

# THE ADVENT

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



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Our life ought to be governed  
by the Love for Truth and the  
Thirst for Light .  
Blessings



# The ADVENT

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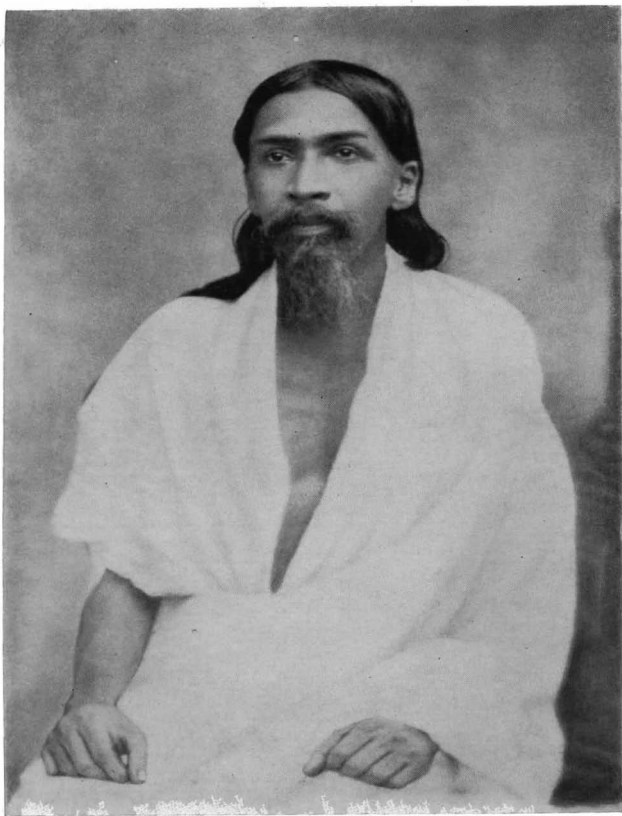
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The Mighty Mother sits in lucent calm  
And holds the eternal Child upon her knees...

Sri Aurobindo



OUR HOMAGE

G. S. Jayswal, 20, Mango Lane, Calcutta.



OUR HOMAGE

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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.*

## EDITORIAL

### SWEET MOTHER

(8)

THE pressure from above has been withdrawn and normalcy restored to the earth-consciousness.

Pressure meant a separation: something foreign acting from elsewhere, an interference. As a process, a passage needed for a time, for a special purpose and under special circumstances, it was necessary and welcome. But circumstances have changed.

The higher consciousness is not to remain always high but become level with the normal. Either the higher must come down and mingle totally with the lower or the lower has to rise and merge altogether into the higher, or both meet and unite midway somewhere.

Earth or material nature does not easily tolerate anything unknown and foreign to it. Even if it is for its own well-being, a foreign touch makes it shrink and turn on itself. It is even painful for it to bear. In the end the earth is not to be goaded on or driven along:

it has to go on its own. It must depend entirely on itself, bring out what it carries within itself or has acquired or stored. It has to outgrow its childhood or apprenticeship, the period when an intelligent amount of pressure or even coercion might be needed or inevitable. But that stage passed, the higher realisation is to be the natural expression of ordinary earth-life: its normal state is to be the state of the higher consciousness, its life naturally moved by its self-nature expressing its own truth.

If there is to be a Divine destiny for earth, it must be because of its free choice. There must be no pressure or even solicitude from any agent outside itself to compel it or force it that way. It must be a glad and spontaneous impulse from within to follow the line of destiny it has itself chosen.

As the original birth of Ignorance was a free choice of Ignorance, even so the return of Ignorance to consciousness is to be a matter of spontaneous self-seeking. It may be true or it is true in a deeper way that a mortal is chosen whom the Divine has already chosen, but that is another matter. Here upon earth we, mortal souls, are free agents, we choose or we do not choose.

In any case if one is to possess truly something one must acquire it by one's exertion and in one's complete liberty. A free gift or an imposition even of a precious object is always something foreign and unnatural to it. One must learn to love a thing in order to have it wholly for oneself, it must be made part and parcel of one's being. And true love can exist only in free choice.

Latterly the Mother was saying whenever the question of the descent of supermind was raised that there was no descent any longer: for, the thing has descended and it is here, it is no more a question of descent, that is to say, something arriving from elsewhere that was not here before. At present it is simply the question of manifestation of the thing that is with us and among us.

At one time Mother was asking for, even pleading for collaboration from the Material Nature. It was accorded in principle but in act it was found wanting. Now the tables are turned. The earth-consciousness has now to ask for, pray for collaboration from the Divine. The material consciousness has to come forward and take the lead and play the frontal role in the working out of the evolution.

The collaboration of her physical body has been withdrawn, in order to leave us free in our physical movements so that we may learn to labour and labour in full freedom for the service expected of us. We say she has withdrawn herself, that is to say, in her physical body, but she is still there, and her being there, her very existence is force, a helping force and that is collaboration enough and is always at our disposal.

Now at present it all depends how much the earth consciousness has received, imbibed or assimilated of the Divine Presence. That will be the measure of the fulfilment human beings can achieve. As much as we earth-creatures feel and express of the higher reality, that much we shall become truly and divinely. If we continue to be the old stock with no or little change, well, we shall have to wait perhaps for another million years.

It would mean for us naturally a change of dress for good many a time perhaps. There seems to be no other way. But a change of dress is inevitable and should be welcome, for kept on too long it would stink. A dip in the Vaitarani or Acheron (if we happen to be in Greece) would be wholesome. There is however always the possibility of a miracle happening: to this Mother was referring very often. In that case you might learn to change, to renew yourselves in the inner way, even like the Vedic cows: as the Rishi says — *paliknirid yuvatayo bhavanti* — even those of them who were grey with age, became young again. (Rig-veda, V.2.4)

Naturally it does not matter at all to the Divine, the supreme consciousness — the whole eternity is his play-field, a million years this side or that do not count for Him anything.

And yet, we are human beings and we can have other vistas equally divine.

The Mother became a human being like us as totally as possible for that purpose, to shorten the million years.

\*  
\*\*

The Mother continues to do what is necessary under the circumstances and perhaps more, she has not stopped her work. But the most crucial thing and the most critical — turning the corner

— has been done. Sri Aurobindo has spoken of it in memorable words — we know the passage in *The Mother* — I quote the lines and conclude:

“The Mother not only governs all from above but she descends into this lesser triple universe. Impersonally, all things here, even the movements of the Ignorance, are herself in veiled power and her creations in diminished substance, her Nature-body and Nature-force, and they exist because, moved by the mysterious fiat of the Supreme to work out something that was there in the possibilities of the Infinite, she has consented to the great sacrifice and has put on like a mask the soul and forms of the Ignorance. But personally too she has stooped to descend here into the Darkness that she may lead it to the Light, into the Falsehood and Error that she may convert it to the Truth, into this Death that she may turn it to godlike Life, into this world-pain and its obstinate sorrow and suffering that she may end it in the transforming ecstasy of her sublime Ananda. In her deep and great love for her children she has consented to put on herself the cloak of this obscurity, condescended to bear the attacks and torturing influences of the powers of the Darkness and the Falsehood, borne to pass through the portals of the birth that is a death, taken upon herself the pangs and sorrows and sufferings of the creation, since it seemed that thus alone could it be lifted to the Light and Joy and Truth and eternal Life. This is the great sacrifice called sometimes the sacrifice of the Purusha, but much more deeply the holocaust of Prakriti, the sacrifice of the Divine Mother.”

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

## “SPIRITUAL MONISM”

**M**ONISM is a philosophical theory which propounds the concept of One Reality as the material cause of the whole creation. Spiritual Monism also propounds the same concept and holds that it is the Spirit which is the only Reality. Sri Aurobindo's philosophical reflections are based on Indian traditions of Vedantic Non-Dualism. He re-interprets the Vedantic philosophy and propounds the theory of the Absolute Spirit as the only Reality behind the Universe which is not a superimposition on the Reality as the Mayavadins think, but it is a manifestation of the Spirit within itself. That Reality is not purely speculative, but that is to be realised practically within our own Self or Spirit and this is the purpose of Yoga. So Sri Aurobindo holds that the Vedantic formula of the Self in all things, all things in the Self and all things as becomings of the Self is the Key to this richer and all-embracing Yoga (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 21).

This Monism inspires us to be divine in all aspects of our being. We have to attain the integral knowledge of the Spirit and try to utilize it in our life not only for our own welfare but for the whole of our race. When the Presence of the Self is realised in all beings and when all beings are realised in the Self, we may become capable to have the knowledge of the One Self or the One Reality practically and it fulfils the purpose of our life as well as knowledge. To realise the Presence of the Infinite Being in the finite beings through the knowledge of identity of the Reality or the Spirit with all beings helps to attain the pure Delight of our own existence in this manifold manifestation of the Universal Spirit, and it would lead us towards the integral knowledge of the monistic Principle working within the whole creation which is a manifestation of That. Sri Aurobindo holds that to live in the Self is not to dwell for oneself alone in the Infinite immersed and oblivious of all things in that ocean of impersonal self-delight; but is to live as the Self and in the Self equal in this embodiment and all embodiments and beyond all embodiments. This is the integral knowledge (*Ibid.*, p. 306).

Although it seems impossible to the ordinary reason that there is Oneness behind the infinite diversities of this ever-changing Nature, yet there is no difficulty for the spiritual man to realise that Oneness

of the Spirit which is the source of all unities in the works of Nature. Any person who realises this spiritual unity within the Universe, surpasses the limitations of the surface mind which always perceives diversities everywhere. As long as we are led by this mind, there is no possibility to find out or discover the spiritual truth within our own being. But as soon as the spiritual insight appears in us, our whole life is coloured with spirituality and this is the only experience which can help us to understand the unity in all actions of nature and realise the identity of the One Spirit with all beings. Sri Aurobindo has portrayed a beautiful picture of that experience in Savitri:

Where world was into a single being rapt

.....

And all was known by the light of identity

And spirit was its own self-evidence.

.....

There unity is too close for search and clasp

And love is a yearning of the One for the One,

And beauty is a sweet difference of the Same

And oneness is the soul of multitude.

There all the truths unite in a single truth,

And all ideas rejoin Reality.

(Cent. Ed., Vol. 28, pp. 31-32)

Spirituality is the foundation of our culture and it is immanent in all aspects of experience. It is the Spirit which is the active Force behind the external and internal phenomena. Our empirical consciousness which gives the force of perception to our senses and mind, is only an outer aspect of the pure consciousness which is the Reality within and without every being and becoming. This Consciousness is One and is called by different names as the Brahman, the Atman, the Purusha, the Sat and so on. It is also the Power of Existence in all beings, because everything of the whole universe is merely a manifestation of That in different forms. So the study of the Spiritual Monism requires the practical knowledge of the Spirit. This spiritual knowledge, according to Sri Aurobindo, perceives that there is a greater thing in us; our inmost self, our real being is not the intel-

lect, not the aesthetic, ethical or thinking mind, but the divinity within the Spirit, and these other things are only the instruments of the Spirit (*The Foundations of Indian Culture*, p. 148).

The sages of the Upanishads had realised directly this truth of their being and perceived the Self identified with the whole Universe. The experiences of those ancient sages are the sources of inspiration for the modern man to realise the same truth which is everlasting and may be discovered within our own existence. Sri Aurobindo has also explained this truth by saying: The Brahman becomes all these beings; all beings must be seen in the Self, the Reality, and the Reality must be seen in them, the Reality must be seen as being actually all these beings; for not only the Self is Brahman, but all is the Self, all this that is is the Brahman, the Reality (*The Life Divine*, p. 405). So the Self and the Brahman and the Reality are identified with each other, because they are One substantially and so the realisation of the Self is the realisation of the Brahman or vice versa and same is the position of the Reality.

Spiritual Monism does not reject the world as a Maya or as an illusion like a snake in the rope as the Illusionist Mayavadins think, but it is a reality or a play of the Absolute Spirit. Although confusions are there in the world, yet we cannot say that the whole Universe is a confusion in the Spirit. Confusions and real knowledge both are the part of human nature, because man is superficially not a divine being, and ignorance is mixed with mental perceptions. Besides all this, there is a unity in the whole play of the Divine. When that Divinity is evolved in the mind of the man through aspiration and meditation, the man becomes a divine being by the descent of the divine insight, then all differences of external world disappear and the unity and indivisibility of the Self or the Spirit is realised directly, because the individual and the universe are the real manifestations of the same Spirit which is working within us and the whole universe. After the attainment of this knowledge all and One, world and God seem identified and the spiritual unity is realised everywhere. So Sri Aurobindo holds that this mutual inclusion is spiritual and psychological; it is a translation of the eternal unity of the One and the Many. This means that cosmos and individual are manifestations of a transcendental Self who is indivisible being although he seems to be

divided or distributed. Therefore all is in each and each is in all and all is in God and God in all (*Ibid.*, p. 336).

Spiritualism is the foundation of the Spiritual Monism, because it is the Spirit which is the only Reality behind the whole Nature and it is the cause of the whole evolution in Nature. When we go deep in the practical aspects of this theory, we discover the Spirit immanent in the whole Nature and working to evolve at least in the spiritual persons. Here, the Self is embracing the Self everywhere, because the spiritual man directly perceives the Spirit identical with the whole universe. Sri Aurobindo says that it is the foundation of the pure consciousness that is the first object in the evolution of the spiritual man, and it is this and the urge of that consciousness towards contact with the Reality, the Self or the Divine Being that must be the first and foremost or even, till it is perfectly accomplished, the sole pre-occupation of the spiritual seeker (*Ibid.*, p. 765). So, spirituality is the form of divinity in our life. The spiritual man must be the divine man and spiritualise the whole environment around him. Just as the fragrance of the lotus attracts the bees and makes them intoxicated with its own love, similarly the spiritual man attracts the other persons and makes them intoxicated with his own divinity.

Spirituality is the highest morality which tries to remove all social conflicts and brings complete peace and joy with itself in our society. Its commandments are the forms of highest duty. It is also the Law of the Divine Nature. This spirituality also evolves supramental consciousness in man. So, Sri Aurobindo says that a supramental gnostic individual will be a spiritual Man (*Ibid.*, p. 882); a spiritual or gnostic being would feel his harmony with the whole gnostic life around him, whatever his position in the whole (*Ibid.*, p. 915); an inner life awakened to a full consciousness and to a full power of consciousness will bear its inevitable fruit in all who have it, self-knowledge, a perfected existence, the joy of a satisfied being, the happiness of a fulfilled nature (*Ibid.*, p. 918).

The problem of Matter is not a hindrance in the study of the Spiritual Monism, because Matter is also one of the various aspects of the Spirit. Whatever is seen or experienced in this world, that is the manifestation of the Spirit. One Spirit expresses itself in different ways. Matter, life, mind, etc., are the expressions or forms of the

Spirit; they cannot exist without the Force or Power which is working behind them, and that Force or Power is derived from the Spirit which is identical with Absolute Existence, Consciousness, Power, Bliss, etc. If there were no consciousness hidden within Matter, no evolution could take place in it. So, the law of Evolution in Matter proves the presence of Spirit in the Matter. Sri Aurobindo also says that there is no body without, no body that is not itself a form of soul; Matter itself is substance and power of spirit and could not exist if it were anything else, for nothing can exist which is not substance and power of Brahman (*Ibid.*, p. 678). He also says in Savitri:

And Matter is of thinking substance made (Vol. I, p. 238)

Thus, we see that this Spiritual Monism is a philosophical theory which propounds that there is One Spirit which is the only Reality within the Universe and even beyond it. Matter, Life, Mind, etc., are not different from the Spirit, but they are the different forms of That. The World is not an appearance but it is a real manifestation of the Spirit within itself. There is a spiritual unity within this whole Play of the Spiritual Being, because that is both One and Many, the Play and the Player, the Creation and the Creator and so on. This truth is also justified in Savitri:

He is the Maker and the world he made,  
 He is the vision and he is the seer;  
 He is himself the actor and the act,  
 He is himself the knower and the known,  
 He is himself the dreamer and the dream.

(Vol. I, pp. 54-55)

R. D. NIRAKARI

## THE MOTHER AND TREES\*

(1)

**T**HERE is a huge tree in one of our bungalows, spreading itself wide, preventing the growth of other plants and trees in the vicinity. The sadhak in charge thought it for long and one day he decided to cut and remove that old tree. When he met the Mother the next day he mentioned it and asked her if he could do it. He was surprised to hear from Mother that the previous night the spirit inhabiting the tree had come to her and pleaded that the tree might not be disturbed and it be allowed to continue to stay there. Obviously the spirit in the tree had understood what the sadhak had decided and thought it better to steal a march over him by speaking to Mother earlier than him. Mother asked him to let the tree alone.

(2)

The Eucalyptus tree in the Ashram compound had been badly shaken during a cyclone and it started withering. It went to Mother and said that it was feeling lonely and desired to go to its fellow-trees in the hills.

Mother told the tree she would give it a companion and persuaded it to stay on. Another Eucalyptus sapling was planted near the older tree.

Needless to say the tree revived.

(3)

One day the Mother spoke to X. in charge of Auroville affairs that the large Banyan tree seemed to be in trouble. For it had come to Mother the previous night and shown its distress.

Enquiry was made forthwith and it was found that someone had carelessly left a huge knife stuck in the trunk of the tree after work the day earlier.

\* A page from a recent book *Sidelights on the Mother*.

## SANSKRIT SOURCES IN SRI AUROBINDO'S WORKS

(The writings of Sri Aurobindo are strewn with innumerable references and echoes from Sanskrit literature, especially the scriptural. A compilation of these references is in progress. Some excerpts are here reproduced illustratively. — M.P.P)

### ABANDON

Abandon that you may possess.<sup>1</sup>

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः ।<sup>2</sup>

### ABSOLUTE

The Upanishads speak of the Absolute Parabramhan as *tat*;<sup>3</sup>

तत् उ सर्वस्य अस्य बाह्यतः ।<sup>4</sup>

they say *sa* when they speak of the Absolute Para-Purusha.<sup>5</sup>

सः पर्यगात् ।<sup>6</sup>

### ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE

The relation of the phenomena of Nature to the fundamental ether which is contained in them, constitutes them, contains them and yet is so different from them that entering into it they cease to be what they now are, is the illustration given by the Vedanta as most nearly representing this identity in difference between the Absolute and the relative.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*: In Either case.

<sup>2</sup> *Isha Upanishad*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> *The Hour of God*: Purna Yoga.

<sup>4</sup> *Isha Upanishad*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> *The Hour of God*: Purna Yoga.

<sup>6</sup> *Isha Upanishad*, 8.

<sup>7</sup> *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, Chap. 9.

अस्य लोकस्य का गतिरित्याकाश इति होवाच ह वा इमानि भूतान्याकाशादेव समुत्पद्यन्त  
आकाशं प्रत्यस्तं यन्ति ।<sup>1</sup>

### ACCESSIBLE

He is accessible even to the Atheist. To the materialist He dis-  
guises Himself in matter. For the Nihilist He waits ambushed in  
the bosom of Annihilation.<sup>2</sup>

ये यथा माम् प्रपद्यन्ते तास्तथैव भजाम्यहम्<sup>3</sup>

### ACTION

The thing to be done.<sup>4</sup>

कार्यम् कर्म ।<sup>5</sup>

Fight and overthrow thy opponents.<sup>6</sup>

युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान् ।<sup>7</sup>

Action demanded by the Master of your being.<sup>8</sup>

कर्तव्यम् ।<sup>9</sup>

Thick and tangled is the way of works.<sup>10</sup>

गहना कर्मणो गतिः ।<sup>11</sup>

Action regulated by nature.<sup>12</sup>

स्वभावनियतम् कर्म ।<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Chhandogya Upanishad*, I.9.1.

<sup>2</sup> *The Hour of God: Certitudes.*

<sup>3</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 4.11.

<sup>4</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga: Part 4, Chap. 20.*

<sup>5</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*: 3.19.

<sup>6</sup> *The Ideal of the Karmayogin: Karmayoga.*

<sup>7</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*: 11.34.

<sup>8</sup> *The Yoga and its Objects.*

<sup>9</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*: 3.22.

<sup>10</sup> *The Yoga and its Objects.*

<sup>11</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*: 4.17.

<sup>12</sup> *The Yoga and its Objects.*

<sup>13</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*: 18, 47.

Whosoever has his temperament purged from egoism, whosoever suffers not his soul to receive the impress of the deed, though he slay the whole world yet he slays not and is not bound.<sup>1</sup>

यस्य नाहंकृतं भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।

हत्वापि स इमाल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥<sup>2</sup>

He who is free inwardly, even doing actions, does nothing at all; for it is Nature that works in him under the control of the Lord of Nature.<sup>3</sup>

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।

यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारम् स पश्यति ॥<sup>4</sup>

### FRUIT OF ACTION

To action thou hast a right but never under any circumstances to its fruit.<sup>5</sup>

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।<sup>6</sup>

### MECHANICAL ACTION

Act by mere play of the organs of sense and motor-action.<sup>7</sup>  
केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।<sup>8</sup>

### ADORATION

It is possible so to turn life into an act of adoration to the Supreme by the spirit in one's works; for, says the Gita, 'He who gives to me with a heart of adoration a leaf, a flower, a fruit or a cup of water, I take and enjoy that offering of his devotion.'<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*: Karmayoga.

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 18.17.

<sup>3</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga*: Part 1, Chap. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 13.30.

<sup>5</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga*: Part 1, Chap. 9.

<sup>6</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 2.47.

<sup>7</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga*: Part 2, Chap. 14.

<sup>8</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 5.11.

<sup>9</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga*: Part 1, Chapt 6.

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥<sup>1</sup>

An ultimate inexpressible adoration offered by us to the Transcendent, to the Highest,<sup>2</sup>

परम् भावम् ।<sup>3</sup>

to the Ineffable, is yet no complete worship if it is not offered to him wherever he manifests or wherever he hides his godhead — in man and object and every creature.<sup>4</sup>

मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।<sup>5</sup>

### ALL

All is the Divine Being.<sup>6</sup>

वासुदेवः सर्वम् ।<sup>7</sup>

The Divine in the world, the All, of the Gita.<sup>8</sup>

मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि ।<sup>9</sup>

### AMRITAM

This truth and bliss called by the Veda *amṛtam*, Immortality.<sup>10</sup>

ऋतं सपन्तो अमृतमेवैः ।<sup>11</sup>

### AMSHA (PART)

It is verily an eternal part of Me that in the world of individual

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 9.26.

<sup>2</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga: Part I, Chap. 6.*

<sup>3</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 9.11.

<sup>4</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga: Part I, Chap. 6.*

<sup>5</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 9.11.

<sup>6</sup> *The Life Divine: Vol. 2, Chap. 6.*

<sup>7</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 7.19.

<sup>8</sup> *Letters on Yoga.*

<sup>9</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 9.4.

<sup>10</sup> *The Hour of God: On Yoga*

<sup>11</sup> *Rig Veda*, 1.68.2.

existence becomes the Jiva or individual.<sup>1</sup>

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।<sup>2</sup>

### ANANDA

Ether of bliss, the Ananda Akasha of the Upanishads.<sup>3</sup>

एष आकाश आनन्दः ।<sup>4</sup>

From Ananda all existences are born, by Ananda they remain in being and increase, to Ananda they depart.<sup>5</sup>

आनन्दात् ह्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । आनन्देन जातानि जीवन्ति । आनन्दं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति ।<sup>6</sup>

As the Upanishad insists, the Ananda is the true creative principle. For all takes birth from this divine Bliss.<sup>7</sup>

• आनन्दात् ह्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते ।<sup>8</sup>

The ancient Indian idea is absolutely true that delight, Ananda, is the most expressive and creative nature of the free self because it is the very essence of the original being of the Spirit.<sup>9</sup>

आनन्द आत्मा ।<sup>10</sup>

It is a statement of the Upanishad that there is an ether of Ananda in which all breathe and live; if it were not there, none could breathe or live.<sup>11</sup>

को ह्येवान्यात् कः प्राण्यात् । यदेव आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात् ।<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Ideal of the Karmayogin: The Three Purushas.*

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 15.7.

<sup>3</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga: Part 4, Chap. 24.*

<sup>4</sup> *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.7.

<sup>5</sup> *The Life Divine: Vol. 1, Chap. 12.*

<sup>6</sup> *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 3.6.

<sup>7</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga: Part 2, Chap. 24.*

<sup>8</sup> *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 3.6.

<sup>9</sup> *The Future Poetry: Chap. 25.*

<sup>10</sup> *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.5.

<sup>11</sup> *Letters on Yoga.*

<sup>12</sup> *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.7.

# SAVITRI: A STUDY IN DEPTH

## BOOK TWO: CANTO IV

### THE KINGDOMS OF LITTLE LIFE

A quivering trepidant uncertain world  
Born from that dolorous meeting and eclipse

.....  
Inheritor of poverty and loss

.....  
It strove with a blindness as of groping hands

.....  
Hunting for a joy that earth has failed to keep,  
Too near to our gates its unappeased unrest  
For peace to live on the inert solid globe.

**T**HE dolorous meeting between life and Matter brings about an eclipse of the puissance and the splendour of the former; it has to veil itself in the obscurity of Matter; but even so its power is not altogether lost; it fills Matter with its vibrations of a most subtle kind giving an impression that Matter is lifeless; there is a mutual striving on either side; life aware of its power before its entanglement in Matter and Matter with the urge of the spirit within, both are restless and strive to come out of the darkness; their unappeased unrest accounts for the lack of peace and the prevalence of discontent on the earth.

A Power beyond earth's scope has touched the earth;  
The repose that might have been can be no more;  
A formless yearning passion in man's heart,  
A cry is in his blood for happier things:  
Else could he roam on a free sunlit soil  
With the childlike pain-forgetting mind of beasts  
Or live happy, unmoved, like flowers and trees.  
The Might that came upon earth to bless  
Has stayed on earth to suffer and aspire.

The hunger of life for its pristine glory and the evolutionary stress in Matter are cumulatively responsible for a disturbance in the placidity and contentment that should have been the lot of man also as it has been of beasts, trees and flowers; but he is passionate by a yearning which is as yet formless, aimless; but it is a distinct hankering after a happier state; he feels driven away from the present state by a spirit of disgust and as a sequel life which abandoning its heights, has come to dwell on earth, realises that it has come to strive to struggle and to aspire. 'The desire soul left to itself would circle in the same grooves for ever.'

Man's natural joy of life is overcast

And sorrow is his nurse of destiny.

The animal's thoughtless joy is left behind

Care and reflection burden his daily walk:

.....

He has exhausted now life's surface acts,

His being's hidden realms remain to explore.

.....

In his fragile tenement he grows Nature's lord.

In him Matter wakes from its long obscure trance,

The involved life in Matter wakes up from its long trance and in man reaches a consciousness, the highest registered so far; the thoughtless joy of an animal is not for him; he is burdened with a reflection and seriousness; sorrow and pain are his constant drives; the banquet of life is too meagre for his growing soul; from a fragile, puny, defenceless slave of nature, he progresses to a spirit, a lord, a conqueror of nature, having all its resources at his command; but he realises that there are hidden realms to be explored and conquered.

Life cast her seed in the body's indolent mould;

.....

Compelling it to sense and seek and feel.

.....

A guideless sense was given her for her road;

.....

Instinct was hers, the chrysalis of Truth,  
 .....

She brought into Matter's dull tenacity  
 Her anguished claim to her lost sovereign right,  
 .....

Adorer of a joy without a name,  
 In her obscure cathedral of delight  
 To dim dwarf gods she offers secret rites.  
 But vain unending is the sacrifice,  
 The priest an ignorant mage who only makes  
 Futile mutations in the altar's plan  
 And casts blind hopes into a powerless flame.

The poet in a flash-back, rapidly sketches the evolution of life; the seed of life is cast into the mould of Matter; the seal of insentience is gradually lifted; the latent force wakes up from its torpor; struggles into a sense, a movement, not guided by an intelligence, but by an automatism of the blind working of an instinct towards truth; life thus slowly overcomes the resistance of Matter; seeks to establish her anguished claim of sovereignty; she enters into the crypt of Matter as a devotee into a cathedral; offers her prayers before the powers in charge of Matter, but all she succeeds in obtaining is a few surface alterations; some mutation in the shrine of the Matter; and even this is done through the mediation of the mage, the priest in charge.

'...in Matter undoubtedly lies the crux; that raises the obstacle; for because of Matter Life is gross and limited and stricken with death and pain, because of Matter Mind is more than half blind, its wings clipped, its feet tied to a narrow perch and held back from the vastness and freedom above of which it is conscious.<sup>1</sup>

And hardly under that load can she advance;  
 .....

Matter dissatisfies, she turns to mind  
 She conquers earth, her field, then claims the heavens.  
 .....

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 206.

Only a glimmer sometimes splits mind's sky  
 .....  
 That makes of night a path to unknown dawns  
 .....  
 For Knowledge gropes, but meets not Wisdom's face.  
 .....  
 A foundling of the gods she wanders here  
 Like a child-soul left near the gates of Hell<sup>1</sup>.  
 Fumbling through fog in search of Paradise.

Life finding it difficult to advance with the load of Matter, and feeling dissatisfied with its rigidity and unyielding nature, develops the mind, hoping that it may serve the purpose; mind has occasional glimpses which are too soon enveloped in darkness; it struggles to reach the light of dawn through the night of ignorance; it fumbles and gropes along; it is like the orphan left at the gates of hell seeking its way to Paradise, dimmed by the fog and the mists. Thus the evolutionary stages are marked by nescience slowly leading to ignorance which opens gradually the gates of knowledge that is purely intellectual where the higher promptings of the spirit are felt, making the seeker dissatisfied till the highest consciousness, wisdom is gained.

'If, in other words, it is not merely a mental being who is hidden in the forms of the universe, but the infinite Being, Knowledge, Will which emerges out of Matter first as Life, then as Mind, with the rest of it still unrevealed, then the emergence of consciousness out of the apparently Inconscient must have another and completer term; the appearance of a supramental spiritual being who shall impose on his mental, vital, bodily workings a higher law than that of the dividing Mind is no longer impossible. On the contrary, it is the natural and the inevitable conclusion of the nature of cosmic existence.'<sup>2</sup>

In this slow ascension he must follow her pace  
 .....  
 For so only could he know the obscure cause  
 Of all that holds us back and baffles God

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

.....  
 He chanced into a grey obscurity  
 Teeming with instincts from the mindless gulfs  
 .....  
 Life here was intimate with Death and Night  
 And ate Death's food that she might breathe awhile;  
 .....  
 Parading she flaunted her animal disgrace  
 .....  
 The graceless squalor of her beast desires,  
 .....  
 Here first she crawled out from her cabin of mud  
 .....  
 The upward look was alien to her sight,  
 .....  
 Renounced was the glory and the felicity,

Aswapathy enters into the coils of life, enters its pace, so that he may experience the difficulties, the obstacles thwarting the upward ascent; he reaches the obscure place of its start where the instinct takes the place of the mind where it enters into a compromise with Nescience so that she may be permitted to breathe awhile; she readily signs the conditions of her acceptance of subconsciousness and the reign of Night; becomes the companion of Death, satisfying his hunger by her mutations so that this sojourn may eventually lead to happier stations. Life in her present state appears a contrast to her divine birth; it is deformed, ugly and shorn of its glory; does not evince the slightest sense of beauty nor a response to light; she pitifully revels in her debasement; instead of being ashamed, she parades her squalor and vileness; she lives in a cabin of mud, mute, bare-bodied and inglorious; she has not much freedom of movement due to the heavy weight of her body; renounced have been the glory and felicity that have been hers once; she wallows in the mud and mire and hardly looks upward whence she has descended.

A swaddled visionless and formless mind,  
 Asked for a body to translate its soul.

.....  
 On dim confines where Life and Matter meet

.....  
 There life was born but died before it could live.

.....  
 • Mind flickered, a disordered infant-glow,  
 And random shapeless energies drove towards form

.....  
 Matter smitten by Matter glimmered to sense,

.....  
 Of instinct from a cloaked subliminal bed  
 Sensations crowded, dumb substitutes for thought

.....  
 Free in a world of settled anarchy.

The need to exist, the instinct to survive  
 Engrossed the tense precarious moment's will

.....  
 It was a vain unnecessary world

.....  
 Nothing seemed worth the labour to become.

Aswapathy sees a mind, a consciousness groping for a body, a casement, in the dim meeting place of mind and life; everything there is in an amorphous shapeless confusion; life is dead as soon as it is born; there is a struggle for existence but there is no solid ground for life; he notices a whirl of energies anxious to take form; there is an anxiety for inconscience to develop consciousness; there is clash of matter with matter; their friction gives rise to instinct; sensations take the place of thoughts; the hammer-beats of nature, its violence awakes a perception which still partakes of a mechanical nature; in this world of anarchy, survival is the primary concern engrossing the attention of a precarious existence always exposed to the hostility of nature; food is not sought for because of hunger but accrues by a combat of forces and the violence of nature; in short it seems an unseemly and unnecessary world, not worth its labour.

But judged not so his spirit's wakened eye.

.....  
 He saw the purpose in the works of Time.  
 .....

The first writhings of the cosmic serpent Force  
 Uncoiled from the mystic rings of Matter's trance;  
 It raised its head in the warm air of life.  
 It could not cast off yet Night's stiffening sleep  
 Or wear as yet mind's wonder flecks and streaks,  
 Put on its jewelled hood the crown of soul  
 Or stand erect in the blaze of spirit's sun.

Aswapathy is like a lonely star a representative of light on a vast background of the dark horizon; he with his awakened spiritual consciousness, sees a purpose, a concealed design, working itself out in all the apparently aimless and unmeaning movement; to his eye, the cosmic force is like a python, uncoiling itself ring by ring, from its trance or mysterious sleep in Matter; it has just come out into the open to draw in fresh air; it has not yet developed the consciousness of a mind, nor has it advanced to the level where it can feel the urges of the spirit within.

The secret crawl of consciousness to light  
 .....

Beneath the body's crust of thickened self  
 .....

The turbid yeast of Nature's passionate change,  
 Ferment of the soul's creation out of mire.  
 A heavenly process donned this grey disguise,  
 .....

To release the glory of God in Nature's mud.  
 .....

A mystic Presence none can probe nor rule,  
 Creator of this game of ray and shade  
 .....

Asks from the body the soul's intimacies  
 .....

Links its mechanic throbs to light and love.

It summons the spirit's sleeping memories

But the consciousness first abandons itself to the carnal pleasures of lust; has a fill of satisfaction from all sensuous enjoyments; but life feels the ferment of the soul beneath the crust of the body; the in-conscience is a camouflage, a grey disguise, purposely worn so that in a phased manner, the immersed divine glory may be released; Aswapathy's spiritual insight reveals to him the secrets of the shifting flux; he tracks the source of all the movement; he discovers the mystic Presence responsible for the light and the shade of existence; it breathes a spark of life into Matter; and makes it the link between the body and the spirit.

Up from subconscious depths beneath Time's foam;

.....  
They come disguised as feelings and desires,  
Like weeds upon the surface float awhile

.....  
Always a heaven-truth broods in life's deeps;

The pressure of the spirit in some unguarded moment, when the surface consciousness proves a lax sentinel, releases the longings and the impulses concealed in the subconscious; they come out like a rabble in a riotous holiday spirit; they are just like the weeds that float for a time and sink in the stream; these however impure and degraded they may be, are evidences of an indwelling spirit that in a more propitious time may express itself better and take direct charge of the movement.

A touch of God's rapture in creation's acts

.....  
Lurks still in the dumb roots of death and birth,  
The world's senseless beauty mirrors God's delight.

.....  
It flows in the wind's breath, in the tree's sap,  
Its hued magnificence blooms in leaves and flowers.  
When life broke through its half-drowse in the plant

That feels and suffers but cannot move or cry.  
 In beast and in winged bird and thinking man  
 It made of the heart's rhythm its music's beat:  
 It forced the unconscious tissues to awake  
 And ask for happiness and earn the pang

The world has come out of delight; is sustained by it; the world mirrors the rapture of God; it is displayed everywhere; it is manifest in the wind's breath, the tree's sap, in the magnificence of its leaves and flowers; when we reach from the subconscious plant to the conscious animal kingdom, the God's rapture may be heard in the musical, rhythmical heart-beats of the birds, the beasts and the men.

All Nature's longing drive none can resist,  
 .....  
 To enlarge life's room and scope and pleasure's range,  
 To battle and overcome and make one's own,  
 .....  
 A yearning to possess and be possessed,

In the higher order of creation a tissue of consciousness is awakened; there is a craving for happiness, a thrill of pleasure to be acquired with a pang of suffering if necessary; but blind to the fount of joy within, the soul catches at passing things; it seeks for delight elsewhere thinking it lies in possession of external objects and thus there is developed a will to battle, to overcome and make one's own.

Here was its early brief attempt to be,  
 .....  
 Whose stamp of failure haunts all ignorant life.  
 .....  
 Ghostlike pursues all that we dream and do.  
 Although on earth are firm established lives,  
 .....  
 Yet are its roots of will ever the same;

The determination to live, to somehow exist is there even

amongst the discouraging and disheartening factors; but its fear and the failure to live up to its resolve haunts it through life and shadows its waking and even the dream consciousness; though life here follows the rigid laws fixed and unvaried by Nature, of growth followed by decay, there is however a persistence of will to live, to exist; this determination is persistent everywhere in life.

This was the first cry of the awaking world.

.....  
 In beast and reptile and in thinking man  
 It lasts and is the fount of all their life.

.....  
 The spirit in a finite ignorant world  
 Must rescue so its prisoned consciousness  
 Forced out in little jets at quivering points  
 From the Inconscient's sealed infinitude.

.....  
 A neighbour is her life to insentient Nought.

This yearning for life is not confined to man only, but permeates even the lower order of existence such as the reptile, and the beast; it is a craving in evidence ever since the dawn of consciousness even in the minutest degree; to exist is the be-all and the end-all of life; it has no loftier aims; but the infinitude of the spirit lying prisoned under the seal of Inconscience struggles for liberation; the urges and the promptings that flash upon it may show the light or furnish the key; but alas they are too soon engulfed by the darkness; further the consciousness is disabled by the condition of its precariousness by nature of its mortality and by its proximity to inconscience which has a more enduring grip than the fitful glimmers that may open out at critical junctures of life.

Non-Being's night could never have been saved  
 If Being had not plunged into the dark

.....  
 Being became the Void and Conscious-Force  
 Nescience and walk of a blind Energy

And Ecstasy took the figure of World-pain.  
 .....

A Wisdom that prepares its far-off ends  
 Planned so to start her slow aeonic game.  
 .....

At last the struggling Energy can emerge  
 .....

The Two embrace and strive and each know each  
 .....

In Nature he saw the mighty Spirit concealed,  
 Watched the weak birth of a tremendous Force,

The Spirit which has plunged into the nether region of Inconscience the opposite of itself should have ever remained unrescued as Non-Being but for the Supreme planning an evolution from this devolution of Himself; the Eternal with the intention of working out the salvation of the world, throws himself into the limitations of time; it is He that undergoes all the sufferings in the shape of life so that by his sacrifice he may bring about the redemption here; for this purpose the Being becomes a Void, an apparent blank; his Bliss gets transformed into pain; and his consciousness wears the mask of ignorance; he thus conceals himself in his contraries; but the indwelling intelligence in everything pushes it along the planned curves to the designed end; the self-discovery should be a slow, aeonic purpose since otherwise the descent is meaningless and the game deprived of all the pleasure sought to be derived from it; the Spirit and Nature, the Purusha and the Prakriti are at hide and seek; the struggle for emergence, the stir of the Spirit becomes manifest to Aswapathy even in the faint beginnings of life; everywhere he finds evidence of the mighty Spirit concealed in Nature and he derives a feeling, an assurance that ultimately the struggling energy will come out in a wider field of consciousness and embrace nature its playmate.

We may quote from *The Life Divine*, 'Existence plunging into apparent Non-Existence, Consciousness into an apparent Inconscience, Delight of existence into a vast cosmic insensibility are the first result of the fall and, in the return from it by a struggling fragmentary experience, the rendering of Consciousness into the dual

terms of truth and falsehood, knowledge and error, of Existence into the dual terms of life and death, of Delight of existence into the dual terms of pain and pleasure are the necessary process of the labour of self-discovery.... Still because the Non-Existence is a concealed Existence, the Inconscience a concealed Consciousness, the insensibility a masked and Dormant Anānda, these secret realities must emerge; the hidden overmind and Supermind too must in the end fulfil themselves in this apparently opposite organisation from a dark infinite.<sup>1</sup>

‘If this underlying subliminal consciousness were to come itself to the surface, there would be a direct knowledge; but this is not possible, first, because of the veto of obstruction of the Inconscience and secondly because the evolutionary intention is to develop slowly through an imperfect but growing surface awareness.’<sup>2</sup>

‘As Life and Mind have been released in Matter, so too must in their time these greater powers of the concealed Godhead emerge from the involution and their supreme Light descend into us from above.’<sup>3</sup>

And there arose from the dim gulf of things  
The strange creations of a thinking sense,  
.....

Beings were born who perished without trace,  
Events that were a formless drama’s limbs  
.....

An insect hedonism fluttered and crawled  
And basked in a sunlit Nature’s surface thrills  
And dragon raptures, python agonies  
Crawled in the marsh and mire and licked the sun  
.....

Nature now launched the extreme experience  
.....

To massive from infinitesimal shapes,

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 263.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 546.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264

Aswapathy sees a scene of creation where nature has launched an experimentation to massive from infinitesimal shapes; life there is which attempts to be but perishes as soon as it comes into being; they are the inconsequential creations in the whirl of a blind life force; they look like events in a drama of existence which has as yet taken no definite shape or direction; fragmentary and fitful existences bask for a while under the warmth of the sun and perish; next is the stride from the puny to the gigantic creations of life; huge animals like the python and the dragon crawl into view and enjoy the surface thrills of nature; these are mighty of body but dwarfish in brain.

The kingdom of the animal self arose,  
Where deed is all and mind is still half-born

.....  
But to the outward only were they alive,

.....  
And to the prick of need that drove their lives.

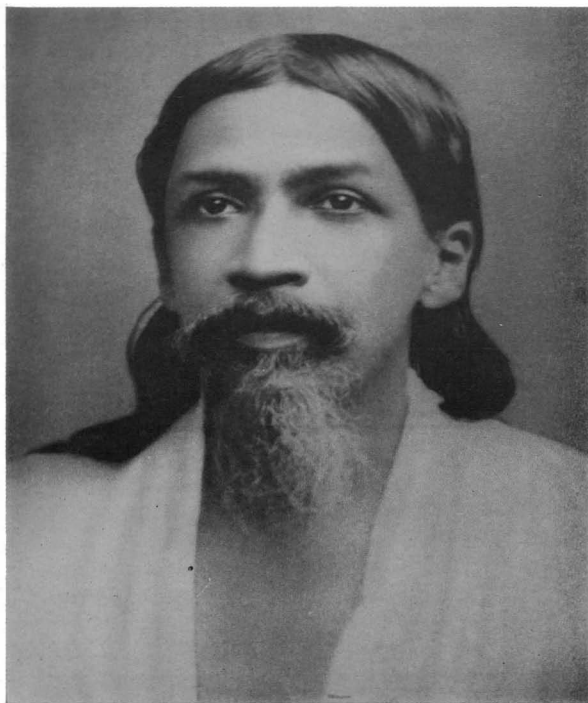
.....  
Its thoughts were kneaded by the shocks of sense;  
It captured not the spirit in the form,

The animal life has an intelligence which is confined to a response to the externals; they are pricked into an activity by the bodily needs of hunger and self-protection; it is not aware of the spirit nor is the mind developed enough to give it a respite from the physical preoccupations; it is the shocks of the environment that determine the texture of its thoughts.

Beings were there who wore a human form;  
Absorbed they lived in the passion of the scene,  
But knew not who they were or why they lived:  
Life had for them no aim save Nature's joy

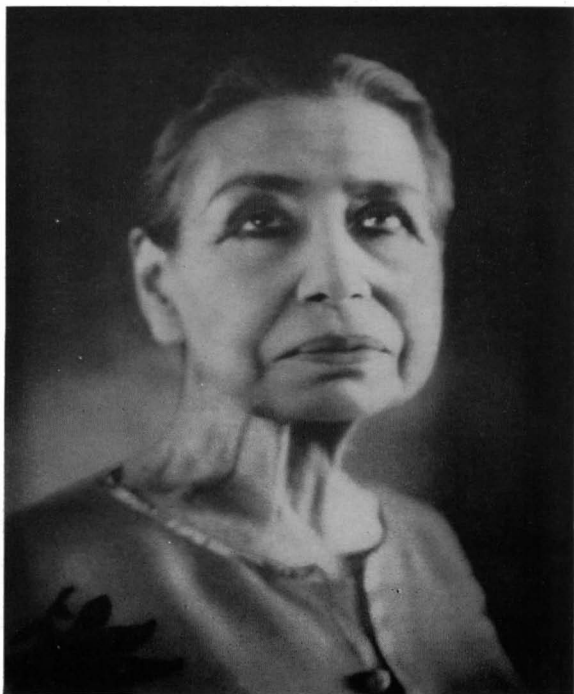
.....  
They worked for the body's wants, they craved no more,

.....  
Identified with the spirit's outward shell.



OUR HOMAGE

Ms. Naffar Chandra Jute Mills Limited, Calcutta.



OUR HOMAGE

B. N. Engineering Works, Calcutta.

There are beings who though they wear the appearance of man are close to animals in the nature and the way of their lives; they are never worried about the purpose of their existence or its origin or goal; they are immersed in the satisfaction of the biological needs and enjoyment of the feast provided by nature; the shell and not the spirit, claims all their attention.

He saw the drama only and the stage.

.....  
The burden of reflection was not born:

Mind looked on Nature with unknowing eyes,  
Adored her boons and feared her monstrous strokes.

.....  
It thirsted not for the secret wells of Truth,

.....  
But made a register of crowding facts  
And strung sensations on a vivid thread:

.....  
But only to feed the surface sense with bliss.

.....  
To guard their form of self from Nature's harm,  
To enjoy and to survive was all their care.

They are interested in the charm of the passing spectacle, the phantasmagoria of life and its unstable and gorgeous base; man simply looks on nature with a blank unthinking eye; his mind is a record transcribing all the impressions; it revels in the boons of nature and fears its frowns; all the sensations are strung on the thread of his memory; he is more involved in the primary concern of self-preservation against nature's cruelties and a free abandon to an enjoyment of its bounty than in the reflections of a higher order or in the discovery of the secret wells of truth within.

To save their small lives from surrounding Death

They made a tiny circle of defence

Against the siege of the huge universe:

They preyed upon the world and were its prey,

But never dreamed to conquer and be free.  
 .....

The patterns of thinking of a little group  
 Fixed a traditional behaviour's law.

With the intention of ensuring their survival, they raise fortifications against the inroads of nature; for purposes of defence they organise themselves into a tiny circle and fix up the modes of behaviour; they live on nature and nature lives on them; it may be recalled that the eater is at last eaten; they have not yet the thought or capacity of making a bid for their freedom by the conquest of nature not through exploitation but by the development of identity or harmony with nature.

They turned in grooves of animal desire.  
 .....

Did by a banded selfishness a small good  
 Or wrought a dreadful wrong and cruel pain  
 On sentient lives and thought they did no ill.  
 .....

Mocking or thrilled by their torn victim's pangs;  
 Admiring themselves as titans and as gods  
 Proudly they sang their high and glorious deeds  
 .....

Those like himself, by blood or custom kin,  
 .....

His personal nebula's constituent stars,  
 Satellite companions of his solar I.

A small circle determines the code of behaviour to be followed by the rest; satisfaction of carnal desires is its activating principle, they form themselves into small bands and live by rapine, rape and slaughter; they are proud of a good or evil done if it serves the interests of their group; they glory in the pangs of their victim and fancy themselves titans or gods according to the respective carnage or good done; they sing the paeans of their triumph; those that have like disposition or have ties of consanguinity are admitted into the pack;

they are the satellites moving round the ego of a leader, catering to his interests and incidentally deriving small benefits for themselves.

Herding for safety on a dangerous earth  
 He gathered them round him as if minor Powers  
 To make a common front against the world

.....  
 Or else to heal his body's loneliness.  
 In others than his kind he sensed a foe,

.....  
 Or he live as lives the solitary brute;

.....  
 None thought to look beyond the hour's gains,

.....  
 Or felt some touch divine surprise his heart.

.....  
 Inflicting mutual grief and happiness  
 In ignorance of the Self for ever one

They form into aggregates to protect themselves against the hostility of nature or other hordes or to escape from a sense of desolation in a not altogether friendly world; sometimes he may choose to remain isolated and in that case he is all nerves, ever in the dread of an attack and is in a state of preparedness to meet the same; thus they are absorbed in the activities of the hour; they never look beyond or experience a touch of the divine; they have no ideals to make the world better; they inflict grief on each other by mutual rivalries forgetting that there is a unifying self which remains common to all.

A half-awakened Nescience struggled there  
 To know by sight and touch the outside of things.  
 Instinct was formed; in memory's crowded sleep  
 The past lived on as in a bottomless sea:

.....  
 Clutched to her the little she could reach and seize  
 And put aside in her subconscious cave.

.....

And learn by failure and progress by fall

By suffering discover his deep soul

Consciousness is in throes of birth; it begins as ignorance trying to know; it is just like a half-awakened person feeling still drowsy; it is by sight and sensation that it becomes vaguely aware and instinct does duty for mind; the experiences gained, the impressions left are shelved in the lockers of the sub-conscious; it draws from the subliminal vaults only just what is necessary for meeting the present needs; the rebuffs in life, the discomfitures and failures are the schools of its discipline and development; they enlarge its consciousness and enable it to discover the soul hidden within.

Half-way she stopped and found her faith no more.

Only the life could think and not the mind,

Only the sense could feel and not the soul,

Some joy to be, some rapturous leaps of sense.

Behind all moved seeking for vessels to hold

A first raw vintage of the grapes of God

On earth's mud a spilth of the supernal Bliss,

Intoxicating the stupefied soul and mind

A heady wine of rapture dark and crude,

Dim, uncast yet into spiritual form

Obscure inhabitant of the world's blind core

An unborn godhead's will, a mute desire.

Life stops half-way since her faith does not carry her along the full course and falters in the middle by distraction and distrust; it is only with the surface layers of consciousness that man thinks; he does not bring into play the psychic person; 'this veiled psychic entity is the flame of the Godhead always alight within us, inextinguishable even by that dense unconsciousness of any spiritual self within which obscures our outward nature. It is a flame born out of the Divine and, lumi-

nous inhabitant of the Ignorance, grows in it till it is able to turn it towards the Knowledge. It is the concealed Witness and Control, the hidden guide, the Daemon of Socrates, the inner light or inner voice of the mystic. It is that which endures and is imperishable in us from birth to birth, untouched by death, decay or corruption, an indestructible spark of the Divine<sup>21</sup>

He is soon caught in the web of raptures that the senses weave around him; and as a consequence the soul-search is abandoned; but behind all the surface impermanent pleasures is the everlasting vintage of delight and ecstasy of God; it is seeking for a proper medium to touch the earth and because of the dearth of an appropriate receptacle, only a few drops are scattered on the earth and even with these life become intoxicated enough to grow forgetful of the soul; but what becomes obvious is that the obscure inhabitant within is anxious and resolved to disclose himself.

A mould of body's early mind was made.

.....  
A difficult evolution from below

Called a masked intervention from above;

.....  
The Intelligence that devised the cosmic scheme.

.....  
Moving concealed by Matter and dumb life.

.....  
There was no thinking self, aim there was none:

.....  
Only to the unstable surface rose  
Sensations, stabs and edges of desire

.....  
And jets of subconscious will or hunger's pulls.

.....  
Then came the pressure of a seeing Power

.....  
Centre of reference in a conscious field,

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 207.

