualities they have imparted to the movement,—are strength, manhood, a bold heart, a clear brain, a virile efficiency. The government they have established has been showing these qualities to the full in its treatment of the Cretan difficulty. It has shown that free Turkey, while not rashly oblivious of the circumstances created by an unfortunate past, will not tolerate any attempt to be treated as Sultan Abdul Hamid suffered himself to be treated. Sultan Abdul Hamid, afraid of his subjects, afraid of the world, afraid even of his spies and informers, followed the weak and cowardly policy of dishonest, intriguing and evasive Machiavellianism. He conducted that policy with a certain skill and statecraft in details which eventually evoked admiration, but it could neither save Turkey from ignominy and weakness nor permanently protect a throne based upon cruelty, falsehood and despicable meanness. All that it did, for Satan must be given his due, was to stave off a final disruption of Turkey and expulsion of the Ottoman from Europe. But true freedom is always conscious of strength and knows that it is better to perish than to live for a short while longer at the cost

of continual insult, degradation and weakness. The first efforts of the new government have been to save what remained of the outskirts of Turkish empire in Europe, the suzerainty in Crete, the supreme control in Macedonia. Their diplomacy has been strong, outspoken and fearless. It did not flinch nor in any way draw back a step or lower its tone until it forced Greece to a satisfactory attitude and obliged the Powers to baffle the tortuous Greek methods by lowering the Greek flag in Canea. It has quietly ignored the attempt of the Powers to interfere even by a suggestion in the direct question between itself and Greece; for we read that Turkey is not going to give any formal answer to the Powers' Note recommending pacific counsels, as that Note did not call for any reply. It has been supported by the newly liberated nation by means of a Boycott which would have alarmed into reason a stronger government than that of Athens. And as strength, when firm and able, can never be ignored, it has secured the sympathy of the Powers in the shape of concessions which would never have been yielded to a weak or overcautious Government. Strength attracts strength; firm and clear-minded courage commands success and respect; strong and straight dealing can dispense with the methods of dissimulation and intrigue. All these are signs of character and it is only character that can give freedom and greatness to nations.

### **Greece and Turkey**

It is not to be imagined, however, that this is the closing chapter. The question between Greece and Turkey will have eventually to be fought out by the sword. It is true that the immediate question is for the moment settled and the rest in the Cretan patchwork mended. But that patchwork is not of a kind to last. The Greek Government is not likely to give up its methods in Crete, the Christian population their desire for union with Athens or the present Cretan administration their secret sympathy with and support of these aspirations. It would have been a simpler matter if the population of the island had been wholly Christian, but there is a Mahomedan population also which is as eagerly attached to the Turkish connection as the other are desirous of the Greek. The ancient history of Crete supports the

sentiment of Greek unity, its latter history the sentiment of Imperial Ottoman greatness. And apart from Crete, there are inevitable sources of quarrel in Macedonia. Some day the powers will have to stand aside and allow these natural enemies to settle the question in the only possible way. The result of such non-intervention in an armed struggle could not be doubtful. The Mongolian is a stronger spirit than the Slav, the Mussulman a greater dynamic force than the Christian, and it is only ignorance and absolutism that has for the time depressed the Turk. The disparity between the Turk and the Greek is abysmal. The former is a soldier and statesman, the latter a merchant and intriguer. A war between two such Powers with none to intervene would speedily end with the Turk not only in occupation of Thessaly but entering Athens.

### **Nation-stuff in Morocco**

The Powers of Europe are highly indignant at the tortures and mutilations practised by Mulai Hamid on his vanquished rival, El Roghi, and his captured adherents. There is no doubt that the savage outbreak of mediaeval and African savagery of which the Moorish Sultan has been guilty, is revolting and deprives him personally of all claim to sympathy; but European moral indignation in the matter seems to us to be out of place when we remember the tortures practised by American troops on Filipinos (to say nothing of the ghastly details of lynching in the Southern States) and the unbridled atrocities of the European armies in China. Be that as it may, we come across a remarkable account, extracted in the *Indian Daily News*, of the stuff of which the Moorish people are made. The narrator is Belton, the Englishman who commanded the Sultan's army and has resigned his post as a protest against the Sultan's primitive method of treating political prisoners. Death and mutilation seem to have been the punishments inflicted. Belton narrates that twenty officers of El Roghi had their right hands cut off and then seared, according to the barbarous old surgical fashion, in a cauldron of boiling oil, to stop the bleeding. Not from one of these men, reports the English soldier with wonder, did there come, all the time, a single whimper. And he goes on to tell how one of them, after the mutilation, quietly

walked over to the fire where the cauldron was boiling, and, while his stump was being plunged in the boiling liquid, lighted from the flame with the utmost serenity a cigarette he held in his hand. Whatever may be the present backwardness of the Moors and the averseness to light of their tribes, there is the stuff of a strong, warlike and princely nation in the land which gave birth to these iron men. If ever the wave of Egyptian Neo-Islam and Mahomedan Nationalism sweeps across Morocco, Europe will have to reckon with no mean or contemptible people in the North West of Africa.

### Spain and the Moor

Another corner of the Asiatic world—for Northern Africa is thoroughly Asianised if not Asiatic,—is convulsed with struggles which may well precede another resurgence. There was a time when the Moor held Spain and gave civilisation to semi-barbarous Europe. The revolution of the wheel has now gone to its utmost length and finds the Spaniard invading Morocco. But this invasion does not seem to promise any Spanish expansion in Africa. With infinite difficulty and at the cost of a bloody emeute in Spain, King Alfonso's Government have landed a considerable army in Morocco and yet with all that force can only just protect their communications and stand facing the formidable country where the stubborn Kabyle tribesmen await the invader. There the army is hung up for the present, unwilling to retreat and afraid to advance, and the Spanish General has again sent to Spain for reinforcements, a feat of military strategy at which he seems to be exceptionally skilful. If the men of the mountains are fortunate enough to have a leader with a head on his shoulders, the circumstances augur a reverse for Spain as decisive and perhaps more sanguinary than the Italian overthrow in Abyssinia. Meanwhile King Alfonso has sacrificed all his youthful popularity by this ill-omened war and the bloody severity which has temporarily saved his throne. And with the popularity of the young king has gone the friendship of the Spanish nation for England, for the Spaniards accuse that friendship of the origination of these troubles and the British Government as the selfish instigators of the intervention in Morocco.

## China Enters

The circle of constitutionally governed Asiatic countries increases. To Turkey, Persia and Japan, China is added. Towards the close of the ten years set apart in the Chinese programme for the preparation of self-government, the Chinese government has kept its promise to grant a constitution. Provincial Assemblies have been established, are working and have shown their reality and independence by opposing government demands. The electoral basis of an Imperial Assembly has been provided. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the steady, resolute, methodical Chinese, with their unrivalled genius for organisation, will make a success of the constitutional experiment. In all Asia now with the exception of Siam and Afghanistan, the only countries which are denied a constitutional government are those which have not vindicated their national freedom. Even in Afghanistan the first ineffective stirrings of life have been and will grow to something formidable before many years are over. We wonder whether Lord Morley and his advisers really believe that when they are surrounded by a free and democratic Asia, the great Indian race can be kept in a state of tutelage and snail-paced advancement, much less put off to a future age in the dim mists of a millennial futurity to which the penetrating vision of the noble and Radical Lord cannot pierce? The worst opponents of Indian freedom know well what this Asiatic constitutionalism means, and therefore the *Englishman* struggles, in the face of continual disappointment, to foresee the speedy collapse of Nationalism and Parliamentary Government in Persia, Turkey and even Japan as the inevitable fate of an institution foreign to the Asiatic genius, which is popularly supposed to recoil from freedom and hug most lovingly the heaviest chains.

## The Progress of China

A recent article in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* gives a picture of the enormous educational progress made by China in a few years. In the short time since the Boxer troubles China has revolutionised her educational system, established a network of modern schools of all ranks,

provided for a thorough modern education for her princes and nobles, and added to the intellectual education a thorough grounding in military knowledge and the habits of the soldier, so that, when the process is complete, the whole Chinese people will be a nation trained in arms whom the greatest combination of powers will not care to touch. On another side of national development, a railway has just been opened which has been entirely constructed and will be run by Chinese. When the process of education is well forward, it is intended by the Chinese Government to transform itself into a constitutional and Parliamentary government, and in its programme this great automatic revolution has been fixed to come off in another eight years but the Chinese, trained by the confucian system to habits of minute method, perfect organisation and steady seriousness in all things great and small, could thus calmly map out a stupendous political, social and educational change, as if it were the programme of a ceremonial function, and carry it out with thoroughness and efficiency. Once the Chinese have made up their minds to this revolution, they are likely to carry it out with the greatest possible completeness, businesslike method, effective organisation, and the least possible waste and friction. In the history of China, no less than the history of Japan, we are likely to see the enormous value of national will-power using the moral outcome of a great and ancient discipline, even while breaking the temporary mould in which that discipline had cast society, thought and government. We in India have an ancient discipline much more powerful than the Chinese or Japanese; but whence is the centre of sovereignty in India which will direct the national will-power to the right use of that discipline? Where even is the centre of national endeavour which will make up for the absence of such a government? We have a government manned by aliens, out of touch with and contemptuous of the sources of national strength and culture; we have an education empty of them which seeks to replace our ancient discipline by a foreign strength, instead of recovering and invigorating our own culture and turning it to modern uses; we have leaders trained in the foreign discipline who do not know or believe in the force that would, if made use of, revolutionise India more swiftly and mightily than Japan was or China is being revolutionised. It is this and not internal division or the drag of the old and un-

suitable conditions that makes the work in India more difficult than in any other Asiatic country.

### The Assassination of Prince Ito

A great man has fallen, perhaps the greatest force in the field of political action that the nineteenth century produced, the maker of Japan, the conqueror of Russia, the mighty one who first asserted Asia's superiority over Europe in Europe's own field of glory and changed in a few years the world's future. Some would say that such a death for such a man was a tragedy. We hold otherwise. Even such a death should such a man have died, in harness, fighting for his country's expansion and greatness, by the swift death in action, which, our scriptures tell us, carry the hero's soul straight to the felicity of heaven. The man who in his youth lived in imminent deadly peril from the swords of his countrymen because he dared to move forward by new paths to his God-given task, dies in his old age by a foreign hand because, at the expense of justice and a nation's freedom, he still moved forward in the path of his duty. It is a difficult choice that is given to men of action in a world where love, strength and justice are not yet harmonised, and he who chooses in sincerity and acts thoroughly, whether he has chosen well or ill, gathers *punya* for himself in this world and the next. Then he was building a nation and he lived to do his work, for his death would not have profited. He was building an Empire when he died and by his death that empire will be established. The soul of a great man fulfilled in development but cut off in the midst of his work, enters into his following or his nation and works on a far wider scale than was possible to him in the body. Korea will gain nothing by this rash and untimely act, the greatest error in tactics it could have committed. The Japanese is the last man on earth to be deterred from his ambition or his duty by the fear of death, and the only result of this blow will be to harden Japan to her task. She has science, organisation, efficiency, ruthlessness, and she will grind the soul out of Korea until it is indistinguishable from Japan. That is the only way to perpetuate a conquest, to kill the soul of the subject nation, and the Japanese know it. A subject nation struggling for freedom must always attract Indian sympathy, but the

Koreans have not the strength of soul to attain freedom. Instead of seeking the force to rise in their own manhood, they have always committed the unpardonable sin against Asiatic integrity of striving to call in a European power against brother Asiatic. The Koreans have right on their side, but do not know how to awaken might to vindicate the right. The Japanese cause is wrong from the stand-point of a higher morality than the merely patriotic, but they believe intensely in their religion of patriotic duty and put all their might into its observance. It is not difficult to predict with which side the victory will be.

Prince Hirobumi Ito was the typical man of his nation, as well as its greatest statesman and leader. He went ahead of it for a while only to raise it to his level. He had all its virtues in overflowing measure and a full share of its defects and vices. Absolutely selfless in public affairs, quiet, unassuming, keeping himself in the background unless duty called him into prominence, calm, self-controlled, patient, swift, energetic, methodical, incapable of fear, wholly devoted to the nation—such is the Japanese, and such was Ito. As a private man he had the Japanese defects. Even in public affairs, he had something of the narrowness, unscrupulousness in method and preference of success and justice of the insular and imperial Japanese type. Added to these common characteristics of his people he had a genius equal to that of any statesman in history. The eye that read the hearts of men, the mouth sealed to rigid secrecy, the rare, calm and effective speech, the brain that could embrace a civilisation at a glance and take all that was needed for his purpose, the swift and yet careful intellect that could divine, choose and arrange, the power of study, the genius of invention, the talent of application, a diplomacy open-minded but never vacillating, a tireless capacity for work,—all these he had on so grand a scale that to change the world's history was to him by no means a stupendous labour. And he had the ancient Asiatic gift of self-effacement. In Europe a genius of such colossal proportions would have filled the world with the mighty bruit of his personality; but Ito worked in silence and in the shade, covering his steps, and it was only by the results of his work that the world knew him. Like many modern Japanese, Ito was a sceptic. His country was God of his worship to whom he

dedicated his life, for whom he lived and in whose service he died. Such was this great *vibhuti*, who came down to earth in a petty family, an Eastern island clan, a nation apart and far behind in the world's progress, and in forty years created a nation's greatness, founded an Empire, changed a civilisation and prepared the liberation of a continent. His death was worthy of his life. For there are only two deaths which are really great and carry a soul to the highest heaven, to die in self-forgetting action, in battle, by assassination, on the scaffold for others, for one's country or for the right, and to die as the Yogin dies, by his own will, free of death and disease, departing into that from which he came. To Ito, the sceptic, the patriot, the divine worker, the death of the selfless hero was given.

### The Transvaal Indians

The visit of Mr. Polak has excited once more a closer interest in the Transvaal question and associations are being formed for the agitation of the question. It will therefore be opportune to consider the practical aspect of the struggle in the Transvaal and the possibility of help from India. There can be no two opinions outside South Africa, and possibly Hare Street, as to the moral aspects of the question; for it must be remembered that the Indians in the Transvaal are not claiming any political rights, but merely treatment as human beings first, and, next, equality before the law. It is open to the South Africans to exclude Indians altogether, but, once they are admitted, they are morally bound to refrain from a treatment of them which is an extreme and unpardonable outrage on humanity. To degrade any part of the human race to the level of cattle is in the present stage of progress an insult and an offence to the whole of mankind. It would be equally reprehensible to whatever race the humanity so degraded belonged, but the fact that these men are Indians, has made their sufferings a national question to us and a standing reproach to the British people who, out of selfish fear of offending their own kith and kin, allow this outrage to be committed on their own subjects whom they have deprived of all means of self-protection. The great glory of the Transvaal Indians is that while men under such circumstances have always sunk into the condition to which they have been

condemned and needed others to help them out of the mire, these sons of Bharatbarsha, inheritors of an unexampled moral and spiritual tradition have vindicated the superiority of the Indian people and its civilisation to all other peoples in the globe and all other civilisations by the spirit in which they have refused to recognise the dominance of brute force over the human soul. Stripped of all means of resistance a helpless handful in a foreign land, unaided by India, put off with empty professions of sympathy by English statesmen, they, ignored by humanity, are fighting humanity's battle in the pure strength of the spirit, with no weapon but the moral force of their voluntary sufferings and utter self-sacrifice. Mr. Polak has well said that the Indian nation is being built up in South Africa. The phrase is true in this sense that the supreme example of the moral and spiritual strength which must be behind the formation of the new nation, has been shown first not in India but in South Africa. The passive resistance which we had not the courage and unselfishness to carry out in India, they have carried to the utmost in the Transvaal under far more arduous circumstances, with far less right to hope for success. Whether they win or lose in the struggle, they have contributed far more than their share to the future greatness of their country.

We must consider their chance of success, and though we do not wish to speak words of discouragement, it will not do to hide from ourselves the enormous difficulties in the way. For success, either the Government in England must interfere and compel the Transvaal to do right, or the Transvaal must be stirred by shame and by the interest of the poorer part of the Boer community to reverse the laws, or the Indian Government must intervene to protect its subjects. The first course is unthinkable. It would mean a quarrel with the newly conciliated Transvaal, the marring of the work of which the Liberal Government is justly proud, and a resentment in South Africa which the English ministry will not face for the sake of all India, much less of a handful of Indian coolies and shopkeepers. The poorer Boers will be only inconvenienced, not seriously hurt by the extinction of Indian shopkeeper, and, in any case, they are not a class who are wont to act politically. The Transvaal Government is not likely to yield to any sense of shame. The Boers are a stark race, stubborn to the death, and the grit they showed in the face of the

British Empire, they are also likely to show in this very minor trouble. Nor are they likely to have forgotten the action of the Indians who rewarded the comparative leniency of the Boer Government previous to the war by helping actively in the British attack on the liberty of Transvaal. With their slow minds and tenacious memories they are a people not swift to forget and forgive; we do not rely greatly on their present professions of friendship to the Power that took from them their freedom, and they are wholly unlikely to put from their minds the unpardonable intrusion of the Indian residents into a quarrel in which they had no concern or status.

There remains the Indian Government, and what can the Indian Government do? It can forbid, as has been suggested, Indian coolly recruitment for Natal. This would undoubtedly be a great blow to the planters and they would throw their whole influence into the Indian scale. But, on the other hand, the mass of the Natal whites are full of race prejudice and their desire is for that impossible dream, a white South Africa. A more effective measure would be the suspension of trade relations by the boycott of Colonial goods and the cessation of the importation of Indian raw materials into South Africa. But that is a step which will never be taken. Even if the Indian Government were willing to use any and every means, the decision does not rest with them but with the Government in England, which will not consent to offending the colonies. The Indian Government would no doubt like to see an end of the situation in the Transvaal as it weakens such moral hold as they still have over India, and they would prefer a favourable termination because the return of ruined Indians from the Transvaal will bring home a mass of bitterness, burning sense of wrong and a standing discontent trained in the most strenuous methods of passive resistance. And many of them are Mahomedans.

The one favourable factor in favour of the Transvaal Indians is their own spiritual force and the chance of its altering the conditions by sheer moral weight. It is India's duty to aid them by financial succour which they sorely need and the rich men of the country can easily afford, by the heartening effect of public and frequently expressed moral sympathy and by educating the whole people of India literate and illiterate in an accurate knowledge of what is happening in the

Transvaal. This is the only help India can give to her children over the seas so long as she is not master of her own destinies.

### Transvaal and Bengal

There are two crying grievances which have done more than anything else to embitter popular feelings against the authorities and in both cases the populations most directly affected have resorted to passive resistance as the only remedy open to them. The first is the gross and systematic oppression now being practised on the Indians in the Transvaal, and the other the repression of national aspirations towards unity and self-development, in Bengal typified by Partition and Deportation. Nothing can be more inconsistent than the attitude taken by the Moderate Convention towards these two questions. They have telegraphed their sympathy with the heroic passive resistance of the Transvaal Indians; they have shown their sympathy with Bengal by bycotting our boycott. Eighteen thousand rupees were promised for the Transvaal Indians in the one scene of enthusiasm which relieved the depressed dullness of the proceedings, and although we have little hope that this spasmodic activity will be followed up by steady support, it is better than nothing. On the other hand the Bengal questions were left to be moved by Bengalis, the Partition to S. J. Bhupendranath, the Deportations to Mr. A. Choudhuri. A deputation was appointed by the Convention to proceed to lay the question of Partition once more before Lord Morley; and of whom, think you, the deputation is to consist? S. J. Surendranath Banerji and S. J. Bhupendranath Bose. Not a single Moderate deputy is forthcoming from the whole of India to support Bengal even to this extent in its bitter and arduous struggle. Yet men are not ashamed to go from Bengal as self-elected delegates to a Convention which has disowned and dishonoured Bengal and which Bengal has disowned.

# SRI AUROBINDO AND THE NEW AGE

## CHAPTER IV

### FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT

#### WESTERN LITERATURE

AS we have already seen in the case of the arts, what is distinctively modern emerges from a protracted tension and clash between the past with its essential elements of enduring value and its overgrowths and exaggerations on the one hand, and the creative urge and lure of the future on the other. Like the overgrowths and exaggerations of the past, the futurist impulses have also their heady drifts and bizarre extravagances. But the Time-Spirit tends to sort out only those elements that pertain to a definite future, and reject the rest. Its universal vision directs its selection, which the human mind cannot fathom.

