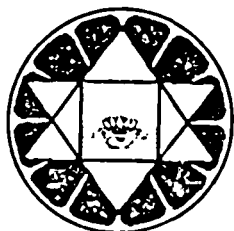


# SRI AUROBINDO

## *Archives and Research*

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## Nasik Speech

On his way home from the Surat Congress, Sri Aurobindo spoke at several places in Maharashtra at the instance of local leaders. Two reports are given here of a speech he delivered in Nasik on 24 January 1908. In the first, which is from a secret police intelligence report, the words of the speech have been translated from the original English into Marāthi and back again into English. They thus should evidently not be taken as the exact words used by Sri Aurobindo. The second report was published as a letter to the editor of the *Mahratta*, an English-language newspaper of Poona, on 2 February 1908. The date given, "Saturday night", seems to be in error, as Saturday was 25 January. The frontispiece photograph was taken at Amfauti less than a week after this speech was delivered.

**N**ASIK, February 6th. — On the 24th January Babu Arvind Ghose, Proprietor of the *Bande Mataram* paper, accompanied by one Moreshwar Govind Purohit, said to be the manager of the National School, Pandharpur, arrived at Nasik Road Station and was met at the station by the following persons: —

Waman Sakaram Khare, Vishvanath Gangadhar Ketkar, Ramchandra Ganesh Pradhan, Ramkrishna Raoji Jaiwant, Keshav Lakshman Khare, Hari Raoji Muthe, Gangaprasad Panalal, Manohar Yadneshwar, Mahadev Balwant Gadgil and Sakaram Dadaji Gorhe.

On arrival of the train at the platform the Babu was received with shouts of *Bande Mataram* and subsequently led to the 2nd Class waiting room, where he was garlanded by Vishvanath Gangadhar Ketkar. The party then moved off for Nasik City, the Babu, Ramchandra Ganesh Pradhan and Vishvanath Gangadhar Ketkar driving in a carriage lent by Mr. Chandwadkar.

On arrival at the Theatre in the town, some school-boys, at the instigation of Sakaram Dadaji Gorhe, unharnessed the horses and dragged the carriage through the town to the houses of the under-mentioned individuals who gave the Babu *pānsupārī*<sup>1</sup>:— M. Balwant Gadgil, Pandurang Antoba, [...] <sup>2</sup> Pathan, the Co-operative Society's

<sup>1</sup> Betel leaf and nut.

<sup>2</sup> A line of the printed report has apparently been left out here.

shop and the Vidya Booshan Press. The party then proceeded to the house of Waman Sakaram Khare, whose guest the Babu is during his stay in Nasik. At about 10-30 A.M. the Babu addressed an open-air meeting in front of the old Wada. Before rising to speak he was presented with an address, which will be found printed in English on page 3 of the *Nasik Wrata* of the 25th instant, a copy of which accompanies. . . .

The following is a rough translation of [Sri Aurobindo's] speech as given in the *Wrata*.

Thank you for the welcome you have accorded me, which I do not deserve, because whatever I do is not done by me of my own accord. My actions are dictated by God. I am simply an instrument in His hands. The address should, therefore, be presented to Him and not to me. Let us thank Him.

I have hitherto been a writer and not an orator, but circumstances forced me to try my hand at oratory. I have not fixed the subject of my speech, but at the request of some friends I will speak to you on *swarāj*. Unfortunately I am not accustomed to make speeches and may deviate from the subject. Within the past two or three years, either by a stroke of fortune or by Divine inspiration, a new movement or, in other words, power has been created in our country, but the goal to be attained was vague until last year when the old patriot Dadabhai Nowroji in his Presidential address at the National Congress in Calcutta said, "We must have *swarāj* on the lines granted to Canada and Australia, which is our sole aim." The true definition of *swarāj* was given by Dadabhai Nowroji in his speech after the session of the Congress. *Swarāj* means administration of affairs in a country by her own people on their own strength in accordance with the welfare of the people without even nominal suzerainty, which is the object which we wish to attain. We had forgotten it for a time and feared to speak about it. We were far away from the truth and we had forgotten it, and on that account we have been reduced to a bad condition. If we do not acquaint ourselves with the object in view, viz., *swarāj*, I am afraid we, thirty crores of people, will become extinct. The people of Maharashtra must have some recollection of *swarāj*, because a century ago you represented it. *Swarāj* is life, it is nectar and salvation. *Swarāj* in a nation is the breath of life. Without breath of life a man is dead. So also

without *swarāj* a nation is dead. *Swarāj* being the life of a nation it is essential for it. History shows the fate of nations without *swarāj*. In ancient times the Romans had extended their sovereignty over many countries as England has done at present, and under their sovereignty the people of other countries enjoyed as we are now enjoying all the comforts of a peaceful reign. Their lives and properties were all secure as ours are, but in spite of all this, it was said that the people under the sway of the Roman Empire came to grief with its downfall, and were harassed by savage people. The reason is they had no *swarāj*. After a lapse of centuries they stood on their own legs and established for themselves *swarāj* and became happy. It is for this reason that *swarāj* is essentially needed, and is to be gained by our own exertions. If it is gained otherwise, which is impossible, it cannot last long for want of strength in us. One way of gaining it is to implore the sovereign, who holds our realm, but he won't give it. Unfortunately there still exists a party of men who still cling to the idea that we shall obtain *swarāj* by asking for it, which is to be regretted. This party think that we are not capable of managing our own affairs, that we are being trained in that direction and that our benign English Government will extend *swarāj* to us by degrees. But they do not understand that it is against human nature — Indians excepted. The English value the importance of India. Its possession gives them status. If they once allow India to slip from their grasp, they will become a non-entity. Under such circumstances it is silly to say that the English will train us and entrust us with *swarāj*. By reposing confidence in the English people we are already reduced to a miserable condition and in the end will become extinct. Another way of obtaining *swarāj* is to seek aid from a neighbouring nation. But this means jumping from the frying-pan into the fire. No matter from whom we seek assistance their own interests will first be considered. We should, therefore, acquire it by our own efforts. The question, therefore, arises as to how we should do it. We do not possess *swarāj* nor have we the power to retain it. The answer is we cannot master the art of swimming unless we struggle in the water. We should, therefore, be prepared to undergo hardships in the struggle for *swarāj*, as there is no other alternative. We want *swarāj* which means independence, but independence cannot be had unless we are independent. As God created us independent we should be full of inspirations. With full faith in God we should preach independence

through the length and breadth of the country and a beginning should be made to impart national education. The English erred in the beginning in spreading their education, which they now regret, and on this account Lord Curzon adopted a new policy. People should take into their own hands judicial and executive work. They should get their disputes settled by arbitration. Look at the change which has been wrought during the past two years by the Swadeshi movement and boycott. With these two measures we are bound to obtain good results. We, Bengalis, have adopted all these measures and have been successful. If these measures are universally adopted, we shall have more than half of *swarāj* in our hands. The opposition will not sleep over it. It's all known in England. Our idea of the struggle for *swarāj* is that it is the commandment of God, which we must obey. To oppose it is not in our power. [That] Bengalis inspired with this idea do not fear fine, incarceration, deportation or the extreme penalty of the law, is a well-known fact. If a Bengali lad is punished in connection with the Swadeshi movement, he smiles and says it does not matter much; we have gone another step in the direction of our goal. Oh, inhabitants of Maharashtra, since you and Bengalis are stirring to attain one end and as we are all sons of Aryabhumi, let us all jointly set ourselves to the task of bringing about a state of things in accordance with the commandment of God. We, Bengalis, depend upon you, because the sons of Maharashtra were brave soldiers a short while ago. You enjoyed *swarāj* when you were harassed by Muhammadans. A similar commandment was conveyed to you through Tukaram, Ramdas and others, and in obedience to this commandment all Marathas joined. Shivaji, the warrior, came from you, and *swarāj* was established in Maharashtra. The poor were rescued from molestation by the wicked and the country prospered. The present state of affairs is similar. The present agitation is not the creation of man. It is Divine inspiration. It is the commandment of God. Human beings are the instruments to carry it out. There must be unity among us and we are being united. If we, thirty crores of people, unite with a firm resolution for the sake of truth, the commandment of God and His will will be done and the foe will share the fate of the mountain of ashes which disappeared with a strong current of wind. We are all God's creatures, and if all from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) are brought together, it will be seen that our

country is just as big as it is described in our kaas.<sup>1</sup> If we, imbued with this idea, become united with a firm resolution to obey the commandment of God, I feel sure we shall gain our *swarāj* in twenty years. It won't take centuries as our enemies, the Anglo-Indians, imagine, nor will it take half a century as predicted by our Moderates. We, the Bengalis, whom the English consider effeminate, have commenced our work and we shall, by the grace of God, prove ourselves to be the sons of brave men in the eyes of the world.

### BABU ARABINDO GHOSE AT NASIK

On Saturday night Sjt. Babu Arvindo Ghose gave a lecture on *swarāj*, Mr. Baba Saheb Khare being in the chair. Before the lecture an address was presented to Babu Arvindo Ghose by Mr. Daji Saheb Ketkar. The lecturer then rose amidst shouts of *Bande Mataram* and began his lecture. He said —: I was known to you rather as a writer than a speaker. But lately I was compelled to speak at different places at the request of my countrymen. I did not intend to speak on a particular subject, but as some of you had expressed a desire that I should speak on *swarāj*, I begin with *swarāj*, but I do not know where I shall end. The word *swarāj* is now-a-days being freely made use of in all our political activities. Our revered countryman Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji declared from his presidential chair of the Calcutta Congress of 1906 that *swarāj* was the goal of all our political movements. Attempts are made to explain the word *swarāj* but I would rather use the word itself. The word *swarāj* is not new to us. In our Vendanta philosophy the word *swarāj* means *mukti* or salvation. The soul when it is free from all worldly temptations is said to have gained *swarāj* or *mukti*. Then the soul is completely free and lives by itself and for itself. That is the meaning of *swarāj*. The people in Maharashtra know what is *swarāj* because they actually enjoyed it a century or two ago. *Swarāj* is the life and soul. As life is to the body so is *swarāj* to a nation. No nation can be said to be living without *swarāj*. *Swarāj* cannot be given by others; it cannot be

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of this word is not known. It may be a typographical error. In another Marathi report the phrase in question reads, in our translation: "as described in the Veda".

obtained by begging for it. It must be acquired by one's own efforts. It is foolish to expect that others will give us *swarāj*. We cannot rely upon others for *swarāj* but on ourselves. History conclusively proves this. The next question is how to obtain *swarāj*. First of all we must make our minds free and act like free men. We must have faith in God and educate our countrymen in the path of liberty. We can have *swarāj* in education by having recourse to National Education. Our rulers are now attempting to curtail education. Lord Curzon has done it. The work of educating our children must be taken up by us. We can have *swarāj* in trade by recourse to Swadeshi and Boycott. We can have *swarāj* in private disputes by referring them to our own Arbitration Courts. Do not suppose that our enemies will sit silent all the while. They will attempt to trample down our aspirations. Repression has already begun in Bengal, and you know how your brethren in Bengal have suffered and are suffering in Nation's cause. But remember that no human agency could set the whole nation of India into motion in a short space of a year or two. Rest assured that Divine power is working for the regeneration of India, and no human agency or power can stop it. Have firm faith in yourselves. Remember that divine flame is burning within you. Set your eyes on the goal of *swarāj* and move on and on with firmness and confidence. Difficulties will arise and will be created, but you will have the strength to surmount them and ultimately reach the goal.

Sjt. Arabindo addressed the audience for nearly an hour and a half and held it spellbound. His address was full of inspiration and thorough confidence in the will of God. Mr. Pradhan then gave a substance of the speech in Marathi. The president having addressed the meeting, the proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the lecturer amidst shouts of *Bande Mataram*.



## Originality in National Literatures

**I**T is a singular and as yet unexplained phenomenon in the psychology of mankind that out of so many magnificent civilisations, so many powerful, cultured and vigorous nations and empires whose names and deeds crowd the pages of history, only a select few have been able to develop a thoroughly original and self-revealing literature. Still fewer have succeeded in maintaining these characteristics from beginning to end of their literary development. There have been instances in which a nation at some period of especial energy and stress of life has for a moment arrived at a perfect self-expression, but with the effort the literary originality of the race seems to exhaust itself. We have the picture of an age, not the spiritual and mental history of a nation. Such a period of partial self-revelation we find in the flowering of Italian literature; in the *Divine Comedy*, the *Decameron*, the works of Petrarch, Machiavelli, Cellini, Castiglione, mediaeval Italy lives before our eyes for all time; but the rest of Italian prose and poetry is mere literature and nothing more. Again when we have seen the romantic spirit of Spain, its pride, punctilious sense of honour, courage, cruelty, intrigue, passion and the humour and pathos of its decline mirrored in the work of Calderon and Cervantes we seem to have exhausted all that need interest the student of humanity in Spanish literature. Similar instances offer themselves in the Sagas of the Scandinavian peoples and Germany's *Nibelungenlied*, in the extraordinary picture of Mahomedan civilisation of which the *Thousand and One Nights* are the setting. On the other hand there are literatures of high quality and world-wide interest which are yet almost purely derivative in their character and hardly succeed in rendering the national spirit to us at all, so overloaded are they with foreign material, with things learned rather than experienced; such are the American literature, the modern German literature. Instances there are again of the nation freeing itself from foreign domination in one or two kinds of writing which partially reflect its inner mind and life, while the rest of its literature remains derivative and second-hand in its

every fibre. We get to the heart of Roman life and character in Roman Satires, the annalistic histories of Livy and Tacitus, the Letters of Cicero or Pliny, but in the more splendid and ambitious portions of Latin literature we get only the half Greek dress in which the Roman mind learned to disguise itself. Let us suppose that all historical documents, archives, records were destroyed or disappeared in the process of Time and the catastrophies of civilisation, and only the pure literature survived. Of how many nations should we have the very life, heart and mind, the whole picture of its life and civilisation and the history of its development adequately revealed in its best writing? Three European nations would survive immortally before the eyes of posterity, the ancient Greeks, the modern English and French, and two Asiatic nations, the Chinese and the Hindus, — no others.

Of all these the Hindus have revealed themselves the most perfectly, continuously and on the most colossal scale, precisely because they have been the most indomitably original in the form and matter of their literature. The Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas are unique in their kind; the great Epics in their form and type of art stand apart in the epic literature of the world, the old Sanskrit drama has its affinities with a dramatic species which developed itself in Europe more than a thousand years later, and the literary epic follows laws of form and canons of art which are purely indigenous. And this immense body of first-rate work has left us so intimate and complete a revelation of national life and history, that the absence of pure historical writings becomes a subject of merely conventional regret. The same intense originality and depth of self-expression are continued after the decline of the classical language in the national literatures of Maharashtra, Bengal and the Hindi-speaking North.





Sri Aurobindo in Amravati  
January 1908



# Characteristics of Augustan Poetry

The first of a series of lectures on English poetry prepared by Sri Aurobindo for his classes at Baroda College during the early part of his career there (1898-1901). The four passages given as footnotes were found on pages of the manuscript facing the text pages.

## *Relation of Gray to the poetry of his times*

The poetry of Gray marks the transition from the eighteenth-century or Augustan style of poetry to the nineteenth-century style; that is to say almost all the tendencies of poetry between the death of Pope and the production of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 are to be found in Gray's writings. Of the other poets of the time, Johnson and Goldsmith mark the last development of the Augustan style, while Collins, Blake, Cowper, Burns, Chatterton each embody in their poetry the beginnings of one or more tendencies which afterwards found their full expression in the nineteenth century. Gray alone seems to include in himself along with many characteristics of the conservative school of Johnson and Goldsmith all the revolutionary tendencies, not one or many but all, of the later poets. His earliest poem, the *Ode on Spring*, has many of the characteristics of Pope and Dryden; one of his latest, the *Ode on Vicissitude*,<sup>1</sup> has many of the characteristics of Wordsworth. He is therefore the typical poet of his age, which, as regards poetry, was an age of transition.

*What is meant by the Augustan or eighteenth-century style ?  
In what sense is it less poetical than the poetry of Wordsworth and Shelley ?*

The poetry of the eighteenth century differs entirely from that of another period in English literature. It differs alike in subject matter, in spirit and in form. Many modern critics have denied the name of poetry to it altogether. Matthew Arnold calls Pope and Dryden

<sup>1</sup> *Ode on the Pleasure Arising from Vicissitude* [Ed.]

classics not of poetry, but of prose, he says that they are great in the regions of half-poetry; other critics while hesitating to go so far, say in substance much the same thing; Gosse, for instance, calls their poetry the poetry of English rhetoric, which exactly amounts to Matthew Arnold's description of it as half-poetry. Its own admirers give it the name of classic poetry, that is to say a poetry in which imagination and feeling are subordinated to correctness and elegance.

Poetry as generally understood, the poetry of Shakespeare and Wordsworth, may be defined as a deeper and more imaginative perception of life and nature expressed in the language and rhythm of restrained emotion. In other words its subject-matter is an interpretation of life and nature which goes deeper into the truth of things than ordinary men can do, what has been called a poetic criticism of life; its spirit is one of imagination and feeling, it is not intellectual but imaginative, not rational but emotional; and its form is a language impassioned and imaginative, but restrained by a desire for perfect beauty of expression; and a rhythm generally taking the form of metre, which naturally suits the expression of deep feeling. It differs from rhetoric in this that rhetoric expresses feeling which is not deep and not quite sincere, and tries to strike and influence the reader instead of being satisfied with expressing itself and for that purpose relies mainly on tricks of language such as antithesis, epigram etc. Rhetoric tries to excite admiration and appeals to the intellect; poetry is content with adequate self-expression and appeals to the heart.

Eighteenth-century poetry differs from ordinary poetry, in subject-matter, in spirit and in form.

### *Spirit*

The spirit of ordinary poetry is one of imagination and feeling, that is to say imaginative and emotional; that of eighteenth-century poetry is one of commonsense and reason, that is to say intellectual and rational. Pope and Johnson are the two chief critics of the school. Pope expressly lays it down in his *Essay on Criticism* that sense and wit are the bases of all true poetry and Johnson is continually appealing to them as criterions, especially in his life of Gray, where he objects to what he considers the excess of imagery, the incredibility of his subjects, the use of imaginative mythological language and the occasional absence of a didactic purpose. In their opinion nothing should be

admitted in poetry which is not consistent with sense and wit, that is to say which is not intellectual and rational. Accordingly we find no striking imagery and no passion in eighteenth-century poetry; the poets as a rule avoid subjects in which emotion is required and when they do try to deal with the passions and feelings, they fail, their expression of these is rhetorical and not poetic. This is the reason why the drama in the eighteenth century is such an utter failure.

### *Subject-Matter*

The difference in subject-matter is manifold. In the first place, instead of dealing with the whole of life and nature, they limit themselves to a very narrow part of it. This limitation is partly due to the restriction of poetry to sense and wit and partly to the nature of the audience the poets addressed. It was a period in which literature depended mainly on the patronage of the aristocracy, and it was therefore for the English aristocracy of the time that the poets wrote. They were therefore bound to limit themselves to such subject-matter as might suit the tastes of their patrons. These two considerations led to three very important limitations of subject-matter.