Even an illusion gave of fixity  
As if a sea could serve as a firm soil.

Aswaphathy observes a third movement where there are inchoate beginnings of mind; this is a development due to an urge below, supported by a prompting from above, otherwise the concealed intelligence would for ever have remained hidden; it begins as a thin current dispersing itself over the wide unconscious world, gathering experiences on the way; the first formations of a thinking self, if it could be called one, are in the shape of sensations and desires; but gradually all the forces of diffusion are brought into a single focus, a centre of reference, the mind, which gives an illusion of a stability to the different movements of existence; a firm base for existence is as inconceivable as a firm soil on a wavy sea.

It forced on flux a limit and a shape

.....  
Drew lines to snare the spirit's formlessness.  
It fashioned the life-mind of bird and beast,  
The answer of the reptile and the fish,  
The primitive pattern of the thoughts of man.  
A finite movement of the Infinite

.....  
Its right to be immortal it reserved,  
But built a wall against the siege of death  
And threw a hook to clutch eternity.

A finite movement of the Infinite starts by fashioning for its dwelling forms of the bird, the fish, the reptile and the beast; while retaining its privilege of immortality, it builds up the protective defence of a body against the assaults of Death; the body is the bait thrown to Death but the Spirit remains eternal and death is only a process to immortality.

A thinking entity appeared in Space.  
A little ordered world broke into view  
Where being had prison-room for act and sight,

.....  
 An instrument personality was born,  
 .....

A little joy and knowledge satisfied  
 This little being tied into a knot  
 • And hung on a bulge of its environment,  
 A little curve cut off in measureless Space,  
 .....

It knew itself a creature of the mud;  
 .....

It asked no larger law, no loftier air;  
 .....

A backward scholar on logic's rickety bench  
 Indoctrinated by the erring sense,  
 It took appearance for the face of God,  
 .....

For heaven a starry strip of doubtful blue;  
 Aspects of being feigned to be the whole.

As a culmination of all the experimentation of the Life-Force, there appears on the stage of existence, a thinking entity, the man; he infuses into the chaotic world an order and a system; though the spirit is still a prisoner, it has abundant room to think and act; it restricts the flights to the narrow limits of the prison-house; it moves in the small orbit of the seen and the known and imposes a self-inhibition to adventure into the unknown; reason in him is the glass reflecting the habitual movements of nature, its reflex actions; he acquiesces to move in the pre-fixed periphery; and bows to the conditions of brevity and the aimlessness of existence.

The little human is like a minute fragment cut off from the rest of the environment on which he appears a protuberance, a bulge; he is like a curve, a segment of a whole; he has a mind that can plan, a will that can strive but they are always directed towards the satisfaction of small desires and accomplishment of petty ends; there is a mountain of labour for possession of a trifle; a creature of the mud, the mind has a low perch and is incapable of higher flights or aspirations; it is always extrovert, never introvert, always drawn out and

never withdraws into itself; a logician depending exclusively on the senses, the mind takes appearances for facts, and fragments for whole.

And tiny egos took the world as means  
 To sate awhile dwarf lusts and brief desires,  
 In a death-closed passage saw the life's start and end  
 As though a blind alley were creation's sign,  
 As if for this the soul had coveted birth  
 In the wonderland of a self-creating world  
 .....  
 This fire growing by its fuel's death,  
 .....  
 Only it hoped for greatness in its den  
 .....  
 And conquest of life-room for self and kin,  
 .....  
 It had no greater deeper cause to live.  
 .....  
 In limits only it was powerful;  
 .....  
 Its knowledge was the body's instrument;  
 Absorbed in the little works of its prison-house  
 It turned around the same unchanging points  
 In the same circle of interest and desire,  
 But thought itself the master of its jail.

The ego, though tiny, exercises its omnipotence over the man; it eggs him on to the satisfaction of his lust and unending desires; he imagines that his career is routed through a passage opening with life and culminating in death; he further thinks that he has to make the most of its brevity by its exploitation making it yield hedonistic pleasures; but there should have been a higher purpose to be served, by the opportunity of life and the divine with his infinite wisdom could not have created a blind alley as imagined in our ignorance; but the ego tied to its tether of puny thoughts, never looks beyond its self-aggrandisement; even the knowledge gained is used as another limb of the body for procuring more satisfaction to its animal

needs; but its desire grows by what it feeds on and the satisfaction of one desire is the fertile bed for another to blossom; confined to its den it luxuriates in its un-varying repetitious routine of pampering the body and starving the soul; gratified with the little elbow room achieved, it forgets its condition of being a prisoner and has the fancy that it is the master of the jail.

Thought was its apex or its gutter's rim:

.....  
Attached to a confined familiar world,

.....  
Life was a play monotonously the same.

There were no vast perspectives of the spirit,

No swift invasions of unknown delight,

No golden distances of wide release.

.....  
A moment's movement doomed to last through Time.

.....  
A little light in a great darkness born,

Life knew not where it went nor whence it came.

'Around all floated still the nescient haze.

The only redeeming feature is the achievement of thought which is the highest development since the beginning of life from its puny start; while that is the top, it is also the surface of the gutter of nescience; it is a product of the inconscience which still courses in its veins; complacent with the customary, it never embarks on the unfamiliar; it riots in the pleasures of the moment; is not cloyed with the monotony of the movement initiated at one moment or point of time and continued ever the same throughout the rest of life; he does not have the taste for the unknown or the perennial; his consciousness is a little candle throwing its ineffective light on a massive darkness; surrounded by nescience, it little knows whence and for what it has come or whither it goes.

Y. S. R. CHANDRAN

## THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

(2)

*(Continued from the February 1974 issue)*

### THE RISHI'S TASK AND METHOD

THE Indian tradition ascribes a dual function to the Rishi. He was both the "seer" of the hymns and at the same time an officiant at the public sacrifice round which the life of the Vedic peoples turned. This gave him an advantage as well as was a source of considerable difficulty. The advantage was that the priest could direct the prayers to the ordinary ends in view, — the securing of cattle, horses, hero-sons, and all other forms of wealth that would interest his patrons, and thereby secure their approval. The difficulty sprang from the fact that the author of the hymns had quite another aim in view, namely, to make his inner aspiration for the spiritual riches clear to his own mind and to those whom he cared to impart his knowledge. How did he manage these apparently contradictory tasks? The answer to this question gives us a clue to the mystery of the Veda.

Two things came to his help, first, an occult phenomenon of deep import to which he seems to have had access, and second, the peculiar character of the language which he had to use.

"The forces and processes of the physical world", says Sri Aurobindo, "repeat, as in a symbol, the truths of the supraphysical action which produced it. And since it is by the same forces and the same processes, one in the physical worlds and the supraphysical, that our inner life and its development are governed, the Rishis adopted the phenomena of physical Nature as just symbols for those functionings of the inner life which it was their difficult task to indicate in the concrete language of a sacred poetry that must at the same time serve for the external worship of the Gods as powers of the visible universe."<sup>1</sup>

How the authors of the hymns made use of this correspondence between the physical and the supraphysical and what phenomena of physical Nature and other facts of the normal physical life of the times the Rishis took into account in this connection we shall discuss in fuller detail. Here it may suffice to say that this "symbolic" view of things pervades the entire Veda, and adds not a little to the difficulty of getting at its true import. For we of a later age have not only lost the meaning of the symbols, the key words that hold the clue to the Vedic thought, but have also progressed too far in abstract intellectual thinking to understand and appreciate the very different mentality of that early age which preferred the concrete to the abstract like a child does.

The Vedic language too was in many respects, and particularly in its use of the vocables, very different from any of the modern languages. It belonged to a stage in human history when language itself was young. One of its traits, namely, the use of a single word to express more than one idea or action, has no doubt persisted to our times, and is particularly noticeable in the classical Sanskrit which encouraged in its poets a rather disconcerting habit of *double entendre*. But what really distinguishes the old Vedic tongue from its modern descendants is the use of the same vocable as noun, adjective, adverb and sometimes even as verb, and most remarkable of all, — the source in fact of all this multiplicity, — the close association that was still vivid in the mind of the speaker or hearer between the vocable and the root from which it came.

"The word for the Vedic Rishi is still a living thing, a thing of power, creative, formative. It is not yet a conventional symbol for an idea but itself the parent and former of ideas. It carries within it the memory of its roots, is still conscious of its own history.... For the Vedic Rishi *vrka* meant the tearer and therefore, among other applications of the sense, a wolf; *dhenu* meant the fosterer, nourisher, and therefore a cow."<sup>2</sup>

These characteristics of the language enabled the authors of the hymns to use their words with great pliability. To take a single instance, "*canas* meant food but also it meant 'enjoyment, pleasure',

therefore it could be used by the Rishi to suggest to the profane mind only the food given at the sacrifice to the gods, but for the initiated it meant the Ananda, the joy of the divine bliss entering into the physical consciousness and at the same time suggested the image of the Soma wine, at once the food of the gods and the Vedic symbol of the Ananda".<sup>3</sup> The instances may be multiplied, as will be shown presently.

### THE SYMBOLIC SACRIFICE

The sacrifice, that is, the ceremonial offering of gifts to the gods, mainly in the form of food articles, accompanied by hymns of prayer and praise and invoking their participation in the gifts, in return for which they were expected to bestow on the giver the boons demanded, this formed the kernel of the Vedic worship. It is round the sacrifice therefore that the Vedic symbolism has been built. The sacrifice itself carries in the Veda a deep symbolic sense. All its attending circumstances, the offerings, the boons demanded, the gods who confer these boons, the powers that are ever on the alert to spoil the sacrifice and from whom the gods have to win the riches for man, — even the names of the Rishis who officiate as priests and the "kings" who fight the battles with "robber" chiefs, — these are all used as expressive symbols for the inner discipline in which alone lay the main interest of the Rishis in fashioning these hymns.

Wherever we come across symbolic poetry of a high order, as among the Sufis of the Middle Ages or the Vaishnava poets of Bengal for example, we find the poets drawing freely on the life that surrounded them — the wine and the cup-bearer, the drunkard and his intoxication, the passion and sensuousness of human love; for these were figures that would be easily recognised by the profane as well as the initiate, in their apparent and the esoteric sense. The Vedic symbolism is likewise based on the life of the common man of the times.

"That life", as is well-known to the modern student of the Veda, "was largely an existence of herdsmen and tillers of the soil for the mass of the people varied by the wars and migrations of the clans under their kings, and in all this activity the worship of the gods by sacrifice had become the most solemn and magnificent element, the

knot of all the rest. For by the sacrifice were won the rain which fertilised the soil, the herds of cattle and heroes necessary for their existence in peace and war, the wealth of gold, land (*kṣetra*), retainers, fighting-men which constituted greatness and leadership, the victory in the battle, safety in the journey by land and water which was so difficult and dangerous in those times of poor means of communication and loosely organised inter-tribal existence.

“All the principal features of that outward life which they saw around them the mystic poets took and turned into significant images of the inner life.”<sup>4</sup>

In this inner life, the idea of “sacrifice”, in the literal sense of “making holy”, dominated the rest, as the sacrificial ritual did in the external life of the senses. What exactly did the Rishis mean by this inner sacrifice becomes then a matter of crucial importance in the understanding of the Veda.

The object of the Vedic discipline was to find a way out of the “much falsehood” of our normal vital physical and mental life to the truth and felicity of a diviner existence. This in the view of the Vedic Rishi could be done only by an enlargement of the consciousness. The Sacrifice, in the Vedic sense, is “the offering of the mortal being’s activities to the divine by awakening his consciousness so that it assumes right states of emotion and right movements of thought in accordance with the Truth ... and by impelling in it the rise of those truths which, according to the Vedic Rishis, liberate the life and being from falsehood, weakness and limitation and open to it the doors of the supreme felicity.”<sup>5</sup>

The Sacrifice is “a symbol of cosmic and individual activity become self-conscious, enlightened and aware of its goal. The whole process of the universe is in its very nature a sacrifice, voluntary or involuntary. Self-fulfilment by self-immolation, to grow by giving is the universal law .... All the powers and potentialities of the human life are offered up, in the symbol of a sacrifice, to the divine Life in the Cosmos.”<sup>6</sup> The essence of the Sacrifice is a labour of constant discipline, an effort of submission and surrender to the Divine Will, once one becomes aware of it, in all one’s acts and thoughts and feel-

ings. The condition of the effective Sacrifice is "the continual resort day by day, in the night and in the light, of the thought in the human being with submission, adoration, self-surrender, to the divine Will and Wisdom, represented by Agni,"<sup>77</sup> as has been made clear in the very first hymn of the Rigveda.

This is no easy task, indeed is the most difficult work that can be undertaken by man. The Sacrifice (*yajña*) therefore has among its many synonyms, the words *karma*, *apas*, *kāra*, *kīri*, all meaning work, the work, and *carsani* and *kṛṣṭi*, both implying effort, laborious action. Sri Aurobindo therefore calls "the Vedic work, the sacrifice, the toil of aspiring humanity, the *arati* of the Aryan."<sup>78</sup> It is a labour of constant self-introspection and self-correction which few would willingly undertake. It is a constant progression, a march, a journey towards the Light.

It may be observed in passing that it was perhaps due to this supreme importance attached to Sacrifice as the most important work, *karma*, prescribed for man, one that leads to the highest felicity, that in the age that followed the composition and compilation of the hymns, in the age of the Brahmana texts which seek to find a justification for the details of the sacrificial ritual, that so much stress was laid on the correct performance of the rites. And *karma* came to be used in later orthodox thought, so carefully systematised in the Srauta Sutras and Grihya Sutras, and finally in the philosophy of Purva Mimansa, as practically synonymous with the due performance of the Vedic ritual. This it is that really accounts for the view that the Vedic hymnal constitutes the *karma-kāṇḍa* of the Vedic literature, ignoring the fact that the right will to works could come only from a true knowledge and perception of the divine Will. The Sacrifice implied both *jñāna* and *karma*.

### THE BOONS DEMANDED

The Sacrifice has for its object the winning of desirable boons. These boons are described by the general term, *rayi*, *rādhas*, wealth or prosperity. The chief elements of this wealth are cows (*go*), horses (*aśva*), gold (*hiranya*), men or heroes (*vīra*), chariots (*ratha*), offspring (*prajā* or *apatya*). These boons are the gifts of the gods to men who

do the sacrifice well. Who the gods are in the esoteric view we shall discuss later. Here it may suffice to say that they are friends and helpers of men, "the luminous divine powers, born of the infinite consciousness, Aditi, whose formation and activity in our human and mortal being are necessary for our growth into the godhead."<sup>9</sup>

"The chief conditions of the prosperity so ardently desired are the rising of the Dawn and the Sun and the downpour of the rain of heaven and of the seven rivers .... But even this prosperity, the fullness of cows, horses, gold, men, chariots, offspring, is not a final end in itself; all this is a means towards the opening up of the other worlds, the winning of Swar, the ascent to the solar heavens, the attainment by the path of the Truth to the Light and to the heavenly Bliss where the mortal arrives at Immortality."<sup>10</sup> Here we are introduced to the heart of the Mystery. In order to seize its meaning, we must in the first instance know what the boons demanded represent in their real, psychological and spiritual sense.

The safest way would be to follow the indications given by Sri Aurobindo. Anyone interested to know the grounds on which these indications have been based will do well to look up the detailed exposition he has given in his studies on the Veda. It is needless to add that all these boons, so material and earthy in appearance, are in reality symbolic, like the Sacrifice itself.

The Rishis are aspirants to the same Truth, but they differ in the manner in which they use the symbols. Sometimes they lift the veil sufficiently to enable us to guess readily enough what they are driving at; sometimes the veil is thick. But whatever the manner of presentation, they invariably use a fixed system of notation.

Light and Power, the illumination of knowledge and the driving force of energy, are the first requisites in their spiritual progress. Hence the predominance of the Cow and the Horse among the boons demanded. The Cow (*go*) is symbolic of Light, of consciousness at all levels of being. At its highest stands the mystic Cow, Aditi, the infinite Consciousness, Mother of the worlds.<sup>11</sup> The Bull (*vṛṣabha*), it may be noted in passing, stands for the Supreme, Deva or Purusha, though the symbol is applied constantly to the god Indra as well, as the Lord or Puissant.<sup>12</sup> On whatever plane of being, the cows are always the radiances or illuminations of a divine Sun, illuminations

of the dawning divine consciousness, thoughts which realise the Truth, thoughts which seek the Bull.<sup>13</sup> The Horse (*aśva*), symbolises force or energy; the horses are energies of the Divine Force which carry the Sacrifice forward and enable the aspirant to achieve.<sup>14</sup> Light and Power are latent in man; the Cow and the Horse therefore always represent a concealed and imprisoned wealth which has to be uncovered and released by a divine puissance.<sup>15</sup>

Gold (*hiranya*), says Sri Aurobindo, "is probably the symbol of the substance of the Truth, for its radiance is the light which is the golden wealth found in Surya, ... therefore we have the epithet, *hiranyam jyotiḥ*."<sup>16</sup> Chariots (*ratha*) evidently signify movement, the progress of man towards godhead.<sup>17</sup> The Hero (*vīra*) is the battling power within us that performs the journey, the power of the Divine Will that is at work in us and impels us forward.<sup>18</sup> The son (*apatya* or *prajā*) for whom the Rishi constantly prays is the divine birth, "the godhead created within the humanity",<sup>19</sup> the divine Child who in the lap of the Mother wholly sees.

"The three great conquests to which the human being aspires, which the Gods are in constant battle with the Vritras and Panis to give to man are the herds, the waters and the Sun or the solar world; *gāḥ, āpah, svaḥ*. The question is whether these references are to the rains of heaven, the rivers of Northern India ...? Is the winning of Swar simply the recovery of the sun from its shadowing by the storm-cloud ...? Or does the conquest of Swar mean simply the winning of heaven by sacrifice? ... Is it not rather a system of symbolic meanings ...?"<sup>20</sup>

The answer given by Sri Aurobindo is an emphatic yes. He has devoted considerable space to a full discussion of the question. We shall confine ourselves to a bare presentation of his findings, and refer the curious to his book, *On the Veda*. It is particularly in the sense given to the seven rivers that the scholars have completely gone astray and erected on that mistaken basis their current theories about the Veda. We cannot therefore avoid the temptation of referring to some of the absurdities of the current interpretation, in however cursory fashion, by taking up a single hymn in the Rigveda (IV.58) in the

light of Sri Aurobindo, and mainly in his inimitable words.

In this hymn the Rishi Vamadeva says "that a honeyed wave climbs up from the ocean and by means of this mounting wave which is the Soma (*am̐su*) one attains entirely to immortality .... In the fifth verse he openly describes it (the ocean) as the ocean of the heart (*hr̐dyāt samudrāt*), out of which rise the waters of the clarity, *gh̐rtasya dhārāḥ*, the flow, he says, becoming progressively purified by the mind and the inner heart .... 'These move,' says Vamadeva, 'from the heart-ocean, penned by the enemy in a hundred enclosures they cannot be seen ....' Certainly, Vamadeva does not mean," comments Sri Aurobindo, "that a wave or flood of wine came mounting up out of the salt water of the Indian Ocean or of the Bay of Bengal or even from the fresh water of the river Indus or the Ganges and that this wine is a secret name for clarified butter .... Certainly, this does not mean that rivers of ghee — or of water, either — rising from the heart-ocean or any ocean were caught on their way by the wicked and unconscionable Dravidians and shut up in a hundred pens .... For even if the rivers of the Punjab all flow out of one heart-pleasing lake, yet their streams of water cannot even so have been triply placed in a cow and the cow hidden in a cave by the cleverest and most inventive Dravidians. ... Let us observe the remarkable language in which Vamadeva speaks of these rivers of the clarity. He says first that the gods sought and found the clarity, the *gh̐rtam*, triply placed and hidden by the Panis in the cow, *gavi....*"<sup>21</sup>

What the ocean represents, and what the clarified butter and the Soma, we shall consider later. Here it may suffice to conclude with Sri Aurobindo that the "waters" are the planes of consciousness which divide the physical nature of man from their godhead and are full of obstacles to communication between earth and heaven. The gods pour the fullness of these waters, the fullness of conscient being in its movements, especially the upper waters, the waters of heaven, the streams of the Truth, *rtasya dhārāḥ*, across the obstacles into the human consciousness.<sup>22</sup> All the gods are givers of the rain, the abundance (for *vr̐ṣṭi*, rain, has both senses) of heaven, sometimes described as solar waters, *svarvatīḥ, āpaḥ*. The "seven rivers" are not the rivers of the Punjab, whose free and unobstructed flow the Aryan worshipper prayed for in order to ensure the unimpeded working of

his irrigation channels or allow unhindered the navigation of the streams. "The seven rivers are", in the words of Sri Aurobindo, "conscious currents corresponding to the sevenfold substance of the ocean of being which appears to us formulated in the seven worlds enumerated by the Puranas. It is their full flow in the human consciousness which constitutes the entire activity of the being, his full treasure of substance, his full play of energy..."<sup>23</sup>

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

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- <sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *On the Veda* (First University Edition, 1956, Pondicherry), pp. 328-29.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 115-16.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 158-59.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323n.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 233, 303n.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159, 189, 263, 218.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159, 215.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215, 182.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 599n.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117, 121.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99, 101.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

## ON EDUCATION

### DEVELOPMENT URGE

THE parents have to understand the spontaneous motivating processes constituted by the inner urge towards development, progressive attainment of perfection and self-mastery. This inner urge is expressed from the very moment of birth in the spontaneous activities of the helpless neonate and its manifestation becomes evident in the infant who struggles un-fatiguingly to gain progressive control over his uncoordinated muscular movements, to translate his random visual sensations into meaningful perception, to observe various sounds and to acquire speaking ability and to overcome all his limitations. The infant is incessantly engaged in various types of muscular activities in sequence moving arms and legs, trying to raise its head, to balance the body with help of arms while lying on stomach, to crawl, to grasp and to throw objects, attempting to sit, stand with help of support and then without support, learning to walk and practising for progressive perfection in the basic and specialized coordinations. During his learning period he may fall sick but that does not stop his activities, he may not succeed in the beginning to sit or stand or walk and may fall down again and again but his whole-hearted engrossment in a newly attempted activity is not disturbed, rather he takes each failure as a challenge and each smallest success apparently insignificant to the adult is a source of immense joy to him. The developmental urge in the child is expressed in the remarkable learning capacity of the child in different directions simultaneously. While trying to reach and grasp a ball, the child not only learns certain motor coordinations but he closely observes the colour and the shape, listens to the adult who pronounces the word ball, tries to imitate the word and may also want the adult to join in his play, all these activities being the spontaneous manifestation of the developmental urge.

This inner urge is unfortunately eclipsed in due course due to the faulty upbringing and unwise use of external motivation in form of reward and punishment, encouragement of ruthless competition, emphasis on ambition, status and material allurements. This results from the ignorance regarding the needs of the child and lack of under-

standing of the process of education on the part of the parents which has to be a process of progressive stimulation of developmental urge instead of being an imposition from outside for some specific learning. Through right upbringing it is possible to nurture the developmental urge which is overtly expressed in the form of curiosity, urge for exploration, aspiration for achievement and pursuit of progressive perfection and excellence. The suppression of this inner urge due to faulty upbringing leads to perversion of curiosity into purposeless prying, exploration into frivolous activities, aspiration for achievement into ruthless competition which encourages foul means, and pursuit of perfection and excellence into devastating ambition for status and power.

Parents and teachers have to understand the fact that the child, with the tremendous motivating potential within, is his own teacher. The nurture of child means this actualization of the inner motivating potential through the careful nurture of the developmental urge. Ignorant parents and teachers, instead of helping the child to educate himself relegate the teacher within the child to background and thus mutilate his growth and development by trying to impose their ignorance and folly on the child.

For proper upbringing of the child the parents have to be conscious of the necessity for

- i) Balanced nutrition with sufficient amount of first class proteins, vitamins and minerals in addition to other food constituents.
- ii) Suitable hygienic conditions with sufficient sunlight, fresh air and clean surroundings.
- iii) Opportunity for free play and exercise.
- iv) Sufficient rest and sleep.
- v) Freedom from external imposition for spontaneous manifestation of developmental urge and development of self-control.
- vi) Affection and care for providing sense of security conducive to development of poise and self-confidence.
- vii) Stimulation of the curiosity by providing suitable answers to his questions for encouraging the child for further exploration of knowledge.
- viii) Spontaneous communication with the child at his level of development for helping him in progressive understanding of life.

ix) Providing guidance to the child for the exploration of his abilities, aptitudes, and interests.

x) Providing suitable environment to awaken aesthetic appreciation.

xi) Opportunity for healthy recreation and guidance for proper use of leisure.

xii) Opportunity for constructive group activities for training in cooperation and sharing of responsibility.

Parents who are aware of the educational needs of the child can help in the nurture of the developmental urge if they are alert to observe emerging spontaneous activities of the child which are the overt manifestations of this urge. They have to understand the need of encouragement of these activities for the promotion of growth and development, by providing suitable learning situations.

During the first year the child listens to the various sounds with rapt attention. This listening constitutes the beginning of auditory sense discrimination. It is from the earliest period when the child is three months old (even before) that there is need for providing a rich variety of sounds of different musical instruments, bells, birds, rustling of leaves in addition to providing songs and talking to him whenever the child likes to listen. The sounds have to be soft and rhythmic which are pleasing to the child. The training of auditory sense discrimination has to be continued during the period of nursery education.

The child also observes the various objects with fixed gaze right from the earliest period after birth. He has to be provided with sufficient opportunity for observing toys and other objects of different colours, shapes and size in addition to flowers, trees, birds, sky, moon, stars etc. for helping in development of visual sense discrimination the training in which has to continue during the period of nursery education as in case of analytical sense perception.

The parents have also to be aware of the need of providing different types of smells — fragrance of flowers, ripe fruits, aroma of foods etc., and also sufficient training for gustatory and tactile senses though the manifestation of these needs are not evident.

The sense training has however to be integrated with the most important need during infancy and early childhood — the motor

development and the language development up to the age of six or seven years these two aspects should constitute the basis of education: motor development opportunity for manipulation of toys, and objects, free play activities, rhythmic exercises and dance with instrumental music and songs, paperfolding and clay modelling etc. and language development through narrating fairy tales, short stories facts about plants, animals, birds, and other material appealing to the natural interest of the children. For integration of sense training with motor and language development the children may be provided with toys of different colours and shades, multi-coloured play material, bells with different sounds, rhythmic sound of musical instruments of different types used for children's dance exercises and coloured pictorial illustrations with narratives.

The entire process of education has to be directed towards the nurture of the developmental urge, and all learning has to be the spontaneous outcome of the progressive stimulation of the developing capacities of the child with the help of suitable learning material. Unfortunately children are merely forced to learn reading, writing and arithmetic in an artificial way, which instead of creating love for knowledge merely leads to unconscious distaste and the child learns merely to avoid punishment or to get reward.

From the earliest period the child tries to reach for objects and in due course he learns to grasp these with help of palm and later on he develops the capacity to pick things with help of fingers. At this stage the child spontaneously tries to scribble with help of pencil. In addition to scribbling there is emergence of various other types of motor activities e.g. manipulating the containers and packets to open and close the lid, eating with spoon, tearing papers, throwing objects etc. Mostly the parents snub the child who tries to scribble, open a container, tear off a paper or throw an object. The rebuke of adults under such circumstances causes intense shock to the child and if the child is persistently rebuked for these developmental needs he may develop a sense of insecurity, lack of self confidence and severe mental conflict in addition to imperfect motor coordinations which may hamper his success in different activities in life.

Parents have to understand that the various motor activities of the child help in the establishment and subsequent progressive refine-

ment and perfection of the muscular coordinations which are of immense importance in the later life. If the child is deprived of the opportunity for spontaneous practice during the early years, he cannot make up for the loss later on. The parents should carefully observe the activities as these emerge and should encourage the child by providing suitable learning material and situations. When the child starts scribbling spontaneously he has to be provided with pencil and paper or slate to practice freely as the early scribbling helps in the establishment and progressive improvement of the coordination of finger muscles, which is required for learning to write. However the child should never be forced to scribble which may suppress his natural urge. Similarly when the child tries to tear off a paper, it would be proper to supply him with waste paper instead of snubbing him. He would thus be helped in fulfillment of his developmental need to acquire specific manual dexterity. Even throwing off an object provides opportunity to the child to acquire specific motor capacity and is thus a source of tremendous thrill to the child. The child may be provided with a ball during the stage when their urge manifests so that he may be able to satisfy his learning need.

From the earliest period the child tries to do things for himself. He tries to feed himself with help of the spoon though he may spill the food. Parents who deprive the child of this opportunity due to the fear of his spilling the food merely hamper the development. In due course the child may like to comb his hair though he may not be able to do so in the beginning, and later on like to dress himself. The parents have to understand that in feeding the child, bathing him, combing his hair, brushing his teeth, putting on his clothes and shoes and other activities their attitude should be to help the child to do these for himself and for providing this assistance they have to be alert to the emergence of the urge in the child to help himself and should allow the child to have some spontaneous practice. It is significant that the child is satisfied with little practice he may just grasp the comb and put it on his head and after that he may allow the parent to comb his hair. In all the activities the child has to be led to feel that the parents are merely assisting him while he is doing things for himself.

As the child grows up he likes to play with other children. At

this stage the motor development gets associated with the social development. With the emergence of the social need of mixing with other children it is unwise on the part of the parents to always keep the child with them depriving him of the opportunity to mix with other children as this hampers the social as well as the motor development of the child and causes emotional conflict and maladjustment.

The spontaneous urge of the child to observe and manipulate things should constitute the natural beginning of the study of Science and Mathematics. The child has to be provided with wheeled toys toyboats, balloons, pebbles, sea shells, seeds etc. and opportunity for observation of flowers, birds, insects, animals etc. and has to be encouraged to put questions as well as to find answers for himself whenever possible. Similar procedure has to be adopted for helping the child to learn mathematics in the natural way by providing pebbles for counting games, coins, circular cardboards disc, divided in halves and quarters, paper cut into circles, squares, rectangles, three dimensional objects viz. cubes, cones, pyramids, prisms, frustrums, spheres etc.

As the child grows up his urge to listen to narratives has to be used for reinforcing his moral development in addition to the use of these for language development and as means for introducing the child to History through the stories about past and to Geography through the stories about different lands. The qualities of character viz. courage, sincerity, prudence, honesty, humility, self-reliance, perseverance etc. within the framework of narratives inspire the child and kindle the highest and noblest emotions in him.

Through right upbringing the child can be helped in becoming deeply aware of the developmental urge and thus he can be assisted in the progressive actualization of the inner truth of being — swadharma, as the inner urge of the child helps him in sensing his cognitive, affective and conative needs from moment to moment. The spirit of enquiry and aspiration for progressive excellence which is kindled as a smokeless luminous flame within helps in discrimination between the right activity conducive to progression towards inner harmony, understanding of life, self-mastery and creative self-expression, and the activities which are frivolous, energy-dissipating, and degrading. Thus the child is helped to sift between that which

is intrinsically good and that which is one apparently pleasant. Thus the right selection of life activities helps the growing child to feel the inner joy associated with exploration of knowledge, appreciation of art, music and poetry, communion with nature and creative self-expression. This joy is the reinforcing factor in the selection of activities.

Parents and teachers have thus to help the growing child in keeping the developmental urge ablaze, to bring out whatever is best in him, in strengthening of all that is noble in him and in intensifying the aspiration towards the exploration of the truth of existence.

R. K. JOSHI

## REVIEWS

**Essentials of Vedanta** by Dr. G. Srinivasan. Bangalore Printing and Publishing Co., Mysore Rd. Bangalore 18. P. 68, Price Rs. 6.00

A CONCISE account of the three major schools of Vedanta e.g. Advaita of Shankara, Vishishtadvaita of Ramanuja and Dvaita of Madhava, followed up by a brief statement of the Purna Advaita of Sri Aurobindo in so far as it admits of comparison with and distinction from the three. The author points out that Sri Aurobindo does not see any contradiction between the Brahman and the Universe for the latter is only a becoming of the Reality. Again *avidyā* is not something that somehow imposes itself on the Brahman; it arises in the movement of the cosmic evolutionary process of Brahman. He explains how in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy the soul is not devoid of relation with Nature when it is free: the character of the relation undergoes a change. "Sri Aurobindo has developed a philosophy of supreme affirmation and robust optimism." (P. 68)

One point of interest is the five statuses of God according to the Vishishtadvaita: "God in his transcendent (*para*) status is not limited by the world and has an eternal and unchanging essence in himself; God in his immanent or cosmic (*vyuha*) status is the pervasive consciousness in the whole universe so as to sustain it in existence and activity; God as the indweller (*antaryāmī*) in the individual souls feels the uniqueness of individual's experiences; God as the iconic (*arca*) assumes finite material proportions so as to suit the limitations of the devotee in his unlimited grace for him; God as incarnation (*avatāra*) descends into a worldly form for the sake of the devotees." (P. 27)

A useful handbook for students of philosophy.

M. P. PANDIT

**Night and Dawn**, poems by Peter Heehs. Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry, 1974. 87 pages, Rs. 12.

*Night and Dawn* is a poem of aspiration. It finds expression through the more than seventy lyrics presented and through the offerings of Peter Heehs:

I will not take,  
Though life and colour dance around me,  
But will make  
My life a sacrament of giving.<sup>1</sup>

The poems chronicle something of a seeker's early experience and give hope of something more to come. Clearly they have been for him and for us may be a vehicle of introspection and growth.

The lines are genuine and at their best clean and direct.

Not night nor day,  
Not dark nor light.  
A sullen, grey,  
And painless blight.  
And was there ever something called the Dawn,  
Something that made my love more than desire,  
Made truth a thing a child could seize upon,  
And life a flame that reached for something higher?<sup>2</sup>

There are poems that fluently blend experience and image with form, and there are those that contain a discordant or too facile metaphor or compromise to meet the demands of rhyme or metre. But even in the entries which cannot be considered entirely successful as poems, there is often something that shines — mutely,

Dusk, triumphant and slow, comes with its sombre train.  
No red stain in the clouds marks the defeat of day;

<sup>1</sup> "Sacrament of Giving", p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> "Twilight", p. 5.

No spectacular show, only a pomp of grey.<sup>1</sup>

or openly,

I cannot ever tell my love for you,  
 My friends, beautiful comrades on the way.  
 Though silence turn to pain, I cannot say  
 Things which, if uttered, might cease to be true.<sup>2</sup>

If his poetic voice matures to pace with a growing intensity of aspiration, there is the future in Peter Heehs of sincere and felicitous verse of inner life.

TATSAT

**The Literary Criticism of Sri Aurobindo** by Dr. S. K. Prasad.  
 Pp. 487. Published by Bharati Bhawan, Govind Mitra Road, Patna  
 800004 (India). Price: Rs. 65.00 \$ 19.50; £ 8.15

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. Thus far we behold God the supreme creator. But then "And God saw the light, that it *was* good" that is to say that God the reflector and the critic follows close on the heels of the creator and appraises and assesses his work and sees to it that it measures up to his norms and standards. Sri Aurobindo the Avatar, too, not only created a new age of poetry but prolifically gave to the discerning audience many new dimensions to literary criticism. Thus to open Dr. S. K. Prasad's monumental work of research is to strike out into the orbit of an unfathomable personality. It is often said that poetry gives us a distillation of experience which goes far beyond in suggestive power the ordinary meanings of the words. But it does not in any way enlighten us about the mystery of the process of distillation — who distils the experience and what is the nature of the distilled product, what gives it the direct appeal of a self-validating truth? These are

<sup>1</sup> "Dirge at Sunset", p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> "I Cannot Tell", p. 48.

questions either shirked or boggled or answered without any deep probing into the nature of the aesthetic experience as bodied forth in poetry. Dr. Prasad has gone into the heart of the mystery in his Preface observing, "The all-important point which I seek to establish through my study of Sri Aurobindo's literary criticism is what is contained in what I consider to be a very significant critical pronouncement of our so-called soulless age by Sri Aurobindo: "the true creator, the true hearer is the soul." The great Victorian critic, Matthew Arnold, had similarly declared that, "genuine poetry is conceived and composed in the soul".

The author's characterizing the modern age as soulless sounds a little too abrasive and scarifying but it has been echoed and re-echoed by other voices too. As early as the seventeenth century John Donne felt that the new philosophy had completely put out the element of fire by calling everything into doubt. Edith Sitwell in our own time wrote:

Once my love seemed the Burning Bush  
The Pentecost Rushing of Flames;  
Now the Speech has fallen to the chatter of alleys  
Where fallen man and the rising ape  
And the howling Dark play games.

And then cried out wistfully:

But yet if only one soul would whine  
Rat-like from the lowest mud, I should know  
That somewhere in God's vast love it would shine;  
But even the rat-whine has guttered low

Well, as Kenneth Clark puts it, "This is the true cry of our time, the cry of all those whose imaginations are still awake and whose hearts are uncalcined." (*Horizon* July 1949 no. 90)

Sri Aurobindo has rehabilitated poetry and literary criticism to their high role of renovating human life by enshrining in fullest amplitude and power his spiritual vision. And yet it has neither evoked a proper response nor made a dent in the mugwumpery

of established reputations in the literary field. It is this need of the hour that makes Dr. Prasad's book that started life as a doctoral thesis, stimulating and it holds out some promise of breaking the acedia of the reading public corrupted by Freudian muck-raking, gnawed by anxiety and post war disillusion, addicted to murder trials and hourly more unable to concentrate on the deeper realities of existence.

The book under review seeks to amplify and illustrate some of the major themes expounded in Sri Aurobindo's *Future Poetry* and his *Letters on Literature*. But all this cannot be understood and appreciated without a full grasp of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual vision which traces the evolution of humanity and demonstrates how it is heading towards a new spiritual consciousness in all directions, political, cultural, social and aesthetic. This new consciousness he calls the Supermind and it is the culmination of all human dreams of individual perfection and collective perfectibility. This dream for its actualisation calls for "the full emergence of the soul, the full descent of the native light and power of the Spirit and the consequent replacement or transformation and uplifting of our insufficient mental and vital nature by a spiritual and supramental supernature that can effect this evolutionary miracle." (*The Life Divine* p. 1259.) Dr. S. K. Prasad provides the reader with relevant laying out of this framework; for, without that background the reader is most likely to be obfuscated by the terminology employed by Sri Aurobindo — the different planes of consciousness from which poetic inspiration streams down, the nature of the psychic being and the possibility of the *mantra* in poetry. The author pushes the arguments always forward at a pace which enacts and deserves the closest, the slowest and most considered reading and brings in the best critical opinion on the subject in India and Europe. Here one feels that the learned author could have shortened his study by cutting or condensing those parts where he puts down previous and contemporary critics who are not really worth the trouble of elaborate refutation — but perhaps the numinous aspect always tends either to paralyse the critical will or to provoke intemperate polemic.

The future of poetry has been floating in a mist of uncertainty since the time of Plato who banished poets from his Republic. In the wake of Sri Aurobindo the author visualises luminous prospects

awaiting the Muse; for, poetry which has hitherto expressed spiritual experiences through recondite symbols will celebrate them in their full splendour and by its mantric power play a reformative and renovative role in the life of humanity.

Mantra so far has been accessible only to the initiates of the Mysteries and hieratically if not hermetically sealed from common humanity. But in the New Age of poetry it will toss off all garbs and disguises and manifest itself in its full effulgence. But what is Mantra? and what illuminative trail it is going to blaze or has it not already done so in Sri Aurobindo's own spiritual lyrics, sonnets and the epic *Savitri*? Here one long passage from the book will elucidate and bring home the whole drift of Sri Aurobindo's vision of the future poetry. The author observes, "To realise and evoke the power of 'mantric' poetry in human life is to lead it always from progress to progress, from one evolutionary step to another. It is to achieve a very living and uplifting linkage between ourselves and the Supreme Reality above and around, to effectuate a more happy marriage between matter and spirit, the word and the Word! No wonder, then, if Sri Aurobindo tries to impress upon us as gently and persuasively as only a yogic poet and critic can do, that the future of man is closely linked with the future of poetry.... "For", as Sri Aurobindo says, "the great poet interprets to man his present or reinterprets for him his past, but can also point him to his future." Nay, in all the three aspects of time — the present, the past and the future — the great poet can also "reveal to him the face of the Eternal." The poetry of the 'intuitive reason, the intuitive senses, the intuitive delight-soul in us', which is bound to be written in the new intuitive age dawning upon us, and finally rising "towards a still greater power of revelation nearer to the direct visions and work of the Overmind from which all creative inspiration comes, would really mean 'putting the poetic spirit once more in the shining front of the powers and guides of the ever-progressing soul of humanity'. It is poetry which will once again 'lead in the journey like the Vedic Agni, — the fiery giver of the Word, ... the Youth, the Seer, the beloved and Immortal Guest with his honied tongue of ecstasy, the Truth-conscious, the Truth-finder, born as a flame from earth and yet the heavenly messenger of the Immortal!'. The author has produced a massive work of research

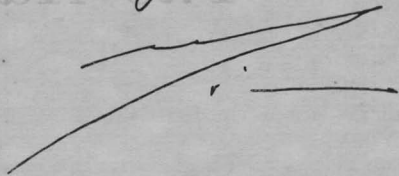
and has provided the student of literature with pertinent extracts from all the known critics of literature, thus fulfilling the Arnoldian ideal of criticism, to make known "the best that was thought and said in the world."

RAVINDRA KHANNA



*The Advent*

In works, aspiration  
towards Perfection is  
true spirituality



# The ADVENT

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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.

### EDITORIAL

#### SWEET MOTHER

(9)

#### ASHRAM, INNER AND OUTER

**I** WILL tell you a story today, but of another kind. I will tell you of a dream, or a vision that I had some time ago. It was an ashram, I say an ashram for it was not quite like our ashram although there was a great similarity between the two. In some respects it was like our ashram and in other respects somewhat unlike. First of all, the whole ashram was in one place, a consolidated organisation, not houses here and there scattered about: there were no buildings or houses belonging to other people or other organisations, also the buildings were beautiful to look at and the general lay-out artistic; but all the activities we have were there. The school was there, the playground was there, the library also, but all in an orderly arrangement. The Mother was also there, she was going from place

to place, observing all and speaking to people. Among the people, curiously some I seemed to recognise, some of those even who are here now, there were many strangers from other countries, a good many of them. Regarding those who are here now and whom I seemed to recognise there also, the impression is rather vague and I cannot name them. But some of those who were here and passed away I recognised very well, they had almost the same face and features — but in a new, fresh and younger form. They were active and handsome young men, young women — I remember Sri Aurobindo quoting from the Rig Veda: the Vedic Rishi speaks of a happy herd of cows grazing in green fields; the Rishi adds: even those among them that were old have become young now. The cow represented for the Rishi the light, the sun's ray, the purity of consciousness. Perhaps the image came from the actual life of the Rishis of that time, the cattle they reared, the domestic animals about them, the natural scenery around them, and all that was an important part of their ordinary daily life. A whole herd of cattle all-white is a beautiful picture. Even so there was something in the atmosphere of the ashram which gave it a special quality, it was clear and pure, limpid and transparent, there was a strange luminosity in it, and it was a very happy atmosphere. While you are there, you feel free and at ease and there were no petty feelings that we have here in the normal life of the world, no anger, no jealousy, no selfishness, no ugliness : there was a happy coordination of all persons and things.

My feeling is that this ashram that I saw was in fact the inner reality of our ashram here, that inner ashram which is within us all; what we see at present is the outer form, the material form which is a good deal deformed and even falsified in many ways. Indeed that inner ashram has an other-worldly atmosphere of its own, an atmosphere of rarified heights. I have told you very often that those who are here are fortunate, they breathe this atmosphere and in spite of their faults and foibles, and no matter what they do, they are in contact with something of the inner beauty and fragrance. I do not know whether you have heard what Mother said more than once, that all the children here, when they live here for some time, imbibe and carry a new atmosphere. And she could recognise a person from a distance, even from a great distance, not by his face or physical features but by the

atmosphere he carried that he belonged to the ashram, very different from the atmosphere an outsider normally carries. It is an atmosphere or aura made of happiness and purity and luminosity. All the ashram children are surrounded by it because it is Mother's own atmosphere. Therefore in those days, she used to say, these children should not go out into the outside world even in their holidays because, when they go out, she said, she had seen it, they lose this ashram atmosphere and when they come back, they are coated with a thick layer of the mud of the ordinary world, and it took her a lot of time and trouble to rub and scrub and clean the dirt upon the body, to make it shine as before. You may remember here in this connection a Ramakrishna story about the sinners who went to the Ganges for a bath to purify themselves: they leave their sins on the shore or the sins leave them as they get into the Ganges water, but the sins wait for them there on the bank and as soon as they come back purified of their sins, the sins lying in wait jump on them again and the sinners remain always sinners. Here naturally you are not destined to remain sinners always.

However, that atmosphere, the inner atmosphere still exists here. With the Mother's withdrawal of physical body that too might have withdrawn a little perhaps, a little only, just a few inches perhaps! But it is still there, for the Mother is there as concrete as before although not as material. As I said, there are some who have passed away from here and some new faces also I found in this other inner Ashram. These are already there wholly in that ashram. But we who are here, we lead a double life as it were: part of us is here, and part in that other inner ashram, as though one leg this side and the other on that side over the fence. In your better moments when you feel nice and free, when you are happy, when you are noble in spirit, you come in contact with that inner ashram, you breathe that atmosphere. In dreams also, while asleep, apparently asleep, many of you must have seen the Mother, must have had Sri Aurobindo's darshan. That is because you come in contact with that inner atmosphere and enter into it. Now our task is to come more and more in contact with that reality even in our waking moments, to be conscious of that which is nothing but the Mother's Presence. Half of you, your inner life, is already there, bathing there in that luminous happy air. Only try to

be conscious of that: if you are conscious of it, even a little, you will feel immensely happy, feel that you are beautiful, that you are wise — when you feel the touch of that inner ashram life. And instead of living entirely or mainly the outer life of the ashram as at present you can turn this life into that inner life; and gradually reshape the present life in the mould of the inner life. That is your duty, your task, particularly you who are students, boys and girls, that is your central work — study and learning and all that is secondary. What you should do and what you can is to breathe a new air, live in a better, more beautiful way. You can have this inner life, that is already there, this inner life, not with much difficulty for it is already there, a collective inner life, which is so beautiful as I say, filled with the fragrance of the Mother's Presence. It is a collective life in which you all are not only brothers and sisters but one body and soul unified in the Mother's loving and living substance. That inner life you have to bring out into your body and all the external activities. It is however the very nature of that inner organisation to express itself outwardly, its spontaneous drive is towards expression and embodiment, even if you do not know or perceive it, it is slowly coming forward. Only if you are conscious, if you help, collaborate, you will be benefitted, you will grow in consciousness, attain a new stature, you will enjoy the supreme happiness of a miraculous achievement.

At present, as I say, there is a separation between the two ashrams, these two worlds or lives. They run parallel to each other, or oftener intertwined, intermixed, dovetailed. They are to be made one single existence; the inner must take up, assimilate into itself the outer, the outer must allow itself to be cleansed and emptied of its dross and be possessed altogether by the inner. They are to form one, as it is said, streamlined entity: one being, one life, one body.

I said your work is to try to be conscious and take part more and more in the inner life. Naturally you ask how to do it. Actually there is no precise process, no hard and fast rule for learning or acquiring it. It is not like learning a mathematical problem or even a particular physical exercise which you learn by habit and culture. It is nothing mechanical. It is a natural growth. It comes automatically and spontaneously, shows itself to you and in you. You have simply to ask for it sincerely, go on asking for it as inteselny as possible, repeat as a

mantra: "I want to be there, I want to be there, I want to be there." That is quite sufficient. That will evoke in you the new light, the new impulse that will lead you on. That is the child's call to the Mother and the Mother always responds — with her Light and Love.

You have been told, and I have also often told you, that although the Mother's physical body is not there, she has left her consciousness with us: the consciousness is still living, it is still working. She herself said even while she was in her body that if ever she left her body, her consciousness would be always with us. But I will add something more here. Apart from the consciousness, what she has left with us, what remains with us, is her Love, the love of her children is still there undiminished as before in its fulness. I spoke of the inner ashram life: that life is built out of her love for her children, and it must be easy for you to enter and enjoy that life through your love for the Mother, your answering love for the Mother's love for you. And through the glow of that love you will gradually develop into what she wanted you to become.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

## SANSKRIT SOURCES IN SRI AUROBINDO'S WORKS

### ANCIENT SPIRIT

**A** REBIRTH of the soul of India into a new body of energy, a new form of its *innate and ancient spirit*.<sup>1</sup>

प्रज्ञा पुराणी ।<sup>2</sup>

### APARA PRAKRITI

This lower manifestation.<sup>3</sup>

प्रकृतिः . . . अपरा इयम् ।<sup>4</sup>

### APPROACH

As men approach Him, so He accepts them.<sup>5</sup>

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथा भजाम्यहम् ।<sup>6</sup>

Even as men come to Me, so I accept them. It is my path that men follow from all sides.... Whatever form the worshipper chooses to worship with faith, I set in him firm faith in it, and with that faith he puts his yearning into his adoration and gets his desire dispensed by me. But limited is that fruit. Those whose sacrifice is to the gods, to elemental spirits, reach the gods, reach the elemental spirits, but those whose sacrifice is to Me, to Me they come.<sup>7</sup>

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथा भजाम्यहम् ।

मम् वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चिचतुमिच्छति ।

तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥

स तथा श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।

लभते च ततः कामान् मयैव विहितान् हितान् ॥

<sup>1</sup> *The Renaissance of India*, IV

<sup>2</sup> *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*, 4.18

<sup>3</sup> *Letters on Yoga*

<sup>4</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 7.4,5

<sup>5</sup> *Heraclitus*, VI

<sup>6</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 4.11

<sup>7</sup> *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, Chapt. 24

अन्तवन्तु फलं तेषां . . देवान् देवयजो यान्ति . .  
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥<sup>1</sup>

Even as men approach him, so he accepts them and responds too by the divine Love to their bhakti.<sup>2</sup>  
ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।<sup>3</sup>

### APRAMATTA

In the remembrance, you must be *apramatta*, free from negligence.<sup>4</sup>

आत्मानम् अप्रमत्तः ।<sup>5</sup>

### ARJUNA'S RECOIL

This is a sin we do and a great destruction of men and brothers.<sup>6</sup>  
I will forbear.

अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् . . . हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः । . . न योत्स्ये ।<sup>7</sup>

### ASAT

The Asat, the Non-Existent of the Taittiriya Upanishad, which alone was in the beginning and out of which the existent was born.<sup>8</sup>

असत् वा इदमग्र आसीत् । ततो वै सत् अजायत ।<sup>9</sup>

### ASCENDING PROGRESS

His progress is an ascent from level to level and each new height brings in other vistas and revelations of the much that has still to be done.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 4.11; 7.21-23

<sup>2</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Part III, Chap. 2

<sup>3</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 4.11

<sup>4</sup> *The Yoga and its Objects*

<sup>5</sup> *Chhandogya Upanishad*, 1.3.12

<sup>6</sup> *The Ideal of the Karmayogin: The Greatness of the Individual*

<sup>7</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 1.44; 2.9

<sup>8</sup> *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, Chap. 12

<sup>9</sup> *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.7

<sup>10</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Part IV, Chap. 18

यत् सानोः सानुभारुहत् भूर्यस्पष्टकर्त्वम्<sup>1</sup>

### ASCENDING SERIES OF SUBSTANCE

There is a self that is of the essence of Matter; there is another inner self of Life that fills the other; there is another inner self of Mind; there is another inner self of Truth-Knowledge; there is another inner self of Bliss.<sup>2</sup>

स वा एष पुरुषऽन्नरसमयः ।

तस्माद्वा एतस्मादन्नरसमयात् अन्योऽन्तर आत्मा प्राणमयः । तेनैष पूर्णः ।

अन्योऽन्तर आत्मा मनोमयः ।

अन्योऽन्तर आत्मा विज्ञानमयः ।

अन्योऽन्तर आत्मानन्दमयः । तेनैष पूर्णः ।<sup>3</sup>

They climb Indra like a ladder. As one mounts peak after peak, there becomes clear the much that has still to be done. Indra brings consciousness of That as the goal.<sup>4</sup>

ब्राह्मणस्त्वा शतक्रत उद् वंशमिव येमिरे । यत् सानोः सानुभारुहद् भूर्यस्पष्ट कर्त्वम् । तदिन्द्रो अर्थं चेतति ।<sup>5</sup>

Like a hawk, a kite He settles on the Vessel and upbears it; in His stream of movement He discovers the Rays, for He goes bearing his weapons; He cleaves to the ocean surge of the waters; a great King, He declares the fourth status. Like a mortal purifying his body, like a war-horse galloping to the conquest of riches He, pours calling through all the sheaths and enters these vessels.<sup>6</sup>

चमूच्छयेनः शकुनो विभृत्वा गोविन्दुर्द्रप्स आयुधानि विभ्रत् ।

अपामूमि सचमानः समुद्रं तुरीयं धाम महिषो विवक्ति ॥

मर्यो न शुभ्रस्तन्वं मृजानोऽत्यो न सूत्वा सनये धनानाम् ।

वृषेव यूथा परि कोशमशान् कनिक्रदच्चम्बोरा विवेश ॥<sup>7</sup>

M. P. P.

<sup>1</sup> *Rig Veda*, 1.10.2

<sup>2</sup> *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, Chap. 26

<sup>3</sup> *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.2-5

<sup>4</sup> *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, Chap. 26

<sup>5</sup> *Rig Veda*, 1.10.1-2

<sup>6</sup> *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, Chap. 26

<sup>7</sup> *Rig Veda*, 9.96.19-20

## NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

### A SPIRITUAL APPROACH

**S**RI Aurobindo thought that it was India's destiny to be the Guru of the Nations. The Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram said the same thing in a different way: "India today represents all the ills of modern humanity. India will become the land of its resurrection — resurrection to a higher, truer life". India has first to battle with the festering ills, and defeat, change and transform them into engines of possibility or instruments of national rehabilitation and reconstruction. Only when India thus saves herself by her own exertions would she be in a position to save the world by her example.

*Where are we?* Over twenty-seven years after independence, India presents today a pretty dismal picture. The Five Year Plans haven't been able to give effective fight to poverty. The mass of the people are poorer than even ten years ago. It is pointed out by statisticians that the average availability of pulses per day per capita is now less than 50 grams, as against 60 grams a decade ago. And so on, with many other essential items of food, raiment and shelter. The chasm between the few rich and the many poor hasn't been bridged; if anything, it has only become wider and deeper. There is a visible breakdown in our political and economic life, in our social and cultural life. And a cold desperation seems to have possessed the teeming millions who inhabit our country.

Who will be bold enough to visualise for this India, this sick India, the role of Guru of the Nations? For a time in the early 1950's, India's voice was heard with respect in international forums. The situation changed when India found herself caught in economic narrows after Suez, and India's stock slumped very much indeed after the Chinese invasion, followed by their unilateral withdrawal. Even the victory over Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh haven't radically changed India's international standing. Heavily indebted to other nations, still grovelling in our own economic grooves of stagnation, torn by political, communal, factional rivalries, enfeebled by indiscipline, corruption and defeatism, caught in the whirling wages-prices spiral, India strikes many as the very paradigm

of national sickness. How are we to reconcile Sri Aurobindo's Vision of India and the starkness of current actuality?

Nay more: realistic futurological projections to 2000 A.D. or after would reinforce the truth that, not only with reference to the affluent West or Japan, but also as compared with the new petro-rich Arab countries, or Brazil, Venezuela or Indonesia, India must continue to be a poor country. Which means that we should learn first and foremost to accept the fact of comparative poverty in the context of our present and still growing population, but also take quick steps to make this poverty bearable and honourable by eliminating the grosser inequalities of the present time, and charging our communal and national life with economic and social justice. Instead of unending economic growth (personal and national), what we need is a healthy feeling of "enoughness", the concept of simplicity if not austerity, the ideal of plain living and honest thinking, and the sense of commonalty and commonwealth.

Even in the affluent Western world, intelligent people are anxiously questioning the wisdom of exhausting the non-replenishable material resources of the earth and the parallel exploitation in divers devious ways of the people of the developing or underdeveloped countries. The revolt of Western youth is no passing phenomenon. The flight of more and more Western youth to India to discover and experiment with new patterns of living is an interesting pointer to the future. Affluence more often induces satiety rather than satisfaction. By returning to the ways of simple and honest living, by refusing to ape the criminally expensive habits — conspicuous spending and conspicuous waste — of the affluent West (or the affluent pockets elsewhere), India would once again be able to set her own house in order.

On the other hand, this distrust of wasteful surplusage, this acceptance of comparative national poverty but coupled with the elimination of hunger, want, squalor and ignorance in their present soul-searing forms, might be the means of a great enrichment of the inner countries of the mind, heart and soul. We will make use of all the creative science and technology of our time, but not for exploitation, or luxurious living, or the satisfaction of the individual, communal or national ego. Given a new orientation to life, the emphasis being on inner richness and outer enoughness, inner peace and outer

harmony, inner poise and outer collaboration, India might once more live in self-respect and self-sufficiency, and even acquire the right to be the Guru of the Nations.

The time is past when professional politicians, administrators, economists, industrialists and educationists could be trusted all by themselves to order satisfactorily the affairs of the nation, and of the world. These men wielding divers forms of power have nevertheless made rather a serious mess of things, and they are apparently caught helplessly in the coils of their own contriving. Representative leaders of the world religions met at Leuven in Belgium in August-September last to approach from a religious stance problems like Disarmament and Security, Economic Development and Human Liberation, Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Environment and Human Survival, Education for Peace, Religion and Population, and Violence and Non-Violence, and through the 'Leuven Declaration' appealed as follows to the peoples of the world:

"We are resolved henceforth to serve humanity *together* each in the way most in keeping with the convictions of his spiritual family and local circumstances ...

We press religious people to condemn profiteering by the affluent world from the weakness of the developing countries ...

We plead with our religious communities to evoke among their peoples a fresh sense of awe before the mystery of existence and a recovery of the value of humble self-restraint in the conduct of personal and social life ...

We appeal to the religious communities of the world to inculcate the attitude of planetary citizenship, the sense of our human solidarity in the just sharing of the food, the energy, and all the material necessities which our generous habitat, unlike any other yet perceived in universal space, will continue faithfully to produce if only it is well loved and respected by mankind".

More recently, a Seminar was convened at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, by Sri Aurobindo Society, World Union, Sri Aurobindo's Action and Navajyoti to take stock of the present situation in India and to consider the means of national reconstruc-

tion as the necessary prelude to a reshaping of the world. Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy and integral Yoga may be viewed as the culmination and fulfilment of the main Indian tradition, and the quintessential aim of the Yoga is life-affirmation and world-transformation. Among the participants in the Seminar, which extended from 18th to 20th February, were members of the Ashram and its several affiliated institutions as also select invitees from outside. After the inauguration highlighted by a keynote address from Mr. M. P. Pandit, the Seminar divided itself into four commissions devoted respectively to the Social, Spiritual, Educational and Economic aspects of the national malady. The discussions were wide-ranging, and covered both the theoretical and practical aspects of the various problems of national reconstruction. In the end, the Seminar adopted a Statement which begins with this significant affirmation:

“For any social programme to be meaningful and effective, the individual must be accepted as the key. Secondly, the orientation of life must be changed: it should proceed from within outward”.

Purify the source within, transform the individual; from this base, the outer changes, the reconstruction of society, would follow. The far aim of the whole endeavour should be “the spiritual Vision of India as the soul of the world”. And this aim is to “rise out of the various imperfections, deformations and deviations that characterise the present society, towards increasing enlightenment, progression and perfection”.

Groups of awakened, enlightened and dedicated individuals — with wings for Women and Youth — should function at various centres as foci of purposive motivation and change. Study of spiritual literature, elevating association (*satsanga*), and the practice of psychological disciplines like meditation, concentration and prayer, should help to deepen and heighten the level of consciousness. From self-study (*svādhyāya*) to service would be a natural step, the motive-force being spiritual. All religions are roads to service and realisation, but it is first necessary to recover the spiritual bases of the various religions — Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Chris-

tianity, Zoroastrianism, Hebraism — and systems of ethics, because these bases are often hidden by encrustations of dogma, ritual and superstitious custom which sometimes tend to pervert the purity of the source. The seminal teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother can lead to “the integration of personality, the resolution of conflicts between the individual and the collectivity, and the integration of the values of the different civilisations of the East and the West”. A beginning has been made already at Auroville, but such experiments in integral living should be multiplied as pilot-projects for ushering in the new India, the new World, of the future.

A revaluation of the ends and means of Education will be central to any scheme of reconstruction. “The ideal education is that which is imperceptibly woven into every detail of the day-to-day life of the student”. The experiments in “free progress” or integral education at Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education and at Auroville may with advantage be repeated with local adjustments elsewhere also.

All discussions on National Reconstruction are apt to hinge on the economic problem. The Seminar described the economic situation in India as “a state of self-perpetuating drift”, and hence what is needed is a decisive breakthrough to new horizons of possibility. It was rightly urged that “problems cannot be solved at the same level of consciousness that has given rise to them; one has to rise to a higher level and seek their solution”. On the practical side, the following four-fold programme was recommended:

1. a positive will to change — change for the better — in the people;
2. a professional collective management system, which should replace the existing outmoded system of proprietary or statist management;
3. the individual to learn to identify himself with the aggregate, to cultivate a sense of oneness with the whole;
4. above all, a change of attitude towards wealth and money, for wealth too is a power of the Divine and should be augmented and used for the manifestation of the Highest in all walks of life.

If wealth is one of the aspects of the Divine Power, joyous work is verily a form of worship of that Power. If something new is to be built, it should be on firm new foundations. Everywhere one hears the rumblings of disorder and the urgent call for new life, new times, and a new dispensation. This is the hour to be heroic, to start with a new spiritual faith, adventure bravely and instal Mother India on her sacred pedestal again.

K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

(Courtesy: THE MAIL)

## NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

### A PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL PROGRAMME

(Working paper and Report of the deliberations and recommendations made by the Committee for Spiritual Regeneration in the joint Seminar on National Reconstruction held on 18th, 19th and 20th of February, 1975, at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.)

#### WORKING PAPER

“THE world is preparing for a big change.” This is what the Mother saw and said in one of her recent messages, and aroused in Her children a spirit of participation in the ‘big change’ by her subtle call “Will you help?”. (1970)

A new age must come and there must emerge a new society, a new humanity. Our privilege can be to make our conscious preparation for it. Mental as we are at the moment, this preparation has to be primarily a psychological self-opening, an intellectual and emotional readiness for the reception of the influence of the new power of Consciousness. The terms of this psychological preparation will be those of educating the present mentality into true perspectives, inspiring ideals, refined emotions and judicious will-power. With these man could not only seek but also welcome the New Consciousness; in the absence of them the New Consciousness might have to work, who knows, through catastrophes. Mental we are, spiritual we have to be; our preparation has to be psycho-spiritual. An effective programme of this preparation could be taken up by both individuals and organisational groups who receive their inspiration from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and who wish to work for a better Future.

Such a programme naturally deserves to be global. But it must avoid all extravagant regard for uniformity, and give necessary importance to the essentials of development uniquely specific to each society, each country, each culture. In that context India deserves to have a comprehensive programme of spiritual regeneration so that she could resume her true spirit, reorient herself and reorganise her

life according to her true nature, her true being, her *svabhāva*. Then alone could India rise to her stature, play her proper role and contribute her best to the community of nations; then alone could she fulfil her true mission of guiding and helping the entire world towards man's divine destiny. The revealing words of Sri Aurobindo are:

“India is the *guru* of the nations, the physician of the human soul in its profounder maladies; she is destined once more to new-mould the life of the world and restore the peace of the human spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

And confirms the Mother: “India's true destiny is to be the *Guru* of the world.”

Let us turn to Sri Aurobindo's guidance for the development of India and her spiritual regeneration. He says:

“India can best develop herself and serve humanity by being herself and following the law of her own nature. This does not mean, as some narrowly or blindly suppose, the rejection of everything new that comes to us in the stream of Time or happens to have been first developed or powerfully expressed by the West. Such an attitude would be intellectually absurd, physically impossible and, above all, unspiritual; true spirituality rejects no new light, no added means or materials of our human self-development. It means simply to keep our centre, our essential way of being, our inborn nature and assimilate to it all we receive, and evolve out of it all we do and create.”<sup>2</sup>

It is quite often mistaken that spirituality is an exclusive concern for the life of the spirit in its isolation from the rest of life and that spiritual pursuits are necessarily unsecular or other-worldly pursuits. But in the words of Sri Aurobindo “Spirituality is not necessarily exclusive; it can and in its fullness must be all-inclusive.” He enlightens us further, particularly revealing to us the spiritual genius of India:

<sup>1</sup> Cent. Ed. Vol. I, p. 731.

<sup>2</sup> *The Renaissance in India*, pp. 73-74.

“The Spirit is the higher infinite of verities; life is a lower infinite of possibilities which seek to grow and find their own truth and fulfilment in the light of these verities. Our intellect, our will, our ethical and our aesthetic being are the reflectors and the mediators. The method of the West is to exaggerate life and to call down as much — or as little — as may be of the higher powers to stimulate and embellish life. But the method of India is, on the contrary, to discover the spirit within and the higher hidden intensities of the superior powers and to dominate life in one way or another so as to make it responsive to and expressive of the spirit and in that way increase the power of life. Its tendency with the intellect, will, ethical, aesthetic and emotional being is to sound indeed their normal mental possibilities, but also to upraise them towards the greater light and power of their own highest intuitions. The work of the renaissance in India must be to make this spirit, the high view of life, this sense of deeper potentiality once more a creative, perhaps a dominant power in the world”.<sup>1</sup>

Thus revealed, spirituality is to be regarded as an all-inspiring, all embracing self-culture in which we have first to discover the truth of our inmost being and then enlighten all the parts of our being by its splendour and enliven all our activities with its power. That would imply a central approach to all life, personal as well as public, individual as well as collective, and not any confined concentration on some little part of our living.

The key to true spirituality may be termed as ‘psychic transformation’, and all the items of a psycho-spiritual programme in India have to be oriented to it. It may be generally stated that the necessary steps to the psychic and spiritual preparation would be the deepening and raising of our consciousness more and more from its present levels to profounder and higher levels; the marks of development would be spontaneous affinity with truth and good and beauty: widening of thought, serenity, faith and confidence, self-reliance, sincerity, truthfulness, strength of will, love and harmony would be the manifest terms of that development.

<sup>1</sup> *The Renaissance in India*, pp. 27-28.

This preparation in the context of Indian renaissance which is coming up is not only resuming what once naturally belonged to the Indian genius, but a further and recreative prospect and venture into a diviner future of the entire world as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo:

“The recovery of the old spiritual knowledge and experience in all its splendour, depth and fullness is its first most essential work; the flowing of this spirituality into new forms of philosophy, literature, art, science and critical knowledge is the second; an original dealing with modern problems in the light of Indian spirit and the endeavour to formulate a greater synthesis of a spiritualised society is the third and the most difficult. Its success on these three lines will be the measure of its help to the future of humanity.”<sup>1</sup>

Addressing ourselves thus to the great mission of India's spiritual regeneration for the good of the whole world, we could now see the possibility of a two-fold programme: (i) a general campaign for spiritual recovery, a regeneration and a resumption of the hitherto ideals of spirituality by reorienting ourselves to the Indian spirit, — a reconstructional movement of a community of sadhakas; (ii) a concentrated effort of intensive preparation for adventurous exploration into the possibilities of future spirituality, — a movement of daring sadhakas with personal fervour for spiritual research and pledged to new experiments. Needless to say that the second type of programme could be taken up by our Ashram; it would perhaps be more accurate to say that our Ashram already is engaged in it.

A psycho-spiritual programme has to be both individual and collective. The characteristic feature of the one has to be personal self-improvement and of the other a mutual fostering and promotion in the spirit of '*parasparam bhāvayantaḥ*. Without being both it would not be complete and effective, for, although spirituality is not reducible to social terms yet there are both the aspects of spiritual development, a unique individuality and a harmonious communion with all.

<sup>1</sup> *The Renaissance in India*, p. 27.

Some of the effective items of personal spirituality and self-discipline which have always been recognised as almost indispensable for self-improvement could be listed as under:

1. Self-cleansing vigilance, *saṅgyama*
2. Self-regulating practice, *niyāma*
3. Self-enlightening study, *svādhyāya*
4. Self-energising austerity, *tapas*
5. Self-assuring confidence, *viśvāsa*
6. Self-improving resolutions, *vrata*
7. Self-quietening meditation, *dhyāna*
8. Self-inspiring devotion, *bhakti-bhāvanā*
9. Self-sustaining faith, *śraddhā*
10. Self-purifying sincerity, *niṣṭhā*
11. Self-expanding service, *sevā*
12. Self-dedicating work, *yajña*

A list of self-improving virtues cannot be completely exhaustive. What is proposed here can be enhanced further, the suggestion being that such items of self-culture could be suitably adopted by individuals according to their nature and need and circumstances. What would always matter is that self-improvement is indispensable and that the inner sincerity of attitude rather than an outer form of our practice will be the important thing. It deserves to be understood that the success of all our collective programmes will depend entirely on the quality of our individual self-improvement. In that sense all sadhana has to be basically a sadhana of self-improvement.

As for the collective programme we could suitably develop items of mutual and cooperative nature, items for example like physical education, congregational meditation, regular weekly *svādhyāya*, study camps, cooperative projects of dedicated work, mutual arousal and promotion of yogic attitudes towards life-situations, etc., etc. There will naturally arise the need of opening svadhyaya and sadhana centres at different places with proper atmosphere and promotional equipments. Devoted individuals who could organise the activities of such centres will be a consistent requirement.

As far as feasible, educational activities could be closely asso-

ciated with such centres, for in fact sadhana and education are essentially one.

While the programme of an all round self-improvement has to be initiated with a fresh vigour, we could ill afford to miss or neglect the popular ways of ethico-religious life in India, for indeed religion as well as ethics has always been spiritually oriented here. It would be expected, on the contrary, that such a movement would focus on the spiritual significances of religious practices and traditional norms, stripping off the true content from routine rituals or customary observances, so that the conventional people might experience a sense of recovery of their own faith and in turn become more and more catholic to others' faiths.

On the bases of recovered spirituality it would be proper to bring out the unifying principles of all religions and thus harmonise all faiths. A spiritual movement, though transcending in its true essence all religiosity, would, while having a liberating effect on religion, not cancel, — much less condemn, — the religious life: it would rather provide the nourishing kernel to the religious people, supporting them in their own faiths, inspiring thus a christian to be a better christian, a muslim to be a truer muslim, and the followers of the various other cults better adherents of their established ideals. The Gita, for example, enjoins on the man of wisdom (jnatin) to support and strengthen the people of ordinary faiths by his superior knowledge.

So too regarding the traditional ways of living. A spiritual movement would liberate rather than disparage social conventions, catholicise individuals into mutual appreciation rather than tear them away into antagonistic attitudes towards traditional ways of living. The characteristic motive of spirituality would be to help in finding the deeper significance of customs and make people more conscious of the implied values of their traditional culture and thus encourage them to develop further and ever more in their own line of growth.

This, however, would never imply that it is demanded or expected of a spiritual movement to be either passively indifferent or clumsily tolerant of all that is nonsense or superstitious or petrified either in the name of religion or in the garb of custom. On the contrary, it has to be very sensitive and drastic, making absolutely no allowance to all that tends to persist in ignorance. In principle it may

have to be even revolutionary, since all spirituality is in a sense a reversal, that is, living radically from within, from the soul-truth instead of living from without, from external considerations, *antar-mukhī* as against *bahirmukhī*. But this revolution is not an externalised operation, a turmoil or a disruptive commotion: it is rather a serious and self-resolute orientation in which all that is extraneous becomes insignificant and the call of the soul within out-weighs every other consideration. Primarily therefore it is getting oneself revolutionised rather than revolutionising others. And since the spiritually revolutionised would live by spiritual consciousness, truth and good and beauty would be his characteristic features.

The collective aspect of spiritual life would thus be almost an outcome of the spiritual orientation in social living. Conventional life of the community could well be the field for the spiritual man for penetrating deep into the spiritual content implied in traditional values, and his association with others an occasion for arousing others' consciousness towards the profundity of that content.

One of the very helpful and valuable things that such a movement could and should do is to work out a thorough value-scheme in which such an integral hierarchy of values could be brought home that nothing worthwhile in life is left out and no stress on any one particular value could render it out of proportions. Physical, economic, social, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic, moral and religious values must find their due place corresponding to the different pursuits of man and the developing levels of his consciousness. Such a value-system will not only sustain all the value seeking of man but will also guide him in matters of value-grades so that he could always live by a correct perspective and never lose sight of the supreme value. Sri Aurobindo's categorical advice is: "... the lower in us must learn to exist for the higher, in order that the higher also may in us consciously exist for the lower, to draw it nearer to its own altitudes."<sup>1</sup>

Another very important work could be usefully taken up by a psycho-spiritual movement: that is the work of 'personality integration', not in the popular manner of psycho-therapy but in the deeper sense of psycho-synthesis. In this age of stress and strain the

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on the Gita*, p. 29.

human individual is suffering from all sorts of disintegrational imbalances. His personality is almost torn between unhealthy pulls and pushes and the problem of maladjustment is reaching its heights. Psychiatry is fast coming to the view that a proper rehabilitation of personality is possible by the recovery of one's deeper faith and his devotion to that inspiring ideal to which one would feel pledged. Spirituality in its core has all the inspiration for loving and living the highest ideals. The work of personality integration can best be done by spiritual orientation and spiritual regeneration can best be accomplished by truly integrated personalities.

These suggestive notes could be summed up into a seven-fold programme consisting of (i) Self-improving discipline coupled with group activities including dedicated work for mutual promotion of higher and superior considerations;

(ii) Recovery of spiritual content of religious traditions for a harmonious appreciation of different faiths;

(iii) Bringing home an integral view of life for promoting wholesome attitudes towards life-situations;

(iv) Proper value-orientation with clear consciousness as to the supreme Goal of life;

(v) *Svādhyāya* — personal and in group; regular and in special camps;

(vi) Personality integration and self-yoking to the Divine.

(vii) Sustained and researchful adventure into future possibilities of a divine life.

#### BRIEF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The passages from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the Committee felt, open the entire perspective and strike the keynote and provide the guide-lines for all the task to which this Committee could address itself:

The Committee realised that spirituality being the core of Indian life as viewed by Sri Aurobindo, it could not be treated as a mere aspect among other aspects of an Indian Reconstruction Programme: it rather deserved to be the central theme of all the aspects, economic, social, educational and the rest. It further realised that

spirituality being all-inclusive on the one hand, and on the other, sadhana being unique to each individual without much uniformity, the task of formulating any programme for the whole nation was rather delicate. All the same the urgency of spiritual regeneration being so acutely felt, some suggestions, howsoever tentative, deserved to be imperatively worked out. The Committee therefore considered it very important that in a spiritual regeneration programme primary emphasis should be laid on the *principles of spirituality*, and the mention of specific practices should be regarded as simply useful suggestions to be suitably adapted.

Since it is quite often misconceived that spirituality is an isolated pursuit of some unworldly or other-worldly aim, it deserved to be brought home and very clearly emphasised that true "spirituality is to be regarded as an all-inspiring all-embracing self-culture in which we have first to discover the truth of our inmost being and then enlighten all the parts of our being by its splendour and enliven all our activities with its power. That would imply a central approach to all life, personal as well as public, individual as well as collective".

Considering the various suggestions of the working paper as valuable the Committee very strongly felt that the programme of *svādhyāya* was of capital importance since it was through *svādhyāya*, that individuals as well as groups could bring their consciousness into direct contact with the enlightening Consciousness revealing itself through the Word-Power. A separate Note on *svādhyāya* is given here. *Svādhyāya*, it is sincerely believed, would effectively initiate us into other parts of the total programme.

In the field of work the programme of spiritual regeneration should be brought to active participation in the ideal and project of Auroville.

The Youth of the country deserve to be particularly inspired into the Auroville ideal of Tomorrow while the traditional people need to be made deeply conscious of the agelong ideals of spirituality.

#### A NOTE ON SVADHYAYA

'*Svādhyāya*' is a very significant word. We in India are more or less conversant with its meaning and import, even though in the

course of long tradition its practice in life has mostly lapsed into mere routine of scriptural readings, mechanical while regular in its mode.

In the famous eight-fold Yoga of Patanjali '*svādhyāya*' is one of the essential five self-regulatives, *niyama*, absolutely necessary for the inner self-preparation for and in the life of Yoga. The Gita in its scheme of all-life-yajna speaks of *svādhyāya* as coupled with spiritual knowledge, *svādhyāya-jñāna-yajña*. (Chapter IV-28) It also mentions of it as one amongst the foremost divine qualities. (XVI-16) Almost all other spiritual traditions have recognised the great value of *svādhyāya*, and have considered it necessary and helpful in the life of *sādhana* that is spiritual discipline.

Literally speaking *svādhyāya* would mean self-study. But it is not merely a study by oneself: it is at once a study of one's self, the truth of one's spiritual reality. Consequently it has a specific reference and bearing on scriptural study which is basically contemplative. It could thus be meaningfully said that *svādhyāya* is a contemplative or meditative study of soul-truths in the light of revealing scriptures. Such a study would, from the very nature of the case, be a profound study very much different from common and ordinary informational readings, superior even to intellectual learnings. It would at the least be that wisdom-giving study for which T. S. Eliot happened to express his great and serious concern when he exclaimed "Where is that knowledge which is lost in information, and where is that wisdom which is lost in knowledge?"

Our usual studies are loaded and stuffed with information for the most part, and at their best they serve as the material out of which we might weave out what we call intellectual understanding termed loosely as 'knowledge'. But nothing more than that. Informational survey and intellectual approach have, no doubt, their value. But by themselves they fall miserably short of wisdom, and, given to their presumptuous claims, they stick to their limitations, may even fall a prey to falsehood and ignorance, from which nothing short of spiritual wisdom can save.

Now in a programme oriented to Wisdom, study in the spirit of *svādhyāya* is a must, since it is a meditative study, and to meditate is at once to open our inner consciousness in receptivity to the light

of the truth that radiates through the Word. A programme of *svādhyāya* can have both the modes, individual as well as collective. Those who have a proper disposition for such contemplative studies with others can have the joy and satisfaction of mutual enlightenment when they join as Wisdom-seekers, *parasparam bodhayantaḥ* as the Gita puts it. (X-9)

To study the revealing writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in a spirit of *svādhyāya* is not only meaningful in this context, but the most pertinent and essential thing, for, to say the least, *svādhyāya* is the basic and most effective condition for receiving the profound meanings of their words. Without that spirit we are likely to fail in getting the full import: with that spirit we are assured of their illuminating influence.

Man being mental at the moment, he lives his conscious life according to his thoughts, under the influence of his emotions and directions of his will. Until a superior light and power possess him and mould his normal nature and transform his whole being he has to progress through his mental preparation which may be termed as his mental *sādhana*. Even in the *sādhana* of his body and life his mental understanding and attitude and resolutions are his leaders. "Man is a mental being and the mind is the leader of his life and body;" For an inward turn of his psychic *sādhana* his mind has to learn to open itself to faith and to become quiet to receive the psychic influence. The mind's preparation and *sādhana* has thus to proceed with *svādhyāya* which is meditative study of the truths of life and existence revealed in the scriptures and the writings of the seers and sages and *avatārs*.

In this context, what a privilege for mankind that Sri Aurobindo has written so abundantly, so revealingly, so convincingly, and has made a whole treasure of valuable truths available for our *svādhyāya*; what a great fortune again, that the Mother has so richly explained the secrets of existence and the goal of life: To study Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is to be with them, at least mentally, and thus to be exposed in mind to the influence of their Light. To engage ourselves in the study of their writings in the spirit of *svādhyāya* is at once to enlighten our thoughts, inspire our feelings, ennoble our attitudes and enhance our will. Their words are at once a light and a power, and to

receive them is to breathe in the truths they contain. They not only communicate, they charge our consciousness. *Svādhyāya* is attuning ourselves to their Muse; the least it gives is an inviting acquaintance with the heights and depths of life and reality, in its true spirit it kindles the fire of 'spiritual thought' in us.

Sri Aurobindo reveals to us the ways in which Nature has conducted man's inward preparation towards spiritual evolution. He says, "There are four main lines which Nature has followed in her attempt to open up the inner being, — religion, occultism, spiritual thought and an inner spiritual realisation and experience: the three first are approaches, the last is the decisive avenue of entry."<sup>1</sup> He calls them "powers" since each is effective in its own way and also in combination with one another. Making a specific exposition of each he tells us about spiritual thought that "it has been the outcome of realisation and experience or built its structures as an approach to it". *Svādhyāya* here appears in its true significance working both ways — basing itself on revealed Truth and approaching towards experience and realisation.

Regarding spiritual thought and study he says:

"An intellectual approach to the highest knowledge, the mind's possession of it, is an indispensable aid to this movement of Nature in the human being. Ordinarily, on our surface, man's chief instrument of thought and action is the reason, the observing, understanding and arranging intellect. In any total advance or evolution of the spirit, not only the intuition, insight, inner sense, the heart's devotion, a deep and direct life-experience of the things of the spirit have to be developed, but the intellect also must be enlightened and satisfied; our thinking and reflecting mind must be helped to understand, to form a reasoned and systematised idea of the goal, the method, the principles of this highest development and activity of our nature and the truth of all that lies behind it."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 765

<sup>2</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 780.

## A SUGGESTION

Such, being the significance of *Svādhyāya*, and so much being the importance of spiritual thought and its intellectual study, it may be very useful to launch a comprehensive programme of *svādhyāya*. For the sake of efficiency this programme could be organised by an informal and free Association of the seekers of Truth which might be called: 'SRI AUROBINDO SVADHYAYA MANDALA'.

The *Svādhyāya Maṇḍala* should aim to develop into a vast sphere of *svādhyāya* with *svādhyāya* centres and circles everywhere but confining circumference nowhere.

Its primary feature has to be an inspiring activity of elevating and enlightening study of spiritual literature, and not a form of mere constitutional body.

Its purpose and programme will be to promote and enhance the mind's seeking for the spiritual truth and thereby release the mental energy into psycho-spiritual explorations.

The foremost field of *svādhyāya* will be the revealing writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, integral and integrative as they are. Scriptural studies like those of the Upanisads, the Gita, the Dhammapada etc. could be suitably included without any sectarian bias.

*Svādhyāya* will have its personal as well as mutual aspects: a contemplative self-study would be the personal way, and a dialogue over meditative readings would be the mutual way of collective *svādhyāya*.

The programme of *svādhyāya* could be regular — daily or weekly — and also on particular occasions in Study Camps specially organised for intensive study etc.

The activities of *svādhyāya* Centres could be extended in terms of expository talks, seminars, conferences, and such other regular study provisions as may be felt useful according to the local needs.

Certain educational activities could, as far as feasible, be associated with these centres.

It would be important to consider the requirements of *svādhyāya* Centres. They would need suitable places with necessary books and a scope for library facilities to develop in due course. Basic books may be available to deserving readers at cheaper rates.

Easy expository booklets may be published for preliminary studies of the common readers. A monthly journal entitled 'SVADHYAYA' in regional languages may regularly supply useful selections from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for contemplative study of the members of the *svādhyāya* Centres.

Working sincerely and regularly, these *svādhyāya* Centres could prepare their own compilations of inspiring and enlightening selections from source books on different topics for use and service to those workers who propose taking up certain projects of practical work in any sphere of life with spiritual outlook. This would be a very practical help of the centres to the society.

MAHESHWAR

## SEMINAR ON NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

### PRINCIPLES OF APPROACH AND IMPLEMENTATION\*

**F**OR any social programme to be meaningful and effective the individual must be accepted as the key. Secondly the orientation of life must be changed: it should proceed from within outward.

Individuals who accept this discipline of inner change should organise groups of like minded individuals for the preparation of the needed climate and the means for the execution of the programmes. These groups or Centres are to be autonomous bodies deriving guidance direct from their source of Inspiration — The Mother.

The background of this work is the spiritual vision of India as the soul of the World. The aim is to rise out of the various imperfections, deformations and deviations that characterise the present society towards increasing enlightenment, progression and perfection. The endeavour at Sri Aurobindo Ashram is the working model for this purpose.

These Centres, as they develop, should have distinct wings for the development of the Youth and of Women. Facilities should be provided for a sound programme of physical education as a strong physical base is indispensable for a total growth. Apart from studies, exercises in self-discipline etc. there should be a dedication to social service for the Divine.

Naturally the main motive force for this movement is spiritual. But this spirituality is not anything that touches only the soul or only a part of oneself; it is the central truth around which everything is to be organised. Each individual must exert himself to awaken in himself his soul or psychic centre utilising all means that are available; study of spiritual literature, especially those of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, elevating association — Satsang — practice of psychological discipline like prayer, meditation etc. to deepen and heighten the level of one's consciousness. It is equally important to normalise these elevations of consciousness by expressing them in day to day life.

Studies must be undertaken in order to recover the spiritual bases of religions and ethics as they have come down to us; side by side

\* General statement presented by the Seminar.

explorations into the future expressions of spirituality must be promoted. This endeavour — both individual and collective — is best carried on under the guidance of the Ashram.

Application of the Teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for the integration of personality, resolution of the conflict between individual and the collectivity, integration of values of the different civilisations of the East and the West, on the lines attempted at Auroville, must be given priority.

The importance of the right type of education that alone can help in an organised realisation of these Ideals cannot be gainsaid. A total change in the attitude to the child who is to be educated, a radical change in the role of the teacher and in the relation between the teacher and the taught, are called for. The ideal education is that which is imperceptibly woven into every detail of day to day life of the student. Taking advantage of the breakdown in the current systems of education in the country, the encouraging results of the modes of integral education developed in Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education must be propagated. Teachers from outside who are open to new ideas and feel the need to revise their methods must be encouraged and helped to imbibe the spirit and learn the techniques of the New Education. Orientation camps in the Ashram may be provided under expert guidance. A cell may be created at the Centre of Education to keep contact with teachers and groups who are interested in New Education and guide them. A periodical bulletin on the subject may also be considered for a larger propagation. A small committee is recommended to be set up to maintain the link between teachers in the Ashram and teachers outside who are trying to work out this programme in their respective institutions to the extent that is possible.

Lastly the state of economy in the country is in a state of self-perpetuating drift. A breakthrough has got to be effected and that can be done if:

1. A positive will to achieve is developed in the people:
2. A professional collective management system is allowed to replace the existing, outmoded system of proprietary management:
3. The individual is educated to identify himself with the collectivity.

4. There is a change of attitude to wealth and money is recognised to be a Power of the Divine to be used for the manifestation of the Highest in all walks of life.

The individual should change — in his attitude and living. He must create an area of influence around himself and generate action. Existing models of such enterprise should be publicised.

It should be recognised that problems cannot be solved at the same level of consciousness that has given rise to them. One has to rise to a higher level and seek their solution.

There is much in the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother that could help in revolutionising the attitude and creating new dimensions in the field of economy. Committees must be set up to collect apposite passages on these themes and present them in an effective manner. There should also be a kind of clearing house Committee to receive queries from those interested and feed them with the right answers from the Teachings of the Masters.

It is strongly recommended that to guide and direct such a many-sided movement of regeneration as this, a Central Coordinating Committee be set up in Pondicherry with a representative each from the participating organisations and a convener from the Ashram. This Committee may co-opt members for specific assignments as and when necessary. The Committee must meet periodically and review the developments.

Joint Seminars of the type now held must be organised at least once a year to take stock and prepare programmes for the next years.

## SAVITRI: A STUDY IN DEPTH

### BOOK TWO: CANTO V

#### I

#### THE GODHEADS OF THE LITTLE LIFE

**A** SWAPATHY sees before him a vivid picture of the little life; it struggles into existence on the fringe of the Truth idea; has a protective covering of Ignorance; he directs his searching glance into the mists of obscurity to disentangle its origins; even as the search-light reveals all that is covered up in darkness, so too his penetrating eye discloses the restless uncouth populace teeming in their thousands in the dusk; they are moved into activity by the subtle deities; men in their ignorance believe that they are doing everything on their own, little knowing the control exercised over them by the unseen supra-physical forces; these magic artisans, the forces working behind the veils, mould out of the plastic clay a motley multitude of ignominious creeping life such as the reptiles; there are seen at work not only the evil but the good spirits; there are fairer genii who due to their fall, have lost their soul while retaining their beautiful exterior; they are interested in playing with good and evil; they lure into failure all attempts by resorting to the sorceries of deceit and corruption; they spill poison into knowledge, making man an enlightened brute and making virtue disgusting, dull and drab.

'However large a part of this pressure may be traced to our own subliminal self or to the siege of the universal mind forces or life-forces belonging to our own world, there is an element which bears the stamp of another origin, an insistent supra-terrestrial character.'<sup>1</sup>

These supra-terrestrial forces take advantage of men with half-awakened souls following an uncertain line of drift; the twilight state of their vacillation is their lurking place for their wily scheming; the primitive heart comes under the dominance of their misleading suggestions; they influence with their dark counsels; misguide their darkened lives into greater darkness; it is not the powers of the earth

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 691.

alone but those belonging to the other worlds also that vie with one another to exercise their influence on the earth life; when reaching the earth, these powers which function as absolutes in their own realms, have to adjust and acclimatise themselves to the conditions obtaining on the earth; for the purpose of gaining a hold on earth, even the opposites have to unite; the human mind which is a prey to all these subtle forces, is naturally thrown into a state of unquiet; it hungers for light which when traced to its origin is discovered to lie within; but the light for which the conscious life is athirst is beyond its reach since the human mind is subject to the laws of the inconscience and the pulls of the blind desires; the mind is under the yoke of forces beyond its control; even the conquests achieved so far by the mind are of doubtful value; with all their travail they get a battered crown, a success mangled out of shape; but gradually a higher consciousness steps in; the horizon widens and the finite grows into the infinite.

'This organisation includes as on our earth, the existence of beings who have or take forms, manifest themselves or are naturally manifested in an embodying substance tangible only to subtle sense, a supraphysical form-matter. It is possible to receive help or guidance or harm or misguidance from these beings; it is possible even to become subject to their influence, to be possessed by their invasion, or domination, to be instrumentalised by them for their good or evil purpose. At times the progress of earthly life seems to be a vast field of battle between supraphysical forces of either character, those that strive to uplift, encourage and illumine and those that strive to deflect, depress or prevent or even shatter our upward evolution or the soul's self-expression in the material universe. Some of these Beings, Powers or Forces are such that we think of them as divine; they are luminous or benignant or powerfully helpful; there are others that are Titanic, gigantic or demoniac, inordinate influences, instigators or creators often of vast and formidable inner upheavals or of action that overpass the normal human measure.'<sup>1</sup>

At the outset the world gives the impression of a brute machine in spite of the fact that the Supreme sits in the inconscient secrecy directing the whole movement; the Spirit first takes birth as matter;

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 691.

lies in a tranced condition, asleep and dumb; the subtle vibrations of life in matter are neither heard nor perceived; the subtle wizard, the creative Force of the Supreme, is at work producing numerous material forms; behind the veil of inconscience, the immanent supreme intelligence is directing the whole movement.

Though the world has sprung out into existence out of Ananda, in the initial stages of creation, there is an all-pervasive insensibility; first there is the space characterised by sound vibrations; this is followed by the element of the air which has the quality of touch, clash and clasp; the creative force looks like a spendthrift throwing away its energy; but it is also a force of conservation drawing back all that has been scattered or diffused.

The next arrival on the stage is the element of fire which modifies itself into the luminous order of the stars; space becomes a vast field of electric energy releasing strange wave-particles; thus is formed Matter where consciousness is heavily massed; 'In matter Chit or Consciousness-force masses itself more and more to resist and stand out against other masses of the same consciousness-force; in substance of spirit pure consciousness images itself freely in its sense of itself with an essential indivisibility and a constant unifying interchange as the first basic formula even of the most diversifying play of its own force.'<sup>1</sup> The world which seems an impossibility comes out of the void; but because it is a reality, it is a miracle; this is the explanation from the limited human perception; the riddle, the mystery of life is sought to be solved by error leading to a groping of truth.

It may to another view appear an illusion, a deception imposed by Maya; or all may be an appearance of a change, a flux while the spirit is immutable; the objects which appear stationary are in a constant whirl; they await life and consciousness; this leads to the dreamer in the pose of stone changing slightly from inconscience to mobility; this sets the scene for nature's conscious play; the pent up force in matter trickles out in an inarticulate fashion; there is a thin spray of life along the prevailing dead order of existence; the ocean of lifeless space is dotted by islands of the living; a conscious power of life twins the insensible matter; they ever after function as companions; but the life that is born obeys the laws of matter; except for certain move-

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 233.

ments, and the basic responses to sensations of pain and pleasure, life and matter are indistinguishable; life awake or asleep looks like matter; however these involuntary movements in life reveal the directive heavings of an imprisoned will of the Supreme.

Life in its nascent stage has not taken the shape to vocalise its feelings; there is yet an inarticulate sensibility, an experience of a throb of delight, a vague unexpressed thrill of pleasure at its own beauty; in course of time there is the birth of feeling, an awareness; but this consciousness is turned without and is not directed within since the doors of the house are sealed; as a sequel the eye catches the surface and misses the spirit concealed within; though life is laden with infinite potentialities, it does not venture into the depths but confines itself to the shallow waters of safety; it is merely content with trotting out its desires, its yearnings for fulfillment at a later stage; it does not experience that by which it lives or breathes; then slowly as a result of long hungering, mind and thought are born lending an awareness to the encasement of the body; the reflex actions or the instinctive responses are now transformed into well thought-out conscious reactions; with the birth of consciousness, the realisation dawns that matter and spirit are not different but aspects of the same reality; this brings about a new attitude to life; heart overflows with love and life takes an uplifting turn since its activities in the new awareness, are under the soul's witness gaze.

Due to the impulsion of an unseen will, there break out fragments of some vast impulse to become; from the unconscious swoon of things, wake up numerous forms and shapes; an animal creation creeps and runs; though hunted by death, it strangely clings to life; then man is moulded from the original brute; he is endowed with a thinking mind, but his intelligence has a double characteristic; it is part involved in the operations of nature and part detached and observant; he is intended to be and gives the impression of being the driver of Nature's wheel of works, but instead of being the director, he becomes the directed; instead of being the master, he becomes the servant; but eventually he may rise up to the mission of motivating and recording nature's drift; then he may become the master-spring of the delicate enginery of the evolutionary nature; man unlike other animals, looks heavenwards; he catches the face of the emergent being

in the Heaven's light; Nature herself pauses aghast; is amazed at the works wrought in her mystic sleep; when she has arrived at the stage of man in the course of her works, she holds a self-enquiry; finds she is no longer driven by instinct; but governed by thought and will; therefore she creates a specious image of a self, the living idol of the disfigured spirit, the narrow ego; she makes it the centre of her mass of impulses; she creates a thinking body from chemic cells; she directs her activities thus towards some high Unknown; the bracing fresh air from the Supreme above, is felt below on the earth.

The earth may sometimes receive flashes from the celestial spheres; it is in their light that some of the human ideals are conceived and are sought to be carried through; but unfortunately the divine qualities which are absolute in their own spheres, undergo a mutilation when they reach the earth; the ever-lasting pure love that is the quality of an awakened soul, becomes here the tarnished sordid love; the wings that it develops are not those of the seraph that could lift the soul but those of the petty moth that perishes in no time; joy is a rare visitor no doubt on the earth, but for the duration of the visit, man feels a sense of beauty and forgets all sense of misery and mortality; it is under these not very encouraging circumstances, that man struggles hard to make the best of life; but without his knowledge, there is the in-dwelling presence of the spirit, a projection of the unmanifest Reality; the time is not yet ripe for its earthly embodiment or for its overt interference in Nature's doings; the spirit mutely allows itself to be bound by nature; watches the works of his own ignorance; though the spirit is silent and non-interfering, everything takes place according to the immanent wisdom within the thing itself.

The huge world has most unintelligibly its origin in Inconscience; it seems to be the base for its movement; the key that can unlock the mystery is buried in the folds of Inconscience; there is an inner voice within us which is also blocked from reaching our ears; but what becomes obvious is that there is the mighty labour of the spirit which has brought the world into existence; the exact machine that the world reveals itself to be, gives evidence of an art and ingenuity that are beyond human comprehension and therefore appear without sense; man is in the unfortunate position of not understanding a thing in its whole; he can destroy, analyse, and piece together

again; he cannot have any understanding, unless the thing is fragmented; therefore he does not see the purpose behind all this play of nature; he misses the wood for the trees; he is lost in the minutiae, the jungle and the intricacy of fine detail of nature and runs away with the notion that the fragments picked up are truths; we, who are hardly in a position to see the intimate part we have in the cosmic, evolutionary scheme, may mistake harmonies in nature for discords; with the limited instrumentation of his faculties, he cannot fathom the purpose, the part, and the significance in the divine scheme of what may appear to him as useless.

‘We see only part of nature’s purpose and all that does not subserve that part we call waste.’<sup>1</sup>

Bedevilled by a pettifogging reason, man is unable to feel the pulse and core of things; he cannot plumb the depths, the mystery of life’s mighty sea by embarking on the fragile vessel of logic; perhaps he can count the waves and scan the foam and do nothing beyond; true perception is possible only when mind and reason are transcended, only when a spirit of humility and surrender are developed; without knowing the origin and purpose of the vast energies locked up in nature, he seeks to canalise them for human ends; but this is a futile attempt since the instrumentation either human or mechanical is vitiated at source in that it is the Inconscience that is the base and instead of promoting it may retard the human weal; it is only a few dribblets of the unseen cosmic energies circulating in the vast universe that come to man’s share; the human mind is far off and remote from the source of authentic light; its vision and knowledge are confined to an infinitesimal sector of the vast universe; human life is part of the universal life force; he may separate himself from the ocean by an individuation, by raising around himself by way of protection from invasions of larger life and the cosmos, the walls of the divisive ego; it is in higher awareness that the walls of the ego collapse and a true identity is reached.

Even our conscious movements have sealed origins; they come off not because of our will or volition, as we believe, but because of the promptings of the subliminal, a vast sea of which we have no knowledge and of which the surface consciousness forms the mi-

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 84.

nutest fraction; man lives in absolute ignorance of this vast ocean within; every impulse like a wave is born there; the roots of human action like the roots of a tree are concealed under the earth; they are below the surface in the Inconscience or the subliminal; there are planes and planes and the powers belonging to them exercise their influence which reaches us through the subliminal springs concealed within; the spirit's puissance is such that it can act direct without any elaborate instrumentation such as mentalisation preceding actuation; the subliminal receives all the impressions in the wakeful and the sleep condition; they are reduced to a Morse code and a particular mystic message being transmitted by the subtle being, sometimes the animal counterpart, a Troglodyte, the necessary impulse and actuation follow; thus man is swayed as much by the overt as by the covert and occult.

'The subconscious is the Inconscient in the process of becoming conscious; it is a support and even a root of our inferior parts of being and their movements. It sustains and reinforces all in us that clings most and refuses to change, our mechanical recurrence of unintelligent thought, our persistent obstinacies of feeling, sensation, impulse, propensity, our uncontrolled fixities of character. The animal in us — the infernal also — has its lair of retreat in the dense jungle of the subconscious. To penetrate there, to bring in light and establish a control, is indispensable for the completeness of any higher life for any integral transformation of the nature.'<sup>1</sup>

Man, though he thinks he is the author and the architect of his fate, is in fact a puppet in the hands of the unseen elemental strengths; these forces in their turn are unaware of the source of their strength and the cause they serve; a man for all his thinking is unable to take decisions in critical moments, unless he is pushed into taking one by invisible hands; the large troupe behind the veils, operates the strings, plays with the fortune of the mortals; makes of them the marionettes for their entertainment; but even these dark powers that take hold of man, also play their part in promoting the objective of the creative spirit; the agents who use us as tools, are themselves tools of the Unknown; their interference sometimes is the cause of the unforeseen and the unexpected; this is accounted for and explained away as the incoherence of fate; the mortals in their turn are improvident and

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 655.

throw away the precious opportunity of life on trivial pursuits; the higher Truth has no attraction to them; they lie prone before the demoniac force; these asuric forces have an inordinate hold on their hearts; they are the architects of the low-built lives, trade on their worldly desires, and by their gratification make man more and more worldly minded; man thus becomes attached to the earth, its coarseness and muddy thrills; the divine ecstasy is not for him; Ananda is alien to him; the temple of the soul which should be filled with the symbols of beauty, he clutters with the stuff of ego's mart; meanwhile the subtle powers which play with human lives, design the comedy or the tragedy, arrange the plot, the deed, the circumstance and the decor of the dull-hued stage; they are the prompters, the tutors of our stumbling speech; we are the mere actors who play the role, strut about for a while and disappear as soon as the piece assigned is finished; unable to build our own fate by an indomitable will of our own, we play into the hands of these unfriendly powers which are interested in stifling the human development.

The life of the mortal continues unvaried and remains the same drab routine as long as the human animal retains the sway and the soul is shoved behind; as long as man remains extrovert and is interested merely in intellectual pursuits and creature comforts, man is doomed to an irredeemable littleness and pettiness; this explains why, ever since the dawn of consciousness, life has been essentially the same in the insect, the ape and the man except for its brightened appearance in the general level in the course of evolution; man derives a gross contentment in the small success achieved at the material level though it turns him away from the call of the spirit; he earns a precarious right to live at great cost of toil and hardship and ultimately pays the wages of death; in spite of all these curbs, he achieves something; himself being a part of the creative spirit and experiencing its momentary clasp sometimes, he is able to reproduce a puny splendour in his art and music; he strives and leaves behind something which survives him; he sometimes has the gleams of the revels of the gods; with his fragile and failing limbs, it is not possible for him to reproduce those raptures; any such attempt brings about his collapse for it is a 'leonine greatness that would tear his soul'; the boon of the little hour of life is thoughtlessly squandered on trifles; his companionships have not the endur-

ing bond of love but of convenience; hence the brief moment of his life is filled with disharmony, jealousy and hatred; he takes to art in the spirit of a pastime and never with the intention of making it a bridge to the infinite; even when the heavenly glimpses visit him, he cannot eternise his momentary exaltation; his flights in art must have a low pitch; the sustained high soaring flights by the very nature of the human instrumentation, are not possible; he takes to music in the spirit of giving a thrill to his nerves, getting a sensation from it, and he has not the least intention of stepping into the rhythm of the universe, of putting himself in tune with the harmony of the universe.

Harassed by toil and exposed to a welter of cares, man approaches nature for its healing balm and derives comfort from its tranquillity; he puts himself in unison with nature and its spirit; makes an opening in his heart which closes the next moment since it is too weak to hold the puissant guest and since he is presently caught up under a new excitement; his days are tinged with the red hue of strife and the little glow of a finer nature is swamped by a re-assertion of the tribal nature; he exiles himself from his real self; there are very few that have the persistence to scale the heights; most of them are content to lead a life set in a low key; the small joy of life that breaks out of the Bliss supreme, the Ananda underlying all existence is enough to make him reconciled with the acerbities of life and he plods on; he immures himself in the citadel of his ego; erects a formidable hedge against self-expansion; further he finds in his worldly preoccupations a means to shut-off God and forget his kingship to infinity since 'time has he none to turn his eyes within'.