Western literature has had a history which amply illustrates the above truth. Unlike the history of science since the Renaissance, that of the arts and literature usually shows less radical ruptures and abrupt transitions—the very spirit of aesthesis makes for a certain balanced continuity. But in the modern age, particularly since the Age of Reason, science has so firmly seized on the mind and life of man, and its increasing influence has been so decidedly antithetical to the aesthetic spirit that even in the spheres of the arts and literature we notice sudden and fundamental breaks and departures from the past, as if the new in its intolerant daring and exuberance was bent on wiping out all traces of the old. This is, indeed, a novel phenomenon, unprecedented and significant. It only proves the strong hold the scientific spirit has acquired over the whole of human life and its activities. Aesthetics or the cult of beauty, which is the soul of all artistic creation, has been sacrificed to the interest of utility, which is the only goddess materialism worships. “The age of the beautiful is over; ours is one of emergency and implacable demands”,

as Goethe says. And the cult of stark utility dominates and determines the productions of modern art, labelled as realism. Utility is the goal and realisation of self-interest, and the pervading commercialism and industrialism, which is the modern method of providing for utility, has so infected the field of art that the artist makes no bones of pandering to the vulgar tastes of those who pay the piper and call the tune. Scientific commercialism has perverted cultured taste and wallows in a general degeneracy of all aesthetic values. Or, if there is, as we have already observed, an incipient trend towards subjectivism, which is a corollary of individualism, it is from the sensational findings of modern scientific and medical psychology, unavoidably short-sighted and superficial, that the artists have derived inspiration for their fantastically subjective creations. It is, no doubt, a natural reaction against the conventional and the florid. But what it achieves is a ghastly portrayal of the sinks and sewers of human nature. Modern scientific insistence on the sole reality of Matter with its inveterate tendency to considering it as the only source of all psychological functions, which was so strong in the nineteenth century, has blighted higher imagination and atrophied the power of profound reflection, to speak nothing of the intuitive faculty in man. It is true that the greatest of the scientists, such as Leonardo, Newton, Max Planck, Einstein etc. have all had intuitions as the sole origin of their discoveries and inventions, but they were fortunate exceptions who had escaped the corroding influence of materialistic science. This influence has corrupted the very soul of arts and literature and caused a deplorable sterility in the sphere of true artistic creation. But there is a steady gleam of hope in the recent remarkable developments in physics, biology and psychology. It betokens a turn of the tide. Before long man may well be exploring with a surer insight not only the subconscious and the unconscious, but the measureless realms of his subliminal and superconscious parts and the infinity and immortality of his Spirit, and receiving, perhaps more than ever before, a bountiful afflatus of intuitions, inspirations and revelations, which are the real stuff and sustenance of all artistic creation.

Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374), though he belonged more to the traditions and temper of the Middle Ages, can yet be called the precursor and maker of Renaissance literature. It was he who brought

into it a fresh breath of free imagination, a lyrical strain of subjectivism nourished by his wide acquaintance with the Latin classics, a joyous love of Nature, and a distinctly secular spirit as against the conventional religious or theological note of his times. His poetry, characterised by a striking atticism in language, exerted an extensive influence and set a model for the poetic form even in other languages than the Italian, like English and French. He displays in himself the conflict between the past and the future perhaps more than any other contemporary writer. His ascetic frame of mind could not reconcile itself to his haunting love for Laura who became the centre of his impassioned poetic creation. He symbolises the typical pull between two polar drives: the call of the cloistered life of self-naughting, and the attraction of the sense objects of the world, glorified by the modernist spirit. Intuitive and emotional, he enlivened his secularism with the sap of his Christian and classical temperament.

His successor and follower, Boccaccio (died 1375) steeped himself in ancient Greco-Latin culture and continued the search begun by his master for old manuscripts. His *Decameron* was received with admiration and high praise, and at once established his fame as a master of Italian prose. In the one hundred tales of *Decameron* a few are romantic, but the rest are concerned with contemporary social life which is parodied in a glowing vein of realism. He strikes a strong secular note, which has been swelling down the centuries of the modern age.

An intense love of the pagan culture and classics, awakened by Petrarch and Boccaccio, spread far and wide, and numerous valuable manuscripts were collected and studied with zeal and earnestness. Libraries were set up at many places in order to preserve the manuscripts and cater for the increasing avidity for classical learning. The most important result of this classical revival was a new conception of education. The old idea that education was a training for some vocation or for the monastic life was given the go-by, and a more liberal conception came to prevail, consistent with the humanistic spirit. The doors of educational institutions were flung open to all classes, and boys and girls were given equal facilities to train their character, improve their intellectual faculties, imbibe some religious and moral culture, equip themselves for being useful to society, and

build their bodies by regular physical exercises. This was, indeed, a decisive step forward from the mediaeval notion of education which was rather conservative, narrow and strait-laced. With the expansion of the horizons of thought and the fields of observation and experimentation, there came a widening of secular interests and an adventurous spirit of enterprise. A general awakening all over Europe led to a quickening of the creative impulse and initiative.

Another factor which immensely helped the spread of education and the cultivation of aesthetic sensibilities was the increasing patronage extended by wealthy men who took a special pride in fostering the arts and encouraging and helping deserving artists and students. They cherished a love for beauty in all forms—in painting, architecture, sculpture, music and literature, and even in individual and collective bearing and manners. The Greek ideal of general order and refinement was thus retrieved to a certain extent in the Humanism of the modern age.

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) reflects in his famous book, *The Prince*, the antimoral or amoral spirit prevailing in contemporary politics. Expediency and not ethical principles had come to be the guiding rule among the governing heads of the continent. And Machiavelli gave an eloquent and piquant expression to it. His thought and language captured the intellectual men of his times, and he was widely read and admired. His influence has been percolating through various channels to the present times, receiving considerable support from the materialistic and sceptical outlook engendered by science.

As a striking counterpoise to the drastic departure of Machiavelli's political thought appeared the sober views and balanced maturity of the mind of Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), an erudite Dutchman writing in Latin. Erasmus had the strength and courage of his conviction to swim against the tide of humanistic bohemianism in life and arts. He used his profound biblical knowledge and solid scholarship to exhort the people to hark back to the moral and religious values they had almost thrown to the winds. A contemporary of Luther, he was anything but an iconoclast. He believed deeply in morality and the cohesive power of religion, but was bitter in his criticism of the Church of his day and the ill-corroding social life. His

writings exerted a great inspiring influence on Luther, and he tried to enlist the sympathy of this intellectual giant in his onslaught against the Church, but he was a revolutionary man of action and Erasmus as a sedate thinker of far-reaching thoughts was averse to revolution. He was for steady, circumspect construction. Though he had in the beginning showed his essential sympathy with Luther's stand-point, he developed later a sort of impatience of his headstrong ways and reckless utterances which tended to disrupt the existing order. But Luther carried in himself the breath of the Time-Spirit, and nothing could stand in the way of his relentless campaign against the ramshackle fabric of mediaeval conventionalism, so long as he remained loyal to his inspiration. Erasmus, too, longed for reform, but in the gingerly way all reformers long—by a gradual, though accelerated process of enlightenment, discarding of abuses, and reconstruction. He stands as a bridge between the old and the new.

Thomas More (1478-1535) illustrates in his ambivalent personality the same tension between the past and the future which we have noticed in Erasmus, but in a more accentuated form. His attachment to the Christianity of the Middle Ages and his love of the classical culture and learning were as much firmly rooted in him as his reaction against the tattered conceptions and frozen conservatism of the past was powerful. He opened new paths of thought and, embodying the true spirit of Renaissance humanism, made a strong case in favour of communism, abolition of personal property, and annulment of all social distinctions and religious sectarianism. He insisted on material well-being and the healthy pleasures of life, and protested against ascetic practices. But his own practice belied his preachings. He was an ascetic himself in his nature and habits, as was evidenced by his wearing of the hair-shirt and persistent monastic longings. He was not only a thinker and writer, but a lawyer, a politician, and an administrator of no mean stature. But his involvement in politics cost him his life—he was beheaded by the orders of Henry VIII. He thus earned martyrdom and was later canonised by the Church. Martyrdom covers up all inner conflicts and surrounds itself with a halo of glory. Caught between the cross-currents of his time, he could not square his conscience with the urgent stirrings of the humanistic aspirations which he found in himself. He symbolises the long-

drawn travail of the modern age.

Turning to France, we find the same struggle between the old and the new. But, whereas Renaissance in Germany produced an upheaval in theological and ecclesiastical spheres, in France it gave birth to a literature of unprecedented richness. Francois Rabelais (1483-1553) felt a subtle attachment to the scholastic tradition of the Middle Ages even while he launched a vigorous attack upon the Church and its multiform corruption. He advocated reform in education and stood boldly for the hedonistic pleasures of life. More than Erasmus whom he admired and more than Thomas More, he introduced a robust note of modernism into literature, which he enriched by his mastery of technique, flexibility of language, mordant satire, and comic inventions.

Another great French writer was Michel De Montaigne (1533-1592) who has won immortal renown as the first essayist in post-mediaeval Europe. There was very little of the scholastic or Christian taint in his thought and writings. A moderate Catholic as he was, he belonged to the growing number of those who represented sceptical humanism. Besides being a lawyer, he was a man of practical experience and insatiable curiosity who travelled extensively and learnt many an invaluable lesson not only by open-eyed observation, but by systematic and sustained introspection. His essays are considered as a model of perfection by virtue of their simplicity, naturalness, scintillating sarcasm, cosmopolitan outlook, and epicurean wisdom. He initiated a distinct phase of humanistic modernism in France.

*(To be continued)*

RISHABHCHAND

# SRI AUROBINDO ON THE UPANISHADS AND THE GITA

## THE UPANISHADS

SRI Aurobindo's approach to the Upanishads is not merely intellectual; he used them and the Gita as treasures of spiritual experience during the early period of his sadhana. To him they are not repositories of intellectual philosophies to be used in metaphysical discussions, but are inspired and intuitive expressions of the seers continuing the spiritual tradition of the Veda.

He has given detailed interpretation of the Isha and Kena. An early translation of the Eight Upanishads as also a revised one of the Mandukya is available. In his interpretation of the Upanishad he follows the same line that he does in that of the Veda relying on the straightforward meaning of words and internal evidence of the text. This is what he says about them : "Here the intuitive mind and intimate psychological experience of the Vedic seers passes into a supreme culmination in which the Spirit, as is laid in a phrase of the Katha Upanishad, discloses its own very body, reveals the very word of its self-expression and discovers to the mind the vibration of rhythms which repeating themselves within in the spiritual hearing seem to bind up the Soul and set it satisfied and complete on the heights of self-knowledge."

He says further : "These works are not philosophical speculations of the intellectual kind, a metaphysical analysis which labours to define notions, to select ideas and discriminate those that are true, to logicise truth or else to support the mind in its intellectual preferences by dialectical reasoning and is content to put forward an exclusive solution of existence in the light of this or that idea of the reason and see all things from the viewpoint, in that focus and determining perspective."<sup>1</sup>

"The Upanishads are epic hymns of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and God-knowledge."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Foundations of Indian Culture* pp. 305-306.

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

Some writers have advanced the contention that the Upanishads represent the Jnana Kanda in opposition to Karmakanda of the Veda : the Vedas stand for the rituals and Upanishads for knowledge. They even assert that the Upanishads are a revolt against the Vedic ritualism. Those opinions are not supported by proper study of the Riks or of the Upanishads. The core of the effort, both of the Veda and the Upanishads, is the attainment of a spiritual state which can lift man out of ignorance. Only, the Upanishads speak of the experience in intuitive, inspired and revelatory speech which is different from that of the Veda. The Veda speaks in the language of symbols and is written at a time when Sanskrit speech was plastic and the words retained the memory of their origins. The Rishis speak out boldly about the visions they saw as concrete spiritual realities related to outer ceremonials of the sacrifice which was their mystic symbol of man's communication with the divine powers that surround him outwardly as well as inwardly. The difference in the language of the Veda and that of the Upanishads is marked : where we have Agni, Indra, Aditi, Surya etc. in the Veda in the latter we have Jnana, Satya, Brahma, Prakriti, Atma, but still as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out in his foreword to the *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, there are passages where in the two types of expression meet. The Upanishad, like the Veda, aimed at attaining a secret knowledge : Artabhaga is asked by Yagnavalkya to retire into secrecy to speak about the problem of condition of the Soul after death.

There is hardly an Upanishad which does not include some Vedic hymns in its body, very often in a different context from that in the Veda. It shows the profound reverence in which the Vedas were held by the seers of the Upanishads. For example, when Satyakama Jabala delays in imparting spiritual instruction to the young disciple his wife chides him and says :

मा त्वा अग्नयः परिप्रवोचन् । (Chh. IV. 10. 2.)

“Let not the Fires instruct the seeker before you do.” Fire as a God was worshipped by the seers of the Upanishads. In Kathopanishad Nachiketa-Fire is mentioned as the deity that can help the aspirant to realise the Higher consciousness.

The Upanishads accepted the Vedic symbols in their psychological significance; for instance, धेनु Dhenu ‘the fostering cow’ is

spoken as वाचं धेनुमुपासीत। तस्याः चत्वारः स्तवाः। “The fostering cow, the speech, must be worshipped; she has four udders”. (*Brihad* 5.5.8) This has clear reference to sukta 164th of the I Mandala.

That the sacrifice—Yagna—was symbolic to the seers of the Upanishads—as it was later to the writer of the Gita also—is clear from texts like आदित्य एव समित्। (VI.1.9 *Brihad*) and then संवत्सर एव समित्। (*Brihad* VI.1.9)—“The Sun is the offering holy wood for the sacrifice, so also “the year is the offering wood.” Also असौ वा आदित्यो देवमधु—(*Chhand.* 1.4) “That Sun—the son of Aditi—is the honey of the Gods” where the Sun and Honey both are openly symbolic.

The opening verse of the Brihadaranyaka shows not only that sacrifice was symbolic but that the universe itself is symbolised as the Horse-Sacrifice, Ashwa-medha. This is the Ashwa-medha in which Samudra is spoken as related to the Ashwa and to Usha, the goddess Dawn, who is the head of the sacrificial horse : उषा वै अश्वस्य मेघस्य शिरः।

Thus the symbolism of the Veda is woven in these ancient Upanishads. Long ago I collected a list of Vedic words used in the Upanishads almost in the same sense : Ex. वाम Vama : meaning ‘delight’. That sacrifice is symbolic hardly admits of any doubt in face of Upanishadic texts like पुरुषो वाव यज्ञः। (*Chhand.* 3.16.1). “The Purusha is, indeed, the sacrifice” which is followed by the text dividing man’s life into three parts, symbolically represented by the rhythms like Gayatri, Trishtubha, and Jajati, corresponding to the morning, afternoon and evening sacrifice lasting 24, 44 and 48 years of life respectively, according to the number of words of the rhythm. तस्य यानि चतुर्विंशतिवर्षाणि तत्प्रातःसवनं चतुर्विंशत्यक्षरा गायत्री गायत्रं प्रातःसवनम्। (*Chhand.* 3.16.1)

Aditya, generally identified with the Sun, is said to be the Brahman : आदित्यो ब्रह्म (*Chhand.* III. 19)

If we examine some of the passages in which the Upanishads employ the Vedic words in the same sense we find that the symbolic sense is also accepted by them : तद् तद्वनं नाम—“The name of That is that Delight”. तद्वनमित्युपासितव्यम्। “As that Delight one should seek it—follow after it”.

The Upanishad employing its own terminology suddenly brings in the Vedic symbol as in : विज्ञानसारथिर्यस्तु मनःप्रग्रहवान्नरः। सोऽध्वनः पारमाप्नोति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम्॥ (*Katha* 1.3.9)

“That man who uses the mind for reins and the knowledge for the driver, reaches the end of his road—the highest seat of Vishnu”. The “highest seat of Vishnu” is a Vedic phrase.<sup>1</sup>

So also, हंसः शुचिषद् वसुरन्तरिक्षसद् होता वेदिषदतिथिर्दुरोणसत् ।

Of the Katha is the same as Rigveda IV.40.5 “Lo, the Swan whose dwelling is in the purity, He is Vasu in the inter regions, the Sacrificer at the altar, the Guest in the vessel of the drinking : he is in man, in the great Ones, and his home is in the Law (of the Truth), his dwelling is in the firmament: he is all that is born of the water, and all that that is born of earth, and all that is born on the mountains. He is the Truth, He is the mighty one” (*Katha Valli* 2.2.)

नृषद्वरसदृतसद् व्योमसदब्जा गोजा ऋतजा अद्रिजा ऋतं बृहत् ॥

“Falsehood is embraced on both sides by Truth—partakes the nature of truth itself”. (*Brihadā* 5.5.1) This can be compared to V.5.7 of the Rigveda.

Here the universal manifestation is spoken of as the Ashwatha tree : “This eternal Ashwatha tree has its root above and branches stretching below; that is the brilliant pure, that is the Brahman, that is what is called Immortal”. (*Katha 2. Valli* 6.1)

ऊर्ध्वमूलोज्वाकशाखः एषोऽश्वत्थः सनातनः । तदेव शुक्रं तद् ब्रह्म तदेवामृतमुच्यते ॥

The tendency to turn spiritual experience into symbols seems almost inevitable because that seems to be the only way to concretise it.

The Vedic Rik I.164.12 is literally repeated in the Prashnopanishad.

Sometimes even the original text of the Upanishad runs into the language of the Rig Veda : take the Taittiriya text in which Indra plainly appears as the power and godhead of the divine mind :

यश्छंदसां वृषभो विश्वरूपः छंदोभ्योऽध्यमृतात् संबभूव । स मेन्द्रो मेधया स्पृणोतु ।  
अमृतस्य देव धारणो भूयासम् । (*Taittiriya* I. 4.)

“He who is the Bull of the Vedas of the universal form, he who was born in the sacred rhythms from the Immortal—may Indra satisfy me through the intelligence. O God, may I become a vessel of the Immortal”. Sri Aurobindo.

And a kindred passage may also be cited from the Isha in which

<sup>1</sup> This is related to I.22.20; I.154.5 Taittiriya I.A.3 v.9.

Surya the Sun-God is invoked as the godhead of knowledge whose supreme form of effulgence is the oneness of the Spirit and his rays dispersed here on the mental level are the shining diffusion of the thought mind and conceal his own infinite Supramental truth, the body and self of this Sun, the truth of the spirit and the Eternal.

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् । तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥

Isha 15

पूषन्नेकर्षे यम सूर्यं प्राजापत्य व्यूह रश्मीन्समूह । तेजो यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते पश्यामि  
योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि । Isha 16

“The face of the Truth is covered with a golden lid : O fostering Sun, that uncover for the law of the truth, for Sight. O fosterer, O Sole Rishi, O controlling Yama. Surya, O Son of the Father of creatures, marshal and mass thy rays : the Lustre that is thy most blessed form of all, that I see, He who is this, this Purusha, He am I”. Isha 16

The kinship in difference of these passages with the imagery and style of the Veda is evident and the last indeed paraphrases or translates into a later and more open style a Vedic verse of Atris, V.62.1 :

ऋतेन ऋतमपिहितं ध्रुवं वां सूर्यस्य यत्र विमुचन्त्यश्वान् ।

दश शता सह तस्थुस्तदेकं देवानां श्रेष्ठं वपुषामपश्यम् ॥

“Hidden by your truth is the Truth that is constant for every where they unyoke the horses of the Sun. There the ten thousands stand together, That is the One : I have seen the Supreme Godhead of the embodied gods”.

In this text is expressed the aspiration of the human Soul :

असतो मा सद् गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्माऽमृतं गमय ।

(Brihad I. 3.28)

“From non-being lead me to Being, from Darkness lead me to Light, from death lead me to immortality”. This finds expression in the Riks

उद्वयं तमसस्परि ज्योतिष्पश्यंत उत्तरम् । देवं देवत्रा सूर्यमगन्म ज्योतिरुत्तमम् ॥

(Rig-veda)

The symbolic nature of the sacrifice was very well known to the Upanishads, for it says : Aditya आदित्यः is the Samit, the holy wood for offering. The Sun is the holy wood offered ; रश्मयो धूमः “The rays of the Sun are the smoke”. तस्मिन्देवाः श्रद्धां जुहुति । “In it the gods offer Faith”.