First, the exclusion of the supernatural from poetry. The temper of the times was rationalistic and sceptical and to the cultured aristocracy of the times Shakespeare's ghosts and fairies and Milton's gods and angels would have seemed absurdities; it resulted also from the idea of commonsense as the cardinal rule of poetry, that nothing incredible should be admitted unless it was treated humorously, like the sylphs and gnomes in Pope's *Rape of the Lock* or the beasts in the fables of Gay and Swift. Poetry however seems naturally to demand the element of the supernatural and the only way to admit the supernatural without offending against reason was by Personification. We therefore find a tendency to create a sort of makeshift mythology by personifying the qualities of the mind. Otherwise the supernatural practically disappears from English poetry for a whole century.

Second, the exclusion of rural life and restriction to the life of the town and of good society. The aristocracy of the time took no interest in anything but the pleasures, occupations and mental pursuits of the town and it is accordingly only with this part of life that eighteenth-century poetry deals. The country is only treated as a subject of ridicule as in Gay's *Shepherd's Week* or of purely conventional

description as in Pope's *Pastorals* and *Windsor Forest*.<sup>2</sup>

Third, as a natural result of this, the exclusion of external Nature. The sense of natural beauty is quite absent from eighteenth-century poetry and we do not have even so much as the sense of the picturesque except in subjects such as landscape gardening where art could modify nature. Whenever the poets try to write of natural scenery or natural objects, they fail; their descriptions are either conventional and do not recall the object at all or only describe it in a surface manner recalling just so much as may be perceived by a casual glance. Of sympathy with Nature or close observation of it, there is hardly a single instance in English poetry between Dryden and Thomson.

Fourth, the exclusion of human emotion, that is to say poetry was not only limited to the workings of the human mind and human nature, but to cultured society and to the town, and not only to this but to the intellect and weaknesses of men purely; the deeper feelings of the heart are not touched or only touched in an inadequate manner; and it is a characteristic fact that the passion of love which is the most common subject of English poetry, is generally left alone by these poets or if handled, handled in a most unreal and rhetorical manner.

It followed from the exclusion of so much subject-matter that the forms of poetry which demanded this subject-matter almost disappeared. Lyrical poetry and the drama, both of which demand passion, feeling and fancy; epic poetry, which requires a grasp of entire human and external nature, a wide view of life and some element of the super-nature; and serious narrative poetry are very little represented in the age of Pope and then only by second-rate productions. The poetry of the age is mainly didactic, i.e. its subjects are literary criticism, ethics, science or theology, or humorous, i.e. consists of satire, mock-epic, humorous narrative and light society verse. All these are subjects which are really outside the scope of poetry strictly so called, as they give no room for imagination and emotion, the cardinal elements of poetry. The subjects and the way they are treated, making allowance for the difference involved by the use of metre and especially the heroic

<sup>2</sup> The poets of the time have a tendency to the false or conventional pastoral; that is to say a mechanical imitation of Latin and Greek rural poetry, and especially when they try to write love poetry, they use Latin and Greek pastoral names; but these pastorals have nothing to do with any real country life past or present, nor do they describe any rural surroundings and scenery that ever existed, but are mere literary exercises.



metre which necessitates a very condensed expression of thought, is not very different from that of the prose periodicals of the time. The poetry of the age taken in the mass gives one the impression of a great social journal in verse, somewhat more brilliant and varied than the *Tatler* and *Spectator* but identical in spirit.

### *Form*

Lastly the poetry of the eighteenth century differs widely in form, i.e. in language and metre, from that of preceding and subsequent poetry. This difference proceeds from a revolt against the poetical language of the seventeenth century, just as the language of Wordsworth and Keats is a revolt against that of the eighteenth. The Elizabethan poets aimed at a poetry which should be romantic, sensuous and imaginative; romantic, that is to say full of the strange and wonderful, sensuous, that is to say expressing the perceptions of the senses and especially the sense of the beautiful in vivid and glowing colours, and imaginative in the sense of being full of splendid and original imagery, and especially of striking phrases and vivid metaphors. In the later Elizabethans and even many of the earlier all this was carried to great excess; the love of the strange and wonderful was carried into unnaturalness and distortion, sensuousness became lost in exaggeration and poetry became a sort of hunt for metaphors, metaphors used not as aids to the imagination, but for their own sake, and the more absurd and violent, the better. Waller and Dryden first and Pope to a much greater extent revolted against this style of forced ingenuity and proclaimed a new kind of poetry. They gave to Elizabethan language the name of false wit and Pope announced the objects of the new school in an often quoted couplet

True wit is nature to advantage dressed  
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.

This couplet gives the three main principles of eighteenth-century style out of which all its distinctive characteristics rise.

(1) The poets were to write only of what oft was thought; they were to avoid the Elizabethan romantic tendency to search after the strange and wonderful. But these poets went much farther. Not only all that was peculiar or eccentric but all that was original, individual

or unusual was avoided as offensive to reason and commonsense. There are no ideas in Augustan poetry which are not perfectly obvious and common, nothing which might not occur to an average educated man. This was fatal to poetry which to be poetry at all must be unusual; unusually lofty, unusually beautiful or unusually impassioned, and which dries up in an atmosphere of commonsense and commonplace. Augustan poetry has neither feeling for greatness nor for beauty nor for passion and it is therefore not without justice that it is described as at best a half-poetry or a poetry of rhetoric.

But the obvious and commonplace will not be read, unless it is made to look new and interesting by brilliant language.

(2) The second principle is that while the obvious and commonplace should be the staple of poetry, it should be expressed in new and brilliant language, and this should be done by means of true wit. That is to say, while false ingenuity should be avoided, true ingenuity should be the rule of poetry. Accordingly we find that striking poetical expressions are singularly absent; the imagery is cold, obvious and conventional; their place is taken by brilliant cleverness and rhetoric. In order to conceal the barrenness of subject-matter every line is made an antithesis, an epigram or some other rhetorical turn of language. The Augustan poets did not realise that wit, whether false or true, has nothing to do with poetry and so they fell from one extreme to the other; poetry with them became even more an exercise for mere ingenuity than with the Elizabethans, in a way less open to ridicule but more barren and prosaic.<sup>3</sup>

(3) The eighteenth century was not contented with nature, it wanted nature to be dressed and dressed to advantage. Elizabethan poetry had been even at its best either rude and unpolished or extravagant and lawless. It broke through all the ordinary rules which restrain poetry; in their recoil from this tendency the Augustans determined to restrict themselves by the greatest number of rules possible, not only those rules which are universal and for all time but many which

<sup>3</sup> Besides this, in order to dignify the obviousness of their ideas and sentiments, a sort of conventional poetic language was adopted, wherever wit and epigram could not be employed; ordinary words were avoided as ignoble and literary words often with an artificial meaning were employed, or else a sounding paraphrase was employed or a pretentious turn of language. The universal rule was that an idea should not be stated simply, but either cleverly or as it was called nobly.

were artificial and unsuitable. They made the language and metre of their poetry not only smooth and elegant, but formal and monotonous; the tendency was as has been often said, to cut out poetry according to a uniform and mechanical pattern. Cowper said that Pope

Made poetry a mere mechanic art  
And every warbler has his tune by heart

and Taine has expanded the charge in his *History of English Literature* (II p.194), "One would say that the verse had been fabricated by a machine, so uniform is the make." The charge though exaggerated is well-founded; there is a tendency to a uniform construction and turn of sentence and the unchanging repetition of three or four rhetorical artifices. It is the language of a school rather than of individual genius.

When we examine the metre, we find it treated in the same way. Poetical harmony depends upon two things, the choice of the metre and the combination of all the various cadences possible within the limits of the metre chosen. The poet chooses a particular stanza or a couplet form or blank verse just as he thinks most suitable to his subject; but the pauses and accents in the lines of the stanza or successive verses may be arranged many different ways, the disposition of long and short syllables and the combination of assonances and alliterations are almost infinite in their variety, and great poets always vary one line from another so that not only the language but the sound of the verse, or as it is technically called the movement may suggest the exact emotion intended. This variation of cadences is a matter not for rules, but for individual genius to work out. But the Augustan poets in their passion for regularity determined to subject even this to rules. They chose as their favourite and almost only form of verse, the couplet and especially the heroic couplet. All ambitious poetical work of Pope's school is in the heroic couplet; only in light verse do they try any other. The part of their poetry in lyrical metres or in stanzas is insignificant in quantity and almost worthless in quality. Having confined themselves to the heroic couplet, they tried to make even this as formal and monotonous as possible; they put a pause regularly at the end of the first line and a full stop or colon at the end of the second; they place the accent almost invariably on every second syllable; they employ assonance without the slightest subtlety and, though without some skill in the

disposition of long and short syllables good metre itself is impossible, yet they only use it in the most elementary manner. The only variety then possible was a very minute and almost imperceptible one which gave great scope for ingenuity but little for real poetic power.

One more characteristic of the school must be noticed, i.e. the narrowness of its culture. In the eighteenth century it was the tendency to consider all the age between the third and sixteenth centuries as barbarous and best forgotten; even the sixteenth and early seventeenth were regarded as half barbarous times; and the only things besides contemporary science, philosophy and literature which were regarded with interest were ancient classical literature and French civilisation. Even of the classics, little was known of Greek literature though it was held in formal honour; French and Latin and Latin rather of the second best than the best writers were the only foreign influences that affected Augustan literature to any appreciable extent.

The main characteristics of eighteenth-century poetry may therefore be summed up as follows; — a rational and intellectual rather than imaginative and emotional spirit; a restriction to town society and town life, an inability to deal with rural life, with Nature, with passion or with the supernatural; a tendency to replace the supernatural by personification; an almost exclusive preference for didactic, satirical and humorous poetry; a dislike of originality and prevalence of merely obvious ideas and sentiments; an excess of rhetorical artifice in style; a monotonous, rhetorical and conventional style; a restricted and cut-and-dried metre and an exclusion of all poetic influences and interests except the Latin writers and contemporary and French thought and literature. Its merits were smoothness, regularity and correctness; great cleverness and brilliance of wit; great eloquence; and the attainment of perfection within its own limits and according to its own ideals.<sup>3</sup>

These restrictions forced the writers to be extremely condensed and ingenious and as has been said reduced every couplet to the point of an epigram.

<sup>3</sup> The history of our period is partly that of a breaking away from formality in language and metre and a revival of lyric poetry, but still more of a struggle to widen the range of poetry by bringing all nature and all human activity both past and present into its scope, to increase interests and subject matter as well as to inspire new life and sincerity into its style.

# ঊষাস্তোত্র

তরুণ প্রেয়সী ঊষার দীপ্তিময় দেহ প্রকাশ হইয়াছে, বিশ্বময় জীবনকে উদ্দেশ্যপথে প্রেরণ করিয়াছেন ঊষা। তপোদেব অগ্নি মনুষ্যের মধ্যে জ্বলিতে জ্বলিয়াছে। ঊষা সর্বরূপ অন্ধকার ঠেলিয়া জ্যোতির সৃজনে কৃতার্থ।

মহৎ বিস্তার, নিখিলের দিকে সম্মুখ দৃষ্টি তুলি উঠিয়াছেন। পরিধান আলোক-বস্ত্র পরিয়া গুরু-তত্ত্বের স্বৈতকায় প্রকাশ করান দেবী। তাঁহার বর্ণ স্বর্গের সোনা, তাঁহার দর্শন পূর্ণদৃষ্টি স্বরূপ, জানের রশ্মিমুখের মাতা, জানের দিবসের নেত্রী, তাঁহার আলোকময় দেহ প্রকাশ হইয়াছে।

দেবতাদের চক্ষু সূর্য্যকে ভোগময়ী বহন করিতে, সেই দৃষ্টিসিদ্ধ শ্বেত প্রাণ-অঙ্ককে আনয়ন করিতে, সত্যের কিরণে সুব্যক্ত, দেখা দিয়াছেন দেবী ঊষা। দেখি নানা দৈব ঐশ্বর্য্য, দেখি নিখিলের মধ্যে সম্ভূতা সর্ব্বত্র সেই আলোকময়ী।

যাহাই আনন্দময় তাহা অন্তরে, যাহাই মনুষ্যের শত্ব তাহা দূরে, এইরূপ তোমার প্রভাত চাই। গঠন কর আমাদের সত্যদীপ্তির অসীম গোচারণ, গঠন কর আমাদের ভয়শূন্য আনন্দ-ভূমি। যাহা বৈত ও শ্বেতময় তাহা দূর কর, মনুষ্য-আত্মার যত ধন বহিয়া এস। হে ঐশ্বর্য্যময়ী, আনন্দ ঐশ্বর্য্য প্রেরণ কর জীবনে।

দেবী ঊষা, তোমার যে শ্রেষ্ঠ দীপ্তির ক্রীড়া, তাহা লইয়া আমাদের অন্তরে বিকশিত হও, এই দেহীর জীবন বিস্তারিত কর। হে সর্ব্বানন্দময়ী, স্থির প্রেরণা দাও, দাও সেই ঐশ্বর্য্য যেখানে সত্যের কিরণময় গাভীই ধন, যেখানে জীবনের সেই অনন্তগামী রথ ও অশ্ব।

সেই ধনে ধনী বশিষ্ঠ আমরা, হে সুজাতা, হে স্বর্গনন্দিনী, যখন চিত্তপ্রোভে তোমাকে বর্দ্ধিত করি, তুমিও আমাদের অন্তরে ধারণ কর, লব্ধ জ্ঞান বৃহৎ সেই আনন্দরাশি।

# Hymn to Dawn

**L**O, DAWN, the Beloved, appears in her gleaming young body. She impels all Life on the path towards the goal. Fire, the Divine Force, is born to be kindled in man. Dawn drives away all Darkness and fulfils herself in creating Light.

She, the Goddess, rises lifting her forward gaze towards the Vast, the Universal. She has put on the robe of Light and displays the white brilliance of her subtle norms of Truth. Heaven-gold is her hue, her vision is all-round seeing: verily, she is the mother of the herd of brilliances of knowledge, a leader of our bright days; her luminous body is disclosed.

The Goddess, All-Enjoyment she is: she comes carrying the Sun, the Eye of the Gods, bringing here the white Life-steeds that have the perfect vision, she comes, the Goddess wholly revealing herself in the rays of the Sun. Behold her in her multiple divine riches, behold her manifest everywhere, in all things, behold her the Mother of Radiance.

All delight is within, all that is hostile to man is afar: so let it be in thy dawning. Build our pasture of infinity, illumined with truth, build our home of delight freed from fear. Drive away all that divides and antagonises, bring to us all the wealth of the human soul, O Mother of Plenty, send forth into life all the plenitude of delight.

Goddess Dawn, manifest thyself in our hearts in the play of thy supreme Effulgence, widen the life of this embodied being. O Mother of Delight, give us stable impulsion. Give us that plenty whose wealth is the luminous herd of Truth, where range the chariots and horses of Life moving towards Infinity.

We are rich in those riches, we the steadfast aspirants, O Goddess, born in perfection, Daughter of Heaven! We foster Thee with our thought-streams and Thou too holdest in our bosom the knowledge won and the Vast and the Seas of Delight.

Translated by Shri Nolini Kanta Gupta from Sri Aurobindo's original Bengali. The hymn, written in the manner of the Suktas of the Rigveda, was composed in Pondicherry.

# Now I have bourne

Now I have bourne Thy presence and Thy light  
Eternity assumes me and I am  
A vastness of tranquility and flame,  
My heart a deep Atlantic of delight.  
My life is a moving moment of Thy might  
Carrying Thy vision's sacred oriflamme  
Inscribed with the white glory of Thy name  
In the unborn silence of the Infinite.

My body is a jar of radiant peace,  
The days a line across my timelessness,  
My mind is made a voiceless breadth of Thee,  
A lyre of muteness and a luminous sea;  
Yet in each cell I feel Thy fire embrace:  
A brazier of the seven ecstasies.

2 February 1938



## To the Ganges

Hearken, Ganges, hearken, thou that sweepst golden to the sea,  
Hearken, Mother, to my voice.  
From the feet of Hari with thy waters pure thou leapest free,  
Waters colder-pure than ice.

On Himaloy's grandiose summits upright in his cirque of stones  
Shiva sits in breathless air,  
Where the outcast seeks his refuge, where the demon army moans,  
Ganges erring through his hair

Down the snowwhite mountains speeding, the immortal peaks and cold,  
Crowd thy waves untouched by man.  
From Gungotry through the valleys next their icy tops were rolled,  
Bursting through Shivadry ran.

In Benares' stainless city by defilement undefiled  
Ghauts and temples lightly touched  
With thy fingers as thou ranst, laughed low in pureness like a child  
To his mother's bosom clutched.

Where the steps of Rama wandered, where the feet of Krishna came,  
There thou flowest, there thy hand  
Clasps us, Bhagirathie, Jahnavie or Gunga, and thy name  
Holier makes the Aryans' land.

But thou leavst Aryavurtha, but thou leapest to the seas  
In thy hundred mighty streams;  
Nor in the unquiet Ocean vast thy grandiose journeyings cease,  
Mother, say thy children's dreams.

Written in Baroda, this poem was held back by Sri Aurobindo when his other poems of the period were published.



Down thou plungest through the Ocean, far beneath its oozy bed  
In Patala's leaden glooms  
Moaning o'er her children's pain our mother, Ganges of the dead,  
Leads our wandering spirits home.

Mighty with the mighty still thou dwelledst, goddess high and pure;  
Iron Bhishma was thy son,  
Who against ten thousand rushing chariots could in war endure;  
Many heroes fled from one.

Devavrath the mighty, Bhishma with his oath of iron power,  
Smilingly who gave up full  
Joy of human life and empire, that his father's wish might flower  
And his father's son might rule.

Who were these that thronged thereafter? wherefore came these puny hearts  
Apter for the cringing slave,  
Wrangling, selfish, weak and treacherous, vendors of their nobler parts,  
Sorry food for pyre and grave

O but these are men of mind not yet with Europe's brutal mood alloyed,  
Poets singing in their chains,  
Preachers teaching manly slavery, speakers thundering in the void.  
Motley wear these men of brains!

Well it is for hound and watchdog fawning at a master's feet,  
Cringing, of the whip afraid!  
Well it is for linnet caged to make with song his slavery sweet.  
Man for other ends was made.

Man the arrogant, the splendid, man the mighty wise and strong,  
Born to rule the peopled earth,  
Shall he bear the alien's insult, shall he brook the tyrant's wrong  
Like a thing of meaner birth?

Stepoor in the east, of Chand and Kedar, bright with Mogul blood,  
And the Kings of Aracan

And the Atlantic pirates helped that hue, — its ruined glory flood  
Kirtinasha's waters wan.

Buried are our cities; fallen the apexed dome, the Indian arch;  
In Chitore the jackals crowd :  
Krishna's Dwarcā sleeps for ever, o'er its ruined bastions march  
All the Oceans thundering loud.

Still, yet still the fire of Kali on her ancient altar burns  
Smouldering under smoky pall,  
And the deep heart of her peoples to their Mighty Mother turns,  
Listening for her Titan call.