But can Man, the crown of all that has been done so far, be the last word in evolution?; this cannot be; only a definite stage has been reached in the long ascent from nescience, a terminal point where there may be a branching off from nescience to super-sentience; if man were all, then we have to accept existence as an accident in Time, an illusion, or phenomenon or freak; the world must be a fiction; a monstrous lie created by the fertile mind; man may be a somnambulist, an automaton moving without volition from scene to scene 'whither it knows not'; granting it is all a dream, the questions arise: 'who is the dreamer? and whence the dream? the world therefore is real but it is too colossal for the puny man to understand with his limited facul-

ties; what is unlimited can be understood only by rising above all limits; the human apparatus which functions marvellously when applied to the physical world of man, fails miserably when turned to the transcendental use; this misuse lands us in the trouble of doubt and disbelief; however there is an inner perception to which is revealed a pointillage minute of little self; it must be the primal source of all; but the giantess Science takes the infinitude of Matter as its base; we are between the scientist who is lost in his ever-growing data and the intellectual who is lost in his abstractions; we are tossed between the quantitative and qualitative analysis, induction and deduction and in this situation, Religion brings in the hope, speaks of a Reality and promises riches compensatory of all the rigours and austerities undergone here.

According to mind's superficial reading, the disbelievers go to hell, the black unknown and those having faith, to heaven; but this is only a provisional scheme devised by the mind; true knowledge rests not on these surface powers; it comes from a deeper seeking from within; the greater vision meets us when we leave these small purlieus of mind; then shall we be aware of a witness soul within, concealed from us; in the new light of consciousness with which we are charged, everything assumes a fresh significance; we see the luminous presence at the core and everything quivers with a God-light; the artificial hedges dividing the finite from the infinite, crumble down, leading to a spirit of identity, universality; in this context we can read back and discover that the magnificent though confused pattern of the universe is a game in which the sempiternal concealed in the Inconscience is striving to peer at himself or attempting a self-discovery or gradual unfoldment through the apparent form; we are guided in every one of our actions by the immanent self towards the goal of the unknown self; in the apparent mechanical working of nature, is revealed on a deeper reading, a direction, a guidance, a sanction of the unseen presence, an eye 'that drives the stars and the suns'; everything is thus governed by a logic of its own which may defy human reasoning.

A higher destiny awaits man; he is not a mere creature of flesh and blood; he will grow in course of time to a consciousness that he is more a spirit than a body; he will act more as the delegate of the Supreme, a pioneer for paving the ground for the appearance of a su-

per race that can manifest in a fuller measure the glory of God; the One has made the supreme sacrifice, passed through the crucible of suffering in the shape of man; in the guise of a beggar, he stretches out his hands for alms; he does all this for the redemption of man; even in the theatre of our small lives, man is visited, in spite of his best attempts to steel his heart against any appeals, by urges and promptings divine to help the ailing and the suffering; in this vale of misery that this world is, we hear yet the murmur of occult happiness; the broad general feature of pain has an undertone, an undercurrent of bliss manifest in laughter, in sleep because the characteristic of the Divine is Ananda and everything floats in and is supported by it; the Lord is like Krishna, inviting all by the dulcet notes of his flute to participate in the banquet provided by nature.

Though mostly subject to sordid material pulls, man becomes conscious of a Presence within which is indestructible and part of the divine; 'this kindles a fire that is half divine'; there is a rift, an opening in the ego wall; with bowed heads, so as to avoid a collision with the lowly threshold, angels of ecstasy and self-giving pass into our heart; the heart melts; is filled with flashes of sympathy and tenderness making for a self-enlargement; behind in the subliminal, unknown to us, a work is done tending to transform the human to divine nature; the eternal Entity within plans not for the time under the shadow of death, but unmoved by the limitations to which man is subject, it prepares its matter of divine felicity and makes the human respond to its shaping hands; instead of a direct there is the devious manifestation of the Reality, his beauty, power and knowledge express themselves by extreme division and fragmentation; our strength derives from omnipotence, thought from omniscience, but they are deformed and limited by the base of Inconscience on which they have to manifest; however his attraction to these qualities of knowledge, beauty and power in the absolute, brings an awareness of their origin and makes him athirst for realisation.

The awareness of the greater Self comes suddenly in a sea-like downpour; it is a descent of massive lightnings; 'if we accept the Vedic image of the Sun of Truth, we may compare the action of the Higher Mind to a composed and steady sunshine, the energy of the Illumined Mind beyond it to an out-pouring of massive light-

nings of flaming sun-stuff'<sup>1</sup>; it works a sea-change in the man subject to such a welcome descent; every part of his tissue and cell are thrilled with an apotheosis; the ego which is a perverse distorted image of the real self carrying on hitherto its petty traffic, rises from its dwarf ignoble condition to its full radiant stature; the travesty, the clay troll kneaded into a God and worshipped in ignorance by man is replaced by the effulgent soul, flaming with a paradisaical touch; but this ascent of the spirit has to be preceded by a preparation; consciousness must be released from its long incarceration in Inconscience; the heart must grow to its native heavenly strength; the mind must expand beyond its rim into greater knowledge and will; there must be a spirit of dedication, of sacrifice of the small ego self; he must hew an opening, make a road in the abyss for heaven's descent, for the Godly light to refashion him.

Aswapathy adventures through the astral chaos, undaunted and supported by his spirit's flame which dimly lights up the gloomy region disturbing the demon gods who protest against the intrusion; he journeys on without an aim or end in view; he trusts only the sunlight of his spirit.

Y. S. R. CHANDRAN

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 255.

## EVOLUTION: ITS NATURE AND DEMANDS

**W**HERE something has been made, surely there must be a Maker. This is the view that is fundamental to my own thought about life, its nature and its purpose.

When that something is permeated by an unbelievably high degree of complexity, then I can presume only that the intelligence responsible for the complexity derives from this Maker.

But — running from one extreme to the other — we now live in an age when God is Dead and anything goes. Sir Julian Huxley, addressing the Darwin Centennial Convocation of the University of Chicago, in November 1959, talked of two-and-a-half billion years of biological improvement being due to 'the blind opportunistic workings of natural selection.' But to be opportunistic is to seize your opportunity and to do that you must first recognise it as such and this cannot be done by blindness. Surely it is much more elegant, simple, and rational to think that a process which began as stardust and went on to produce first stars, then planets, then fish, then apes, then man possibly knows what it is up to.

The concept of universal immanence explains how this could be done — this Creator dwells within all created and directs it as an Artist directs his work of Art, being also objective scientist and mathematician. It dwelt within Shakespeare and Beethoven giving us tangible evidence of much higher forms of thought and feeling than those common to us. It experiences every thought and emotion not only here but throughout the Universe, every raised eyebrow, every act of love and hate. It times the insemination of every seed and navigates the birds across the oceans. It is in the fledgling robin and the bee and in the whale and the astronaut, in blades of grass and in erupting volcanoes. It never ceases; it never sleeps. Time is as nothing to it. In the evolution of plant and animal life, e.g. in the development of camouflage and colour adaptation among moths, butterflies, and insects, it gives further evidence, as Thoreau felt by Walden Pond, of much much higher levels of life than those so far available to man in beauty, complexity, and sheer subtlety of form and content, complexity and subtlety echoed only by the finest art, poetry and music, when they achieve the sublime. As Wordsworth intimated, it paints and apprecia-

tes the multihued glories of the morning and evening sunscape; it can be as cruel as rape and genocide and cannibalism and is in every holocaust and orgy. Its ultimate object we can only conjecture, perhaps the conversion of its own energy into additional spiritual reserves through Child's Play, or giving birth to Gods and Goddesses, but the higher the intelligence the higher the purpose.... Quantum physics reveals Matter as patterned energy. If Matter is patterned energy then the Creator could be also Projectionist, Time only a building brick.

This view is neither Belief nor Disbelief but an hypothesis aimed at Understanding.

Sir Julian Huxley notes in his *Religion without Revelation*, 'Once we have rid ourselves of this doctrine of a Divine Power external to ourselves, we can get busy with the real task of dealing with our inner forces.'

The beauty of the concept of Immanence is that it gets rid of an arbitrary external or intrusive anthropomorphic deity without asking us to consider the experiment of life in a vacuum. And Immanence allows for the whole range of human feelings from the sacred and sublime to that mysticism which is rooted in but goes beyond the verifiable truth of objective science and the artificial if valid truth of imaginative art. By mysticism I do not mean strong and possibly misleading intuitions but, e.g., being caught in the grip of meaningful coincidences — Carl Jung's synchronicity — which are valid to the observing and reasoning intelligence or intellect seeming to give objectively direct glimpses, even "revelations" of the Puppeteer at work.

All thought is ultimately subjective even the most objective; it is the accuracy and impartiality of the observation that is important and introspection is as valid as the external as a source of experimental observation. If life is merely one's own reflection, then some "reflections" are clearer and more comprehensive than others ...

It is as if this Maker periodically reveals secrets to humanity concerning the point and purpose of existence in a vital cumulative process of culture and civilisation: the secret that the world is round not flat; the law of gravity and the theories of relativity; the theory of evolution.

Unhurried, over billions of years, this creative and destructive

Maker toys with its material but, sooner or later, a mutation occurs, or, now, an idea catches on and a movement forward is made in a process of refinement by fire.

But let us not fall into the 19th century trap of believing Evolution necessarily guarantees the continuous perfection of man, as Darwin himself thought. We would not be the first animal to become extinct through overdeveloping its armaments, whether it be top-heavy antlers or over-costly bombs. Like the dinosaurs, we may cease to amuse....

In the overall ebb and flow of history, it is not necessarily the fittest who survive during periods of decline or disintegration: it is Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Polonius, Laertes and Claudius who survive, establishing indeed a vicious circle, whose inevitable frustration must always intensify to further violence.

Arthur Kæstler in his book, *The Ghost in the Machine* (Hutchinson, 1967) thinks that evolution has botched the union of the new and old brains leading to a paranoic streak in man leading, in turn, to his persistent will to DESTRUCTION. But this may be like blaming the television set because the programme is bad. It may not be the equipment which is faulty but the fact that those in charge of the channels of communication in totalitarian societies block that truth which is life. This enables them, with their power politics, to maintain their unjust distribution of wealth and resources, and this leads to the reaction of frustration and violence, the collective unconscious being deprived of the catharsis of healthy art and communication.

If and when the scientific method is applied to population control and the distribution of wealth and resources, we shall awake from this nightmare without the need for Arthur Kæstler's drugs to achieve mental harmony. In the course of evolution, the second man killed the first, the third the second. Surely the fourth will be more enlightened?

Let us now review briefly the nature of Evolution and see what it appears to require of us for continued development and, indeed, survival.

What the patient and exhaustive Charles Darwin and the brilliant and incisive Alfred Russell Wallace said in the 1860's is briefly that there is in Nature a struggle for existence in which the weakest and

least perfect succumb. The environment produces changes and those which facilitate survival are maintained, leading to ever better adaptation, aided not only by natural selection but also by genetic mutation which can improve the stock. All this is reviewed with great authority by Sir Alistair Hardy in his books, *The Living Stream* (1965), and *The Divine Flame* (1966), published by Collins. In *The Living Stream*, on p.124, he writes that there can be no doubt the selection acts on small random changes in the inherited nuclear material and that this is the chief physical mechanism of evolution. But why random? Why not through immanence should these changes not be precisely calculated? Direction is implicit in the whole process and chance or randomness directly militate against direction. Randomness betokens absence of control but the unbelievable complexity and fineness with which the whole of Matter and Nature are balanced betoken the presence of control — of infinite control.

On p.94 of *The Living Stream*, Sir Alistair notes of the gene complex: "The appearance of any organism is the product of this internal gene complex interacting with the external environment..."

What room does this leave for free will? But it fits in exactly with the concept of universal immanence, individual consciousness a product of fusing directing forces, the feeling of free-will being entirely subjective. The feeling of being free reaches its peak when desire welds with action and fulfilment, but in actual fact all are cogs in a vast machine; this is the vehicle of libidinous psychic energy making the Collective Unconscious, as it strives for collective fulfilment, to reach the Promised Land bodied forth in that Art which taps our deepest desires expressing the fundamental driving Dream of the species, the world-wide demi-urge, lost sight of only in periods of increasing functional complexity when Realism ousts Romance and Art merely represents instead of curing disease.

Writing of the superlative creative powers of selection as seen in the camouflage of animals, Sir Alistair refers to the 'subtleties of the artist's craft' and the tricks of 'the cunning creative artist' all produced by selection and modifying the actual *behaviour* of the animal; eventually, he sees *behaviour* as a selective force, as a dominant selective force (p.163) in higher forms. According to myth — as immanently communicated for us by the coded signposts of the Collect-

ive Unconscious — the behaviour of Jesus leads to immortality. Thus, the primitive “fairy story” acquires additional verisimilitude or fresh life as the old values are resurrected in the new empirical frame of reference.

Mention of Jesus brings us to Arnold Toynbee and the social sciences. What does this evolutionary force want of us at this time? Socially? It may not be too gross a simplification to say that all the two dozen or so civilisations which have so far appeared here have been motivated by the union of Greed and Necessity. This was the union which pushed the American frontier from New York across mountains and deserts to San Francisco and the acquisitive instinct rooted in insecurity may be said to have been endemic in the growth of all other empires and cultures.

But in the history of every civilisation, there always comes a moment when this union ceases to be constructive, when it becomes chiefly destructive. Things can look well on the surface, as with Sparta or Rome, but the inner quality of life can be rotten and deteriorating further. When the union turns abortive, the society is faced with the challenge of evolving a totally new social structure based on the best teachings of its culture — in the case of the West today, this is the teachings of Christianity. Arnold Toynbee seems to have made it quite clear in his *A Study of History* (abridgement by D.C. Somervell, O.U.P. 1957) that if this challenge is not met the civilisation dies or fossilises in living death.

I suppose if the teachings of Jesus were summed up in one word, that word would be “Co-operation”. What political philosophy today is based on co-operation? As we look around the world it seems to be Tyranny from the right or Terror from the left. Yet when we do co-operate, we can put men on the moon. The grinning challenge now placed by evolution is to apply this same co-operation to the distribution of wealth and resources. Along with population control, this would purge the frustration and stop the violence. The bombs would then be dismantled instead of stock-piled. The continual application of science to religion would help further to fill the spiritual vacuum and give man back his soul again, i.e. a sense of dedicated purpose without which he must run out of fuel and expire in the desert or wasteland of chaotic anarchy.

In the ebb and flow of history, we must hope the water is about to flow again after a long black spell of anxious analysis.

If an Age of Synthesis dawns, bathing us once again in the warm radiance of understanding, humanity will awake from its troubled slumber to full conscious maturity. This will achieve a higher more satisfying life for all, based not on endless soul-destroying labour but on creative leisure as we cease fighting like rats in an overcrowded trap. We will then evolve together to realise our deepest dream as betokened by Aldous Huxley's Perennial Philosophy involving the compulsive apprehension of Intelligence through mystic insight as man realises his true inner Self containing the immanent Creator as His Story or history makes up the evolving tidal river of life in the cosmos as a whole.

At the moment, amidst our birth pangs, there are few signs of our adapting to the new challenge and its requirements. The statistical curves for industrial disputes, crime, vandalism, violence, mental and psychosomatic illness, alcoholism, venereal disease, suicide, drug-addiction and divorce are all rising.

The downfall of the dinosaurs may have been facilitated by the explosion of a supernova as powerful as hundreds of millions of suns. It could be our turn now. So far, man has never yet refrained from using, sooner or later, any weapon that has been devised for him and explosions seem very much part of the creative process.

On the other hand, what in some cases we laughingly call sentiment, man has only just arrived here. The growth and application everywhere of the scientific method is relatively very, very rapid indeed.

If the alarm is ringing, the escape route is open.

DESMOND TERRANT

## THE OBJECT OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA\*

**F**FIFTY-FOUR years ago today the Mother came to Pondicherry, to Sri Aurobindo and finally settled here. On the 24th of April 1920, six years after she had first visited this then comparatively unknown French settlement on the south-east coast of India, the Mother adopted Pondicherry as her home and, until 17 November 1973, when she willingly gave up her physical body, she had not left it even for a night. This may be a good time to contemplate, within our capacity, the object of the Integral Yoga, for she was, as she still is, the guiding spirit and force of this most comprehensive spiritual discipline. As I go round India and sometimes other countries of the world, I find increasing interest in and enthusiasm for the philosophy and the yoga of Sri Aurobindo. This certainly is a most encouraging sign. We have arrived at the cross-roads; humanity is bewildered, does not know in which direction it should go, what should be its goal. The gospel of progress, of material prosperity, of advance in education and technology and mastery over the forces of Nature, possession and enjoyment, seems to have lost its charm. More and more there is a turning towards what Sri Aurobindo calls the subjective aspect of man's being and nature. Having forgotten the spiritual aspect of life's significance, the West concentrated entirely on living well. It was good living rather than good life that became the be all and end all of the Western man. We in the East have been deeply affected by this new ideal of life and while today the West is seeking some new path, we in the East and in India are trying to catch up with the West in its mad race for good living. But in the process man has created a number of problems for himself which cannot be solved by the normal resources that he has at his disposal. It seems to me that we must have a new orientation, a new view of man, that we must find other areas of his consciousness where we may be able to find the solutions to the problems he has created for himself. How are these remarks relevant to the subject which we may entitle generally "The Object of the Integral Yoga"? Sri Aurobindo has said in his great work "*The Synthesis of Yoga*" that yoga is certainly one of the most important elements of

\* A transcription of a taped talk given to some student-friends on April 24, 1974, at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

the future life of humanity. It seems to me that apart from the desirability of pursuing a path of yoga towards self-discovery, it is also a potent means of remaking man in such a manner that he can face the problems of life today. But I could urge upon you the more legitimate view of the yoga and speak to you briefly on the true object of the Integral Yoga.

This is a topic which has been expounded, explained, explicated a thousand and one times by people competent to speak on the philosophy and yoga of Sri Aurobindo. Why treat of the same theme again, you may ask? The reason for choosing the subject is this: I find in the course of lecturing in different parts of India and sometimes in other countries of the world, that there is a good deal of confusion in people's minds in regard to the goal of the Integral Yoga. The idea of a new race of beings, a new world, a new life, the Life Divine, is so fascinating that many people have come to look upon this as the *first* object of the Integral Yoga. This however is a mistake and thrice a mistake. Sri Aurobindo is quite clear on the point that seeking the Divine, uniting oneself with one's own highest Self, experiencing and realising the Divine and living in God and living from the God-Consciousness, these are the main objects of the Integral Yoga. We may say that this is not a new aim, that all yogas in some way or other have spoken of the need for the knowledge of the Self, God, the Divine or the Absolute. We would add that the realization in the context of Sri Aurobindo and the Integral Yoga does not mean quite, indeed not at all, the same thing as it does in that of the other yogas. Its conception of the realization of the Self is extremely comprehensive. He has said over and over again that Reality cannot be bound to any particular status of its existence. The different yogas approach, experience, realise the Divine in a partial and limited way. A brief glance at the history of Yoga not only in India but in other countries of the world, — yes, there is yoga in the other great religions too, — a brief glance at the history of spiritual thought and practice and achievement would convince us that there is a great deal of difference between different mystic disciplines. This is as it should be. For one thing, man is extremely varied in his nature, no two human beings are alike; for another, the Truth has got infinite aspects and man, being a mental being and limited in his consciousness, must necessarily fol-

low one path and following one path means arriving at one aspect of the goal. I am not saying the same goal. Here again there may be some room for confusion which I would like to clear up. All Yogas promise experience and realisation of the same Reality but they do not all yield the *same* experience of that Reality. Be that as it may, the object certainly is to find the Divine and live in the Divine and carry out the Divine's directions in life if we are chosen to do so. Is it not true then that a transformation of Nature, as Sri Aurobindo calls it, is an object of the Integral Yoga? There is no gainsaying the fact that this is the most distinguishing feature of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and Yoga. To usher in a new world, to help in the evolution of a new race of beings, to bring about a new quality of life, spiritual, supramental, divine life, certainly, this is the ultimate aim of the Yoga. But what I am trying to impress upon you is this that before this particular aim can even be thought about by those who have taken up the Integral Yoga, a great deal has to be done and achieved. To manifest the Divine in life is an impossible ideal unless the Divine who is to be manifested has been realised, realised not only in one aspect but in all the aspects in which we can know it. And here lies the distinction of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. Its character of synthesis, comprehensiveness and harmony is first evidenced in its idea that the Divine has got many aspects and there is a particular kind of knowledge by which all of them can be known simultaneously and equally importantly. If this is not done in our consciousness, it cannot be done in our nature outwardly.

It is emphatically true that for Sri Aurobindo the Divine has got many statures and we must arrive at and experience — realise, make *real to us* — the integral Brahman in which all these different aspects of the Divine can be known together and held in perfect balance in one single spiritual perception. I say spiritual but I will have to qualify this a little because though it is spiritual, it is spiritual in a very special sense. We have been told over and over again that Mind cannot know the Reality. This is only partly true. The kind of mind that cannot know the Reality is the analytic, dialectic, argumentative mind, a mind impure, impelled by desire, urged on by ambition, dominated by the separative ego-sense. But mind can become free of all these defects, faults and lacks. Mind is a consciousness that can proceed only

on the basis of division and separation but it is also a fact at the same time that mind is always questing after unity. This is because the mind is a derivative power of another consciousness which possesses a knowledge of unity inherently. And because mind is a power fallen from that higher level of Consciousness, the quest of unity is inbuilt in the mental consciousness also. Because of this fact, because of this essential nature of mind, it can be made pure, quiescent, capable of receiving and reflecting knowledge, power, peace, bliss descending from the Spirit on the mind. This reception, this reflection is what we call spiritual knowledge, spiritual experience, spiritual intuition, spiritual realisation. It is spiritual because it is experience of the Spirit. But the medium by which this experience is obtained is not capable of realising all the aspects of the Truth integrally. The word integral is very important in Sri Aurobindo's yoga. It could even be described as a *mantram*. What Sri Aurobindo is proposing is that man must evolve in him another level of consciousness which possesses the integral knowledge, which indeed is the integral knowledge. This is what Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind.

The Supermind is already an accomplished level of consciousness. If we go back to the basic concept of the Reality as Sat-Chit-Ananda, the Chit is Consciousness but the Chit is also Chit-Shakti, Consciousness-Force. It is the Force aspect of Consciousness which moves towards itself, discovers itself, knows itself. This knowledge of Sat-Chit-Ananda that is had by Sat-Chit-Ananda himself; the result of the primary movement of its Chit or Consciousness, this knowledge that God has of himself is what Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind. This alone knows all the aspects of the Divine. Sat-Chit-Ananda as utter transcendence, Sat-Chit-Ananda as cosmic, Sat-Chit-Ananda as individual, as Soul, Mind, Life, Matter, to know all this together, simultaneously, integrally, this is therefore the first object of the Integral Yoga. The manifestation of the Divine in Matter, the transformation of Nature, the evolution of a new race of beings, and as a result of that, the ushering in of a new world, of a new life, all of these are included in the aims of the Integral Yoga. But there are many preconditions which must be met, fully met, before we could talk about the manifestation of the Divine in Nature, in Matter, fully in man, and this is what I would like to impress upon you very strongly. I will try to prove my

contention by Sri Aurobindo's own words. Here is a letter of Sri Aurobindo which is extremely important in this connection:

"To find the Divine is indeed the first reason for seeking the spiritual Truth and the spiritual life; it is the one thing indispensable and all the rest is nothing without it. The Divine once found, to manifest Him, — that is, first of all to transform one's own limited consciousness into the Divine Consciousness, to live in the infinite Peace, Light, Love, Strength, Bliss, to become that in one's essential nature and, as a consequence, to be its vessel, channel, instrument in one's active nature. To bring into activity the principle of oneness on the material plane or to work for humanity is a mental mistranslation of the Truth — these things cannot be the first true object of spiritual seeking. We must find the Self, the Divine, then only can we know what is the work the Self or the Divine demands from us. Until then our life and action can only be a help or means towards finding the Divine and it ought not to have any other purpose. As we grow in the inner consciousness, or as the spiritual Truth of the Divine grows in us, our life and action must indeed more and more flow from that, be one with that. But to decide beforehand by our limited mental conceptions what they must be is to hamper the growth of the spiritual Truth within. As that grows we shall feel the Divine Light and Truth, the Divine Power and Force, the Divine Purity and Peace working within us, dealing with our actions as well as our consciousness, making use of them to reshape us into the Divine Image, removing the dross, substituting the pure gold of the Spirit. Only when the Divine Presence is there in us always and the consciousness transformed, can we have the right to say that we are ready to manifest the Divine on the material plane. To hold up a mental ideal or principle and impose that on the inner working brings the danger of limiting ourselves to a mental realisation or of impeding or even falsifying by a half-way formation the true growth into the full communion and union with the Divine and the free and intimate outflowing of His will in our life. This is a mistake of orientation to which the mind of today is especially prone. It is far better to approach the Divine for the Peace or Light or Bliss that the realisation of Him gives than to bring in these minor things which can divert us from the one thing needful. The divinisation of the material life also as well as the inner life is part of what we see as the

Divine Plan, but it can only be fulfilled by an outflowing of the inner realisation, something that grows from within outwards, not by the working-out of a mental principle."<sup>1</sup>

Now four things stand out in this letter. First, to find the Divine is indeed the first reason for seeking the spiritual Truth and the spiritual life, not only that, all the rest is nothing without it. Secondly, the Divine once realised, we have to make ourselves ready for its manifestation, but this would mean first transforming our inner consciousness into the Divine Consciousness, to live in the Peace, Knowledge, Power and Bliss of the Divine fully. It is only then that we can become vessels, channels, instruments of the Divine's Will working out in our nature, but we must give ourselves first, become divinised in our consciousness, so that through the divinised consciousness Nature can be brought within the scope of divinisation. Thirdly, to bring the principle of oneness on the material plane and to work for humanity is described by Sri Aurobindo as a mental mistranslation of the Truth, that is to say, before the Divine has been realised and before we have started to live in the Divine Consciousness, to fix upon an ideal, even the ideal of bringing the sense of oneness on the material plane, is a mistranslation of the Truth and certainly working for humanity is that mistranslation also. They are a misinterpretation of the Truth by the mind because they are not the first goals of the Yoga. We must not decide ourselves what we are going to do, we must leave it to the Self, the Divine in us, to decide for us what work he demands from us. It is his command that we will carry out, his order that we will execute, his direction that we will always obey. Fourthly, as Sri Aurobindo says at the end, the manifestation must be a process of outflowing of that which we have realised within us, and this cannot be done by fixing mentally what our work is going to be. We must grow into the Truth as completely as we possibly can, give our nature up to the Truth and the Force of the Truth will bring about the change. And this means not deciding upon what is going to be our task, spiritually speaking, by the standards of the mind. Sri Aurobindo says this will be a falsifying and that this will hamper our growth. I will read the last sentence again and it will make clear what the essence of the letter is. "The divinisation of the material life also as well as the inner life is part of what we see as the Divine plan but it can only be fulfilled by an out-

flowing of the inner realisation, something that grows from within outwards, not by the working out of a mental principle.”

There is another letter which says the same thing but more specifically:

“The object of the yoga is to enter into and be possessed by the Divine Presence and Consciousness, to love the Divine for the Divine’s sake alone, to be tuned in our nature into the nature of the Divine, and in our will and works and life to be the instrument of the Divine. Its object is not to be a great yogi or a Superman (although that may come) or to grab at the Divine for the sake of the ego’s power, pride or pleasure. It is not for Moksha though liberation comes by it and all else may come, but these must not be our objects. The Divine alone is our object.”<sup>2</sup>

It may seem paradoxical to say that the object of the Integral Yoga is not to become a great yogi, not to become a superman, not even to seek liberation. But the meaning is that all these things may be given us by the Divine but that our seeking should be for the Divine himself and nothing else at all. For if we have a limited aim, our achievement will also be partial, but if we want the Divine for the sake of the Divine, not because of what he can give us, then we would be in quest of the true aim of the yoga. Here is a part of another letter:

“The object of yoga is not to get power or to be more powerful than others or to have great siddhis or to do great or wonderful or miraculous things.

“The object of yoga is not to be a great yogi or a superman. This is an egoistic way of taking the yoga and can lead to no good; avoid it altogether.

“To talk about the supramental and think of bringing it down in yourself is the most dangerous of all. It may bring an entire megalomania and loss of balance. What the sadhak has to seek is the full opening to the Divine, the psychic change of his consciousness, the spiritual change. Of that change of consciousness, selflessness, desirelessness, humility, bhakti, surrender, calm, equality, peace, quiet sin-

cerity are necessary constituents. Until he has the psychic and spiritual change, to think of being supramental is an absurdity and an arrogant absurdity."<sup>3</sup>

Now what is the Divine, what is the nature of the Absolute that we are called upon to experience and realise and live in? First I will read a small poem of Sri Aurobindo where he sketches a picture of the Absolute in very bold, strong strokes:

“Not sound, nor silence, neither world nor void,

But the unthinkable, absolute, unalloyed

One, multitudinous, nameless, yet a Name,

Innumerable other, yet the same.

Immeasurable ecstasy where Time

And Space have fainted in a swoon sublime!”<sup>4</sup>

The Divine is neither sound nor silence. It has been said that there is an aspect of the Divine which can only be described as Silence. It is beyond all self-expression and hence beyond all description, even silence is a description which really is not adequate. But Sri Aurobindo says it is not only that. Why not? Because sound proceeds from silence. Word is an expression of that which is beyond the Word. Nevertheless, the Reality manifests itself and the medium of its self-expression is the supreme Word, the *parāvāk* of which all words are limited manifestations. The Divine is neither world nor void. It is not peopled with creatures, qualities, attributes, features, and yet it is not void, not a contentless emptiness. The unthinkable, absolute, unalloyed One, not confined to relativities, pure, not a mixture of different types of elements, is indivisible yet multitudinous. If it is One and also multitudinous, the implication is that the One has become the Many, all is a self-variation of the Self. Nameless, yet it is a Name. Name is the inner power of things, it is *nomen*, the essence of a thing expressed as a power sustaining its existence and in the last analysis the Divine is that inherent power. All names proceed from the Name which is the Name of the Divine who is in himself and in essence nameless. Innumerable other, Brahman is always whatever it has become, yet it ever remains identically the same. Nothing can

affect Brahman's self-existence, nothing can make it forfeit its being. To whom shall it forfeit its own being? There is no other reality, so it is the same, yet by its inherent power it becomes innumerably other. It is immeasurable ecstasy, bliss of existence; it is, it knows that it is and it enjoys its own existence, not only its own existence, but also the manifestation of its own existence in the multitudinous world as Self and Soul and mind and life and matter. It has become everything, it is spread out, extended in everything, it is the galaxy as much as the particle of dust. There in the Absolute Divine, Time and Space have fainted in a swoon sublime, they are in abeyance. Sri Aurobindo does not say that Time and Space do not exist there, but they are in a sublime trance, that is to say, this immeasurable ecstasy is beyond Space and Time but is manifesting itself also in Space and Time, for Space and Time though they are there in the being of the Absolute are not experienced, not realised, because the Omnipresent Reality is beyond Space and Time.

But beyond does not mean "minus". It is not that the Divine is not in Space and Time, in fact they are means of his self-extension, but we in our search must first go to the essential Reality and that is beyond Space, Time and Causality which constitute our world. So when our poet says it is not world nor void, it is not the world that we know, in which we live, move and have our being; the world lives by That, That does not live by the world, and being in the world, we must go beyond it and find its source, its sustenance, its reality. Here is another passage from "Savitri" in which Sri Aurobindo speaks eloquently of the Absolute :

"The Absolute, the Perfect, the Alone  
 Has called out of the Silence his mute Force  
 Where she lay in the featureless and formless hush  
 Guarding from Time by her immobile sleep  
 The ineffable puissance of his solitude.  
 The Absolute, the Perfect, the Alone  
 Has entered with his silence into space:  
 He has fashioned these countless persons of one self;  
 He lives in all, who lived in his Vast alone;  
 Space is himself and Time is only he.

The Absolute, the Perfect, the Immune,  
 One who is in us as our secret self,  
 Our mask of imperfection has assumed,  
 He has made this tenement of flesh his own,  
 His image in the human measure cast  
 That to his divine measure we might rise;  
 Then in a figure of divinity  
 The Maker shall recast us and impose  
 A plan of godhead on the mortal's mould  
 Lifting our finite minds to his infinite,  
 Touching the moment with eternity.  
 This transfiguration is earth's due to heaven:  
 A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme:  
 His nature we must put on as he put ours;  
 We are sons of God and must be even as he:  
 His human portion, we must grow divine.  
 Our life is a paradox with God for key."<sup>5</sup>

The Absolute, the Perfect, the Alone, there is no other reality, *ekamevādviṭīyam*. But this One without a second has become all, *sarvabhūtāni cābhūt*, all is Brahman, *sarvam khalvidam brahma*. How does the One, the Alone, the Perfect, the Absolute become All and all? It has called out of the silence, from the featureless and formless hush the mute Force. The Force though it manifests the world in the being of the Absolute yet guards its absoluteness from Time and the works of Time. She is the intermediate link between the world and the Divine, She is the Mother. So the Mother hides the Absolute from the onslaught of the world of relativities and yet draws out this world of multiplicity from its unsullied being. Without being limited by Space and Time, the Absolute as Sachchidananda has entered with his silence into Space and Time, has fashioned these countless persons of his Self; each self, each soul is a person of the one Self who becomes many selves,—selves who become many souls. He lives in all who lives in his vast Alone; in his essential nature he is the vast Alone but by the expansion of his inherent Force, he has become all, he lives in all, he is the inmost reality, the Self of all, "Space is himself and Time is only he". In the previous poem quoted by me, Sri Aurobindo says,

“immeasurable ecstasy where Time and Space have fainted in a swoon sublime”, they were not non-existent, but they were in abeyance, but now God has entered into Space and Time. It has assumed our mask of imperfection, it has cast its image in the human mould. But why, with what purpose? The purpose simply is this, the Divine having become human, the human has to become Divine. We must become as we are originally in the Truth of our being, namely God, the Divine, the Absolute. We are mortals, but we have derived our existence from immortality and having known that immortality has assumed mortality, mortality must also put on immortality. This is the debt that man has to discharge towards God. God has a debt to man too, he must make himself available to him, he must confer the divinity on man who is his own creature. But man from his side must accept this mission, fulfil this charge, complete this task and in the cosmic travail of Nature, he must attain Divine perfection. What is our life? It is a paradox. And how should we solve the paradox, where is the key to its solution? God is the key, since God is the beginning, the source, the sustenance, the substance of life. Any problem of life can be solved only if man can go back to the source and from there look at life and its problems and its difficulties and also find the solution there in the essential nature of things which is God himself.

Now when we say problems of life, the first problem of course is self-knowledge. We must know the Truth of our being, discover the Ground of our existence. I think it can be said without any fear of contradiction that all men are really seeking self-knowledge because they are all seeking bliss. It is true that it comes to us as pleasure because of our divided consciousness. This divided consciousness which distorts the essential truth of things turns Bliss of Existence into pleasure, pain, and indifference. We cannot get the purity of Bliss unless we discover our Self because the very nature of the Self is Bliss, — nobody can live without the Bliss of Existence, says the Upanishad, nobody could breathe except in the Ether of Bliss. And therefore we are always questing after self-knowledge which will give us the self-bliss. The bliss however can be realised in the inner parts of our consciousness and nature. But Sri Aurobindo says that it is to be realised and enjoyed integrally in everything, that we must be able

to find the Self and its Bliss everywhere, even in matter. Not only must we find it in matter, we must also enable matter itself to find it. It is possible for the consciousness in me to know that matter is a form of consciousness seizable by the senses, but Sri Aurobindo says that it is also possible to make matter itself conscious of the truth of its being, to find its soul. As he says in "Savitri":

"Across the thick smoke of earth's ignorance  
 A Mind began to see and look at forms  
 And groped for knowledge in the nescient Night:  
 Caught in a blind stone-grip Force worked its plan  
 And made in sleep this huge mechanical world,  
 That Matter might grow conscious of its soul  
 And like a busy midwife the life-power  
 Deliver the zero carrier of the All."<sup>6</sup>

The world was created with this purpose. In matter which is to all intents and purposes absolutely opposed to the nature of the Divine lurks dormant the soul. Arouse matter, awake the consciousness in it and matter will become capable of knowing God, to discover its soul, to say: "I am a form of Consciousness". How is this possible? Can matter really do it? It can because "...Matter's breasts suckled the divine Idea." (*Savitri*) What is the Idea? It means the supermind, the Divine's integral self-awareness and all-awareness. It is the pre-vision of the whole course of manifestation, substance of everything that is in the world, the power that sustains and maintains them in existence and the urge of evolution in them. Evolution is bringing out what is potentially already present in existence. Nature is in travail to deliver the potentialities and make them actualities here in the world. Now the Idea is present in the very heart of the atom. "And Matter's breasts suckled the divine Idea". Sri Aurobindo says this about the Idea in *Savitri*. Aswapathy is making journeys in the upper worlds and he has come to worlds where everything is so utterly unlike objects in this world; there everything is beautiful, harmonious, marvellous, and yet in these higher worlds something is missing:

"Only was missing the sole timeless Word  
 That carries eternity in its lonely sound,  
 The Idea self-luminous key to all ideas,  
 The integer of the Spirit's perfect sum  
 That equates the unequal All to the equal One,  
 The single sign interpreting every sign,  
 The absolute index to the Absolute"<sup>77</sup>

The Idea is the timeless Word and the Word is the creative Knowledge-Will of the uncreate Consciousness-Force of the Divine. It is the self-luminous key to all ideas. All our ideas are pale reflections of this supreme Idea, our ideas are mental, this is supramental. "It is the integer of the Spirit's perfect sum" that equates the unequal All to the equal One, The One has become All which is all existences and in the All there are inequalities, but the inequalities are nothing but That, they house in themselves the equal One. The Idea is the single sign interpreting every sign. Everything in the world is a sign, a symbol of the Divine, but their significance, their meaning, their interpretation lies in the Supreme's integral self-symbol which is the supermind, that is the absolute index to the Absolute. If we want to know the Absolute absolutely, we must have the absolute knowledge which is the supramental awareness.

But in order to do these things we must first find the essential Spirit. Unless we do that it will not be possible at all to find the Spirit in anything and everywhere. We must know the Truth of things before we can discover the Truth *in* things. Sri Aurobindo says this in so many words in a passage in "Savitri":

"Lulled by Time's beats eternity sleeps in us.

In the sealed hermetic heart, the happy core,

Unmoved behind this outer shape of death

The eternal Entity prepares within

Its matter of divine felicity,

Its reign of heavenly phenomenon."<sup>78</sup>

Eternity sleeps in us who seem to be creatures of Time. We must realise that eternal Reality and make it completely manifest in us.

The eternal Entity that is within us prepares for its overt manifestation a matter of divine felicity. It is in the process of evolving a new body the very stuff of which is the divine Truth. I said everything is questing after self-knowledge, not only the soul in us but everything else in nature is seeking perfection. Our thoughts seek for light, our strength aspires for an omnipotent force from which it is derived. Indeed the world is nothing but a manifestation of a veiled God-joy, *ānandādhyeva khalvimāni bhūtāni jāyante*, from Bliss all creatures are born.

“Each part in us desires its absolute;  
 Our thoughts cover the everlasting Light,  
 Our strength derives from an omnipotent Force,  
 And since from a veiled God-joy the worlds were made  
 And since eternal beauty asks for form  
 Even here where all is made of being’s dust,  
 Our hearts are captured by ensnaring shapes,  
 Our very senses blindly seek for bliss.  
 Our error crucifies Reality  
 To force its birth and divine body here,  
 Compelling, incarnate in a human form  
 And breathing in limbs that one can touch and clasp,  
 Its knowledge to rescue ancient Ignorance,  
 Its saviour light the inconscient universe.”<sup>9</sup>

The ancient Ignorance will be rescued by Knowledge, the saviour Light come into the inconscient Darkness, the evolving god-man have a divine body alive and breathing and with limbs that one can touch and clasp. But how and when can it happen ?

“And when that greater Self comes sea-like down  
 To fill this image of our transience,  
 All shall be captured by delight, transformed:”<sup>10</sup>

We are transient beings but there is something of the Eternal in us and that must come to the forefront unmistakably manifest. Then the body itself will know the self and enjoy its immeasurable ecstasy.

"In waves of undreamed ecstasy shall roll  
 Our mind and life and sense and laugh in a light  
 Other than this hard limited human day,  
 The body's tissues thrill apotheosised,  
 Its cells sustain bright metamorphosis.  
 This little being of Time, this shadow-soul,  
 This living dwarf figure-head of darkened spirit  
 Out of its traffic of petty dreams shall rise."<sup>11</sup>

We indulge in petty dreams, in little ambitions, in small aspirations, but we must grow out of this littleness, this pettiness, this transience. We must seek the *bhūmā*, the Vast, the Immeasurable, the Illimitable, for that is the highest Bliss, *bhūmaiva sukham*; not in the petty lies happiness, because the little is mortal, *yat alpam tat martyam*. The petty ego of the Time-bound creature will be new-made in the image of God and become a god.

"Its shape of person and its ego face  
 Divested of this mortal travesty,  
 Like a clay troll kneaded into a god  
 New-made in the image of the eternal Guest,  
 It shall be caught to the breast of a white Force  
 And, flaming with the paradisal touch  
 In a rose-fire of sweet spiritual grace,  
 In the red passion of its infinite change,  
 Quiver, awake, and shudder with ecstasy."<sup>12</sup>

There must be a reversal of consciousness, a new vision, a fresh revelation.

"As if reversing a deformation's spell,  
 Released from the black magic of the Night,  
 Renouncing servitude to the dark Abyss,  
 It shall learn at last who lived within unseen  
 And seized with marvel in the adoring heart  
 To the enthroned Child-Godhead kneel aware,  
 Trembling with beauty and delight and love."<sup>13</sup>

Yes, all this will happen,

“But first the spirit’s ascent we must achieve  
 Out of the chasm from which our nature rose.  
 The soul must soar sovereign above the form  
 And climb to summits beyond mind’s half-sleep;  
 Our hearts we must inform with heavenly strength,  
 Surprise the animal with the occult god.”<sup>14</sup>

This we must do first, refuse all truck with Ignorance, and this we cannot do unless we have achieved the Spirit’s ascent out of the void from which our nature sprang. The heights of the Self must be scaled, the heavenly Force must move our hearts and let the secret God in us supplant the animal in our being. When we have scaled the heights of the Spirit then we can plumb the depths of the sub-conscious, the unconscious and the material inconscience. There we must bring the heavenly Light and cut asunder the darkness with a mystic splendour.

“Then kindling the gold tongue of sacrifice,  
 Calling the powers of a bright hemisphere,  
 We shall shed the discredit of our mortal state,  
 Make the abysm a road for Heaven’s descent,  
 Acquaint our depths with the supernal Ray  
 And cleave the darkness with the mystic Fire.”<sup>15</sup>

For however enigmatic the world may seem to be, however meaningless our life may appear to be, God and his Nature, nay, God as Conscious Nature, is leading the world to a high and integral consummation.

“There is a truth to know, a work to do;  
 Her play is real; a Mystery he fulfils:  
 There is a plan in the Mother’s deep world-whim,  
 A purpose in her vast and random game.  
 This ever she meant since the first dawn of life,  
 This constant will she covered with her sport,

To evoke a person in the impersonal Void,  
 With the Truth-Light strike earth's massive roots of trance,  
 Wake a dumb self in the unconscious depths  
 And raise a lost power from its python sleep  
 That the eyes of the Timeless might look out from Time  
 And the world manifest the unveiled Divine."<sup>16</sup>

ARABINDA BASU

All references are to the volumes of Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library.

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1. Volume 23, *Letters on Yoga*, p. 516.
2. *ibid.*, p. 503.
3. *ibid.*, p. 504.
4. Volume 5, *Collected Poems*, p. 92.
5. Volume 28, *Savitri*, p. 67.
6. *ibid.*, p. 101.
7. *ibid.*, p. 97.
8. *ibid.*, p. 170.
9. *ibid.*, p. 170.
10. *ibid.*, p. 171.
11. *ibid.*, p. 171.
12. *ibid.*, p. 171.
13. *ibid.*, p. 171.
14. *ibid.*, p. 171.
15. *ibid.*, pp. 171-72.
16. *ibid.*, p. 72.

## REVIEWS

**Studies in East-West Philosophy** By G. Srinivasan. Arnold-Heinemann Publishers, New Delhi 16. Pp. 111, Price Rs. 25.00.

**T**HIS is a collection of short essays on subjects of philosophical import: Choice and Value, Freedom and Necessity, Moral Freedom, Dialectic of the Individual, Logic of Moksha etc. The common theme is the place accorded to man the individual *vis à vis* the collectivity and the Transcendent, from the point of the Existentialists in the West and the Sage-philosophers in India. The writer stresses on the positive content of *moksha* and points out that the true spiritual experience connoted by the term is *realisation*, not attainment.

Discussing the question whether 'a state of seclusive peace and aloofness can be regarded as the zenith of human spiritual realisation', the author quotes from Sri Aurobindo: "Certainly, we may prefer the absorption in a pure exclusive unity or a departure into a supracosmic transcendence, but there is in the spiritual truth of the Divine Existence no compelling reason why we should not participate in this large possession and bliss of His Universal Being which is the fulfilment of our individuality."

The exposition is adequate, clear and precise.

M. P. PANDIT

**Mystic Approach to the Veda and the Upanishad** by M. P. Pandit. Ganesh and Company, Third Impression, 1974. 125 pp. Rs. 10.

More than two decades ago when *Mystic Approach to the Veda and the Upanishad* first appeared, Ravindra Khanna in a review for "Mother India" began:

The Renaissance of spiritual India is an event of profound importance for modern times and the world's future. For cen-

turies the creative genius of this country lay withdrawn ..., allowing her great discoveries of the inner and outer life to be encrusted with superstition and ceremonial ....

Today again India has risen, radiating her spiritual knowledge .... Sri M. P. Pandit rightly observes: "What looked a certain death, however, proved to be just a slumber. Indian culture knows no death because it is based on the eternal verity of the Spirit—the *sanātana dharma*."

This perception, acknowledged then by a relative few, has come of age. So too an essence of that renaissance, the theme of this volume: reaffirmation of the spiritual content of the Veda and Upanishad.

That at that time it be suggested these scriptures are pre-eminently revelations of spiritual knowledge bordered on academic, Indological heresy. Of course it was Sri Aurobindo even thirty-five years earlier who originated, or reinstated, the esoteric interpretation through the pages of the "Arya". It had been received by certain scholars — particularly in relation to the Veda — as it was by even Dr. S. Radhakrishnan as "opposed not only to the modern views of European scholars but also to the traditional interpretation of Sayana and the systems of Purva-Mimamsa, the authority on Vedic interpretation; we must hesitate to follow the lead of Mr. Aurobindo Ghosh, however ingenious his point of view may be."<sup>1</sup> That now the recognition of these scriptures' spiritual content has become commonplace, is a sign of the immensely greater receptivity of the advanced mind and heart of man. The third printing of *Mystic Approach* is thus most apposite.

The dominant traditional and modern European theories have regarded the Vedas as the primitive hymnal of a people not yet capable of sophisticated psychological or spiritual comprehension. They are thought to contain ritual propitiatory offerings to personified powers of Nature, to the gods of a vast pantheon. Sri Aurobindo's view affirms that these scriptures are actually what their name suggests, *Veda*, a book of divine knowledge. The sacrifice then reveals itself as a "making sacred", a conscious self-giving of all one has and is to the Divine that all may become what it truly is. The Gods to whom the oblations

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Philosophy*, S. Radhakrishnan, pp. 69-70.

are made are seen to be the powers, attributes and personalities of the sole and supreme Divine Being — the Reality above transcendently, around universally and within individually. It is, thus, for self-culture and spiritual enlightenment that the Veda is centrally intended. This being so, Sri Aurobindo concludes, “it becomes of supreme importance to know and to hear its message”.

*Mystic Approach* is a step towards the restoration in this light. Its opening section surveys concisely the fields of Vedic enquiry and presents the fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo’s symbolic interpretation. It provides a direct and uncluttered introduction to and entry into the Veda as well as a foundation for the examples of the esoteric view’s application which follow. These illustrations, of the true nature of the *soma* and of the legend of Shunah-shepa, are compelling by their clarity, justness and spiritual inevitability.

The concluding chapter similarly re-establishes the authentic import of the high and pure utterances that are the Upanishads. Modern scholarship is inclined to see in the Upanishad relatively developed intellectual reflections on the nature of existence in revolt against the obscurant traditional worship and ritualism they saw in the Veda. Closely following Sri Aurobindo’s line of approach, Pandit makes evident the Upanishads’ continuation and summation of the spiritual essences held in the Veda. These sacred writings are shown to be repositories and living guides for the seeker of the Spirit.

In his *Mystic Approach to the Veda and the Upanishad*, Pandit has lent his hands to a work initiated by Sri Aurobindo, the burnishing of the pure gold of the Vedic and Upanishadic receptacles and the pouring agan of the clarified truths therein assembled.

TATSAT

## THE PRIME MINISTER MEETS ASHRAM CHILDREN

*Srimati Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister, paid a special visit to the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education on the 19th of April. She first visited the Sports Ground where she witnessed a March Past of the members and heard them sing the Bande Mataram. A recorded message of the Mother given to the captains (on 24.4.61) was played.*

### MOTHER'S VOICE

Mes enfants,

Nous sommes unis dans un même but, pour un même accomplissement, une œuvre unique et nouvelle que la Grâce divine nous a donnée à accomplir. J'espère que de plus en plus vous comprendrez l'importance exceptionnelle de cette œuvre et que vous sentirez en vous une joie sublime qu'il vous ait été donné de l'accomplir.

La force divine est avec vous, sentez de plus en plus sa présence et soyez bien soigneux de ne jamais la trahir.

Sentez, voulez, faites que vous soyez des êtres nouveaux pour la réalisation d'un monde nouveau.

Et pour cela mes bénédictions seront toujours avec vous.

### (Translation)

My children,

We are united towards the same goal and for the same accomplishment — for a work unique and new, that the divine Grace has given us to accomplish. I hope that more and more you will understand the exceptional importance of this work and that you will sense in yourselves the sublime joy that the accomplishment will give you.

The divine force is with you — feel its presence more and more and be very careful never to betray it.

Feel, wish, act, that you may be new beings for the realisation of a new world and for this my blessings shall be always with you.

*Thereafter the Prime Minister addressed the Ashram Children:*

I am happy to have this opportunity of seeing the young and the old or perhaps all the young in heart who are here, who have marched and sung so beautifully in front of us. It was inspiring for me to hear the Mother's words and I can well imagine what it must mean to you to be living here, and to feel her presence.

I know what great importance she gave to physical education, in fact the very first time I visited Pondicherry, I think we saw a physical demonstration and she herself was with us then.

We in India, as perhaps people all over the world, have a very great responsibility in trying to make this a better world in trying to create a new type of human being. There are many paths and many truths, and perhaps each one of us has to find the path and the truth for ourselves and to seek for strength not from outside but from within ourselves.

Many times when we see what is happening in the world we are discouraged, but there is no cause for discouragement and specially here, in India the people have always risen to the occasion, they have always been able to face hardship and danger with courage, with faith and determination. So I give you all my good wishes for the future. I know that you have a role to play and that you will rise to the occasion magnificently.

Thank you.

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*The Advent*

Whatever is your personal  
value or even your individual  
realisation, the first quality  
required in yoga is humility.

