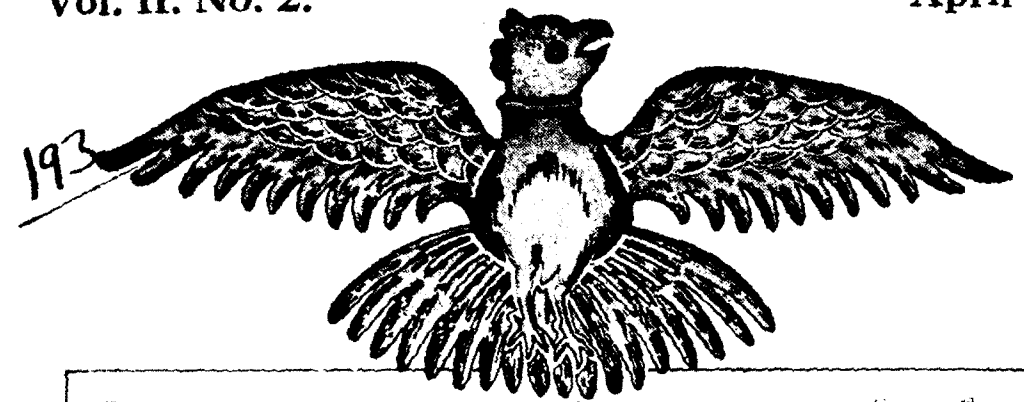


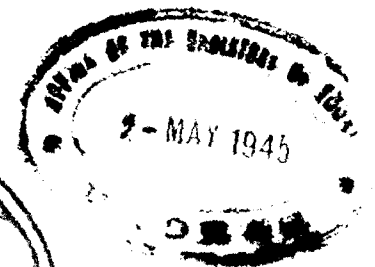
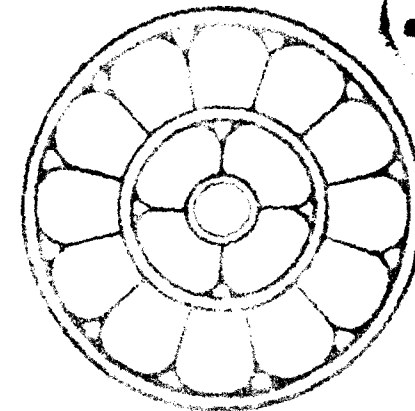
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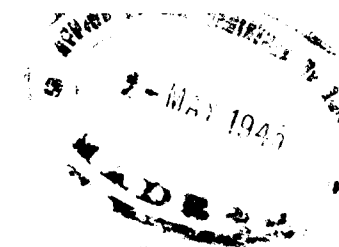
The **ADVENT**

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



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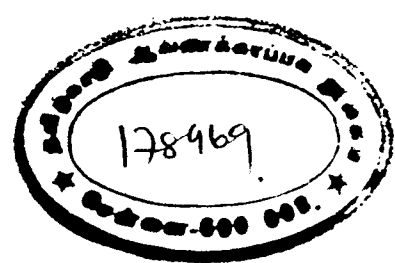
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R. VAIDYANATHASWAMY, D.Sc.

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THE ADVENT

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A Prayer

(Translated from the French)

Darkness has descended upon earth, dense, violent, victorious...

All is sorrow, panic and destruction in the physical world, and the splendour of the light of Thy love seems darkened by a veil of mourning...

O sweet Mother, I melt into Thee with an immense love, in an intense supplication to the Lord of all things, that He may show us our route, that He may trace the path of His work, so that we may walk boldly upon it.

Time presses: O Lord, the powers divine must come to the succour of the anguished earth.

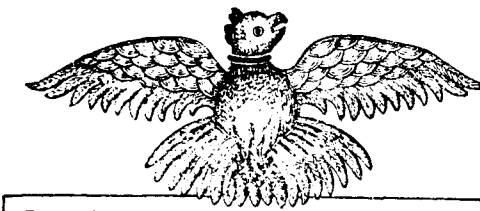
O Mother, sweet Mother, Thou claspest all Thy children to the vastness of Thy breast and Thou enlopest them all with an equal love.

I have become the purifying fire of Thy love. O Lord, O silent Unthinkable, accept the holocaust of this brazier of love so that Thy reign may come, Thy light may triumph over darkness and over death.

Manifest Thy power. From day to day, from hour to hour we implore Thee: "O Lord, manifest Thy power."

Sept. 4, 1914.

THE MOTHER



The ADVENT

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

PANACEA OF "ISMS"

Communism

Communism cannot save humanity. For if it means the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, well, a healthy normal society will not bear or tolerate it long—no Dictatorship, whether of one or of many, is likely to endure or bring in the millennium. In that sense communism is only a "fascismo" of "small" people (fighting against a fascismo of big people). A society is not normally made up of proletarians only: it does not consist merely of lotus-eaters nor does it consist of hewers of wood and drawers of water alone (peasants and labourers). Even a proletariat society will slowly and inevitably gravitate towards a stratification of its own. In its very bosom the bureaucracy, the military, the officialdom of a closed body will form a class of

its own. A Lenin cannot prevent the advent of a Stalin. Even if the proletarians form the majority, by far a very large majority, even then the tyranny of the majority is as reprehensible as the tyranny of the minority. Communism pins its faith on struggle—the class struggle, it says, is historically true and morally justifiable. But this is a postulate all are not bound to accept. Then again if communism means also materialism (dialectical or any other), that also cannot meet and satisfy all the needs and urges of man, indeed it leaves out of account all the deeper yearnings that lie imbedded in him and that cannot be obliterated by a mere denial. For surely man does not live by bread alone, however that article is indispensable to him: not even culture, the kind admit-

ted by communism, severely intellectual, rational, scientific, pragmatic can be the be-all and end-all of human civilisation. Communistic Russia attempted to sweep away all traces of religion and church and piety; the attempt does not seem to have been very successful.

As a matter of fact Communism is best taken as a symptom of the disease society suffers from and not as a remedy. The disease is a two-fold bondage from which man has always been trying to free himself. It is fundamentally the same bondage which the great French Revolution sought most vigorously and violently to shake off—an economic and an ideological bondage, that is to say, translated in the terms of those days, the tyranny of the court and the nobility and the tyranny of the Church. The same two-fold bondage appears again today as combated by Communism, viz., Capitalism and Bourgeoisie. Originally and essentially, however, Communism meant an economic system in which there is no personal property, all property being held in common. It is an ideal that requires a good deal of ingenuity to be worked out in all details, to say the least. Certain religious sects within restricted membership tried the experiment.

mentality is required, a mentality freed from normal mundane reactions, as a preliminary condition in order that such an attempt might be successful. A perfect or ideal communism may be possible only when man's character and nature has undergone a thorough and radical change. Till then it will be an Utopia passing through various avatars.

Socialism

Nor can socialism remedy all the ills society suffers from, if it merely or mainly means the abolition of private enterprise and the assumption by the State of the entire economic and even cultural or educational apparatus of the society. Even as an economic proposition State Socialism, which is only another name of Totalitarianism, is hardly an unmixed good. First of all, however selfish and "profiteering" the individual may be, still, one must remember that it is always the individual who is adventurous and inventive, it is he who discovers, creates new things and beautiful things. A collective or global enterprise makes for massiveness and quantity, but it means also uniformity, often a dead uniformity: for variety, for originality, as well as for the aesthetic tone and the human touch, the per-

be indispensable. Education in such a system would mean a set routine and pattern, an efficient machine to bring out consistently and continuously uniform types of men who are more or less automatons, mechanical and regimented in their make-up and behaviour. An all-out socialistic Government will bear down and entomb the deeper springs of human consciousness, the magic powers of initiative and creativity that depend upon individual liberty and the free play of personal choice. We do not deny that Socialism is an antidote to another malady in the social body—the parcellation, the fragmentation into a thousand petty interests, all aggressive and combative, of the economic strength of a community, and also the stupendous inequality and maldistribution of wealth and opportunity. But it brings in its own poison.

It is a great illusion, as has been pointed out by many, that a collective and impersonal body cannot be profiteers and war-mongers. A nation as a whole can very well be moved by greed and violence and *Sieglust* (passion for conquest)—Nazism has another name, it is also called National Socialism. Everything depends not upon the form, but the spirit that animates the form. It is the spirit, man's inner nature that

is to be handled, dealt with and changed; outer systems and forms have only a secondary importance.