Yet Pratapaditya's great fierce spirit shall in might awake  
In Jessore he loved and made,  
Sitaram the good and mighty for his well-loved people's sake  
Leave the stillness and the shade.

And Bengal the wide and ancient where the Senas swayed of old  
Up to far Benares pure,  
She shall lead the Aryan peoples to the mighty doom foretold  
And her glory shall endure.

By her heart of quick emotion, by her brain of living fire,  
By her vibrant speech and great,  
She shall lead them, they shall see their destiny in her warm desire  
Opening all the doors of Fate.

By the shores of Brahmaputra or where Ganges nears the sea,  
Even now a flame is born  
Which shall kindle all the South to brilliance and the North shall be  
Lighted up as with the morn.

And once more this Aryavurtha fit for heavenly feet to tread,  
Free and holy, bold and wise,  
Shall lift up her face before the world and she whom men thought dead,  
Into strength immortal rise.

Not in icy lone Gungotry nor by Kashi's holy fanes,  
    Mother, hast thou power to save  
Only, nor dost thou grow old near Sagar, nor our vileness stains,  
    Ganges, thy celestial wave.

Dukkhineswar, Dukkhineswar, wonderful predestined pile,  
    Tell it to our sons unborn,  
Where the night was brooding darkest and the curse was on the soil  
    Heaviest, God revealed the morn.



## Prefatory Note on Bhartrihari

This essay was written as a preface to the translation of Bhartrihari's Nitishataka which Sri Aurobindo first called "The Century of Morals", but later *The Century of Life* (see note to the translation on page 157 of Centenary Volume 8). The rendering was done in Baroda around the turn of the century and later revised before being brought out as a book in 1924. At this time Sri Aurobindo deliberately suppressed this elaborate prefatory note, substituting for it the brief note referred to above.

**B**HARTRIHARI'S Century of Morals (Nitishataka) a series of poetical epigrams or rather *sentences* upon human life and conduct grouped loosely round a few central ideas, stands as the first of three similar works by one Master. Another Century touches with a heavy hand Sringara, sexual attraction; the third expresses with admirable beauty of form and intensity of feeling the sentiment of Vairagya, World-disgust, which, before and since Buddha, has figured so largely in Indian life. In a striking but quite superficial manner these brief stanzas remind us of the Greek epigram in the most masterly hands; Mimnermus, Simonides; but their spirit and the law of their internal structure relate them rather to a type of literature peculiarly Asiatic.

Classical Sanskrit literature, as a whole, is governed by an inner stress of spirit which urges it to a sort of lucid density of literary structure; in style a careful blending of curious richness with concentrated force and directness of expression, in thought and matter a crowded vividness and pregnant lucidity. The poet used one of the infinite harmonic variations of the four-lined stanza with which our classical prosody teems, or else the couplet called Arya, noble verse; and within these narrow limits he sought to give vividly some beautiful single picture, some great or apposite thought, some fine-edged sentiment. If a picture, it might be crowded with felicitous detail; if a thought, with pregnant suggestion; if a sentiment, with happy shades of feeling; but the whole must be perfectly lucid and firm in its unity. If these qualities were successfully achieved, the result was a *subhāvita*, a thing well said and therefore memorable. Some-

times the *subhāṣita* clarified into a simple epigram, sometimes it overcharged itself with curious felicities, but the true type lay between the extremes. Similar tendencies are noticeable in the best Indian artwork in ivory, wood and metal, and even enter its architecture with that spirit which passed into the Moguls and informing new shapes of loveliness created the Taj. Many a small Hindu temple is a visible *subhāṣita* in stone. In India of the classical times the tendency was so strong that poems of considerable magnitude like Kalidasa's Race of Raghov or Magha's Slaying of Shisupala are for the most part built up of stanzas on this model; in others there are whole passages which are merely a succession of *subhāṣitas*, so that the account of a battle or a city scene affects us like a picture gallery and a great speech moves past in a pomp of high-crested armoured thoughts. A successful *subhāṣita* of the highest type is for all the world as if some great ironclad sailing solitary on the limitless ocean were to turn its arc-light on a passing object; in the brilliant concentrated flood of lustre a small vessel is revealed; we see the masts, funnel, rails, decks, the guns in their positions, men standing on the deck, an officer on the bridge, every detail clear in the strange artificial lustre; next moment the light is shut off and the scene, relapsing into darkness, is yet left bitten in on the brain. There is the same instantaneous concentration of vision, the same carefully-created luminousness and crowded lucidity of separate detail in the clear-cut unity of the picture.

But the *subhāṣita* is not peculiar to India, it pervades Asia. The most characteristic verse of China and Japan is confined to this style; it seems to have overmastered Arabian poetry; that it is common in Persian the Rubaiyat of Omar and the writings of Hafiz and Sādi would appear to indicate. In India itself we find the basis of the style in some of the Upanishads, although the structure there is more flexible and flowing, not yet trained to the armoured compactness of classic diction. Subsequently the only class of writing which the spirit of the *subhāṣita* did not invade, was that great mass of epic and religious literature which made its appeal to the many and not to the cultured few. In the Mahabharat, Ramayan and the Purānas we have the grand natural stream of Hindu poetry flowing abundantly through plain and valley, not embanked and banded by the engineer.

Kalidasa and Bhartrihari are the two mightiest masters of the characteristic classical style as it was at its best, before it degenerated

into over-curiosity. Tradition tells us they were contemporaries. It is even said that Bhartrihari was an elder brother of Vikramaditya, Kalidasa's patron, — not of course Harsha of the sixth century to whom European scholarship has transferred the distinction, but the half-mythical founder of Malava power in the first century before Christ. To account for the succession of a younger brother, the old and common story of the fruit that changed hands till it returned disastrously to the first giver, is saddled on the great moralist. King Bhartrihari understood that his beloved wife was unfaithful to him, and, overwhelmed by the shock, fell wholly under the influence of *vairagya*, abandoned his crown to Vikrama and sought the forest in the garb of an anchorite. The second stanza of the Century of Morals commemorates the unhappy discovery. But the epigram has no business in that place and it is doubtful whether it has a personal application; the story itself is an evident fiction. On the other hand the notion of some European scholars that Bhartrihari was a mere compiler of other people's *subhāsitas*, is not much better inspired. Undoubtedly, spurious verses were introduced and a few bear the mark of their extraneous origin; but I think no one who has acquired a feeling for Sanskrit style or is readily responsive to the subtle spirit in poetry can fail to perceive that the majority are by one master-craftsman. The question is for those to decide who have learned to feel the shades of beauty and peculiarities of tinge in words (a quite different thing from shades of meaning and peculiarities of use) and to regard them not as verbal counters or grammatical formations but as living things. Without this subtle taste for words the finer personal elements of style, those which do not depend on general principles of structure, cannot be well-appreciated. There are collections of *subhāsitas* in plenty, but the style of Bhartrihari is a distinct style and the personality of Bhartrihari is a distinct personality. There is nothing of that infinite variety of tone, note, personal attitude — I do not refer to mere shiftings of standpoint and inconsistencies of opinion — which stamp a collection; there is one characteristic tone, a note strong and unmistakable, the persistent self-repetition of an individual manner. All is mint of a single mind.

Bhartrihari's Centuries are important to us as the finished expression of a thoroughly typical Aryan personality in the most splendid epoch of Indian culture. The most splendid, not the best; for the vigor-

ous culture mirrored in the epics has been left behind; the nobly pure, strong and humane civilisation which produced Buddha gives way to a civilisation a little less humane, much less masculine, infinitely less pure, yet richer, more variously coloured, more delightful to the taste and senses; the millennium of philosophy and heroism yields to the millennium of luxury and art. Of the new civilisation Kalidasa is the perfect and many-sided representative; he had the receptive, alchemistic imagination of the great world-poets, Shakespeare, Homer and Valmekie, and everything that was in his world he received into that alembic with a deep creative delight and transmuted into forms and sounds of magical beauty. Bhartrihari's was a narrower mind and intenser personality. He represents his age in those aspects which powerfully touched his own individual life and character, but to others, not having catholicity of moral temper, he could not respond. He was evidently a Kshatriya; for all his poetry breathes that proud, grandiose, arrogantly noble spirit of that old magnanimous Indian aristocracy, extreme in its self-assertion, equally extreme in its self-abnegation, which made the ancient Hindu people one of the three or four great peoples of antiquity. The savour of the Kshatriya spirit in Bhartrihari is of the most personal, intimate kind, not the purely poetic and appreciative delight of Kalidasa. It is with him grain of character, not mere mental impression. It expresses itself even in his Vairagya by the fiery and ardent, almost fierce spirit which inspires his asceticism, — how different from the fine quietism of the Brahmin! But the Century of World-disgust, although it contains some of his best poetry is not to us his most characteristic and interesting work; we find that rather in the Century of Morals.

This Century is an admirable, if incomplete poetic rendering of the great stock of morality which our old writers summarised in the one word *ārya*, — Aryan, noble. The word *ārya* has been thought to correspond very closely to the English idea of a gentleman, — inaccurately, for its conception is larger and more profound in moral content. *Arya* and *anārya* correspond in their order of ideas partly to the totality indicated by the word, *gentleman*, and its opposite, partly to the conceptions knightly and unknighly, partly to the qualities suggested in an English mind by the expressions English and unEnglish as applied to conduct. The Aryan man is he who observes in spirit and letter the received code of a national morality which included the

higher niceties of etiquette, the bold and chivalrous temper of a knightly and martial aristocracy, the general obligations of truth, honour and high feeling, and, crowning all, such great ideals of the Vedic and Buddhistic religion, — sweetness, forbearance, forgiveness, charity, self-conquest, calm, self-forgetfulness, self-immolation — as had entered deeply into the national imagination.

The ideas of the *Century of Morals* are not in themselves extraordinary, nor does Bhartrihari, though he had a full share of the fine culture of his age, appear to have risen in intellectual originality beyond the average level; it is the personality which appears in the *Centuries* that is striking. Bhartrihari is, as Matthew Arnold would have said, in the grand style. He has the true heroic turn of mind and turn of speech; he breathes a large and puissant atmosphere. High spirited, high-minded, high of temper, keen in his sympathies, admiring courage, firmness and daring aspiration above all things, thrilling to impulses of humanity, kindness and self-sacrifice in spite of his rugged strength, dowered with a trenchant power of scorn and sombre irony, and occasionally of stern invective, but sweetening this masculine severity of character with varied culture and the old high Indian worship of knowledge, goodness and wisdom, such is the man who emerges from the one hundred and odd verses of the *Shataka*. The milder and more feminine shades of the Aryan ideal he does not so clearly typify. We have often occasion to ask ourselves: What manner of men did the old Aryan discipline, uniting with the new Hellenic-Asiatic culture, succeed in producing? Bhartrihari is at least one type of its products.

And yet in the end a doubt breaks in. Was he altogether of his age? Was he not born in an alien time and an evil day? He would have been better at home, one fancies, with the more masculine temper depicted in the *Mahabharata*. Certainly he ended in disgust and fled for refuge to ascetic imaginations not wholly characteristic of his time. He had lived the life of courts, was perhaps an official of high standing and seems to have experienced fully the affronts, uncertainties, distastes to which such a career has always been exposed. From the beginning stray utterances point to a growing dissatisfaction and in the end there comes the poignant cry of a thwarted life. When we read the *Century of Passion*, we seem to come near the root of his malady. As in the earlier *Century* he has subdued to the law of poetical form the ethical aspects of life, so now will he deal with the delight of



the senses; but how little of real delight there is in this misnamed Century of Passion! Bhartrihari is no real lover, certainly; but neither is he a genuine voluptuary. Of that keen-edged honey-laden delight in the joy of the senses and the emotions which thrills through every line of Kalidasa's *Cloud*, there is no faintest trace. Urged into voluptuous experience by fashion and habit, this high and stern nature had no real vocation for the life of the senses; in this respect, and who shall say in how many others, he was out of harmony with the moral atmosphere of his times, and at last turned from it all to cry aloud the holy name of Shiva by the waters of the pure and ancient river, the river Ganges, while he waited impatiently for the great release. . . . But this too was not his vocation. He had too much defiance, fire, self-will for the ascetic. To have fallen in the forefront of ancient heroic battle or to have consummated himself in some grandiose act of self-sacrifice, this would have been his life's fitting fulfilment, the true end of Bhartrihari.

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The edition followed in the main is that of Mr. Telang in the *Bombay Sanskrit Series*. The accepted order of the verses, although it admits a few gross errors and misplacements, has nevertheless been preserved. All the *Miscellaneous Epigrams* at the end have been omitted from the rendering; and three others, the 90th, which has crept in from the *Shakuntala* of Kalidasa, the 104th, which is an inferior version of an earlier epigram and the 18th, which has come down to us in a hopelessly corrupt condition. The 27th epigram occurs in the *Mudrarakshasa* but has been admitted as it is entirely in Bhartrihari's spirit and manner and may have been copied into the play. Some other verses which do not bear internal evidence of Bhartrihari's authorship in their style and spirit, have yet been given the benefit of the doubt.

The principle of translation followed has been to preserve faithfully the thought, spirit and images of the original, but otherwise to take the full license of a poetical rendering. In translation from one European tongue into another a careful literalness may not be out of place, for the genius, sentence structure and turns of thought of

European languages are not very dissimilar; they belong to one family. But the gulf between Sanskrit and English in these respects is very wide, and any attempt at close verba! rendering would be disastrous. I have made no attempt to render the distinctive features of Bhartrihari's style; on the contrary I have accepted the necessity of substituting for the severity and compact massiveness of Sanskrit diction which must necessarily vanish in translation, the greater richness and colour preferred by the English tongue. Nor have I attempted to preserve the peculiar qualities of the *subhāṣita*; Bhartrihari's often crowded couplets and quatrains have been perforce dissolved into a looser and freer style and in the process have sometimes expanded to considerable dimensions. Lines of cunningly wrought gold have had to be beaten out into some tenuity. Otherwise the finer associations and suggestions of the original would have been lost or blurred. I hold it more pardonable in poetical translation to unstring the language than to dwarf the spirit and mutilate the thought. For in poetry it is not the verbal substance that we seek from the report or rendering of foreign masterpieces; we desire rather the spiritual substance, the soul of the poet and the soul of his poetry. We cannot hear the sounds and rhythms loved and admired by his countrymen and contemporaries; but we ask for as many as we can recover of the responses and echoes which that ancient music set vibrating in the heavens of their thought.

# The Veda

**A**T THE root of all that we Hindus have done, thought and said through these many thousands of years, behind all we are and seek to be, there lies concealed, the fount of our philosophies, the bedrock of our religions, the kernel of our thought, the explanation of our ethics and society, the summary of our civilisation, the rivet of our nationality, a small body of speech, Veda. From this one seed developing into many forms the multitudinous and magnificent birth called Hinduism draws its inexhaustible existence. Buddhism too with its offshoot, Christianity, flows from the same original source. It has left its stamp on Persia, through Persia on Judaism, through Judaism, Christianity and Sufism on Islam, and through Buddha on Confucianism, and through Christ and mediaeval mysticism, Greek and German philosophy and Sanskrit learning on the thought and civilisation of Europe. There is no part of the world's spirituality, of the world's religion, of the world's thought which would be what it is today, if the Veda had not existed. Of no other body of speech in the world can this be said.



This untitled, unnumbered fragment was found in the notebook which contains the commentary on the Isha Upanishad which is printed on pages 37 - 55. It may therefore be dated to the same period, i.e. 1905-1907.

# Hymns to Soma

Rig-veda Mandala 9, Suktas 43-50

1. This with the Words let us clothe, this that appears as a life-movement cleansed pure of soil, by Light, for Rapture.
2. This all our words that seek the being's growth make glad as of old, delight for the Mind to drink.
3. Purifying its streams bright rejoicing moves this Bliss perfected by the Words from Medhyatithi's luminous mind.
4. O pure-flowing Wine, win for us a felicity, O Lord of delight, entirely glorious and thousand-energied in its brilliant power.
5. Joy neighs aloud in the sheath of its purifying like the Horse that gallops towards plenty, when desiring the godhead it flows through it and beyond.
6. Stream pure towards the winning of our plenty, towards the increase of the illumined who declares thee; O Joy, enrich him with an utter force.

44

1. Towards a vast formation, O Joy, thou bearest us forward like the sea bearing forward a wave; thou movest becoming Ayasya towards the gods.
2. Clashed in the mentality, made firm by the understanding Joy is impelled towards the supreme and holds seerhood by the illumined mind.

These hymns were translated in Pondicherry in 1915.

3. It is this that is awake in the gods and it comes pressed from them into the sheath of the purifying, Delight in his movement accomplishing every work.
4. So do thou flow pure for us desiring the plenty, effecting a shining sacrifice. Thee man on his fullness places, on all his seats.
5. May its energy be utterly displayed, may this be ever increasing for the Lord who enjoys and the Lord in the vitality, may Delight labour controlling all in the gods.
6. Today for possession of the soul's substance, do thou, finder of the will, discoverer of the Way, conquer for us the plenitude, yea, the inspiration vast.

45

1. Stream pure for our rapture with the soul's strong vision that the godhead may be manifest in us, O Delight for the mind to drink.
2. Arrive at the goal of thy embassy; let the god in the mind be satisfied; arrive for thy lovers to the godhead, arrive to the highest good.
3. Ruddy art thou and we will adorn thee with the illuminations of the light for ecstasy. Open wide for us the gates to Bliss.
4. He has flowed beyond the sheath of the purifying, he is the Steed of Power that flings in its strength its yoke behind on the road. Delight gallops towards the gods.
5. To him his lovers cry aloud as beyond the senses he sports in the woodlands of his delight. For the lord of the sweetness they yearn who raise the song.
6. Flow in that pure stream of thine by which when men drink of it thou givest them perfect vision. O Joy of God, for him who affirms thee an utter strength.

## 46

1. Like horses that gallop and do swiftly their work they are loosed in their race for the manifesting of the gods, they stream, they increase our . . . formations.
2. Powers of sweetness perfected, adorned like a woman by her father's clan; the outpourings of bliss join and cleave to the vital god.
3. Lo these outpourings of the delight and the sweetness full of the love and pleasure are poured into their vessels and increase the power in the mind by works.
4. O ye bright Energies run and with strong hands seize Soma's soul-upheaving ecstasies; join his rapture with your rays.
5. So stream pure, O winner of wealth, enforcer<sup>2</sup> for us of the vast treasure of felicity, O Joy, find for us the heavenly path.
6. The ten who impel cleanse this that has to be cleansed, flowing into purity, for the god in the Mind an intoxicating wine.

## 47

1. Lo, by this perfect working Bliss that was great, has increased; full of its own intoxication it aspires upward in its abundance and its mastery.
2. All that it has done and all that it shall do becomes conscious in it by the beating down of all that opposes, doing<sup>2</sup> violence, it accumulates its gains of active Truth.
3. May this Bliss become . . .<sup>1</sup> and essence of the Power of

<sup>1</sup> One illegible word

<sup>2</sup> Reading uncertain

mind, even its electric force and win us our full thousand, now that its self-expression is born.