7-

# The ADVENT

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OUR HOMAGE

Naffar Chandra Jute Mills Ltd., Calcutta



OUR HOMAGE

*In memory of Rai Bahadur G. V. Swaika, Chairman  
Swaika Group of Industries, Calcutta*



# 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

### SWEET MOTHER

(10)

### ONE DAY MORE

**I**N her "Prayers and Meditations" (*Prières et Méditations*) Mother wrote under the date September 25, 1914:

A new light will break upon the earth,  
A new world will be born,  
And the things promised will be fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently, that is to say, after a lapse of more than forty years, under the date February 29 - March 29, 1956, she introduced a

<sup>1</sup> Une lumière nouvelle poindra sur la terre,  
Un monde nouveau naîtra,  
Et les choses promises seront accomplies.

change in the statement, in respect of the tense used. She re-wrote it in this form:

A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born,  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

The change was needed because of the change in the situation. There has been a radical change in the actualities of the situation. Mother herself explains in another message communicated after about a month under the date April 24, 1956:

The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise, but a living fact, a reality. It is at work here and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it.<sup>2</sup>

She speaks repeatedly of her vision and declares most emphatically that the new world is born, born, born, — as it were, thrice born (*il est né, né, né*). It is there behind, it is moving, threading past all the obscurities that hide it but in a manner indomitable and invincible: the outer weight of Ignorance cannot hold it down eternally.

Progress continues, the Mother declares under the date February 3, 1958, that is to say, after the lapse of about two years — a momentous declaration, the arrival of a full-fledged supramental boat at the shore of earth. Its mission was to carry within it human beings who were ready for the supramental life. The description of the whole scene was so beautiful, so graphic, so alluring that on reading it a young girl from outside wrote to the Mother that she would like to be a passenger on the boat and prayed to the Mother for admission.

<sup>1</sup> Une lumière nouvelle poinds sur la terre.

Un monde nouveau est né,

Et les choses promises sont accomplis.

<sup>2</sup> La manifestation du Supramental sur la terre n'est plus seulement une promesse, mais un fait vivant, une réalité.

Il est à l'œuvre maintenant, ici-bas, et un jour viendra où le plus aveugle, le plus inconscient, même le plus volontairement ignorant sera obligé de le reconnaître.

Mother explains that the substance of which this new world was made was the most material supramental, the supramental substance nearest to the physical world, its first manifestation.

Yes however, this is not the end, the culmination. One step has still to be taken — the material Matter too has to be touched and remoulded — and that means a hiatus, a time-lag in the end. The process of creation always follows this line, a thing to be created or embodied upon earth is first created in a subtle world. When it is ready, ready-made in that world, then it precipitates itself upon the material world, slowly or gradually or suddenly according to — the cosmic will. An illustration to explain the point, the Mother herself gives it.

Once, asked about the liberation of India, sometime in 1915 when India was completely in bondage, she answered without the least hesitation: “India is free.” She did not say “India will be free”, she said simply “India is free” as though stating an actual fact. The physical fact however came about in the year 1947, that is to say, 32 years after the thing happened in the subtle world. Mother comments that that is the exact image of the resistance to the manifestation, the physical realisation.

Not merely creation, but destruction also happens in the same way. The destruction first occurs in the subtle world and as a consequence inevitably takes place the physical destruction. Sri Krishna in the *Gita* tells Arjuna: All these troops ranged against you have already been killed by me, you have only to be just the instrument or the excuse: *mayai vaite nihataḥ pūrvameva*.

\*  
\*\*

Savitri is coming back to earth to her normal life. She has done her final conquest. And the whole world of the new conquest, the embodied Life Divine within her, she enters the earth-life, but with the veil drawn upon herself and her achievement. The ‘one day more’ is yet to be done, the ‘one day’ made of material Matter. She is not to disclose herself till that one day is done. The curtain is down now but behind lies the whole edifice she has built up, in its entire unflawed beauty and fulfilment. At present outwardly we see before

us the arena of a gray dangerous world, as of old. The curtain will surely roll up and reveal what it hides, slowly or perhaps a shell may burst open all on a sudden and bring forth the new life full and entire .... How will it happen...the Revelation, the Epiphany? The event will show. In the meantime, the New Creation, "a greater dawn" she holds within herself

Deep guarded by her mystic folds of light.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

## FROM UNPUBLISHED WRITINGS

(1)

**A**LL being is the Eternal, the Infinite, the Divine; there is nothing beyond the Eternal and Infinite, — neither is there anything else anywhere whether in existence or in non-existence.

All being ranges between the Manifestation and the Non-Manifestation. These are the two poles of the Infinite.

The Non-Manifestation is not a Non-Existence. Non-Existence is a term created by the mind and has no absolute significance; there is no such thing as an absolute Nihil or Zero. It is agreed even by the philosophies of the Nihil, Tao or Zero (Shunyam) that the Non-Existence of which they speak is a Nought in which all is and from which all comes. Tao, Nihil or Zero is not different from the Absolute or the Supreme Brahman of Vedanta; it is only another way of describing or naming it. The Supreme is an Existence beyond what we know of existence and therefore only it can seem to our mind as a Zero, a Nihil, a Non-Existence. There is nothing there of what we know as existence, for though all is in Tao, yet all is there in a way of which our mind can have no conception or experience, therefore to the mind no reality and being, no concept of existence.

The manifestation in the Ignorance, that in which we live, has also been described as Asat, a non-existence, because it is not real, eternal, infinite, divine; it must therefore be an illusion, since only That exists and nothing else. But even Illusionism agrees that the manifested world is not without reality — it is practically real, but not eternal. Moreover manifestation even if illusory in this sense has no end or beginning in itself, but only to the soul that withdraws from it. It goes on existing eternally to other souls, it goes on existing to the Eternal. It is in the eternal consciousness that it exists, though apart from that consciousness it has no existence. Moreover the Self of which it is made is not nothingness or void, but the Eternal itself which manifests it from itself and out of its own substance casts into form and force. It is therefore not a real Nihil, but a limited and constantly renewed, recurrent or mutable existence.

It is therefore permissible to say that all being ranges between

Manifestation and Non-Manifestation, for both are degrees of existence, the one rising towards the Absolute, the other (in appearance, and in appearance only) determined and relative.

(2)

Here in the green of the forest, lost in the stillness of Nature  
 Long like lovers together alone with our hearts we have<sup>1</sup>  
 wandered,

Hands linked, thoughts linked, listening mute to the voices of Silence,  
 Light of the spaces, sovereign beauty, comrade of rapture.

Golden the tresses that fell on her shoulders, a mantle of sunlight,  
 Golden the thoughts came cast from her lips like jewels of wonder,  
 Golden the smile in her heart and her radiant ripple of laughter.

First in the silence we knew each other; the eyes were the gateways  
 Opening soul into soul and spirit was bare to the spirit.

Speech only covers the mind and the heart when it strives to reveal  
 them!

Silence, the wizard interpreter, drew us closer to oneness.

First in the silence we felt our heart-throbs beating together.

\*

As in the body a man and a woman marry and mingle,  
 Hearts locked, limbs locked, twisted to one by the serpent of passion,  
 So our spirits were locked in each other, hushed into oneness  
 Spiritual and hurled on a rapid and violent ocean of rapture.

(3)

## SURYA

Surya, the Vedic Sun-God, though one of the least invoked of the gods, is yet the centre of the mystic worship and ritual. It would be too much to say that the Vedic religion was a Sun-cult like the Iranian, but it was certainly a Sun-seeking and Light-seeking.

<sup>1</sup> Or, "had".

ing. The creation of the Sun and the Dawn by the Word was the original object for which the sacrifice was instituted by the seers, the pristine forefathers. And all the circumstances and objects of the sacrifice continued to be grouped round this original master-thought of the ancient culture.

For the birth of the Sun and the Dawns or their release from the cave of the darkness continued to preoccupy the Vedic mind and associated itself with the idea of the word and the sacrifice. The sacrifice was offered for the conquest of the cows, and these were the shining herds of the Sun, — of the horse, and the horse too was the possession and gift of the Dawn, — of the world of Swar, and Swar is the triple luminous region of the Sun-God, — of the waters and the seven rivers, and these were the shining streams of that Heaven and full of the light of Swar, — of a luminous plenitude, a shining wealth, a golden felicity but this gold too was the golden light of Surya. His were the shining seers and strong heroes who were born as the sons of the sacrifice and chanted and fought against the lord of darkness. To be able to look long upon the sun, not to go into long exiles from the light was the prayer of the Vedic seer to his gods. Dawn and Night surrounded all the march of the Sacrifice, — the periods of its procession were the days, months, years of Surya. The conquest of the Night and the journey of the Sun-God to his supreme seats was the symbol of Aryan victory. The gods are all "Shining ones", brothers of Surya and living in his light. Indra presides over his heavens, Agni is the heat of his fires. Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Savitri, Pushan, Twashtri the fashioner of things are his names and forms. Dawn is his lover. Heaven and Earth desire his glories and are fulfilled in them. Soma the nectarous moon-god is bright with his lustres, Vayu the life-deity is the heat of his blaze; the Ashwins are the mates of his brilliant daughter Surya who purifies their wine of delight and ascends their wonderful chariot. Thus the whole Rig-veda rises out of the ancient Dawn as a thousand-voiced Hymn to the<sup>1</sup> imperishable Light of an immortal Sun.

This Sun is only outwardly the physical godhead adored in the popular worship. To the Vedic mystic Light is the concrete body of Truth; within himself he perceived Truth as a Light psychically

<sup>1</sup> or, "an"

identical with the physical light of the Sun. He perceived a sky of mental being behind the physical in which the Sun of this material system became a Sun of conscious light flooding the mind with the illuminations of a new hidden Truth. This was the Surya worshipped by the seers.

This identity of Truth and the Vedic Light is found everywhere in the symbolism. The Sun itself in the cavern of the Panis is described as "that Truth dwelling in the darkness." Its light is called sometimes "light that is gold", *hiranyam jyotih*, sometimes "light that is truth", *ṛtam jyotih*. The rains and the seven rivers, luminous waters of Swar, are described as the streams of Truth, the rivers that know the Truth, the waters that have perfect knowledge, the waters that ascend the mind. Swar itself is the fearless light, the vast Truth, the luminous pasture of the cows and these luminous cows of the Dawn are called the cows that are thoughts. Dawn the mother and leader of the cows is called also the leader of truths and is said herself to be full of truth and to come from its home. The Vedic seers are themselves called the luminous seers and the one ordinary word for the thinkers or powers of knowledge is *sūrayah*, connected with Surya in the sense of illumination. The path of the Sun is also called the path of the Truth.

SRI AUROBINDO

## THE VIZIERS OF BASSORA BY SRI AUROBINDO

AN ATTEMPT AT SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION  
AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

**B**Y reading or seeing *The Viziers of Bassora* with the inner vision, the drama reveals its forceful spiritual message, its exact psycho-analysis of the human being, its humourous and dramatic depiction of *yogic sādhanā*, what explains that "Sri Aurobindo seems to have had an especial fondness for this youthful creation of his", to cite the publisher's introduction.

The story is written in the symbolic form of fairy tales. As in dreams and visions the characters portray parts of man's complex personality and the places represent planes of existence.

Bassora, an Arabian province, symbolizes the terrestrial manifestation of man, who is shown in a stage of evolution in which the ego sits on the throne in the person of King Alzayni. The first vizier in man's microcosm is Ibn Sawy, the human mind which has already developed into a higher mind. The second vizier in man's psychological state is Almuene, the *asura*. Man holds within him a conflict between his higher mind, which tries its best to uphold happiness and order in Bassora by means of morality, and the Asura who is very eager to disturb man's inner balance and aims at the domination of the whole human personality.

Ibn Sawy is married to Ameene, who plays the part of the higher vital. Their pampered son Nureddene is the hero of the play. He personates the spiritually high-evolved man who in the play is predestined to realize his soul. Nureddene is the lover and beloved of the female beauties of Bassora, who represent the joys and pleasures of the ordinary, worldly life. To the latter he directs a lot of effort and time.

Despite his being still merged in *māyā*, the aspiration for a higher life burns already in Nureddene as the following monologue shows:

## NUREDDENE

I shall go forth, a daring errant-knight,  
 To my true country out in faery-land;  
 Wander among the Moors, see Granada,  
 The delicate city made of faery stone, ...

And o'er romantic regions quite unknown  
 Preach Islam, sword in hand; ...

Then on through undiscovered islands, seas  
 And Oceans yet unnamed; ...

Nureddene's true country is faeryland, his inner being, the yet unknown regions of his consciousness.

The passage continues:

## NUREDDENE

Then in some land I have not settled which,—<sup>1</sup>

Marry a Soldan's daughter, ...

deserving her

By deeds impossible: conduct her armies

Against her foemen, enter iron-walled

Cities besieged with the loud clang of war, ...

And so extend my lady's empire wide —<sup>2</sup>

The first stage was exploration of his inner being. And the second one is the coming into contact with the psyche, symbolized by "a Soldan's daughter". This is an image of ancient tales where the princess represents man's soul. Nureddene aspires to deserve his soul by fighting against the hostile forces, his psyche's "foemen". He dreams of bringing home the victory on the inner fields of Kurukshetra and therewith to extend "his lady's empire wide"; in other words, to establish the firm psychic reign in him and to expand it over the whole of his nature. What a beautiful parable of the aim of

<sup>1</sup> P. 40, bottom line

<sup>2</sup> P. 41, top

*sādhanā* as well as colourful symbolism of the process.

And now to the introduction of the second Vizier's family, Almuene's son, hunchbacked Fareed, symbolizes naturally the lower and subconscious vital as well as the sex desire. He terrorizes Bassora and indulges in vices whenever he can, thus doing his best to fulfil his role as the most vile and base part of human nature. His mother Khatoon, the wife of the *asura* Almuene, personates the intermediary between Nureddene's higher emotions and feelings and the impulses of the *asura*. She opposes Almuene's influence on Fareed, but is not strong enough to be successful, because of her attachment to husband and son.

Here are two passages, in which Khatoon addresses Almuene concerning Fareed:

#### KHATOON

You have indulged the boy till he has lost  
The likeness even of manhood. God's great stamp  
And heavenly image on his mint's defaced,  
Rubbed out, and only the brute metal left  
Which never shall find currency again  
Among his angels.<sup>1</sup>

The devil you strive to raise up from that hell  
Which lurks within us all, seal, would take  
The full flame of the inferno, not the gusts  
Of smoke jet out in ordinary men;<sup>2</sup> —

In the following extracts Almuene expresses his conceptions about the right education of Fareed:

#### ALMUENE

'Tis thus a boy should be trained up, not checked,  
Rebuked and punished till the natural man  
Is killed in him and a tame virtuous block  
Replace the lusty pattern Nature made.

<sup>1</sup> P. 8, top

<sup>2</sup> P. 9, bottom : p. 10, top



of man's evolution, to guide the earth and human being out of "the great famine", out of the world of obscurity, falsehood, ignorance and death towards a unity and harmony where even the most insatiate hunger for light, truth, bliss and love can be stilled.

At the slave-market, Ibn Sawy tells the broker that he will come later, when the lass has been fetched. In his absence, Anice-aljalice is brought and Fareed arrives with Almuene. Fareed wants Anice for the satisfaction of his vile desires. Of course Almuene is not willing to pay her full price and tries even to take her by force. But the soul draws back from the grip of the *Asura*. Just when Almuene wants to beat the broker, Ibn Sawy returns. He informs the second vizier that he purchases the slave-girl for the King. The will of the ego has the precedence before the greed and instincts of the lower vital and the *asura* leaves Anice to the higher mind, despite Fareed's still wanting to take her by force. This is Ibn Sawy's reaction at the first sight of the psychic being:

IBN-SAWY

What, is your mould indeed a thing of earth?

Peri, have you not come disguised from heaven

To snare us with your lovely smiles, you marvel?<sup>1</sup>

ANICE-ALJALICE

I am a slave and mortal.<sup>2</sup>

IBN-SAWY

Prove me that.

ANICE-ALJALICE

A peri, sir, has wings, but I have none.

IBN-SAWY

I see that difference only.<sup>3</sup>

The soul, when it descends on earth, has to subdue itself to the terrestrial laws. It becomes a "slave" of *karma* and duality, of the mental, vital and physical being. The psyche, so to say, loses its wings with which it could fly on the spiritual heights. In a sense it even

<sup>1</sup> P. 26, bottom

<sup>2</sup> P. 26, bottom

<sup>3</sup> P. 27, top

becomes "mortal", as its descent caused a fainting and a submission to mortality.

Ibn Sawy buys her for 10,000 pieces, that is to say that the higher mind brings up the effort necessary for the first contact with the psychic being.

He accepts the counsel of the broker to keep her for ten days before handing her over to the King and to give her rest, baths and food, for "her beauty's worn with journeying". The soul has to recover from the effects of the incarnation into the human body and is not immediately at the first contact in the most conscious state, which had been reached in its previous earthly life. For recuperation it needs rest, that is meditation, baths, that is purification of the nature, and food, that is the spiritual nourishment.

Ibn Sawy acting in the service of the ego trusts Anice to the custody of his wife Ameena, and places a guardian in front of her room to keep her safe from Nureddene, the hunter of women's hearts. The guardian, an ethiopian eunuch, represents the body-consciousness whose dullness is a hindrance to Nureddene's contact with his psychic being.

Nureddene, when he returns home after three days of absence, appeases his always indulgent parents and his cousin with charm and humour. Then he asks his father to buy Anice-Aljalice for him. He had seen her only once, but had fallen so deeply in love with her that he swears he'll "be at home quite four days out of seven" once she would be his slave-girl. The first gaze at his psyche provoked a reversal of consciousness in him. He is ready to give up more than half of his pleasures and thus his spiritual aspiration becomes predominant over his worldly bondages. His father, to save the situation and the slave-girl for the King, answers that he has to leave for some business and will return in ten days. Then he will see about the slave-girl. Nureddene's first change of consciousness is still accompanied with an ego-serving activity of his mind, which assists the ego's desires.

I must now mention Nureddene's cousin Doonya. She portrays the spiritual intuition. Earlier in the story Almuene had asked Ibn Sawy for the hand of his niece for Fareed. But the intuition refused, preferring suicide to the lower vital. The higher mind consented with

Doonya and rejected Almuene's proposal. So the attempts of the lower vital to abuse the soul as well as the *siddhi* of intuition were both prevented.

Anice-Aljalice confesses to Doonya her love for Nurddene as well as her unwillingness to be the ego's slave-girl. She promises Doonya that she would end her cousin's "hawking" once she would be united with him. Doonya in turn assures Anice of her help in bringing the lovers together, because she wants to "reform" Nureddene.

The soul knowing itself destined for the spiritual personality and not the ego in man uses the faculty of intuition to overcome the obstacles of the ego's will and the mind's plots. As we all know, once a constant relation between the psychic being and the outer personality is established, the psychic power is able to "reform" the human nature.

Intuition shows Nureddene the chamber where his psychic being is hidden. Nureddene bribes the guardian, the body consciousness, and therewith removes the last hindrance to his second and very powerful reversal of consciousness, which results in his relation with the psychic being.

Let me cite Sri Aurobindo's symbols of the second reversal of consciousness:

NUREDDENE

I told you 'twas the morning.

ANICE-ALJALICE

Morning so early?

This moment 'twas the evening star; is that

The matin lustre?

NUREDDENE

There is a star at watch beside the moon

Waiting to see you ere it leaves the skies.

Is it your sister Peri?

ANICE-ALJALICE

It is our star

And guards us both.<sup>1</sup>

The matin lustre, the dawn is the well-known Vedic image of Usha,

<sup>1</sup> P. 51, top

the bringer of the light. The vision of the moon symbolizes — as Sri Aurobindo explains — spirituality and the star hieroglyphs a new inner creation. The sense of time is lost here in the eternal presence of the spiritual experience. The passage continues:

NUREDDENE

It is the star of Anice,  
The star of Anice-Aljalice who came  
From Persia guided by its silver beams  
Into these arms of vagrant Nureddene ...

Strange, strange that I who nothing have deserved,  
Should win what all would covet! We are fools  
Who reach at baubles taking them for stars ...

What can I say  
But once more that I have deserved you not,  
Who yet must take you, knowing my undesert,  
Whatever come hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

His visions as well as the experience of the contact with the psychic being mark the beginning of Nureddene's spirituality in this life. He realizes that "the gadding pleasures" of the *māyā* are only "baubles" and "random berries without savour". Wide open are his eyes to the Divine Grace and he is full of humility.

Further in the same passage the true identity of Anice-Aljalice is openly revealed in this dialogue:

NUREDDENE

Nothing will come to us but happy days,  
You, my surpassing jewel, on my neck  
Closer to me than my own heartbeats.<sup>2</sup>

ANICE-ALJALICE

Yes,  
Closer than kisses, closer than delight,

<sup>1</sup> P. 51 & 52

<sup>2</sup> P. 53, bottom

Close only as love whom sorrow and delight  
Cannot diminish, nor long absence change  
Nor daily prodigality of joy  
Expend immortal love.<sup>1</sup>

What else than the soul is the "surpassing jewel on (man's) neck" which is "closer than his own heartbeats"? And what is it in man that possesses "immortal love"? Says Nureddene to his psychic being "you have the love".

There is now, of course, a lot of upheaval in the house of the first vizier and Nureddene, in his own words, has to return "to earth from Paradise". His new consciousness has to confront the members of the terrestrial nature. This is easiest with his higher vital, which accepts the new situation without much resistance and immediately assists the stabilization of Nureddene's new inner state. There is the pressure of the new consciousness and the influence of the higher vital forces Ibn Sawy, the higher mind, to take firmly the side of the spiritual being and to support it as best he can. He covers up what has happened before king ego, whose reign, deeply rooted as it is in the human nature, is far from being abolished. Nureddene's change of consciousness begins now to bring about a new organization of his outer personality.

Doonya is being married to Murad, the Turk captain of Bassora's police, who had always been trying his best to curb the lower vital Fareed from rioting. Murad portrays the purified vital force. Intuition and force are complementary. Without the vital force to act, spiritual intuition is powerless and unmanifest. Without the intuition to guide and to illumine, the force is either blind and undirected or ill-governed by some lower principle of intelligence.

The first vizier has to part for about a year on a mission for the famous Persian Caliph Haroun al Rasheed, who will play a role later in the drama. He orders his wife to stay during his absence secretly with Murad and Doonya while pretending openly that she was travelling abroad to visit relatives, which means that she equally would not see Nureddene for a year's span. The higher mind divides his riches into two halves, one for Nureddene and one for Ameena with

<sup>1</sup> P. 53 & 54, bottom-top

Doonya and Murad, foreseeing the possibility that his son would waste his patrimony and lead an unsober life-style, which lays near as Nureddene's nature is not yet purified. Nureddene has now left the old rut of living and entered the path of the spiritual life. It becomes therefore necessary that his higher mind and higher vital, under the protection and partly guidance of which he lived till now quite safely, become silenced and quieted, giving way for the growth of his new consciousness and the battle with his lower nature. To advance further Nureddene has to "reculer pour mieux sauter" as the Mother once cited. He has to give up his achieved mental and vital level — though still half of their power remains with him — and to surpass the higher mind by intuition and soul-guidance, and the higher vital by the purification and integration of his whole vital being. The vessel has to be emptied for the new creation to be poured in.

Let us now see the reaction of the *asura* and his son. Naturally, Almuene keeps still his grip on Nureddene's lower nature and his lower vital strongly opposes any surrender. Almuene is very very revengeful for the defeats he has suffered. As soon as he learns the news of Ibn Sawy's departure he devises plots for the destruction of Nureddene and his family. He visits his nephew, Ajebe, who is a friend of Nureddene and offers him on the one hand "place, power, honours, gold" for a service, on the other hand "death, disgrace, beggary" for the refusal of his assistance. This is the answer to Ajebe's question: "What service?"

#### ALMUENE

Ruin wanton Nureddene.

Gorge him with riot and excess; rob him

Under a friendly guise; force him to spend

Till he's a beggar. Most, delude him on

To prone extremity of drunken shame

Which he shall feel, yet have no power to check.

Drench all his senses in vile profligacy,

Nor mere light gallantries, but gutter filth,

Though you have to share it. Do this and you're made;

But this undone, you are yourself undone.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. 73, bottom

Ajebe seeks counsel from Mymoona, the sister of his beloved slave-girl Balkis. Both are aware of the love and close union of Balkis with Anice-Aljalice. Mymoona advises Ajebe:

MYMOONA

Do one thing.

AJEBE

I will do what you shall bid me.

MYMOONA

He has some vile companions, has he not? ...

MYMOONA

Whisper the thing to them; yourself do nothing.

Check him at times. Whatever else you do,

Take not his gifts; they are the price of shame.

If he is ruined, as without their urging

Is likely, Satan's satisfied, if not,

We'll flee from Bassora when there's no help.<sup>1</sup>

Sri Aurobindo uses Ajebe as a symbol for all the vital parts and entities in Nureddene which, are already involved in the process of psychicisation. He has opened himself to the psychic influence when he bought Balkis and Mymoona in the slave-market. Balkis personates an emanation of the psychic being, a sort of psychic spark in the vital entity Ajebe. She is the ambassadress of the psyche, her office is to expand her embassy in Ajebe, until he entrusts her the full reign over himself, therewith excluding the asuric impact of his uncle, with whom to make a breach he does not have the courage, besides reasons of ambition and desire, springing forth from the asuric strain in his blood.

Mymoona embodies the vital mind of Nureddene which has not yet surrendered itself to the Divine. She serves as an intermediary between Balkis and Ajebe. The latter is not yet spiritualized enough to be able to communicate and get along with her, and so Balkis needs the vital mind as a support for her progressive psychicisation of Ajebe. How unconscious and crude Ajebe still is, lies open in this passage:

<sup>1</sup> P. 75, 1st half

AJEBE

Bring me your lute and sing.  
I'am sad and troubled. Cross me not, my girl,  
My temper's wry.

BALKIS

Oh, threats?

AJEBE

Remember still

You are a slave, however by my love  
Pampered, and sometimes think upon the scourge.<sup>1</sup>

Of course the psychic spark does not obey such base violence but counteracts it, piercing the divine banner deeper and deeper into Ajebe's heart, perpetually refining his nature and preparing his spiritual break-through.

With the all-pervading eye of the seer of the truth, Sri Aurobindo unravels man's psychological structure and reveals the workings of the spiritual alchemy. With how much humour this is done, all who have read or seen *The Viziers of Bassora* know. Truly, "A God who cannot smile could not have created this humourous (stage-play)".

## II

Let us now turn the wheel of time around eight faery months forward and have a look at what happened to Nureddene in the absence of his parents:

We find that the *asura*'s plan to ruin Nureddene has been partially realized. Although he could not be drenched in "gutter-filth", still Nuredden accepted the forces of the lower nature as his friends and feasted with them. The psychic being is not yet fully conscious and awake to the truth and therefore allows Nureddene's indulgence into lower nature. This is a period in which the psychic consciousness grows and impregnates Nureddene more and more, until it becomes ready for the rejection of the impulses of the lower nature.

Under the impetus of the spiritual intuition Doonya and its part

<sup>1</sup> P. 76, 2nd half

Balkis, the psychic being finally becomes conscious of the situation. The *karmic* creditors wait already in the entrance hall. The time has come for Nureddene to face the impurities of his nature and its badly needed integration. Anice asks Nureddene to pay the debts of *karma* else she will not smile again.

To our shocked hero remains now only to obey the psychic being: Here is his comment:

NUREDDENE

She frown on me! look cold! for sums, for debts!  
 For money, the poor paltry stuff we dig  
 By shovels from base mire. Grows love so beggarly  
 That it must think of piastres? O my heart!<sup>1</sup>

Excited and angry he throws half of his treasury, without account and measure, to the waiting creditors. The psychic being warns Nureddene in a parable about the consequences to which his further indulgence to such impure and obscure forces as his friends and feasting would lead. Obviously the Divine cannot be expected to install Itself in a stable and share it with the animal remainders in man.

To surrender immediately to the psychic impetus is as yet difficult for Nureddene as his answer shows.

NUREDDENE (after a pause)

Tomorrow I will stop this empty life,  
 Cut down expense and only live for you.  
 Tonight there is the banquet. It must stand,  
 My word being given. Azeem!

(Enter Azeem)

What money still

Is in the treasury? What debts outstand?

AZEEM

More now than you can meet. But for today's folly,  
 all would have been well, — your lordly folly!

But "*alea jacta est*". The dice of fate is thrown. Nureddene is forced

<sup>1</sup> p. 84, 85

to realize the full seriousness of this plight and to confront it. In vain he seeks loans from his so-called "friends", whose real nature is revealed to him by Ajebe:

AJEBE

I am your ruin's author.  
If you have still  
A sword, use it upon me.

...

...

...

Incited by the Vizier, promised  
Greatness, I in my turn incited these  
To hurry you to ruin. Will you slay me?

NUREDDENE

(After a pause)

Return and tell the Vizier that work's done.  
Be great with him.

There is no aggression in Nureddene because of the weakness of his nature. He accepts himself without self-pity and bitterness and gives the blame for his fate to nobody else than himself. We see that as soon as Nureddene asks his so-called "friends" to support him in his Sadhana, he meets only resistance and evasion.

Nureddene enters now a new episode of his spiritual development. He has paid the *karmic* debts in as far as this was possible with the past acquired power. It was still relatively easy to reach so far. But now a *yogic* new-land begins and greater difficulties have to be overcome.

This non-attachment to the already achieved power and its generous handling makes Nureddene fit for transcending his state of being. Because he is not attached to silver, he shall enjoy gold.

We saw before that Ajebe confessed his treachery and repented it. The psychic influence in him was ever-increasing and finally leads to his spiritual breakthrough. The vital entity Ajebe promises his psychic spark Balkis to be more obedient and to renounce his uncle, the *asura*. Ajebe takes the definite stride into the integrated parts of Nureddene and has predominantly surrendered himself to the psychic command. With this an important progress in Nureddene's vital nature is brought about.

In between, Nureddene has asked Murad, the purified vitality for loans, which were refused. Murad replies negatively because to help Nureddene would be only in appearance a succour, but in reality hinder his spiritual progress. It is not a compromise of truth and falsehood, but the full reign of the Soul and the Divine in him that have to be achieved.

Not compromise but fight is the solution.

Nureddene, however, possesses still the supreme Power and riches as this dialogue shows:

ANICE-ALJALICE

You still have me.

NUREDDENE

That's much.

ANICE-ALJALICE

No, everything.

NUREDDENE

'Tis true, and I shall feel it soon.<sup>1</sup>

Anice offers not only to sell her dresses and gems, but even herself. The psyche is ready for the utter self-sacrifice for the growth of the spiritual consciousness. Of course Nureddene does not accept this offer of Anice. Her counsel to "be friends" again with Ajebe, to rely again on him, is this time readily obeyed by Nureddene.

NUREDDENE

Anice, my own sins are  
So heavy, not to forgive his lesser vileness  
Would leave me without hope of heavenly pardon.

ANICE-ALJALICE

I'll call him then.

(Exit)

NUREDDENE

Let me absolve these debts,  
Then straight with Anice to Bagdad the splendid,  
There is the home for hearts and brains and hands,

<sup>1</sup> P. 97, top

Not in this petty centre. Core of Islam,  
Bagdad, the flood to which all brooks converge.<sup>1</sup>

Bagdad is the subtle physical seat of a consciousness far above the ordinary human one, "It is the core of Islam," "the flood to which all brooks converge". To reach the inner core of the spiritual teaching and the oneness behind the multiplicity of creation is now the deep aspiration of our adept. About Bagdad I shall speak later.

Anice returns with Ajebe, Balkis and Mymoona. Mymoona, who also has been going through a process of purification, informs Nureddene about the plot which she has devised to rescue him: He shall sell Anice in the slave-market, where Ajebe would buy her.

#### MYMOONA

Fear not the sale which shall be in name alone.

'Tis only Balkis borrowing her from you,

Who pawns her value. ...

But if you ask, why then the mart and auction?

We must have public evidence of the sale

To meet an uncle's questions.<sup>2</sup>

Anice at once accepts this plan, but Nureddene has his considerations and objections. Because he had promised his father to sell Anice when but only when it is her will, he finally consents to the vital mind's suggestion.

The questions which pose themselves here are: Why would Murad's help hinder the spiritual progress and Ajebe's support not? And why is the Psyche eager to accept a plan which is, as we shall see soon, doomed to failure? Is not the vital mind a relatively base source of inspiration and have not its plannings even at their best an element of falsehood and impurity in them? And if a ruse is used why not pretending that Murad is the lender, while Ajebe actually is? Would not the Asura be angry with his nephew for being the cause of Nureddene's rescue?

Before we answer all this let us first see what happens at the

<sup>1</sup> P. 107-08

<sup>2</sup> P. 109, middle

market.

While Ajebe is bidding for Anice, his uncle appears. Almuene proclaims that his nephew is bidding for him. Powerless, the vital entity, Ajebe, leaves the market to fetch Nureddene. Meanwhile the psyche, unshaken in its innate grandeur, fearless and royal, faces up to the Asura:

ANICE-ALJALICE

I'll not be sold to you.

ALMUENE

What, dar'st thou speak, young harlot?

Fear the whip.

ANICE-ALJALICE

Vizier, I fear you not; there's law in Islam.

My master will deny the sale.

ALMUENE

Thy master

Shall be a kitchen negro, who shall use thee.

ANICE-ALJALICE

Had I whip, you should not say it twice<sup>1</sup>

Ajebe returns now with Nureddene who tries to evade the sale. But this is too much irritation for Almuene. He abuses the couple and draws even his scimitar. The merchants out of friendship to Nureddene's father hinder Almuene's slaves from interfering, and this allows Nureddene to seize the second Vizier.

NUREDDENE

If thou wouldst live, crave pardon of the star

Thou hast spat on. I would make thee lick her feet

But that thy lips would foul their purity.

ALMUENE

Pardon, oh, pardon!

NUREDDENE (Throwing him away)

Live then, in thy gutter.

(Exit with Anice)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. 113-14

<sup>2</sup> P. 117, middle

Finally the veiled conflict of the higher and lower nature in our hero breaks fully open. It was for this that the psyche sought the assistance of Ajebe and willingly agree with Mymoona's proposal, these two being the point of contact with the adverse power. We see that a descent of the consciousness is effected by the psychic being, — symbolised by the bringing to the slave-market of Anice-Aljalice, — which directs the *sādhanā* towards the grappling with the *asuric* impact in his nature, because further spiritual advancement demands a full and sincere rejection of the forces of the darkness. The merchants, which symbolise the effects, the advantageous *karma*, caused by the benevolent and just action's of Nureddene's higher mind, hold back the powers of Almuene and thus allow Nureddene to seize and reject the weakened *asuric* impulsion. But this initial victory of Nureddene is not much more than a challenge, a declaration of war with the *asura*, who, of course, will not rest before the complete destruction of his foe, the spiritual consciousness unless of course he himself is eradicated first.

In the meantime, while all this is going on, King Alzayni, the ego, is planning the assassination of his emperor, the Caliph Haroun Al Rasheed, who is expected to come to Bassora.

Alzayni knows that the divine vice-regent Haroun conceives a dumb displeasure against him and that his throne might easily tumble. With good reason the ego fears the descent of the divine force, as it would certainly end its reign in the human being. Alzayni orders Murad:

ALZAYNI

Murad, the time draws near. The Caliph comes  
To Bassora; let him not thence return.

MURAD

My blade is sharp and what I do is sudden.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously Murad thinks of using his blade not on the Caliph but for the enemies of the Divine. In this situation Almuene enters battered and daubed with mud and dirt. He informs the King that a year ago Ibn Sawy gave away the slave-girl, whom he had pur-

<sup>1</sup> P. 120, middle

chased for Alzayni, to his son. Almuene continues :

ALMUENE

This profligate squandering away his wealth  
 Brought her to market; there I saw her and bid  
 Her fair full price. Whereat he stormed at me  
 With words unholy; yet I answered mild,  
 "My son, not for myself, but the King's service  
 I need her." He with bold and furious looks,  
 "Dog, Vizier of a dog, I void on thee  
 And on thy Sultan." With which blasphemy  
 He seized me, rolled in the mire, battered with blows,  
 Kicks, pullings of the beard, then dragged me back  
 And flung me at his slave-girl's feet, who, proud  
 Of her bold lover, footed my grey head  
 Repeatedly and laughed, "This for thy King,  
 Thy dingy stingy King who with so little  
 Would buy a slave-girl sole in all the world."<sup>1</sup>

The ego, furious, decrees instantly fierce punishment and the death penalty for Anice and Nureddene. These, however, are warned in time by Sunjar. Sunjar represents the physical mentality which is the manager in the human household for physical dealings. Ajebe is now the helper in need.

AJEBE

Quick, Nureddene.

I have a ship all ready for Bagdad,

.....

Flee then to Bagdad

And at the mighty Haroun's hand require  
 Justice upon these tyrants. Oh, delay not.<sup>2</sup>

The expansion of the spiritual consciousness has become an open threat to the ego and the *asuric* force, which both mobilise all their

<sup>1</sup> P. 122-123

<sup>2</sup> P. 125, middle.

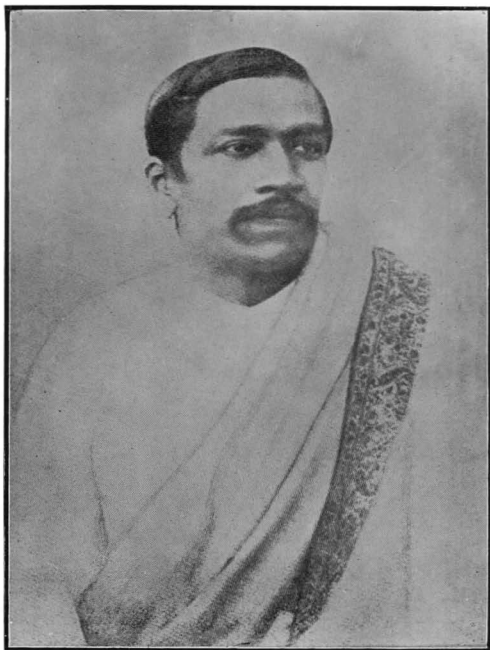
power to abolish the spiritual being. We see that through his *sādhanā* the conflict of light with darkness in Nureddene has been catalysed in such a degree that only the Caliph, the descent of a high spiritual force can manage to control the lower nature.

A journey in a boat, explains Sri Aurobindo, is an inner movement in the *sādhanā*. The ballast of Ajebe's attachment to his uncle as well as of other impurities had been thrown overboard and so the vessel is ready for its crusade into the inner worlds.

### END OF PART I

ALEXANDER BRODT





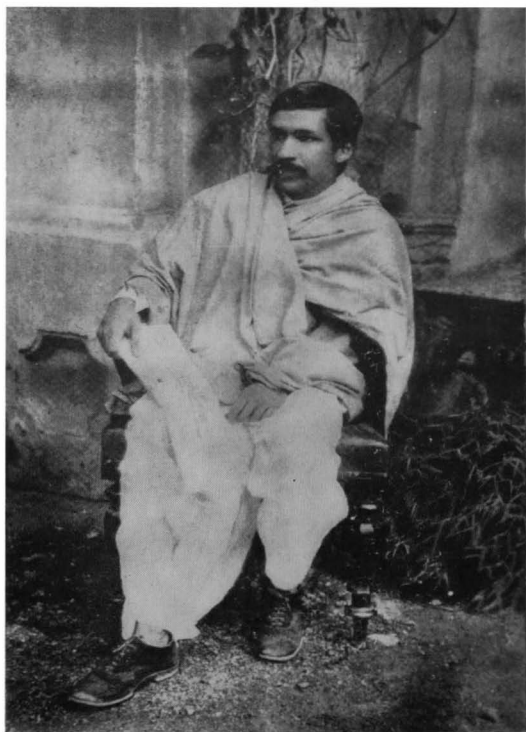
OUR HOMAGE

The Indian Tube Company Limited  
*A Tata-Stewarts and Lloyds Enterprise*



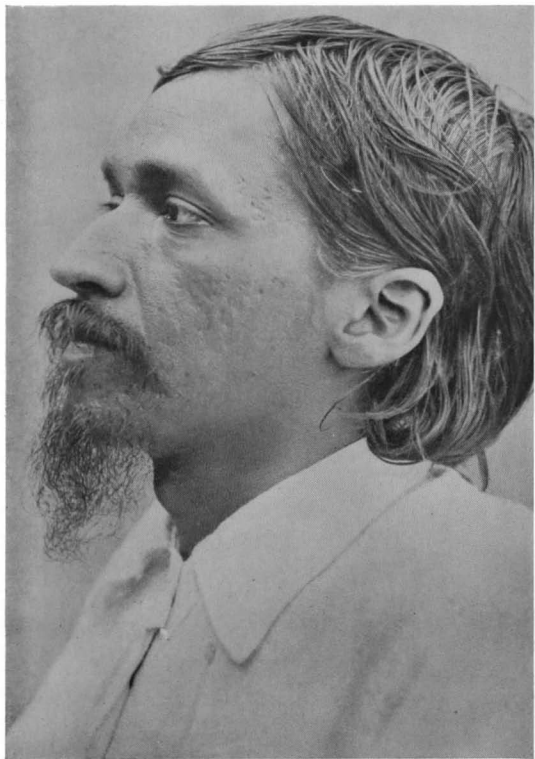
OUR PRANAMS

Aswini Kumar Pramanik & Family, Calcutta



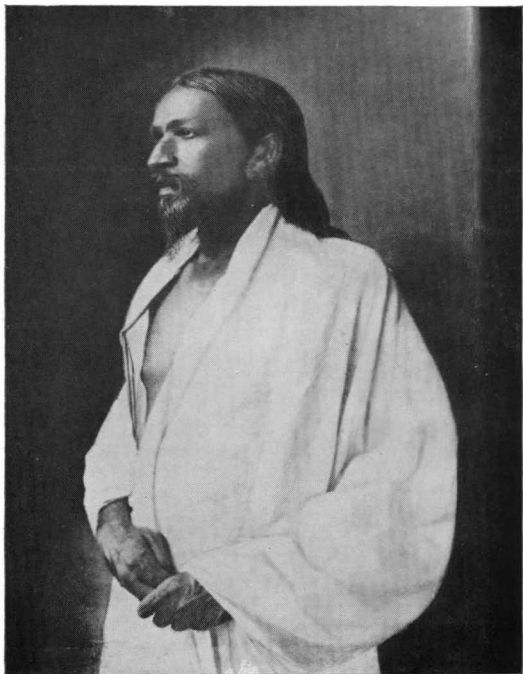
OUR HOMAGE

Aceto Chemicals Private Ltd., Calcutta



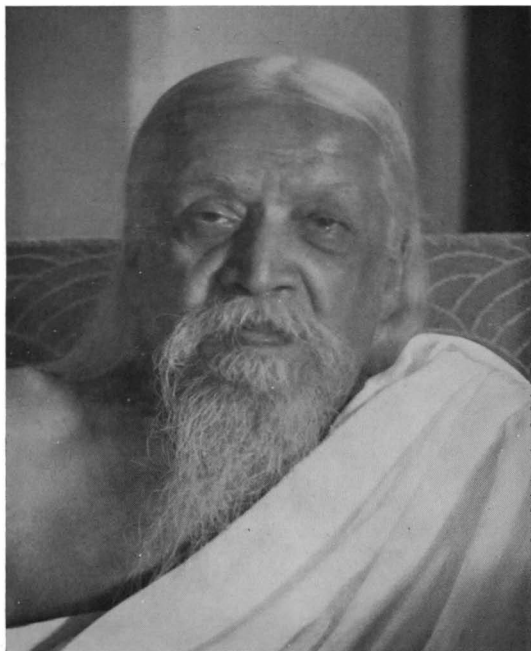
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Birla Jute Mfg. Co. Ltd., Staple Fibre Division, Calcutta



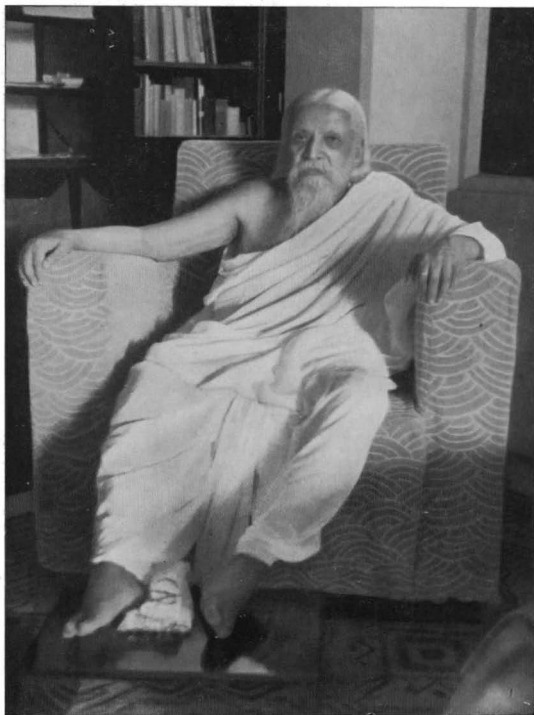
OUR HOMAGE

Asiatic Soap Company, Calcutta



OUR HOMAGE

*In memory of R. Singhi, Chartered Accountant  
Singhi & Co., Calcutta*



OUR HOMAGE

New Gujrat Cotton Mills Ltd., Calcutta

## THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

(3)

### THE VEDIC GODS AND GODDESSES

WHO are the deities whom the Veda worships? They are many and varied. Thirty-three was the number given to them in the Brahmanas; the number was raised to thirty-three crores in later Hindu thought. Modern scholarship is bewildered by their nature and functions, dubs them as superstitions of a primitive people, erects its own theories to explain their multitude, flounders in the end. Ancient Indian thought did not fare much better. The Brahmana texts composed presumably long after the esoteric sense of the Veda had got dimmed by the demands of the sacrificial ritual, tried to hide their ignorance by weaving myths around the Vedic deities, a faculty exploited to the full in the Puranic portions of the Mahabharata and in the extant Puranas themselves.

Vedic interpreters of the age immediately following the Brahmana period — Yaska and the rest — belonged to two distinct schools for the most part.<sup>1</sup> One, the precursor of the modern European school, invented the solar myth. In its view, the sun, the moon, the stars, the sky, the rains have been given the names of gods with the forms of men; or else Indra, Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Varuna, Vishnu are merely the names and forms of the sun; Mitra is the god of the day, Varuna of the night, the Ribhus and the Ashwins are no other than the rays of the sun. The other and perhaps more influential school regarded the Vedic deities both as personifications of the cosmic Powers of Nature, themselves powerful beings endowed with a human form and capable of conferring on their worshippers the boons of heaven after death and of all material benefits on earth including the destruction of man's foes. Apart from these two well-known views, there were two others that are not without interest. One of these regarded the gods, or at least some of them, as having been originally kings and mortal men deified after death. The other view assigned a spiritual meaning to the gods and the boons demanded by the Rishis: Surya for example was not the physical sun but the

Sun of Knowledge, Indra was the Jivatman or the Life-force (*prāṇa*). Sayana the medieval commentator makes a reference to this view at places in his commentary.

Sayana of course was intent on the ritualistic interpretation of the Veda and his conception of the Vedic gods is closely akin to that of the second important view to which we refer above. He has to wrestle with the text in many places to fit the gods into his scheme; sometimes he has to do that by ignoring grammar and etymology, sometimes by paying lip homage to the truth of their real, psychological and spiritual sense. Modern scholarship, starting at first with Sayana and the older commentators like Yaska could not naturally ignore the historical and the "astronomical", the mythical and the ritualistic views held in ancient and medieval India; to these they added their own notions based on their studies of comparative philology, — the Aryan-Dravidian theory was a direct product of this masterpiece of pseudo-historical scholarship — comparative religion and the social anthropology of surviving primitive races. The result has been a hotch-potch, a groping in the dark for meanings where none exists, a failure to find a coherent sense in many a description of the gods, an ascription to these "primitive barbarians" a state of mind near enough to insanity. As Sri Aurobindo puts it, "we are left as much in the dark as before."

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The broad conclusion to which modern scholarship has arrived, — if we leave aside its frantic attempts to fit the conclusions to facts in difficult and doubtful cases, and such cases are not infrequent, — is that the Vedic deities are universal powers of physical Nature personified. Agni, in this view, is nothing more than "the personification of the sacrificial Fire or of the physical principle of Light and Heat in things, or Indra anything more than the god of the sky and the rain or of physical Light,"<sup>2</sup> and so on. It must at once be conceded that in many passages it is quite possible to endorse this view; there are of course many others where that is impossible. "In the lesser gods the naturalistic interpretation has less ground for confidence; for it is obvious that Varuna is not merely a Vedic Uranus or Neptune, but

a god with great and important moral functions; Mitra and Bhaga have the same psychological aspect; the Ribhus who form things by the mind and build up immortality by works can with difficulty be crushed into the Procrustean measure of a naturalistic mythology ... Saraswati will submit to no such treatment. She is plainly and clearly, the goddess of the Word, the goddess of a divine Inspiration.”<sup>3</sup>

There is no doubt that the average man of the Vedic age, the vast majority who formed the multitude, looked upon the sun, moon and the sky, the fire and air and the storm, earth and the waters, dawn and nightfall as visible embodiments of Powers far mightier than men and not mere material realities, Powers who were conscious of man's needs and demands and capable of meeting them in response to prayer and sacrifice offered with faith. They were not mistaken in this; for such conscious Powers exist; “hence the force of prayer, worship, sacrifice for material ends; hence the use of them for worldly life and in so-called magic rites which comes out prominently in the Atharva Veda .... This is the real secret of the external sense of Veda.”<sup>4</sup>

But to the élite, to the man of wisdom and aspirant to a higher life than that known to the ordinary man, the gods and goddesses to whom prayers were offered had a different meaning altogether, served a different purpose. It is this that we have to consider. In what follows the references to the Vedic deities must be understood in that sense.

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Behind and above all things there is a Timeless Ineffable ungrasped by thought to which the Rishi gave the name of That, or One Existent, *tat, ekam sat*, an Absolute which “reveals itself out of the secrecy of things as the God or Deva.”<sup>5</sup> This Supreme Existent is the Deity of whom all the gods are different Names and Powers. “‘The Existent is one,’ says the Rishi Dirghatamas, ‘but the sages express It variously; they say Indra, Varuna, Mitra, Agni; they call It Agni, Yama, Matariswan’.”<sup>6</sup> They pervade the universe, all the worlds visible and invisible, shape them and govern their activities by their inherent powers which are ultimately those of the Supreme Lord, the Deva. The Vedic view of divinity is both monotheistic and polytheistic at the same time, throughout the Veda, and not merely

in some later hymns of the tenth Mandala as the moderns imagine. It is monotheistic because God is one; it has to be polytheistic because the Supreme assumes many forms and powers, through them He manifests.

“The Father of all things is the Lord and Male; he is hidden in the secret source of things, in the super-conscient.”<sup>5</sup> Deva is the Immortality.<sup>7</sup> He the Prurusha is “in this early pastoral imagery the Bull, *vṛṣabha*.”<sup>8</sup> He is “the divine Purusha, Sachchidananda, the three highest states and Truth are his four horns.”<sup>9</sup> He is also the Cosmic Godhead who maintains and guides the activity of all the universe; the presiding deities of this activity in its multitudinous forms are the gods and goddesses who derive their powers from Him, are Himself in diverse forms. He is at the same time the Godhead Immanent in man and in every other creature, whom He leads according to their nature towards the heights of consciousness, power and bliss. He receives their worship and answers to their prayers.

Deva, the Supreme Purusha, the Bull of the pastoral imagery, has His counterpart in Aditi, the Supreme Prakriti of later thought, the Cow of this imagery. “Aditi is the supreme or infinite Consciousness, mother of the gods ... Aditi is existence in its infinity.”<sup>10</sup> She is the “Mother of all things, ... the white-shining Mother ... in whose lap the soul sees ... with the all-embracing vision of the supramental infinite consciousness.”<sup>11</sup> She has been described as the Great One or Queen, *mahiṣī*, because She is the vast Mother.<sup>12</sup> The Mother is the “*Dhenu* or fostering Cow with the seven rivers for her sevenfold streaming as well as *Gau*, the Cow of Light with the Dawns for her children.”<sup>13</sup> The seven rivers are here obviously not the rivers of the Punjab; they are “the waters of being, the Mothers from whom all forms of existence are born”<sup>14</sup> Nor are the Dawns the physical dawns of an Indian horizon. “Dawn the daughter of Heaven, the face or power of Aditi, is the constant opening out of the divine light upon the human being, she is the coming of the spiritual riches, a light, a power, a new birth...”<sup>15</sup> Aditi is not only in the effulgent realms of the superconscient; She is also “the infinite consciousness hidden in the subconscious.”<sup>16</sup> It is this that enables the slow emergence of consciousness out of the inconscience of

Matter which we call evolution, and which is the cosmic function of the gods to make possible.