Nationalism

Again, Nationalism is also not the *summum bonum* of collective living. The nation has emerged out of the family and the tribe as a greater unit of the human aggregate. But this does not mean that it is the last word on the subject—larger units are not to be found or formed. In the present-day juncture it is nationalism that has become a stumbling-block to a fairer solution of human problems. For example, India, Egypt, Ireland, even Poland, whatever may be the justifying reasons, are almost exclusively—chauvinistically—nationalistic. They believe that the attainment of their free, unfettered separate national existence first will automatically bring in its train all ideal results that have been postponed till now. They do not see, however, that in the actual circumstances an international solution has the greater chance of bringing about a happier solution for the nation too and not the other way round. The more significant urge today is towards this greater aggregation—Pan-America, Pan-Russia, Pan-Arabia, a Western European Block and an Eastern European

Block are movements that have been thrown up because of a great necessity in human life and its evolution. Man's stupidity, his failure to grasp the situation, his incapacity to march with Nature, his tendency always to fall back, to return to the out-dated past may delay or cause a turn or twist in this healthy movement, but it cannot be permanently thwarted or denied for long. Churchill's memorable call to France, on the eve of her debacle, to join and form with Britain a single national union, however sentimental or even ludicrous it may appear to some, is, as we see it, the cry of humanity itself to transcend the modern barriers of nationhood and rise to a higher status of solidarity and collective consciousness.

Internationalism

And yet internationalism is not the one thing needful either. If it means the obliteration of all national values, of all cultural diversity, it will not certainly conduce to the greater enrichment and perfection of humanity. Taken by itself and in its absolute sense it cannot be a practical success. The fact is being proved every moment these days. Internationalism in the economic sphere, however, seems to have a greater probability and utility than in the

merely political sphere. Economics is forcing peoples and nations to live together and move together: it has become the soldering agent in modern times of all the elements—the groups and types of the human family that were so long separate from each other, unknown to each other or clashing with each other. But that is good so far as it goes. Powerful as economic forces are, they are not the only deciding or directing agents in human affairs. That is the great flaw in the "Internationale", the Marxian type of internationalism which has been made familiar to us. Man is not a political animal, in spite of Aristotle, nor is he an economic animal, in spite of Marx and Engels. Mere economics, even when economics is working for a greater unity of mankind, tends to work more for uniformity: it reduces man to the position of a machine and a physical or material machine at that. By an irony of fate the human value for which the international proletariat raised its banner of revolt is precisely what suffers in the end. The Beveridge Plan, so much talked of nowadays, made such an appeal, no doubt because of the economic advantages it ensures, but also, by far and large, because it views man as a human being in and against the machine to which

he belongs, because it is psychologically a scheme to salvage the manhood of man, so far as is possible, out of a rigidly mechanistic industrial organisation.

Humanism

So the cry is for greater human values. Man needs food and shelter, goes without saying, but he yearns for other things also, air and light: he needs freedom, he needs culture—higher thoughts, finer emotions, nobler urges—the field and expression of personal worth. The acquisition of knowledge, the creation of beauty—philosophy, art, literature, science, in their pure forms, pursued for their own sake, are things man holds dear to his heart. Without them life loses its charm and significance. Mind and sensibility free to roam, not turned and tied to the exclusive needs and interests of physical life, free, that is to say, to discover and create norms and ideals and truths that are values in themselves and also lend values to the matter-of-fact terrestrial life. It is not sufficient that all men should have work and wages, it is not sufficient that all should have learnt the three R's, it is not sufficient that they should understand their rights—social, political, economic—and claim and vindicate them. Nor is it sufficient for men to become merely

useful or indispensable—although happy and contented—members of a collective body. The individual must be free, free in his creative joy to bring out and formulate, in thought, in speech, in action, in all the modes of expression, the truth, the beauty, the good he experiences within. An all-round culture—a well-developed mind, a well-organised life, a well-formed body—a harmonious working of all the members of the system at a high level of consciousness—that is man's need, for there lies his self-fulfilment. That is the ideal of humanism—which the ancient Graeco-Roman culture worshipped, which was again revived by the Renaissance and which once again became a fresh and living force after the great Revolution and is still the high light to which Science and modern knowledge turns.

The More Beyond

And yet this is not the grand finale, the *ne plus ultra*. For man does not stop with man—in the tremendous phrase carved by Nietzsche, "Man is a thing that shall be surpassed." Until and unless man surpasses himself, finds a focus and fulcrum outside and beyond his normal human—too human—self, he cannot entirely and radically change his nature and rebuild his society on an

altogether different pattern. Man has to reach his divine status, become the Divine, within and outside, body and soul; then only can the ills to which he is exposed totally vanish and then alone can he enjoy individually and collec-

SECTARIANISM OR LOYALTY

Modern culture demands that one should not be bound to one creed or dogma, swear by one principle or rule of life or be led blindly by one man. Truth, it is said, has many facets and the human being is also not a Cyclops, a one-eyed creature. To fix oneself to one mode of seeing and believing and even behaving is to be narrow, restricted, sectarian. One must be able to see many standpoints, appreciate views at variance with one's own, appraise the relativity of all standards. Not to be able to do so leads to obscurantism and fanaticism. The Inquisitors were monomaniacs, obsessed by an *idée fixe*. On the other hand, the wisest counsel seems to have been given by Voltaire who advised the inquirers to learn from anywhere and everywhere, even Science from the Chinese. In our Indian legends we know that Uddhava did not hesitate to accept and learn from more than a dozen Gurus. That is as it should be if we would have a mind and con-

tively a perfect life on earth. Naturally man is not expected to accomplish this mighty work alone and unaided, he can rest assured and comforted, for Nature herself is moving inexorably towards that consummation.

sciousness large and vast and all-encompassing.

And yet there is a question. While attempting to be too liberal and catholic one may happen to turn a dilettante. Dilettante is one who takes an interest, an aesthetic, a dispassionate and detached interest in all things. His interest is intellectual, something abstract and necessarily superficial; it is not a vital interest, not a question of his soul, an urgent problem of his living.

A spiritual interest is nothing if it is not in this way a question that touches life to its core. That means a definite goal and appropriate means to reach that goal, and that again necessarily involves a choice, a process of acceptance and rejection. The goal is also called the *Isha*, the godhead that one seeks, the Divine that is fulfilled in oneself. Being a personality, an individual, one has to choose, one can best follow the line of evolution and growth and fulfilment of that personality and individuality—that is the call of

the Psyche, the direction of the Jiva. In other words one has to be loyal and faithful to one's nature and being. That is why it is said, Better to perish while fulfilling one's own law of life than to flourish by fulfilling another's law. By being curious about another's Dharma -- it is this kind of curiosity that led to the original fall of man, according to the Bible—that is to say, if one is vitally curious, allows oneself to be influenced and so affected and diverted by what is an outside and foreign force, because not in the line of one's own truth and development, one asks for a mixture and intervention which bring confusion, thwart the growth and fulfilment, as that falsifies the nature.

It is not only bad influences that affect you badly, even good influences do so—like medicines that depend upon the particular constitution for their action. In ancient times this was called *varnashankara* or *dharmashankara*, as, for example, when a Kshatriya sought to follow the rule of life of a Brahmin or *vice versa*. This kind of admixture or mesalliance was not favoured, as it was likely to bring about an obscurity in the consciousness and in the end frustration in the spiritual life. That was the original psychological reason why heresy was con-

sidered such a dangerous thing in all religions.

It is not sufficient to say that God is one and therefore wherever He is found and however He is found and whoever finds Him one must implicitly accept and obey and follow. God is one indeed: but it is equally true that he is multiple. God is not a point, but a limitless infinity, so that when one does reach Him one arrives at a particular spot, as it were, enters into only one of his many mansions. Likewise God's manifestation upon earth has been infinitely diverse, his Vibhutis, avatars, his prophets and vicegerents have been of all sorts and kinds. Precisely because God is at once one and infinitely multiple and because human nature also is similarly, if one in essence, infinitely multiple in expression, each one while seeing and finding the one God seeks and finds him in and through a particular formulation. That is the original meaning, the genesis and justification of creeds and dogmas. Only, it must be borne in mind, that one can be faithful even to a particular creed and dogma and yet transcend it, live a particular mode of life and yet possess at the back of it and as its support the very sense and consciousness of infinity itself. Where there is this synthetic and transcendent experi-

ence dogmatism has no place, nor conflict between creed and creed.

One can be as catholic and boundless as infinity, still one can and has to bow down to a special figure of it, since or if one who approaches it has a figure of his own. Just in the same way as when one is in the body, one has to live a particular life framed by the body, even the mind as well as the life are canalised in the mould of the body consciousness, and yet at the same time one can live in and through the inner consciousness immeasurably innumerable in other bodies, in the unbarred expanse of the cosmic and the transcendent. The two experiences are not contradictory, rather they reinforce each other.