4. For, seer of the Truth in the man who holds it of itself it claims the Delight for his illumined mind when its thoughts become clear and bright.
5. Thou art he who in the bringings, in the manifold plenty for the conquerors winnest possession of the felicities even as of these labouring powers.

48

1. Thou art that which brings to the seats of our fulfilment the mights of the Great Heaven and we seek thee in the beauty of thy brightness by perfection in our works.
2. Thee rapturous, entirely energised and its violent expressions, vast, with its motion of the snake, breaking open for us our hundred cities.
3. Thence let the Bird of painless delight bring Thee to be king of our heavens, O perfect in will, towards felicity.
4. Him let the Bird bring who for every one that has vision of the luminous heavens is their common possession, transgressor of the lower Light, guardian of the Truth.
5. Now driving forward he attains to a greater largeness of the Power in the mind, effects his possession of our energies and accomplishes all our endeavour.

49

1. Stream down utterly on us thy rain, even the whole wave of the waters from all heaven; undecaying stream down those vast impulsions.

2. **Flow pure in that stream by which the herds of the Light come hither to this our house, they that bring <sup>3</sup> to the creature Delight.**
3. **The rich-offering stream down on us in that stream in the sacrifices and manifest entirely the godhead; stream on us the Rain.**
4. **For Force race abroad in thy stream over all the sense-life where thou art purified; let the gods in us hear indeed.**
5. **Let Bliss purifying itself in its streams flow upon us beating away the giant devourers, illumining in us all luminousnesses with that pristine Light.**

## 50

1. **Upward mount thy strengths and their voice is as the sound of the waves of the ocean of being. Urge the wheel of the wain.**
2. **In thy pouring forth, when thou movest on the plane of the Sense, the three Words in us mount upward desiring their plenitude.**
3. **In the veiling of the sense they with the stones of the pressing send racing the Beloved and the Brilliant pure-flowing from whom sweetness rains.**
4. **Flow in thy stream into the place of the purifying, O complete in ecstasy, O Seer, there to take thy seat where our illumination is born.**
5. **So stream, O utter ecstasy, brightening thyself with the rays of the Light, with its active beams, O Lord of sweetness, that of thee the Mind may drink.**

<sup>3</sup> Reading uncertain.



# The Karmayogin

## A COMMENTARY ON THE ISHA UPANISHAD

This is the first chapter of a commentary on the Isha Upanishad done in Baroda or Calcutta after 1904 or 1905 and before 1908. The second chapter will be given in our next issue. A portion of the same commentary has already been published in Centenary Volume 27 (pp. 201-88).

### CHAPTER I

## The Law of Renunciation

### I. GOD ALL AND GOD EVERYWHERE

**GURU:** Salutation to the Eternal who is without place, time, cause or limit. Salutation to Him who rules the Universe, the Lord of the Illusion, the Master of manifold life. Salutation to the Self in me, who is the Self in all creatures. Brahman, Isha, Atman, under whatever aspect He manifests Himself or manifests not, to Him the One and Only Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, salutation.

The Upanishad begins: —

“With the Lord all this must be clothed (as with a garment), even all that is world in this moving universe; abandon the world that thou mayest enjoy it, neither covet any man’s possessions.”

The Upanishad first sets forth the universality of the Supreme Being; for whatever we see, hear or are in any way sensible of, we must feel the presence of the Lord surrounding it. This tree that I am sitting under, I must not consider as only so many leaves, bark, pith, sap and roots encased in earth and air; I must realise that it is a manifestation in the Supreme who is the only reality. This voice that I am uttering, vibrates in the atmosphere of the Divine Reality; only because it vibrates there, is it capable of sound, articulation and meaning. No action I do or watch others do, but the Lord is there surrounding and upholding it; otherwise it could not be done. Whatever I see, I am seeing God; whatever I hear, I am hearing God; whatever

I do, it is the Energy of God which is governing my actions. This is the first thing the Karmayogin has to realise and until he has set his mind on the realisation, Karmayoga is impossible. The Lord is everywhere; the Lord surrounds everything with His presence; the Lord is all. वामुदेव. सर्वमिति .<sup>1</sup> This Karma that I do, I do it in the Lord; this subjective I who act, exist only in the Lord; the objective he, she, it to whom the action is done, exists only in the Lord. It is the omnipresent universality of the Supreme that has first to be realised. When the Yogin has had spiritual experience of this universality, then only is he fit for Karmayoga; for not till then can he sink the constant feeling of I and Thou and he in a single higher and wider Existence; not till then can he escape from apparent self to true Self, and without such escape Karmayoga cannot really begin. To clothe all things with the Supreme, to be conscious of Him in all you say, do, think feel or are sensible of, — this experience is the beginning of Karmayoga. The transformation of this experience into the habitual condition of the soul, is the consummation of Karmayoga; for it leads straight to the knowledge of Brahman and the ecstasy of union with Him; Karma melting into and becoming one with Jnana and Bhakti. Karma, Bhakti, Jnana, — Action, Love, Knowledge, are the three paths which lead out of phenomenal existence to the eternal reality, and where the three meet and become one, is the end of the great journey, that highest home of Vishnu towards which it is the one object of the Upanishad to turn and guide us. The Isha Upanishad is the Scripture of the Karmayogin; of the three paths it teaches the way of Action, and therefore begins with this first indispensable condition of all Godward action, to see all things, creatures, causes, effects, changes and evolutions as so many transitory phenomena enveloped with the presence of the Supreme Being and existing in Him and by Him only. Not I but He, for He is my real self and what I call I is only so much covering and semblance, — this is Vedanta; the first feeling of this truth is the beginning of Jnana, the beginning of Bhakti, the beginning of Karma. सोऽहम् .<sup>2</sup> He is the true and only I.

<sup>1</sup> *Vāsudevah sarvamiti* the Divine Being is all (Gita 7.19)

<sup>2</sup> *So'ham*: He am I (Isha Upanishad 1).

## II. ISHA, THE LORD

Let us now look closely into the language of the Scripture, for in the Upanishad every word is of infinite importance and is chosen in preference to others for some profound and significant reason. *Ishā* is the first word of the Upanishad; it is with the Lord that we must clothe all things in this Universe, it is the Lord whose presence, will, energy we must realise in whatever we see, feel, do or think. It is in other words the Supreme Being not in His aspect as the actionless, unknowable Parabrahman, transcendental and beyond realisation by senses, mind or speech; it is not even Sachchidananda, that absolute self-centred Existence, Consciousness, Bliss with whom the Jnanayogin seeks to unite himself in Samadhi; it is the Eternal in His aspect as Ruler of the Universe, He who keeps the wheel of phenomena turning and guides its motions as the mechanician controls his machine. The Karmamargin aims at living disillusionized, but yet using the illusions of Maya as the materials of his Yoga; he seeks to free himself from phenomena while yet living among phenomena; it is therefore Isha, Maheshwara, the Lord of the Illusion, the Master of multiple phenomenal life whom he must seek and in whom he must lose his lower self. Since he works through actions, it is the Master of actions whom he must worship with the flowers and incense of a selfless life.

Is there then a difference between Parabrahman and Isha? Are there two Supreme Beings and not one? No difference, really; the distinction is one of appearance, of semblance. Parabrahman, the absolute, transcendental, eternal reality is unknowable to human reason; That which is above reason in man can reach Parabrahman and experience Parabrahman, because It is Parabrahman; but this is in the state of Samadhi and from the state of Samadhi the human understanding can bring back no record intelligible to the reason or explicable in terms of speech. Parabrahman in His Essence is therefore realisable, but not intelligible; He can be experienced, He cannot be explained or understood. Still Parabrahman presents to the understanding two semblances or aspects by which He can be relatively though not absolutely known. These two aspects correspond to the two powers inherent in Parabrahman as the Knower of Himself, the powers of Vidya and Avidya, the power to know and the power not to know, the faculty of Knowledge and the faculty of Illusion. Para-

brahman can know Himself as He really is; this is Vidya. He can also imagine Himself as He is not; this is Avidya. In the first aspect He is Sachchidananda, absolute Existence, Consciousness and Bliss; He exists to Himself alone, because there *is* no other existence but Himself; He is conscious of His own existence only, because there *is* no other existence to be conscious of; He is the bliss of His own self-conscious existence, because there is nothing outside or other than Him to give Him external bliss. That is the eternal reality, that is His aspect to Vidya or true Knowledge. But there is also the eternal unreality, His aspect to Avidya or False Knowledge. Then He is a great Will, Shakti or Force pouring itself out in a million forms and names and keeping for ever in motion the eternal wheel of phenomenal Evolution, which He guides and governs. He is then Isha, the Lord or Ruler. To use a human parallel, Shakespeare pouring himself out in a hundred names and forms, Desdemona, Othello, Iago, Viola, Rosalind, Macbeth, Hamlet, Lear, Cymbeline is using his power of Avidya to become the lord and ruler of a wonderful imaginary world. Shakespeare putting aside his works and returning to his own single and sufficient existence is using his power of Vidya to recover his own constant single reality. But there is one Shakespeare and not two. Now the Karmamargin has to deal with this great multifold phenomenal universe and when he seeks to feel the presence of the Eternal round every single thing it contains, it must necessarily be not in His unconditioned, unphenomenal aspect of Sachchidananda but in His conditioned, phenomenal aspect as Isha, Lord of the Universe. As Isha the Karmayogin may worship Him in various sub-aspects. Isha is a double being as Purusha and Prakriti; Purusha, the great male ocean of spiritual force which sets Prakriti to produce and watches her workings, and Prakriti, the mighty female energy which produces and works unweariedly for the pleasure of Purusha. He is the triple Being, Prajna, Hiranyagarbha, Virat; Prajna, Lord of Sleep-Life, the intelligent force which lives and wakes in what would otherwise seem inert and inanimate existence or the mere blind play of mechanical forces; Hiranyagarbha, the Lord of Dream-Life who takes from this ocean of subconsciously intelligent spiritual being those conscious psychic forces which He materializes or encases in various forms of gross living matter; and Virat, Lord of Waking-Life, who governs, preserves and maintains the sensible creation which Hiranyagarbha has shaped.

He is triple again as Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu; Shiva, the destroyer, the Yogin, the Lord of brute or inert life; the Master of Samadhi, the Refuge of the outcast and of those who have no refuge; Brahma, the Creator, who puts forth life and stays not his hand for a moment; Vishnu, the Preserver and Saviour, the Master of Power and Love and Life and Light and Sweetness. With all these aspects of Isha, the Lord, Hindu worship has associated names and forms and in these names and forms He shows Himself to His worshippers. The Jnanayogin loves to worship Him as Shiva, the Master of utter Samadhi; to the Bhakta He appears in whatever form appeals most to the spiritual emotions of His devotee. But the Karmayogin should devote himself to those forms of the Supreme Lord in which His mighty Shakti, His Will to live and create has expressed itself in its highest, purest and most inspiring and energetic virility; for Karma is merely Shakti in motion and the Karmayogin must be a pure conductor of divine energy, a selfless hero and creator in the world. Isha Himself in His Avatars, Buddha, Rama, Srikrishna, has given us the highest types of this selfless divine energy and it is therefore to these mighty spirits, God-in-man, that the Karmayogin may well direct his worship. Or he may worship Isha in His Shakti, in the form of Durga-Kali, the most powerful realisation of His cosmic energy which the human mind has yet envisaged. If he is able to dispense with forms, he may worship the idea of Isha Himself, the Almighty Lord, whom the Hindu adores as Hari, the Christian as God, the Mahomedan as Allah. Even the atheist, if he recognizes a mighty Power at work in all life and existence and yields up his self and actions to the will and ends of that Power, or if he recognizes in men the godhead he refuses to recognize in the Universe and devotes himself to the selfless service of his kind, has set his foot on the path of Karmayoga and cannot fail to reach the Lord whom he denies. It is of no importance that the Karmayogin should recognize a particular name or form as the greater Self to win whom he must lose his smaller self; but it is of importance and essential that he should recognize the existence of a Power inside and outside himself to the law of whose Will and Workings he can sacrifice the self-will and self-worship of the natural man. Whatever name he gives to this Power or whether he gives it a name or not, it is Isha, the Lord, whose presence he must feel around every object and movement in the Universe.

### III. ISHA AND HIS UNIVERSE

Next let us take note of the word वाम्यम्.<sup>3</sup> All this Universe must be clothed with Isha; we must draw the feeling of His presence round every object in the Universe and envelop it with Isha, as a robe is drawn round and envelops the wearer. For the Lord is greater than His Universe. This tree is not the Lord, it is in the Lord. We must avoid the materialistic Pantheism which identifies the visible Universe with the Supreme Being. It is true that He is both the final and material Cause of the Universe, and in one sense He is His Universe and His Universe is He, just as Shakespeare's creations are really Shakespeare himself, woven by him out of his own store of psychic material; and yet it would be obviously a mistake to identify, say, Iago with Shakespeare. This tree is evolved out of original ether, ether pervades it and surrounds it, but the tree cannot be described as ether, nor ether as the tree; so, going deeper down, we find it is evolved out of the existence of the Lord who pervades it and surrounds it with His presence; but the tree is not the Lord, nor the Lord the tree. The Hindu is no idolater; he does not worship stocks or stones, the tree as tree or the stone as stone or the idol as a material thing, but he worships the presence of the Lord which fills and surrounds the tree, stone or idol, and of which the tree, stone or idol is merely a manifestation or seeming receptacle. We say for the convenience of language and mental realisation that God is in His creature, but really it is the creature who is in God न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि.<sup>4</sup> "I am in not them, they are in Me."

We find European scholars when they are confronted with the metaphors of the Sruti, always stumbling into a blunder which we must carefully avoid if we wish to understand our Scriptures. Their reason, hard, logical and inflexible, insists on fixing the metaphor to its literal sense and having thus done violence to the spirit of the Upanishad, they triumphantly point to the resultant incoherence and inconsistency of our revealed writings and cry out, "These are the guesses, sometimes sublime, generally infantile, of humanity in

<sup>3</sup> *Vāsyam*: to be clothed, to be worn as a garment, to be inhabited. (See note to Isha I, Cent. Vol. 12, p. 63.)

<sup>4</sup> *Na tvaham tēsu te mayi* (Gita 7.12).

its childhood." But the metaphors of the Sruti are merely helps to a clearer understanding; you are intended to take their spirit and not insist on the letter. They are conveniences for the hand in climbing, not supports on which you are to hang your whole weight. Here is a metaphor वास्यम्,<sup>5</sup> clothe, as with a garment. But the garment is different from the wearer, and limited in the space it occupies: is the Lord then different from His creation and limited in His being? That would be the letter; the spirit is different. The presence of the Lord who is infinite, must be thought of as surrounding each object and not confined to the limits of the object, — this and no more is the force of वास्यम्.<sup>5</sup> When we see the tree, we do not say, "This is the Lord", but we say, "Here is the Lord". The tree exists only in Him and by Him; He is in it and around it, even as the ether is.

All this, says the Sruti, is to be thought of as surrounded by the presence of the Lord, सर्वमिदम्,<sup>5</sup> all this that is present to our senses, all in fact that we call the Universe. But to avoid misunderstanding the Upanishad goes on to point out that it is not only the Universe as a whole, but each thing that is in the Universe which we must feel to be encompassed with the divine Presence, यत्किञ्च जगत्या जगत्,<sup>6</sup> everything and anything that is moving thing in Her who moves. Jagatī, she that moves, in the ancient Sanscrit, was a word applied to the whole Universe; afterwards it meant this moving earth,<sup>7</sup> that part of the cosmos with which we human beings are mainly concerned and the neuter jagat, that which moves, came to be the ordinary expression for world or universe. But why is the universe called "she that moves"? Because it is the result of the working of Prakriti, the visible form of Prakriti, the great female material energy of the Lord, and the essence of Prakriti is motion; for by motion she creates this material world. Indeed all object matter is only a form, that is to say a visible, audible or in some way sensible result of motion. Every material object is what it is here called, jagat, a world of infinite motion; even the stone, even the clod. Our senses tell us that

<sup>5</sup> Sarvam idam. all this, all that is here (the common phrase in the Upanishads for the totality of the phenomena in the mobility of the universe).

<sup>6</sup> Yat kiñca jagatyām jagat: whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion (Isha 1).

<sup>7</sup> The ancient Rishis knew that the earth moves. चला पृथ्वी स्थिरा भ्रान्ति [Calā pṛthvī sthūrā bhāntī]. "The earth moves, but seems to be still".

the material world is the only reality, the only steadfast thing of whose rule and order we can be sure and by which we can abide; but our senses are in error and the Upanishad warns us against their false evidence. The material world is a transitory and changing whirl of motion on the surface of Brahman, the great ocean of spiritual existence, who alone is, in His depths, eternal, real and steadfast. It is He who as the Lord gives order, rule and abidingness to the infinite motion we call the Universe; and if we wish to be in touch with reality, we must train our souls to become aware of His presence sustaining, pervading and surrounding this moving Prakriti and every objective form to which her varying rates of vibration have given rise. Thus placed in constant touch with reality, the Karmayogin will escape from the false shows and illusions of Prakriti; Karma or action which also is merely her motion, energy at work, will not master him and drive him as a storm drives a ship, but he will rather be the master of action, both his own and that of others. For it is only by understanding practically the reality of a thing and its law of working that one can become its master and make use of it for his own purposes.

#### IV . GOD IN MAN AND IN ALL CREATURES

But when the Karmayogin has seen the Lord surrounding all things with His presence and all things existing only as transitory manifestations, idols or images in this divine Reality, what follows ? It follows that just as this tree or that mountain exists only as an image or manifestation in the divine Reality, so also all creatures, men included, are merely images or manifestations in the same divine Reality. In other words what is real, living, eternal in you and me, is not our body, nor our vitality and its desires, nor our mind, nor our reason and understanding, but just the divine presence which pervades me and you as much as it pervades the tree and the mountain. And it is not the body, vitality, mind, reason or understanding which constitutes the presence of the Lord within us; for my body differs from yours, my vitality differs from yours, my mind differs from yours, my reason and understanding differ from yours; they differ even from themselves according to time and circumstances; but the Lord is one and unchanging. There must therefore be something



deeper hidden within us than any of these things, something which is alone real, living and eternal. This something is called in the Vedanta the Self; it is Brahman or the Lord within each of his creatures. The Self is in the microcosm what Sachchidananda is in the macrocosm; it is the great pure luminous existence, self-conscious and self-blissful, which acts not, neither desires, but watches the infinite play of Prakriti in the life of the creature It informs. And just as by the power of Avidya Sachchidananda takes the semblance of a mighty Will or Force, Isha, creating endless multiplicity and governing, guiding and rejoicing in the interplay of worlds, so by the same power this Self or Witness in Man takes the semblance of a sublime Will creating for itself action and inaction, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, victory and defeat, guiding, governing and rejoicing in the activity of the apparent creature it informs, but unaffected and unbound by his works. This Will, which the Vedanta calls Ananda or Bliss and not will, must not be confused with mere volition or desire, for volition belongs to the outer and apparent man and not to the inner and real. This Self is in me, it is also in you and every other being and in all it is the same Self, only the Will or Shakti manifests in different degrees, with a different intensity and manner of working and so with different qualities and actions in each separate creature. Hence the appearance of diversity and divisibility in what is really One and indivisible.