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The gods too have their "own home" in the superconscient Vast, the supreme Truth-Consciousness (*ṛta-cit*) of the Vedic hymns. "The gods act, it is continually stated, by the power of the Truth."<sup>17</sup> They are born of the Felicity, *mayobhūh*, and they work for felicity. They have a double action, "divine and pre-existent in themselves, they are human in their working upon the mortal plane when they grow in man to the great ascension."<sup>18</sup> Their cosmic function appears most clearly in the hymns to the great Gods, Brahmanaspati or Brihaspati, Rudra and Vishnu, the prototyped of the later Trinity. These hymns are few in number; but that is not because these great Gods are of lesser importance in their cosmic function than, say Agni or Indra, to whom are addressed the major part of the Vedic hymns because these others are more directly concerned with the main purpose of the hymns which is to express and confirm the Rishis' aspirations. That is a point which it is important to stress. The emergence of the Trinity as the principal aspects of the Godhead in later religious thought was no mere accident.

All the three are in the Veda creators and preservers; and Vishnu shares with Rudra the function of destruction — "he (that is, Vishnu) is like a terrible lion that ranges in the difficult places," says a hymn.<sup>19</sup> Brahmanaspati creates cosmos out of the original chaos and thus enables consciousness to evolve out of the inconscient. Rudra provides the necessary force for the upward lift and for the breaking of all obstacles. Vishnu supplies the static element, gives a firm footing as it were through the stable gradation of the worlds, from the lowest Earth to the highest Heavens. Each again, it might be worthwhile repeating, carries in him the whole power of the Deva, the Supreme Lord; each is in his utter reality the Deva Himself, in his manifestation a face or aspect of the Lord. This is true as much of these great Gods as of the lesser deities and they are worshipped as such. That explains the high-sounding "heno-

theism" of the Veda, which strikes the modern scholar as one of its peculiar traits.

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In the beginning was the vast Inconscient Ocean, *apraketam salilam*, an indeterminate Infinite out of which the finite worlds were to rise and make room for consciousness to grow towards the other Infinity of the Superconscient, the "upper ocean" of the Veda. Brahmanaspati, "becoming manifest first of the gods out of the vastness of that Light of Truth-consciousness",<sup>20</sup> may thus be regarded as the first of the *formateurs*. He descends with full consciousness from the heights of the superconscient, and plunging into the inconscience brings out of it the formations of consciousness which in the Vedic view represent the worlds visible and invisible. He "creates the worlds by the Word out of the...inconscient ocean that was this all."<sup>21</sup> He is "the Father of all things."<sup>22</sup> He is like all the other gods the friend and helper of aspiring man. Brihaspati, another name of this god, is the conscious Soul-Power in man, the creative Soul who in his other form of Brahma "seeks to manifest and increase himself in the royalty of the human nature and he who attains to that royalty of light and power...finds himself always cherished, fostered, increased by the divine cosmic powers."<sup>23</sup>

The cosmic function of Rudra is to supply the force for the upward movement of Brahmanaspati's formations. This Mighty One "presides over the struggle of life to affirm itself; he is the armed, wrathful and beneficent Power of God who lifts forcibly the creation upward, smites all that opposes, scourges all that errs and resists, heals all that is wounded and suffers and complains and submits."<sup>24</sup> For he too has like all the gods a cosmic and a psychological aspect. "The force that battles is his gift, but also the final peace and joy."<sup>25</sup> He, as Sri Aurobindo has chosen to emphasise, is "the most terrible of the gods, the one of whom alone the Vedic Rishis have any real fear."<sup>26</sup> Nor is the conception of Siva borrowed from the "Dravidians"; for all the violent and benign aspects of Rudra-Siva of the Puranic Triad are already there in the Veda.<sup>27</sup>

Vishnu the all-pervading measures out in his three strides and

arranges in their fixed ascending hierarchy all the worlds or planes of consciousness that constitute the cosmos. He thus "supplies the necessary static elements — Space, the ordered movements of the worlds, the ascending levels, the highest goal .... In these worlds he the all-pervading dwells and gives less or greater room to the action and movements of the gods."<sup>28</sup> These worlds are mainly three, namely, the earth of our physical consciousness, the heaven of mind with the mid-world of life acting as the link between the two, and the triple world of rich substance (*vasu*), abounding force (*urj*) and delight (*mayas*), the high and vast world of Truth (*satyam*, *rtam*, *brhat*) serving as the link between this highest world of Sachchidananda and the lower triplicity of mind, life and matter in which we live.<sup>29</sup> Vishnu preserves all these five worlds of being imperishably by infusing them with delight of which he is the source. "All of them this Vishnu fills with his divine joy of being."<sup>30</sup> He is the constant friend of man, he is the Deva helping and evoking the powers of the ascent. His highest seat, the world of supreme delight, is the goal of this human journey.<sup>31</sup>

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Not merely Vishnu and Rudra and Brahmanaspati, but all the other Vedic gods whatever their appellation or special function, are the helpers and friends of man in his high endeavour. "Without exception they are described as increasing man, bringing him light, pouring on him the fullness of the waters, the abundance of the heavens, increasing the truth in him, building up the divine worlds, leading him against all attacks to the great goal, the integral felicity, the perfect bliss."<sup>32</sup> The Rishi was aware that he could not by his unaided effort free himself out of the triple cord of mind and life and body, get rid of all his imperfections. He needed the assistance of divine Powers. "The Rishis pray always to the gods to make their path to the highest bliss easy of going and thornless."<sup>33</sup> They knew that it is only by reaching the highest seat of Vishnu that they could be fully free.

In what ways do the gods help the aspirant in his upward march? They supply him the necessary knowledge, which goes on increasing as he mounts higher and higher in the scale. They provide him the necessary force to act in accordance with the knowledge. They give him the joy of the effort. They fight man's battles against his enemies inner and outer and help him to conquer or overpass the obstacles to his growth. They assist the mortal to increase in obedience to the Truth; for through the Truth lies the path to Bliss. They in fact represent to him his higher psychological states and functions, and to these he gives the appropriate names etymologically allied to the respective state or function: Agni, Indra, Soma, Marut, Vayu, Usha, Surya Savitri, Pushan, Mitra, Varuna and all the rest. Sometimes he addresses them as Vishvadevas, all the gods, "the universal collectivity of the divine powers."<sup>34</sup> The gods "become, take shape, as it were, in him."<sup>35</sup> It is this *vaiśvadaivya*, man becoming in his status and function, in all the parts of his being, in all his thoughts and action even as the gods are, that in Sri Aurobindo's view was the esoteric meaning of the Vedic worship, the secret of the Vedic yoga.<sup>36</sup>

We shall now have to give a passing glance at these other gods who fill the Vedic hymnal.

(To be continued)

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## SRI AUROBINDO: THE POET\*

The Word, a mighty and inspiring Voice,  
Enters Truth's inmost cabin of privacy  
And tears away the veil from God and life.

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The Ineffable puts on a robe of speech  
Where all its words are woven like magic threads  
Moving with beauty, inspiring with their gleam,  
And every thought takes up its destined place  
Recorded in the memory of the world.

*Savitri*, Book X. 4.

THESE lines from 'Savitri', Sri Aurobindo's great epic, almost give a full account of what Sri Aurobindo, the Poet has done, say, has achieved through his poetry, ranging from simple quartets to a great epic poem of nearly 24,000 lines, and passing midbetween through almost all the varied forms of poetic expression. Here, in Sri Aurobindo, we meet the Word, which really is a mighty and inspiring voice, something like the great ॐ (Om) is a mighty and realising Mantra, which has entered Truth's inmost cabin of privacy, the inner occult apartments of life and much that is beyond, and has torn away the veil from God, which has taken us into the Presence of God and has revealed all the secrets of life. We can say there is not a single aspect of life which has not been dealt with in Sri Aurobindo's poetry and the revelation of things transcendent, reaching upto the threshold of the Unmanifest that we find here is there perhaps for the first time in our earthly life. Here indeed we see the Ineffable putting on a glorious robe of speech, where all its words are woven like magic threads moving with beauty, inspiring with their gleam, which often blazes up into a bright sunlight.

To speak of Sri Aurobindo as the Poet is as good as speaking about the Himalayas. It is as simple as taking up a book of Geogra-

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phy with all its maps and charts and pictures and having a delightful experience of knowing something about one of the seven wonders of the world. But to scale this giant of a mountain is a different thing, to reach its highest peak human capacity has only recently reached the required height. Similarly we can talk about the Poet and his poetry to our heart's content, yet we can hardly rest at that, there is indeed the temptation, and the need also, to go near this mountain, this Nagadhiraj (नागाधिराज) of a Poet and partake of its beauty and mystery and delight. The foothills of Sri Aurobindo's poetry are indeed charming, as are the farflung foothills of the Himalayas with their numberless Tirthas — the sacred places and sacred rivers, but as we go up, as we move further and further up the height, a graded acclimatization becomes necessary, requiring also to carry a set of oxygen along with us. When we try to be with the highest expression of Sri Aurobindo's poetic genius, it becomes a breath-taking experience. Here we have to equip our mind and our nerves with a new capacity of experience, with a new sensitiveness, with as good a thing as some occult growth, a willing surrender, a helpful suspension of the outer mind and outer self and to allow ourselves to be led like a child, clinging to the beatific hand of the *Musa Spiritus* that is there to lead us up the difficult ascent.

By now, in these glorious days of Sri Aurobindo's Birth Centenary, we are sufficiently familiar with the unique personality of one of our greatest Persons, who is the living *Vibhuti* of our age. We now know the various aspects through which his inner self has expressed itself, each one of them a stupendous achievement by itself. We know the politician, the thinker, the philosopher, the great mystic — the *Maha Yogi* that Sri Aurobindo is, but the poet Sri Aurobindo is a manifestation unique by itself. As a politician, we see his personality spreading out through the length and breadth of our vast country like a rejuvenating wind and awakening us to our national consciousness for the first time like a blazing fire. As a thinker, as a philosopher we feel him bringing to our mind all the illumination that is possible to the present limit of human consciousness. As a *Maha Yogi*, the mystic, the Supreme Guru, we find him leading us in a great enchanting silence into the inner and higher worlds. In this action, there is an occult working, and it is hard to be figured out in a single physical

mould. It is like a hand manipulating from behind and flowering out in all the expressions of life on all its levels. With the Yogi we aspire, we open ourselves, we receive, we grow into the new divine growth, which has been his real mission on earth and feel fulfilled in our silent adoration of him.

The poet Sri Aurobindo is somewhat like a luminous link between the outer and inner working of Sri Aurobindo. Here the poet on one hand refines and sublimates all the outer stuff of life and mind and on the other gives a form, a word to all that belongs to the formless and wordless. What he could not or rather would not say to the outer mind and surface intellect he states it outright in poetry and what remains a difficult or occult realisation, a partial and gradual unfolding of the inner self in the working of sadhana, he puts it in an explicit manner; the whole range of inner realisation, the inner worlds and their working, the visions of Godhead, the thrill of the mystic contacts, the throbs of supreme delight and the charm of the greatest beauty and beatitude are there all too vividly spread out as on an unending canvas. His poetry is indeed, in his own words, 'The Word that enters Truth's inmost cabin of privacy and tears away the veil from God and life.' Here we are made to see and feel in a most palpable manner God, who has remained, for most of us, an intangible substance—*अप्राह्यम्, अनिर्वचनीयम्-agrāhyam, anirvacanīyam*. Here we are given to realise life, that has been to us a dark and dolorous substance, as a glorious manifestation of the Divine.

We know fairly enough the poetical career of Sri Aurobindo. He started writing poetry at a very early age, while studying in England. His was a clever and deft hand, apart from writing in English, which was, as we know, his natural language from the very first, he composed in Greek and Latin also which were taught to him with a warm heart by his able tutor. The poetic faculty continued to work, but after coming over to India, as he entered new phases of life, and started practising Pranayama, a preliminary movement to his real Sadhana, things started to come to him, poetry as well as prose, in a great gust. And after coming over to Pondicherry and during the course of his intense Yoga, as he reached unknown levels of consciousness beyond the mind, all that he wrote was done from a silent mind. There he received inspiration from its pure region, the movement of Intuition

in its native sky. And the working out of the great epic 'Savitri' was an epic process itself. It became for him 'a field of experimentation to see how far poetry could be written from one's own Yogic Consciousness and how that could be made creative.'

And we know now what the Yogic consciousness is and can be. It is a field of new powers, new realisations, new self-creation, a plunge into the vast unknown that comes within our range of experience. Here at a certain stage the writing of 'Savitri' does not remain a mere poetical creation but becomes actual happening, so many divine events in human history. As the Mother reveals to us this stupendous inner reality we feel an awful exhilaration on knowing what actually happened when 'Savitri' was being written. Here is what She says: 'All this is his (Sri Aurobindo's) own experience, and what is most surprising is that it is my experience also....And I observed something curious, that day after day the experiences he read out to me in the morning were those I had the previous night. Word for word, yes all the descriptions, the colours, the pictures I had seen, the words I had heard, all, all I had heard put by him into poetry, into miraculous poetry....It is the picture of our joint adventure into the Unknown, or rather into Supermind....' And as she adds, 'Savitri' is the whole Yoga of transformation, and this Yoga now comes for the first time in the earth consciousness...' we touch the Truth for which Sri Aurobindo lived and worked and wrote all that he did in verse and outside the verse.

Apart from poetry Sri Aurobindo has written a number of plays also, each embodying a separate climate of a separate nation in separate ages. The plays are also in verse, and have their own charm of expression and interest of their subject. A still greater contribution by Sri Aurobindo to poetry is his translations into verse, and a part in prose also, of poetry from Sanskrit, Bengali and even from Tamil and Greek and Latin, the major bulk of it from Sanskrit and Bengali, select passages from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Gita, from Kalidasa, Bhartrihari, from Vidyapati, Chandidas and other Bengali poets. His translations of the Upanishads and the Vedas, a great working out of a difficult subject, though in prose, have a deep touch of poetical expression, a turn of phrase which brings out much more fully the significance of the original bare word.

All this amounts to a stupendous mass, standing before which, we simply feel an overpowering awe and a great fullness of being in the presence of a rich creative genius.

The evaluation of what Sri Aurobindo has written as poetry has been a delicate and challenging job. There have been a varied type of reactions to his poetry, some of them even going to the length of denying any poetical value to it. Every reaction can have its justification from the critic's own make-up. But we know that Sri Aurobindo himself has been a great scholar and student of poetry, a brilliant expositor of this Muse in its divine ascension, and he has worked upon his own writings again and again, reaching out for a greater and fuller, for a more and more perfect perfection. He has been a great experimenter also, he has tried new metres and worked a great deal on the possibility of quantitative metre in English, illustrating his point by a huge piece of epic 'Illion', and other poems also, 'Ahana' being one of them a brilliant piece.

Though there are people, who refuse to grant any virtue to Sri Aurobindo's poetry, there are a large number of people who have with real labour and understanding approached Sri Aurobindo's poetry and found in it something of a supreme creative nature. Acknowledged scholars in the West also have been able to appreciate Sri Aurobindo's work in its real truth. Thus says Sir Herbert Read, a leading modern poet and critic in England, about 'Illion': "It is a remarkable achievement by any standard, and I am full of amazement that some one not of English origin should have such a wonderful command, not only over language as such, but of its skilful elaboration into poetic diction of such high quality." Another profound scholar, Professor Vivian de Sola Pinto (University of Nottingham) has spoken of 'Savitri' as a "remarkable epic... surely among the greatest poetic achievements of the present century." And this is what an American critic has said about 'Savitri': it is "probably the greatest epic in the English language... a perfect Cosmic poem".

This much about Sri Aurobindo, the Poet should suffice for our present purpose. Standing as we are in the presence of this great Himalaya, that Sri Aurobindo himself is, and his poetry only one of the great mountains in its long range, glittering with its white brilliant snows, we feel some of the lofty air from its peaks moving

around us and we breathe a heavenlier air uplifting us from our earthly basis, and we can now rest content with this much of musing about Sri Aurobindo's muse — the *Musa Spiritus*.

It will be indeed a great delight if we can have a fairly representative glimpse of Sri Aurobindo's poetry. But even that will be a big affair and I will content myself by just picking up a few lines from here and there and just feel a murmur of the grandiose Word that he has uttered.

Sri Aurobindo has written much in a simple manner and these lines are perhaps unparalleled in their simple charm, they are one of his metrical experiments:

In some faint dawn,  
 In some dim eve,  
     Like a gesture of Light,  
     Like a dream of delight  
 Thou comest nearer and nearer to me.

*(More Poems)*

And these are perhaps the simplest lines about a subject — God, which is quite complex and yet simple at the same time.

Thou who pervadest all the worlds below,  
     Yet sitst above,  
 Master of all who work and rule and know,  
     Servant of Love!

Thou who disdainest not the worm to be  
     Nor even the clod,  
 Therefore we know by that humility  
     That thou art God.

*(Collected Poems)*

But we know that Sri Aurobindo's poetry is like a multi-keyed and multi-toned organ and we should love to hear the instrument in its fullest amplitude. Though he has concerned himself mostly with the deepest and loftiest aspect of things, yet he has not missed to

touch things of the commonest nature also. These lines about a cat, even with their simplicity, pass on to subtle and deep things also:

Mute stands she, lonely on the topmost stair,  
 An image of magnificent despair;  
 The grandeur of a sorrowful surmise  
 Wakes in the largeness of her glorious eyes ...

Her tail is up like an unconquered flag,  
 Its dignity knows not the right to wag.

An animal creature wonderfully human,  
 A charm and miracle of fur-footed Brahman,  
 Whether she is spirit, woman or cat,  
 Is now the problem I am wondering at.

*(‘Despair on the Staircase’)*

As an epic poet Sri Aurobindo has encompassed every aspect of human experience of life and things but among them the heroic, the beautiful and the mystic are the foremost. Before he launched into his great epic ‘Savitri’, he wrote about these things on a smaller scale also in some of his long narrative poems which have an epic throb in them. These lines from a short poem form as if a first sounding of the war-trumpet before the fierce battles begin.

With wind and the weather beating round me  
 Up to the hill and the moorland I go.  
 Who will come with me? who will climb with me?  
 Wade through the brook and tramp through the snow?

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I am the lord of tempest and mountain,  
 I am the Spirit of freedom and pride.  
 Stark must he be and a kinsman to danger  
 Who shares my kingdom and walks at my side.

*(‘Invitation’)*

This daring is an essential quality of life and is the basis of all victory and enjoyment that come to us as a result of our struggles. Thus, as in life, so in literature, the heroic and the beautiful are woven together, the tragic and blissful are there side by side or superseding one another as things happen in their destined way. Concerned as Sri Aurobindo is with the grimmest problems of life he deals with the heroic side of things at a greater length, yet the love and beauty of things also are there, though not in outward abundance, yet equally balanced in their subtle reality. We shall see some of his most charming expressions as found in his earlier narratives. Here is the meeting of Pururavus and Urvasie:

... Then through all his limbs there flashed  
 Youth and the beauty and the warmth of earth  
 And joy of her left lonely to his will.  
 He moved, he came towards her. ...  
 With a great cry and glad Pururavus  
 Seized her and caught her to his bosom thrilled,  
 Clinging and shuddering. All her wonderful hair  
 Loosened and the wind seized and bore it streaming  
 Over the shoulder of Pururavus  
 And on his cheek a softness. She, o'erborne,  
 Panting, with inarticulate murmurs lay, ...  
 Her naked arms clasping his neck, ...  
 Amid her wind-blown hair their faces met.  
 With her sweet limbs all his, feeling her breasts  
 Tumultuous up against his beating heart,  
 He kissed the glorious mouth of heaven's desire.  
 So clung they as two shipwrecked in a surge.

(*'Urvasie'*)

Still more charming is the love of Ruru with Priyumvada in 'Love and Death'. We will have just a glimpse of it:

....He remembered  
 The chompuc bushes where she turned away  
 Half-angered, ...

And the swift leap of all her body to him,  
 And eyes of large repentance, and the weight  
 Of her wild bosom and lips unsatisfied ;...

(*'Love and Death'*)

- And now to the heroic in Sri Aurobindo's poetry. Here is one of the most vivid pictures of a war: it is from 'Baji Prabhou'.

... They reached the perilous crest; there for a while  
 A slaughter grim went on and all the the verge  
 Was heaped and walled and thickly fortified  
 With splendid bodies ....

Small was the space for fight,  
 And meeting strength with skill and force with soul  
 The strong and agile keepers of the hills  
 Prevailed against the city-dwelling hosts, ...  
 So fought they for a while; then suddenly  
 Upon the Prabhou all the Goddess came.  
 Loud like a lion hungry on the hills  
 He shouted, and his stature seemed to increase  
 Striding upon the foe. Rapid his sword  
 Like lightning playing with a cloud made void  
 The crest before him, ...

(*'Baji Prabhou'*)

We see here the best epic tradition carried forward by Sri Aurobindo, and in 'Illion', a long narrative of nearly 5000 lines in the best Homeric tradition, written in his evolved qualitative metre, we have a still more thrilling experience of the poet's muse.

Silent, aloof from the people he sat, a heart full of ruins.  
 Low was the rumour that swelled like the hum of the bees in a  
 meadow  
 When with the thirst of the honey they swarm on the thyme  
 and the linden,  
 Hundreds humming and flitting till all that place is a murmur.

Then from his seat like a tower arising Praim the monarch  
 Slowly erect in his vast tranquillity silenced the people:  
 Lonely, august he stood like one whom death has forgotten,  
 Reared like a column of might and of silence over the assem-  
 bly, So Olympus rises alone with his snows into heaven.

(*Illion*)

And now we can turn to 'Savitri' where the poet's muse has reached its most mature expression. Here everything has grown into a subtlety, a depth, wideness, a height, an inmost reality that are there on the highest plane of spiritual experience. Here the love and the struggle, the pursuit and achievement, the battle and victory and the culmination of the whole existence have not remained on our human plains. Though taking account of everything in life, and plunging down even into the nether pits of all the underworlds, the poem is a great transcendence, a superhuman embodiment of the utmost Reality.

But we cannot venture here far into this immense world of 'Savitri'. We shall just touch the fringe of this Virat Sristi. Let us meet outright the lovers here, in the greatest love-poetry of our times, where the love has attained a rare subtlety and depth.

A sacrament of joy in treasuring palms  
 She brought, flower-symbol of her offered life,  
 Then with raised hands that trembled a little now  
 At the very closeness that her soul desired,  
 This bond of sweetness, their bright union's sign,  
 She laid on the bosom coveted by her love.  
 As if inclined before some gracious god...  
 She bowed and touched his feet with worshipping hands;  
 She made her life his world for him to tread  
 And made her body the room of his delight,...  
 He bent to her...  
 He gathered all Savitri in his clasp.  
 Around her his embrace became the sign  
 Of a locked closeness through slow intimate years,...  
 In a wide moment of two souls that meet

She felt her being flow into him as in waves  
 A river pours into a mighty sea.  
 As when a soul is merging into God  
 To live in Him for ever and know His joy,  
 Her consciousness was a wave of him alone  
 And all her separate self was lost in his.  
 As a starry heaven encircles happy earth,  
 He shut her into himself in a circle of bliss  
 And shut the world into himself and her.  
 A boundless isolation made them one;  
 He was aware of her enveloping him  
 And let her penetrate his very soul,  
 As is a world by the world's spirit filled,  
 As the mortal wakes into Eternity,  
 As the finite opens to the Infinite.  
 Thus were they in each other lost awhile,  
 Then drawing back from their long ecstasy's trance  
 Came into a new self and a new world...  
 In a new act of the drama of the world  
 The united Two began a greater age.

(Book V. 3.)

But soon the shadow of Death descends upon their love, of  
 the short life of their love only Savitri is aware, and it is she who  
 bears the equally intense pain of this.

...Love and Doom,  
 The ancient disputants, encircled her  
 Like giant figures wrestling in the night:

(Book I. 1.)

And at the appointed hour Death comes to Satyavan:

...Now the great Woodsman  
 Hewed at him and his labour ceased: lifting  
 His arm he flung away the poignant axe  
 Far from him like an instrument of pain...  
 He cried out in a clinging last despair,

“Savitri, Savitri, O Savitri,  
 Lean down my soul, and kiss me while I die.”  
 And even as her pallid lips pressed his,  
 His failed, losing last sweetness of response;  
 His cheek pressed down her golden arm.

Satyavan dies and the living Death appears:

Something had come there conscious, vast and dire.  
 (Book VIII. 3)

But we shall not face this God here and now. After a long and arduous preparation, after a new birth in a young Divinity, equipped with her original Force Savitri ultimately conquers Death. To realise the joy of this ever first victory of man over Death we have to be with the poem for long long hours.

Rather than meeting the miserably dying Death I would like to meet God, as Ashwapathy found him at the end of his long pursuit of the Unknowable, in his unthinkable transcendent form:

The universe removed its coloured veil,  
 And at the unimaginable end  
 Of the huge riddle of created things  
 Appeared the far-seen Godhead of the whole,  
 His feet firm-based on Life's stupendous wings,  
 Omnipotent or lonely seer of Time,  
 Inward, inscrutable, with diamond gaze.  
 Attracted by the unfathomable regard  
 The unsolved slow cycles to their fount returned  
 To rise again from that invisible sea.

(Book III. 1)

We can see here what distance the poet has covered from the God that turns himself into a clod to the Godhead that is gazing from the farthest end of the universe with his diamond gaze and attracting with his unfathomable regard all the slow cycles of the universe to himself — to the fount of all and giving them a new

birth again and again, a new birth in his own divine form.

We will stop here now, but I should like to close with a little nearer vision, not that mysterious formidable inscrutability of the supreme Godhead, but a very palpable divinity with which we are familiar, but which here appears in a very charming luminous form with a very deep function. It is the heavenly sage Narad leaving the earth after revealing to Savitri and her parents the decree of Fate.

He spoke and ceased and left the earthly scene,  
Away from the strife and suffering on our globe,  
He turned towards his far-off blissful home.  
A brilliant arrow pointing straight to heaven,  
The luminous body of the eternal seer  
Assailed the purple glory of the eternal noon  
And disappeared like a receding star  
Vanishing into the light of the Unseen;  
But still a cry was heard in the infinite,  
And still to the listening soul on mortal earth  
A high and far imperishable voice  
Chanted the anthem of eternal love.

(Book VI. 2)

Such indeed is the imperishable Voice, that Sri Aurobindo, the Poet is, chanting the anthem of all eternal and infinite things.

SUNDARAM

## MAHACHAMASYA AND THE FOURTH VYAHRITI

**M**AHACHAMASYA, the name of the Rishi mentioned in the fifth chapter of the Taittiriya Upanishad's first part (Shikshavalli) is supposed to be a patronymic: son of Mahachamasya. But if, as Sri Aurobindo insists, the names of the Rishis have always a symbolic value, we may suppose that Mahachamasya is the Seer of the Great Bowl (*mahā-camasa*), the sacrificial bowl which is in the Veda a figure for the physical body of man. This bowl in which the delight of existence is offered to the gods is made singly by Twashtri, the framer of things, but is new-made by the Ribhus, the three human-divine "powers of luminous knowledge" who build up upon it "from the material of the four planes three other bodies, vital, mental and the causal or ideal body." (*Uta tyam camasam navam, tvastur devasya niskrtam; akarta catvarah punah. RV 1.20.6*).<sup>1</sup> It is this fourfold bowl which enables man "to live in the plane of the Truth-Consciousness"<sup>2</sup>, the plane of the Ideal or rather of the Real-Idea.

In the Veda the four planes, the planes from which the Ribhus take their material, are Prithivi, or Earth; the Antariksha, an intermediary region symbolic of the vital domains; Dyau, or heaven; and Swar, that wide other world, *uru u loka*, the world of Truth. By the time of the Upanishads the distinction between Dyau and Swar had been lost, and "therefore a fourth name had to be found for the world of Truth."<sup>3</sup> This discovery is the work of Mahachamasya. To the three lower Vyahritis ("utterances" or "Words"), that is, Bhur, Bhuvar and Suvar (= Swar in the Yajur Veda, from the Taittiriya Aranyaka of which the Upanishad is taken), is added the fourth great name, Mahas. This, the "great world" is "the supramental or Truth-Consciousness"<sup>4</sup> and is, as the Upanishad states "the Brahman, the Self, and the other gods are its members":<sup>5</sup>

तद् ब्रह्म स आत्मा अङ्गान्यन्या देवताः

The gods are potencies of the Overmental creation, but above the shining lid of the Overmind is the plane of Truth, the divine self-expression of the Absolute, whether seen objectively (Brahman) or subjectively (Atman). In this supramental plane the different god-

heads are "held together as a harmonious play of the existence"<sup>6</sup> like the many limbs of a single and integral body.

That the three Vyahritis, with the fourth beyond them, represent what in the *adhiloka* we see as the worlds is made clear in the next section of the chapter. Bhur (as we have already noted) corresponds to "this world", Prithivi, the earth-principle; Bhuvar to the Antariksha (in his early translation of the Taittiriya Sri Aurobindo has rendered, "sky"); and Suvar to that "other world", not the other world, *u loka*, which is the Vedic greater heaven, *brhad dyau*, but the world of free mentality which the Veda calls Dyau. Beyond these is Mahas, the sun, "the symbol of the supermind."<sup>7</sup>

Similarly the Upanishad states that Bhur is Fire; Bhuvar, Air; Suvar, the Sun; and that beyond the Sun is the Moon, which is Mahas. As to why the same word (Aditya=Sun) is used here for what is above taken for the highest world, I am not prepared to say. The Upanishads are not the expression of the rigid philosophical mind, and no attempt to cram inconvenient texts into preconceived mental frames will alter their essential character which, being based on intuition and not thought, is one of wonderful plasticity. We may simply note that in the Brihadaranyaka (iii.6.) we have a similar placement of the world of the Moon above that of the Sun, perhaps because the world of Delight (Mayas, Ananda) is in the old systems ranked higher even than the supramental world. We may also recall that in the third part of the Kena, Agni (Fire) and Vayu (Air) are followed by Indra, the Lord of the Divine Mind, but that the Brahman is finally approached by none of these, but by Uma, the Supreme Nature, the Mother.\*

The symbolism of the rest of the passage is even more difficult to penetrate, and we need not attempt more than some enlargement of Sri Aurobindo's translation. Bhur is the hymns of the Rig-veda; Bhuvar, those of the Sama-veda; and Suvar, those of the Yajur-veda; that is, the Rik or "word of illumination",<sup>8</sup> the Saman or "word of the divine *ānanda*"<sup>9</sup> and the Yajus or "word of power for the right ordering of the action".<sup>10</sup> Beyond all these is the *brahman*, not here so

\* See also in the next chapter of the Upanishad

In Bhur He is established in Agni, as Bhuvar in Vayu, as Suvar in the Sun, as Mahas in the Eternal.

much "the Eternal", as "the word or Mantra in its profoundest aspect".<sup>11</sup>

Again, Bhur is the main breath, *prāṇa*; Bhuvar is the lower breath, *apāna*; Suvar is the pervasor of all the breaths, *vyāna*; but of all these the substance is Food, *annam*, which is Mahas. We have here a brief anticipation of the great importance given to Food in later parts of the Upanishad, for example in the first chapter of the Brahmanandavalli and especially in the tenth and concluding chapter of the Brighuvalli. By Food all the breaths increase and prosper.

The entire chapter, we may say, is a perfect square: a figure of four sides made up of four four-sided figures. "These are the four and they are fourfold; — four Words of his naming and each is four again." Always beyond the three lower manifestations is "a certain fourth", the world beyond the body, life and mind, the divine Supermind.

This is the discovery of Mahachamasya, a finding made not only once sometime in the past, but an ever-renewable discovery of an eternal truth. For as the names of the Rishis are symbolic, they themselves represent "certain spiritual experiences and victories".<sup>12</sup> In this age too it was found that "we need a name"<sup>13</sup> for that other world beyond, and the great discovery was made again: "Supermind is the fourth name — fourth to that in its descent, fourth to us in our ascension".<sup>14</sup> And in this, our fortunate era, not only had the fourth name been discovered, but through the efforts of the Rishis of the age the world named has been made manifest here in the lower triplicity.

PETER HEEHS

#### NOTES

All references are to the Centenary Library Edition of Sri Aurobindo's works:

1. *The Secret of the Veda*, p. 329.

2. *Ibid.* 3. *Ibid.*, p. 171. 4. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

5. *The Upanishads*, p. 321. All other citations from the Upanishad under study are from this translation of Sri Aurobindo, which, it should be remembered, was done by him well before he began his yogic sadhana.

6. *The Life Divine*, p. 280.

7. *Letters on Yoga*, p. 102.

8. *Essays on the Gita*, p. 314.

9. *Ibid.* 10. *Ibid.*

11. *The Secret of the Veda*, p. 306. 12. *Ibid.* p. 154.

13. *The Life Divine*, p. 123. 14. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

## SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DISINTEGRATION OF THIS AGE : REASONS FOR AND THEIR REMEDIES\*

(“The true law of our development and the entire object of our Social Existence can only become clear when we have discovered not only like modern Science what man has been in his past physical and vital evolution, but his future mental and spiritual destiny and his place in the cycles of Nature.”<sup>1</sup>)

“**T**HOU too Brutus?” — is a Shakespearean illustration of exclamation. But it has not become obsolete as yet. It is in the usage till today. In the latter half of this century — in the late sixties — we had heard a respectable Principal of a college exclaiming in the same way — though in different circumstances — “Thou too Ramesh?”

Ramesh — once a brilliant student of his College, his pride and pride of the locality as well — had become a wagon breaker. We have seen a very good-natured young boy with poetical feelings in his student life, uttering slangs towards his subordinates, taking bribes from the smugglers — because he is now a Police Officer, and a well-disciplined group leader under N.C.C. — becoming a political hooligan. A few years ago we had the misfortune to witness that the teen-agers — both boys and girls of different Universities belonging to respectable families — becoming the victims of clashes between different disintegrated political ideas. They were found not at all hesitating to kill their colleagues or be killed by them.

But why? — who is responsible for this breakdown of social standards and disintegration of social and political values? The individual? The Society? or the State? — why man has become so poor in his feelings and emotions? — so demoralising in his conduct and character? Who is responsible for this pitiable plight of man?

“Man’s present predicament” — says Sri Aurobindo, “is due to his neglect of his inner development which has left him a slave of his passion”. In this single sentence of the Master we get the answer. Man himself is responsible and none else.

\* Paper for the Seminar held in the Ashram during 18th to 20th February, 1975.

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*.

Throughout the history of human civilisation man has been trying to develop his outer life, prosper his material existence. Excepting a few instances of recent and remote in the life and sadhana of quite negligible number of Yogins and Sanyasins here and there, nowhere man has been seen busy in developing his inner nature and as a consequence he has become a slave of his passion. And hence this crisis — the crisis of character.

It is from the gregarious instinct of human being, as we know, that normal human society emerges. But at the very beginning of its formation — to avoid clashes of egos and antagonistic ideas the Society had to patch an accommodation of converging interests and treaty of peace between discords by establishing what is today known as social laws. By these social laws which helped in establishing interests of association as against interests of clashes — individual development was fettered to a great extent. Nevertheless, the growth of modern civilisation was ensured. For its progress, this civilisation — with the help of social laws, has established mass of social Institutions and customs which in the long run have been proved to be a hindrance to the normal growth and development of individual, though at the outset the establishment of such Institutions and customs received psychological sanction and support of the individuals because of their inherent quality of stimulating mutual existence and understanding.

“A normal human Society”, as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo, “treats man essentially a physical, vital and mental being and therefore it develops a system of mental growth and efficiency — an intellectual, aesthetic and moral culture, it evolves the vital side of the human life and creates an evergrowing system of economic efficiency and vital enjoyments and this system becomes more rich, cumbrous and complex as civilisation develops.”<sup>1</sup>

Obviously it becomes clear that there is radical defect somewhere in the process of civilisation. If we are to find out where lies the defect then we have to study first what actually ‘man’ is. It is not at all paradoxical in this age of Reason that man’s existence could not be fully explained, because the ‘Reason’ has got no such capability of going deep into it. The mind, the life and the body are three terms of

<sup>1</sup> *The Human Cycle*.

man's existence with which the 'Reason' has some competence to deal. Thinkers, Social-reformers and Religious leaders of the past and physical-Scientists, Politicians and Economists of the present age — none of them has been able to get hold of the truth of Nature's working in humanity. So they either lose the individual in man or think of him chiefly as a cell, an atom.

A study of Nature's working in humanity reveals that, — of all the earthly creatures man is a most dissatisfied being and yet he is the brightest product of this universe. Sri Aurobindo says, "Man is an abnormal who has not found his own normality, ... therefore, though man is infinitely greater than the plant or the animal, he is not perfect in his own nature like the plant and the animal." This imperfection as we see later, is not at all a deplorable thing but rather a privilege and a promise, because it maintains in man a constant flow of ever increasing dynamism which in its turn opens out to him an immense vista of self-development and self-exceeding. This imperfection, therefore, provides man with the vast scope of his becoming the brightest product of this universe. This is the spiritual element in man, — and his earliest preoccupation.

It is true that man started his life with animal instinct and impulse but his ultimate goal is to attain divinity. At his highest he is a half-god and that is not the end of his journey. He still marches forward and upward (towards his final possibility) till he becomes a whole-god. But the pity is that he is not fully aware of this inner urge nor of his destiny. He remains ignorant of it and therefore, has done nothing for its development and consequently the Society also remains incompetent to get hold of this truth. He does not know that he is a transitional being, that his greatness is not in what he is but in what he makes possible and that he is a mental being whose mentality works here involved, obscured and degraded in physical brain. He believes that mind is the highest force in man, but he does not know that mind in man is ignorant, clouded and struggling power. He feels that it is not possible for him to remain satisfied with what he gains, achieves and possesses; but knows not what is that thing which if obtained brings for him an everlasting contentment.

He does not know what is that knowledge which when acquired

leaves nothing to be known further ज्ञातव्यं नावशिष्यते. Yet he is after that. Therefore, it is absolutely his business to definitely know what he aspires for. And this he cannot do so long as he remains ignorant of his inner nature and unless his effort is exerted towards its development. How he will proceed may be summed up thus: —

Human mind, as we know, has threefold of working viz., thinking, feeling and willing. If man *feels* it to be absolutely necessary for him to rise above and move forward and not to remain in stagnancy — that is to say, in a vicious cycle of birth, growth, decay and death — then he must *think* deeply to find out means which leads him to that goal. Thereafter he applies his third force — his *will* — his firm determination which enables him to hew out the path himself. Only then his transcendence is possible; only then he realizes that there is within himself something which he has not yet been able to manifest but which he should and that is his real work. He is not here to remain bound up with physical and vital and mental nature but can free himself from that bondage and move beyond, — not of course to an unknown heaven, but a society which regards man as a soul incarnated for a divine fulfilment upon earth, that is to say a perfect Society.

A Society which tends to be perfect should never regard its unit — a man — as a physical, vital and mental being, because it realizes that these three terms of existence do not make the sum total of a complete manhood and that “they are means to an ulterior end and cannot be made for ever an end in themselves”.<sup>1</sup>

A Society is a collective soul and therefore, is not subject to be controlled by any institution and/or dogmatic creeds which are always mechanical in their character. A Society, like an individual, cannot live, grow and progress under such mechanism. When man tries to tie-up this dynamism of society or raise walls on its way to progress by introducing rigid laws and customs, he digs not only the grave of the society but also brings about his own death, because a society cannot live by machine and in a lifeless society man also cannot live. Therefore “the society exists by the individual for its mind and life

<sup>1</sup> *The Human Cycle.*

and body is constituted by the mind and life and body of its composing individuals."<sup>1</sup>

But from this fact it will not be wise to conclude that individual is a mere cell of the collective existence for he will not cease to exist if separated or expelled from the collectivity, for the collectivity, the community is not even the whole of humanity and it is not the world: the individual can exist and find himself elsewhere in humanity or by himself in the world. Therefore, individual is the key of the evolutionary progress, because it is the individual who possesses the competence of becoming conscious of the Reality — the truth of his existence. We are to determine, therefore, what is the true relation between an individual and a Society. Who is required to be perfected first? — the individual? or the Society?

The process of perfecting individual by individual effort and Society by the effort of a group of individuals — is a perpetual one and should be put to work simultaneously. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, — “The perfect Society will be that which most entirely favours the perfection of the individual, the perfection of the individual will be incomplete if it does not help towards the perfect state of the social aggregate to which he belongs”.<sup>2</sup>

The present age in which we live is called Rational Age — where Reason is the governor of life. In this age, as we have already mentioned — thinkers, historians and sociologists — none of them has been able to conceive that a new order of life is ahead, for that conception lies beyond the four walls of Reason. So, guided by this limited power of reason mankind has formed a rationalized society and believes that the rational intelligence has the competence to solve all sorts of problems that engross it. On the basis of this idea man has “created a system of civilisation, which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacities to utilise and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites”<sup>3</sup> This civilisation, it is found, “has also created many more problems than it can solve, has multiplied excessive needs and desires, the satisfaction of which it

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*.

<sup>2</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

<sup>3</sup> *The Life Divine*.

has not sufficient vital force to sustain, has developed a jungle of claims and artificial instincts in the midst of which life loses its way and has no longer any sight of its aim."<sup>1</sup>

This is because, — this civilisation — though at first sight has a very powerful attraction is founded upon the same wrong basis of treating life as machine. The mechanical order of the physical universe, with which reason has the competency to deal, does not hold good in the field of life, far less in that of mind. Life, is a mobile, progressive and evolving force, a force that is the increasing expression of an infinite soul in creatures. The conflict and struggle between antagonistic ideas that stand on the way to its progress can only be done away with satisfactorily if man realizes the truth of his existence. But here reason has no capability to help him. "The integral truth of things is truth not of the reason but of the spirit. Therefore the solution lies not in the reason but in the soul of man". It is a spiritual — an inner freedom that can alone create a perfect human order. It is a spiritual greater than the rational enlightenment that can alone illumine the vital nature of man and impose harmony on its self seekings, antagonisms and discords".<sup>2</sup>

Now it has become convincingly clear that the mind and the intellect are not the key power of our existence, because they have, up till this date, been able to trace out only a round of half truth and uncertainties and they lead mankind to revolve in that unsatisfying circle. It is imperative, therefore, for man as an individual to declare boldly that all he has yet developed, including the intellect of which he is so rightly and yet so vainly proud, are now no longer sufficient for him and that to uncase, discover, set free the greater light within shall be henceforward his pervading preoccupation. Because he has now come to understand that without an inner change it is not possible for man to cope with the gigantic development of his outer life and that a radical transformation of his inner nature is quite indispensable if he intends to survive.

Indeed, if humanity is to take the next step of evolution that is to say to enter into the subjective age of society leaving behind the age of reason, it needs such individuals. A change from mental and vital to the spiritual order of life must necessarily be brought

<sup>1 2</sup> *The Human Cycle.*

about in the individuals and a great number of individuals before it can lay any effective hold in the community.

“It is only through the individual mind that the community can arrive at a clear conception. All great changes find their first clear and effective power and their direct shaping force in the mind and spirit of an individual, or of a limited number of individuals. Therefore, there must be the individual and the individuals who are able to see, to develop, to recreate themselves and at the same time there must be a mass, a society, a communal mind to whom their idea may be communicated.”<sup>1</sup>

Of course objections to this solution may be raised. It may be questioned whether such a mass progress or conversion by individuals is at all possible, because in this solution machinery invented by Reason has got no role to play to perfect either the individual or the society; an inner change is needed in human nature, a change too difficult to be ever effected except by the few. Hence it puts off the consummation of a better human society to a far off date in the future evolution of the race.

Sri Aurobindo says, “This is not certain; but in any case, if this is not the solution, then there is no solution; if this is not the way then there is no way for the humankind.”<sup>2</sup>

It is, therefore, necessary that the common mind should remain prepared so that it can get hold of the light and truth as and when the same is communicated to it by the individuals. It is for the unpreparedness and unfitness of the society that the progress is delayed. If the common mind, that is to say, the society begins to admit the ideas proper to the higher order and the heart of man begins to be stirred by aspirations emerged from these ideas, “then” in the words of Sri Aurobindo, — “there is certainly a hope of some advance in the not distant future”<sup>3</sup>

It is expected that in the philosophy, arts, poetry, painting, sculpture, music, in the ideas of ethics, in the application of subjective principles by thinkers to social questions — the trend of the refulgent ideas will first make its appearance and if at that time the commu-

<sup>1</sup> *The Human Cycle*

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

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

nal mind is ready to take hold of such a turn of human thought then it will surely lead humanity to a profound revolution.

With this hope in our mind we are here to prepare ourselves as individuals to become pioneers to bring about that profound revolution. We are here to lead mankind to the next that is to say, to the last sector of social cycle. We are to move towards subjective age of society. The role which we will have to play thereafter for the spiritualisation of society is our future task. At present we are to establish the higher truth of life in our mundane existence because we firmly believe that without that truth the problems that have engrossed humanity, a partial indication of which has been laid down in the context, can never be radically solved. The change which will prepare the transition of human life from its present four dimensional limits into those larger and purer horizons, — is then our task to bring about.

SAMAR BASU

## A THOUGHT FOR ACTION\*

**A** YOGI or Sadhak does external work as a part of Sadhana. A Yogi meant for work externally for bringing spirituality in human society by uplifting an organisation or group of people, an area or state or country, will become aware of the forces working both for good and bad i.e. progressive evolutionary forces and stagnating influences. By his involvement one way or the other, by the service undertaken, he will come to know about the problems and psychology of people, circumstances prevailing, and forces working. He will also inwardly or externally become one with the heart of people and will whenever occasion arises arouse a responsive feeling.

The consciousness of such a being all the while prepares a plan of work for an effective solution of the problems of people and a plan of action. To such a person opportunity comes unexpectedly or when the circumstances are right. He has love and sympathy for (and from) one and all. For the people hardened by the circumstances or experiences, he knows that if a fitting solution is presented they will respond. The solution is never a tailor — made one for all groups or areas. It is different for different units and for different occasions.

Let us take an example. A big or medium size Industry by the inter-dependance of rank and file of personnel and their families develops a Consciousness of its own. The unit reflects the attitudes of top-man say the chairman. This happens because he has the power. The position he takes is to be accepted by all, at times though grudgingly. Gradually the psychology of the rank and file adjusts to the wave-length of the top-man or sometimes to the few top-men. Various employees of such groups are of different religious, social and culture back-ground, but in the external life they adopt the attitude adopted by the policies and psychology of the higher echelon. The Yogi or Sadhak who is the member of such a society i.e. working among the group will after getting familiar with the Aura or the formed Being of the Group will influence the group by his inner force and also in external action by his own example, and constructive

\* \* Paper submitted at the Seminar on National Reconstruction.

and effective suggestions and changes. There are always more enlightened or aspiring individuals everywhere and through their co-operation and collaboration he can slowly put the group in a progressively evolving path both materially and spiritually to bring harmony, Light and Presence.

How should such persons carry themselves out? The whole literature of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is there to take guidance from. In each area there is a Deity working supporting the evolution for perfection of the Area — the deity — a portion of all-mighty Mother India and The Mother. She works patiently, working out the big outlines of progress and/or smaller details SHE will act through such individual or individuals. To a person dedicated to the service of people She may reveal herself as a Conscious Being and Presence. In history we have such examples.

We in India had plenty of religious preaching and spiritual teachings throughout generations. At the present times where the base of life and getting the necessities of life is uncertain the people are not likely to respond to higher light by preaching only. It is necessary, now, simultaneously with such activities to present before the people a much more wider programme of social, cultural and material and educational development in which the people initially at least are prepared to put their faith and collaborate for a trial. This you will say is what the Government is doing. However, the Government attempts it by paid men and according to its own fancies and ideas. We have experienced that this has not given sufficient result, and the people have not reciprocated. However, our work envisages the use of all the Government facilities and schemes; but the central guidance remains with devoted Sadhaks and people. The Groups may be for practical working purposes organised in a sort of co-operatives or cultural groups. Indian population is concentrated in villages and mostly such Groups must be for a collection of villages.

The part to be played by an aspiring Sadhak is in short to work from his or her station of life for an integral development around, consciously.

I. N. PATEL

## REVIEWS

**Rigveda Vol. I** By Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati. Translated by Acharya Dharmadeva Vidya Martanda. Pub: Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Dayanand Bhavan, Ramalila Grounds, New Delhi 1. p. 1016. Price: Rs. 2.

IT is appropriate that the first commemorative volume of the Centenary of the foundation of the Arya Samaj should be on the *Rig-veda* with the commentary of Rishi Dayananda Saraswati who was the first seer in modern times to have discovered the right clue to the mystic wisdom embedded in the enigmatic verses of the Veda. The founder of Arya Samaj took his stand on the truth of the multi-significance of roots as enunciated by Rishi Yaska in his Nirukta and cut across the laboured, artificial and often grotesque interpretations woven by ritualists, naturalists, grammarians and intellectuals from the West. He not only translated the Vedas into Hindi but wrote his own commentary on the hymns justifying his interpretation, controverting others. Pandit Dharmadevji has commenced translating this commentary into English and we have before us the first volume which covers 61 Suktas of the first Mandala of the Rig Veda. The text and the prose order are given in Sanskrit, translations follow with notes. The commentary is rendered meticulously in English.

In his elaborate introduction, Panditji covers many topics of interest to the Vedic scholar. He throws interesting sidelights on the work of other scholars in the field. He cites evidence from the letters and notes of Max Müller and others of his school, to expose their real motive in undertaking studies in the Vedic literature: to prove (to their own satisfaction!) the primitive nature and insufficiency of the Vedic religion and thus open the doors to the invasion by Christianity as the saviour.

The translator has done full justice to the spirit of the approach of Dayananda Saraswati by adding his own explanatory notes and comments which are copious. He has underlined where Swamiji differs from Sayana (and his Western followers). He has noted the meanings worked out by modern commentators, notably Sri Kapali Sastriar in his commentary *Siddhanjana*, following the esoteric interpretation of

Sri Aurobindo. The whole work is encyclopaedic in nature and promises to form a comprehensive reference library by itself when completed.

To enhance the value of this work for the modern student, we would suggest that portions dealing with the interpretations by other scholars which are not acceptable to this approach, may be printed in smaller types as foot-notes. Thereby the flow of thought along the interpretation advocated is not interrupted.

The task undertaken by the saintly author is staggering. The thoroughness with which he proceeds in his labour of love is a model and an inspiration to all conscientious scholarship.

**Upanishad in the Eyes of Rabindranath Tagore** By *Anil Kumar Mukherji*, Pub: Author, 81/1B Jagadish Bose Rd. Calcutta 14. pp. 163. Price Rs. 12.50.

Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, father of Poet Tagore, had a deep feeling for the Upanishads and he took care to communicate something of it to his son, with the result that Rabindranath always breathed the spirit of the ancient seers when he read or explained passages from these ancient texts. The author of the present work has made a painstaking collection of all the passages from the Upanishads cited by the Poet in the course of his extensive writings and speeches and presented them in these pages along with the interpretative explanations given in his writings. In order to help the reader form an idea of the development of the mind of the Poet in this regard, he has arranged the explanations chronologically — as they appeared in his writings. They are over a hundred, from all the major Upanishads.