Uddhava might have had

numberless teachers and instructors, but the Guru of his soul was Sri Krishna alone, none other. We may learn many things from many places, from books, from nature, from persons; intuitions and inspirations may come from many quarters, inside and outside, but the central guidance flows from one source only and one must be careful to keep it unmixed undefiled, clear and pure. When one means nothing more than playing with ideas and persons and places, there is no harm in being a globe-trotter; but as soon as one becomes serious, means business, one automatically stops short, finds and sticks to his Ishta, even like the Gopis of Sri Krishna who declared unequivocally that they would not move out of Brindaban even by a single step.

Soul in the Ignorance, wake from its stupor.

Flake of the world-fire, spark of Divinity,

Lift up thy mind and thy heart into glory.

Sun in the darkness, recover thy lustre.

—“Soul In The Ignorance”—Sri Aurobindo.

CANZONET

So passing sweet
To adore her heaven-remembering feet,
For she disdains not earthly grace!
And strangely hued
With love's impassioned sanctitude
Lures the dream-shadowy silence of her gaze!

O hers the ecstatic mood
Of an eternal dawn-pure sky
Where blends in deepest amity
The awakening loveliness
Of voiceful day
With night's unchangeable mystery
Past human words...
Poor fleeting words
In vain endeavouring to express
What aeons of constellate calm can scarce convey!

—Amal

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

I

The principle of this Yoga is not a perfection of human nature as it is but a psychic and spiritual transformation of all the parts of the being through the action of an inner consciousness and then of a higher consciousness which works on them, throws out the old movements or changes them into an image of its own and so transmutes the lower into higher nature. It is not so much the perfection of the intellect as a transformation of it, a transformation of the mind, the substitution of a larger greater principle of knowledge—and so with all the rest of the being.

This is a slow and difficult process; the road is long and it is hard to establish even the necessary basis. The old existing nature resists and obstructs and difficulties rise one after another, till they are overcome.

II

In our Yoga the Nirvana is the beginning of the higher Truth, as it is the passage from the Ignorance to the higher Truth. The Ignorance has to be extinguished in order that the Truth may manifest.

III

What we are doing, if and when we succeed, will be a beginning, not a completion. It is the foundation of a new consciousness on earth—a consciousness with infinite possibilities of manifestation. The eternal progression is in the manifestation and beyond it there is no progression.

If the redemption of the soul from the physical vesture be the object, then there is no need of supramentalisation. Spiritual Mukti and Nirvana are sufficient. If the object is to rise to supraphysical planes, then also there is no need of supramentalisation. One can enter into some heaven above by devotion to the Lord of that heaven. But that is no progression. The other worlds are typical worlds, each fixed in its own kind and type and law. Evolution takes place on the earth and therefore the earth is the proper field for progression. The being of the other worlds do not progress from one world to another. They remain fixed to their own type.

The purely monistic Vedantist says, all is Brahman, life is a dream, an unreality, only Brahman exists. One has Nirvana or

Mukti, one lives only till the body falls—after that there is no such thing as life.

They do not believe in transformation, because mind, life and body are an ignorance, an illusion—the only reality is the featureless, relationless Self or Brahman—Life is a thing of relations; in the pure Self, all life and relations disappear. What would be the use and possibility of transforming an illusion that can never be anything else (however transformed) than an illusion? There is no such thing for them as a “Nirvanic life”.

It is only some Yogas that aim at a transformation of any kind except that of ignorance into knowledge. The idea varies,—sometimes a divine knowledge or power or else a divine purity or an ethical perfection or a divine love.

What has to be overcome is the opposition of the Ignorance that does not want the transformation of the nature. If that can be overcome, then old spiritual ideas will not form an obstacle.

It is not intended to supramentalise humanity at large, but to establish the principle of the supramental consciousness in the earth-evolution. If that is done, all that is needed will be evolved by the supramental Power itself. It is not therefore important that

the mission should be wide-spread. What is important is that the thing should be done at all in however small a number, that is the only difficulty.

It means, if the transformation of the body is complete, no subjection to death—it does not mean that one will be bound to keep the same body for all time. One creates a new body for oneself when one wants to change, but how it will be done cannot be said now. The present method is by physical birth—some occultists suppose that a time will come when that is not necessary—but the question must be left for the supramental evolution to decide.

The questions about the Supermind cannot be answered profitably now. Supermind cannot be described in terms that the mind will understand, because the terms will be mental and mind will understand them in a mental way and mental sense and miss their true import. It would therefore be a waste of time and energy which should be devoted to the preliminary work—psychisation and spiritualisation of the being and nature without which no supramentalisation is possible. Let the whole dynamic nature led by the psychic make itself full of the dynamic spiritual light, peace, purity, knowledge, force; let it afterwards get experience of the

intermediate spiritual planes and know, feel and act in their sense, then it will be possible to speak last of the supramental transformation.

IV

In the supramental consciousness, there are no problems—the problem is created by the division set up by the Mind. The Supramental sees the Truth as a single whole and everything falls into its place in that whole. The supramental is also spiritual, but the old Yogas reach Sachchidananda through the spiritualised mind and depart into the eternally static oneness of Sachchidananda or rather pure Sat (Existence) absolute and eternal or else a pure Non-existence absolute and eternal. Ours having realised Sachchidananda in the spiritualised mind plane proceeds to realise it in the supramental plane.

The supreme supra-cosmic Sachchidananda is above all. Supermind may be described as its power of self-awareness and world-awareness, the world being in itself. So to live consciously in the supreme Sachchidananda one must pass through the Supermind. If one is in the supra-cosmic apart from the manifestation, there is no place for problems or solutions. If one lives in the transcendence and the cosmic view at the same time, that can only be

by the supramental consciousness in the supreme Sachchidananda consciousness—so why should the question arise? Why should there be a difference between the supreme Sachchidananda version of the cosmos and the Supermind's version of it? Your difficulty probably comes from thinking of both in terms of the mind.

(1) The Supermind is an entirely different consciousness not only from the spiritualised Mind, but from the planes above spiritualised Mind which intervene between it and the Supramental plane. Once one passes beyond Overmind to Supermind, one enters into a consciousness to which the norms of the other planes do not at all apply and in which the same Truth, e.g. Sachchidananda and truth of this universe, is seen in quite a different way and has a different dynamic consequence. This necessarily results from the fact that Supermind has an indivisible knowledge, while overmind proceeds by union in division and Mind by division taking division as the first fact, for that is the natural process of its knowledge.

(2) In all planes the essential experience of Sachchidananda, pure Existence, Consciousness, Bliss is the same and Mind is often contented with it as the sole Truth and dismisses all else as part of the grand Illusion, but

there is also a dynamic experience of the Divine or of Existence (e.g. as One and Many, Personal and Impersonal, the Infinite and Finite etc.,) which is essential for the integral knowledge. The dynamic experience is not the same in the lower planes as in the higher, in the intermediate spiritual planes and in the supramental. In these the oppositions can only be put together and harmonised, in the supermind they fuse together and are inseparably one; that makes an enormous difference.

(3) The universe is dynamism, movement—the essential experience of Sachchidananda apart from the dynamism and movement is static. The full dynamic truth of Sachchidananda and the universe and its consequence cannot be grasped by any other consciousness than the Supermind, because the instrumentation in all other (lower) planes is inferior and there is therefore a disparity between the fullness of the static experience and the incompleteness of the dynamic power, knowledge, result of the inferior light and power of other planes. This is the reason why the consciousness of the other spiritual planes even if it descends can make no radical change in the earth-consciousness, only modify or enrich it. The radical transformation needs the

descent of a supramental power and nature.

One cannot speak of two classes of Sachchidananda, for Sachchidananda is the same always—but the knowledge of Sachchidananda and the universe differs according to the degree of the consciousness which has the experience.

The personal realisation of the Divine may be sometimes with Form, sometimes without Form. Without Form, it is the presence of the living Divine Person, felt in everything. With Form, it comes with the image of the One to whom worship is offered. The Divine can always manifest himself in a form to the bhakta or seeker. One sees him in the form in which one worships or seeks him or in a form suitable to the Divine Personality who is the object of the adoration. How it manifests depends on many things and it is too various to be reduced to a single rule. Sometimes it is in the heart that the Presence with the form is seen, sometimes in any of the other centres, sometimes above and guiding from there; sometimes it is seen outside and in front as if an embodied Person. Its advantages are an intimate relation and constant guidance or if felt or seen within, a very strong and concrete realisation of the constant presence. But one must be very sure of the

purity of one's adoration and seeking—for the disadvantage of this kind of embodied relation is that other Forces can imitate the Form or counterfeit the voice and the guidance and this gets more force if it is associated with a constructed image which is not the true thing. Several have been misled in this way because pride, vanity or desire was strong in them and robbed them of the finer psychic perception that is not mental and can at once turn the Mother's light on such misleadings or errors.

—Sri Aurobindo

THOUGHTS ON CURRENT EVENTS

IS SCIENCE THE CAUSE OF WAR?