This divisibility of the Indivisible is one of those profound paradoxes of Vedantic thought which increasing Knowledge will show to be deep and far-reaching truths. It used to be implicitly believed that human personality was a single and indivisible thing; yet recently a school of psychologists has grown up who consider man as a bundle of various personalities rather than a single, homogeneous and indivisible consciousness. For it has been found that a single man can divide himself or be divided into several personalities, each living its own life and unconscious of the other, while yet again another personality may emerge in him which is conscious of the others and yet separate from all of them. This is true; nevertheless, the *man* all through remains one and the same, not only in body but in his psychical existence; for there is a deeper substratum in him which underlies all these divided personalities and is wider than all of them put together. The truth is that the waking personality is only the apparent man, not the real. Personality is the creation of memory,

for memory is its basis and pedestal. If the pedestal, then, be divided and put apart, the superstructure also must be in the same act divided and put apart. But the waking memory is only a part, a selection of a wider latent memory which has faithfully recorded all that happens not in the man's present life only, but in all his past. The personality which corresponds with this latent unerring memory is the true personality of the man; it is his soul, one infinite and indivisible, and its apparent divisions are merely the result of Avidya, false knowledge, due to defective action of the waking memory. So the apparent division of the divine Self into many human selves, of the indivisible Paramatman into many Jivatmans, is simply the result of Avidya due to the action of the Maya or self-imposed illusion of Isha, the great Force who has willed that the One by this force of Maya should become phenomenally manifold. In reality, there is no division and the Self in me is the same as the Self in you and the same as the Self up yonder in the Sun. The unity of spiritual existence is the basis of all true religion and true morality. We know indeed that as God is not contained in His universe, but the universe is in Him, so also God is not contained within a man. When the Sruti says elsewhere that the Purusha lies hidden in the heart of our being and is no larger than the size of a man's thumb, it simply means that to the mind of man under the dominion of Avidya his body, vitality, mind, reason bulk so largely, the Spirit seems a small and indistinguishable thing indeed inside so many and bulky sheaths and coverings. But in reality, it is body, vitality, mind and reason forming the apparent man that are small and trifling and it is the Spirit or real man that is large, grandiose and mighty. The apparent man exists in and by the real, not the real in the apparent; the body is in the soul, not the soul in the body. Yet for the convenience of language and our finite understanding we are compelled to say that the soul is in the body and that God is within the man; for that is how it naturally presents itself to us who use the mental standpoint and the language of a finite intelligence. The Lord, from our standpoint, is within all His creatures and He is the real self of all His creatures. My self and yourself are not really two but one. This is the second truth proceeding logically from the first, on which the Karmayogin has to lay fast hold.

## V SELFLESSNESS THE BASIC RULE OF KARMAYOGA

From the fundamental truth of one divine Reality pervading and surrounding all phenomenal objects and from its implied corollary, the identity of my Self with your Self, the Upanishad deduces a principle of action which holds good for all Karmayogins. "Abandon the world that thou mayst enjoy it, neither covet any man's possession." He that would save his soul, must first lose it. He who would enjoy the world, must first abandon it. Thus from an intellectual paradox the Upanishad proceeds to a moral paradox, and yet both are profound and accurate statements of fact. At first the reason revolts against an assertion so self-contradictory. If I put my food away from me, how can I enjoy it? If I throw away the sovereign in my hand, another may have the joy of it but how can I? I, Devadatta, am told to enjoy the world, yes, all that is in the world; yet I find that I have little enough to enjoy while my neighbour Harischandra has untold wealth. If I am to enjoy the world, how shall I proceed to my object? Not surely by abandoning the little I have, but by keeping fast hold on it and adding to it the much that Harischandra has. So would argue the natural man, rationally enough from his point of view, but so would not argue the Karmayogin. He will covet no man's possession, because he knows such terms as possession, mine, thine, to be false and illusory in the light of the secret tremendous truth he has got hold of, that there is nothing in this world real, desirable and worth calling by the name of bliss except Brahman, the eternal reality of things. Self-gratification and the possession of wealth and its enjoyments are transitory, illusory and attended with inevitable trouble and pain, but the enjoyment of one's identity with Brahman and the possession of Brahman are pure and undisturbed bliss. The more I possess of Him, the wider and nearer perfection will be my enjoyment. Brahman then is the only wealth the Karmayogin will covet. But how can we possess Brahman? By surrounding all things in the world with Him, by realizing Him in all things. If I am wealthy, the Lord is there in my wealth, but if I am poor, the Lord is there too in my poverty; because of His presence I can enjoy my poverty as much as I did my wealth. For it is not the wealth and the poverty which matter or are real, but only the feeling of the presence of the Lord in all things. That is one way in which I can enjoy the world

by abandoning it; for the world is Brahman, the world is the Lord, and to him who has experience of it, all things are bliss, all things are enjoyment. What ground then is there left for coveting another man's possessions? Harischandra possesses merely so much gold, estates, houses, Government paper; but I, Devadatta, in my cottage, possess the Lord of the Universe and am the master and enjoyer of the whole world. It is I who am rich and not Harischandra. That is the fulfilment of his discipline for the Karmayogin.

But let us go down many steps lower. I have not yet ascended the ladder, but am still climbing. I have not yet acquired the habitual consciousness of the presence of the Lord surrounding all things as the only reality for whose sake alone transitory phenomena are precious or desirable. How in this imperfect stage of development can the Karmayogin escape from covetousness and the desire for other men's possessions? By realising more and more the supreme bliss of a selfless habit of mind and a selfless work. This is the way to his goal; this is his ladder. Unselfishness is usually imagined as the abnegation of self, a painful duty, a "mortification", something negative, irksome and arduous. That is a Western attitude, not Hindu; the European temperament is dominated by the body and the vital impulses; it undertakes altruism as a duty, a law imposed from outside, a standard of conduct and discipline; it is, in this light, something contrary to man's nature, something against which the whole man is disposed to rebel. That is not the right way to look at it. Unselfishness is not something outside the nature, but in the nature, not negative but positive, not a self-mortification and abnegation but a self-enlargement and self-fulfilment; not a law of duty but a law of self-development, not painful, but pleasurable. It is in the nature, only latent, and has to be evolved from inside, not tacked on from outside. The lion's whelp in the fable who was brought up among sheep, shrank from flesh when it was placed before him, but once he had eaten of it, the lion's instincts awoke and the habits of the sheep had no more delight for him. So it is with man. Selflessness is his true nature, but the gratification of the body and the vital impulses has become his habit, his second or false nature, because he has been accustomed to identify his body and vital impulses with himself. He, a lion, has been brought up to think himself a sheep; he, a god, has been trained to be an animal. But let him once get

the taste of his true food, and the divinity in him awakes; the habits of the animal can please him no longer and he hungers after selflessness and selfless work as a lion hungers after his natural food. Only the feeling has to be evolved as a fulfilment of his nature, not painfully worked up to as a contravention of his nature. The man who regards selflessness as a duty, has not yet learned the alphabet of true altruism; it is the man who feels it as a delight and a natural craving, who has taken the right way to learn. The Hindu outlook here is the true outlook. The Hindu does not call the man who has risen above the gratification of desire a selfless man; he calls him आत्मवान्, "the self-ful man; that man is अनात्मवान्,<sup>9</sup> that man has not found himself, who still clings to the gratifications of his body and vital impulses. Read that great drama of self-sacrifice, the Nagananda, and you will feel how different is the Hindu outlook from the Western: there self-sacrifice is not a painful and terrible struggle but a glorious outpouring of the nature, a passionatedelight. "It is only human nature, we say indulgently of any act of selfishness. But that is an error and thrice an error. It is not human nature, but animal nature: human nature is divine and selfless and the average selfish man is selfish not because of his humanity, but because his humanity is as yet undeveloped and imperfect. Christ, Buddha, these are the perfect men; Tom, Dick and Harry are merely animals slowly shaping into men.

## VI. THE PHILOSOPHICAL JUSTIFICATION OF ALTRUISM

The philosophical justification for this outlook is provided for in the fundamental position of Vedanta.सोऽहम्,<sup>10</sup> I am He; Thou too art He; there is therefore no I and Thou, but only He. Brahman, Isha is my true self, the real Devadatta; Brahman, Isha is the true self of my neighbour, the real Harischandra. There is therefore really no Devadatta, no Harischandra, but my Self in the mental and bodily case called Devadatta and my Self in the mental and bodily case called Harischandra. If therefore Harischandra enjoys untold riches, it is I who am enjoying them; for Harischandra is my Self. —

<sup>8</sup> *Ātmavān*: in possession of the Self.

<sup>9</sup> *Anātmavān*: not in possession on the Self.

<sup>10</sup> See note 2.

not my body in which I am imprisoned or my desires by which my body is made miserable, but my true self, the Purusha or real Man within me, who is the witness and enjoyer of all this sweet, bitter, tender, grand, beautiful, terrible, pleasant, horrible and wholly wonderful and enjoyable drama of the world which Prakriti enacts for his delectation. Once I experience this truth, I can take as much pleasure in the riches of Harischandra as if I myself were enjoying them; for I can thenceforth go out of my own self and so enter into the self of Harischandra, that his pleasure becomes my own. To do that I have simply to break down the illusory barrier of associations which confines my sense of self to my own body, mind and vitality. That this can be done, is a common experience of humanity, to which the name of love is given. Human evolution rises through love and towards love. This truth is instinctively recognised by all the great religions, even when they can not provide any philosophical justification for a tenet to which they nevertheless attach the highest importance. The one law of Christianity which replaces all the commandments is to love one's neighbour as oneself, the moral ideal of Buddhism is selfless benevolence and beneficence to others; the moral ideal of Hinduism is the perfect sage whose delight and occupation is the good of all creatures (सर्वभूतहितरतः).<sup>11</sup> It is always the same great ideal expressed with varying emphasis. But love in the sense which religion attaches to the word, depends on the realisation of oneself in others. If, as Sankhya and Christian theology say, there are millions of different Purushas, if the real man in me is different and separate from the real man in another, one in kind but not in essence, there can be no feeling of identity; there can only be mental or material contact. From material contact nothing but animal feelings of passion and hatred can arise; from mental contact repulsion is as likely to arise as attraction. A separate individual Self will live its own life, pursue its own gratification or its own salvation; it can have no ground, no impulse to love another as itself, because it cannot feel that the other is itself. The Vedanta provides in the realisation of a single Self and the illusory character of all division the only real explanation of this higher or spiritual love. Altruism in the light of this one profound revealing truth becomes natural, right and inevit-

<sup>11</sup> *Sarvabhūtahitaratah* : busied with and delighting in the good of all creatures.

able. It is natural because I am not really preferring another to myself, but my wider truer self to my narrower false self, God who is in all to my single mind and body, myself in Devadatta and Harischandra to myself in Devadatta alone. It is right because by embracing in my range of feelings the enjoyment of Harischandra in addition to my own I shall make my knowledge of the universality of Brahman an experience, and not merely an intellectual conception or assent; for experience and not intellectual conception is true knowledge. It is inevitable because that is my way of evolution. As I have risen from the animal to the man, so must I rise from the man to the God; but the basis of godhead is the realisation of oneself in all things. The true aim and end of evolution is the wider and wider realisation of the universal Brahman. Towards that goal we progress, with whatever tardiness, with whatever lapses, yet inevitably, from the falsehood of matter to the truth of spirit. We leave behind, first, the low animal stage of indolence, brutishness, ignorance, wrath, lust, greed and beast violence, or as we call it in our philosophy the tamasic condition and rise to various human activity and energy, the rajasic condition, from that again we must rise to the sattwic condition of divine equipoise, clarity of mind, purity of soul, high selflessness, pity, love for all creatures, truth, candour, tranquillity. Even this divine height is not the highest; we must leave it behind and climb up to the peak of all things where sits the bright and passionless Lord of all, lighting up with a single ray of His splendour a million universes. On that breathless summit we shall experience the identity of our Self not only with the Self of others, but with the All-Self who is the Lord and who is Brahman. In Brahman our evolution finds its vast end and repose.

## VII. THE MEANING OF RENUNCIATION

The Karmayogin therefore will abandon the world that he may enjoy; he will not seek, as Alexander did, to possess the whole world with a material lordship, but, as Gods do, to possess it in his soul. He will lose himself in his own limited being, that he may find himself illimitably in the being of others. The abandonment of the world means nothing less than this, that we give up our own petty personal joy and pleasure to bathe up to the eyes in the joy of others; and

the joys of one man may be as great as you please, the united joys of a hundred must needs be greater. By renouncing enjoyment you can increase your enjoyment a hundredfold. That was ever the privilege of the true lover. If you are a true lover of a woman, it is her joys far more than your own that make your happiness; if you are a true lover of your friends, their prosperity and radiant faces will give you a delight which you could never have found in your own small and bounded pleasures; if you are a true lover of your nation, the joy, glory and wealth of all its millions will be yours; if you are a true lover of mankind, all the joys of the countless millions of the earth will flow like an ocean of nectar through your soul. You will say that their sorrows too will be yours. But is not the privilege of sharing the sorrows of those you love a more precious thing than your own happiness? Count too the other happinesses which that partnership in sorrow can bring to you. If you have power, — and Yoga always brings some power with it, — you may have the unsurpassable joy of solacing or turning into bliss the sorrow of your friend or lover, or the sufferings and degradation of the nation for which you sacrifice yourself or the woes of the humanity in whom you are trying to realise God. Even the mere continuous patient resolute effort to do this is a joy unspeakable; even defeat in such a cause is a stern pleasure that strengthens you for new and invincible endeavour. And if you have not the power to relieve or the means to carry on the struggle, there is still left you the joy of suffering or dying for others. "Greater love than this has no man, that he should die for his friend." Yes, but that greatest love of all means also the greatest joy of all. "It is a sweet and noble thing to die for one's country." How many a patriot in his last moments has felt that this was no empty poetical moralising, but the feeble understatement of a wonderful and inexpressible reality. They say that Christ suffered on the cross! The body suffered, doubtless, but did Christ suffer or did he not rather feel the joy of godhead in his soul? The agony of Gethsemane was not the agony of the coming crucifixion, the cup which he prayed might be taken from his lips, was not the cup of physical suffering, but the bitter cup of the sins of mankind which he had been sent to drink. If it were not so, we should have to say that this Jesus was not the Christ, not the Son of God, not the avatar who dared to say, "I and my Father are one," but



a poor weak human being who under the illusion of Maya mistook his body for himself. Always remember that it is not the weak in spirit to whom the Eternal gives himself wholly; it is the strong heroic soul that reaches God. Others can only touch his shadow from afar. नायमान्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो न च प्रमादात्तपसो वाप्यलिङ्गात् <sup>12</sup>

The abandonment of the world which is demanded of the Karmayogin is not necessarily a physical abandonment. You are not asked to give up your house and wealth, your wife, your children, your friends. What you have to give up is your selfish desire for them and your habit of regarding them as your possessions and chattels who are yours merely in order to give you pleasure. You are not asked to throw away the objects of your desire, but to give them up in your heart. It is the desire you have to part with and not the objects of the desire. The abandonment demanded of you is therefore a spiritual abandonment; the power to enjoy your material possessions in such spirit of detachment that you will not be overjoyed by gain, nor cast down by loss, is the test of its reality, — not the mere flight from their presence, which is simply a flight from temptation. The Karmayogin has to remain in the world and conquer it; he is not allowed to flee from the scene of conflict and shun the battle. His part in life is the part of the hero, — the one quality he must possess, is the lionlike courage that will dare to meet its spiritual enemies in their own country and citadel and tread them down under its heel. A spiritual abandonment then, — for the body only matters as the case of the spirit, — it is the spirit on which the Karmayogin must concentrate his effort. To purify the body is well, only because it makes it easier to purify the spirit; in itself it is of no importance; but if the soul is pure, the body cannot be touched by uncleanness. If the spirit itself is not stained by desire, the material enjoyment of the objects of desire cannot stain it. For if my spirit does not lust after new wealth or cling to the wealth I have, then my use of riches must necessarily be selfless and without blame; and having parted with them in spirit and given them into the treasury of God, I can then truly enjoy their possession. That enjoyment is clear, deep

<sup>12</sup> *Nāvamātmā balahīnena labhyo na ca pramādāt tapaso vāpyaliṅgāt*: This Self cannot be won by any who is without strength, nor with error in the seeking, nor by an askesis without the true mark (Mundaka Upanishad 3.2.4.).

and calm; fate cannot break it, robbers cannot take it away, enemies cannot overwhelm it. All other joy of possession is chequered and broken with fear, sorrow, trouble and passion, — the passion for its increase, the trouble of keeping it unimpaired, the sorrow for its diminution, the fear of its utter loss. Passionless enjoyment alone is pure and unmixed delight. If indeed you choose to abandon riches physically, as well as in spirit, that too is well, provided you take care that you are not cherishing the thought of them in your mind. There is another curious law of which many who follow the path of spiritual renunciation, have had experience. It is this that such renunciation is often followed by a singular tendency for wealth to seek him who has ceased to seek wealth. A strong, capable will bent on money-making, will doubtless win its desire, but at least as often wealth, fame and success flee from the man who longs after them and come to him who has conquered his longing. Their lover perishes without winning them or reaches them through deep mire of sin or a hell of difficulty or over mountains of toil, while the man who has turned his back on them, finds them crowding to lay themselves at his feet. He may then either enjoy or reject them. The latter is a great path and has been the chosen way of innumerable saintly sages. But the Karmayogin may enjoy them, not for his personal pleasure certainly, not for his false self, since that sort of enjoyment he has abandoned in his heart, but God in them and them for God. As a king merely touching the nazzarana passes it on to the public treasury, so shall the Karmayogin, merely touching the wealth that comes to him, pour it out for those around him, for the poor, for the worker, for his country, for humanity because he sees Brahman in all these. Glory, if it comes to him, he will veil in many folds of quiet and unobtrusive humility and use the influence it gives not for his own purposes but to help men more effectively in their needs or to lead them upward to the divine. Such a man will quickly rise above joy and sorrow, success and failure, victory and defeat; for in sorrow as in joy he will feel himself to be near God. That nearness will deepen into continual companionship and by companionship he will then grow ever liker God in his spiritual image until he reaches the last summit of complete identity when man, the God who has forgotten his godhead, remembers utterly and becomes the Eternal. Selflessness then is the real and only law of renunciation:

in the love of one's wider self in others, it has its rise; by the feeling of the divine presence in all earthly objects, it becomes rooted and unshakeable; the realisation of the Brahman is its completion and goal.