Even some Vedic words find a symbolic meaning in the

Upanishads अयमास्ते अंतरिति सोऽयास्यः (Ayasya is one of the seers of the Rig Veda) One who sits in the inner being is Ayasya.

अथैतस्य मनसो द्यौः शरीरम् । ज्योतीरूपम् असौ आदित्यः । तद् यावदेव मनस्तावती  
द्यौस्तावान् असौ आदित्यः ।

“Likewise, of that Mind sky is the body. Its light form is you Sun. As far as Mind extends, so far extends the sky, so far Sun.” I.5.12.

These two, Sun and Fire entered into a sexual union, therefrom was born breath. He is Indra, he is without a rival.

“These are all alike, all Infinite” Brih. I.5.13

The Vedic symbolism finds place in the Brihadaranyak a in the following :

पुरश्चक्रे द्विपदः पुरश्चक्रे चतुष्पदः ।

पुरः स पक्षी भूत्वा पुरः पुरुष आविशात् ॥ (Brihad 2.5 18th)

I. “Citadels with two feet he made, citadels with four feet he did make; in the citadels he, having become a bird—into the citadels he—Purusha—the person—entered.” comp : VI.47.18

Rig Veda :

इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप ईयते । युक्तानि अस्य हरयः शता दशेति ।

अयं वै हरयोऽयं वै दश च सहस्राणि बहूनि च ।

Brihad 2.5.19th.

II. “Indra by his magic powers—powers of formation—goes about in many forms; yoked are his ten hundred steeds”. He, the Soul, Verily, is the steeds” (Compare R.VI.47.18)

### THE GITA

The Gita differs from all the scriptures of the world in that it is not a book of philosophy seeking for setting forth an explanation of the cosmos, neither is it a book of revealed religion. It is a book that addresses itself to a life-situation, it is not written in the cell of the philosopher or in the forest groves to answer the why and wherefore of the world and life. It answers the question : how to act *in life* in a critical situation created by conflicting values. In this regard the Gita agrees perfectly with Sri Aurobindo’s vision of the Reality, for he insists that life, and therefore all action, should be moulded by the Divine dwelling in the heart of man—he wants human life to become divine.

Gita tells us that the value of action depends not upon its outer form but on the psychological basis from which it proceeds. It points a practical path to reach the basis, the true source of action. In this respect Gita is value-centric. It shows that normally man acts under the pressure of desires, emotions, greed, ambition—in short on the basis of ego. This is not the right basis. It is, or should be accepted as, only a temporary basis which serves some preliminary purpose of the growth of man towards the Light. The right basis of action, the Gita says, is not even social morality or ethical idealism. The true source of action is the Divine Will in the individual discoverable by him.

Gita teaches that Life and action are not to be renounced but their ignorant—egoistic—basis has to be rejected and it has to be changed into the true basis. It declares that a Divine Will is actively at work and can, and does, intervene in a critical life-situation in the case of an individual or a collectivity. When the individual gives up his egoistic initiation of action then an impersonal and even a Divine Will can be discovered and obeyed. This great truth is crucial because it has a direct bearing on the goal of life, the highest fulfilment of man on earth.

The difficulty is that of discovering the Divine Will; for men have so many ideas, ideals, values etc. in life by which they seek to govern, partially through their conduct. Gita is catholic in its scope and accepts all lesser ideals and values as a preparatory stage—as steps on the way to the discovery of the Divine Will. But it insists again and again upon the necessity of making the discovery. Though in a certain sense everything happens by the sanction of the Divine Will, discoverable. This is the problem set before Arjuna in the Gita. One may equate the Divine Will to a principle, to an idea, an ideal, a value—which one follows but over and above—independent of all such intermediate, permissible standards, there is a Divine Will which is to be discovered. A divine purpose is at work in the universe in the individual's life and in that of the collectivity.

Gita points out psychological processes and methods by which one can gradually progress towards the discovery of the Divine Will : it can be arranged in the form of a graded rise with methodical steps. One has to begin by doing action without desire for the result, with an

attitude of equality—samata—in which neither good nor adverse result affects the inner balance and the fundamental attitude of detachment. In fact the establishment of samata, equality, in the consciousness under all conditions is the sign that one has succeeded in giving up the desire or attachment for the fruit of action.

Gita suggests a further step : on the basis of the Sankhya realisation it speaks of the two parts of human consciousness, a realisable dichotomy in the inner being. There is in each individual a part that can separate itself from his nature, from the mind and all its ideas, suggestions, movements, from the emotions, feeling and their actions and reactions, from the desires, impulses and passions of the vital, and from the body, and remain unaffected by it. It is the Purusha as the Sakshi, the witness consciousness. Gita says that by practising this separation of Purusha and Prakriti man would be able to control his nature more effectively and it would serve as the initial step in the process of transformation of nature.

Gita points out the distinction between Tyaga and Sannyasa external and true renunciation. There was an excessive otherworldly stress in the spiritual ideals of India for centuries, though renunciation of life as an indispensable condition for spiritual realisation was not accepted in the Vedic age. Nor was it accepted in the Upanishads.

The conception of the Divine in the Gita is not that of a static being, it is dynamic. Gita may be said to be unique in emphasising this aspect and relating it to life. This Omnipresent Reality has a purpose, a divine purpose, and life is meant to be the field for the working out of that purpose and even the battle-field of Kurukshetra is not exempted from it. By implication, and even by open declaration, Gita says that life is not altogether governed by the ego—either individual or collective. In fact Sri Aurobindo suggests that Kurukshetra can be taken as the symbol of the battle of life in which forces of Light and Darkness are constantly clashing. As regards the dilemma of Arjuna Sri Krishna assures him that the Divine Will shall be fulfilled as far as the battle of Kurukshetra is concerned, even if Arjuna does not participate in it as its instrument. Krishna says to Arjuna in effect: Kurukshetra is not your battle only—though each participant has joined it for his own purpose—it is mine and I have a purpose to carry out and it would be carried out at any cost. We

might note that the Gita teaches that collective life has a divine purpose to fulfil.

The world we live in wears the appearance of an inert, inconscient creation, and the human life is full of the play of ignorant forces and is undivine. Many religious and philosophical systems have given great prominence—e.g. Buddhism—to this aspect. To Gita the world is not altogether undivine. It devotes four chapters to the Vibhuti Yoga and shows how the world is beautiful, magnificent and divine. Even Matter which is regarded as inert can be sublime—the Himalayas are the sublime in Matter. In fact these four chapters of the Gita may be regarded as a detailed Bhashya-exegesis—of the opening verse of the Ishopanishad: “*iśā vāsyamidam sarvam yat kiñca jagatyām jagat*” (All this (Universe here manifested) is for habitation by the Lord—whatever is moving in the universal movement.” Sri Krishna points out in effect that the Divine is not absent from the world he is here flowing in the rivers and in the vegetable kingdom. Gita makes us feel the divine Presence in the world, for the world is not merely what our senses represent it to be, the Divine is there even though unperceived.

One of the basic ideas of the Vedanta—derived from the Sankhya system—is that Purusha—the Self, is eternally free—*nitya mukta*—but Prakriti, Nature, is, and is condemned to remain, bound—it is eternally ignorant and imperfect. Gita points out that as the Purusha, the Self, is eternally free so is Prakriti also a claimant not only to freedom but even to perfection. This can be seen by studying the implications of some aspects of the Gita. Even though the essential divinity is the same in the Saint and the Sinner, still the Saint—Sadhu—has to be protected and saved and the wicked destroyed. The distinction between ‘Sadhu’—the Saint, the Mahatma, the great Soul, or the Sreshta and the ordinary man is due to what they express in their Nature, in their Prakriti. That may be regarded as the first step of the movement of Prakriti towards freedom and perfection.

Next, the Gita speaks of the Vibhuti—special becoming. The Vibhuti embodies not merely the nature of a Sadhu, not merely heightened human perfection but some quality, some aspect of the Divine and his power. That may be regarded as the second step in nature’s ascent to freedom and perfection. In the Vibhuti nature

rises to far greater heights than even the highest attainment reached by man. For example, the non-violence practised by Mahatma Gandhi far surpasses the ordinary practice of it by man. In that sense he can be called the Vibhuti of Ahinsa.

In the Avatar, the incarnation, nature attains its highest perfection. The Avatar aspect is an important part of Indian conception of the Divine and it has been brought into prominence by Gita, which points out the evolutionary significance of the phenomenon of Avatarhood. The Divine is not some absentee land-lord away from life, it can take up human nature and a human form. Some religions, like Christianity, accept one and only one incarnation of the Divine. They practically limit the Omnipotence to one single act—but to the Hindu view Omnipotence of God cannot be limited to one incarnation and therefore the Hindu admits many incarnations including that of Christ. Sri Krishna says: I have accepted human birth and action; one who knows my birth and action as divine really knows me.

Gita points out that divine action by the human being is possible; it is possible by a gradual development of the human consciousness. This is made clear in the Vibhuti yoga chapters by Sri Krishna declaring : पाण्डवानां अर्जुनोऽहम् । “I am Arjuna among the Pandavas”—and Arjuna would be carrying the Divine Will and therefore doing divine action if he participated in the battle. To act in life from a divine poise is possible and even a Five Year Plan, Tibetan situation and some disturbing incident can seek guidance from it.

Sri Aurobindo's last chapter in the “Essays on the Gita” is not merely a brilliant summary of its teaching but is the most inspired message in modern writings on the Gita.

°A. B. PURANI °

## CRISIS IN CULTURE\*

The Community Church  
NEW YORK

16th September 1962.

“Stop thinking that you are of the West and others of the East. All Human beings are of the same divine origin and meant to manifest upon earth the unity of their origin.”

THE MOTHER.

4-8-1949.

### Crisis of Culture

1.—Man is living under the shadow of Matter, not in the Light of the Spirit.

2.—The leading power of life to-day is the Desire-Soul working in the individual or in the collective being. To this Desire-Soul the Kâmanâmaya Purusha—the world is a vast treasure-house in which man is allowed to rob as much as he can during his short life: this Desire-Soul is leading the mental being of man.

3.—Life instead of becoming an instrument has become the leading claimant on man. Man to-day is “the engine without a driver or rather the driver is servant of the engine”.

*Sri Aurobindo*

4.—The mind that is at work in man is subject to severe limitations of practical reason. Science is the result of his practical reason. The aspect of universal knowledge which is science has acquired a high place in the life of man. Scientific progress is mind's great victory over Matter, Science has turned undreamt of possibilities into actualities. It has established man as the king among earthly creatures.

The mental outlook which science promotes lends more and more towards utilitarianism, agnosticism and atheism.

Economy has become the central dynamic drive and the highest

\* A Talk given at a meeting of *The Religious Discussion Group* at the Community Church, New York.

value of man's collective life. In spite of efforts to avoid it, the economy-centric outlook tends always to lead to conflicts.

The peace that seems to prevail is not true peace, it is the result of fear,—fear of the atom-bomb and other destructive weapons. Man is still unable to see that atom-bomb has no power apart from man to do any harm. He fails to see that the problem is man himself. It is he who has to change his psychology.

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The Crisis of Culture is a world-crisis, it is the crisis of Human Culture. The crisis arose and developed in Europe and would have remained confined to the advanced countries of Europe and America. But the two world-wars rightly made it a crisis of human culture.

The world-war two shattered many false notions about superiority and perfection of European culture. In fact, it clearly demonstrated that behind the veneer of civilized man was hiding the barbarian and all his scientific advance had only sharpened his claws and teeth.

The immediate result was the beginning of liquidation of political and economic exploitation of empires and colonies,—not on any ethical or idealistic ground but in view of competitive scientific progress and efficient organisation of national life, competitive armaments and fear of catastrophes.

But the cultural domination of the world by the European outlook remains due to its dynamic character and scientific progress which has changed so rapidly the outer life of man. As a matter of fact, as far as cultural values are concerned, the European outlook dominated by economy as the highest value of cultural life, has gained in humanity.

After the second world-war America created history by giving economic aid not only to the defeated but even to underdeveloped nations of the world. It was a gesture, perhaps, prompted by enlightened self-interest, but equally, or even more, by a feeling of "one world" which has already emerged after the second world-war.

But the overall result of the scientific advance and the economic

help has been the concentration of all the energies of the nations,—old and newly awakened—on economic progress hoping to banish poverty and illiteracy, from their midst. It is, certainly a necessity. But it has tented to make economy-centric outlook as the highest cultural value.

This is now so widely accepted that it has become the problem of human culture. Rebuilding of economy to be sound requires planning; and peace is needed to carry out economic plans. That is why peace has lasted even in the midst of a prolonged "cold war". In all these efforts even the best leaders forget that establishment of real peace requires an inner change, a change in man's nature. There must come a change in his mode of looking at himself and at the world, a change in his way of thinking about life and the world.

Man has to remember that economic forces are, in their last analysis, psychological and not merely material. Economy influences and in many cases even governs man's life and nature; the mind, the will, the general attitude can influence his economic outlook and create a new mould of individual and collective living. America partly, bears the responsibility for creating this cultural crisis in humanity. With the best intentions she is trying to apply remedies that have already failed or have very little chance of success. Her economic help has rendered possible the raising of the standard of living on earth. But in the last analysis it is not "plans"—five years or fifty years that will truly resolve the crisis. It is "man" who will have to do it by changing his own nature.

If we look at modern culture we find, as Sri Aurobindo puts it, it has two gods: Life and practical Reason organised as science. Under the guidance of these two gods the potentialities of matter have been sounded and man has acquired the knowledge of processes by applying which to the field of production man can live in comfort on the earth.

But now instead of dominating Matter of which he is the manipulator—not the creator, nor yet a perfect master,—man is being dominated by material conditions—(almost as he was once governed by inert Nature when he was living in the primitive state) and sometimes he behaves like a barbarian with all his scientific advance. This

happens when ambition goads his life to possess all the riches of mother earth.

The remedy suggested and attempted by science is "more science" but, science is not the solver of problems, often it is their creator. Prosperity, the result of scientific inventions applied to life, is like a "tiger" he who rides it cannot dismount, or rather it is like a monster that needs constant attention. In attending to this monster no time, no energy is left for anything else. Material abundance, where it is achieved, has not made man more free; he has only become a victim of his own creation. By the blessings of science not "production" but "consumption" is now the problem. An eminent American writer says "we cannot use, do not want more wheat, butter or cotton but we dare not produce less".

This has logically led to an indefinite increase in the number of things used by the average man. Advertising, radio, television etc.—things that can contribute to man's uplift if properly used,—yes, "if" is a big "if",—all urge the common man to buy or do something. "Buy on credit, pay later"—they say. The tendency is to create a mass-mind controlled by "interests". The individual, his uniqueness is losing its importance. In the present atmosphere the "mass" counts. The worst harm of communism is the reduction of the individual to non-entity. It is happening in the midst of our free and democratic society. Even crime has lost its natural roots; it has now in some places become a "business". For prosperity consumption is regarded as the necessity and prosperity is equated to happiness, if not to perfection. This prosperity is not sound for it depends upon consumption. In the collective life of to-day, organised solely on economy as the highest value, it is not what "man" wants but what "industry" wants is the problem. It can be said that men are not riding the automobiles, they are being ridden.

Even in the field of Education where we try to prepare the future leaders of humanity our ideals are influenced by the prevailing atmosphere. We prepare our students for "Life". Which life? The grinding economic machine in which he will have to fit in as a mechanical part? Our educationists actually try to fix capacity of the groups while real education is "leading out that which is behind the veil of nature" not what is on the surface. Efficiency of educationist insti-

tutions is judged by equipment and building. Our education is trying to prepare the mentality of the student to adjust itself to the prevailing values in our society; it should really arm him with the capacity of keenly observing the structure of our collective life and inspire him to change if it necessary.

A constantly rising standard of living as a criterion of collective progress is at best a half-truth, and therefore dangerous. A life with a high standard of living need not necessarily be "good" life. Even when man's needs are met and he has ample leisure, it does not follow that he will devote himself to higher pursuits of culture. That needs an inspiring motive in life. But to-day even the educated man has no time to think or read, and the uneducated does not want to think or read.

What is the end we seek in our culture to-day? we do not know where we are going, we don't know even where we want to go, but we are on the move and we are doing everything to increase our speed. Needs are met but the drive creates restless activity which ends in psychological tensions, constant strain, want of poise, it does not permit man to look either backward or forward. Suddenly, the rising curve of production seems to end in a catastrophe.

There is need for a radical reconsideration of the values of collective life. We must try to find the true fulfilment of the individual.

The remedies suggested fall into two classes: one advocates acceptance of machinery and other a marxist society or a rationalisation of the use of atomic energy as advocated by Bertrand Russell in his six broad-casts from London, entitled "Living in an atomic age". Russell's solution seems to beg the question; for, how is mankind to be persuaded to use the atomic power rationally? The second solution wants to reject machinery and also industrial progress. It is too late to put the question, for it is impossible to roll back the wheel of life.

Is it inevitable to have these problems? In fact, these problems are the result of a "choice" made by man. So, in this crisis of culture to-day we must make a choice. We must give up the idea that man needs nothing except an increase in his ability to produce goods and to wield power.

We then come to the real problem: man. To-day man is trying

to know every thing except himself. He has forgotten the famous motto which Plato gave "know thyself", and also the command of the ancient wisdom of India that said : "know that self of thine which is the bridge to immortality". Even when modern man tries to know himself as in the attempts of psychology he tries to know himself as Matter. He believes that the potentiality of Matter is richer than that of man. He has lost sight of the truth that man's consciousness is more interesting than the mechanically determined aspects of behaviour. Not what man can "do" but what man "is" and what he can "become" that is the problem. As he has sounded the potentiality of Matter and contributed to the progress of mankind, he has to work out the potentiality of Life and Mind and Spirit.

In some intellectual quarters the complaint made about "value judgments" as something contrary to man's nature—whatever we may mean by human nature,—is without foundation, for "value insistance is part of human nature. It is man's power of value-insistance that changes the individual and collective life.

If the modern man will not bring actively in his life some values higher than economy the condition will go on inviting greater and greater crisis. Where is the race for production going to stop ? Where is the constantly rising standard of living going to end ? To go on producing more and to induce man to use what is produced would be nothing short of tying man down to his animal existence albeit a comfortable one—; it would emphasise his outer nature at the expense of his inner being.

What is man ? Is he merely an economic being, a producing and consuming machine, or an individual ? Is man a piece of Matter determined in his every movement by unconscious forces, or is he something in his essence that is fundamentally free and can change the balance of existing forces within and around him ?

This crisis of culture is really a crisis of evolutionary movement of universal energy. The awakening of Mind—intellect—in the midst of a world of Matter's apparent inconscience and the blind play of life-force was the beginning of a developing crisis which seems now to have reached a critical point. The question is : is mind the highest reach of this evolving energy ? Does the solution of man's problem lie in the intensification of what man is at present ? does it lie in

the efficiency and the complex play of Life-force ?

The solution lies in a radical change of human nature and it can begin by replacing the economy-centric value in life by either the idealistic, ethical, aesthetic or spiritual values as the highest one. The call on man is to rise to a higher level of consciousness, the level of universal consciousness, the truth-consciousness. He may begin by thinking and feeling in terms of humanity and unity of the race. He has to ascend to that higher level and bring down the Light, Peace, power and harmony from there into Mind, and Life and Body into the individual and collective life. The problem is not external it is an inner one. What is needed is not intensification of what man is, but bringing into manifestation what he can be.

There is a higher power that is the origin and sustainer of all life. Man can take help of that Power in the difficult task of transforming his own nature. For, as the human aspiration to reach divine perfection is needed as the indispensable condition, so the Divine help is also there to help man in his endeavour. There is a Divine will to manifest divine perfection in life. The world exists to manifest the Divine.

But there are difficulties and obstacles on the path. The late Dr. A. Coomarswamy wrote an article in the Harvard university journal : "who is Satan ? and where is hell ?"