The terrible and limitless sufferings caused by the war have set people thinking everywhere about the real cause of war and the means by which it can be effectively prevented. One view is that Science is the cause of war and it is remarkable that some eminent scientists themselves have put forward such a view. Thus Sir C. V. Raman, speaking recently at the Vellore conference, observed that Science was primarily responsible for the present condition of Europe and world-wide sufferings; that it had become the profession of the most educated and eminent men to invent weapons for destroying the greatest possible number of people; he further observed that as long as humanity would not listen to the message of India, to the message of Buddha, Mahavira and Asoka, these streams of blood and tears would continue to flow indefinitely. The Marxists, on the other hand, are shocked by this view that Science is the cause of war and that only spirituality can bring the salvation of mankind. They point to the lesson of history, how the teaching of Buddha and others has not been able to prevent wars and they emphasise that the affairs of the world, constituted as it is, cannot be based on the ideals of Buddha and Asoka. Is then this state of things, this repeated hecatomb of mankind to continue for ever? It is not Science, they say, but the abuse of Science which is the root of the mischief and that it is not the message of Buddha or Krishna, but that of Karl Marx which alone can save humanity by doing away with this abuse for good. But the question of the real cause of war is too serious to be thus made a matter of party slogan. How Marxists in India are blinding themselves by their party-mindedness is very well illustrated by the fact that they consider the Hindu-Muslim conflict in India as only a form of class-war. For all the evils of the world they have found one panacea—down with the capitalists and do it with violence as they would not otherwise give up their vested interests. Here is a real declaration of war to end war and bloodshed and tears. But may we turn the lesson of history on them and ask—was there no war in the world before the advent of capital-

ism in the 19th century? It is only now, in this commercial age, that economic factors have become the chief source of war; but before this, political causes, the search for "territorial aggrandisement and political predominance or hegemony among the nations" were the primary cause of war, commercial aims were only a secondary cause; and this is also true of the present European war which has been brought about by the militarists of Germany to establish the rule of the German race over the world and thus realise their ideal of the Superman. It is no doubt true that a bourgeois State "has its eye chiefly on the possession of markets, on the command of new fields of wealth, the formation or conquest of colonies or dependencies which can be commercially and industrially exploited and on political aggrandisement only as a means for this more cherished object;" but where is the guarantee that a socialist State also will not behave in the same manner? It is said that the real cause of war is the greed of capitalists for profits. But is greed a monopoly of the capitalists only? Have not other people also the same lust for money, for profit, for power? The men who will be at the head of a Marxist or Socialist Government will inevitably seek economic advantages for their country and the recurrence of war will be unavoidable. By collectivisation, a socialist State will enormously increase its production and must go out in the world in search of fresh pastures. If anything, an individualistic democracy will be less prone to war than a socialist State, as war inevitably brings many restrictions on individual liberty; but as that will be a normal thing in a

socialist State, war will not be regarded as a special evil in that respect. On the other hand, the regimentation in such a State makes it very efficient for war effort as we have seen in the exploits of Soviet Russia in the present war; and this very efficiency will tempt such a State to go to war on some pretext or other.

The greatest defect of Marxism is that it expects to bring about a radical improvement in the affairs of men without a radical change in human nature, but simply by some change in the external social and economic machinery. In this way it turns away attention from the one thing essential, the inner change of man; and it is Science which is chiefly responsible for this mentality; it has so much mechanised the human intellect that it expects to bring in a new order of things principally or solely through mechanical means, through social and political adjustments. As this can never be successful, Science can in a true sense be called the primary cause of the present condition of Europe and of the continuation of the sufferings of humanity. It is a good sign that scientists themselves have begun to realise this and to turn to spirituality for the correction of the defects of Science and the prevention of its abuse. Thus in a recently published book, *The Structure of Morale*, the author, J. T. Maccurdy, a scientist, observes: "At the moment we are beginning to emerge painfully from an age of materialistic philosophy that has been invaluable as the inspiration for applied Science, but has led to a neglect of other values, a neglect that is perhaps the ultimate cause of the present war."

Europe, with all its passion for progress, has not yet been able to

reconcile its two great ideals of Liberty and Equality. Individualistic democracy gave political liberty and equality before the law, but it led to the merciless exploitation of the poor and the weak; Marxism wants to establish economic equality, but "this equality can only be presently secured by strict regulation, and that means that liberty at least for a time must go under. And at any rate the root of the whole difficulty is ignored, that nothing can be real in life that is not made real in the spirit. It is only if man can be made free, equal and united in spirit that there can be a secure freedom, equality and brotherhood in their life. The idea and sentiment are not enough, for they are incomplete and combated by deep-seated nature and instinct, and they are besides inconstant and fluctuate. There must be an immense advance that will make freedom and unity our necessary internal and external atmosphere. This can come only by a spiritual change and the intellect of Europe is beginning to see that the

spiritual change is at least a necessity; but it is still too intent on rational formula and on mechanical effort to spare much time for discovery and realisation of the things of the spirit." (Arya, Vol. VII-41.)

It is for Asia, and especially for India to show to the world by example as well as precept how human life can be radically changed and transformed through spirituality. The message of Buddha and other spiritual leaders of India has neither failed nor is it impracticable; those who think otherwise themselves fail to appreciate the great civilising and elevating influence that Buddhism has exercised and is still exercising all over the world; if the millennium has not yet come, it is because the task is too great, human nature too difficult to be transformed, and humanity has had to go through a long period of slow and gradual preparation. Only now the time has come for the consummation of the age-long spiritual efforts of India.

SHEER WASTE OF MONEY

Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda, the former Parliamentary Secretary of the Bombay Congress, has made the following statement in support of the khadi movement: "Indian mills produce cloth today worth about 50 crores of rupees; of this a sum of about ten crores of rupees constitute the wage bill of the industry. Khadi of the same value would provide 35 crores of rupees in the shape of wages. Khadi manufactured from the same quantity of cotton would be sold at 100 crores of rupees, of which the wage bill would amount to 70 crores of rupees. As against 50 crores of rupees in the price

of cloth, the increase in the amount distributed as wages is 60 crores of rupees."

Two things in this statement are worth noticing. First, the price of khadi is double of the price of the same quantity of mill cloth. But how does Mr. Nanda assume that people would continue to buy khadi at such a high price? How long can mere sentiment, expensively bolstered up by propaganda, prevail against the self-interest of people inducing them to pay Rs. 2 for a piece of cloth which can be bought at Re. 1 from the mills? It is reasonable to expect that people would

pay more for hand-made rice as it is healthier and more nourishing than mill-made rice. But there is no such virtue in khadi as compared with mill cloth. Why should Indians be asked to spend 100 crores of rupees for their clothes when they can have them from the mills only for 50 crores? But unless they do that the khadi movement cannot go on, so Mr. Nanda silently assumes that they would do so. A little analysis will show that khaddar cannot come to stay unless all mills are abolished not only in India but throughout the world. Mills can buy cotton at a much cheaper wholesale rate than is possible for a cottage spinner; then the latter will have to pay wages to the weaver for getting his yarn woven into a cloth. But the mills will do both the spinning and the weaving at a much less cost. Thus the price which the spinner will get by selling that piece of cloth in the open market will be much less than what he has actually spent for the cotton and weaving. Thus instead of getting any wages for having spun the yarn, he will have to pay something from his own pocket for having done the virtuous act of spinning, *charkayajna* as it is called. If at present spinners are getting something as wages, however miserable, it is because someone else is paying the excess amount from his own pocket. How long can this show last?

Secondly, Mr. Nanda states that at present the mills are distributing 10 crores of rupees to the workers as wages; khadi of the same value would provide 35 crores of rupees as wages. This seems very well on paper; but why Mr. Nanda does not compare the number of workers among whom the money is to be distributed? Of this huge sum of 35 or 70 crores how much would each

individual spinner get? "At present a spinning machine runs as many as one thousand spindles, each turning at the rate of ten thousand revolutions a minute and it needs only one man and two boys to tend two thousand spindles." Thus the money which a mill gives to one man and two boys would have to be distributed among hundreds of cottage spinners; would not that be a sheer waste of money like scattering a tumbler of water on the parched sands of a desert?

Coming to actual figures, we find that the well-known Abhay Ashram in Bengal, one of the best-organised khadi centres founded by Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghose, a member of the Congress working Committee, paid Rs. 25,000 only as wages to 9,000 spinners in 1927. That was when the khadi movement was at its peak. It has admittedly deteriorated since then, so much so that the Khadi Pratisthan of Bengal, another well-known centre highly subsidised by the A.I.S.A. has been compelled to give up khadi work altogether and is now dealing with such village products as oil, rice, atta, ghee though it still preserves its original name of Khadi Pratisthan. Now the above figures of the Abhay Ashram show that the spinners actually got on the average less than four annas per month. The ten crores given as wages to workers by the mills would give a decent means of livelihood to many lacs of workers; whereas the wages from the charka is practically negligible, even if it be eight or twelve annas per month. This is not distribution of wealth but destruction by too much splitting.