*(To be concluded)*

# Passing Thoughts

## RELIGION IN EUROPE

**T**HERE is no word so plastic and uncertain in its meaning as the word religion. The word is European and, therefore, it is as well to know first what the Europeans mean by it. In this matter we find them, — when they can be got to think clearly on the matter at all, which is itself unusual, — divided in opinion. Sometimes they use it as equivalent to a set of beliefs, sometimes as equivalent to morality coupled with a belief in God, sometimes as equivalent to a set of pietistic actions and emotions. Faith, works and pious observances these are the three recognised elements of European religion. From works, however, the ordinary work of the world is strictly excluded. Religion and daily life are, in the European opinion, two entirely different things which it is superstitious, barbarous, unenlightened and highly inconvenient to mix up together. Altruistic works are sometimes brought under religion, sometimes excluded from it. The idea of knowledge being part of religion is a conception which the European cannot receive into his intellect; religion and knowledge are to him two things absolutely and eternally unconnected, if not opposed and mutually contradictory of each other. The place of knowledge is taken by faith or belief stripped of any reason for the belief. The average Christian believes that the Bible is God's book, but ordinarily he does not consider anything in God's book binding on him in practice except to believe in God and go to Church once a week; the rest is only meant for the exceptionally pious. On the whole, therefore, to believe in God, to believe that He wrote a book, — only one book in all these ages, — and to go to Church on Sunday is the minimum of religion in Europe; on these essentials piety and morality may supervene and deepen the meaning.

## RELIGION IN INDIA

Religion in India is a still more plastic term and may mean any-

thing from the heights of Yoga to strangling your fellowman and relieving him of the worldly goods he may happen to be carrying with him. It would therefore take too long to enumerate everything that can be included in Indian religion. Briefly, however, it is *dharma* or living religiously, the whole life being governed by religion. But again what is living religiously? It means, in ordinary practice, living according to authority. The authority generally accepted is the Shastra; but when one studies the Shastra and Indian life side by side, one finds that the two have very little to do with the other; the Indian governs his life not by the Shastra but by custom and the opinion of the nearest Brahmin. In practice this resolves itself into certain observances and social customs of which he understands neither the spiritual meaning nor the practical utility. To venerate the Scriptures without knowing them and to obey custom in their place; to reverence all Brahmins whether they are venerable or despicable; to eat nothing cooked by a social inferior; to marry one's daughter before puberty and one's son as soon as possible after it; to keep women ignorant and domestically useful; to bathe scrupulously and go through certain fixed ablutions; to eat on the floor and not at a table; to do one's devotions twice a day without understanding them; to observe a host of meaningless minutae in one's daily conduct; to keep the Hindu holidays, when an image is set up, worshipped and thrown away, — this in India is the minimum of religion. This is glorified as Hinduism and the Sanatana Dharma. If, in addition, a man has emotional or ecstatic piety, he is a Bhakta; if he can talk fluently about the Veda, Upanishads, Darshanas and Puranas, he is a Jnani. If he puts on a yellow robe and does nothing, he is a *tyāgī* or *sannyāsin*. The latter is liberated from the ordinary dharma, but only if he does nothing but beg and vegetate. All work must be according to custom and the Brahmin. The one superiority of average Indian religion is that it does really reverence the genuine Bhakta or Sannyasin provided he does not come with too strange a garb or too revolutionary an aspect. The European almost invariably sets him down as a charlatan, professional religionist, idle drone or religious maniac.

## THE REAL MINIMUM

Turning away from this sorrowful debris of ancient religious forms in India and Europe, we may fix the genuine minimum of religion at this — to know God, to love and to serve him. The Europeans think that to fear God is a noble part of religion, forgetting the dictum of the Bible that perfect love casteth out fear and that the devils also believe and tremble. Perfect knowledge, perfect service also cast out fear. One may know, love and serve God as the Master, Lover, Friend, Mother; or as the Higher Self; or as Humanity; or as the Self in all creatures. If it be objected that this gives scope to Atheism, it must be remembered that Buddha also has been termed an Atheist. The average Hindu is right in his conception of religion as dharma, to live according to holy rule; but the holy rule is not a mass of fugitive and temporary customs, but this, to live for God in oneself and others and not for oneself only, to make the whole life a sadhana the object of which is to realise the Divine in the world by work, love and knowledge.

## THE MAXIMUM

There is a maximum as well as a minimum, and that is to rise beyond this life into a higher existence, not necessarily for oneself alone or in order to leave the world and vanish into the Universal, but as the highest have done, as God Himself habitually does, to bring down the bliss, illumination and greatness of that higher existence into the material world of creatures. All that rises beyond the minimum to the maximum, even though it may not attain it, is the Para Dharma; the minimum is the Apāra. To be a good, unselfish and religious man is the *apara* or lower *dharma*; to reach God revealed and bring Him down to earth where He hides Himself, is the higher. This is the Secret Wisdom, which defeats itself if it remains for ever secret. For this the great Avatars, Teachers and Lovers come, to reveal Him in divine knowledge, to reveal Him in mighty action, to reveal Him in utter delight and love.

## Seven Aphorisms

**G**OD is the supreme Jesuit Father. He is ever doing evil that good may come of it; ever misleads for a greater leading; ever oppresses our will that it may arrive at last at an infinite freedom.

Our Evil is to God not evil, but ignorance and imperfection, our good a lesser imperfection.

The religionist speaks a truth, though too violently, when he tells us that even our greatest and purest virtue is as vileness before the divine nature of God.

To be beyond good and evil is not to act sin or virtue indifferently, but to arrive at a high and universal good.

That good is not our ethical virtue which is a relative and erring light on the earth; it is supra-ethical and divine.



I know that the opposite of what I say is true, but for the present what I say is still truer.

I believe with you, my friends, that God, if He exists, is a demon and an ogre. But after all what are you going to do about it?

## On Sadhana and Telepathy: A Letter

**W**HAT you are doing is entirely the right thing and nothing more is needed. The peace you feel is the basis, the foundation for the transformation; all the rest will be built on it. To open to the Divine Forces with a quiet and strong aspiration, to become conscious of their working, to allow quietly that working and calmly to contain it, seconding it with one's aspiration, getting more and more knowledge and understanding of what is being done as one goes on — this is the sound and natural way of the Yoga.

The thing that happened about the postcards is not at all an accident,<sup>1</sup> it is a normal happening and occurs very frequently even in ordinary life, but people do not notice it or do not give any value to it, dismissing it perhaps as an accident or coincidence. It is called telepathy in English nowadays — that is, to feel at a distance the thought, sentiment or experience (some event or reaction to an event) of another. There are people nowadays in the West who practice thought exchange at a distance. When the Yogic consciousness develops, this kind of telepathic knowledge becomes much more conscious and frequent and can be organised into a habitual action and well-controlled instrumentation of the consciousness, a normal activity of the nature.

10 November 1932

<sup>1</sup> The disciple had written: "I am enclosing herewith two cards for your perusal and return, marked as (a) and (b), bearing the same date — 21st September 1932. In (a) my friend asks me about my welfare...and in (b) I reply that I am all right, he need not be anxious, as marked. The card (a) seen with a magnifying glass at the place marked will show the date 21 Sept. 32 stamped at K and the date 21st Sept. 1932 has been underlined in (b) at the top. I got this letter back, sent from K afterwards in a separate envelope. On the 21st September 1932, I sat quietly in the afternoon for some time, then I felt that my friend was growing anxious of me, so I should write him and I wrote accordingly a little after on the very same day.

"Now I wish to learn whether such a cross-letter is a mere accident or has some rule behind it. In the latter case, a throwing of light on the rule is solicited."



## Spiritual Experience and Its Expression

I FIND nothing either to add or to object to in Professor Sorley's comment on the still bright and clear mind; it adequately indicates the process by which the mind makes itself ready for the reflection of the higher Truth in its undisturbed surface or substance. But one thing perhaps needs to be kept in view — that this pure stillness of the mind is indeed always the required condition, the desideratum, but to bring it about there are more ways than one. It is not, for instance, only by an effort of the mind itself to get clear of all intrusive emotion or passion, to quiet its own characteristic vibrations, to resist the obscuring fumes of a physical inertia which brings about a sleep or a torpor of the mind instead of its wakeful silence, that the thing can be done. This is indeed an ordinary process of the Yogic path of knowledge; but the same end can be brought about or automatically happen by other processes — for instance, by the descent from above of a great spiritual stillness imposing silence on the mind and heart, on the life stimuli, on the physical reflexes. A sudden descent of this kind or a series of descents accumulative in force and efficacy is a well-known phenomenon of spiritual experience. Or again one may start a mental process of one kind or another for the purpose which would normally mean a long labour and yet may pull down or be seized midway, or even at the outset, by an overmind influx, a rapid intervention or manifestation of the higher Silence, with an effect sudden, instantaneous, out of all proportion to the means used at the beginning. One commences with a method, but the work is taken up by a Grace from above, by a response from That to which one aspires or by an irruption of the infinitudes of the Spirit. It was in this last way that I myself came by the mind's absolute silence unimaginable to me before I had the actual experience.

There is another question of some importance — what is the exact nature of this brightness, clearness, stillness, of what is it constituted, — more precisely is it merely a psychological condition or something more? Professor Sorley says these epithets are after all metaphors and he wants to express and succeeds in expressing —

though not without the use of metaphor — the same thing in a more abstract language. But I was not conscious of using metaphors when I wrote the phrase though I am aware that the words could to others have that appearance. I think even that they would seem to one who had gone through the same experience, not only a more vivid, but a more realistic and accurate description of this inner state than any abstract language could give. It is true that metaphors, symbols, images are constant auxiliaries summoned by the mystic for the expression of his vision or his experience. It is inevitable because he has to express in a language made or at least developed and manipulated by the mind the phenomena of a consciousness other than the mental and at once more complex and more subtly concrete. It is this subtly concrete, this supersensuously sensible reality of the phenomena of the spiritual — or the occult — consciousness to which the mystic arrives that justifies the use of metaphor and image as a more living and accurate transcription than the abstract terms which intellectual reflection employs for its own characteristic process. If the images used are misleading or not descriptively accurate, it is because the writer has a paucity, looseness or vagueness of language inadequate to the intensity of his experience. Apart from that, all new phenomenon, new discovery, new creation calls for the aid of metaphor and image. The scientist speaks of light waves or of sound waves and in doing so he uses a metaphor, but one which corresponds to the physical fact and is perfectly applicable — for there is no reason why there should not be a wave, a limited flowing movement of light or of sound as well as of water.

But still when I speak of the mind's brightness, clearness, stillness I have no idea of calling metaphor to my aid; it is meant to be a description quite precise and positive — as precise, as positive as if I were describing in the same way an expanse of air or a sheet of water. For the mystic's experience of mind, especially when it falls still, is not that of an abstract condition or impalpable activity of the consciousness; it is rather an experience of a substance — an extended subtle substance in which there can be and are waves, currents, vibrations not physically material but still as definite, as perceptible, as tangible and controllable by an inner sense as any movement of material energy or substance by the physical senses. The stillness of the mind means, first, the falling to rest of the habitual

thought movements, thought formations, thought currents which agitate this mind-substance. That repose, vacancy of movement, is for many a sufficient mental silence. But, even in this repose of all thought movements and all movements of feeling, one sees, when one looks more closely at it, that the mind substance is still in a constant state of very subtle, formless but potentially formative vibration — not at first easily observable, but afterwards quite evident — and that state of constant vibration may be as harmful to the exact reflection or reception of the descending Truth as any formed thought movement or emotional movement; for these vibrations are the source of a mentalisation which can diminish or distort the authenticity of the higher Truth or break it up into mental refractions. When I speak of a still mind, I mean then one in which these subtler disturbances too are no longer there. As they fall quiet one can feel an increasing stillness which is not the lesser quietude of repose and also a resultant clearness as palpable as the stillness and clearness of a physical atmosphere.

This positiveness of experience is my justification for these epithets “still, clear”; but the other epithet, “bright”, links itself to a still more sensible phenomenon of the subtly concrete. For in the brightness I describe there is another additional element that is connected with the phenomenon of Light well known and common to mystic experience. That inner Light of which the mystics speak is not a metaphor, as when Goethe called for more light in his last moments; it presents itself as a very positive illumination actually seen and felt by the inner sense. The brightness of the still and clear mind is a reflection of this Light that comes even before the Light itself manifests — and, even without any actual manifestation of the Light, is sufficient for the mind’s openness to the greater consciousness beyond mind — just as we can see by the dawn-light before the sunrise; for it brings to the still mind which might otherwise remain just still and at peace and nothing more a capacity of penetrability to the Truth it has to receive and harbour. I have emphasised this point at a little length because it helps to bring out the difference between the abstract mental and the concrete mystic perception of supra-physical things which is the source of much misunderstanding between the spiritual seeker and the intellectual thinker. Even when they speak the same language it is a different order of perceptions

to which the language refers. The same word in their mouths may denote the products of two different grades of consciousness. This ambiguity in the expression is a cause of much non-understanding and disagreement, while even a surface agreement may be a thin bridge or crust over a gulf of difference.



I come now to the question raised by Professor Sorley, what is the relation — or rather the position of the intellect in regard to mystic or spiritual experience. Is it true as it is often contended that the mystic must, whether as to the validity of his experience itself or the validity of his expression of it, accept the intellect as the judge? It ought to be very plain that in the search, the discovery, the getting of the experience itself the intellect cannot claim to put its limits or its law on an endeavour whose very aim, first principle, constant method is to go beyond the domain of the ordinary earth-ruled and sense-ruled mental intelligence. It would be as if you were to ask me to climb a mountain with a rope around me attaching me to the terrestrial level — or as if I were permitted to fly but only on condition that I kept my feet on the earth or near enough to the safety of the ground while I do it. It may indeed be the securest thing to walk on earth, to be on the firm ground of terrestrial reason always; to attempt to ascend on wings to the Beyond-Mind ether may be to risk mental confusion and collapse and all possible accidents of error, illusion, extravagance, hallucination or what not — the usual charges of the positive earth-walking intellect against mystic experience; but I have to take the risk if I want to do it at all. The reasoning intellect bases itself on man's normal consciousness, it proceeds by the workings of a mental perception and conception of things; it is at its ease only when founded on a logical basis formed by terrestrial experience and its accumulated data. The mystic goes beyond into a region where the everyday mental basis falls away; the terrestrial data on which the reason founds itself are exceeded, there is even another law and canon of perception and knowledge. His entire business is to break out or upward or widen into a new consciousness which looks at things in a very different way, and if this new con-

sciousness may include, though viewed with quite another vision, the data of the ordinary external intelligence, yet it cannot be limited by them, cannot bind itself to see from the intellectual standpoint or conform to its manner of conceiving, reasoning, its established interpretation of experience. A mystic entering the domain of the occult or of the spirit with the intellect as his only or his supreme light or guide would risk to see nothing, or see according to his preconceived mental idea of things or else he would arrive only at a subtly "positive" mental realisation of perceptions already laid down for him by the abstract speculations of the intellectual thinker.

There is a strain of spiritual thought in India which compromises with the modern intellectual demand and admits Reason as a supreme judge, — but it must be a Reason which in its turn is prepared to compromise and accept the data of spiritual experience as valid *per se*. That is to do what the Indian philosophers have always done; for they have tried to establish by the light of metaphysical reasoning generalisations drawn from spiritual experience; and it was always on the basis of that experience that they proceeded and with the evidence of the spiritual seekers as a supreme proof ranking higher than intellectual speculation or inference. In that way they preserved the freedom of spiritual and mystic experience and allowed the reasoning intellect to come in only on the second line as a judge of the generalised metaphysical statements drawn from the experience, but not of the experience itself. This is I presume something akin to Professor Sorley's own position — for he concedes that the experience itself is of the domain of the ineffable, but he suggests that as soon as I begin to interpret it, to state it, I fall back inevitably into the domain of the thinking mind; I am using its terms and ways of thought and expression and must accept the intellect as judge. If I do not, I knock away the ladder by which I have climbed — through mind to Beyond-Mind — and I am left unsupported in the air. It is not quite clear whether the truth of my experience itself is supposed to be invalidated by this unsustained position, but at any rate it remains something aloof and incommunicable without support or any consequences for thought or life. There are three propositions, I suppose, which I can take as laid down or admitted in this contention and joined together. First, the spiritual experience is itself of the Beyond-Mind, ineffable and, it should be presumed, unthinkable. Next, — in

the expression, the interpretation of the experience, you are obliged to fall back into the domain of the consciousness you have left and so you must abide by its judgments, accept the terms and the canons of its law, submit to its verdict; for you have abandoned the freedom of the Ineffable and are no longer your own master. Last, spiritual truth may be true in itself, in its own self-experience, but any statement of it is liable to error and here the intellect is the sole possible arbiter.

I do not think I am prepared to accept any of these affirmations completely just as they are. It is true that spiritual and mystic experience carries one first into domains of Other-Mind or All-Mind (and also Other-Life and All-Life and I would add Other-Substance and All-Substance) and then emerges into the Beyond-Mind; it is true also that the ultimate Truth has been described as unthinkable, ineffable, unknowable — “speech cannot reach there, mind cannot arrive to it.” But I may observe that it is so to human mind, but not to itself, since it is not an abstraction, but a superconscious (not unconscious) Existence, — for it is described as to itself self-evident and self-luminous, — therefore in some direct supramental or at least overmind way knowable and known, eternally self-aware. But here the question is not of an ultimate realisation of the ultimate Ineffable which according to many can only be reached in a supreme trance withdrawn from all outer mental or other awareness; we are speaking rather of an experience in a luminous silence of the mind and any such experience presupposes that before there is any last unspeakable experience of the Ultimate or disappearance into it, there is possible a reflection or descent of at least some Power or Presence of the identical Reality into the mind-substance. Along with it there is a modification of mind-substance, an illumination of it, — and of this experience an expression of some kind, a rendering into thought ought to be possible. Moreover an immense mass of well-established spiritual experience would have been impossible unless we suppose that the Ineffable and Unknowable has truths of itself, aspects, revealing presentations of it to our consciousness which are not utterly unthinkable and ineffable.

If it were not so, indeed, all account of spiritual truth and experience would be impossible. At most one could speculate about it, but that would be an activity very much indeed in the air and even a movement in a void, without support or data. At best, there could

be a mere manipulation of all the possible ideas of what conceivably might be the Supreme and Ultimate. For we would have nothing before us to go upon other than the bare fact of a certain unaccountable translation by one way or another from consciousness to an incommunicable Supraconsciousness. That is indeed what much mystical seeking actually held up as the one thing essential both in Europe and India. Many Christian mystics spoke of a total darkness through which one must pass into the ineffable Light and Rapture, a falling away of all mental lights and all that belongs to the ordinary activity of the nature; they aimed not only at a silence but a darkness of the mind protecting an inexpressible illumination. The Indian Sannyasins sought by silence, by concentration inwards, to shed mind altogether and pass into a thought-free trance from which, if one returns, no communication or expression could be brought back of what was there except a remembrance of ineffable existence and bliss. But still even here there were previous glimpses or contacts and results of contact of That which is Beyond; there were contacts of the Highest or of the occult universal Existence, which were held to be spiritual truths and on the basis of which the seers and mystics did not hesitate to formulate their experience and the thinkers to build on it numberless philosophies, theologies, books of exegesis or of creed and dogma. All then is not ineffable; there is a possibility of communication and expression, and the only question is of the nature of this transmission of the facts of a different order of consciousness to the mind and whether it is feasible for the intellect or must be left for something else than intellect to determine the validity of the expression or, even, of the original experience. If no valid account were possible there could be no question of the judgment of the intellect — only the violent contradiction of mind sitting down to judge a Beyond-Mind of which it can know nothing, starting to speak of the Ineffable, think of the unthinkable, comprehend the Incommunicable.