Dr. Coomarswamy argues that the attempts of some modern scholars to disprove their existence is mistaken and misses the mark. Satan is not outside, it is not a separate being : it is a part of man that blinds him to his own divinity. It opposes the divine potentiality in man and lures him with the false promise of fulfilment in the pursuit of power, of abnormal ambition. Under its influence man thinks that Divinity is not the Eternal Reality, but an illusion and an outmoded superstition. It is this part in man—mainly his vital being, that obstinately refuses to admit anything higher than his ego, his ambition and greed, his "will to power" and "to conquer".

When man accepts this active denial of his higher nature and takes to the path of the ego-centric outlook in life,—the satisfaction of desires and impulses and ambitions—as the highest fulfilment he creates hell. No actual hell can be compared to that which surrounds the living human beings.

Modern culture all along tends to make this denial of man's higher possibility a logical conclusion. The modern mind has been meekly submitting to the triumphal march of materialistic outlook and is trying to become its exponent and supporter.

The crisis of human culture is upon humanity : it has to choose between its ignorant egoistic nature and the Divine spark within him. Will my voice reach the wider collectivity of this great country ? I do not know. But I would like to appeal to, and awaken that sleeping soul of the pioneers who came as "pilgrims" seeking freedom of conscience; they did not come and found this country with the lust of gold. They wanted to find a place where they could worship God according to their inner light. It is that which has found expression in Whitman, Emerson, Benjamin Franklin, Lincoln and others less known to history. Has the material prosperity and its lure tempted the inheritors of that freedom of conscience ? It is for you to answer.

I come to this country to awaken that original aspiration and I bring no feeble voice, no halting faith; for I bring the power of Mother India to awaken the brother soul of this nation, the country in which the call of the spirit has been ringing for thousands of years from the eternal snow of the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari.

From non-being lead me to Being,

From darkness lead me to Light,

From death lead me to Immortality.

This constant refrain in the life of the country has given rise to galaxies of personalities that bear witness not only to the truth of the aspiration but to the fact that it can become the guiding Light of every day life. When the aspiration for the Divine becomes living and dynamic it tends always to transform life—individual and collective—into the image of the Divine. The voice of ancient India proclaimed in the early dawn of man's culture "All this, indeed is for habitation by the Lord". It is in awakening this Spark in man—lying hidden under his extrovert nature,—that the remedy for resolving the crisis lies. Let us awaken that aspiration and by the aspiration the spark and make it the inspiring guide of our life so that we may make this earth of ours a fit "habitation for the Lord !"

A. B. PURANI

## REVIEW

**Thus Spake Basava**—Translators : A. S. Theodore and D. K. Hakari.  
Published by Basava Samiti, Bangalore 9. Pages : 82.

IT is gratifying that Karnataka has embarked on a series of centenary celebrations of her saints, mystics and other spiritual personalities. Last year witnessed the fourth centenary commemoration of Saint Purandaradasa, this year of Kanakadasa, his contemporary, and now Basava Samiti have organised the centenary celebration of Sri Basaveswara, a saint and mystic of rare insight who lived and taught in the 12th century and founded the sect of Veerasaivas. To mark the occasion the Samiti have brought out this booklet containing English translation of a selection of 108 sayings or Vachanas of Basaveswara.

The translation is a brave and laudable effort; for, although composed in a language seemingly simple, interspersed with homely anecdotes and analogies, the Vachanas do not lend themselves to easy rendering into other languages least of all into a European language like English. Alive to this difficulty the translators have provided explanatory notes towards the end of the book to assist the general reader, as far as possible, in understanding the texts.

The Vachanas elucidate the philosophy and the ethical teachings of Basava. Devotion to Shiva and *jangamas*—God and devotees of God—is the keynote of Veerasaivism. “Treat me, Lord, as feckless beast of Thine...Raise me with Thy Grace and hold fast my mind firmly to Thy feet...” prays Basava, and gazing at the Beatific Vision vouchsafed to him he bursts forth: “I behold none but Thee where’er I lift mine eyes.” There are other moments of sublime exaltation too : “Thy Maya enshrouds the universe yet my mind possesses Thee. Therefore am I greater than Thou, greater than the universe tho’ Thou be ! ” Is there anything impossible for the Divine Grace to accomplish or fulfil ? No:

“If Thy hand be upon it the dead wood sprouts  
With Thy favour the dried cow, its udders fill...”

Basava accepts one God only although He may have many names. He has no use for 'Diverse gods in diverse places niched in plant, flower, tank and well' which men seek after; evidently he refers to vital gods and other lesser beings who can at best confer health, wealth or progeny. Likewise he does not hold with public worship in temples or pilgrimages and holy baths. He is vehemently opposed to any discrimination between man and man based solely on birth or caste. Although himself born to Brahmin parents he denounces the four *varṇas* of orthodox Hinduism.

Basava is intensely practical; to him world is a workshop and far better, he says, to serve humanity here, on this earth, than to aspire to the status of Brahma, Vishnu or Rudra.

And what of salvation? This is, according to Veerasaivism, Nishpatti, perfection. "Perfection comes out of good action and good action comes out of *vicāra*, i.e., discrimination based on knowledge. Reliance on *līṅga*<sup>1</sup> helps proper discrimination and the basis for *līṅga* is the *guru*, the preceptor. The basis for *guru* is *bhakti*, i.e., devotion." (P. 81)

"On the soil of devotion Guru as seed sprouts  
Then as leaf appears the *līṅga*.  
Branches of *līṅga* bear flowers in bloom for thoughts,  
Which in season turn as young fruits for actions.  
These mature and mellow by devotion's inspiring;  
And full ripen'd they, anon to earth's dusty claim return.  
But behold! 'fore each could finish the fall,  
'Mine own" claimed HE by HIS call,—  
Lord Kudala Sangama."

KESHAVMURTI

<sup>1</sup> The word *līṅga* has a distinct connotation in Veerasaiva philosophy. Briefly, *iṣṭa līṅga* is the gross *Linga* which the devout Veerasaiva receives at the time of his initiation by a *Guru* and which he has to wear and worship throughout his life time. Through concentration and worship of *iṣṭa līṅga* the initiate gets into contact with the subtle *prāṇa līṅga*, life-force, and through *Prana Linga* he meets *bhāva līṅga*, the Para Brahman.

"Do not be troubled by your surroundings and their opposition.  
These conditions are often imposed as a kind of ordeal."

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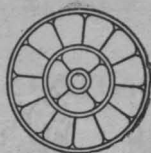
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*The Advent*



Money is not meant  
to make money, money  
is meant to make the  
earth ready for the advent  
of the new creation.

# The ADVENT

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# The ADVENT

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November 1905

The destiny of India will not wait on the  
falterings or failings of individuals.

—SRI AUROBINDO



# THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - Sri Aurobindo.

## EDITORIALS

### NOTES

**T**HE material world is, as we all know, three-dimensional; it has a length, a breadth and a depth. In fact every material object is material because it has these three dimensions. That is what we knew till now. But Einstein has added another dimension to complete the picture of material reality. He says, time is the fourth dimension. For along with space, time also is to be taken into consideration for fixing or situating a physical object. Not space alone with its three dimensions determines the physical character of an object but time also has its share. A material object exists in space; it exists also in time. It occupies a portion of space and it occupies a portion of time. Indeed time, sometimes, becomes a more important factor; for it brings about a change in the spatial dimension.

But dimension, in reality, that is to say, the configuration it gives to an object is a function of consciousness. The four-dimensional aspect of material reality is given or projected by what we call the

physical consciousness. Material time and material space are the two norms through which the physical consciousness deploys itself.

But physical consciousness, the consciousness that plays through the senses is only one form of it—the lowest, the most material formation. For there is a ladder of consciousness and in it we rise rung by rung to other—what are known as higher formulations.

As we rise we find that the dimensions increase in number. Our consciousness, our being becomes more and more multiple. In the physical and material, our perception is limited to the four dimensions because of two factors—one, things are spaced out that is to say, they are separate and discrete from one another. We know the law of material space that two things cannot occupy the same space. Secondly, things or events are separated in time, that is to say, there is the law of succession. But in the higher regions, higher or subtler regions, this separation due to time and space loses much of its exclusive force. Things tend to coalesce, even to get identified with each other. The obstructions that time and space offer to intercommunication are minimised more and more as our consciousness or being soars up or dives down into deeper and deeper and higher and higher regions. The dimensions increase in number; that means we begin to apprehend things from many angles and sides at the same time, we have more and more a simultaneous view of the total or global reality of an object. So instead of a four-fold view of things we may have a fivefold, sixfold, tenfold, hundredfold view of things depending on our status of consciousness. In the highest status,—we call it Satchidananda, the infinite and eternal consciousness—things attain infinite dimensions, all merged in the Ultimate's unitary consciousness.

(2)

All knowledge is within you. Information you get from outside, but the understanding of it? It is from within. The information from outside gives you dead matter. What puts life into it, light into it is your own inner light.

All education, all culture means drawing this inner light to the front. Indeed the word 'education' literally means 'to bring out.'

Plato also pointed to the same truth when he said that education is remembrance. You remember what is imbedded or secreted within, you bring to the light, the light of your physical mind, what you have within, what you already possess in your being and inner consciousness. Acquisition is not education. Indeed a miser is not a rich man, rich is he who knows how to utilise his wealth, even so a possessor of much information is only a carrier of loads.

True education is growth of consciousness. It is consciousness that carries the light and the power of the light. We are born upon earth with this consciousness at the centre of our being. And a growing child is nothing but a growing consciousness. Growth of consciousness means an increasing intensity and an increasing amplitude or wideness of the light. Unfortunately, placed as we are under the circumstances of life as it is, this light of consciousness is not allowed to grow in its natural and normal way. The external demands of life and the world put a pressure upon it which turns it away from its straight path. Things are demanded of this light or consciousness which do not belong to its nature, which are not an expression of its nature. As though it is twisted, tortured or smothered under utilitarian necessities.

The brain should be a flowering of this consciousness, a developing vehicle for the expression of the increasing consciousness. For that a guidance is needed so that one may always turn within and look for that consciousness, feel it growing, and with one's will and thought and act help its growth and development. A brain is not developed by the mass of information that may be pressed into it. Informations are necessary but they should be presented in such a way as to serve as fuel, helpful fuel to the mounting fire, they must not be merely piled up upon and around the fire or be as so many wet faggots crushing it down with their weight. A true learner is one who seeks sincerely this inner consciousness which is one's own; the true teacher is one who knows how to lead the learner towards this inner light.

(3)

Human language was born out of the necessity of inter-communication among human beings living together. The necessity naturally

related to the physical life and its demands and requirements. Man being a mental being sought intercommunication through his mind. So mind yoked to the physical demands gave the first form and pattern to human speech.

Language in the beginning must have been an echo or a graphic expression of man's sense-bound mind. But as the mind developed, became more and more rational and intellectual, language also tended to become more and more abstract and intellectualised. Even so at its best, language could be the vehicle and embodiment of man's mental and intellectual world.

But man moves on, his mind opens on new horizons, his consciousness is not tethered to sense-experiences nor even limited to the region of thought and ideation built or grown in accordance with the mode and schema of sense-experiences.

Man began to possess, to acquire intuitions and inspirations, that is to say, movements of consciousness that lie beyond the frame given by the sense-mind. These new perceptions could naturally be expressed with difficulty through what one may call the earth-nurtured or earthbound language. The aerial luminous character of the mystic consciousness is always said to be beyond speech, beyond even mental formulation.

And yet poets, mystic poets have always sought to express themselves, to express something of their experience and illumination through the word, the human tongue. It is extremely interesting to see how a material, constructed or formed to satisfy the requirements of an ordinary physical life is being turned into an instrument for luminous and effective communication and expression of other truths and realities in the hands of these seer-creators (*kavi-kratuh*). They take the materials from ordinary normal life, familiar objects and happenings but use them as images and allegories putting into them a new sense and a new light. Also they give a new, unfamiliar turn to their utterance, a new syntax, sometimes uncommon construction and novel vocabulary to the language itself so that it has even the appearance of something very irregular and twisted and obscure. Indeed obscurity itself in the expression, in the form of the language has often been taken as the very sign of the higher and hidden experience and illumination.

The Vedic rishis speak of the different levels of speech—the human language is only one form of speech, its lowest, in fact the crudest formulation. There are other forms of speech that are subtler and subtler as one rises in the scale of consciousness. The highest formulation of language, the 'supreme Word—*vāk*—is 'Om'—*Nāda—śabda-brahma*. That is the supreme speech-vibration, the rhythmic articulation of the Supreme Consciousness—Satchidananda; the expression there is nearest to silence, almost merges into silence.

Our human language cannot expect to attain that supreme height of felicity of expression but wherever something of the vibration has been communicated to it by the magic hand of the creative poet, we have the 'mantra', the supreme, the mantric poetry.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

## FROM "KARMAYOGIN" 1910

### I

#### ON ART AND LITERATURE

#### THE REVIVAL OF INDIAN ART THE MAIN DIFFERENCE

THE greatness of Indian art is the greatness of all Indian thought and achievement. It lies in the recognition of the persistent within the transient, of the domination of matter by spirit, the subordination of the insistent appearances of Prakriti to the inner reality which, in a thousand ways, the Mighty Mother veils even while she suggests. The European artist, cabined within the narrow confines of the external, is dominated in imagination by the body of things and the claims of the phenomenon. Western painting starts from the eye or the imagination; its master word is either beauty or reality, and, according as he is the slave of his eye or the playfellow of his imagination, the painter produces a photograph or a poem. But, in painting, the European imagination seldom travels beyond an imaginative interpretation or variation of what the physical eye has seen. Imitation is the key-word of creation, according to Aristotle; Shakespeare advises the artist to hold up the mirror to Nature; and the Greek scientist and the English poet reflect accurately the mind of Europe.

But the Indian artist has been taught by his philosophy and the spiritual discipline of his forefathers that his imagination is only a channel and an instrument of some source of knowledge and aspiration that is greater and higher; by meditation or by yoga he seeks within himself that ultimate centre of knowledge where there is direct and utter vision of the thing that lies hidden in the forms of man, animal, tree, river, mountain. It is this *samyag jñān*, this *sākṣād darśan*, the utter, revealing and apocalyptic vision, that he seeks, and when he has found it, whether by patient receptivity or sudden inspiration, his whole aim is to express it utterly and revealingly in line and colour. Form is only a means of expressing the spirit, and the one thought of the artist should be how best to render the spiritual

vision. He is not bound by the forms that compose the world of gross matter, though he takes them as a starting point for his formal expression of the vision within him; if by modifying them or departing from them he can reveal that vision more completely, his freedom and his duty as an artist emancipate him from the obligation of the mere recorder and copyist. The ancient Asiatic artists were not incapable of reproducing outward Nature with as perfect and vigorous an accuracy as the Europeans; but it was their ordinary method deliberately to suppress all that might hamper the expression of their spiritual vision.

Reality for its own sake, one of the most dominant notes of Art in Europe, Indian artistic theory would not have recognised; for we have always regarded the reality of the Europeans as an appearance; to us the true reality is that which is hidden; otherwise, there would be no need of the prophet, the philosopher, the poet and the artist. It is they who see with the *sūkṣma dr̥ṣṭi*, the inner vision, and not like the ordinary man with the eye only. Beauty for beauty's sake, the other great note of European Art is recognised by us, but not in the higher work of the artist. Just as in the first ideal, the tyranny of the eye is acknowledged, so in the second the tyranny of the aesthetic imagination. The Indian seeks freedom, and the condition of freedom is the search of ultimate Truth. But in this search the imagination is an unsafe and capricious guide; it misinterprets as often as it interprets. The claim of the eye to separate satisfaction can only be answered by the response of decorative beauty; the claim of the imagination to separate satisfaction can only receive the response of fancy playing with scene and legend, form and colour, idea and dream, for pure aesthetic delight; but in the interpretation of things the eye and the imagination can assert no right to command, they are only subordinate instruments and must keep their place. Whenever, therefore, the Indian artist puts away from him his high spiritual aim, it was to seek decorative beauty informed by the play of the imagination. Here he held decorative beauty to be his paramount aim and declined to be bound by the seen and the familiar. If by other lines than the natural, by subtler or richer methods than those of outward Nature, our old masters could gain in decorative suggestion and beauty, they held themselves free to follow their inspiration. Here,

too, they often deliberately changed and suppressed in order to get their desired effect. If they had been asked to deny themselves this artistic gain for the sake of satisfying the memory in the physical eye, they would have held the objector to be the bondslave of an unmeaning superstition.

We of today have been overpowered by the European tradition as interpreted by the English, the least artistic of civilised nations. We have therefore come to make on a picture the same demand as on a photograph,—the reproduction of the thing as the eye sees it, not even as the retrospective mind or the imagination sees it, exact resemblance to the beings of objects we know, or, if anything more, then a refinement on Nature in the direction of greater picturesqueness and prettiness and the satisfaction of the lower and more external sense of beauty. The conception that Art exists not to copy, but for the sake of a deeper truth and vision, and we must seek in it not the object but God in the object, not things but soul of things, seems to have vanished for a while from the Indian consciousness.

Another obstacle to the appreciation of great art, to which even those Indians who are not dominated by European ideas are liable, is the exaggerated respect for the symbols and traditions which our art or literature has used at a certain stage of development. I am accustomed for instance to a particular way of representing Shiva or Kali and I refuse to have any other. But the artist has nothing to do with my prejudices. He has to represent the essential truth of Shiva or Kali, that which makes their Shivahood or Kalihood, and he is under no obligation to copy the vision of others. If he has seen another vision of Shiva or Kali, it is that vision to which he must be faithful. The curious discussion which arose recently as to the propriety or otherwise of representing the Gods without beard or moustache, is an instance of this literalism which is a survival of the enslavement to form and rule characteristic of the eighteenth century. The literalist cannot see that it is not the moustache or beard or the symbol which makes the godhead, but the divine greatness, immortal strength, beauty, youth, purity or peace within. It is that godhead which the artist must draw and paint, and in the forms he chooses he is bound only by the vision in dhyana. Whether his interpretation will gain an abiding place in the thought and imagination of the race, depends

on its power to awake the deeper vision in the race. All that we can demand is that it shall be a real God, a real Shiva, a real Kali and not a freak of his imagination or an outcome of some passing *samskāra* of his education or artistic upbringing. He must go to the fountain-head of knowledge within himself or his claim to freedom does not stand. It has already been said that the condition of freedom is the search for truth, and the artist must not allow his imagination to take the place of the higher quality.

Indian Art demands of the artist the power of communion with the soul of things, the sense of spiritual taking precedence of the sense of material beauty, and fidelity to the deeper vision within, of the lover of art it demands the power to see the spirit in things, the openness of mind to follow a developing tradition, and the sattwic passivity, discharged of prejudgments, which opens luminously to the secret intention of the picture and is patient to wait until it attains a perfect and profound divination.

## TWO PICTURES

The *Modern Review* and *Prabasi* are doing monthly a service to the country, the importance of which cannot be exaggerated. The former review is at present the best conducted and the most full of valuable matter of any in India. But good as are the articles which fill the magazine from month to month, the whole sum of them is outweighed in value by the single page which gives us the reproduction of some work of art by a contemporary Indian painter. To the lover of beauty and the lover of his country everyone of these delicately executed blocks is an event of importance in his life within. The Reviews by bringing these masterpieces to the thousands who have no opportunity of seeing the originals are restoring the sense of beauty and artistic emotion inborn in our race but almost blotted out by the long reign in our lives of the influence of Anglo-Saxon vulgarity and crude tasteless commercialism. The pictures belong usually to the new school of Bengali art, the only living and original school now developing among us and the last issues have each contained a picture especially important not only by the intrinsic excellence of the work but by the perfect emergence of that soul of India which we attempted

to characterise in an article in our second issue.