As a matter of fact, it is not spinning but weaving which can become a useful cottage industry. In Bengal more than five millions of men are earning their

livelihood by weaving. If the mills agree not to produce certain varieties of cloth which would be done only in the handlooms, and if the weavers in their turn agree to use only mill yarn, the condition of the weavers can be improved and more persons can take to weaving as a profession.

—*Critic.*

TREND OF HUMAN AFFAIRS—1945

There is but little doubt that we have now entered upon the last phase of the second World War. In a few months' time there will come a pause in the orgy of brutal bloodshed and wanton destruction that has marked the high water mark of human efficiency in the civilised world. Yes, a pause will come, but God alone knows for how long. It is necessary for us to realise where exactly we stand on the path of human progress. For, progress it is, in spite of all the vicissitudes on the way.

While the last great struggle of 1914 to 1918 was on, we were told again and again that it was a war to end war, that it was a righteous war destined to put an end to illwill and hate between man and man, and to usher in an unending era of peace and goodwill on earth. Somehow, during the present war Biblical phrases have not been bandied about so freely as then, but there have been very many loud professions of faith in the principles of democracy. Clever people in Britain and America have already started formulating plans for the reconstruction of the world on the basis of justice and fair play, if not of liberty, fraternity and equality. In 1916, in his "Ideal of Human Unity", Sri Aurobindo had said about the general trend of human affairs:—"Two different possibilities have been precipitated much nearer to realisation by the

present European conflict, a federation of free European nations, and on the other hand, the distribution of the earth into a few great empires or imperial hegemonies." We have to see how far things will have progressed in these two directions by the time the present hostilities have been suspended. The ambition of Germany to build up a new Europe, disciplined, efficient and strong, under Teutonic control, and the claim of Japan to organise a new Asia under her own hegemony will probably have vanished into thin air by then. But Russia will remain and her voice will undoubtedly be potent in the matter of rebuilding the world. We have not yet heard what the Russian statesman thinks of the platitudes set forth by eminent Anglo-Americans. I dare say a common understanding has been arrived at with regard to the partition of acquired territories, possibly also about future spheres of influence. But what real agreement can there be between the political philosophy that underlies Soviet communism and that which justifies a constitutional monarchy or a plutocratic democracy! However that is not of very great importance to the world in general, as long as the victorious powers are agreed upon giving each nation, small or big, an opportunity to fulfil its group life in its own way. The nation-state is so far the largest living unit of

corporate life recognised by the European political thinker and very strong reasons would have to be advanced to deny this to the people of other continents when the world is being reconstituted. I am not thinking particularly of my own country, just now, for it is an open question as to whether India has developed politically an integral consciousness, sufficiently strong and honest to enable her to embark on a free national existence.

This is all that I need say by way of preface, for my main object is to introduce the reader to a remarkable summing up, by Sri Aurobindo, of world affairs as they stood after the termination of the first Great War. The article was published in the *Arya* in 1920, and must have been well known to the readers of that journal. But there are many today who have not seen it, or at any rate not studied it as it should be studied. A careful perusal of this article will enable us to take stock of the likely results of the present struggle—results, both near and remote. The immediate result of the last war was thus assessed by the Master:—"Around us is a black mist and welter of the present, before us the face of a dim and ambiguous future"—"A great intellectual and moral bankruptcy, an immense emptiness and depression has succeeded to the delirium of massacre." Yet with his prophetic vision he peered through the gloom, and gave us the inner meaning of the upheaval that had shaken the world. The tall talk that people had indulged in during the war was meaningless, and merely intended to prove to the world the good faith of the contending parties. World-peace was an excellent slogan and it was reiterated again and again. Self-determination for small nations was a very

good catchword and it was repeated over and over to gain the goodwill of the lesser peoples of the world, whose sympathy and aid were useful enough, while the war was on. But as soon as armistice was declared, all these pious protestations were forgotten and an unseemly scramble for power ensued. Africa was to be "appropriated and partitioned as the personal property of two or three great powers." Western Asia was "to be administered under a system of mandates . . . openly justified as instruments of commercial exploitation." Militarism gained a new lease of life instead of being scotched and killed, as had been so glibly promised during the pendency of the war. These things had been foreseen all along by a few but became popular commonplaces after the armistice.

It was clear that the war ended in 1918 not because the war lords of the various countries had turned pacifists but because the belligerent nations were too exhausted to continue fighting. The events during the interval between the two great wars amply showed that the contending nations were waiting more or less but to recover their breath—waiting with hate and guile in their hearts—to deliver harder blows at one another at the earliest opportunity. In the old world, wars had often been waged mainly to serve the dynastic interests and to satisfy the dynastic ambitions of kings and emperors. But in 1914, even though the Hapsburg, the Romanoff and the Hohenzollern occupied their respective thrones, the war was one between nation and nation. We can even go farther and specify that it was a struggle between the aggressive Germanic idea and the middle class liberalism represented by France, England and

America. The Teuton had the worst of it, but only for a time. The Kaiser was eliminated, but a new leader arose to carry on the old cult of German domination under a new name. With this leader the democratic powers of Europe, each behind the back of the other, carried on a mild flirtation almost up to the last moment before the general flare up. Now, what was the League of Nations doing all this time! Even in 1920 Sri Aurobindo had not a good word to say for it. In his opinion, "it hardly even exists or exists only as a mockery and a bye-word". During the years that followed it played a very sorry part indeed, till ultimately it lost its prestige entirely. This League seldom gave a bold, free and fair decision, and even when it did, it had no power of enforcing its decree. Several powerful nations kept out of it altogether, while others used it wholly to attain their own selfish ends. We have but to refer to Manchukuo, Spain and Abyssinia to establish the utter futility of this international body.

The apparent result of the first great war was thus a dismal crash of all great ideals, a dire disillusionment. But that is only one aspect of it. All such cataclysms are part of Nature's deliberate design. Nature often progresses by balancing opposites—now favouring one side, now favouring the other, anon bringing about a compromise between the two. Her evolutionary march is slow and measured and in it there is no room for sudden miracles. As Sri Aurobindo observed, "the expectation of an immediate and magically complete transformation and regeneration of the world" was an error. What is established by habit and custom, and is deep-seated in the character of man cannot be uprooted

in one fierce endeavour. The war came and gave a first shock, it dealt a death blow on the moral side to a life that was no longer serving Nature's fixed purpose of uplifting and unifying humanity. It loosened the soil, upturned the sod and prepared the ground for a new sowing. The sowing and the harvest may take a long time to come, but a beginning has undoubtedly been made. This is the inner meaning and the remoter result of the first great war.

The French revolution had sounded the death knell of an absolute monarchy, a hereditary aristocracy and a church with special privileges. It had brought into power a new class, the bourgeoisie, who thence-forward dominated almost all countries in Europe, except autocratic Russia and Turkey, throughout the last century. This class, possessing all scientific knowledge, easily became the new aristocracy of intellect and absorbed into itself the barons and knights of old, who were the former leaders of society. Moreover, organising and controlling all the huge commercial enterprises of an industrial age, they gradually became the repositories of wealth in their respective countries. By the end of the century, however, the labouring classes, hitherto silent, woke up to a sense of their own importance and began to proclaim aloud that they were as much producers of wealth as the capitalist and were entitled to an equal share in the affairs of their nation. Thus inside every nation-state these two classes,—the capitalist intelligentsia and the labouring proletariat—stood confronting each other. During the last war, in the midst of the life and death struggle between nation and nation, there was a truce between the two. But it was

only a truce, not a reconciliation. Regarding the position between these two classes in 1920 the Master observed, "The modern contest between capital and labour has entered into a new phase and the two incurably antagonistic principles are evidently moving..... towards the final and decisive battle". Except in Russia, the capitalist bourgeoisie everywhere held the field by sheer weight of prestige. As happened after the fall of Napoleon, there was a stiffening of the old regime in all democratic countries after the overthrow of Germany. But this reaction was a passing thing. The change in the attitude of the labour party clearly indicated this. In Sri Aurobindo's language, "the labour movement is everywhere completing its transformation from a reformist into a socialistic and therefore necessarily.....a revolutionary type." The ideal of that movement is no longer a better social status for labour, but "the substitution of labour for wealth as the social basis and the governing power." This was quite true even of a country like England which was, and is still, largely controlled by Tory interests. It is only the hesitation of the Labour leaders that delays "the joining of the decided issue of battle". One great war after another makes it apparent that the nation-state with its monstrous egoism, however necessary a stage it has been in the path of evolution, has outlived its utility at least in its absolutist and exclusive form. Humanity has to march on to a larger living unit of group life. And this presupposes a psychological state which is as yet but implicit in the human mind. Likewise, socialism in some form which establishes equality in the state even though it achieves its object by grinding down

the individual, seems to be an indispensable stage in evolution. For it is only through this intermediate condition that human society can march to its ultimate ideal of a free brotherhood untrammelled by governmental compulsion. The various forms through which man is most likely to pass have been clearly specified by Sri Aurobindo in this essay of 1920. First, an individualistic democracy, which is "a system of political liberty and equality before the law" right enough, but which brings in ultimately "an inhuman social inequality and economic exploitation, an incessant class war and a monstrous and opulently sordid reign of wealth and production machinery." Such a titanic system must inevitably crash by its own weight. The second equation discovered by humanity is principally "an equal association in the labour and the common profits of a collective life." This system is probably also doomed to failure, for, the equality it aims at can only be secured by a strict regimentation of life and total extinction, for the time, of all individual liberty. The root of the whole difficulty is that in all these schemes of life, the spirit of man, his true self, has been ignored. The liberty, fraternity and equality aimed at has to be internal as well as external. Men must be made free, equal and united in spirit before the problem of human society can be solved. That a spiritual change is necessary in man is beginning to be realised.