Touching the passage on Love in the Brihadaranyaka (2.4.5.) the Poet says: "It is said in one of the Upanishads: *It is not that thou lovest thy son because thou desirest him, but thou lovest thy son because thou desirest thine own soul.* The meaning of this is that whomsoever we love, in him we find our own soul in the highest sense. The final truth of our existence lies in this. Paramatma, the supreme soul, is in me, as well as in my son, and my joy in my son is the realisation of this truth."

In an autobiographical reference to the communication of the

*gayatri* to him when he was initiated at eleven, he writes: "This produced a sense of serene exaltation in me, the daily meditation upon the infinite being which unites in one stream of creation my mind and the outer world. Though today I find no difficulty in realizing this being as an infinite personality in whom the subject and object are perfectly reconciled, at that time the idea to me was vague. Therefore the current of feeling that it aroused in my mind was indefinite, like the circulation of air — an atmosphere which needed a definite world to complete itself and satisfy me."

A valuable addition to Tagoriana.

**ABC of Satya Dharma and its Philosophy** BY *Surendra Nath Sen Gupta*. Pub: N. G. Sen Gupta, 18/2 Selimpur Lane, Calcutta 31. Pp. 450, Price Rs.13/-

The main theme of this prolix writing is the Religion of Truth. God is Truth and His Truth is many-sided. It manifests itself in multiple truths answering to the myriad forms in the universe. This Supreme Truth has its own Law, its Dharma, into which humanity has to grow. The meaning of life is the development of consciousness from the animal stage, through the human stage, to the divine stage. Human will is part of the cosmic Will and it is truly free to the extent to which it attunes itself to the larger Will. Though the God of this religion has no form and shall not be worshipped in form, He has *gunas*, Qualities which we have to acquire. And to do so is *Guna Sadhana*. And there are many more such ideas that the author formulates in these pages. He quotes from modern scientists to support his arguments regarding the creation of the material world, the beginnings of life, the inevitability of rebirth etc.

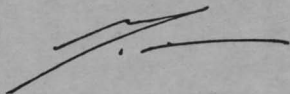
M. P. PANDIT



*The Advent*

To give to the Divine  
what one has in excess  
is not an offering..

One should give at  
least something out  
of what one needs.



# The ADVENT

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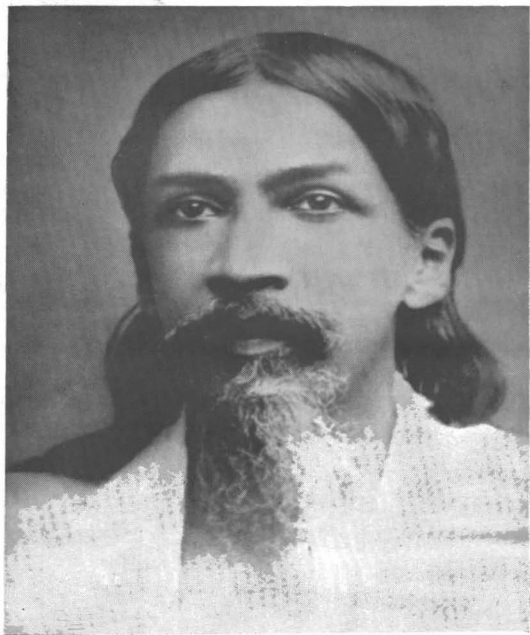
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The cup has often to be emptied  
before it is new-filled.

SRI AUROBINDO



OUR HOMAGE

Naffar Chandra Jute Mills Ltd., Calcutta



# 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

### SWEET MOTHER

(II)

**I**T seems I am to tell you something about the Mother — a bit of her life, a bit of her activities.

Well, the first part of her life, as you all know, the Mother passed in France, she was born in France, in Paris. So, naturally it was very often pointed out to her that she was French, she was European. To this however, she was always protesting, saying, "I am not European, I am not French." It would indeed sound somewhat strange to say that her family came in fact from Egypt. Her parents, her father and mother went to France just a year before she was born, a year only. And in Egypt, her family, it seems, belonged to a very ancient Egyptian family — perhaps even to a royal family of Egypt, the Pharaohs. So she is not European or French by blood although she was brought up as such. Strictly speaking, she would belong to the middle east, that is to say, the portion joining east of Europe and west of Asia. It

means the union of Europe and Asia, the two harmonised, and that reflects the character of Mother's life and its destiny.

As I said, she spent the first part of her life in France. But why France? There is a meaning in the choice. We know now the meaning, the fundamental meaning of her life, her mission and her work. She came to bring a new light. She wanted a new world, not the old world with its old nature and old culture, but a new world, a new human race. She brought with her the new light that is to re-create, re-shape man and the world. What was the relation between the new man and France? For the new light to come and manifest, you have first to receive it in your mind, that is to say, you must see and recognise that it is a new light and ask for it. And mind is the first or the topmost receptacle in man. You may remember here the opening line of *Dhammapada* containing the epitome of Buddha's teaching: "Manopubbamgama dhamma" — mind is the foremost of all human functions. Mind surpasses all, embraces all. Now, the light as it comes down and enters you, the first thing it touches is your head, that is, your mind: you see it, you are conscious of it. France represents today just this mind of humanity at its best, the flowering of its culture and civilisation. She was born there so that the highest mind of the human race may receive that light through her. She passed her life there in the company of the élite, the most cultured people of the time, scientists, artists, poets, all of the highest and most refined status. She was there so that through her contact and association she could bring into them the new light. With this end in view she started a society, rather a group, and the name given to it was "le cosmique". Cosmic means the whole world, in other words, what she was doing, what she was giving, was for the whole world, for all men, for East and West, for everybody. Also it means a cosmic or world-embracing consciousness. She was creating a new type of the mental world, through the highest mental development, to reach a still wider mind — beyond the individual egoistic mind. As I have said, the mind, the head, being the highest part in man it is easy for man to receive the new light through his head first of all. You may remember here, in this connection, Sri Aurobindo's poem "The Golden Light": how it comes from above and first enters into the head, the brain. It illumines your thoughts, develops your understanding,

widens it, deepens it and sharpens it. But understanding is not sufficient, you must love it, then only you begin to possess it. So the golden light enters your heart. Then it proceeds further down towards a more concrete and active expression, it enters into the vital region as we call it. Lastly the golden light enters your feet, that is, possesses your physical limbs, it becomes concrete materially and present, as though solidified, in your very body, it builds the body beautiful.

The Mother thus brings the golden light into the head of humanity, the top rung of its consciousness, and that work of initiation, Diksha, into the Life Divine she started in France. From France she went to Japan for the next stage of her work. To Japan she came, to the Far East. She spent five years, five long years in that country. Japan is the land of the Zen system of meditation, that is to say, a special way of entering into an inner consciousness, not a rational mental consciousness but a gaze inward into an occult and more sensitive region. The Japanese as a nation represent indeed a very sensitive vitality, an artistic vitality that seeks order and beauty in life, in the mode of living. For the golden light to manifest and have its play in the physical world and possess its body as it were, a vitality of this kind is necessary to acquire it and hold it. The Japanese wrestlers are well-known for their vital strength, self-controlled strength, usually they possess, almost all of them, you must have noticed, in pictures at least, a big tummy, and it is, they believe, the store-house of vital strength. This does not mean that I advise you to develop a big paunch, on the contrary. However, even in physical activities more than the mere physical strength, the vital strength is necessary. Yes, the Japanese have a vital, strong, controlled, ordered, sensitive. You may remember one or two Prayers of the Mother in her *Prières et Méditations*. She spoke of the cherry-blossom which is the emblem of the Japanese artistic sense, the feeling for beauty, a purified sense-perception : not a rough and crude and violent (lower) vital, but a fine, a pleasant intimate feeling and orderly happiness, that means the cherry blossom. Mother described also a vision of hers, a beautiful picture it was, a Japanese mother and her child : it was an image of the new child that was born in humanity. A new world is thus ushered in in the land of the cherry-blossom, the new vital world, for all the world.

The Mother is creative consciousness, wherever she happens to be, wherever she is called upon to be, her very presence moves for creation, creating a new world and a new dimension of being and consciousness, according to the need of time and place. And it is a whole world she creates, and her creation endures, for it is an added achievement in the evolution of the human being.

To this end, a neat strong orderly vital world of which we were speaking, itself acquires a competent body to support it and manifest it. The golden light must come into the feet. And that was the work she was doing here and it is for that that she created the Ashram. You all know the special emphasis she laid on physical education in order to prepare the body and senses to receive the golden light. She always said physical education gives you the basis for the new consciousness, the new light, you must have a strong body, a beautiful body, a body that endures : for the new light is powerful, it is not merely light, it is force, you must be able to bear it and carry out its commands.

Indeed, she came here in order to give a shape, a concrete and physical form, an earthly body to this Divine Light. Now the body beautiful is not by itself an end and fulfilment, in order to secure it you must secure a beautiful vital. Not only so, for a fulfilment in the body and in the vital one must possess a mind beautiful. The physical education that the Mother has arranged for us here is to prepare us for the body beautiful. And the school that she has organised is for the cultivation of the mind. The cultivation of the mind, however, means not only storing it with information on various kinds of subjects, the study of books : it means a purification and clearance of the mind, the mental stuff itself, an elevation of consciousness to seek and recognise the new light. I have said that you are to receive the new light through the head at first, but through the heart also, and dynamically through your vital energy. You must not only see and recognise it, but love it and be devoted to it. And here comes the Mother's central work, her special gift, her grace to us. When you love a thing, you love, as it is said, through the heart, but there is love and love and there is a heart within the heart. True love, the love that is divine is within this inner heart which is your soul, the real being or person in you, and the soul coming out, coming to the

front as we say, is the Mother's special Grace here, her gift to all of you, to each one of you here. She has given you your soul. I have often said that it is a special privilege here for each one of us, for each one of you to carry this being, this inner being, this intimate person, the Divine Child who is you. It is this that is building your divine personality, it is this that will give you in the end a mind beautiful, a vital beautiful, a body beautiful — all that you need, all that is perfect and flawless in your life here in this world. You may remember, many of you, the famous line of *Savitri* that you must have heard from the Mother's own lips :

Built is the golden tower, the Flame-child born.

She has built this tower of new life and the child is there : the Golden Child. This golden child is in every one of you. You must find it, recognise it, that is the goal of your life, the mission and fulfilment of all what you want to do and be on earth. Some of you surely must have felt in you the presence of this child. Some may have seen it even as the Divine Child in you. These things — visitations as they are called — usually come in dreams. At least I know of some who have seen them, who came and told me of their miraculous experience. It is a possibility for every one and if you happen to see it you must recognise it, hold it, grasp it with all love and affection. The Mother is still living and active among us, and her Presence is still there, even concretely, for each one of you has the Divine Child in you.

I end with a prayer, a prayer that I made to the Mother some-time ago, it is on behalf of the small children of our playgrounds:

“Sweet Mother, your playground children are angels. They have not become divine or godly, but they are angels, earthly angels. Keep them constantly under your eye, cradle them in your loving consciousness.”

That was the prayer I made on your behalf to the Mother, and I am sure Mother has responded “Yes”.

So...Aurevoir.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

## SPIRITUAL UNITY AND IDENTITY

SRI Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy has a unique place not only in the Vedantic Philosophy of India but in the whole philosophy of the world because it propounds the theory of spiritual unity and identity within and without the whole Universe. The spiritual is to be identified with the Divine, and so it is the Divine Unity or the Divine Identity which is to be recognised through the higher knowledge of the Universal Consciousness or the Consciousness-Force which is present within all beings and becomings. The knowledge of this Unity and Identity is of practical use to make our lives peaceful and delightful, because the Spirit or the Self whose presence is to be perceived by the spiritual insight in everything is itself Pure Bliss and its realisation brings all peace and delight into the mind of the person who perceives it. The Divine is also working in Nature as its essence and the Force behind its Laws, therefore the Law of the Divine Unity is to be realised in Nature and through that the basic identity is to be attained by the actual realisation of the Spirit which is identified with our own Self. All experiences of the ancient and the modern Sages of India lead us towards the realisation of the state where spiritual Unity and Identity are to be attained as the goal of human knowledge and the basic purpose of human life.

Sri Aurobindo also described the nature of the Divine Experiences in his works and although his whole language is symbolic it refers to some stages of his own realisation, and we can have through it enough inspiration for practical guidance in our own life. The Language of Unity and Identity is found also in the Upanishads and the Vedas which is presented in Sri Aurobindo's approach in a scientific way and has expressed the old spiritualism in modern thoughts.

The whole Universe is full of multiplicity and diversity. Our mind always perceives them directly and they both have become the laws of our perceptions in this world. But all external knowledge requires something behind it which must be capable of clarifying the idea of Divine Unity within the Universe, and that something, according to Sri Aurobindo, is higher knowledge or the supramental knowledge which can realise directly the presence of the Divine in each and every being and becoming of this whole Universe, so he says that in this

comprehensive knowledge there is no independent centre of existence, no individual separated ego such as we in ourselves, the whole of existence is to its self-awareness an equal extension, one in oneness, in multiplicity, one in all conditions and everywhere. Here the All and the One are the same existence; the individual being does not and cannot lose the consciousness of its identity with all beings and with the One Being; for that Identity is inherent in the supramental condition, part of supramental self evidence.<sup>1</sup> Whatever is seen or perceived in Time and Space is manifold and we experience plurality everywhere. All spatial and temporal extension is qualified with division and diversity. But in the Chandogya Upanishad, it is said that all is the Brahman(III.14.1), which shows that there is substantially Oneness behind the universe, and Sri Aurobindo further explains this concept by saying that this extension of the Being in Time and Space and this pervasion and indwelling is in intimate relation with the absolute Unity from which it has proceeded, with that absolute indivisible in which there is no centre or circumference but only the timeless and spaceless One. That high concentration of unity in the unextended Brahman must necessarily translate itself in the extension by this equal pervasive concentration, this indivisible comprehension of all things, this universal undistributed immanence, this Unity which no play of multiplicity can abrogate or diminish. "Brahman is in all things, all things are in Brahman, all things are Brahman"<sup>2</sup> is the triple formula of the comprehensive Supermind.

There are certain laws which seem to be contrary according to the mental and vital nature of man, and they cannot work simultaneously in them; even logically they seem to be contrary. For example the laws of freedom and the laws of order cannot work in mind and life at the same time. But the supermind-consciousness is so much higher that it can involve both laws simultaneously without any opposition, and this is because our superficial mind is not aware of the Unity or the Identity which is working behind the whole nature, while the supermind is aware of the basic principle or the fundamental law of the Universe and so there is no incompatibility in the presence of the laws or in the working of the laws which seem

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.129-130.

to be logically contrary to the ordinary reason. Therefore, Sri Aurobindo holds that the two principles of freedom and order which in mind and life are constantly representing themselves as contraries or incompatibles, are in the supermind consciousness native to each other and even fundamentally one. This is so because both are inseparable aspects of the inner spiritual truth and therefore their determinations are one, they are inherent in each other, for they arise from an identity and therefore in action coincide in a natural identity.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, the supramental consciousness is a gnostic consciousness or a truth-consciousness which is directly aware of the One Reality within the whole creation, because the latter is only a manifestation of the former in different forms and that is present everywhere as a universal Identity behind multitudinous aspects of the material or superficial as well as the spiritual or inner nature. All oppositions of the external nature are removed before the higher or the evolved consciousness of the supramental states of our Being, because according to Sri Aurobindo, the evolved gnostic being would have a consciousness of universal identity and a consequent or rather inherent Truth-knowledge, Truth-sight, Truth-feeling, Truth-will, Truth-sense and Truth-dynamis of action implicit in his identity with the One or spontaneously arising from his identity with the All.<sup>2</sup>

The basic truth behind this identity is the disappearance of the separative ego, because as long as the ego remains in the mind the latter cannot evolve towards the supramental consciousness. The same is the truth behind the spiritual unity, because ultimately there is only One Absolute Spirit which is to be recognised through the disappearance of the personal ego and through the direct realisation of the omnipresent Spirit as the whole truth behind the workings of the nature. When the individual ego disappears in the mind of man, his consciousness realises the unity and identity of the Spirit or the Being. Although it seems impossible to the mental consciousness and human reason, yet after the spiritual evolution of the supermind or the gnostic being it becomes the foremost law of that consciousness because in that state it is the Divine Knowledge which works through the Divine Force and because the will of the Divine and that of the gnos-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 890.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 891.

tic being become identical, the actions of that being become the same as that of the Divine, and this is the practical aspect of the spiritual Identity as well as Unity. Sri Aurobindo explains that in consequence of the Identity present everywhere, ruling everything and harmonising all diversities, there would be no play of a separate self-affirmation; the will of the self of the gnostic being would be one with the will of the Ishwara, it would not be a separative or contrary self-will. He further clarifies this fact by saying that the Divine knowledge and Force would act through the gnostic being with its full participation and the freedom of this spiritual being is found on the unity of its will with the will of the Eternal. All the mental standards would disappear because all necessity for them would cease; the higher authentic law of identity with the Divine Self and identity with all beings would have replaced them.<sup>1</sup>

The Universe itself is the play of the Divine Being and that One Being has become the Many in this play; even then it remains One in its multifarious manifestations in the form of infinite beings and becomings. That One is the Existence behind all existing things, that One is the Consciousness in all conscious beings and That is also the Inner Force working within the whole universe. If we wish to enjoy the play of the Divine, we must be aware of the divine Unity which can be perceived with the spiritual mind and we must have the knowledge of Identity which is present everywhere in the world. When this knowledge of self-identity reveals itself in the divinised mentality the person realises the Presence of the Spirit in the whole working of the nature and then all activities of the common man seem to be directed by the divine Laws of the Absolute Being which is One Conscious Substance and has created everything out of itself as a play of the Divine Force. Sri Aurobindo clarifies this mystery of the world and the Spirit in Savitri and refers to the Identity behind the Being and the becomings:

“As one forgetting he searches for himself ;  
 As if he had lost an inner light he seeks ;  
 His own self’s truth he seeks who is the Truth ;  
 He is the player who became the play,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* pp.892-893.

He is the thinker who became the thought ;  
 He is the many who was the silent One."<sup>1</sup>

In the *Essays on the Gita*, he also describes the truth of the Divine Existence which manifested itself as the existence of all beings and therefore is One Spirit identical with all spirits : "All existence is a manifestation of the divine existence and that which is within us is the spirit of the eternal Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

The Laws of spiritual unity and identity are not only metaphysical, but they are to be perceived and realised also in the practical aspects of life, and so they also give the ideal of spiritual morality. Unity is also to be attained between the individual Self and the Universal Self i.e., between the soul and God ; and the process or the method for attaining that unity may be called the Yoga in the terminology of practical philosophy. Sri Aurobindo has also defined the Yoga in terms of unity or union between the individual consciousness and the universal One and this unity is to be realised throughout the life, because there is a natural relation between life and Yoga and through this unity or Yoga we have to realise the identity not only between our Self and the Absolute Truth behind our existence, but also between the Self and the Universe on the one hand, and on the other between the Transcendent Being and the whole Nature. So, in Sri Aurobindo's words it is said that in the right view both of life and of Yoga all life is either consciously or subconsciously a Yoga. For we mean by this term, according to him, a methodised effort towards self-perfection by the expression of the potentialities latent in the being and a union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent Existence we see partially expressed in man and in the cosmos.<sup>3</sup> Self-identity with the Spirit makes us realise the universal or collective identity, because the process of Yoga can also be realised in the whole Nature which from time to time, manifests its powers in different forms through its natural evolution and thus Sri Aurobindo says that in each of these forms Nature acts both individually and collectively ;

<sup>1</sup> *Savitri*, Vol. I, p.61.

<sup>2</sup> *De luxe Edition*, p.410.

<sup>3</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p.2.

for the Eternal affirms Himself equally in the single form and in the group-existence. Man also may seek his own individual good from any or all of these spheres of activity or identify himself in them with the collectivity and live with it, or rising to a true perfection of this complex universe, harmonise the individual realisation with the collective aim.<sup>1</sup>

The actual realisation of spiritual unity and identity requires a complete transformation of our present life into a divine life. This divinity is not an Utopian concept but a practical aspect of all the persons who have realised the presence of the Divine in their lives. All the main Upanishads refer to the divine realisations of the various sages who had realised the identity between their own existence and the Existence behind the natural phenomena. 'I am the Brahman', 'That thou art', 'All is the Brahman' etc., these sentences of the Upanishads point out the divine experiences of the ancient sages who, again and again, emphasise the Oneness of the Divine Reality which is called by different names ; even the Rigveda says that the One Reality is described by various names by the sages (I.164.46), and the Gita also describes that the Brahman or Reality is One and is the Undivided in the divided things (XVIII.20). In all his main works, Sri Aurobindo has also emphasised this basic truth of our existence and of the existence of the whole Universe that there is Oneness in the many, Oneness in all diversities and divisions of the world, but our mind or reason cannot perceive that Oneness which is to be realised through the evolved mind or the spiritualised mind moving towards the supermind. This supramental consciousness has no difficulty to realise or perceive the Divine in this life and in this world. He is sure that there is a natural evolution in the whole of nature and the Spiritual Force is the basic Force within the Nature which is working to reveal the Spirit in every mind. Sri Aurobindo thinks and holds that that hour must come when the supramental race will appear on this earth and then spiritual unity will be realised directly. He says that the gnostic being will have the powers to perceive the Oneness of Divinity and he will know every mystery of the universe with the knowledge of self-identity. In his own words it is said that in a gnostic, a life of super-reason and supernature, a

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.

self-aware spiritual unity of being and a spiritual conscious community and interchange of nature would be the deep and ample root of understanding; this greater life would have evolved new and superior means and powers of uniting consciousness inwardly with consciousness; intimacy of consciousness communicating inwardly and directly with consciousness, thought with thought, vision with vision, sense with sense, life with life, body-awareness with body-awareness would be its natural basic instrumentation.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we see that the direct knowledge of the spiritual unity and identity which can transform our whole superficial mentality and life into divine and spiritual mentality and life is required as the practical aim of our being in this world; otherwise we cannot attain the real knowledge of our own Being or Self, and we cannot know what we are. Therefore, we should not only hope for the divine transformation through the knowledge of the spiritual unity and identity, but also make an effort to realise the Divine within this life by conscious evolution of our mentality towards the higher grades of our consciousness.

R. D. NIRAKARI

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, pp.922-923.

# THE VIZIERS OF BASSORA BY SRI AUROBINDO

AN ATTEMPT AT SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION  
AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

## III

(Contd.)

THE next scene shifts to Bagdad, to the gardens of the Caliph's palace. Bagdad is the seat in the subtle physical of Haroun Al Rasheed, who portrays the highest divine principle of existence, which is manifested in the earth atmosphere — this of course before the supramental manifestation. The gardens are the subtle physical earth, which though being the play-field of various sorts of forces, are still more beautiful than their stronger deformed gross physical counterpart.

Before we follow our hero and heroine further in their "adventure of consciousness" let us consider first that the play has now reached a strong degree of dramatic tension, which Sri Aurobindo counterbalances with the humorous incidents in the Caliph's gardens. In this interpretation, however, only the main-action can be dealt with, hence the Bagdad adventure has to be treated in short. To come back to the drama :

Anice and Nureddene enter the gardens without knowing who its owner is. They meet Sheikh Ibrahim, the gardener, who pretends to be the garden's landlord. He invites them, hypnotised by their beauty, to the Pavillion of Pleasure in the garden, where he entertains them with food and wine. Under the impact of the wine which depicts the *maya's* narcotization and the lulling into sleep of the consciousness, Sheikh Ibrahim reveals his true being throughout the following scenes to an ever wider extent. He is the very gem of hypocrisy and perversity and symbolizes the law of falsehood and delusion which is active in man. Nureddene, however, sees through Sheikh Ibrahim immediately, though he himself is not yet completely free from being attached to the "narcotica" of falsehood and illusion. Already

the first cup of wine is sufficient for Nureddene to lose, though for a short time only, the conscious relation with his psychic being. In the words of Anice-Aljalice:-

ANICE-ALJALICE

That is the trick he always serves me. After the first cup he dozes off and leaves me quite sad and lonely.<sup>1</sup>

Anice exults in her happiness that Nureddene is out of the reach of the ego and the *asura*. She lights the eighty candles of the Pavilion's great candelabrum and Nureddene lights the hundred lamps in the windows. The Soul and the spiritual personality kindle the flames of aspiration and the light of spirituality in the core of the *maya*, there-with attracting the Caliph's attention who then watches with his ministers, Mesrou and Jafaar from a tower.

Mesrou and Jafaar portray forces from the higher planes of the lower hemisphere. The immixture of falsehood with truth of which even the upper grades in the lower hemisphere are not free is increased in them still through their descent into the subtle physical as their conduct in the Bagdad scenes shows.

The beauty of Anice and Nureddene intensely appeals to Haroun, especially as the harmony of the form is further enriched by the ensnaring voice of the psyche who addresses the *bhakta* Nureddene:

ANICE-ALJALICE

*song*

King of my heart, wilt thou adore me,

Call me goddess, call me thine?

I too will bow myself before thee

As in a shrine.

Till we with mutual adoration

And holy earth-defeating passion

Do really grow divine.<sup>2</sup>

Haroun decides to make the acquaintance of Anice and Nureddene

<sup>1</sup> p. 136, bottom

<sup>2</sup> p. 147, middle

in a disguise as Nureddene is not yet ready for the open manifestation of the divine vice-regent. He gets from a fisherman, who is stealing fish from the river in the garden, his garment as well as his own fish. We see that the Divine vice-regent receives exactly at the right moment the help he needs. Haroun's disguise is a test for Nureddene's discrimination, sincerity, trust and surrender. The coat is of a fisherman; the head, however, is discernibly of a diviner origin for those eyes which are able to penetrate the outer appearance.

The stealing fisherman depicts the well-known Vedic image of the vital thieves which steal the spiritual force, progress and riches.

Haroun offers the fish in a loud voice before the Pavilion, and the psyche instantly demands that he be called in. Nureddene wants to buy the fish but Haroun gives them free. He asks Nureddene:

HAROUN AL RASHEED

Tell me thy story. Walk apart with me.

It may be I can help thee.

NUREDDENE

Leave us, I pray thee.

Thou, a poor fisherman!

HAROUN AL RASHEED

I vow I'll help thee.

NUREDDENE

Art thou the Caliph?

HAROUN AL RASHEED

If I were, by chance?<sup>1</sup>

Nureddene returns addressing Anice:

NUREDDENE

He is writing out a letter.

ANICE-ALJALICE

Surely, my lord,

This is no ordinary fisherman.

If 'twere the Caliph?<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 157, top

<sup>2</sup> p. 158, middle

A part of Nureddene, however, is still sceptical and unconvinced. Just then Haroun comes back. He asks Nureddene:

HAROUN AL RASHEED

Givest thou no gift at parting?

NUREDDENE

You're a fisher! (opens his purse)

HAROUN AL RASHEED

Nothing more valuable?

ANICE-ALJALICE

Wilt take this ring?

HAROUN AL RASHEED

No, give me what I ask.

NUREDDENE

Yes, by the prophet, because thou hast a face!

HAROUN AL RASHEED

Give me thy slavegirl.<sup>1</sup>

(There is a silence)

Thunderstruck Anice and Nureddene stare into the eyes of fate. Then Nureddene answers:

NUREDDENE

Another time

I would have slain thee. But now I feel 'tis God

Has snared my feet with dire calamities,

And have no courage.

HAROUN AL RASHEED

Dost thou give her to me?

NUREDDENE

Take her, if Heaven will let thee.<sup>2</sup>

Utter sacrifice is demanded from Nureddene who is now conscious that behind everything that happens to him is the Divine Will, to which he now surrenders even the most precious gem he possesses, — his psychic consciousness.

<sup>1</sup> p. 159, top

<sup>2</sup> p. 160, middle

He is about to leave for Bassora when Haroun gives him a letter for the Sultan Alzayni:

NUREDDENE

Man, what have I to do with thee or letters?

HAROUN AL RASHEED

Hear me, fair youth. Thy love is sacred to me

And will be safe as in her father's house.

Take thou this letter. Though I seem a fisherman,

I was the Caliph's friend and schoolfellow,

His cousin of Bassora's too, and it may help thee.

NUREDDENE

I know not who thou art, nor if this scrap

Of paper has the power thou babblest of,

And do not greatly care. Life without her

Is not to be thought of. Yet thou giv'st me something

I'd once have dared call hope. She will be safe?

HAROUN AL RASHEED

As my own child, or as the Caliph's<sup>1</sup>

After Nureddene has left the Caliph puts on once again his imperial robe and reveals himself openly to the psyche who still suffers the shock of the separation from her lover and adorer.

The Caliph now reforms Sheik Ibrahim. The transformation of the gardener will materialize in the transmutation of the division and falsehood in Nureddene as we shall see shortly.

#### IV

Meanwhile, in Bassora, the terrestrial human personality, a struggle between the lower vital and the *asura* is going on. Almuene is not willing to meet Fareed's full demand for money, that is power, but only half of it and even beats his son. Therefore the lower vital, Fareed, tries to poison the *asura*. He is however hindered by Ameena, the higher vital, which shows that she is still attached to hostile influences. Such an action between obscure vital forces is nothing

<sup>1</sup> p. 162, top

extraordinary, as egoism, viciousness and slavery to the lowest instincts is their inner self-law, *swadharna*, which evidently does not change in the relationships between themselves.

Here is Almuene's reaction to Fareeds attempt to kill him, which speaks for itself:

ALMUENE

What is this horrible surprise,  
 Beneath whose shock I stagger? Is my term  
 Exhausted? But I would have done as much,  
 Had I been struck. It is his gallant spirit,  
 His lusty blood that will not bear a blow.  
 I must appease him. If my own blood should end me!  
 He shall have money, all that he can ask.<sup>1</sup>

*Exit*

As soon as he returns to Bassora, Nureddene gives his letter to the king who orders Almuene to read it out to him. The letter runs: Alzayni shall at once hand over the kingship to the new monarch Nuredene and then come to Bagdad to answer for his offences. This if he hopes to live. Almuene quickly tears away the Caliph's signature and seal and claims that the letter is a forgery. Ajebe who is present, insists on the letter having been whole and accuses his uncle of having torn it. Alzayni gives orders to imprison Ajebe. Murad warns Alzayni of the consequences if the letter is not forged. Therefore Alzayni decides to wait 10 days. If by then all will be well, Nureddene will be beheaded.

Meanwhile he is given to the custody of Almuene. Here are Almuene's plans:

ALMUENE

I have ten days  
 To torture him, though Caliph's turn his friend.  
 Murad is gone,  
 And I hold Doonya in my grip, Ameena too  
 Who, I have news, lives secret with her niece.

<sup>1</sup> p. 169, end

But where's the girl? God keeps her for me, I doubt not,  
 A last sweet morsel. It will please Fareed.  
 But there's Haroun! Why should he live at all,  
 When there are swords and poisons?<sup>1</sup>

The time has come for the show-down between the spiritual parts of Nureddene's personality and the hostile forces and the ego. A life-and-death struggle begins now between the higher and lower human nature. The symbol of the decapitation makes evident the intention of the adverse powers to eradicate the spiritual personality completely, a doom from which only the descent of a higher spiritual force can save Nureddene, as the power to destroy the evil of the lower principles in man is of a suprahuman level. Our hero has to prove whether he is capable of clinging to the Truth even when the psychic being is veiled and he is left alone face to face with the bad will, the hostility and the impurity of his lower nature.

As Sri Aurobindo has explained, the process of purification necessitates the retirement of the psychic consciousness so that all suppressed and detained parts of the nature can be lured out of their secret recesses in the subconscious and brought before the light for transfiguration. Shock and ordeal are breaking the last resistances in Nureddene, who is now ready to bear the intensity of the hero's high-way to God. He is well aware that it is the result of his past *karma* that he is suffering from; his soliloquy shows this:

#### NUREDDENE

We sin our pleasant sins and then refrain  
 And think that God's deceived. He waits His time  
 And when we walk the clean and polished road  
 He trips us with the mire our shoes yet keep,  
 The pleasant mud we walked before. All ill  
 I will bear patiently. Oh, better here  
 Than in that world! Who comes? Khatoon, my aunt!<sup>2</sup>

Khatoon, the central vital, visits Nureddene who is imprisoned in the

<sup>1</sup> p. 176, bottom

<sup>2</sup> p. 177, top

home of the asuric force itself. We witness the last purification, the cleansing of the subconscious. It is this darkest and lowest region of the human consciousness, the dark cave of the Vedas, which is the chief resistance to a radical and deeply rooted spiritual change in Nureddene. The descent of the consciousness into the subconscious is very aptly symbolised here through the imprisonment in the home of the hostile forces.

Khatoon promises to shield him from Almuene. She orders to mend his treatment, attempting to alleviate the dark impact of the subconscious.

At this moment Almuene with his slaves rushes into the cell of the prisoner. He is in a furious rage and wants to torture Nureddene fiercely because Fareed, the lower vital, was murdered when he tried to rob Doonya. The impurity of the lower vital in its attempt to lay hands on the spiritual intuition was hindered by the vital mind, Mymoona, brought to its fall by the psychic power, Balkis, and then abolished by Murad, the purified vitality. The collaboration of the integrated personalities in Nureddene rids him of the impact of the lower nature therewith causing the last decisive liberation of his central vital from the attachment to the lower impulsions. Khatoon now keeps Almuene away from Nureddene:

KHATOON

What is his fault?

Touch him and I acquaint the King. Vizier,

Thou slew'st Fareed

....

Him you have murdered, Vizier,

Both soul and body. I will go and pray

For vengeance on thee for my slaughtered child.

*Exit*

ALMUENE

She has balked my fury. No, I'll wait for thee.

Thou shalt hear first what I have done with Doonya

And thy soft mother's body. Murad! Murad!

Thou hast no son! Would God thou hadst a son!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 179, bottom

Doonya, however, together with Balkis, Mymoona and Nureddene's mother Ameena, flee taking secret shelter in Bassora, and so are safe from the wrath of the *asura*. Nureddene's nature has become too pure to fall into the hands of the powers of darkness. Thus, the only remaining strong point of the asuric influence in Nureddene is the ego Alzayni who too, is sitting on a tumbling throne.

Ameena the emotional being is consoled by the intuition who reads to her a secret letter from Murad, who has been imprisoned, for his deed that is restrained by the ego.

He writes that the Caliph is supposed to come and the king will release him for a need of his own and that the returning Ibn Sawy is only two day's journey from Bassora.

We see that the activity of the higher mind which made place for the growth of the spiritual consciousness will still play its role in the culmination of the drama. For the final liberation Nureddene needs the full power of the soul, as well as all the forces of his nature which have become new instruments of the inner consciousness.

Meanwhile we witness in Bagdad the final call of the soul causing the fire-winged descent that alone can rescue Nureddene:

The psyche urges the divine vice-regent to send his forces to save Nureddene whom she feels to be in great danger as seven days have passed without a message from him. She threatens, if Haroun does not answer her demand, to appeal to the One, the Supreme, of whom Al Rasheed is only an inferior formation, and to accuse him before his Divine Origin. The Flame-Word springs forth from the soul and blazes up in the heart of the great Caliph who then at once sends his troops together with Anice in a forced march to Bassora, he himself following in their wake.

Ten days have passed and Nureddene is to be beheaded publicly. The conquest of the fear of death, which the spiritual seeker aware of his eternity knows to be only a passage to other planes of existence — *Transit, non perit* — is a necessity, if Nureddene wants to pluck the apples of immortality. As Sri Aurobindo has written: "What is this then thou callest death? Can God die? O thou who fearest death, it is life that has come to thee sporting with a death-head and wearing a mask of terror".

After he has received a last drink of strength from the in between

released Murad, Alzayni is about to give the sign for execution. Just then arrives Ibn Sawy, the higher mind and so a little delay is won. The Sultan narrates scornfully what is about to happen to his son as well as the fate of his niece and wife whom he has ordered to be punished severely and then to be sold as slaves into the worst *milieu*. Ibn Sawy is commanded by Alzayni to stay and watch the death of his son.

The night is darkest before dawn and Nureddene's trials are the greatest. By the fire of its ordeals is the spiritual personality prepared for the new birth, which awaits Nureddene when he has abandoned everything, has achieved perfect equality, complete self-surrender and an absolute faith in the Divine. That Nureddene has this trust in the Divine Justice and fully accepts the Will of the Lord is shown in this dialogue between him and Ibn Sawy:

NUREDDENE

Justice of God, thou spar'st me nothing. Father! Father!

IBN SAWY

Bow to the will of God, my son; if thou  
Must perish on a false and hateful charge,  
A crime in thee impossible, believe  
It is His Justice still.

NUREDDENE

I well believe it.<sup>1</sup>

Alzayni gives now the fatal order to strike. All of a sudden the sound of trumpets is heard. Despite Almuene's protest, Alzayni demands the executioner to pause. A soldier rides in and announces the arrival of Jaafar, the Caliph's Vizier with strong troops and, behind him of the Caliph himself.

In vain Sultan Alzayni seeks support from Murad, who reveals that Ibn Sawy's wife and Doonya are well off and not as Alzayni was made to believe, punished and sold as slaves. Almuene still presses the Sultan to kill Nureddene, but Jaafar is already there. He hands Alzayni and Almuene to the guards and addresses Nureddene as king of Bassora. Till the last second and even after it the *asura* still tries desperately to abolish the spiritual being. The hour of God, how-

<sup>1</sup> p. 190-191

ever, has come and the spiritual personality is not only saved from the axe of the ego and the *asura* but exalted from what seemed a gloomy doom to the monarchship in the human personality. Jaafar brings not only kingship but also...

JAAFAR

I've brought a slave-girl for you, Nureddene,  
The Caliph's gift.

NUREDDENE

I'll take her, if I like her.  
Life is my own again and all I love.  
Great are thy mercies, O Omnipotent!

Even the attachment to the supreme desire for union with the soul has been given up and replaced by consecration to the Divine Will as Nureddene's detached and grateful answer shows.

The last scene takes place in the palace of Bassora where a new King and Queen take over the government of the human being with the spiritualized and integrated parts of the nature being pure instruments and subject to the soul and spiritual consciousness.

In the following lines it is clearly indicated that Nureddene's nature is now integrated around the spiritual consciousness.

IBN SAWY

Let happiness flow out in smiles. Our griefs  
Are ended and we cluster round our King.<sup>1</sup>

A third, culminating reversal of consciousness has taken place: Nureddene passes beyond the relation with the psychic being to the union and oneness with his soul, and so becomes the immortal king, the effective divine deputy in man's personality. Into the inner kingdom descends now the highest universal principle, the divine vice-regent manifesting himself without disguise and delivering Nureddene from the already immobilised ego and asuric impact. This is the Caliph's sentence:

<sup>1</sup> p. 197, bottom

HAROUN AL RASHEED

'Tis well.

Sultan Alzayni, not within my realm  
 Shall Kings like thee bear rule. Great though thy crimes,  
 I will not honour thee with imitation,  
 To slay unheard. Thou shalt have judgment, King,  
 But for the Vizier here, his crimes are open  
 And loudly they proclaim themselves.<sup>1</sup>

HAROUN AL RASHEED

...Young King

Of Bassora, to thee I leave thy enemy.

ALMUENE

I did according to my blood and nurture,  
 Do thou as much.

NUREDDENE

He has beguiled me, Caliph.

I cannot now pronounce his doom.

HAROUN AL RASHEED

Then I will.

Death at this moment! And his house and fortune  
 Are to thy father due. Take him and slay.<sup>2</sup>

No trace of hate and revengefulness are in Nureddene, who acts according to his *dharma* of love and compassion as Almuene acted according to his demonic nature. With Haroun's sentence the asuric influence in Nureddene and the ego gives way to the true and eternal individuality.

A final description of the power of the soul is given in these words of the Caliph:

HAROUN AL RASHEED

All then is well. Anice, you're satisfied?  
 I never was so scared in all my life  
 As when you rose against me.

<sup>1</sup> p. 198, middle

<sup>2</sup> p. 199, top

## ANICE-ALJALICE

Pardon me!

The drama ends and a new adventure of consciousness begins with a last blessing and an admonition of the divine vice-regent before he leaves for another battle for the advancement of the terrestrial evolution.

ALEXANDER BRODT

## SRI AUROBINDO'S CONTRIBUTION TO VEDANTA

**I**N as much as the Upanishads claim their knowledge to be one after the acquisition of which nothing remains to be known, they should be regarded as the last word on Vedanta, representing the *alpha* and *omega* of the Vedanta philosophy. And eventually a certain orthodox circle has been led to the same belief. But today if we visualize the whole phenomenon in its historical perspective, we cannot but assertively say that the Vedanta is incomplete without the writings of Sankara, Bhaskara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallabha and the rest, although it is no less true that these Masters spoke on the Vedanta only by way of commenting either on the Upanishads or on the Brahma-Sutra which latter is only a virtual concordance of the Upanishads. Moreover, they have commented on the original Vedanta in such an independent manner that they have evolved out of the same texts such divergent systems as non-dualism, dualism and the like, and yet each of them is regarded to be as close to the original Vedanta as the rest.

This bears out the fact that the Upanishads contain within themselves not only the central truth about the reality as realized by their seers in a particular age, but also enough potentiality for future developments. And this is in consonance with the nature of the reality which is not only an eternal stasis but also a continuous dynamis. If the Static aspect of the reality can be visualized centrally at any moment in the history of the world, the dynamic can be realized properly only as it really manifests itself through the process of the world. As such, the Vedantic system needs to be formulated and reformulated with the passage of time and the significance of a particular formulation or reformulation would depend on how far its author has incorporated, interpreted, and assimilated new facts into his system and yet has remained sincere to the original.

From both these viewpoints, Sri Aurobindo's contribution to the Vedanta is immense. In the first place, he has not only remained close to the original source of the Vedanta but has also brought unprecedented enlargement to its area. In fact, the word "Vedanta" has been taken to mean not only "the concluding portion of the Veda" but also equal-

ly "the secret of the Veda". And as a matter of principle all the Vedantic teachers have accepted this proposition and accordingly have accorded to the Veda as such, and by no means only the Upanishads, the supreme status of verbal testimony not only in regard to Karma but also with respect to *Jñāna*. For, on occasions each one of them has quoted also from the Samhitas. Moreover, even the Upanishads themselves time and again trace the origin of their doctrines to the Samhitas. One of the Upanishads, i.e. the *Isa* is even a part and parcel of the Samhita. But, in spite of all these facts, the Vedantic teachers have practically drawn upon only the Upanishads in formulating their respective doctrines. If they refer to the Samhitas at all, it is only by way of seeking their casual support for their previously formed views. Thus, it was Sri Aurobindo who for the first time in the history of the Vedanta studied the Samhitas thoroughly from the Vedantic viewpoint, and tried to disengage their real import from within a thick cluster of symbols. He brought to bear on his Vedic studies not only his rare linguistic acumen, and profound philosophical, psychological and historical knowledge but also his entire wealth of yogic experience, which all combined led him to find entirely novel ideas in the Vedas and to reformulate them into fresh concepts which are worthy of being recognized as significant contributions to the Vedantic system.

Thus, for instance, his concept of the Supermind, which he develops on the basis of the Rigvedic *Rita-Cit* and in the light of his own supramental yogic experiences, is something new to Vedanta and at the same time profoundly conducive to elimination of certain anomalies in the system. In view of the appalling divergence in the nature of Brahman and the world, the appearance of the latter out of the former was sought to be explained previously either through the inexplicable agency of *Maya* as by Shankara, or through the doctrine of Karma as by Ramanuja, or in terms of certain analogies as by Bhaskara, or in certain devotional terms as by Vallabha and Chaitanya. But these principles of explanation, being either inexplicable in themselves or extremely limited in their range, are productive of certain untoward doctrines in the system. In fact, the principle responsible for the manifestation of the world ought to be as realistic and broad as the world itself. As regards *Maya*, it implies logical discontinuity

and hence it is unrealistic. As regards Karma, it signifies mechanical constriction which alone the world is not. Hence the necessity of a comprehensive principle which might be existential as well as ideal, logical as well as supra-logical, creative as well as mechanical. Sri Aurobindo's Supermind is of the same nature. It is existential consciousness and supreme intelligence operating somewhere as mechanical constriction and elsewhere as creative autonomy. Owing to the admittance of such a principle, the world ceases on the one hand to be an inexplicable nonsense and on the other to be an endless repetition from action to result and from result to re-appearance.

The process of involution and evolution is another significant contribution of Sri Aurobindo's. Notwithstanding numerous references to such a process in the Samhitas and also the Upanishads, none of the previous Vedantic teachers has taken up this idea seriously. For instance, in the famous Nasadiya Hymn of the Rigveda, it is said that in the beginning there was One who breathed by Itself without air whatsoever, and who later on concealed Itself in an all-enveloping darkness and under the impulsion of a certain desire made Itself manifest in the form of the cosmic principle and, indeed, the cosmos. Similarly in the Hymn to Purusha, it is maintained that the primordial Purusha while remaining unmanifest by three-fourths of Himself, manifests Himself by one-fourth and gradually diversifies Himself in the form of the variety of worldly principles and beings. Now, while Shankara twists these accounts to suit his Mayavada and Ramanuja likewise reads in them merely alternation of creation and dissolution of the world, Sri Aurobindo develops out of them his doctrine of involution and evolution. Owing to this doctrine, several of the lacunae inherent in the Vedanta of other schools are quite satisfactorily removed. For instance, lacking in any such logically understandable scheme of emergence of the world out of Brahman, Shankara takes recourse to Mayavada which amounts only to confession of one's complete ignorance of the process by which this creative transformation takes place. But under the same circumstances, Bhaskara, although struggling hard to bring home the fact of the oneness of the unity of Brahman and the diversity of the world analogically through the similes of water and ripples, or the sun and its rays, fails to work it out into a philosophically viable principle. Analogy can only

confirm a principle in its validity but can by no means serve as its substitute. As regards Ramanuja, he no doubt realistically shows how the one Brahman manifests Itself into a multitude of Jivas on the one hand and the Nature on the other, but attributes all this cosmic activity solely to the actions of individual Jivas done during the previous creation. This explanation, to be sure, duly recognises the claims of the individual as a motive force behind the cosmic creation, but at the same time utterly fails to do the same in regard to the Universal. If the universal is no less real than the individual as a constituent of the world, it too must share at least equally in the primordial motivation. As such, the world must have, besides the individual, a definite universal motive and accordingly a unitary process of manifestation. These logical necessities are adequately fulfilled by the doctrine of involution and evolution. These processes are said to be motivated by Sachchidananda's desire to have the delight of becoming. Now evolution, of course, has come to be an undeniable fact about the Universe, and involution is a pre-requisite of evolution. This constitutes a firm ground in favour of the validity of Sri Aurobindo's doctrine. Understood in terms of this doctrine, the world, getting rid of its illusory, sheer individualistic and fortuitous character, comes out as realistic, universalistic and a necessary product of the nature of the reality.

Harmonisation of stasis and dynamis in the transcendent, is another important contribution of Sri Aurobindo's. Needless to say that all the schools of Vedanta ascribe the ultimate causality of the world to Brahman while at the same time regard the latter as absolutely above all transformations. Thus they inadvertently land themselves into the well-known paradox of Vandhya-Putra and Shasha-Shringa. They eventually try to get rid of this paradox by different ingenious but flimsy devices. Sankara's doctrine of Maya is one of such devices. Needless to say that in spite of all its ingeniousness, this doctrine is really a self-defeating proposition. Ramanuja, on the other hand, tries to face this paradox with his doctrine of Visheshya-Visheshana-Bhava. Brahman, according to him, creates the world and yet remains absolutely unaffected by this act of It quite in the same way as the substantive, even though qualified by the adjective, remains always the same. It is evident that this solution of Ramanuja's is based

on absolute separateness of substance and attribute. But howsoever valid this viewpoint might have been at the time of Ramanuja, now after Locke's critique of the relationship between substance and quality, it need not be said that Ramanuja's solution has lost its ground in toto. In this age of Relativity, it would be out and out illogical to talk of absolute separateness of substance and quality or, indeed, of substantive and adjective. Today their mutual relationship is pretty well understandable in terms of potentiality and actuality or stasis and dynamis. If this conclusion has any bearing on the understanding of the relationship between Brahman and the world, the former ought to be regarded as stasis potent of dynamis while the dynamis is as real as latter as dynamis tending towards stasis. From this viewpoint stasis is inherent in the latter. Admittance of this fact, while, on the one hand, saves the world of unreality, it, on the other, redeems one of the necessity of indulging in the dichotomy of substance and quality or substantive and adjective.

Divinization of the world is another significant concept introduced by Sri Aurobindo into Vedanta. This concept is based on the tendency of mind, life and matter towards higher and higher developments. It is an indubious fact how matter has given rise to life and how life has evolved mind out of it. The mind in its turn is gradually imbibing certain supramental notions, ideas and traits. This goes to suggest that in course of time, mind, life and matter, the three fundamental principles of the world, would gradually get transformed by imbibing more and more of the divine light. This is not to suggest that with the divinization of the world these principles would disappear from here. What is rather meant is only that these would get rid of their present limitations and hostilities and would be harmonised at a higher level to make a better world. The idea of divinization too is not anything extraneous to the original Vedanta. In the Samhitas the seers are much more eager to invoke the divinity into their minds, lives, parts of the body, the Veda, and to various earthly objects than to go themselves to heaven. In the light of the above tendency of matter, life and mind, Sri Aurobindo has evolved out of these scattered references of the Veda his systematic doctrine of divinization. As against him, Shankara takes the world to be an evil which, instead of being cultivated and developed, is to be left behind as soon as possible. The world, in his view, being the effect of Maya, is inex-

plicable in its purpose. If it is somehow regarded as the play of God, it is so only from the viewpoint of Isvara which is not his ultimate reality. Neither is it so from the viewpoint of the individual and the universal. Thus, at its best, it is only an epiphenomenon holding good only in a transitional phase of the reality, and by no means an inherent characteristic of it. As regards Ramanuja, he no doubt takes much care of the individuals with respect to the primary motivation behind the creation of the world. According to him, the world is there owing to the Karmas of the individuals and it is also a means of their liberation. But although so much interested in the liberation of the individuals, seldom does he think of the liberation of the world as a whole. In his view, while the Chit-Tattwa is eternal, unchanging and real, the Acit-Tattwa is fleeting and unreal. On account of this contrariety, the Acit, although constituting the body of God, is to be shunned off by the Chit. Devotion to God is suggested as the way to getting rid of the clutches of Acit. Ramanuja, indeed, had taken a bold step in characterising the world, consisting of Chit and Achit, as the body of God. But by bringing in the dichotomy of Chit and Achit he failed to provide for the nourishment of the major part of even God's body. Taking a step ahead of Ramanuja, Vallabha, no doubt, has thought of the divinization of the Acit also in a certain sense. Clusters of trees at the banks of the Yamuna, and the mount Govardhana etc. are regarded by him as more blissful than heaven itself, since they provided the occasion for the blissful sports of Krishna. He takes even the bodies and sense-organs of devotees as liberated from Maya and her influence and thus to be divinized. But apart from these few selected spots, he could not extend his idea of divinization to the rest of the world. Thus, apart from the emotionally charged spiritual state of a few devotees, with respect to certain things associated with Krishna, the rest of the world remained as mundane as ever. But, taking a long stride ahead of these Vedantins, Sri Aurobindo has shown the possibility of complete and real transformation of the world as a whole.