The picture in the July number is by Mahomed Hakim Khan, a student of the Government School of Art, Calcutta, and represents Nadir Shah ordering a general massacre. It is not one of those pictures salient and imposing which leap at once at the eye and hold it. A first glance only shows three figures almost conventionally Indian in poses which also seem conventional. But as one looks again and again the soul of the picture begins suddenly to emerge, and one realises with a start of surprise that one is in the presence of a work of genius. The reason for this lies in the extraordinary restraint and simplicity which conceals the artist's strength and subtility. The whole spirit and conception is Indian and it would be difficult to detect in the composition a single trace of foreign influence. The grace and perfection of the design and the distinctness and vigour of form which support it are not European; it is the Saracenic sweetness and grace, the old Vedantic massiveness and power transformed by some new nameless element of harmony into something original and yet Indian. The careful and minute detail in the minutiae of the dresses, of the armour of the warrior seated on the right, of the flickering lines of the pillar on the left are inherited from an intellectual ancestry whose daily vision was accustomed to the rich decoration of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri or to the fullness and crowded detail which informed the massive work of the old Vedantic artists and builders, Hindu, Jain and Buddhist. Another peculiarity is the fixity and stillness which, in spite of the Titanic life and promise of motion in the figure of Nadir, pervade the picture. A certain stiffness of design marks much of the old Hindu art, a stiffness courted by the artists perhaps in order that no insistence of material life in the figures might distract attention from the expression of the spirit within which was their main object. By some inspiration of genius the artist has transformed this conventional stiffness into a hint of rigidity which almost suggests the lines of stone. This stillness adds immensely to the effect of the picture. The petrified inaction of the three human beings contrasted with the expression of the faces and the formidable suggestion in the pose of their sworded figures affects us like the silence of murder crouching for his leap.

The central figure of Nadir Shah dominates his surroundings. It is from this centre that the suggestion of something terrible coming out of the silent group has started. The strong proud and regal figure is extraordinarily impressive, but it is the face and the arm that give the individuality. That bare arm and hand grasping the rigid upright scimitar are inhuman in their savage force and brutality; it is the hand, the finger, one might almost say the talons of the human wild beast. This arm and hand have action, murder, empire in them; the whole history of Nadir is there expressed. The grip and gesture have already commenced the coming massacre and the whole body behind consents. The face corresponds in the hard firmness and strength of the nose, the brute cruelty of the mouth almost lost in the moustache and beard. But the eyes are the master-touch in this figure. They overcome us with surprise when we look at them, for these are not the eyes of the assassin, even the assassin upon the throne. The soul that looks out of these eyes is calm, aloof and thoughtful, yet terrible. Whatever order of massacre has issued from these lips, did not go forth, from an ordinary energetic man of action moved by self-interest, rage or blood-thirst. The eyes are the eyes of a Yogin but a terrible Yogin; such might be the look of some adept of the left-hand ways, some mighty Kapalika lifted above pity and shrinking as above violence and wrath. Those eyes in that face, over that body, arm, hand seem to be those of one whose spirit is not affected by the actions of the body, whose natural part and organs are full of the destroying energy of Kali while the soul, the witness within, looks on at the sanguinary drama tranquil, darkly approving but hardly interested. And then it dawns on one that this is not so much the Nadir of history unconsciously perhaps the artist has given a quiet but effective delineation of the Scourge of God, the man who is rather a force than a human being, the Asura with a mission who has come to do God's work of destruction and help on the evolution by carnage and ruin. The soul within is not that of a human being. Some powerful Yogin of a Lemurian race has incarnated in this body, one born when the simian might and strength of the *vānara* had evolved into the perfection of the human form and brain with the animal still uneliminated, who having by *tapasya* and knowledge separated his soul from his

nature has elected this reward that after long beatitude, *prāpya puṇyakṛtām lokān uṣitvā sāśvatīḥ samāḥ*, he should reincarnate as a force of nature informed by a human soul and work out in a single life the savage strength of the outward self, taking upon himself the foreordained burden of empire and massacre.

From Nadir the coming carnage has passed into the seated warrior and looks out from his eyes at the receiver of the order. The gaze is contemplative but not inward like Nadir's, and it is human and indifferent envisaging massacre as part of the activities of the soldier with a matter-of-fact approval. The figure is almost a piece of sculpture, so perfect is the rigidity of arrested and expectant action. The straight strong sword over the shoulder has the same rigid preparedness. There is a certain defect in the unnatural pose and obese curve of the hand which is not justified by any similar detail or motive in the rest of the figure. We notice a similar motiveless strain in the position of Nadir's left arm, though here something is perhaps added to the force of the attitude. A standing figure receives the sanguinary command. The folded hands and the scimitar suspended in front are full of the spirit of ready obedience and there is an expression of pleasure, almost amusement which makes even this commonplace face terrible, for the decree dooming thousands is taken as lightly as if it were order for nautch or banquet. The three mighty swords by a masterly effect of balanced design, fill with death and menace the terrace on which the men are seated. Behind these formidable figures is a part of the palace gracious with the simple and magical lines of Indo-Sarcenic architecture and in the distance on the right from behind a mass of heavy impenetrable green a slender tapering tower rises into the peaceful quiet of Delhi.

On another page of the same review we have a picture by one of the greatest Masters of European Art, Raphael's vision of the Knight. The picture is full of that which Greece and Italy perfected as the aim of Art, beauty and such soul-expression as heightens physical beauty. It is a beauty that is expressed in the robust body and the feminine face of the armed youth both full of an exquisite languour of sleep, in the sweet face, the voluptuous figure, the gracious pose of the temptress offering her delicate allurements of flowers,

in the other's grave strong and benign countenance, the vigorous physique and open gesture of promise and aspiration extending a book and a fine slender sword, in the delicacy of the landscape behind and the tree under which the dreamer lies. There is a suggestion but it is the suggestion of more and more beauty, there is the harmony and relation of loveliness of landscape as a background to the loveliness of the nobly-grouped figures. There is an attempt to express spiritual meanings but it is by outward symbols only and not by making the outward expression a vehicle for something that comes from within and overpowers impalpably. This is allegory, the other is the drawing and painting of the very self of things. Only in the delicate spiritual face of the Knight is there some approach to the Eastern spirit. This is one kind of art and a great art, but is the other less? Beauty for beauty's sake can never be the spirit of art in India, beauty we must seek and always beauty, but never lose sight of the end which India holds more important, the realisation of the Self in things. Europeans create out of the imagination. India has always sought to go deeper within and create out of the Power behind imagination, by passivity and plenary inspiration in Yoga, from samadhi.

#### INDIAN ART AND AN OLD CLASSIC

We have before us a new edition of Krittibas's Ramayan, edited and published by that indefatigable literary and patriotic worker S. J. Ramananda Chatterji. Ramananda Babu is well known to the Bengali public as a clear minded, sober and fearless political speaker and writer; as editor of the Modern Review and the Prabasi he has raised the status and quality of Indian periodical literature to an extraordinary extent, and has recently been doing a yet more valuable and lasting service to his country by introducing the masterpieces of the new school of Art to his readers. His present venture is not in itself an ambitious one, as it purports only to provide a well-printed and beautifully illustrated edition of Krittibas for family reading. With this object the editor has taken the Batatala prints of the Ramayan as his text and reproduced them with the necessary corrections and the omission of a few passages which offend modern idea of decorum. Besides, the book is liberally illustrated with re-

productions of recent pictures by artists of Bombay and Calcutta on the subjects chosen from the Ramayan.

The place of Krittibas in our literature is well established. He is one of the most considerable of our old classics and one of the writers who most helped to create the Bengali language as a literary instrument. The sweetness, simplicity, lucidity, melody of the old language is present in every line that Krittibas wrote, but, in this recension at least, we miss the racy vigour and nervous vernacular force which was a gift of the early writers. Our impression is that the modern editions do not faithfully reproduce the old classic and that copyists of more learning and puristic taste than critical imagination or poetical sympathy have polished away much that was best in the Bengali Ramayan. The old copies, we believe, reveal a style much more irregular in diction and metre, but more full of humanity, strength and the rough and natural touch of the soil. In no case can our Ramayan compare with the great epic of Tulsidas, that mine of poetry, strong and beautiful thought and description and deep spiritual force and sweetness. But it must have been greater in its original form than its modern dress.

The great value of the edition lies however in the illustrations. All the pictures are not excellent; indeed we must say quite frankly that some of them are an offence to the artistic perceptions and an affliction to the eye and the soul. Others are masterpieces of the first rank. But in this collection of pictures, most of them now well-known, we have a sort of handy record of the progress of Art in India in recent times. Turning over the pages we are struck first by the numerous reproductions of Ravivarma's pictures which were only recently so prominent in Indian houses and, even now, are painfully common, and we recall with wonder the time when we could gaze upon these crude failures without an immediate revolt of all that was artistic within us. Could anything be more gross, earthy, un-Indian and addressed purely to the eye than his "Descent of Ganges", or more vulgar and unbeautiful than the figure of Aja in the "Death of Indumati", or more soulless and commonplace than the Ahalya, a picture on a level with the ruck of the most ordinary European paintings for the market by obscure hands? Some of these efforts are absolutely laughable in the crudeness of

their conception and the inefficiency of their execution; take for instance the fight between Ravan and Jatayu. Raja Rukmangad's Ekadashi is one of the few successes, but spirited as the work undoubtedly is, it is so wholly an imitation of European workmanship that it establishes no claim to real artistic faculty. All that can be said for this painter is that he turned the Indian mind to our own mythology and history for the subject of art; and, that he manifests a certain struggling towards outward beauty and charm which is occasionally successful in his women and children. But he had neither the power to develop original conceptions, nor the skill to reproduce finely that which he tried to learn from Europe. He represents in Art that dark period when, in subjection to foreign teaching and ideals, we did everything badly because we did everything slavishly. It is fortunate that the representative of this period was a man without genius; otherwise he might have done infinitely more permanent harm to our taste than he has done.

The art of Sj M. V. Durandhar shows a great advance. The basis is European but we see something Indian and characteristic struggling to express itself in this foreign mould. Unlike Ravivarma Sj. Durandhar has always a worthy and often poetic conception, even when he fails to express it in line and colour. In the stillness and thoughtfulness of figures in the second illustration of the book there is a hint of the divine presence which is suggested, and Indian richness, massiveness and dignity support this great suggestion. There is augustness and beauty in the picture of Rama and Sita about to enter Guhyaka's boat. Others of his pictures are less successful. Another intermediate worker in the field who is very largely represented, is Sj. Upendra Kishor Ray. This artist has an essentially imitative genius whose proper field lies in reproduction. There are attempts here to succeed in the European style and others which seek to capture the secret of the new school, especially where it is original, strange and remote in its greatness; but these are secrets of original genius which do not yield themselves to imitation and the attempt, though it reproduces some of the mannerisms of the school, often ends merely in grotesqueness of line and conception.

We have not left ourselves the space to do justice to the really great art represented in the book, the wonderful suggestions of land-

scape in Sj Abanindranath Tagore's "Slaying of the Enchanted Deer", the decorative beauty of the "Last Days of Dasarath", and the epic grandeur and grace and strange romantic mystery of "Mahadev receiving the Descent of the Ganges". We would only suggest to the readers whose artistic perceptions are awakened but in need of training, to use the comparative method for which Sj. Ramananda Chatterji has supplied plentiful materials in this book; for instance, the three illustrations of the Kaikayi and Manthara incident which are given one after the other,—Sj. Nandalal Bose's original and suggestive though not entirely successful picture, Sj Durandhar's vigorous and character-revealing but too imitatively European work, and Sj. U. Ray's attempt to master the new style with its striking evidence of a great reproductive faculty but small success where originality is the aim. Finally, let him look at the few examples of old art in the book, then at the work of the new school, especially the two pictures against page 22 and last at Raja Ravivarma's failures. He will realise the strange hiatus in the history of Indian Art brought by the enslavement of our minds to the West and recognise that the artists of the new school are merely recovering our ancestral heritage with a new development of spiritual depth, power and originality, which is prophetic of the future.

#### SUPRABHAT : A REVIEW

The paper *Suprabhat*, a Bengali monthly, edited by Kumari Kumudini Mitra, daughter of Sj. Krishna Kumar Mitra, enters this month on its third year. The first issue of the new year is before us. We notice a great advance in the interest and variety of the articles, the calibre of the writers and the quality of the writing. From the literary point of view the chief ornament of the number is the brief poem *Duhkhabhisar*, by Sj. Rabindranath Tagore. It is one of those poems in which the peculiar inimitable quality of our greatest lyric poet comes out with supreme force, beauty, sweetness. Rabindra Babu has a legion of imitators and many have been very successful in catching up his less valuable mannerisms of style and verse, as is the manner of imitators all the world over. But the poignant sweetness, passion and spiritual depth and mystery of a poem like this, the haunting cadences subtle with subtlety which is not of

technique but of the soul, and the honeyladen felicity of the expression, these are the essential Rabindranath and cannot be imitated, because they are the things of the spirit and one must have the same sweetness and depth of soul before one can hope to catch any of these desirable qualities. We emphasise this inimitableness because the legion of imitators we mention are doing harm to the progress of our poetry as well as to the reputation of their model and we would suggest to them to study this poem and realise the folly of their persistent attempt. One of the most remarkable peculiarities of Rabindra Babu's genius is the happiness and originality with which he has absorbed the whole spirit of Vaishnav poetry and turned it into something essentially the same and yet new and modern. He has given the old sweet spirit of emotional and passionate religion an expression of more delicate and complex richness voiceful of subtler and more penetratingly spiritual shades of feeling than the deep-hearted but simple early age of Bengal could know. The old Vaishnava *bhāva*—there is no English word for it,—was easily seizable, broad and strong. The *bhāva* of these poems is not translatable in any other language than that the poet has used,—a striking proof is the unsatisfactory attempt of the poet himself, recorded in another article in this issue, to explain in prose his own poem, *Sonar Tari*. But while the intellect tries in vain to find other intellectual symbols for the poet's meaning, the poetry seizes on the heart and convinces the imagination. These poems are the essence of poetry and refuse to be rendered in any prose equivalent. Poetry is created not from the intellect or the outer imagination but comes from deeper source within to which men have no means of access except when the divine part within seizes on the brain and makes it a passive instrument for utterance the full meaning of which the brain is unable at the moment to grasp. This is the divine mania and enthusiasm, which the subtle spiritual discernment of Plato discovered to be the real meaning of what we call inspiration. And of this unattainable force the best lyrics of Rabindranath are full to overflowing.

The article *Shantiniketan Rabindranath* by S. Jitendranath Banerji is another feature of great interest. The writer has a good descriptive gift and the passages which describe the *Shantiniketan* are admirable; but the chief interest naturally centres in the conversa-

tion with the poet which is recorded with great fullness. The private talk of a rich and gifted nature with power of conversational expression is always suggestive and we await with interest the future issue of this article. We hope Jitendra Babu will give us a fuller view of the remarkable educational experiment which this original mind is developing in the quiet shades of Bolpur. The brief hints given of the moral training and the method of education followed point to a system far in advance of the National Council of Education which is still tyrannised over by tradition and method not only European, but unprogressively European. A brief instalment of Sri Aurobindo Ghose's *Karakahini* is also given which describes the identification parades of the Bomb Case, gives some glimpses of the approver Noren Gossain and deals with the personal character of some of the jail officials. *Nanak Charit* by Krishna Kumar Mitra, the first instalment of which is given in this issue, commands interest both by its subject and the name of its writer. The two chapters given are full of interesting details of Nanak's birth and childhood and promise an attractive biography of one of the greatest names in religious history. An article of minor importance is the continuation of S. J. Jadunath Chakravarti's *Ekannabarti Paribar o Strisiksha*, which is of considerable merit. The author has seized on two of the great advantages of the joint family system, its ideal of a wider brotherhood and unity and its ample training in morale and capacity. *Dainik Bal* and the poem *Bodhan* seem to us to be failures, but there is no other feature of this number which is without merit or interest.

We have left to the last Dr. P. C. Ray's long article on "the Bengali Brain and its misuse". It is a long indictment of past and present Bengal, covering sixteen pages of the magazine. Dr. P. C. Ray is a name which is already a pride to the nation to which he belongs and his deep scientific knowledge, original research and creativeness are one of the most conspicuous instances of that strong, acute and capable Bengali intellect which he admits to be inferior to none. Any article from his pen must be of great interest and cannot be without value. But it is one of the unfortunate results of the denationalising influence of our past education that a mind like Dr. Ray's should be without intellectual sympathy for the old culture whose inherited tendencies his own character, life and achievements illustrate in so distinguished

a manner. If it had not been for the past which Dr. P. C. Ray condemns, such noble types as the last fifty years of Bengal teems with, would not have been possible. As to the necessity of far reaching changes in the future we do not greatly differ with the writer. The immediate past has been a period of contradiction and the reservation of strength, the future will be a period of expansion and the liberation and expenditure of strength. The structure of the new age must necessarily differ from that of the old. But the spirit of the article is narrow and intolerant. It is couched in that general spirit of self-depreciation and indiscriminate fault-finding which was a characteristic of our people when national hope and energy were at nadir. There are all the stock denunciations with which we were familiar before the recent resurgence. Such writings void of the note of hope, encouragement and energy, will not help a nation to rise but rather depress it and push it back into the past. Moreover Dr. Ray makes the same mistake which European writers made when they condemned the Middle Ages wholesale because they were a period of contraction and not of expansion. That mistake has now been recognised in Europe and justice has been done to that which was praiseworthy as well as to that which was bad in the "Dark Ages". We in India are recovering from a similar error and if there are those who go to the opposite extreme and see nothing good outside the mediaeval Hindu culture and forms, the same thing happened in Europe and for the same reason, as a reaction from that very intolerance and sweeping denunciation which are the spirit of Dr. Ray's article. It cannot last any more than it lasted in Europe. Some of the strictures we hold to be too much at secondhand; especially in his criticisms of religion the writer seems to us to be wandering outside the province in which he can speak with authority. After all one must enter into the spirit of an age and civilisation before one can profitably criticise it, otherwise we miss the meaning of history and falsify its values. Nevertheless the article is ably written and should be studied as a complete expression of the Europeanised standpoint in looking at Indian problems. As to the present, Dr. Ray lays too much stress on the survivals of the end of the nineteenth century when the national consciousness touched bottom and ignores the youthful strength and energy which is preparing the twentieth.

## II

### EUROPE: NATIONALISM, IMPERIALISM AND THE LIBERAL TRADITION

#### NOTES

##### A GREAT OPPORTUNITY

THE end of the great struggle between the last representative of European autocracy and the insurgent Demos, is not yet. At present the Czar holds the winning cards. The mismanagement of the Revolution by a people unaccustomed to political action has put advantages into his hands to which he has no right. But it is significant that the revolution still smoulders. As Carlyle wrote of the French Revolution, it is unquenchable and cannot be stamped down, for the fire-spouts that burst out are not slight surface conflagration but the flame's of the pit of Tophet. Murder and hatred rising from below to strike at murder and tyranny striking from above, that is the Russian Revolution. Had another man than a Romanoff, the race obstinate and unteachable, sat on the throne at St. Petersburg, the victory of the autocracy after such imminent and deadly peril would have been surely used to prevent, by healing measures and perfectly spontaneous concessions, a repetition of the sanguinary struggle. It is probably the last opportunity Fate will concede to the Czar Nicholas and it is a great opportunity. But he will not take it and in the shadow forces are again gathering which are likely in the end to destroy him. The Czarina is sleepless in deadly anxiety for the safety of her child the Czar leaving her behind, enters Italy and is guarded by an army. In Russia the Ministry balances itself on the top of a frail edifice crowning the volcano that still sputters below. One wonders why they should think it worth their while to bolster up sanguinary injustice for a season at so huge a cost.

## THE DEATH OF SENOR FERRER

The extraordinary commotion in Europe over the execution of the enthusiast and idealist Ferrer,—a judicial murder committed by Court Martial,—has revealed a force in Europe with which statesmen and Governments will have very soon to deal on pain of extinction. We have no sympathy with the philosophy or practice of Anarchism, holding as we do, that the Anarchist philosophy is some millenniums ahead of the present possible evolution of humanity and the Anarchist practice some millenniums behind. But Senor Francisco Ferrer was no mere anarchist. He was a man of high enthusiasms and ideas, engaged, at great sacrifice and, as it turns out, risk to himself, in freeing the Spanish mind by education from the fetters of that bigoted Clericalism which has been the ruin of Spain. For a man of this kind—a man of eminent culture and unstained character, the friend and fellow worker of distinguished men all over the occidental world,—to be shot without any reputable evidence by a military tribunal regardless of universal protest, was an outrage on civilisation and an insult to European culture. Such an incident, however, might have happened formerly with no result but a few indignant articles in the Continental Liberal Press. This time it has awakened a demonstration all over the Western world which is, we think, unprecedented in history. The solidarity and deep feeling in that demonstration means that the huge inert Leviathan, on whose patient back the aristocratic and middle class of Europe have built the structure of their polity and society, is about to move. When he really uplifts his giant bulk, what will become of the structure? Will it not tumble into pieces off his back and be swallowed up in the waters of a worldwide revolution?