"The present international policy of Labour carries in itself at the end..... a juster equation between the national and the international idea, an international comity of nations." This policy no doubt promises a better future to mankind than anything formulated as

yet by the oligarchies that dominate human affairs today. But it is by no means the end of human endeavour. It is man's innermost Self, his Spirit, that must be, as we have said already, rendered free and equal in outer life too.

With regard to Russia the Master wrote in 1920 that the success of the revolution in that country promised to be as much a landmark in human history as the achievements of the Jacobins in revolutionary France. It gave at the right moment the necessary shaking to the old and effete ideas and institutions that had begun already to crumble down in western Europe. The Russian revolution was no doubt a miracle of human energy, but what was even more important was the power of the idea that lay behind its outward success. The Western powers while not ceasing to call it a monstrosity and a danger to civilised life were obliged to come to terms with it. If this was significant in 1920, how much more significant is the fact that at the commencement of the present war the emissaries of both England and Germany were hanging about Stalin's door for weeks together waiting for a smile of recognition from him. And with very good reason, too, considering the indomitable spirit and all-round efficiency displayed subsequently by the Russian forces during the present prolonged struggle. If the Russian upheaval was "the outstanding portent of things to come" in 1920, how much more so is it today! The words of the Master are eloquent:—"The thing of real significance is.....that a great nation marked out as one of the coming leaders of humanity has taken a bold leap into the hidden gulfs of the future, abolished the past foundations made and persisted in a radical experiment of

communism, replaced middle class parliamentarism by a new form of government and used its first energy of free life to initiate an entirely novel social order. It is acts of faith and audacities of this scale that change or hasten the course of human progress." Regardless then of the Bolshevik dictatorship and its methods, there is something in the great Russian experiment which shows the eternal Time-Spirit at work. Whether the Russians' bold conception of the economic commune will one day rise to the height of the spiritual commune or not we cannot say. But one thing is certain that the shaking of the two great world wars will make the soil ready for the new sowing.

In the march towards the ultimate unity of mankind the great empires and commonwealths that have arisen, or will rise in the near future, are likely to play a great part. The British Empire consisting of a mother country and colonies largely united by race and culture is likely to be the most successful experiment in this direction, if it can solve the question of India. At one time it was feared that Australia and South Africa were not going to remain long in the empire. But that danger is now no more. The present war has settled it. But India, differing in race, tradition and culture from England and held principally by the sword, is a different proposition. Cripps came with a proposed solution but India would not consider it. Another opportunity may come her way after the war.

This brings us to the fact of a widespread Asiatic resurgence. Asia, once free, once accustomed to live her own life in her own fashion, is tired of western domination. She is no longer willing to acquiesce even in such make-shifts as

protectorates and mandates. Whether she is justified in claiming national independence or not in the eyes of the dominant westerner, it is certain that she will not be satisfied till she gets it. She is willing enough to take full advantage of all that the West has to teach her of scientific lore, but without any desire to occupy a subservient position politically. The question that we have to consider from a broader point of view is whether Asia is wholly dead unable any longer to make any contribution to the general welfare of mankind. Sri Aurobindo gives an emphatic reply in the negative, though as yet the movement of her resurgence "is finding expression more by a preface, an attempt to vindicate her bare right to live for herself, than by any pregnant effort of independent creative thought or action." Still there is involved, probably subconsciously as yet, "an ideal of spiritual and moral independence" and a desire to preserve the subtle principle of Asiatic culture. After the present war Asia's self-assertion is likely

to be more pronounced, and more determined. This will open, in Sri Aurobindo's words, a certain latitude for the emergence of "a new and as yet unforeseen principle" in the evolution of human group life. Socialism, or, at least, labour industrialism, and Asiatic unrest were its two prominent features in 1920. Both these are likely to be very much more persistent and acute after the present war. But both may, of course, fail to give the necessary turn to evolution. A resurgent Asia may turn out to be but a shoddy imitation of capitalist Europe, and labour in power may not retain the breadth of view of labour in opposition. For as we have said above, a change in the spirit alone can carry humanity safely across the shoals in which it finds itself. In fact, the whole atmosphere is chaotic, but out of this chaos something might emerge, something "not yet formulated in the experimental laboratory of Time, not yet disclosed in the design of Nature."

—Charu Chandra Dutt.

INSPIRATION AND EFFORT

(A LETTER)

You hold that genuine poetry is written always by inspiration—effortlessly—as if in a state of semi-trance. A correct view, this, as regards fundamentals. But you take my breath away by adding that, because in my letter I used words like "tried", "attempted", "sought" when I spoke of producing poetry of a mystic and spiritual order new in many respects to the English language, you drew the conclusion that I wrote my poems with a manufacturing mentality which thought out with intellectual labour all the phrases, linked up the different parts like a mechanic rivetting joints and constructed artificially an unfamiliar out-of-the-way model!

Inspiration is a fact and it does come from a region that is beyond the muscular brain and the tense sinews of thought: it comes from a hidden fountain of force which is more spontaneous, swift, suggestive, vision-bright and

harmonious: its outflow brings a condition of mind cleansed of a too external and intellectual and deliberately constructive activity—hence the semi-trance, as it were, of poetic creation. But poetry does not always rush through the mind in an unbroken and perfect river of light. The fact that sometimes it makes a godlike rush proves its source to be other than the wide-awake labourer brain, yet often the river is a series of spurts, jets, clogged clarities, fragmentary freshnesses—half-lines, scattered phrases, words that glow like separate drops unable to meet and move forward. The interrupted nature of inspiration is the lament of all poets. What they do when inspiration fails is at times to stop writing and let the mind rest, at other times to strain with the mind vaguely towards the missing music. This straining is not intellectual: it is an instinctive, intuitive groping, the response of some living iron in us to a mysterious magnet across unknown inner space. The poet feels hazily the direction in which he must go, he is drawn towards a point whose presence he has an inkling of, without any vision of its exact word-focus of meaning and suggestion. This intense yielding of the consciousness to the unknown fountain of inspiration must be distinguished from the brain's manufacturing labour. The poet lends all his powers of concentration to the yielding movement, he leaps into the unconceived with his thought, his imagination, his emotional being, his senses, and brings forth tentative words and lines, attempt on glimmering attempt to catch the final felicity of poetic speech. That is why there are so many versions before the right one is found, corrections and changes and recastings that frequently precede the full satisfying phrase.

No doubt, it is difficult not to use the manufacturing part of the mind in this groping for inspiration; and that is the reason why several versions are altogether defective, while in others a mixture takes place of the inspired and the manufactured—and, only after repeated trial, attempt and seeking, the winged beauty is captured without the least stain on it of the pedestrianism of prose. So the fact of deliberate concentration reinforcing the vague unease of the "soul-search" does not prove the resultant poetry to be less poetic. Nor is the process of correction an intellectual labour: correction must be done, as every poet knows—chiselling and polishing are often necessary for even the most inspired singers, and this implies effort. The poet consciously and deliberately sits down to alter what his instinct tells him is insufficiently "quintessenced". He sets about transforming the imperfect parts, alembicating the impure stuff; only, it must be understood that he does not chop and change with just a logical acumen: he brings to bear upon his work a creative sense, and all that he does is to try again to contact the source of his inspiration. He withdraws into himself, collects his mind, becomes unaware of ordinary thought-movements, enters to that extent into a semi-trance—but you can't deny that his is an effort, no matter if it be an effort to catch what is effortless or spontaneous or inspired!