# A Letter of Sri Aurobindo to His Uncle

c/o Rao Bahadur K.B. Jadhava  
Near Municipal Office  
Baroda  
15th August 1902

My dear Boromama,<sup>1</sup>

I am sorry to hear from Sarojini<sup>2</sup> that Mejdada<sup>3</sup> has stopped sending mother's allowance and threatens to make the stoppage permanent unless you can improvise a companion to the Goddess of Purulia. This is very characteristic of Mejdada; it may even be described in one word as Manomaniac. Of course he thinks he is stopping your pension and that this will either bring you to reason or effectually punish you. But the main question is, "What is to be done now?" Of course I can send Rs 40 now and so long as I am alone it does not matter very much, but it will be rather a pull when Mrinalini<sup>4</sup> comes back to Baroda. However even that could be managed well enough with some self-denial and an effective household management. But there is a tale of woe behind.

Sarojini suggests that I might bring her or have her brought to Baroda with my wife. I should have no objection, but is that feasible? In the first place will she agree to come to the other end of the world like that? And if she does, will not the violent change and the shock of utterly unfamiliar surroundings, strange faces and an unintelligible tongue or rather two or three unintelligible tongues, have a prejudicial effect upon her mind? Sarojini and my wife found it intolerable enough to live under such circumstances for a long time; how would mother stand it? This is what I am most afraid of. Men may cut themselves off from home and everything else and make their own atmosphere in strange places, but it is not easy for women and I am afraid it would be quite impossible for a woman in her mental condi-

<sup>1</sup> Eldest maternal uncle. This letter was written to Jogendra Basu, eldest son of Shri Rajnarayan Basu and brother of Sri Aurobindo's mother

<sup>2</sup> Sri Aurobindo's sister.

<sup>3</sup> Second brother (as addressed or referred to by brothers and sisters junior to him), viz. Sri Aurobindo's brother Manmohan Ghose

<sup>4</sup> Sri Aurobindo's wife.



tion. Apart from these objections it might be managed. Of course I could not give her a separate house, but she might be assured that whenever a Boro Bou<sup>3</sup> came, she should have one to receive her in; I daresay that would satisfy her. In case however it does not or the experiment should be judged too risky, I must go on sending Rs 40 as long as I can.

But there comes the tale of woe I have spoken of. We have now had three years of scarcity, the first of them being a severe famine. The treasury of the State is well nigh exhausted — a miserable 30 or 40 lakhs is all that remains, and in spite of considerable severity and even cruelty in collection the revenues of the last year amount simply to the tail of the dog without the dog himself. This year there was no rain in Baroda till the first crop withered; after July 5th about 9 inches fell, just sufficient to encourage the cultivators to sow again. Now for want of more rain the second crop is withering away into nothingness. The high wind which has prevented rain still continues, and though there is a vague hope of a downpour after the 15th, one cannot set much store by it. Now in case there should be a severe famine this year, what may happen is something like this; either we shall all be put on half-pay for the next twelve months, — in other words I who can only just manage to live on Rs 360 will have to do it on Rs 180 — or the pay will be cut down permanently (or at least for some years) by 25 per cent, in which case I shall rejoice upon Rs 270; or thirdly (and this may Heaven forbid) we shall get our full pay till December and after that live on the munificent amount of nothing a month. In any case it will be impossible to bring mother or even Mrinalini to Baroda. And there is worse behind. The Ajwa reservoir after four years of drought is nearly exhausted. The just-drinkable-if-boiled water in it will last for about a month; the nondrinkable for still two months more. This means that if there is no rain, there will be a furious epidemic of cholera before two months are out and after three months this city, to say nothing of other parts of the Raj, will be depopulated by a water famine. Of course the old disused wells may be filled up, but that again means cholera *in excelsis*. The only resource will be for the whole State to go and camp out on the banks of the Narmada and the Mahi.

<sup>3</sup> "The eldest bride", i.e. the wife of the eldest brother in a family. The reference is obscure.

Of course if I get half-pay I shall send Rs 80 to Bengal, hand over Rs 90 as my contribution to the expenses to Khaserao<sup>6</sup> and keep the remaining 10 for emergencies; but supposing the third course suggested should be pursued? I shall then have to take a third class ticket to Calcutta and solicit an 150 Rs place in Girish Bose's<sup>7</sup> or Mesho's<sup>8</sup> College — if Lord Curzon has not abolished both of them by that time. Of course I could sponge upon my father-in-law in Assam, becoming a *ghorjāmāi*<sup>9</sup> for the time being, but then who would send money to Deoghur and Benares? To such a pass have an all-wise Providence and the blessings of British rule brought us! However let us all hope that it will rain.

Please let me know whether Mejdada has sent any money by the time this reaches you. If he has not, I suppose I must put my shoulder to the burden. And by the way if you have found my MS of verse translations from Sanskrit,<sup>10</sup> you might send it to me "by return of post". *The Seeker*<sup>11</sup> had better remain with you instead of casting itself on the perilous waters of the Post-Office.

My health has not been very good recently; that is to say, although I have no recognised doctor's illness, I have developed a new disease of my own, or rather a variation of Madhavrao's<sup>12</sup> special brand of nervous debility. I shall patent mine as A.G.'s private and particular. Its chief symptom is a ghastly inability to do any serious work; two hours' work induces a feverish exhaustion and a burning sensation all over the body as well as a pain in the back. I am then useless for the rest of the day. So for some time past I have had to break up the little work I have done into half an hour here, half an hour there and half an hour nowhere. The funny thing is that I keep up a very decent appetite and am equal to any amount of physical exercise that may be demanded of me. In fact if I take care

<sup>6</sup> Khaserao Jadhav, a friend of Sri Aurobindo, with whom he was staying in Baroda. In 1902 Khaserao was serving as District Collector of Baroda

<sup>7</sup> Friend of Sri Aurobindo's father-in-law Bhupal Chandra Bose and founder with him of the Bangabasi School and College

<sup>8</sup> Uncle (mother's sister's husband), i.e. Krishnakumar Mitra

<sup>9</sup> An exacting son-in-law.

<sup>10</sup> The reference is probably to Sri Aurobindo's translations from Bhartrihari. See page 24.

<sup>11</sup> A long poem by Sri Aurobindo's which has been lost.

<sup>12</sup> Khaserao's brother, a very close friend of Sri Aurobindo.

to do nothing but *kasrat*<sup>13</sup> and croquet and walking and rushing about, I keep in a grand state of health, — but an hour's work turns me again into an invalid. This is an extremely awkward state of things and if you know any homoeopathic drug which will remove it, I will shut my eyes and swallow it.

Of course under such circumstances I find it difficult to write letters. I do not know how many letters to Sarojini and my wife<sup>14</sup> I have begun, written two lines and left. The other day, however, there was a promising sign. I began to write a letter to you and actually managed to finish one side and a half. This has encouraged me to try again and I do believe I shall finish this letter today — the second day of writing.<sup>15</sup> The improvement, which is part of a general abatement of my symptoms, I attribute to a fortnight's determined and cynical laziness. During this time I have been to Ahmedabad with our cricket eleven and watched them get a jolly good beating; which happy result we celebrated by a gorgeous dinner at the refreshment room. I believe the waiters must have thought us a party of famine-stricken labourers, dressed up in stolen clothes, perhaps the spoils of massacred famine officers. There were six of us and they brought us a dozen plentiful courses; we ate them all and asked for more. As for the bread we consumed — well, they brought us at first a huge toast-rack with about 20 large pieces of toast. After three minutes there was nothing left except the rack itself; they repeated the allowance with a similar result. Then they gave up the toast as a bad job, and brought in two great plates each with a mountain of bread on it as large as Nandanpahad. After a short while we were howling for more. This time there was a wild-eyed consultation of waiters and after some minutes they reappeared with large trays of bread carried in both hands. This time they conquered. They do charge high prices at the refreshment rooms but I don't think they got much profit out of us that time. Since then I have been once on a picnic to Ajwa with the District Magistrate and Collector of Baroda, the second Judge of the High Court and a still more important and solemn personage whom you may have met under the name of

<sup>13</sup> Physical exercise. Sri Aurobindo has written that he used to do such exercises as *bauthak* (deep knee-bends) and *dand* (a sort of push-up) at Baroda.

<sup>14</sup> See the letter that follows.

<sup>15</sup> I didn't after all. [Sri Aurobindo's note].

Mr. Anandrao Jadhav.<sup>16</sup> A second picnic was afterwards organized in which some dozen rowdies, not to say Hooligans, of our club — the worst among them, I regret to say, was the father of a large family and a trusted officer of H.H. the Maharajah Gaekwar, — went down to Ajwa and behaved in such a manner that it is a wonder we were not arrested and locked up. On the way my horse broke down and so four of us had to get down and walk three miles in the heat. At the first village we met a cart coming back from Ajwa and in spite of the carters' protests, seized it, turned the bullocks round and started them back — of course with ourselves in the cart. The bullocks at first thought they were going to do the journey at their usual comfortable two miles an hour, but we convinced them of their error with the ends of our umbrellas and they ran. I don't believe bullocks have ever run so fast since the world began. The way the cart jolted, was a wonder; I know the internal arrangements of my stomach were turned upside down at least 300 times a minute. When we got to Ajwa we had to wait an hour for dinner; as a result I was again able to eat ten times my usual allowance. As for the behaviour of those trusted pillars of the Baroda Raj at Ajwa, a veil had better be drawn over it; I believe I was the only quiet and decent person in the company. On the way home the carriage in which my part of the company installed itself, was the scene of a remarkable tussle in which three of the occupants and an attendant cavalier attempted to bind the driver, (the father of a large family aforesaid) with a horse-rop. As we had been ordered to do this by the Collector of Baroda, I thought I might join in the attempt with a safe conscience. *Paterfamilias*<sup>17</sup> threw the reins to Providence and fought — I will say it to his credit — like a Trojan. He scratched me, he bit one of my coadjutors, in both cases drawing blood, he whipped furiously the horse of the assistant cavalier, and when Madhavrao came to his assistance, he rewarded the benevolent intention by whipping at Madhavrao's camel! It was not till we reached the village, after a six-miles conflict, and got him out of the carriage that he submitted to the operation. The wonder was that our carriage did not get

<sup>16</sup> A friend of Sri Aurobindo, no doubt a relative of Khaserao and Madhavrao. He was probably the recipient of the letter of 1912 printed on pages 423-25 of Centenary Volume 27

<sup>17</sup> In ancient Rome, the father or male head of a household

upset; indeed the mare stopped several times in order to express her entire disgust at the improper and turbulent character of these proceedings. For the greater part of the way home she was brooding indignantly over the memory of it and once her feelings so much overcame her that she tried to upset us over the edge of the road, which would have given us a comfortable little fall of three feet. Fortunately she was relieved by this little demonstration and her temper improved wonderfully after it. Finally last night I helped to kidnap Dr. Cooper, the Health Officer of the State, and make him give us a big dinner at the Station with a bottle and a half of sherry to wash it down. The Doctor got so merry over the sherry of which he drank at least two thirds himself, that he ordered a *special-class* dinner for the whole company next Saturday. I don't know what Mrs. Cooper said to him when he got home. All this has had a most beneficial effect upon my health, as the writing of so long a letter shows.

I suppose you have got Anandrao's letter; you ought to value it, for the time he took to write it is, I believe, unequalled in the history of epistolary creation. The writing of it occupied three weeks, fair-copying it another fortnight, writing the address seven days and posting it three days more. You will see from it that there is no need to be anxious about his stomach: it righted itself the moment he got into the train at Deoghur Station. In fact he was quite lively and warlike on the way home. At Jabalpur we were unwise enough not to spread out our bedding on the seats and when we got in again, some upcountry scoundrels had boned Anandrao's berth. After some heated discussion I occupied half of it and put Anandrao on mine. Some Mahomedans, quite inoffensive people, sat at the edge of this, but Anandrao chose to confound them with the intruders and declared war on them. The style of war he adopted was a most characteristically Maratha style. He pretended to go to sleep and began kicking the Mahomedans, in his "sleep" of course, having specially gone to bed with his boots on for the purpose. I had at last to call him off and put him on my half-berth. Here, his legs being the other way, he could not kick; so he spent the night butting the upcountryman with his head; next day he boasted triumphantly to me that he had conquered a foot and half of territory from the intruder by his brilliant plan of campaign. When the Boers rise once more against England,

I think we shall have to send them Anandrao as an useful assistant to Generals Botha and Delarcy.

No rain as yet, and it is the 15th of August. My thirtieth birthday, by English computation! How old we are all getting!

Your affectionate nephew  
Aurobind Ghose

P.S. There is a wonderful story travelling about Baroda, a story straight out of Fairyland, that I have received Rs 90 promotion. Everybody seems to know all about it except myself. The story goes that a certain officer rejoicing in the name of Damn-you-bhai<sup>18</sup> wanted promotion, so the Maharaja gave him Rs 50. He then proceeded to remark that as this would give Damn-you-bhai an undue seniority over Mr. Would-you-ah! and Mr. Manoeu(vre)bhai,<sup>19</sup> the said Would-you-ah and Manoeu(vre)bhai must also get Rs 50 each, and "as Mr. Ghose has done good work for me, I give him Rs 90." The beautiful logical connection of the last bit with what goes before, dragging Mr. Ghose in from nowhere and everywhere, is so like the Maharaja that the story may possibly be true. If so, it is very satisfactory, as my pay will now be — Famine permitting — Rs 450 a month. It is not quite so good as Mejdada's job, but it will serve. Rs 250 promotion after ten years' service does not look very much, but it is better than nothing. At that rate I shall get Rs 700 in 1912 and be drawing about Rs 1000 when I am ready to retire from Baroda either to Bengal or a better world. Glory Halleluja!

Give my love to Sarojini and tell her I shall write to her — if I can. Don't forget to send the MS of translations. I want to type-write and send to England.

<sup>18</sup> Perhaps Mr. Dayabhai Harjivandas, an officer of the Baroda State.

<sup>19</sup> Manubhai, private secretary to the Maharaja of Baroda in 1902.

# A Letter of Sri Aurobindo to His Wife

c/o K.B. Jadhav Esq  
Near Municipal Office  
Baroda.

20th August 1902

Dearest Mrinalini,

I have not written to you for a long time because I have not been in very good health and had not the energy to write. I went out of Baroda for a few days to see whether change and rest would set me up, and your telegram came when I was not here. I feel much better now, and I suppose there was nothing really the matter with me except overwork. I am sorry I made you so anxious; there was no real cause to be so, for you know I never get *seriously* ill. Only when I feel out of sorts, I find writing letters almost impossible.

The Maharajah has given me Rs 90 promotion — this will raise my pay to Rs 450. In the order<sup>1</sup> he has made me a lot of compliments about my powers, talent, capacity, usefulness etcetera, but also made a remark on my want of regularity and punctual habits. Besides he shows his intention of taking the value of the Rs 90 out of me by burdening me with overwork, so I don't feel very grateful to him. He says that if convenient, my services can be utilized in the College. But I don't see how it will be convenient, just now, at least; for it is nearly the end of the term. Even if I go to the College, he has asked the Dewan to use me for writing Annual Reports etc. I suppose this means that he does not want me to get my vacations. However, let us see what happens.

If I join the College now and am allowed the three months' vacation, I shall of course go to Bengal and to Assam<sup>1</sup> for a short visit. I am afraid it will be impossible for you to come to Baroda just now. There has been no rain here for a month, except a short shower early this morning. The wells are all nearly dried up; the water of the Ajwa reservoir which supplies Baroda is very low and must be quite used up by next November; the crops in the fields are all parched and withering. This means that we shall not only

<sup>1</sup> See page 77

have famine; but there will be no water for bathing and washing up, or even, perhaps for drinking. Besides if there is famine, it is practically sure that all the officers will be put on half-pay. We are hoping, rather than expecting, that there may be good rain before the end of August. But the signs are against it, and if it comes, it will only remove the water difficulty or put it off for a few months. For you to come to Baroda and endure all the troubles and sufferings of such a state of things, is out of the question. You must decide for yourself whether you will stay with your father or at Deoghur. You may as well stay in Assam till October, and then if I can go to Bengal, I will take you to Deoghur where you can stop for the winter at least. If I cannot come then, I will, if you like, try and make some arrangement for you to be taken there.

I am glad your father will be able to send me a cook when you come. I have got a Maratha cook, but he can prepare nothing properly except meat dishes. I don't know how to get over the difficulty about the *jhī*.<sup>2</sup> Sarojini wrote something about a Mahomedan ayah,<sup>3</sup> but that would never do. After so recently being readmitted to Hindu society, I cannot risk it; it is all very well for Khaserao and others whose social position is so strong that they may do almost anything they like. As soon as I see any prospect of being able to get you here, I shall try my best to arrange about a maid-servant. It is no use doing it now.

I hope you will be able to read and understand this letter; if you can't, I hope it will make you more anxious to learn English than you have been up to now. I could not manage to write a Bengali letter just now — so I thought I had better write in English rather than put off writing.

Do not be too much disappointed by the delay in coming to Baroda; it cannot be avoided. I should like you to spend some time in Deoghur, if you do not mind, Assam somehow seems terribly far off; and besides I should like you to form a closer intimacy with my relatives, at least those among them whom I especially love.

Your loving husband

<sup>2</sup> A maidservant.

<sup>3</sup> A waiting-maid or nurse.



## *Appendix*

# Certificate of the Maharaja of Baroda

### HUZUR ORDER

His Highness the Maharaja Saheb has been graciously pleased to order that

(1) A monthly increase of Rs 90. Ninety British is given to Mr. Aravind Ghose.

(2) His Highness is pleased to note that he has found Mr. Ghose a very useful and capable young man. With a little more of regularity and punctual habits he can be of much greater help; and it is hoped that Mr. Ghose will be careful in future not to injure his own interests by any lack of these useful qualities.

(3) The Minister should try to make a good use of Mr. Ghose's abilities in entrusting him with the compilation of Annual Administration Reports and other important compilations. He is a man of great powers and every use should be made of his talents.

(4) The Minister should also suggest from time to time the different uses to which Mr. Ghose's abilities can be advantageously put. The Huzur will also occasionally direct the uses to be made of Mr. Ghose's services.

(5) If convenient Mr. Ghose's services can be utilised in the Baroda College only care should be taken that his interests do not suffer in any way by his services being lent to the College for some time.

Sayaji Rao Gaekwar  
6 August 1902

Camp Coonoor.

This is the order referred to by Sri Aurobindo in the letter to his wife (page 75) and also on page 10 of Centenary Volume 26. The Huzur is the Crown, i.e. the Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwar, under whom Sri Aurobindo worked for many years. From Baroda College papers, English Education Department, Huzur File, 1902-03.

# Documents in the Life of Sri Aurobindo

## BIRTH

### 1

#### Sri Aurobindo's Birth Date and Time

15th August 1872, 24 minutes (one *daṇḍa* = one *ghaṭikā*) before sunrise, at Calcutta.