## LORD HONEST JOHN

On the converse side a passage from Mr. Algernon Cecil's "Six Oxford Thinkers" is instructive. He dwells on the self-contradictory and ironic close of John Morley's life. "He the philosophic Liberal, the ardent advocate of Home Rule, the persistent foe of war and coercion, is closing his fine record of public service with

a coronet on his head as the ruler of India, of the child of Clive and Warren Hastings, of the creature of strife and fraud; as one might say, a benevolent despot in an absolute constitution, imposed and administered by an alien race." We in India are sure of the despotism but have some doubts about the benevolence. Nor can we accept the phrase, absolute constitution, as anything but an oxymoron, a "witty folly", a happy and ironical contradiction in terms. But for the rest the implied criticism is just.

#### THE FAILURE OF EUROPE

Mr. Cecil sees in this ending of Honest John as Lord Morley the failure of Liberalism; and it must be remembered that the failure of Liberalism means the abandonment of the gospel of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity as a thing unlivable, and that again means the moral bankruptcy of Europe. "Liberalism in any intelligible sense cannot last another generation. In a score of years the strange adventure on which the nations of Europe embarked in 1789 will be concluded, and we shall revert, doubtless with many and formidable changes, to an earlier type. The principles of unchecked individual liberty and unrestricted competition have, to use the ancient phrase, been tried in the balance and found wanting. The golden dreams which so lately cheated the anxious eyes of men have tarnished with time. Their splendour has proved illusive and they have gone the way of other philosophies down a road upon which there is no returning. The old aristocrats have been swept away and some malicious spirit has given us ones bathed in the most material sort of golden splendour. And Misery, Vice and Discontent stalk among the drudges of society much as they did before." Mr. Cecil like most Europeans sees that European liberalism has failed but like most Europeans utterly misses the real reason of the failure. The principles of 1789 were not false, but they were falsely stated and selfishly executed. Europe had not the spiritual strength, nor the moral force to carry them out. She was too selfish, too short sighted, too materialistic and ignorant. She deserved to fail and could not but fail. It is left for Asia and especially for India to reconstruct the world.

## COOK VERSUS PEARY

It is with somewhat sardonic sense of humour that we in India, whom that eminently truthful diplomat, Lord Curzon, once had the boldness to lecture on our mendacity and the superior truth of the Occidental, have watched the vulgar squabble between Dr. Cook and Commander Peary about the discovery of the North Pole. Long ago, most of the romance and mystery had gone out of the search for the Pole. The quest, though still extremely difficult and even perilous to an incautious adventurer, had no longer the charm of those gigantic dangers which met and slew the old explorers. It was known besides that little was likely to reward the man who succeeded, and there was small chance of anything but ice and cold being discovered at the North Pole. What little of the interesting and poetic was left in the idea, has now gone out for ever, and only a sense of nausea is left behind, as the controversy develops and leaves one with a feeling that it would have been better if the goal of so many heroic sacrifices had been left undiscovered for all time, rather than that it should have been discovered in this way. The spectacle of two distinguished explorers, one, we suppose from his title, an American naval officer and the other a savant not unknown to fame, hurling at each other such epithets as liar and faker, accusing each other of vile and dishonourable conduct, advancing evidence that when examined melts into thin air, citing witnesses who, when questioned, give them the lie, while all Europe and America join and take sides in the disgusting wrangle, is one that ought to give pause to the blindest admirer of Western civilisation and believer in Western superiority. We certainly will not imitate the general run of European writers who, arguing smugly from temporary, local or individual circumstances, talk in the style of self-satisfied arrogance, of Oriental barbarity, Oriental treachery and mendacity, Oriental unscrupulousness; we will not say that the continents of Europe and America are peopled by nations of highly civilised liars, imposters and fakers of evidence without any sense of truth, honour or dignity although we have as good cause as any Western critic of Asia; but at any rate the legend of European superiority and the inferior morals of the Asiatic has, by this time, been so

badly damaged that we think even the *Englishman* might think twice before it bases its opposition to national aspirations on the pretensions of the Pharisee. It is evident that we are as good as the Europeans; we think we are in most respects better, we certainly could not be worse.

### BRITISH FEARS

The genesis of the Imperial Press Conference is to be found in that feeling of insecurity which is driving England to seek allies on the Continent and gather round her the children of her loins beyond the seas. During the better part of the nineteenth century after her triumph over Napoleon and her amazing expansion in India, she felt too strong to need extraneous assistance. Mistress of the seas, enormously wealthy, monopolist almost of the world's commerce, she followed on the Continent a policy of splendid isolation broken only by the ill-starred alliance with the third Napoleon. She fought for her own hand everywhere and felt strong enough to conquer. Her Colonies she regarded only as a nuisance. They were a moral asset, probably but hardly a material. They assisted her in no way, they excluded her commerce by tariffs, they took her protection without payment and yet exacted internal independence with an inordinate and querulous jealousy of her interference and unwillingness to allow even the slightest iota of British control to mar the perfection of her autonomy. But a change has come over the spirit of her dream. Mighty powers have arisen in the world, young, ardent, ambitious, rapidly expanding, magnificently equipped moving with the sureness and swiftness of material forces towards empire and aggrandisement. Their armies are gigantic forces against which England's would be as helpless as a boy in the hands of a Titan. Their wealth increases. They are beating England out of the chosen field of her commercial expansion, and it is only by bringing out all the reserves of her old energy that she can just keep a first place; worst of all, their navies grow and if they cannot keep pace with her in numbers, equal it in efficiency. On the other hand India, her passive source of wealth, strength and prestige is struggling in her turn to exclude British commerce and assert autonomy without British control. England is uneasy; she cannot slumber at night for

thinking of her precarious future. To her excited imagination German airships fill the skies and myriad tramp of the Teuton is heard already marching on London, while huge conspiracies spring up like mushrooms in India and evade the eager grasp of the Police with a diabolical skill which leaves behind only arrests and persecution of innocent men, hard judicial comments, a discredited C.I.D. and a desperate weeping *Englishman*. One can no longer recognise the strong, stolid, practical, invincible Britisher in the emotional, hysterical, excitable, panic-stricken race dancing to the tune of its newly liberated Imagination.

#### • THE JOURNALISTIC WAR COUNCIL

It is not surprising under such circumstances that leading Englishmen should call a Press Conference and turn it into a War Council full of such themes as military conscription and naval expansion and always looking out of the corner of its eye at Imperial Federation. The aid and backing of the Colonies has now become a necessity to British imagination. England seeks an American alliance and hungers after the unity of the Anglo-Saxon world, but there are hostile elements in America which militate against that dream. Parting with her old friends of the triple Alliance she embraces France, her ancient and traditional enemy; she courts her bug-bear Russia and many of her publicists are ready to excuse and condone the most savage merciless and inhuman system of tyranny in the world provided she gets a friend in need. But these are uncertain and transitory supports, while the Colonies are bound by ties of blood and interest. The objective of the Press Conference is therefore the Colonies, the union of the English throughout the Empire. And although Sriyut Surendra Nath has been led to the gathering in gilded fetters and is "the most picturesque figure" in the Conference, that is all he is, a picture, even if a speaking picture,—nothing else. For the rest it is Anglo-India that has been called to the great journalistic War Council, not India. The real India has no place there. We wish Sriyut Surendra Nath could have realised it. It might have prevented him from indulging in rhetorical hyperboles about "the wise and conciliatory policy of Lord Morley"—forgetful of the

nine deportees, forgetful of the many good and true men in jail for Swadeshi, forgetful of Midnapur and all it typifies.

### FORGOTTEN EVENTUALITIES

It is strange that British statesmanship should be blind to certain possibilities which will follow from their new Colonial policy. Among the first results of the new idea has been the federation of Australia and the federation of South Africa. The former event is not of such importance to the world as the latter. The referendum in Natal is indeed an event of the first significance, but what it portends is the rise of a new and vigorous nation, perhaps a new empire in South Africa,—certainly not the consolidation of the British Empire. Great organisms like these tend inevitably to separate existence. The one thing that stands in the way is the present inability of these organisms to defend their separate existence. Australia lies under the outstretched sword of Japan to say nothing of the subtler, less apparent but more ominous menace of Germany. Canada is kept to England by the contiguity of a powerful, well-organised and expanding foreign State. South Africa on the other hand is occupied by a strong military race with a stubborn love of independence in its very blood. In the last war it has become aware of its supreme military capacity but also of its inability to hold its freedom without a navy. Yet the main cry of England now is that the Colonies should organise military and naval defence in order to lighten the burden of England and help her in her wars ! They are not satisfied with the contribution of a Dreadnought. They want an Australian navy, a South African navy. Surely, God has sealed up the eyes and wits of those Imperialistic statesmen. They have eyes but they cannot see; they have minds but they are allowed only to misuse them.

### THE RECOIL OF KARMA

There is a general law that Karma rebounds upon the doer. Associated in the Hindu philosophy mainly with the individual and the theory of re-birth, this truth has also been recognised as equally

applicable on other lines to the present life and to the destiny of nations. The *Karmà* of the British people in India has been of a mixed quality. So far as it has opened the gates of Western knowledge to the people of this country it has been good and in return the thought and knowledge of India has poured back upon Europe to return the gift with overmeasure. Had they in addition consciously ideas up and educated the whole people, all the fruits of that good Karma would have gone to England. But the education they have given is bad, meagre and restricted to the few, and their sympathy for the people has been formal and deficient. In consequence the main flood of the new thought and knowledge has been diverted to America, the giant of the future, which alone of the nations has shown an active and practical sympathy and understanding of our nation. British karma in India has been bad in so far as it has destroyed our industries and arrested our national development. This Karma is also beginning to recoil, patently in Boycott and unrest, much more subtly in the growing demoralisation of British politics. Already the jealous love of liberty is beginning to wane in the upper classes in England, political thinkers are emerging who announce the failure of democracy, the doctrine of the rule of the strong man is gaining ground and the temptation to strengthen the executive at the expense of the liberty of the citizen is proving too powerful even for a Radical Government. It seems impossible that even a despotism or a virtual oligarchy should ever again rule in England, yet stranger things have happened in history. The change may come by the growth of Socialism and the seizure of the doctrine of State despotism by masterful and ambitious minds to cloak an usurpation the ancient and known forms of which would not be tolerated, just as the Caesars, while avoiding the detested name and form of kingship, yet ruled Rome under the harmless titles of Princeps and Imperator, first man of the state and general, far more despotically than Tarquin could have done. Under whatever disguises the change may steal upon the people, one thing is certain that if Lord Morley and the Anglo-Indian proconsuls succeed in perpetuating absolutism in India, it will recoil from India to reconquer England. The Nationalists of this country are fighting not only for the liberties of India but for the liberties of England.

## LIBERTY OF EMPIRE

It is an ancient and perpetually recurring choice which is now being offered to the British people, the choice between liberty and empire. The two are incompatible except by the substitution of a free federation for a dominion. Rome was offered the choice. She won an empire and lost her liberty. External expansion has always been accompanied by a concentration of internal power in King or oligarchy. Athens, the only people who attempted to be imperial and despotic abroad and democratic at home, broke down in the attempt. In English history we find that the great expansion in the eighteenth century led to the reactionary rule of the third George and it was not till England after the severe lesson in America adopted her present colonial system that expansion and democracy went hand in hand. That system was not an imperial system but a loose collection of free states only nominally united with the British Crown. The Indian problem is the test of British Liberalism. The colonial system as it stands cannot obtain between two States which are not mother and daughter. The one would not tolerate it, the other would not be content with it. But if England can bring herself to extend in a different form the principle of a collection of free States to India, she may keep her position in the world and her liberty together. Despotic Empire and liberty she cannot keep; she must either yield up absolutism abroad or renounce liberty at home.

SRI AUROBINDO

## TWO PRAYERS OF JANINA

(ORIGINAL FRENCH)

### I

OUI, Mère Divine, Grâce Suprême, c'est vrai, je suis complètement superflue. C'est Toi seule... seulement Toi dans cet être Ton temple sacré. Tu m'as déjà dit une fois que ma vie entière doit être un seul Darshan. Et il faut toujours comprendre Tes mots dans leur sens concret. Ce n'est pas une allégorie. Le temple et le Darshan continuels, ce doit être ma vie, Et c'est, encore une fois, un nouveau pas en avant. O ma Mère Divine, Vérité Suprême, permets que je puisse dresser un temple pur et que jamais je ne permette à l'ignorance de le violer. Je me prosterne devant Toi, tout mon être se prosterne. Reste avec moi, ne t'en vas pas. Je me donne à Toi, je me rends, je me sou mets. Mon amour T'implore — reste.

### II

Ma Mère, Amour Suprême, donne-moi l'Amour total pour Toi — pour Toi dans toutes les formes, tous les événements, dans Tout. Permets que ma soumission devienne totale et que mon ego disparaisse. Oh ma Mère Bien Aimée, je suis étendue devant Toi, devant Ta lumineuse vibration d'Amour; mon être tout entier avec tous ses centres est étendu comme sur une table pour que Tu puisses bien voir cet instrument qui T'implore de le purifier et de le remplir d'Amour. Je suis comme le canevas avec tous ses fils étendus sur le métier à tisser, attendant avec vigilance, concentration et une aspiration ardente que Tes mains pleins d'Amour viennent le toucher.

Tu es ma Mère et Tu es le Très-Haut. C'est seulement et uniquement de Ta grâce que dépend mon être tout entier. Fais de moi ce que Tu veux, donne-moi ce que Tu veux. Je sais que tout ce qui est nécessaire dans Ton jeu arrivera. Mon âme est en paix et depuis hier je sens que Tu me tiens dans Tes bras et que Tu me regardes

toujours. Tes yeux me pénètrent jusqu'au fond de l'âme. Je me prosterne à Tes pieds sans cesse et tout mon être s'ouvre, s'étend et par toutes ses parcelles Te boit — Toi et Ta grâce. Je me donne à Toi, je me rends...je me rends.

Tu me donnes paix et repos. Je n'ai plus de souci, plus de tourment. Tu es ma Mère. Je suis Ton enfant. Je me tiens blottie dans Tes bras, je ferme les yeux, je cache ma tête sur Ton sein et je me fonds en Ton Amour suprême.

Mère, Présence Divine, Créatrice de l'Univers, je m'abandonne, je m'abandonne. Permits que je devienne de plus en plus Ton enfant-seulement, essentiellement.

Tu es le Très-Haut. Je me prosterne à Tes pieds avec toute l'humilité qu'il m'est possible d'avoir aujourd'hui. Je T'implore : purifie cette forme qui s'étend devant Toi en un don sincère.

Donne-moi plus d'humilité encore afin que je puisse être en Toi. Tu es le Très-Haut et le Très Pur. Tu es le Suprême.

(TRANSLATIONS)

I

Yes, Mother Divine, Grace Divine, it is true, I am wholly unnecessary. Thou alone...only Thyself in this being must be Thy sacred temple. Thou saidst to me once that my whole being must be one single Darshan. And Thy words must always be understood in their concrete sense. It is not an allegory. The temple and the continual Darshan—that must be my life. It is once more a new step forward. O Mother Divine, Truth Supreme, let me erect a pure temple and let me not allow the Ignorance to violate it. I prostrate before Thee, my whole being prostrates—stay with me, do not depart. I give myself to Thee, I surrender. I submit. My love implores Thee...stay!

II

My Mother, Love Supreme, give me a total love for Thee

in all forms, in all happenings, in everything. May my surrender be total, may my ego disappear. O, my Mother Beloved, I lay myself before Thee, before the luminous vibration of Thy love : my whole being with all its centre is stretched as on a table for Thee to see this instrument that implores Thee to purify it, fill it with love. I am a carpet, as it were, with all its thread stitched on the form, awaiting with vigilance, concentration and an ardent aspiration so that Thy hands filled with love may come and touch it.

Thou art my mother and thou are the Most High. My whole being depends only and solely upon Thy grace. Make of me what Thou wilt, give me what Thou wilt. I know whatever is necessary for Thy play will happen. My soul is in peace and from yesterday I am feeling that Thou holdest me in Thy arms and art looking at me. Thy eyes enter into the very depth of my soul. I prostrate at Thy feet ceaselessly and my whole being opens, widens and through all its pores drinks Thee in—Thee and Thy grace. I give myself to Thee, I surrender, surrender.

Thou givest me peace and rest. I have no more care, no more trouble. Thou art my mother. I am Thy child. I nestle in Thy arms, I close my eyes, I hide my head in Thy bosom, I melt in Thy supreme love.

Mother, Presence Divine, Maker of the Universe, I give myself over, I give myself up. Let me become more and more Thy child solely and in essence.

Thou art the Most High. I prostrate at Thy feet with all the humility possible for me to have today. I implore Thee : purify this form which lies before Thee in a sincere self-giving.

Give me more and yet more humility so that I may be in Thee. Thou art the Most High and Most Pure. Thou art the Supreme.

# SRI AUROBINDO AND THE NEW AGE

## Chapter IV

### FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT

#### WESTERN LITERATURE

#### FRENCH LITERATURE (*Continued*)

THE age of Louis XIV is a landmark in European history. It saw France, then a more or less backward country, harried and torn by civil wars for over three decades, suddenly rise to an unprecedented greatness in culture and civilisation, literature and arts, manners and social refinement, and become a pattern for other countries to follow. Her culture spread far and wide, and her influence percolated into the inmost layers of Western civilisation.

Louis XIV, though himself a man of no great intellectual endowment, was a lover and patron of the arts and the trappings of culture. He was very fond of the drama, and very generous in his help and encouragement to the artists and men of letters. The French Academy was founded in his reign and, sponsored and patronised by him, it imparted a sense of honour and prestige to those who professed the arts and literature. Painting, architecture, sculpture, furniture-making and gardening, all basked and thrived in the light of royal favour. The *salons* in which enlightened, intellectual ladies took the leading part were veritable nurseries of new styles of poetry, prose, drama and music. In short, there was a splendid flowering of the aesthetic spirit of France which entitled it to be called the cultural leader of the whole of Europe and the age of Louis XIV as the *Grand Siècle*. Modelled upon the ancient Greek and Roman classics, French literature, painting etc. gave the go-by to the Baroque and cultivated simplicity, clarity, harmony, vigour, and an austere restraint in expression. French literature began to be widely read and its tone and temper emulated by many a country in Europe.

Pierre Corneille (1606-1684) can be called the father of modern French drama. His tragedy, *Le Cid*, combined what was best in the mystery and miracle plays of the Middle Ages and in the plays produced during the Renaissance after the pattern of Senecan tragedies. It was a happy union of art and vigour. But his characters lack the intimate touch and throb of life. His romantic genius was in leading strings to the classical standards of the age, and so it failed to express itself in its native accents. Starting with comedies, he swung over to tragedies, and ended with romantic melodrama. Intellectual rather than emotional, interested more in action than in the psychological motives behind it, master of the resources of language, but inclined, like Descartes, more to the direct, simple and rational effect than to the poetic and imaginative appeal, Corneille created a verse-form which contained the essential elements of modern French. His romanticism, which he had to curb in deference to the literary canons of his age formulated by the French Academy, was more classical than romantic, as we understand the word now. But the heart of modern French language beat in his style and gathered force for a fuller expression in his successors.