I may here dwell a little on a point which is never properly seized by those who do not write poetry. The point is Spontaneity. The ordinary notion is that spontaneity is the first flow of words when one starts writing or the flood that overwhelms one all of a sudden. It is frequently these things, but the essence of spontaneity is not

confined to them. The spontaneous word is that which comes from a certain source—the deep fountain of inspiration beyond the logical and ingenious brain: no more, no less. There is not the slightest implication that the initial flow of words is the most inspired: it may be so or it may not—everything depends on whether you are a clear medium or a partly clogged one. If you are not quite clear in the passage running between the creative source and the receptive self, the lines that come to you all of a sudden or at the first turning towards poetic composition are likely to be a mixed beauty and even a facile imitation of the beautiful. Consequently, you have to take a good deal of corrective pains or resort to a total rejection. It is of no moment how much you re-write; all that is important is whether at the first blush or at the "umpteenth" trial you catch unsullied the shining spontaneity of the secret realms where inspiration has its throne. Shakespeare never "blotted" a word; Keats "blotted" a thousand, and yet Keats is looked upon as the most Shakespearean of modern poets in "natural magic". Even Shelley, to all appearance the most spontaneous of singers, was scrupulous in his revisions. What still kept him spontaneous was that each time it was not intellectual hacking and hewing, but a re-vision, a re-opening of the inner sight on the hidden realms in order to behold as accurately as possible the lines and tones, the shapes and designs of those dream-worlds weaving their simple or complex dances.

If you have followed me so far with a nodding head—I mean nodding in agreement and not in dozing boredom—I should like to take you a little further into the business of "trial" and

"attempt" and "seeking". Just as there may be various versions, some tinsel, others half-lit, before the aureoled authenticity is found, so also there are various kinds of the poetically authentic—not merely more inspired or less inspired but different types of perfect inspiration. Byron's famous stanzas beginning

She walks in beauty like the night

are flawless in their own manner, while Humbert Wolfe brings another mode of sight, speech and rhythm equally flawless:

Thus it began. On a cool and
whispering eve
when there was quiet in my heart
she came,
and there was an end of quiet.
I believe
that a star trembled when she
breathed my name.

One may stress the difference in terms of attitude or terms of style, but I think a subtler classification is possible in terms of plane of consciousness. Each plane, like each attitude or style, is capable of an equal poetic excellence: still, the cast of vision, mould of utterance and movement of music are dissimilar. On one plane you may have a lot of attitudes—secular or sacred, sensual or spiritual; Swinburne's frenzy of the flesh in *Anactoria* and his part-Greek part-Norse part-Indian pantheism in *Hertha* function on an identical plane as regards essential qualities of sight, speech and rhythm. On one plane you may have also a host of styles: a colourful vitality whose impact is on what Sri Aurobindo calls the nerves of mental sensation prevails among the Elizabethans, ranging through styles that can be

distinguished one from another—Marlowe's explosive energy, Chapman's violent impetuousness, Shakespeare's passionate sweep, Webster's quivering outbreak. Put beside Milton, however, they all seem kin and offer a contrast to the no less puissant yet more purely reflective or ideative voice heard in *Paradise Lost*. A contrast by plane can be drawn even between the several portions of one and the same writer's work: occasionally the lines of the very same passage belong to different planes. Thus when Wordsworth says:

And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me
with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense
sublime
Of something far more deeply
interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of
setting suns
And the round ocean and the
living air
And the blue sky and in the mind
of man—

he begins with a fine poetic statement of a mystical perception on the mental level, then towards the close of the third line shifts to a level intermediate between this and some other that has a thrill of more than the mind acting the mystic—an intermediate zone which ends with the word "interfused" and leads completely to the ultra-mental in the verse:

Whose dwelling is the light of
setting suns.

Here the change is not merely in the coming forward of the visual faculty; such a faculty is clearly at work also in the two lines that follow—without

altering their mental-mystic imagination to the sheer spiritual-mystic vision that is aglow and athrob in that single verse with a magnificent straining of sight towards secrecy and with an in-tone and overtone and undertone of intimate yet immeasurable suggestion of some deific grandeur.

Now, a mystic poet who is active on several planes may feel that one of them provides the most precious and profound embodiment to his divinations. Therefore, while not always discouraging the other planes, he may prefer to write more abundantly from that which affords him the greatest sense of fulfilment. To do this, he will have to turn his mind in a particular direction, concentrate on a special type of utterance, even reject other types just as excellent in poetic quality and aspire always to pluck his words from a certain depth or height of consciousness and give all his thought, emotion, sense-experience the value and figure and vibrancy that come from that selected centre behind the commonly conscious being, whence flows what he deems his most spiritual expression. So, guided by his pointing instinct, helped by his discriminating intelligence, carried by his exploring intuition, he dedicates himself more and more by a conscious aesthetic yoga, so to speak, to special mystic sources in the Parnassus of inspiration. By intensely seeking to lift all his powers to the revelatory rhythm of such sources as let out lines like that Wordsworthian rarity, he may create, *en masse*, types of word-vision and word-vibration found hitherto in stray lines and passages both in himself and in the poets who have gone before. There is effort here, and attempt, and choice between alternatives, but

nothing that goes against the basic nature of the Muse, the spontaneous creativity of art. Because the poetry he writes is of an unusual order and derives from a psychological fountain difficult to tap with the normal human way of being, however poetic that normal way, he has to sift and select, revise and remould, fix himself in one sole ever-widening variety-disclosing

direction. Yet, inasmuch as his goal is the mystic Divine, the Superconscious beyond man, all his effort and attempt are towards sinking himself much more into a state of semi-trance than is needed when composing the ordinary types of first-rate poetry. Hence, more than any other kind of poet, he fulfils the ideal posited by you.

—K. D. Sethna.

READINGS FROM THE UPANISHADS

II

*"If one were to tell this to a dried-up stump,
Sure, branches would shoot forth and leaves spring from it."*

Gośruti, son of Vyāghrapād, student of sacred knowledge, stayed with the teacher, as was usual in those days, for the necessary period of instruction and practical training for the knowledge of Brahman. His teacher, Satyakāma, son of the servant girl Jabālā, had himself gone through a long course of discipline *tapasya* and by celibacy *brahmacharya* and service to the Guru pleased and won the favour of the Gods—the mystic Bull (Vāyu or Indra?), Agni, the Swan, the Water-bird.¹ They, each in his special line, offered to teach and taught him several aspects of Brahman; indeed, he learnt the truths by their grace, received the knowledge so well that when the teacher saw him later, his very person bespoke the light of Brāhmīc wisdom housed in it.

Joyous, the guru at the request of the disciple bestowed on him the blessings of the final touch for consummation, as if out of regard for the tradition that effective knowledge is usually propagated by the teacher to the disciple, *Brahmavidyā-santati*. Satyakāma, in due course, became an adept in his turn and specialised in more than one method of approach to the knowledge of Brahman. He was the teacher who initiated Upakosala, son of Kamala, into what is called *Akṣipuruṣa vidyā*. To Gośruti whom he blessed with the knowledge of Prāna vidyā, he concludes his instructions with these words: "If one were to tell this to a dried-up stump, sure, branches would be produced on it and leaves would grow."²

¹ Madgu, Water-bird is the symbol of Life. *Prāna* and *Hamsa*, Swan is the Sun, says *Sankarācharya*: the supreme Soul or the Golden Person in the Solar world is represented by the Sun, says Sayana in commenting on the famous hymn of *Vāmadeva Hamsah Śucisad*. It is enough for us to note that the Upanishads use a picturesque language which is at once symbolic and reminiscent of the symbolism of the Rīg Veda; also we must not miss the significance of Satyakāma receiving help from the Gods for *Brahmavidyā* while he was under the care of the Guru for that very purpose.

² Chhandogya Upanishad V. 2.3.

Or in sanskrit

Yady' enat śuśkāya sthānave brūyat,
Jāyeran eva asmin śākhāḥ prarohe-
yuh palāsāni.

This is the glory of the Prāṇa Vidyā of which Gosruti received the knowledge, with the subtleties of practical application from his master Satyakāma. There is no difficulty in grasping the drift of the passage in question. If even a sapless, almost dead stump could revive itself growing to a new-born tree with fresh branches and foliage, man, living, could assuredly develop to a large extent the formative powers of Life and expression of the Spirit by opening to the creative power of the Prāṇa vidyā. The paragraphs that follow reinforce this view and in furtherance of the same proclaim that the aspirant for greatness prays for the strength by which he might become or be *all this*, *Aham eva idam sarvaṃ asāni*. By access to a conscious union with the Life-Spirit, i.e., the Spirit that dwells in and controls all life, man could re-live himself opened to a vaster existence, awaken to vistas of a larger Life, and extend his activity to a wider range of possibilities which ordinarily may seem remote for realisation. This is the trend of the text that we have taken up to illustrate the fact that the Upanishads are books as much of knowledge, *Jñāna*, as of *Upāsana*, way of approach by which the knowledge is won.