With sunrise calculated at 5.40 A.M., the time of birth is 5.16 A.M. local time or 4.52 A.M. Indian Standard Time.<sup>1</sup>

*A note from the files of Nolini Kanta Gupta*

### 2

When attention was drawn to several press enquiries particularly in Bengal as to the exact birthplace of Sri Aurobindo, Srijut Nolinikanto Gupta, Secretary of Sri Aurobindo Ashram told P.T.I.: "Sri Aurobindo was born in the house of late barrister Monomohon Ghose, a close friend of his father, Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghose. The house was in the Theatre Road and the number being most probably 4 (Four). We are not aware whether the house still exists or not."

*A press release dated 2 September 1949*

### 3

Sree Aurobinda Ghose was born in my father's house at 237, Lower Circular Road.

In or about 1879 my father moved to 4, Theatre Road. Subsequently Mr. Byomkesh Chakraborti, Bar-at-Law occupied 237, Lower Circular Road and I believe it was purchased by him. Later on late Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sirkar purchased the property and put

<sup>1</sup> The exact time of Sri Aurobindo's birth is not known. He writes in "About Astrology" (Cent. Vol. 17, p. 288) of "the inability to fix the precise moment of my birth". The above computations were apparently made on the basis of a recollection of a member of Sri Aurobindo's family that he was born about one *daṇḍa* before sunrise on 15 August 1872.

up the new structure after demolishing the old. It is now occupied by the Chinese Consul General.

*Letter of Showlota Das (Mrs. Banbehari Das), youngest daughter of the late Manmohan Ghose, dated 11 June 1956.*

4

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE AUROBINDO CENTENARY COMMITTEE HELD AT 10.30 A.M. ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 1971, AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY, BELVEDERE, CALCUTTA-27.

The following members were present:

1. Shri Surendra Mohan Ghose, Chairman
2. Dr. Niharranjan Ray
3. Shri Debi Prasad Bhaduri
4. Shri K.N. Mookerjee
5. Shri A.K. Ghose
6. Smt. D.G. Keswani
7. Shri H.K. Niyogi
8. Shri Kanti Chaudhuri, Member-Secretary.

1. After a long discussion on the various suggestions in regard to the house in which Sri Aurobindo was supposed to have been born, it was decided as follows:

- a) The arguments in favour of the present 237, Lower Circular Road could not be sustained since this was originally 12, Lower Circular Road, which came to be occupied by the late Shri Manmohan Ghose not earlier than 1876.
- b) According to the Bengal Directory of 1871 and 1872, the late Shri Manmohan Ghose is shown as a resident of 48, Chowringhee which was a part of the then Ballard Building facing Theatre Road. It was, therefore, very likely that Aurobindo was born at this house, which on 15th August, 1872 was shown as the residence of the late Shri Manmohan Ghose.

- c) In 1872, according to the Bengal Directory (Street Directory), No. 14 Lower Circular Road is also shown against the name of the late Shri Manmohan Ghose. But in the alphabetical list of residents of the same year, Manmohan Ghose is shown as a resident of 48, Chowringhee.
  - d) According to the same Directory of 1873, the late Shri Manmohan Ghose is shown as a resident of 14, Lower Circular Road, and not 12, Lower Circular Road, which is now 237, Lower Circular Road.
2. The Ballard's building consisting of numbers 47, 48, 49 and 50 at the corner of Chowringhee and Theatre Road does no longer exist; in fact, a multi-storeyed building is under construction at that place. The question of acquisition of this property does not, therefore, arise.
3. But in 1879, the late Shri Manmohan Ghose rented No. 4 Theatre Road (now No. 8 Theatre Road) and continued to live there for about fifteen years. It was in this house that Sri Aurobindo passed a number of his boyhood years from time to time; indeed it is the only house on Theatre Road with which Sri Aurobindo could be associated for a considerable period of time. The Committee, therefore, requests the Government of India and the Government of West Bengal who are now the owners of No.8 Theatre Road, to make over and dedicate this property to the nation in the name of Sri Aurobindo.

## The Revision of *The Life Divine*

**S**RI AUROBINDO'S *Life Divine* as we know it today, with its fifty-six chapters in two books and three parts, differs considerably from the original version of the work which appeared in the monthly review *Arya* between 1914 and 1921. *The Life Divine* is, in fact, the most thoroughly and systematically revised of all Sri Aurobindo's prose works. Moreover, this revision, done mainly during 1939 and 1940, comprises the largest single body of prose material written by Sri Aurobindo after 1921, the last year of the *Arya's* publication. This paper is an attempt to trace the details of the revision and enlargement of *The Life Divine*, showing in particular how the present text differs from the original *Arya* version. It is based on an examination and comparison of the author's manuscripts.

*An outline of the development of The Life Divine and a survey of the manuscripts.*

The first instalment of *The Life Divine* appeared in the *Arya's* first issue on 15 August 1914. There is no evidence in Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts of the period that he had done any work on, or even conceived a large philosophical work before this time. Indeed, the bulk of Sri Aurobindo's writings of the period before 1914 are political and literary. "And philosophy!" he once wrote, somewhat jocularly, to a disciple, "Let me tell you in confidence that I never, never, never was a philosopher — although I have written philosophy which is another story altogether. I knew precious little about philosophy before I did the Yoga and came to Pondicherry — I was a poet and a politician, not a philosopher. How I managed to do it and why? First, because X proposed to me to co-operate in a philosophical review — and as my theory was that a Yogi ought to be able to turn his hand to anything, I could not very well refuse; and then he had to go to the war and left me in the lurch with sixty-four pages a month of philosophy all to write by my lonely self." Continuing in a more serious vein, Sri Aurobindo stated that in writing *The Life Divine* and the other works that appeared in the *Arya*, "I

had only to write down in the terms of the intellect all that I had observed and come to know in practising Yoga daily and the philosophy was there automatically. But that is not being a philosopher!"<sup>1</sup>

Still *The Life Divine* is not altogether without antecedents. From around 1912 up to 1914 Sri Aurobindo was occupied with a work of Upanishadic exegesis entitled *The Life Divine: A Commentary on the Isha Upanishad*. There are indications that this commentary developed ("overflowed" would perhaps be a better word) into the later independent treatise; for it was in the ancient verses of the Isha that Sri Aurobindo found confirmatory expression of the secret of divine life.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it can be positively stated that Sri Aurobindo did no work on *The Life Divine* itself before June 1914, when it was decided to publish the *Arya*.

Scarcely any of the press copy for the *Arya* version of *The Life Divine* has survived. The few pages that have been preserved are unruled letter-size sheets neatly written and touched up by hand. Most other surviving *Arya* copy is typewritten, with slight revisions added in ink. It is said that the typing was done by Sri Aurobindo himself, and that, in fact, the greater part of the *Arya* was written by him directly on the typewriter. It is also reported that Sri Aurobindo saw as many as seven proofs for each issue of the review. Monthly instalments of *The Life Divine* appeared uninterruptedly in the *Arya* until the series was concluded in the fifty-fourth issue of the journal in January 1919.

The only evidence of any work done by Sri Aurobindo on *The Life Divine* between 1919 and 1939 is an incomplete revision of many of the first twenty-seven *Arya* chapters done at different times, marginally and between the lines of pages torn out from the *Arya*. This revision, sometimes considerable, sometimes scanty, was not used by Sri Aurobindo when, after his accident of November 1938, he took up *The Life Divine* with a mind to bringing it out in a completely revised book form.

The revision of the two books (originally called 'volumes') of this new edition will be considered separately.

<sup>1</sup> *On Himself*, Centenary Volume 26, p.374.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Life Divine* (Book II, Chapter XV), Centenary Volume 19, p.636



DEATH, DESIRE AND INCAPACITY

In the beginning all was covered by Hunger that is Death, that made for itself Mind so that it might attain to possession of self

210

Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad

is the form described by the words that is not the same

This form has the weakness of its desire that it may possess the self it seeks the taste of all foods and builds the house for the being

I. 2. 1. a house

Rig Veda I. 7. 6

In our last chapter we have considered Life from the point of view of the material existence and the appearance and working of the vital principle in Matter and we have reasoned from the data which this evolutionary terrestrial existence supplies. But it is evident that wherever it may appear and however it may work, under whatever conditions, this principle must be everywhere the same. Life is universal Force working so as to create, energise, maintain and modify even to the extent of dissolving and reconstructing substantial forms with mutual play and interchange of energy as its fundamental character. In the material world we inhabit Mind is involved and subconscious in Life, just as Supermind is involved and subconscious in Mind, and this Life instinct with subconscious Mind is again involved in Matter. Therefore Matter is here the basis and the apparent beginning; in the language of the Upanishads, Prithivi, the Earth-principle is our foundation. The material universe starts from the formal atom surcharged with energy, instinct with subconscious desire, will, intelligence. Out of this Matter apparent Life manifests and it delivers out of itself by means of the living body the Mind it contains imprisoned within it; and Mind also has still to deliver out of itself the Supermind concealed in its workings. But we can conceive a world otherwise constituted in which Mind consciously uses its innate energy to create substantial forms and not, as here, only subconsciously. Still though the working of such a world would be quite different from ours, the operation of that energy would always be Life. The thing itself would be the same, even if the process were entirely reversed.

How

is really involved

is involved

self

is involved

is

is not involved at the start but is the beginning

original of substance

intermediate vehicle of

determination

is

is

is involved

is

is the beginning

is



*Outline of the Revision of Book I*

Book I of *The Life Divine*, "The Omnipresent Reality and the Universe", was published as "Volume I" by the Arya Publishing House, Calcutta, in November 1939. In the *Arya* also we find a "Book I", entitled "The Affirmations of Vedanta"; however the series runs on to its conclusion, Chapter LIII,<sup>3</sup> without the appearance of a second book. Book I of the revised version contains the first twenty-seven chapters from the *Arya*, in the same order and with the same titles under which they originally appeared. To these twenty-seven is added a newly written twenty-eighth, "Supermind, Mind and the Overmind Maya", to complete the book.

The revision and enlargement of Book I can best be described with reference to four sets of manuscripts which seem to contain the complete history of the work. The first is a typed copy of the *Arya* text, the first twenty-seven chapters of which have received some revision — interestingly enough, less than the unused revised *Arya* pages referred to above. This revision on the typed sheets may also have been done before 1939. As will be shown below, it has been incorporated in the final text.

The second set of manuscripts is the handwritten and typewritten drafts of the new chapter (Chapter XXVIII) and of substantial additions to Chapter XIX, "Life", and Chapter XXIII, "The Double Soul in Man". The addition to Chapter XIX is a passage which runs from page 184 to page 186 of the Centenary Library text. The other new matter has replaced the *Arya* text of the last half of Chapter XXIII. These additions, as also the new chapter, were originally handwritten on loose sheets, and subsequently typed by a disciple of Sri Aurobindo and revised by Sri Aurobindo before being included with the rest of the text.

Practically all the revision of Book I is done directly on the galley proofs, which form the third set of manuscripts. Most of the chapters were composed by the press from the original unrevised text of the *Arya*, the only exceptions being Chapters XXVI, XXVII and, of course, the new passages and chapter. The revision from

<sup>3</sup> There are actually only fifty-two chapters (in fifty-four issues); the number LIII is due to a printing error.

the bound typed sheets of the *Arya* text (the first set of manuscripts referred to above) were transferred to the galley proofs by a disciple of Sri Aurobindo and further revisions were added subsequently by Sri Aurobindo in his own hand.

### *Nature of the Revision of Book I*

The revision of Chapters I to XII consists of no more than a few words or marks of punctuation changed or added here and there. Chapter IX has slightly more of this type of revision than the other eleven chapters. A larger number of changes and additions of the same type appear in Chapters XIII to XVIII. Chapter XIX, besides having added to it the new passage already mentioned, has more verbal changes than the rest of the chapters of Book I. The parts of Chapter XXIII which have not been completely rewritten are only slightly revised. The remaining chapters, while they have more words and phrases added and changed than the earlier ones, may yet be considered on the whole only lightly revised.

In 1943 a second edition of the first "volume" of *The Life Divine* was brought out. This edition, which incorporated a few minor changes of the author, has been the text for all subsequent editions of Book I, including the Centenary Edition.

### *Conclusion*

With the exceptions noted above the chapters of the revised first book of *The Life Divine* have remained substantially the same as they were when originally published. Even the most revised parts of the *Arya* chapters forming Book I are less changed than the least revised parts of those which, recast, make up Book II. This recasting will be described in the sequel.

A Revised Edition of  
*Thoughts and Aphorisms*

IN PREPARING the revised edition of Sri Aurobindo's *Thoughts and Aphorisms* which has recently been issued, the editors checked the entire text against the author's handwritten manuscript. This notebook dates from the early years of Sri Aurobindo's stay in Pondicherry; various evidence suggests that it should be assigned to the first months of the year 1915. The manuscript appears to be a fair copy and is thus easily legible, although certain words and phrases admit some doubt and others, although clear, seem to have been reproduced incorrectly in earlier editions of the book. We give below a list of important corrections introduced in the new edition. Minor errors of capitalisation, punctuation, spelling, articles, etc. have been omitted from this list.

ERRATA

Aphorism Number	SABCL Page	Opening Words	For	Read
5	79	"If mankind..."	less	her
7	79	"What men call..."	After the second sentence the text should read: "Reason divides, fixes details and contrasts them; Wisdom unifies, marries contrasts in a single harmony."	
12	80	"They proved..."	does	did
14	80	"Hallucination is..."	touches of the artist, — in	touches of artist in
15	80	"That which men..."	perception and superstition	perceptions. Superstition

Aphorism Number	SABCL Page	Opening Words	For	Read
18	81	"Chance is not..."	that did not conceal and disfigure a truth.	that was not the concealing and disfigurement of a truth.
43	83	"If God draw..."	upwards.	upward.
53	84	"The quarrels..."	obtain	attain
54	84	"You say..."	enters	alters
90	88	"This world was built by Ignorance..."	effulgent reason.	effulgent exceeding of reason. (deleting the footnote)
98	89	"Revelation is..."	is direct  or inspired	is the direct  or the inspired
100	90	"Shun all..."	than the highest Kanchanjungha, profounder	than highest Kanchanjungha, be profounder
119	92	"If when thou..."	on	from
131	93	"Because God has..."	circumstance-instrument	circumstance, instrument
137	94	"There is no..."	thy	the
142	95	"Be to..."	on	in
145	96	"O Poet..."	eternal	external
151	96	"A man came..."	this instructor	his instructor

Aphorism Number	SABCL Page	Opening Words	For	Read
152	97	“When our minds...”	alone having	alone as having
160	98	“Shun the barren...”	snare  of unfertile	snare  of an unfertile
180	101	“There are lesser...”	really	secretly
183	101-2	“In the Buddhists’...”	is greater	is a greater
193	103	“The existence of...”	awakening of	awakening in
198	103	“Do not dream...”	ever	even
200	104	“Religion and ...”	are best	seek
204	104	“Animal man...”	After “the present” the aphorism should read: “natural man the varied and tangled mid-road...”	
205	104	The aphorism should read: “Life and action culminate and are eternally crowned for thee when thou hast attained the power of symbolising and manifesting in every thought and act, in art, literature and life, in wealth-getting, wealth-having or wealth-spending, in home, government and society, the One Immortal in His lower mortal being.”		
206	105	“God leads man...”	After “stumlings” the aphorism should read: “of his lower mortality; this is the tangle and contradiction out of which we have to escape into the self-unity <sup>1</sup> to which alone is possible a clear knowledge and a faultless action.”	
219	106	“Hatred is a...”	Kriya	Kriya

<sup>1</sup> “The self-unity” is a somewhat doubtful reading.

Aphorism Number	SAB( L Page	Opening Words	For	Read
230	107	“Men slay...”	The last sentence should read: “If thou slay, first let thy soul have known death for a reality and seen God in the smitten, the stroke and the striker.”	
238	108	“Break the moulds...”	genius	gains
252	109	“If thou think...”	for the fight	forth to fight
273	111	“Fight, while thy...”	thy enemy’s	the enemy’s
280	112	“Do thy lower...”	them	thee
294	114	“There is very...”	more self-deceit	more of self-deceit
296	114	“Be not repelled...”	crookedness	crookednesses
301	115	“Private dispute...”	appreciate	appropriate <sup>2</sup>
311	116	“Fix not...”	thy	the
313	116	“Each one...”	one	man
316	116	“Fix thy soul...”	create the	create its
327	118	“India had three...”	order	orders
333	118	“A nation ...	by common	by a common
345	120	“Be always vigilant...”	reality while	reality even while
347	120	“So many strive...”	So	The

<sup>2</sup> The manuscript clearly reads “appropriate”, but this is probably a slip of the pen “Appreciate”, which is apparently what was meant, is given in the new edition as a possible alternative

Aphorism Number	SABCL Page	Opening Words	For	Read
354	121	"By altruism..."	the perdition of thy brother.	his perdition thy brother.
357	121	"The Brahmin first..."	governs by	governs us by
361	122	"Men seek laboriously..."	the bounded little being	the little bounded being
366	123	"Thou mayst be..."	wisely even	wisely and lovingly even
369	123	"The Vedanta is..."	the eternal sunlight.	a high and eternal sunlight.
378	124	"God made the..."	consent	assent
382	125	"For nearly forty..."	The first sentence should read: "For nearly forty years behind the wholly good <sup>3</sup> I was weakly in constitution; I suffered constantly from the smaller and the greater ailments and mistook this curse for a burden that Nature had laid upon me."  in the body                      in this body	
398	127	"God within is..."	Unaffected  experiment, but with	Unappalled  experiment, with
407	128	"Drugs cure..."	Drugs cure	Drugs often cure
410	129	"If thou pursuest..."	pursuest God	pursuest after God

<sup>3</sup> Note that the reading of "behind the wholly good", a practically illegible phrase written between two lines, is rather doubtful. In addition "depart" in the next sentence is uncertain.

Aphorism Number	SABCL Page	Opening Words	For	Read
410	129	(This aphorism and the one that precedes it should be read as one aphorism.)		
422	130	"There are four..."	fierce	fiercer
432	131	"For my part..."	away	to me
441	132	"I did my..."	command destroyer	commands disturber
469	136	"Because thou wert..."	not the	not thee the
472	136	"Even the atheist..."	déniest the	deny it the
477	137	"When will the world..."	garden	gardens
487	139	"Love of man..."	To love and	So love and
493	139	"Canst thou see..."	Him in seizable	Him seated in sensible
494	140	"Divine Love has..."	perennial might	personal height
495	140	"I used to..."	not suffered	not so suffered
505	141	"Service is chiefly..."	Service	Science
506	141	"O Aristophanes..."	thou watchest thyself. But wilt	thou who watchest thyself, wilt
533	145	"See God every-where..."	a truth	truth



*Archival Notes*

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<b>Aphorism Number</b>		<b>Opening Words</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Read</b>
535	145	"The rejection of..."	utter has	after lies
536	145	"The whole truth..."	the only	the one and only
539	146	"Atheism is the..."	form	frame