Molière (1622-1673) introduced a true aesthetic sense and a chastening restraint into French drama. He depicted in his comedies the social life around him with all its eccentricities and extravagances, its die-hard traditions of the Mediaeval chivalry and turgid conventions as well as its transitional culture in the reign of Louis XIV. We get in his comedies the sparkle of a subtle wit, the breath of April blitheness, and the overflowing lark and laughter of the burlesque; but so consummate is his skill and so sensitive his aesthetic sense that nowhere do we come across any falsetto note or any transgression of the salutary canons of a perfect art. His realism, his sense of proportion, his keen perception of the contours of human nature invest his characters with a vividness and vitality unsurpassed except by Shakespeare in the whole range of modern European drama. His plots are sometimes loosely constructed and his language gives an impression of occasional unevenness and even flatness, but the pulse and passion of his art and the force of his genius sweep the reader off his feet on a wave of bubbling hilarity and lambent satire. An unfailing good humour plays upon his

characters, and virtue and vice are both decked out in such farcical garb as put to the blush the concept of the snob and the prig, and lights up the furrowed brow of depressed humanity. Molière is the greatest creator of modern French comedy—great by the variety and complexity of his creations, great by the inexhaustible freshness and flavour of his gaiety, and great by his unstinted, large-hearted, human sympathies.

Racine (1639-1699) is considered the supreme creator of French tragedy. Where Corneille is lofty, intellectual, sententious, and ideal, Racine is simple and natural. He carries in himself the realistic spirit of the modern times. His fundamental approach to drama is practically the same as of Molière, but while Molière delineates the comical, farcical aspect of human psychology, and throws a gentle light upon the tragic consequences of undisciplined life, Racine takes the emotions of the human heart, particularly, almost exclusively, the feelings and emotions of love, and by a subtle analysis of its intensities, its facile credulities and gullibilities, its blind follies and sublime nobilities, portrays an arresting picture of their inherent tragedy as the brute facts of life attest. His robust, penetrating realism, his superb poetical gifts, and the beauty and charm of his style mark him out as the most consummate dramatist of the age of Louis XIV and one of the greatest in modern European literature.

La Fontaine (1621-1695) was an exquisite poet, lyricist, wit, story teller, master of an engaging, sensitive, polychrome, colloquial style, and a man of smiling benevolence towards all beings. He loved the ancient classical spirit and respected its essential canons, but tempered them with the characteristic elements of modern literary art. He loved Nature in all her varying moods, and felt an inner kinship with her. He represents to a remarkable degree the limpid clarity, simplicity, lightness of touch, subtle irony, precision of observation, a rich and supple language and a splendour and harmony of rhythm which have gone to the making of the most artistic of modern creations. He is a true successor of Molière and a forerunner of Voltaire. His appeal is universal, because his is a democratic spirit, and the French find in his Fables, unlike in Aesop's, which are rather dry and didactic, a perennial fount of artistic enjoy-

ment. There is perhaps no other literary artist whom the French regard with so much love and devotion. The secret of this unfading popularity lies in the fact that La Fontaine embodies the true French ethos, the very cultural and literary individuality of France, and his poetry glows with common human feelings which overflow the frontiers of any particular country and nation. He is at once a typical Frenchman and a wide-visioned cosmopolitan—a rough sketch of the man of tomorrow.

RISHABHCHAND

## THE SPIRITUAL REMEDY\*

(Continued)

30th September 1962

*Q : Does the spiritual remedy exclude non-spiritual remedies?*

A : No. You have to take the spiritual remedy as opposed to outer and material remedies. "Spiritual" remedy is the inner remedy, depending upon nothing outside oneself, as opposed to outer, external remedy for which one has to take help of others. For example, a political or social or economic remedy would require co-operation of many persons and also an organisation. Even these can be related to spirituality if the basis of the effort is psychological, that is spiritual. Such activity is undertaken primarily for its spiritual results in oneself and secondarily for any outer change.

The distinction is drawn in case of persons who do not believe in spiritual remedies. There are people who believe only in outer and material remedies.

*Q : Why do you suggest only spiritual remedy?*

A : Because, the nature of the crisis is psychological, and therefore spiritual. We do not want to exclude other remedies. In fact, we support all activities that move in the direction of the same goal, e.g. towards human Unity or man's fulfilment as a Divine being.

The nature of the crisis may seem to some to be external but that would only be too shallow a view. The breakdown in the western culture took place in collective life and its various organisations; therefore some people may be tempted to set right the outer collective

\* Third lecture at the Community Church, New York. Discussion following the Talk : "Spiritual Remedy."

life (which can be done). But the question one has to answer is : wherein lies the true fulfilment of the collective life of man. Does it consist in a constantly rising economic standard of life ?

*Q: But don't you think that the progress of science and its application to life—for example, the use of atom-energy, man's conquest of space etc. might bring about the solution ?*

*A :* Hardly, because all such progress is to be utilized by man and so long as man is driven by ambition and ego, he will invite conflicts, difficulties and catastrophes.

The change that is required is in man's nature. The centre of the crisis is the individual. The west has lost many of the values it had evolved during two hundred years after two bloodbaths during a generation. The East, equally, has lost and is losing its own values—of man's spiritual greatness under the impact of western Scientific progress applied to life. One sees the domination of the basic western outlook everywhere on earth. Man is facing a spiritual crisis.

*Q: What is Man ?*

*A :* The age-old question ! One may even feel that even as he is, imperfect and ignorant, man has made progress—he has banished superstition, ignorance and starvation from many parts of the globe, and man seems to be moving towards a goal which even the most brilliant period in the past never envisaged.

But it is futile to make such comparisons, the present or the past or even the future is not in itself important. Not what man 'did'—that is only a part of himself, but what man "is" and, more important, what man "can become" that matters.

We have therefore to answer the question : what is man ? Is he a little particle of dust, mere insignificant matter ? Is he merely a complex of inconscient forces brought into being by their mechanical play ? We know that man is body, he is life and he is mind. Is he something more than these ?

There is a vision in which the universe is the creation of an

Omnipresent dynamic Reality of which man, as an individual and a collective being, is the term of manifestation. Man is essentially a soul using mind, life and body as his instruments.

*Q : But where is the necessity of accepting a soul? The mind of which you have spoken is capable of acquiring knowledge, man is capable of an idealism or an ethical endeavour which leads him to noble acts of self-sacrifice in his efforts to reach individual or collective perfection. So, would it not be correct to say that the true remedy is ethical, or, intellectual, idealism—its practice and propaganda? For instance, equality, service, non-possession, self-control, non-violence etc. if these are practised then the problem may be solved.*

A : All these are noble means. They are, in fact, contributory to the spiritual remedy; but they are not themselves the remedy. They strengthen the spiritual forces in the individual and in the collectivity, and we support them as we support the political, cultural and other forces man can generate or muster by creating an outer organisation. For instance, the U.N.O. and its allied activities, or other efforts in the direction of bringing about the unity of mankind.

But the real thing we have to try is to resort to the spiritual remedy because it is the one remedy by which one can create (even as an individual) the most intense power that can resolve the crisis. It evokes the higher power in man. The remedy is independent of the atmosphere—it is the one way that leaves the individual to act freely.

*Q : How can one man's effort resolve such a great crisis? It is a work which requires the cooperation of many, if not all, men.*

A : It is true, but it is not possible to start with the whole community or the race. In trying social, political, economic and other remedies one is compelled to depend upon the cooperation of other men and there the outer method of propaganda and organisation have a place. But in case some greater inner truth one starts with the individual and then the truth slowly spreads to the commu-

nity, or it may be, that the pursuit of the same truth tends to create a community of men.

Take for instance, the suppression of slave-trade. One man Wilherforce, took it up as a personal problem and worked hard for years before he succeeded in making it illegal. Hampdon individually challenged the power of the British Crown to levy tax without the consent of the parliament.

*Q : How can I help in this crisis? Can my help be real—dynamic and effective?*

A : The centre of the power is there in the individual. But we must know that there are people who do not feel the existence of the crisis as we see it. For them the question of resolving it does not arise; others believe and resort to outer remedies—they may succeed in the measure of their sincerity.

But for one who has felt the crisis as his own the first thing he has to know is that all true dynamism is from the soul, all creative movements, even the so called outer material and scientific progress are from the soul, the Divine Spark in man.

*Q : Is that not the language of faith? Perhaps mind may raise a doubt—there may be many who do not believe in the Divine.*

A : In order to try the spiritual remedy it is not indispensable to believe in the Divine unless one feels called upon to believe in him.

But every intelligent man in modern times must ask himself : have I some "Values" in my life? That is to say : have I arrived at some ideal or conception that has become a "value" to me? For instance, have I some conception of Truth in my mind or heart? Do I feel that certain way of feeling and doing is Right? Is beauty a value for me? Have I ever felt the power of true Love? Have I some ideal for which I can sacrifice myself?

That is enough to begin the spiritual remedy. One should not merely hold an idea or an ideal in the mind only, but one must live it in his life. One must take—accept life as an opportunity to

live it,—it must become the primary concern and everything else secondary. It would be the main occupation not one to be attempted at leisure. Such an earnest effort will create an atmosphere around you in which the value will become real.

*Q : It is found that this often leads to conflict; truth of one idea or ideal with the opposite Truth held by another.*

A : It can happen and sometimes growth towards the reality may be through such conflict.

But it is not inevitable, if one can keep his being open to a gradually ascending aspect of the Truth, the Right, the Beautiful, the noble etc. That is to say there is some Truth in each aspect of two conflicting truths. A mind open to the growing value moves on a line of infinite progression along which the true spiritual aim of collective life will dawn on him and also the true fulfilment of the individual.

It will be found that man is more than man,—more than what he appears to be, a mere piece of matter. There is an Omnipresent Reality at work in the universe; it can come down—descend—into human life and change it into an image of divine perfection.

Man is free to remain as he is, or to go on trying whatever means he finds legitimate. It is man who shuts himself in and avoids the action of the Reality. He accepts only the partial aspect of the Reality that comes to him through his devotion to higher "values". In pursuing these values as an individual he must have faith that he is contributing to the solution of man's problem, to the resolution of the crisis, let us remember that the universe is like a spider's web and the whole web can be raised or lowered—however infinitesimally by the weakest filament.

When the freedom of man leads him to the voluntary act of surrender to Universal Purpose then he will comprehend the will and purpose working in life. Then is man fulfilled in realising the Divine will in himself as an individual and as a race.

"...Our unfolding has its roots in the soil of the physical life; its growth shoots up and out in many directions in the stalk and branches of the vital being; it puts forth the opulence of the buds of mind

and there, nestling in the luxuriant leaves of mind and above it, out from the spirit which was concealed in the whole process must blossom the free and infinite soul of man, the hundred—petalled rose of God" (*Future Poetry* 267) Sri Aurobindo.

A. B. PURANI

# THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER

## EDUCATION

### XV

#### PSYCHIC AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATION (*contd.*)

THE soul or the psychic, being the central and everlasting reality of man, his mind, life and body have to be regarded only as its instruments of self-expression in the material world. But in his ignorance he identifies himself with his instrumental being, which is a constructed, perishable self, and does not care to know his immortal reality. The education devised and developed by him is, therefore, even at its best, an education of his instrumental being. It cannot be productive of any abiding and salutary result so long as he persists in ignoring or denying the truth and reality of his being. Even from the instrumental being he singles out his mind as the most important and educable part—mind with its intellect, reason and judgment etc.—and assigns a subordinate position to his life and body. He concentrates all his energies on the education of his mind in various ways. Thanks to the phenomenal scientific and technological advance in modern times, the humanities have been dislodged from their old predominance, theory has been coupled with considerable practical laboratory experiment, and the balance has tilted in favour of experimental practice. This is a swing of the pendulum in the reverse direction. But it is now being more and more realised that this preponderating importance given to technology has led man to neglect the moral and cultural side of education and look upon himself only as a physical being whose ideal in life, if any such thing is at all deemed necessary, should be to carve out a successful career and spend himself in all kinds of profitable work, profitable to his physical well-being and conducive to his position, power and prestige. In this scramble for power and position, in this frenzied pursuit of work for its own sake, breathless and nerve-shattering, he comes to develop a sort of contempt for those who appear to him to bother over much about culture

and refinement, morality and self-control, poise and harmony in their lives. The right balance between these two extremes, the right correlation, has not been found; because the central and centralising truth and reality of his life has not been discovered. The imbalance, the fitful shift in choice and inclination, the unsteady, exclusive stress, the protean working of his nature, torn between the three warring gunas, sattwa, rajas and tamas, is the invariable stamp of normal human existence. There is no calm, no settled happiness in such a life. For, how can there be happiness in a perpetual turmoil of the dualities, a convulsive tension of the opposites? It is the soul alone, the psychic, that, fully awakened to its innate royalty, and with the reins of government held firmly in its grasp, can place each element in its place, introduce order and harmony into its chaotic nature, and teach it to work in a perfect coordination among its various parts, and along the lines of its true evolution. The discovery of the soul is, therefore, of primal and paramount importance in education.

• The soul has an infallible intuition of the Divine Will in it, a sure divination of what is true and right in the complex functioning of its instrumental nature and its faculties. It has a knowledge of the potentialities of its being and the limitless ranges of its latent powers. It is not chained to the brute facts and material circumstances of its earthly existence, nor is it possible for the reason of the mind or the feelings of the heart to define its evolutionary progress or deflect it from its true course. It is sovereign in its will and invincible in its action. Once in possession of its instruments, it can overhaul and change them, quicken them with a new, more fruitful life, lead them to an undreamt-of splendour of spring-tide blossoming, and make them function in a flawless rhythm and harmony of federated autonomy. "Every human being carries hidden within him the possibility of a greater consciousness beyond the frame of his normal life through which he can participate in a higher and vaster life. ...What the human mind does not know and cannot do, this consciousness knows and does. It is like a light that shines at the centre of the being radiating through the thick coverings of the external consciousness."<sup>1</sup> ... "In most cases this presence acts, so to say, from behind the veil,

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education.

unrecognised and unknown; but in some it is perceptible and its action recognisable; in a few among these, again, the presence becomes tangible and its action quite effective. These go forward in their life with an assurance and a certitude all their own, they are masters of their destiny. It is precisely with a view to obtain this mastery and become conscious of the psychic presence that psychic education has to be pursued."<sup>1</sup>

What happens when the psychic deals directly with its instruments and knits them together in a dynamic, corporate economy? The mind evolves powers and capacities far beyond those ordinarily conceived as human. Its imagination, for instance, sheds its usual tendency to conjuring up mere visionary or fanciful shapes and becomes a faculty of creative image-making, lit up with intuition. Reason remains no longer a doubting Thomas, endlessly making and unmaking theories and dogmas out of a clutter of percepts and concepts. Its hypotheses, which are always coloured by its presuppositions and preferences, give place to a lucid ordering, a compact organisation of what knowledge it receives from the higher reaches of human consciousness. Its judgments are no more founded on the shoddy scraps of dubious conclusions arrived at by a toilsome process of weighing the pros and cons of each problem, but proceed upon an integral view which deals with parts not as separate or disparate integers, but as correlates of a composite, homogeneous whole. This whole view is in sharp contrast to the fragmentary or sectional approach of all mental perceptions. Its memory becomes automatic and immediate, as if a finger of light called up a unit out of a well-arranged store-house of past impressions. There is, in short, a general, pervasive play of intuition in all the faculties and operations of the mind replacing their habitual uncertain gropings and vague findings in a dusky light. The faculty of discrimination, likewise, knows with a spontaneous immediacy what to choose at each moment out of a tangle of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, the divine and the undivine. And many a faculty and power which lies unsuspected in latency evolves and acts in a faultless concert of the integrated whole.

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education.

Man, who is complacent as a mental being and proud of the paltry achievements of his mind, will be startled out of his conceited complacency when, under the direct inspiration and guidance of the psychic, his whole being flowers into a divine glory. Nothing in him will be suppressed or overlooked, nothing will be snipped off or whittled down; but all will be galvanised, heightened, expanded and enriched, all will undergo a marvellous transformation, a radical conversion. Will man regret this change, this unimaginable deepening and heightening? Will he lose anything? Nothing at all, except the jarring conflicts, the harassing confusions, and the limitations and squalor of his normal nature. It will be a many-sided, many-hued, synthetic development of the very stuff and structure of his life.

Similarly, in regard to the workings of his heart, man will change beyond recognition. The habitual tumult of his heart's feelings and emotions, the rocking storms of his passions, all will be reduced to a felicitous order and rhythm, a radiant play of harmonies, attuned to the psychic diapason. Joy and sweetness will flow like sap through every fibre of his emotional being and impart an unflinching glow and thrill to his manifold self-expression in life.

The above is just an indication of the tremendous outcome of discovering the psychic being and making it the leader and active agent of our education. I have not mentioned the spiritual gains of it, which are beyond the scope of my present theme, but only what a psychic-directed education can achieve in human life.

*(To be continued)*

RISHABHCHAND

## RIG VEDA SAMHITA\*

WITH

## PADAPATHA\*\* AND COMMENTARY

THERE are twenty-four sections in the First Book of the Seer-hymnodists, Satarchins. Barring the twelfth hymn at the end, the Rishi of the first three Sections is Madhucchandas of the line of Vishvamitra. The Rishi of the twelfth hymn is Jeta, son of Madhucchandas. The metre is Gayatri for the nine hymns commencing with *agnim iḷe* up to *gāyanti tvā*. The first Section consists of three hymns. And the first hymn with nine Riks (stanzas) known as *agnimīḷe* is devoted to the Deity Agni. And of the nine this is the first :

1. OM *agnimīḷe purohitam yajñasya devam ṛtvijam, hotāram ratna-*  
*dhātamam.*

*agnim iḷe purah'hitam yajñasya devam ṛtvijam, hotāram ratna-*  
*dhātamam.*

*agnim* the God called Agni; *iḷe* I laud in longing; God of what kind ? *purohitam* placed in front for the performance of the work; and again of what kind ? *yajñasya devam ṛtvijam* the God who himself has become the *ṛtvik* for the carrying out of the sacrifice that is being performed in celebration of the Godhead; and again of what kind ? *hotāram* who calls the Gods by virtue of his capacity; and still how-made ? *ratnadhātamam* who bears in excelsis the felicities that are charming.

The Etymologists explain the term *agni* in many ways. This much is clear from a scrutiny of their derivations : alternate meanings are advanced by reckoning the form of Agni in some way or the other on the strength of the utterances of the Brahmanas. It is considered that sentences in the Brahmanas such as "Yea, this one was born before, *agre*, the Gods, hence he is *agni* by name", are the basis of meanings like *agranīḷ* (one who is the first).

\* Collection of the Hymns of the Rig Veda.

\*\* Arrangement of the text in which each word is written and pronounced in its original form without phonetic changes. (The Samhita text is continuous incorporating the phonetic changes.)

According to the Grammarians, the word *agni* is derived from the root *ang*. They illustrate the *Uṇādi Sutra*, 'aṅernalopaśca'. *aṅgati*, goes upward; goes up to carry the oblation to the heaven; this is a possible derivation. If the roots meaning *agni* in all the branch-languages of the ancient Aryans be scrutinised, it yields the constituent meaning of movement, strong and luminous. Thus do cohere all the words signifying the nature of *agni*.

*īle* : I laud, says Sayana; I beseech, says Yaska. There is no dispute about the roots having multiple significance. *īlate* signifies says Yaska, beseeching, adoring or worshipping. The act of adoration is the most apposite in view of the form of *agni*, his office and his management of it. *adhyeṣaṇā*—intense longing—means impulsion, aspiration. The longing adoration consists in the welcome and honoured induction in the special performance of the adorable Vicar or Agni the God. *īle* I aspire.

*purohitam* : Agni is placed in the front of the *yajamāna*, sacrificer, for the carrying out of the work of sacrifice. That is why he is waited upon by the Rishi in the inner sacrifice and by the *yajamāna* in the outer sacrifice. Thus is the sense of *adhyeṣaṇā*, longing adoration, apposite to *īle*. This agrees also with the traditional derivation of *purohita*—he holds him in the front. It is to be noted that the order given by the commentators viz. *yajñasya purohitam hotāram devam ṛtvijam ratnadhātamam*, is neither necessary nor proper. When terms yield the meaning in the order in which they stand, it is not right to relate words in one place with words in another. That is why we have commented upon the phrase *yajñasya devam ṛtvijam* as it stands.

*hotāram* : himself a God, he summons the other Gods to be present at the sacrifice. Thus is Agni, the Lord of the call.