The concept of integral knowledge is another remarkable contribution of Sri Aurobindo. In spite of the fact that the Isha Upanishad showed the necessity of both the higher and the lower knowledge, the later Vedantins admitted only the higher knowledge to the fold of their system and rejected the lower as something spurious. Accordingly they recognized immediate spiritual experience of Brahman alone as real

knowledge. This attitude of theirs resulted on the one hand in a gradual decline of all other disciplines of knowledge in India and on the other in a stagnation of the Vedantic thought itself. Coming under such circumstances, Sri Aurobindo, on the one hand, through his deep yogic experiences brought greater depth to the immediate spiritual knowledge of Vedanta, and, on the other, by recognizing physical science, psychology, history, sociology etc. as avenues of real knowledge, he enlarged the scope of the Vedantic knowledge. Thus knowledge of each and every sort has a due place in his integral view-point. Philosophy virtually being a concordance of all sorts of knowledge of the reality as reflected in the human consciousness, a particular system of it ought to go on assimilating into it all sorts of knowledge discovered with the march of time. The modern period being most remarkable in extending the frontiers of knowledge, the modern Vedantin has before him the most challenging task of incorporating all this knowledge in his system. And, in fact, Vedanta has been most fortunate in getting such talents as Vivekananda, Ramatirtha, Sivananda among many more, who enriched it profoundly with the knowledge discovered by such sciences as physics, mathematics and physiology and the rest. But in spite of their best effort to bring this entire knowledge to the Vedantic fold, they could make it touch only the outer fringe of the system. They could not put it into the central doctrines of Vedanta. Hence their works are, as it were, scientific commentaries on Vedanta. But by bringing the scientific as also other sorts of knowledge together with the Vedantic knowledge in his deep yogic contemplations, Sri Aurobindo has enabled his Vedantic knowledge to absorb the best of science and reorientate itself in the light of that knowledge. As such, his work may be regarded as a scientific Bhasya on Vedanta.

SATYA PRAKASH SINGH

## SAVITRI: A STUDY IN DEPTH

### THE KINGDOM AND GODHEADS OF THE GREATER LIFE

#### Book Two: Canto 6

Into an ineffectual world he came  
A purposeless region of arrested birth  
Where being from non-being fled and dared  
To live but had no strength long to abide.

A SWAPATHY journeys as one in a dark tunnel hoping for light and fresh air and reaches an ineffectual world of arrested birth where the will to come into being suffers a suspended animation; there life is a rudderless boat seeking for direction; it is like a soul that has lost its sense of identity, seeking for itself; presently the cheery prospect of a dubious hope, replacing the former bleak denial, greets him; he sees the possibilities for the birth of that 'which never yet could be' by the grace of the Unknown; he finds an earnestness of the Power to manifest itself on the earth though it finds itself stalled by the inadequacy and the limitation of the earth to hold it; to the limited understanding of man, everything appears the work of chance following a strange arithmetic; forms in multitude come into existence but their exact number cannot be determined; starting from a zero or a nothing where potentially everything is, it becomes more than one for the Infinite who is one multiplies himself infinitely.

Life labours in a strange mythic atmosphere full of charm, in worlds of its own imagination that are sought to be translated but cannot be, into reality; the charm of conception may suffer extinction in the execution; therefore life glimmers on the verge of creation, in a hesitant fashion without taking any positive step; it is filled with a high-souled passion, a surge of movement towards ambitious possibilities, but there is nothing definite achieved beyond the effort to represent the divine splendour in dim tokens. But the fineries and the delicacies of the divine splendour by their fugitive nature defy the attempt at capture except by a dream-brush, in a vague mystic manner on a canvas of an equally uncertain background; but there

is however the morning twilight promising the day of fulfilment of all expectation; the several facets, the attributes of the divine feel a strange fascination for their opposites; they feel an inducement of a sense of sport to disguise themselves in their contraries; these children of God come eager and hungry for the joy of finite life; knowledge disfigures itself as ignorance and perfection as imperfection; these ethereal creatures keep flapping their wings in the void dreading to share the fate of perishable things; there is a desire of the higher truths to embody themselves, but the tenacity, the persistence of will is lacking there; on the other hand there is the susceptibility of subjection to the lower pulls of nature and the fading out of the higher urges; consequently they have to obey laws of the inconscience and life is ever in search of an object to embody itself in perfection.

Meanwhile man deceives himself by the substitution of images in the place of live acts, symbols that more conceal than reveal and dreams and visions that have yet to become are already taken for realities; therefore the souls that seek for birth here cannot accomplish their purpose and the spirits already entrapped have to wander through all time in an attempt to find that which sustains them or the source whence they come; this is a realm where nothing has a solid base; 'all was unsafe, miraculous and half-true, all ran like hopes'

Aswaphy at last comes upon a realm where there is a throb of wider life; here around the point centre of the ego-self, life organises the world; the spirit lodged within in the crypt, though alive and athirst for the wider self, is stifled and made to feel content with the fragments that are taken for the whole.

The struggle of the spirit, to come out of the clamp of matter, leads to the emergence of life; the response of both matter and life to the call of the spirit is sheer delight expressed in all its exuberance and magnificent variety; though the joy may be a momentary affair, it for the nonce wears the air of immortality; the highest truth also visits the vaults of the inner self in a moment of the withdrawal of the senses from their outer play; in that tense moment of gathering in all the dispersed faculties and directing them to a focus on the inner being, in this tranced meditation, the whole truth may be grasped and in-

toned from the depths of the soul in a terse formula, a Mantra; not only that, he comes to share also a part of the divinity; a few of His attributes descend on him such as the all-embracing universal love, and intuitive knowledge.

The Will an aspect of the divine is a hierophant at the shrine of the bodiless secrecy; senses by its impulsion are pushed beyond their scope and made to feel an indefinable light and joy; this makes the passion more intense for the Bliss of which they have a faint taste in the peace experienced by a vague consciousness of the Reality and it is in that stage that it becomes possible to have a true knowledge of the world as the symbol of the Unseen, a figure of the Transcendent by the heart fertilising the mind with a luminous vision. The noble impulses, the higher urges, flow to mankind from these kingdoms of greater life; they fix the pattern, the mould of our lives and give a direction to our fate; some of the great upsurges, the stir and the awakening at certain periods in human history, have their origin there; they are the waves flowing on from the profound of the higher realms, touching us or lifting us above ourselves; everything we are striving for and even that which is not known to us, but unfolds itself some day, are mapped out there; the Infinite takes form as finite, the Timeless incarnates himself in time and this concealment of the higher in the lower, must lead to the other possibility; the descent must be followed by ascent; and this is obvious from the unceasing effort on the part of the life-energy in spite of the transience of the human life to move from the known to the unknown, to mount up the steps of the ladder to an unseen end. This is an unrolling, a step by step manifestation, an unending procession leading to ampler from lower forms of life, a caravan of countless forms of thought and force.

The Life-force that is part of, but now separated from the Eternal, in a nostalgic manner enshrines in several forms, the many joys once enjoyed but now lost on account of her severance from the Supreme; she makes of her creative activity of compelling substance into shape, a pre-occupation to heal the wound of separation; she makes a bid to launch into the Eternal's wide sublimities by discarding the prison of littleness created by her in favour of her more evolved and improved products; she achieves the impossible task

of capturing eternity in the meshes of time, of filling the small packet of flesh and feeling that man is with a sense of the Infinite; she is the creatrix, the Shakti, the mobile force of and supported by, the immobile static being; she feels his clasp, his embrace in all her creative activity and perceives him a formless indweller in all the forms of her creation. She is driven on by an indefinable Will to labour unceasingly without any aim; the impossible task self-assigned is to cast the spirit into the physical form, to lend a speech and thought to the Ineffable and to reveal what has ever remained unmanifested; she seems to be nearing the accomplishment of the impossible task, by developing in course of time skill in spite of her following an irrational plan for she has an inventive magic of devising new bodies for imaging the un-imaginable; but she herself does not know what she has been doing because everything is wrought behind a baffling mask which gives the impression of an illusion because of transience to which everything is subject; yet behind the mask the truth of creation lies hidden.

The Life-force is hedged in by the limitations of having to carry on the work of an infinite nature with inadequate instruments in a wide field where consciousness is in a shapeless condition of a thin spray; but even so, by her strokes which are little and which effectuate finite mind and sense, she reveals truths eternal in the field of time; there is a wide gulf between her aspiration and achievement; not minding it, she labours on with a passion and a pain, a rapture and a pang which are her glory and her curse; her attempted achievements, though they are failures judged by her ideals, endure as long as the world lasts; they are a challenge to our reason; they remain indescribable beauties; they display the will to live, a daring, a delirium of delight; she throws out the many-imaged forms of the Self; they are all fictions because the underlying Reality is the One which is indivisible and of which they are the aspects; therefore what is created by her is a dream-world, a fantasy, touched by the fleeing hem of the truth; the facts in the spiritual field are not so well-defined and rigid as they are in physical sciences; in this field there is a call for the dream mind and the soul; without realising them, life imagines certain truths not experienced and hence they are like the painted and not the real birds of paradise put in a cage for display.

'These formulae of science may be pragmatically correct and infallible, they may govern the practical how of nature's processes, but they do not disclose the intrinsic how or why; rather they have the air of the formulae of a cosmic magician, precise, irresistible, automatically successful in its field, but their rationale is fundamentally unintelligible.'<sup>1</sup>

'The attempt to deny or stifle a truth because it is yet obscure in its outward workings and too often represented by obscurantist superstition, or a crude faith, is itself a kind of superstition.'<sup>2</sup>

The greater life is enamoured of the unseen and always seeks what is beyond her reach; she enters a zone of silence where she feels a sense of deliverance, meets with divine grace and pursues the ideals of beauty, good and truth; but the subliminal region is a precarious region leading either to the good or the evil.

'The subconscious has this life of all and the superconscience has it, but under conditions which necessitate our motion upwards.... For not towards the Godhead concealed in the Inconscient ocean where darkness is wrapped in darkness but towards the Godhead seated in the sea of eternal light, in the highest ether of our being, is the original impetus which has carried upwards the evolving soul to the type of our humanity.'<sup>3</sup>

Here she hungers for perfection in word, shape and thought; though a child of heaven, the greater life has not realised its real nature; it may sometimes experience a touch of its higher nature but cannot hold it long; her constant struggle is to seek and retain; she struggles on every plane to create this greatness, be it hell or heaven; everywhere she has a mighty part in the determination of every fate; life thus marches on breaking down all obstacles in her path; the creative urge brings being where there has been non-being before; though apparently dumb, she is highly vocal, though inert, dynamic; though in her fallen state she is a slave of death and ignorance, she is actuated by memories of her original state and aspires to immortality and knowledge of the Unknowable; that explains why there are the unseen covert vibrations of life even in the nescience of an atom or a piece of clod. Inconscience is a gigantic pause, a cosmic swoon; she

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

hides her true nature of immortality by accepting vestures of transience; she toils on in an indefatigable manner under most disheartening conditions; she is denied the guidance of the supreme Light that has sent her forth; she works in the darkness of ignorance and has for her handmaids hardship and calamity; strangely enough these very obstacles of pain and disaster, nourish her growth and stature and she creates by passing through the throes of birth; with the distinct memory of her origin, she draws on the skill bestowed on her by the Wonder-Worker, the creative spirit at the time of her birth; this enables her to create life out of a cosmic swoon, a world out of a void.

She agrees to sleep in matter and receives the punishment of subjection to the laws of Inconscience for her rebel waking; still, even in those conditions she displays superb skill, the enginery of her magic craft by fashioning god-like marvels out of mud; she plants the life urge in the smallest cell of the body, enables even the tissues to think and enriches the fleshy body with a miraculous love, a soul and a voice; she is like a sorcerer with the wand and summons into existence beings and shapes and scenes innumerable; she works these marvels in the vast fields of Time and Space; the suns and the planets light up her road; she gratifies the haunting memory of her immortality by her creations which lend a sense of realisation as long as they last but prove unreal as a dream when they share the fate of transience. Life is motivated in all her activity to incarnate her divine lover in every form she creates; she uses his moods as her moulds to cast His form; each of her acts is a line of her communion with her immanent and unseen guest; she reflects in the beauty of her creation the radiance of the divine smile; ashamed of her rich cosmic poverty, she tries to win the fidelity of her Lord with her small gifts; she woos him to abide in the forms created by her million-impulsed force for she is filled with a dread that he may escape from her arms into the formless being and the ineffable peace; because of the ignorance of the eternal tie of togetherness between nature and spirit, Purusha and Prakriti, a contrary picture of severance, a division, is presented by life; she therefore shuts up God as a prisoner in her works of creation; in the initial stages, the spirit is left slumbering as a forgotten guest in a crypt but life in the evolved and higher stage develops an awareness of the purpose of the movement and through the mind catches a glimpse of the deity; the greater

life builds a rainbow bridge between the void of nescience below and the luminous silence above. Thus life continues the tireless search till the veil is lifted and the darkness of the night of ignorance is displaced by the light of knowledge. Life owes her dynamism to a knowledge and omnipotence behind the veil and therefore she actualises what strikes us as impossibles or wonders while keeping up an impression that she is mute and ignorant; the human mind feels perplexed for any explanation makes her work the more inexplicable; the mystery is not confined to the life world only but extends even to the trivial formation of the physical universe, the difference however being that in life proper, the mystery is no longer disguised but more obvious; though truth is not veiled here, life 'flees from her own sight' since she is unable to grasp it; the seed of the idea develops the form and determines its growth; in contrast to ours, in this world, thought and feeling produce results without having to follow the tardy process of speech and action; but here too the truth is missed, the infinite eludes grasp, it is a copy of and not the truth itself; what Aswapathy finds is an awareness of truth in the light of which is made its faint representation in the form of an image, called God; in spite of this disability, they are tenants of larger air and freer space since they live within, not by the body or the outward things; their external life is a feeble representation, a minor script of the larger life lived within; here life is the sovereign lord and all other forces such as body and mind are her obedient retinue in sharp contrast to the material world where mind and body dominate the life. The sweep of the cosmic force in this plane is such that the distinction between the individual and the universal is lost and all serve as the instruments of her might; those who come under the influence of the higher vital have glimpses of the sunlight and aspire to reach the crown; their creative urge is like a seed working itself out; their self-expansion is the flood embracing the whole environment; but they are content with the self-enlargement achieved and make of the small greatness won a cabin; they play the role of a king sharing the joys and the griefs of their milieu; the denizens of the higher vital are the kinsmen of the earthly race since their borders are close to the earth and are also a spring-board to the higher planes; they represent the complete type of what we strive for and it is from this wider world that greater movements are initiated

on the earth; beings of this region are not subject to the lower pulls like us but obey the laws of their inner nature and follow the unseen leader in the heart; they are not inert or indifferent spectators but choose and swear loyalty to a side when battle is joined between the true and the false; aspiration is the prevailing order of the region, even ignorance is not made an exception and it too is filled with a thirst for knowledge. They are swayed by high ideals; aspire to a monarchy of the sun of perfection; are worshippers of truth which they desire to embody in their daily acts; their thoughts are inspired and lives shaped by truth; in this plane they can subscribe to the truth of darkness with the same ardour; a fighter by nature, the vital being may turn out a warrior for the shining cause of good or may be in the pay of sin; good and evil hold equal tenure on this plane and fight on equal terms; the duality of good and evil, knowledge and ignorance is a common phenomenon; each has its own temple, cult and followers. Sin assumes the world's throne or dons the papal robe propagating her gospel; she perverts the mind and makes power corrupt and slay the soul. Virtue may become statuesque and rigid; not moving with times it may become rigid and outdated, retaining the shell with the spirit gone; sacerdotalism may take the place of the soul at wisdom's altar; or there may be a titan passion goading to a proud unrest leading to a revolutionary or radical reformation. People of the higher vital may catch the All-Beautiful's ray and may project it in their life or creations of art; they see common figures robed in the marvel of beauty and unlock the charm, greatness and joy sleeping in things; they are the architects of their own fate and by their actions can win a throne in heaven or a pit in hell; thus the dual energy can either pull them to good or drag to evil.

'Man's being, nature, circumstances of life are the result of his inner and outer activities, not something fortuitous and in-explorable; he is what he has made himself; the past man was the father of the man that now is, the present man is the father of the man that will be. Each being reaps what he sows; from what he does he profits, for what he does he suffers. This is the law and chain of Karma of Action, of the work of Nature-Energy.<sup>1</sup>

The balance of importance obtaining in the higher vital is far diffe-

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p.718.

rent from that of our world; there the inner, the subtle is of greater value than the outer, the gross; the soul determines the matter and is not determined, as it appears to us in the material world, by matter; even as a word reveals thought, or an act the passion of a soul behind, so the design of this world points to the presence of an interior might; the mind enjoys a freedom from the limitations that characterise it in our world; it can directly receive the impacts of the world without their being channelled through the senses and can enjoy the same thrills; the subliminal forces that lie in ambush and mount a surprise attack on us in the world, carry on their activity here in an undisguised fashion. The concealed on earth, is here revealed, the overt on the earth retains here a covert part indicative of the presence of the Unknown; the Unseen in this realm is actually felt by its jostling the visible shapes; they share each others thoughts and emotions directly without the need of any intermediaries of instrumentation; there is a perfect communion of hearts and minds, a melting of each in each as the flames of two houses on fire; the invisible subtle ground of mind becomes a field of strife or union respectively for the counterparts of hatred and love; the sensations evoked by different emotions sweep over the subtle body like a wave making it quiver with agitation; there is such an accord between them that distance is of no consequence and they can share the joys and sorrows of each other, speak to each other though seas yawn between them; the higher vital has such a throb of loving interchange that consciousness replies to consciousness even when afar.

‘But in the subliminal inner consciousness it is possible to become directly aware of the thoughts and feelings around us, to feel their impact, to see their movements; to read a mind and heart becomes less difficult, a less uncertain venture. There is a constant mental, vital, subtle-physical interchange going on between all who meet or live together, of which they are themselves unaware except in so far as its impacts or interpenetrations touch them as sensible results of speech and action and outer contact: for the most part it is subtly and invisibly that this interchange takes place. But when we grow conscious in these subliminal parts, that brings consciousness also of all this interaction’.<sup>1</sup> In spite of all this interchange, there is still a separateness

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 481.

of soul from soul and an invisible wall of silence is built excluding identity and protecting the individuality of the souls; there is a lot yet to be known; the mystery of Inconscience is disclosed to them but that of Super-conscience, the origin, the source of all, has yet to be unriddled; the *Nama Rupa* have come out of the *Anirvachaniya*, the unchanging, the immutable and the indivisible; they are not the Reality, though they are the self-determinations of the Supreme;

‘When we get into our subliminal consciousness, we find it extending itself to be commensurate with its world; when we get into our superconscient Self, we find that the world is only its manifestation and that all in it is the One, all in it is our self. We see that there is one indivisible Matter of which our body is a knot, one indivisible Life of which our life is an eddy, one indivisible Mind of which our mind is a receiving and recording, forming or translating or transmitting station, one indivisible Spirit of which our soul and individual being are a portion or a manifestation. It is the ego-sense which clinches the division and in which the ignorance we superficially are finds its power to maintain the strong though always permeable walls it has created to be its own prison. Ego is the most formidable of the knots which keep us tied to the ignorance.’<sup>1</sup>

The beginning and the end are enshrouded in a mystery and it is only the middle that is disclosed to us and all the manifestations may be taken for a vocabulary aiming at expression of an inexpressible truth or they are the several digits making up an unfinished total, a sum that cannot be arrived at; the human mind is a dribble, a sprinkle, a little formation of the Supermind; its knowledge naturally is confined and limited to the capacity or the measure of the mind and Truth certainly is beyond its range; below them is a darkness and above a luminous void and placed in between, their explanations mystify more than clarify, complicate more than solve the riddle. Aswapathy while moving in this plane of ambiguity, strangely enough feels that he has become a riddle to himself; everything including himself has become symbolic of something which is to be explored and therefore in quest of the spirit, he follows the trail of concealed delight left by the creative energy in every form. He notes that life as it draws away from the earthly lines, more and more towards the Unknown and

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p.503.

that mind gains a self-deliverance from petty cares and anxieties and is wafted to a greater scene of wider perspectives of marvel and that it is filled with a passion for discovery.

Though the higher vital is conscious of the purpose of reaching the far-off Light, it is bogged in the preoccupations of the immediate and the pressing and in the sequel its movement is stripped of all the meaning that the infinite is working through her; however armed with a magical potency, she rushes forward to the target without clear-cut ideas, fancying that what is aimed at is remote while it is at hand. Aswapathy in the sands of the vast desert of Time, tracks the beginnings of her Titan words, studies the clues to understand the difficult theorems of Nature, scans the tangled weird design of her workings; he is like one striving to know from a key-book the writings of a magician Text; he engages on a charade, a game of speculation to arrive at Nature's intentions by catching at some hints thrown by her; sometimes he sees in her outlines denials only, and negations; he struggles to catch the drift of sequence in her dance-fantasia through the trail left by her fugitive feet; but he is lost in the labyrinth, the intricate maze and the complex corners of her designs and dreams; he chases each guess thinking that it may lead to a solution, but is thrown back weary and baffled like a man armed with key-words without knowledge of the key to unravel the meaning. The crystal of salt that tries to measure the depth of the sea melts and the human eye that seeks to see the reality is stricken blind with its sun-dazzle; the mind suffers the same disability and it has to proceed on the background of the darkness of a trance aided by the glimmer of stars. Supported by the lightning flashes of intuition, Aswapathy reads the chapters of the metaphysical romance of Nature; he observes that the soul makes earnest efforts to retrace back to its home of Reality and if in the attempt she creates transitory forms to capture the Lord, the forms cannot be dismissed as fictions since they are formed and sustained by the truth of the spirit.

Aswapathy sees through the magnificent wrappings of nature's disguise and probes into the significance of these misleading deceptive appearances; it is the form, its rich brocades and broideries that are transparent to the eye but not the thought ensouling the form; the subtle splendour of these draperies and masquerades are symbols

mutely expressive of the truth that sustains their recondite magnificence.

‘ Truth is relative to us because our knowledge is surrounded by ignorance.... Our conclusions are partial, speculative or constructed, our statement of them has the nature of representations or figures, word-images of thought perceptions that are themselves images, not embodiments of Truth itself, not directly real or authentic. These figures or representations are imperfect and opaque and carry with them their shadow of nescience or error;... it is not Truth bodied pure and nude, but a draped figure, — often it is only the drapery that is visible. But this character does not apply to truth perceived by a direct action of consciousness or to the truth of knowledge by identity.<sup>1</sup>

Ideas that have hitherto suffered dismissal as unmeaning are now revealed as truths in sudden scintillations; the unmanifest, the undisclosed seeks to express itself in mystical words or wizard occult lines; he sees the flights of aspiration braving all dangers and enjoying the thrill of adventure; he discovers in the bylanes of the higher vital those who are after the sparkling golden apples of bliss and flowers of dream and muse; from the same stock of the tree of life is seen a crimson flower symbolic of the supreme sacrifice born out of love for the benefit of man and his spiritual advancement; the sacrifice of the Supreme in staging a fall, grows and repeats itself in man. There is a perpetual repetition in the operations of the creative force; human thoughts are like the dragon flies that fly on the mysterious stream of life; they are content to be on the surface and hear the murmur of the flowing stream without venturing to trace its stream; but it curiously enough stages a flight when its desires are about to bear fruit out of a feeling that accomplishment may mean an end to its existence.

What remain with us merely as feelings and thoughts, assume in the realm of the higher vital an immaterial shape; they are self-framed and are not shaped as on earth with material borrowed from the universe; they are symbols vibrant with occult power. Aswapathy develops a spirit of identity with his new environment; stands on meditating peaks of silence and from those heights, life and being are seen as religious offerings to Reality; they appear merging into infinity;

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 533.

their thoughts are like messengers of eagles of significance winging their way to the infinite. He develops a complete identity with nature so that he can learn the secret of her soul; he is lost in admiration of her pomp, the marvels of her delicate craft; he endures the sorceries of her might; experiences the touch of her hands that knead fate in their violent grasp; he also sees the debit side, its despair and disappointment in her vain seekings for the eternal from which she is separated and her clutching at every fleeting truth as Reality and the agony of her heart in not capturing the one Beloved; in short he sees in her a goddess exiled from her native home and building imitations of that heaven; she is the Sphinx with an upward look to the hidden sun. The immanent and the passive presence of the spirit not only offers the key of life but also the strength to the form; though it does not leave any external mark of its presence, it makes itself felt in the pathos of unreachd aspiration. Life stares at him offering an incomplete story in her fragmentary creations with the design of her meaning withheld; it is therefore not in the half-finished designs that we can read the truth, for life is an expression of what is concealed within or lies beyond and it is in the higher vital that a revealing hint is available making the activities on earth meaningful. Aswapathy moves through a mist of subtle tints and finds a divinity chained by limitations and laws of mortality and moving in a half-asleep and involuntary fashion, he is drawn by the melodies and the flutings of the Unknown towards the profounds of the Infinite and the Beyond; he pushes along in the forest crowded by her symbols; by arrow leaps of intuition or flashes of inspiration, he follows the tangled paths of Time marked by the road-lights of the broad salient ideas in the movement of life and decorated by the pageantries of creation which speak a language of hieroglyphs revelatory of the spirit. It looks to Aswapathy a game of touch and go where life though drawn close, escapes from spirit's embrace and spirit attracted by the witchcraft of her moods is lost in her touches of grief and pain, failing to win her; the spirit enjoys the evanescent paradise of her smiles dreaming that he can eventually establish his mastery over life; the Spirit reads the script of life whose manifestations are translations of God's pure original text, but the pregnant word that brought into being the world is hidden in the script itself; the chant of life has lost its divine note

in the wefts of creation it has ushered in and the spirit becomes a captive in the house of sound, a prisoner in the world listening to the myriad-toned play of life or wallows in the ravishments of mind and sense. But life in spite of all set-backs sustained and sufferings endured, persists in her heavenward climbing with a yearning towards peaks for ever unreachd; she draws a guidance for herself, reads a lesson for herself from the diamond sparkles of her experience and the gem-like tears shed in the past; she is impelled along by a deathless longing, a lost remembrance of her original bliss which makes her dissatisfied with the brief snatches of felicity here; this memory is carefully preserved even when she is astray and vagrant in the caverns of desire, hunting for pleasure from perishable things. The surface cadences of creations are governed and guided by the fateful hand touching the cosmic chords and the key of the inner music is hidden in the intrusion and the tremolo of the surface troubled strain. A joy to love and labour though all fails is due to a passionate memory that haunts with ecstasy's fire, recalling with poignancy her former immortal state; that's why, even in defeat we feel a survival of strength; even in despair we see gleams of victory and in death a passage of new worlds. Life gives us the images of both: the heavenly raptures and earth's transient yearnings, but the only thing that life is not able to articulate is the God-given hymn, the truth of which she is divested in the course of her separation from her spiritual home; she raises an evanescent music in the place of the eternal word, the blissful voice and the tremolo of the voices produced by the Life-Force makes her oblivious of the purpose and the theme intended by the enclosed spirit; however occasionally the splendour and beauty, the strength and the sweetness of the Eternal is captured in passing fragments of beauty and delight.

The gap between the aim and the accomplishment, the aspiration and the achievement, renders life a pauper and makes her magical skill thin and bare; though she has grown oblivious of the mission she is charged with and works with a partial vision and in limited horizon, there is in her depths a memory, but the individual soul is lost in the maze of attractions of life and loses sight of God; life has started with the laudable intention of suffusing the whole cosmos, of charging it with the glory of God and the divine consciousness.

It has been her motive to establish a harmony, a marriage between the being and the becoming, the status and the dynamis of the creative bliss, to reveal the Eternal in Time, to make the joys of the spirit no less vivid than those of the flesh and to bring about a parity between life and the Supreme, the earth and heaven by bridging the abyss between nescience and superconscience; in answer to her summons the several aspects and powers of the Supreme master gather to her aid, but in the general tumult the single voice of the Reality is lost. Looking beyond she sees the gods in heaven and below sees a demi-god emerging from the ape, in man; in the higher vital, the peaks of perfection so far touched are men who may be half-gods or half-titans, spreading light or darkness, good or evil; though she has left behind the petty state of man, the greater life still wavers between earth and heaven and does not line up definitely on the side of godhead; the paradox characterising greater life is that joy escapes her grasp or embrace in spite of the best efforts put forth to clasp it; she is not able to track joy to its source; it exists not in things but within; she carries within and immanent the real idea of the divine supermind and its self-determinations but because of her unawareness she runs astray, idles away her time, thinks her purpose small, and allows her faculties and powers to suffer the drag of nescience: and therefore in spite of the impressive grandeur of her activities she lacks the wisdom to set free the spirit and she suffers a haunting sense of limit to her masteries.

'All nature is simply, then, the Seer-Will, the knowledge force of the conscious being at work to evolve in force and form all the inevitable truth of the Idea into which it has originally thrown itself.<sup>1</sup>

'As the power of burning light is not different from the substance of the fire, so the power of the idea is not different from the substance of the Being which works itself out in the idea and its development.<sup>2</sup> The face of the higher vital has no longer any charm for Aswapathy who seeks for a deeper joy and he looks for an escape from her daedal lines, but finds none; life is eternally on the move; there is no repose even in death since it is a passage to other lives; the acts done here form the texture of other lives and our souls are dragged on as with a

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p.120

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.121

hidden leash from birth to birth and world to world; it is thus pushed on by a hidden impulsion, by a secret Will and can know no rest till it reaches its liberation in the Infinite; life, a time manifestation is the magic stream that reaches no sea; it is for ever bound by its works and the liberation from the prison or the fetters of its activities lies in reaching the Infinite; there is a greater unquiet in the higher vital because of an unceasing stir of activity; there is a constant effort to escape from the monotone of life and its wearisome repetitiveness and for this purpose a curious decoration is attempted on the surface to cheat the eye into a belief that there is something novel, but a closer look reveals that it is the old familiar ancient theme refurbished. Life is the movement in a circle creating the illusory impression of progress or forward march, but always coming back to the starting point; every scheme begins with a bang and ends in a whimper; it proclaims itself as a final scheme, a panacea for all Time's ills, but all its inadequacies are revealed in the actual working out and they have to be made good by ancillary and sequel plans; each proclaims his idea as the evangel and is assured of the immortality of its rule; and it is ushered in as Truth's last epitome, Time's golden best, but always it is the same house given a new look, with nothing significant achieved. Half-attempts are piled on lost-attempts and every time fragments are taken for the eternal whole; in this background, the fret and the fever of existence, its hectic activity seems a play without a denouement or idea or purpose, a labour, a toil without purpose; her eyes are fixed on the crown of Reality beyond the reach of her present fallen state. Life is actuated by memories of her one-time greatness and glory; she is haunted by that sense of a larger happier air and her struggle is to regain that glowing paradise; therefore she is awake to a vague mystery's appeal and Reality though not seen, is felt to be truer than the world's face of present truth; we are moved by a spirit we must still become. The imperfect creature man, hopes to recover the lost kingdom of his soul; he yearns for the bliss as the obscure moth for the blazing light and toils hard for the realisation of the aim. Man lifts his worshipping eyes towards heaven for the golden hand of divine grace to effect his deliverance; he rekindles his faith and administers confidence to himself by singing a refrain that the epiphany is at hand, perfection shall be ushered in

by a divine descent, bliss shall replace the present aches of the world and light the darkness; but meanwhile there is no escape from the cycle of births and deaths for one aim fulfilled leads to a greater aim and self-discovery has to be sought by passing through the process of death followed by a fresh birth. It may be asked if there can be rest even after arriving at Truth and in answer it has to be said that when that supreme state is reached, action and repose become convertible synonymous terms; each wave is a movement of peace and bliss; rest is a status, a condition, brimful of all potentialities; action is not more than a minor ripple in the vasts of the infinite calm; and birth itself is a gesture of the Timeless made in time. A sun of transfiguration shall shine on all that is baffling and self-contradictory hitherto; darkness shall reveal the light hidden in its depths; the self-cancelling and the self-afflicting paradox shall reveal itself as a purposeful formulation for furthering the divine plan; and the imbroglio may resolve itself to be a miracle of Ananda; and life itself shall attain a divine transfiguration, cast off its present limitations and attain its true identity. Meanwhile life has to endure a termless labour of mechanical repetitive acts; each page in the volume of its activities bears in its margin the question-mark whether the effort put in is worth the labour; the fabric of life is made up of the warp and the woof of affirmation and negation; the ever-circling wheel of birth and death moves on without cessation; what we see is a vast futility without issue or release from activity; life is ever caught up in a vortex of activity from which there is no escape since death is a passage to another life; it has thus an unenviable and nugatory immortality leading no-whither; world creation itself appears an egregious blunder of the gods or else the Eternal seems an unfeeling, an indifferent spectator of the struggles and the woes of humanity and as butterflies are to children, we may be to the Supreme.

Y. S. R. CHANDRAN

## THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

(4)

### AGNI: THE SEER-WILL

**I**t was no accident that Sri Aurobindo chose to translate all the Agni hymns in the Rigveda. For Agni was to the Vedic worshipper, both the layman and the priest and Rishi, "the one God who envelops with himself the grandeurs of all the Gods."<sup>1</sup> In the external ritual he it is who carries the oblations to the other gods or brings them down to share in the gifts of man; without him there is no worship. In the esoteric view, "the gods have established Agni as the immortal in mortals, the divine power in man, the energy of fulfilment through which they do their work in him."<sup>2</sup> He is the one god who is always awake in man; in his day and his night, in the darkened state of his physical consciousness or in his states of illumination Agni burns bright and works always to destroy his impurities. "Alone of the brilliant Gods, he burns bright and has full vision in the darkness of Night no less than in the splendours of day. The other gods are *uṣarbudhaḥ*, wakers with the Dawn."<sup>3</sup>

What precisely are his nature and special functions? There is a Divine Will at work in the universe, in every atom of being, in the stone and clod as in man and the gods. This Will is the Power instinct with Knowledge that guides, overtly or incognito, the upward march of Evolution. Agni represents that Will to the Vedic seer and mystic. "This Will that is knowledge is the initiator of the upward effort of the mortal towards Immortality."<sup>4</sup> He the Godhead immanent in all things and beings, "seated within them, a secret deity, initiates movement and action.... All puissance of action, strength in the being, beauty of form, splendour of light and knowledge, glory and greatness are the manifestation of Agni."<sup>5</sup> Sri Aurobindo describes Agni as the "greatest, most powerful, most brilliant and most impersonal of all the cosmic Deities."<sup>6</sup> and he does the most work for ascending humanity.

The Vedic sacrifice is in its essence man's "labour and aspiration Godwards."<sup>7</sup> Agni has been described as the priest of the sacrifice,

*purohita*, *ṛtvik*, who guards it and leads it to success. This is the work that Agni does for the aspirant who invokes him. He is the Divine Will in man who pushes him to right action and knowledge, guards him constantly against the inner enemies and the outer who seek to divert him into devious paths, leads him out of his physical consciousness and vital and mind in their ordinary functionings towards the Truth and the Felicity which are the goals of the Rishi's endeavour. It is only when the power of Agni works in all our nature, burns away all its "sins", that out of its many crookednesses the aspirant gets on to the straight path along which the other gods can help man to ascend.

Agni the Divine Will is always at work unknown to us, in our material body and all its functionings, in our desires and vital impulses, in the activities of our mind ; through all of them Agni ensures the maintenance of the Law that upholds the universe, gives to each action its appropriate fruit. It is man's real business in life to accord his action with the Divine Will if he is to live rightly and take full advantage of Agni's constant presence. Agni is the Strength in man and the Knowledge. He "puts out his strength against all assailing powers, who forbids inertia, who repels every failing of heart and of force, who spurns out all lack of manhood. Agni actualises what might otherwise remain as an ineffectual thought or aspiration. He is the doer of the Yoga...; he hammers out our perfection."<sup>8</sup>

#### INDRA LORD OF SWAR

Next to Agni, Indra the Puissant and Shining One is invoked alone or in conjunction with other deities more frequently than any other Power. Around him has grown a cluster of parable and myth which are clearly indicative of his function in the Vedic esoterism. Briefly put, Indra is the godhead who more than any other is engaged in the battle of the Gods and Titans for the possession of earth and men, the release of the cows of Light from the darkened cave of the subconscious, the pouring of the rain of Heaven from the dark clouds of the vital worlds. It is Indra who thus in great measure makes possible the illumination of man by the light of the higher consciousness.

Indra is the "Divine Mind in man...through whom comes the illumination of the supramental Truth ; by the advancing chariots of this giver of Light he conquers our divine possessions."<sup>9</sup> Indra is preeminently the fighter ; he fights man's spiritual battles against the personifications of Darkness that the true Light may grow in him and remain unobstructed. "This growth continues by the winning and growth of the Light, till Indra reveals himself fully as the ... divine mind master of all the illuminations of knowledge."<sup>10</sup> Indra is the Power in the mind which enables one to know the truth from the falsehood, the straight from the crooked.<sup>11</sup> He is the "Lord of Swar, the realm of pure intelligence, through which the ascending soul passes into the divine Truth..., The principle which Indra represents is Mind-Power released from the limits and obscurations of the nervous consciousness"<sup>12</sup> in which we normally live.

He is commonly described as performing his warring feats in the intoxication of the mystic wine, Soma. Soma as we shall see stands for pure Delight. It is when the pure mind is filled with pure delight that the Darkness is repelled. Lightning is "the weapon, the heavenly stone, *svarya aśmā*, by which he destroys the powers of darkness and wins the cows, the solar illuminations." *Iśa*

### THE SUN OF TRUTH

The highest light is that of the Sun, the Vedic Surya. Surya is the light of the Truth who when he rises in our highest heaven of mind dispels "the darkness and falsehoods and limited vision of the separative mentality.... This Truth is the light, the body of Surya."<sup>13</sup> In his cosmic function, he mainly under the appellation of Surya Savitri is the Light that creates or rather manifests the worlds. He is also the supreme Light concealed in the Darkness of the Inconscient, where he had been cast, as the Dark Sun or Martanda "to preside over mortal birth and death."<sup>14</sup> In his psychological aspect, once his Light is liberated by the other gods and made to rise in us in its full splendour in the wake of the Dawn, "he is described as the pure and visioned force of the Truth which shines out in his rising like the gold of Heaven."<sup>15</sup> He gives man the seerhood which brings with it not only the right vision but also the right hearing of the Word of Truth.

That is the sense of the Gayatri mantra which is intended to give us the luminous impulsion of Surya Savitri to all our thoughts. Surya in us then becomes the Creator who new-creates for us all the worlds, gives us "this new-seeing of all things, this new-moulding of thought, act, feeling, will, consciousness in the terms of the Truth, the Bliss, the Right, the Infinity..."<sup>16</sup>

It is this active aspect of the Godhead that is figured by Savitri the luminous Creator. "All that we have done in our ignorance, in our divided and oppressed discernment of things, in our mere mortal becoming and humanity, against gods or men, he shall uncreate and make us free from the sin. For he is the creator of the Right, he is the creator who creates the Truth."<sup>17</sup>

#### THE FOUR KINGS AND THE LORD OF THE PATH

But we cannot live in the Truth, be constantly in the presence of the self-luminous One whom the seers worshipped in the image of the Sun, Surya or Savitri, unless there is firmly established in us a vast purity, a luminous power of love and comprehension, a clear discerning aspiration and endeavour, a spontaneous delight in all things. These are the gifts of Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga, the four great kings, the Sun-gods. They are the Sachchidananda of later thought.<sup>18</sup> They are the four-fold Savitri as Creator.<sup>18a</sup>

Varuna is the lord of all the three oceans of infinite existence, the tenebrous Inconscient, the luminous Superconscience and between the two a third sea of ever-developing conscious being, "the perilous ocean which we have to navigate.... Varuna must teach with his Vast Right and Truth our limited will and judgment,"<sup>19</sup> and lead us to the Highest. He is the great destroyer of sin, the God who in the parable of the triple cord of the Rishi Shunashopa frees the aspirant from the bondage of limited mind, inefficient life, obscure physical animality. Varuna is *samrāt*, "King of all kingdoms and of all divine and mortal beings; earth and heaven and every world are only his provinces."<sup>20</sup>

The one Deity constantly associated with Varuna is Mitra, friend and harmoniser of all discordances, since Mitra cannot fulfil his harmony except in the purity of Varuna. "Mitra was essentially

the Lord of Love.”<sup>21</sup> He brings with him the inner felicity, *mayas*, independent of things, as well as *prayas*, its outflowing as the delight and pleasure of the soul in objects and things. “Mitra is the most beloved of the gods because he brings within our reach this divine enjoyment and leads us to this perfect happiness.”<sup>22</sup>

Aryaman the third of the Great Quarternary, and least prominent in the hymns is yet among the most forceful for achievement. Standing at the head of the *pitrs*, the departed ancestors in the later tradition, Aryaman in the Veda is the Godhead who as leader of the ancient Fathers created for posterity the Path to the Truth. It is as the God of the Path that he is hymned in the few *ṛks* where he is invoked separately and not as is usually the case in conjunction with Varuna, Mitra or other deities. Aryaman is the *ārya par excellence*, the untiring aspirant to the Truth. “Aryaman is the godhead in whose divine power this Aryahood is rooted; he is this Force of sacrifice, aspiration, battle, journey towards perfection and light and celestial bliss by which the path is created, travelled, pursued beyond all resistance and obscurity to its luminous and happy goal.”<sup>23</sup>

Both the cosmic and psychological functions of Bhaga are more clearly discernible in the hymns. Bhaga is “the Lord of Enjoyment.... What the Rishi seeks is the enjoyment in all created things of the immortal and immortalising Ananda.... This Ananda is the highest, the best enjoyment. It disposes all aright... all the distortions, all the evil of the world. It carries man through to the goal.”<sup>24</sup> The Vedic aspirant always seeks to make his path to the goal “a happy going”, a path of felicity, *svvitam*; he shuns all that is evil, belongs to the “evil dream” that has to be turned away. “Bhaga sends to us instead all that is good, *bhadram*, good in the sense of felicity, the auspicious things of the divine enjoying, the happiness of the right activity, the right creation.”<sup>25</sup>

Surya Savitri the great Illuminer manifests himself in another form, Pushan, the fosterer, the increaser in us of the Light; for the illumination is not a sudden but a gradual phenomenon and it needs to be constantly cherished and kept safe from obscurity. “The increase which Pushan gives depends on the recovery of these disappearing illuminations of the Truth.”<sup>26</sup> The growth which he gives is a journey towards the fullness of the Truth. He is therefore the lord

of the Path and guards it.<sup>27</sup>

### SOMA: LORD OF DELIGHT AND THE PURIFIERS

Delight or Immortality is the goal. "Of that beatitude Soma is the representative deity,"<sup>28</sup> figured in the image of the wine offered to the gods and drunk by the sacrificer. "A secret Delight is the base of existence, its sustaining atmosphere and almost its substance.... Sensation is an attempt to translate the secret delight of existence into the terms of physical consciousness. But in that consciousness... divine light and divine delight are both of them concealed and confined, and have to be released or extracted. Ananda is retained as *rasa*, the sap, the essence, in sense-objects and sense-experiences, in the plants and growths of the earth-nature, and among these growths the mystic Soma-plant symbolises that element behind all sense-activities and their enjoyments which yields the divine essence."<sup>29</sup> Therefore it has to be pressed out and distilled before it can be used as a potion of delight. Even so, it is a strong potion which not every system can bear. He who is raw and his body not heated does not taste or enjoy that; he may even break under the violent ecstasy.<sup>30</sup>

The purification of the body and the nervous system and life-parts and the thoughts is therefore a necessary preliminary. Vayu, the Lord of Life, the Aswins, divine healers, Maruts the thought-forces and Ribhus the aides of Indra and artisans of immortality come into play prominently in this connection. Vayu the Wind-God is the "inspirer of that Breath or dynamic energy, called the Prana, which is represented in man by the vital and nervous activities."<sup>31</sup> Vayu brings into conscious activity the energies hidden in the subconscious and turns them godwards: devoted to the "Aryan work".<sup>32</sup> Vayu the nervous activity is only a first condition of the emergent Mind. It is the support given by Life to the evolution of Mind which is the important aspect of Vayu.<sup>32a</sup>

The twin Aswins are the "riders on the horse, the Ashwa, symbolic of force and especially of life-energy and nervous force, the Prana. They are gods of enjoyment, seekers of honey; they are physicians, they bring back youth to the old, health to the sick, wholeness to the maimed."<sup>33</sup> Their special function is to perfect the nervous

or vital being in man in the sense of action and enjoyment.

Maruts, the impetuous godheads of rain and storm in the popular view, are in the esoteric Veda 'the Life-Powers that support by their nervous or vital energies the action of the thought in the attempt of the mortal consciousness to grow or expand itself into the immortality of the Truth and Bliss.'<sup>34</sup> They are closely associated therefore with Vayu and Indra. The Maruts "take our animal consciousness made up of the impulses of the nervous mentality, possess these impulses with their illuminations and drive them up the hill of being towards the world of Swar and the truths of Indra.... The Maruts are the powers of Thought which by the strong and apparently destructive motion of their progress break down that which is established and help to the attainment of new formations."

The Ribhus, three in number, human beings become divine and artisans of immortality, are "the sublimated human energies of formation and upward progress who assist the gods in the divinising of man. ... Another great work of the Ribhus is... to restore youth to the aged parents of the world, Heaven and Earth. Heaven is the mental consciousness; Earth the physical."<sup>35</sup> They are closely associated with Indra and Agni: they are "offspring of Indra, grandson of luminous Force"(Rv.IV.37.4). They help man bear the ecstasies of Soma, and prepare his ascent to the Light.

It is easy to see how the action of these gods helps each other, sometimes overlaps.

### THE DIVINE DAWN

The Light comes through a succession of Dawns. Usha the beautiful Goddess of Dawn is "image and godhead of the opening out of the supreme illumination on the night of our human ignorance."<sup>36</sup> In our progress towards the highest Light, there is a long alternation between states of illumination and states of darkness. It is the function of Dawn to dispel that darkness as it comes until we are able to pass beyond it altogether. Dawn has been called the face or power of Aditi; she brings to man a light, a power, a new birth, the golden treasure of heaven into his earthly existence.<sup>37</sup> With her coming "awaken" all the gods, become effective in our mortal being. The light of

Surya follows in her wake.

### THE OTHER GODDESSES

Surya as we have seen is the Lord of the vast Light, the Truth-Consciousness to which the Rishi aspires. Some of the powers of this Consciousness are symbolised by the goddesses Mahi or Bharati, Dakshina, Sarama, Ila and Saraswati, who are often associated with the Dawn, the Sun, Indra and Agni, the main helpers in the Rishi's upward march. Mahi is "the luminous vastness of the Truth... Ila representing truth-vision or revelation, Saraswati truth-audition, inspiration, the divine word, Sarama intuition, Dakshina the separative intuitional discrimination."<sup>38</sup> As Dawn prepares man for the progressive illumination of his consciousness, three of these other goddesses "are said to bring to birth for man the Bliss, *mayas*.... It is by the dawning of the true or infinite consciousness in man that he arrives out of this evil dream of pain and suffering, this divided creation into the Bliss.... Truth is the foundation, Bliss the supreme result."<sup>39</sup>

Each god too has his female energy.

All these gods and goddesses it may be pertinent to observe are the prototypes of the immense pantheon of the later Epic, Purano-Tantric, Mahayana and Vajrayana systems, each replete with their "divine families," and their esoteric significances.

*(To be continued)*

SANAT K. BANERJI

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## THE PERFECT WIFE

"I must say you fit the description of a budding rishi better than that of a perfect wife." She smiled. Now that they were years away from the quarrels over the fact that she did not fit his idea of the "perfect wife" and could not even understand what he wanted, let alone be what he wanted, they could joke about it and it was always nice to be reminded that he was really happy with her as she was.

She understood now what he had wanted then and again she smiled, thinking how fortunate it was that she had not understood in the beginning. She would have gone crazy in the struggle between wanting to please him and not going against her own nature, or else leaving him. But as she thought, the question arose "What, anyway, is the 'perfect wife'? He wouldn't really have been happy if I'd outguessed every little desire of his as he wanted me to. He's happier that I'm true to myself. But what does that mean?"

Women's lib had touched them both and neither of them had been interested in a traditional husband-wife relationship even before they had begun doing yoga. But some of the traditional habits had crept into their way of life just out of convenience, and periodically she found herself rebelling against them. Sometimes she consoled herself by saying that for him to care for her bicycle and her to wash his clothes was a good exchange. After all she was not interested in learning bicycle mechanics, and such things were his particular skill and interest. "But he's certainly capable of washing his own clothes!" She would immediately think. Was there some other exchange? She could do his typing for him. She was skilled in that and he wasn't. But he didn't have anything to type. And besides all that, and probably more important than all that, something did not feel right in bargaining over the services rendered to one another.

This was only one minor conflict among many other minor conflicts that grated like sandpaper, showing the rough edges of a basically agreeable relationship. But it was also an indication that there was much more work to do.

Even more important were the wranglings of the surface mind when her ego was out in front. For the goal of her life was not to be the perfect wife or the perfect anti-wife, but to be a perfect

servant of the Divine Will and Love. And it was towards this that she turned as often as possible, trying to stretch her capacities at every opportunity. More and more a prayer welled up in her: "May I learn to serve You truly in everyone and everything."

Here was the secret, she felt, to their relationship. It was insignificant that they had had a formal marriage ceremony and signed the papers which made their relationship acceptable to the world. It didn't matter that they had subsequently given up most of the physical trappings which are usually associated with marriage. What mattered to them now was that they were two seekers dedicating their life to the Divine, sharing whatever light they could and the common task of raising a child in the best way they could.

The sandpaper was rubbing, rubbing. It was rubbing through the tarnish which was caked all over their surface relationship preventing the inner beauty from shining through. It was sanding away the crust of ego on her which prevented her from truly serving the Divine in everyone and everything. And it would continue to rub and grate and polish until there was nothing left but smooth, pure crystal, letting the light within shine out constantly.

And when sometimes the crust was thin, it didn't matter whose clothes she was washing because she was washing for the Divine. Nor did she feel that she needed to fix her own bicycle, for the Divine had provided someone who could care for it better than she.

"When I have learned to be a perfect servant of the Divine, when I have accepted to be a perfect, trusting child of the Divine, then, and only then, can I hope to be a perfect wife for the Divine."

MARY ALEXANDER

## REVIEWS

**The Philosophy of Sri Ramanuja** By *V. R. Srisaila Chakravarti*. Pub. V.S.R.Chakravarti, 24, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar Rd. Madras 18. P. 356, Price Rs. 40.

**T**RREATISES on Vishishtadwaita (Qualified Monism) are generally full of metaphysical subtleties couched in a special terminology familiar only to students of Vedanta. The present treatment, however, runs smooth with an abundance of illustrations from the Epics and Scriptures, in a language that is fluent and understandable by the general reader. This is a posthumous collection of discourses systematically covering the main topics of this Philosophy e.g. Chit or Individual Soul, Achit or Matter, Ishwara or God. The author compares the positions of the other schools of Vedanta on these concepts, especially of the Advaita of Shankara and points out how far they do or do not correspond to genuine and authenticated spiritual experience.

Prof. K. Seshadri observes in his terse Introduction that true Vishishtadwaita is wedded to integration and harmonisation of the 'Vedanta of the heart' and the 'Vedanta of the head. "The supreme is the Self, the Soul of thy soul, to whom all that thou art — body, mind and life — belong as body to the soul. Awaken into the awareness of this wisdom by conscious dedication in complete self-surrender." This sums up the Vedanta of the Acharya.

The discussion on the Five kinds of Divine Forms — *para*, *vyuha vibhava*, *antaryamin* and *arca* is highly enlightening.

**Tales and Tellers of Goa** By *V.S. Sukthankar*. Asia Trading Corp. 150 Brigade Rd. Bangalore 25. P.121, Price Rs.12.50.

A charming little book on a charming theme. Cut off from the mainland of India for generations, Goa has had a life of its own — simple, unsophisticated and joyous. The writer has taken considerable pains to gather materials on its folklore, the strands of the composite culture (Portugese and Indian) that has grown among these seafaring people, and the lilting music that comes natural to them. And

with a penmanship of a superb order he narrates some of the stories that have given rise to oft-quoted proverbs, some of their songs (partly in the original Konkani and fully rendered into felicitous English) and ten pieces with their staff-notations. Dr. Gokak speaks for all the readers when he remarks: "We see at work a master-hand which brings to life by a few magical touches, the life that pulsates in Goan homes and in Goan community gatherings."

M. P. PANDIT