*ratnadhātamam* : all accept the derivation of *ratna* as the word ending with the termination *kna* of the *Uṇādis*, applied on the root *ram*.

To us who are concerned with the inner Sacrifice, the derivation given in the *Mantrārthamañjarī*, what bears *ratna* (happiness) is *ratnadhā*, him who bears the happiness excellently *ratnadhāḥ tam*, is acceptable. It means that Agni alone is the bearer, the founder of the felicities—signified by the term *ratna*—which are the fruits of the offerings made by the Rishi, the Yajamana who is engaged in the

inner Sacrifice. For those who swear that there is naught else beyond the outer sacrifice, it means Agni, the donor in excelsis of the *ratna*, the treasure, which, consisting of cows, horses etc., is the fruit of the sacrifice.

And this is the purport of the Rik :

I aspire intensely for Agni the adorable, the leader and the Vicar who carries out the Sacrifice, the God who as the Ritvik does and gets done in due season the Sacrifice to be performed, who being capable of bringing the presence of the Gods in the Sacrifice is their summoner, and who, again, founds in the Yajamana the excellences of Felicity.

Tr. *I adore Agni, the Vicar, the divine Ritvik of the Sacrifice, the summoner who most bears the felicities.*

2. *agnih pūrvebhīṣibhīṣīdyo nūtanairuta, sa devān eha vakṣati.*

*agnih pūrvebhiḥ ṛṣibhiḥ īdyaḥ nūtanaiḥ uta, saḥ devān ā iha vakṣati.*

*agnih* the God equipped with the capacity of the Vicar etc. as mentioned before; *pūrvebhiḥ* by the ancient; *ṛṣibhiḥ* by the seers of the Mantras, Bhṛigu, Angiras and the like; *īdyaḥ* laudable, adorable, to be aspired to; *nūtanaiḥ uta* adorable even by the new seers; *saḥ* the God who is thus spoken of as adorable; *devān* the rest of the Gods like Indra and others; *iha* in this sacrifice; *āvakṣati* brings.

*iha* : Skandasvami has it, "or here, in this world". The purport is that Agni, located on earth, brings the gods located in heaven, to this location on earth. The meaning is clear in the inner Sacrifice.

It is impossible to determine the age of the ancient personages like Angiras. The phrase *nūtanairuta* implies that there were other contemporary seers, creators of Suktas, like Madhucchandas. It also points to the weight of tradition of a sempiternal, fruitful and established discipline devoted to Agni.

Tr. *The Agni adorable by the ancient seers is adorable too by the new. He brings here the Gods.*

3. *agninā rayimaśnavat poṣameva divedive, yaśasaṁ vīravattamam. agninā rayim aśnavat poṣam eva divedive, yaśasaṁ vīravat'tamam.*

*agninā* by the instrumentation of the God; *rayim* treasure, something inner, not merely outer; *aśnavat* (the Yajamana) obtains; what

kind of treasure ? *divedive* day by day; *poṣameva* verily nourished, increasing, never decreasing; and again of what kind ? *yaśasam* with fame, full of glory; *vīravattamam* superbly endowed with hero-power; such is the treasure enjoyed.

Some object to the taking of the term *poṣa* as adjective to *rayi* as it terminates with *ghaṅj*. They say it should be *poṣam*, nourishment, and *rayim* treasure, that is *āśnavat*, enjoyed. If that be so, then the conjunctive word *ca* is to be taken as understood. Then the significance of the word *eva* in *poṣameva* will have been ignored. Both *poṣam* and *yaśasam* are adjectives of *rayi*, used in the sense of possession (*matvartha*).

Such use is common in the Veda. In places like *vapuṣāmidekam* (IV.7.9.), *vapuṣāmapāśyam* (V.62.1), the commentators interpret the meaning indicating *matvartha* as *vapuṣām vapuṣmatām*, possessed of bodies, *devānām*—of the embodied Gods. That is correct. So also here, resort to indication is permissible. *yaśas* is used as adjective of *rayi* to indicate the glory. Some moderns have it that *āśnavat* being in the form of *leṭ* (Vedic Present) should carry the sense of Imperative Tense, *loṭ*. The sense indicated by the Present Tense (*laṭ*) is preferable and approved by the commentators of old.

The purport is : the Yajamana obtains the inner plenitude (denoted by the term *rayi*), superbly full of hero-strength and glorious, due to the power of the Grace of Agni who is the summoner of the Gods as described earlier.

Tr. *By Agni one enjoys a treasure that increases day by day, glorious, most full of hero-power.*

4. *agne yam yajñamadhvaram viśvataḥ paribhūraṣi, sa iddeveṣu gacchati.*  
*agne yam yajñam adhvaram viśvataḥ paribhūh asi, saḥ it deveṣu gacchati.*

*agne* thou; *yam adhvaram* which is moving on the path; *yajñam* sacrifice; *viśvataḥ* on every side; *paribhūh* surrounding; *asi* art; *sa it* that sacrifice alone; *deveṣu* among the Gods; *gacchati* goes to the destination.

The ritualistic commentators take the line that *adhvara* is "free from violence." The immolation of the animal in the sacrifice is a transgression of the injunction of the Dharma Sastra, "Harm not any

creature". To affirm that in this case there is no violence, those who interpret in the external sense explain the term *adhvara* as that in which there is no *dhvara*, violence. Now the sacrifice is described in the Veda as a Person. This one consisting in the giving away of substances, embodying a total self-sacrifice, manifesting in the being of the sacrificer, sets out to the world of Svar above in order to reach the Gods. Therefore he does the journey, *adhvānam rāti*, gives the path for the ascent of the sacrificer. And in such a pilgrim-sacrifice, protection from all evil, as Rakshasas and the like, from all sides, is obtained only from Agni. Hence it is said that only that sacrifice which is well-guarded by Agni reaches to the Gods.

Tr. O Agni! The pilgrim-sacrifice on every side of which thou art, that alone goes among the Gods.

5. *agnirhotā kavikratuḥ satyaścitraśravastamaḥ, devo devebhirāgamat.*  
*agniḥ hotā kavikratuḥ satyaḥ citraśravaḥ'tamaḥ, devaḥ devebhiḥ*  
*ā gamāt.*

*agniḥ* himself; *devaḥ* a God; *devebhiḥ* along with other Gods; *āgamat* may he come. There are four adjectives to Agni. *hotā* summoner of the Gods; *kavikratuḥ*, *kavi* is the term for one with bright intellect; in the Veda *kavi* stands for one who sees the beyond, what is beyond the objects of the senses. So does Sayana comment upon it in many places. The term *kratu* is explained by ritualists either as intelligence or act (ritualist), according to the context. *Kratu* is the unshakable Will or a determined conscious-force capable of execution. Thus the term *kavikratuḥ* signifies a conscious will or will-force seeing the supra-sensible. *satyaḥ* true in seeing, in conscious action and also in self-form, without any touch with or defilement by falsehoods, hence undeviating in activities of seeing etc.; *citraśravastamaḥ*, *śrava* means fame and it is not incorrect to take it so in the external sense; the words *śravaḥ*, *śravaṇa*, *śruti* derived from the root *śru* recall the same meaning. Because it is heard from all over, *śrava* is taken to mean fame. Hence here it means that the hearing, *śravaḥ*, of Agni is superbly (*tama*) *citram*, marvellous, manifoldly discernible.

The purport is that Lord Agni whose audition is varied and suprasensible, himself hearing, can make the seeker hear wonderful auditions.

Tr. Agni, the summoner, the Seer-Will, true and most full of richly varied listenings, may he come a God with the Gods.

Thus ends the first group

of the first chapter

in the first Eighth.

6. *yadaṅga dāśuṣe tvamagne bhadrām kariṣyasi, tavettatsatyamaṅgiraḥ.*  
*yat aṅga dāśuṣe tvam agne bhadrām kariṣyasi, tava it tat satyam*  
*aṅgiraḥ.*

*aṅga* dear; *agne* O Agni; *dāśuṣe* to the Yajamana who gives; *tvam* thou; *yad* that; *bhadrām* happy good; *kariṣyasi* shalt do; *tavet* thine alone; *tat* that; *satyam* Truth; *aṅgiraḥ* O Angira, Agni of this appellation.

According to Sayana this is the sense : Agni gives wealth in the form of animals, progeny and the like to the sacrificer who has given the oblation. That is the good expressed by the term *bhadra*. With the instrumentation of the wealth thus obtained the sacrificer sacrifices again to Agni. That is why it is Agni's alone.

In truth there is no disputation here. But the commentators have done a great disservice to this Mantra laden with delightful meaning in which some truth of Agni is indicated in clear expression. *dāśuṣe* to the giver, *yad bhadrām kariṣyasi* what happy good thou shalt do, *tat satyam* that Truth is thine alone *tavet*—this is the right and direct order.

This then is the purport. The happy good that is going to be done for the Yajamana by Agni is the truth of Agni alone. And what is that happy good which is said to be the truth of Agni only ? They assert, on the strength of the utterances in the *Brāhmaṇa*, that progeny, animals, money, house and so on are all the happy good, *bhadrām*. May be, progeny animals etc. are the good. Let us not quarrel. But there is no doubt that in the Rig Veda, *bhadra* signifies good, something exalted connected with Truth. In cases like, "Savitr God, send far away all calamities, send us only what is good, *bhadrām*" (V.82.5), "Drive the evil dream away" (V.82.4), the term *bhadra* is used in contradistinction to the evil that follows from evil dream. If the meaning is understood in the sense that the Truth of Agni is verily the happy good that ends the misfortunes resulting from false knowledge, then the use of *satya* as adjective to Agni

in the first Rik, and here (in the present Rik) the statement that such a *good* is the Truth of Agni only, stand justified. Hence it is not some common good that is intended. The truth which is the *good* that opposes the false consciousness is verily the principle of Agni, his nature. All over the Veda the word *bhadra* is used in the sense of opposing the misfortune born of evil and false knowledge. And this is clear from the Hymn to dispel the evil dream in which *bhadram varam vṛṇute* (a happy boon do they elect) etc. is chanted in opposition to *Nirṛti*, the deity of Sin.

In another place there occurs a mantra meaning that those who malign the good (*bhadra*) are thrown into the environs of *Nirṛiti* : "those who soil the good by their natures, may Soma give them over to Ahi, or to the lap of *Nirṛiti* consign" (X.104.9). So also is the *bhadra* lauded as relating to the own home of Agni, the Vast Truth denoted by the word *ṛta*; as the objective to be attained by the mind and the Will. "Create for us a happy mind" (IV.19.20), "Send us a happy mind, and diligent will" (X.25.1), "Awake to the right-mindedness of man's happiest state, vast and great and happy is thy house of refuge, O Agni" (V.1.10).

It is to be thus noted that even in yielding the meaning of good, such a word occurring in the mantra, indicates the speciality of *bhadram*. Even the Rik of Kutsa Angira confirms our interpretation of this Rik, *yadaṅga dāsuse*. It says : "This is thy happy grace, that kindled in thy own abode, invoked with Soma, thou soundest forth most benign; thou givest wealth and treasure to the giver. O Agni, in thy friendship may we not suffer harm" (I.94.14). This Rik of Kutsa is to be remembered in grasping meaning of the mantra ahead, *rājantam* etc.

Tr. Agni, the happy good that thou shalt create for the giver, is the Truth of Thee alone, O Agniras.

7. *upa tvāgne divedive doṣāvastardhiyā vāyam, namo bharanta emasi.*  
*upa tvā agne dive'dive doṣāvastah dhiyā vāyam, namaḥ bharantaḥ*  
*ā imasi.*

*agne*, O Agni; *tvā* to thee; *divedive* day by day; *doṣāvastah* night and day; *vāyam* we; *dhiyā* by the thought capable of bearing; *namaḥ* obeisance; *bharantaḥ* carrying; *upemasi* we come, wait upon.

Here some take *doṣāvastā* as Agni who covers the night by his

light and *doṣāvastaḥ* as his vocative. Actually *doṣā* means night and it denotes darkness; *vastaḥ* means day and denotes light. The purport is that whether in dark or in light, in all states, every day, we wait upon you ceaselessly. *Evaṁ nāmo bharantaḥ vayam*, 'thus bearing the obeisances, we', is apposite. The intelligence is capable of bearing the burthen of the obeisance. It is thus to be understood that for one who seeks (waits upon) Agni, the one *sādhana* (means) is the intelligence rooted in meditation, day by day, ceaselessly, in state of inner illumination or no illumination—in a word, in all conditions.

Tr. *To Thee, O Agni, day by day, in the night, and in the light, we approach carrying by our thought the obeisance.*

8. *rājantamadhvarāṇām gopāmṛtasya dīdivim, vardhamānam sve dame.*  
*rājantam adhvarāṇām gopām ṛtasya dīdivim, vardhamānam sve dame.*

In the previous mantra it was said, "Agni, we approach Thee". "Thou" of what kind? The seer describes in three adjectival phrases: *adhvarāṇām rājantam* the master of sacrifices denoted by the term *adhvara*, Path, Journey; *ṛtasya dīdivim gopām* luminous guardian of the Truth; *sve dame vardhamānam* increasing in his own home.

It is not proper to take *gopām* with *adhvarāṇām* when the terms yield meaning as they stand. Thought has to be bestowed upon the meaning in *ṛtasya gopām* (guardian of Truth), *sa ca dīdiviḥ* (and he is shining), *sve dame vardhate* (increases in his own home). In this one hymn itself is affirmed twice the Truth-nature of Agni by the expression *satyaḥ* (Rik 5) and *tavet tat satyam* (Rik 6). In this Rik he is described as the guardian of Truth and as increasing in his own home. What else but Truth could be the own Home of Agni? The Truth, the Right, the Vast, alone is the abode of Agni. And his Truth, the supreme station is to be attained by the Yajamana; Sacrifice is the means therefor. The one who performs is the Seer-Will, the Truth, one whose nature is the Truth, who is the guardian of Truth and whose dwelling place is the Truth: he is only Agni. In the Rik (I.75.5), Rishi Rahugana, son of Gotama, prays to Agni: "Sacrifice to Mitra and Varuna for us; sacrifice to the other Gods; sacrifice to the Truth, the Vast, the Own Home." From this Rik it is clear that Agni's office of carrying out the sacrifice is not for the sake of the Yajamana only, but that the Vast Truth which is the *own home* of Agni is the supreme object of Sacrifice. We hear the same in II.10.2

where it is said : "Shine out, guardian of the Truth, in thy own home."

Such is the profound mantra which has been given a common-place meaning by the ritualist interpretation which has it thus : "The hall of sacrifice is the 'own home' of Agni; there is Agni, who increases by consuming the ghee-offering, worshipped morning and evening by the practicers of Agni-sacrifice."

Tr. *Who reignest over pilgrim-sacrifices, luminous guardian of the Truth, increasing in Thy own home.*

9. *sa nah piteva sūnave'gne sūpāyanaḥ bhava, sacasvā nah svastaye.*

*saḥ nah pitā'iva sūnave agne su'upāyanaḥ bhava, sacasva nah svastaye.*

*agne* Agni; *sa tvam* such as Thou art; *sūnave* to the son; *piteva* like a father; *nah* our; *sūpāyanaḥ* he who is easily approachable, easy of access; *bhava* be; *nah* our; *svastaye* for good; *sacasva* serve, cling to us, be contained in us.

Tr. *Therefore, be easy of access to us as a father upto his son, cling to us for our happy state.*

We have commented upon this hymn of Madhuchhandas on Agni. In this very first hymn of the Rig Veda of ten Books, is revealed the Secret of the Veda, with a certain clarity. While commenting upon it, we have shown briefly as far as necessary, the line of high thought in the Mantras. Though in the case of certain Riks in the hymn, a ritualistic meaning can be somehow extracted, the line is not clear and straight for a ritualistic interpretation throughout. In the ritualistic interpretation a common-place meaning is brought out after a great deal of difficulty in case of words like *kavikratuḥ*, *satyaḥ*, *citrasravastamaḥ*, *dhiyā namo bharantaḥ*, *sve dame vardhamānam* etc. The meaning derived by them of the mantra '*yadaṅga dāśuse*' is ridiculous in the extreme. The direct meaning is : "To him who offers to Agni what he has or what he is himself, Agni effects the happy good—denoted by the term *bhadra*—which eliminates the false consciousness and the misery born out of it. And the Truth that is this good is founded in Agni only."

This is the argument that runs through the mantras of the hymn, as seen through this direct opening on the Secret of the Veda. Thus, Rik by Rik :

First : God Agni himself is waited upon as the Vicar, the Ritvik, for the carrying out of the sacrifice of the Yajamana.

Second : this discipline of adoration of Agni is not something new adopted by Madhuchhandas but what has come down in the tradition of the Rishis from a long past and by which Agni, the foremost of the Gods, brings the other Gods.

Third : the wealth obtained by the grace of Agni is not tainted by fear of decay like the worldly variety, but given to increase more and more.

Fourth : it is not the sacrifice performed by human effort unaided that can reach to the Gods, but only the sacrifice which is guarded in every way from all evil spirits by Agni.

Fifth : endowed with vision and audition, wise, firm of will, Agni is the helper of the Gods.

Sixth : the giving of the special good which lies in Truth-Consciousness as opposed to the False is the Truth of Agni.

Seventh : every day, in all conditions, firm in meditation, weighted with obeisances, the Rishis wait upon Agni.

Eighth : Truth (the Vast Truth) is the own Home of Agni; there he increases for the Yajamana. That he protects.

Ninth : to such Agni who is realised or in order to realise him, does the Rishi pray with great trust : 'Cling unto us like a father to the son, be easy of access to us.'

Certainly an Agni of this kind cannot be only the sacrificial fire which is but an external symbol. Neither can he be only the deity presiding over the material principle of heat. The Agni adored in this first hymn, whose prowess has been brought out by us and whose features set forth in the hymn, is truly the Truth, the Lord auspicious, our Seer-Will.

This is the Agni hymn, which gives a foretaste of the essence of the Secret of the Veda and which, in the tradition of the study of the thousand-hymned Veda, is called the epitome of all Vedic study; and it is to emphasise this feature that the ancients say : "Repeat the *sūkta agnimile*, destroyer of sin, creator of prosperity; the fruit of the study of all the Vedas is obtained thereby."

In the famous Soma sacrifice, known as *agniṣṭoma*, this hymn is

recited by the *Hotṛ* prior to the pouring of the Soma in the morning recitation.<sup>1</sup>

T. V. Kapāḍ Sastry.

(Translated from the *Siddhāñjana*, Commentary on the Rig Veda.)

<sup>1</sup> A fine summary of this Sukta by the present commentator is to be found in his *Sidelights in Sanskrit literature*:

Because his natural movement is one of power and brilliance, his name *agni* is derived by the wise from the root *ang*.

In works of the worship of the Gods, Agni is sought after; he is the summoner in the sacrifice, carrier of felicities, the Ritvik and the Priest.

This adorative waiting upon Agni is an ancient science. Capable of bringing the Gods, he is adorable too by the new.

The treasure obtained from Agni, full of Hearing and Strength, increases day by day; it is not subject to decay like the wealth of the world.

It is only the sacrifice which is environed by the Lord Agni, who is invoked, that reaches the Gods, guarded on the way from the evil spirits.

The sacrifice is called *adhvara* because, arising from the yajamana, he sets out to the world of *sva*; because he creates, gives, *rāti*, the path, *adhva*, to the Heaven, he is known as *adhvara*.

To such a sacrifice Agni comes with the Gods. He comes in the form of Vision, Will-Power; hence he is spoken of as Seer-Will, *kavikratu*.

The happy good averting the False that he, full of varied listernings of the Truth, bears for the yajamana is held to be his special truth.

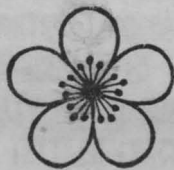
Shining bright in his own abode, the Supreme Truth, for the yajamana, increasing, guardian of Truth, Lord of the Sacrifices, he is ever adored and waited upon by the Rishis, steadfast, engaged in austerities and meditation with daily obeisances carrying full surrender.

Like the father who clings to the son, and is easy of access to him, so is Agni to the devoted Rishi.

Thus lauds the great sage.

*"The truth of all things is in the calm of their depths."*

—SRI AUROBINDO



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