What is the character of the Prāṇa vidyā that the Upanishad praises with a certain force of rhetoric? Is it the same as Brahma Vidya or subsidiary to it, serving a lesser purpose on the way before the goal is reached? If, as is admitted on all hands, the sole aim of all spiritual endeavour is knowledge of the *Param Brahman*, taught in the

Upanishads, how is it that so many *Vidyās* find place in them some of which are said to bring worldly gains to the sādhak? Such questions arise in our attempt to appreciate the *Vidyā sādhanas* that are broadly hinted at or noted with extreme brevity in these concluding portions of the Vedic scriptures, the texts of the Vedānta. In dealing with these questions we must understand and bear in mind some fundamentals of the Upanishadic teachings. We proceed in these enquiries on the basis that the Upanishads are pre-eminently books of knowledge, records of many methods of approach to the Ultimate Reality, inspired utterances of seers who, by disciplined effort, by whole-souled devotion to their subject, by subtler and higher faculties revelatory and intuitional, developed by special means, penetrated into and broke open the seals of the secrets of subtle psychological and spiritual truths and lived the life of the spirit.

In their effort they were, as a rule, aided by the tradition of the Vedic *Rsis*, by the achievements of others who had gone before them, or by the help—not unoften—proffered by the higher Intelligences and Powers of the Universal Spirit itself. Here, we stand on firm grounds relying as we do, on the internal evidence of these scriptures supported by abiding and age-long tradition religious and spiritual and on the testimony of authentic minds that these truths are always verifiable by any one who is interested and equips himself for the venture. Needless to say that it is an erroneous notion to entertain that the Upanishads are the results of revolt, are the rebel children of the parent religion of a semi-civilised Vedic past. We discard the view, foreign to the spirit and tenor

of these sacred texts, that the Upanishads are metaphysical products of speculative labour, which, disrobed of the euphemism, is, in plainer language, bold conjectures of the fantastic or the fabrications of the introvert—notions that have no correspondence to verifiable truths or observable facts.

The Upanishads, then, represent a fragment of the cumulative knowledge of profound truths perceived and lived by the Vedantic seers. The Chāndogya from which we have taken the instance of Prāṇa vidyā for a general appreciation of these vidyās, is, like the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, one of the four or five *Brāhmaṇa-Upanishads* which bear the stamp of antiquity among the twelve major texts. It makes an easy and natural use of the terms and symbols of ritualistic worship which formed part of the externals of the Vedic religion. The Gods of the Vedic pantheon—Agni, Vayu, Indra, Surya—are frequently mentioned as having a double function, as Nature-Powers in the universe, *adhidaitavataṃ* and as the lords of the senses, life, mind and other instruments of the soul within us, *adhyātmam*.

When we speak of the Gods of the Upanishads it is necessary to mention that they occupy a relatively subordinate position in these teachings, while in the Rig Veda generally, they are lords in their sovereign right; each one of them is supreme in his place, is indeed the whole Godhead within and behind him, is one front or facet of the Supreme Deity, retaining the particular features for his special function, a distinct Personality for the purpose. But we know that there is one dominant note vibrating throughout the Upanishads and that is the famous dictum that

“All this is, verily, Brahman”, *Sarvaṃ khalv'idam Brahman*. If all is Brahman, how can the Gods—Agni, Vayu, Indra, Surya—symbolised by Nature-powers, be excluded from being parts or forms of the Brahman? Certainly any object associated with purity, holiness, strength or something sublime could be chosen as fit object in which the Supreme Deity could be worshipped. In the Upanishads the gods are taken for forms of worship, of Brahman, to meditate upon. But when they are closely related to ritualistic worship, the *upāsana* is treated as part of the ritual *Karmāṅga vidyā* said to bring worldly benefits and this need not engage our attention here.

There are still other *upāsanas* which are indirectly parts of Brahmo'pāsana. For there are two kinds: one is worship indirect, partial, symbolic; the other is direct wherein is made a nearest approach through meditation employing methods and forms which correspond to certain aspects of the character of Brahman as seen and taught by the seers of the Vedānta. This is *mukhya*, the chief or main *upāsana* to which we shall revert later on: the other is the *Ango'pāsana* and technically called *Pratika upāsana*, worship of a limb or part or subsidiary to the main worship. *Pratika* means a limb, *anga* or a part in later sanskrit: it is a vedic word which originally meant face, that which moves fronting you, *prati eti*; later it came to mean any part of the body, not merely the face, the frontal aspect. There are instances in the Rks where the word is so explained by Sāyana.¹ The Upanishads seem to have had still some memory of the *Pratika* character of the Vedic Gods as distinct facets or Personal

¹ उषसो न प्रतीकं उवसः प्रमुखं इव ऋग्वेद VI 50-8. सायन भाष्यम्.

fronts of the One Supreme Godhead ; but in practice, they are regarded as respectable parts or limbs and symbols of worship, mediums for meditation on Brahman. There are many *pratikas* mentioned in the Upanishads for upāsana and of all of them, the Sun is the most glorious symbol of God advocated for worship, *Adityo Brahmety' upāsita*. There are two factors that contribute to an effective course of the symbolic worship. The conception of Brahman as specially focussed in the Golden Person that resides in and presides over the Solar world and not the mere solar body as object of worship is an essential element in this *Pratika upāsana*. And this is the other factor. The teachers of the Vedānta have warned that one should not identify himself with the *Pratika* he worships i.e. the symbol in which he worships the Brahman. This caution was found necessary to avert a possible equation deduced from the two well-known affirmations of the Vedānta :

1. All is Brahman,
Sarvam khalv' idam Brahma.
2. I am Brahman,
Aham Brahma smi.

Therefore I am the All which includes the *pratika* and I am *pratika*. It is to avoid such a misconception it is stated that the worshipper, *upāsaka* should not conceive himself as any of the *pratikas* he worships, *Na hi pratika na hi sah*¹; on the other hand, he should have the sublime conception, the supreme idea of Brahman applied to the *pratika*; even here the *pratika* is not to be thought of as Brahman; for although the superior has sway over the inferior and includes it, it is not itself the inferior. Therefore it is the

highest conception, the Brahman-Idea that is the ruling principle of all *pratīkopaśanas*, *'Brahmadṛṣṭir utkarṣāt*.²

Now let us turn to the direct and chief methods of approach to Brahman, *mukhya* Brahmapāsana and see closer into the real character of *Prāṇa* and fix the sense in which the Upanishads speak of it as Brahman itself. When *prāṇa* is taken in a limited sense and narrowed down to the vital air, life-breath in the creatures, it is used as a *pratika* representing Brahman in a comparatively tangible manner and recommended as a means used on the path to reach the goal of Brāhmic knowledge. Examples of such *pratikas* as *prāṇa* life, *manas* mind, *ākāś* ethereal substance co-extensive with space, are to be found in the Chāndogya and other texts for sādhanā; but some of these are directly related to Brahman and are comprehensive, apparently realistic, appealing forms of Brahmapāsana itself; *Ākāś* and *Prāṇa* are two most important of them indicating as they do, two essential aspects of Brahman. Indeed almost all the sādhanas, especially in the Chāndogya, are, broadly speaking, covered by three vidyas which have immediate reference to three terms of Brahman, conceived as *Ātman*, *Ākāś* and *Prāṇa*.

Let us put succinctly what exactly we mean by *Ātman*. If "All this" *idam sarvam* is the last term of Brahman, the first term is *Ātman*, the self by which is meant the foremost principle of Being, the Self in itself, the Self of All that is and has come to be, the Self of all selves, the Self which sees, and is not the seen; this Sole Seer is He, the Self-aware Puruṣa, the One, Eternal, Immortal. All the sādhanas which lay stress upon this aspect of

Brahman, come under what is called *Puruṣa vidyā*.

Thus Brahman, the *Ātman*, is intelligible. But how can *Ākāś* be termed Brahman? *Ākāś* is well-known to be the primary element wherein resides the quality of sound. How can Brahman be termed a mere element, *jada* insentient, while Brahman is Intelligence itself? We can get an idea of what they mean by *Ākāś*, if we carefully look into some of the relevant passages of the texts. "*Ākāśa* is the support, *pratisthā*, it is the goal, *gati*, the ultimate resort of the world, *parāyaṇam*." "All beings rise from *Ākāśa* and set in *Ākāśa*." "Verily, it is *Ākāśa* that manifests Name and Form and that within which they are is Brahman, that the Immortal, He is the *Ātman*."¹ It is not necessary to multiply instances from other Upanishads also where *Ākāśa* is explained as the substance out of which all existences are manifested, all worlds are built, without which nothing can exist, none can live, breathe, *ko hyevā'nyat, kaḥ pranyāt*. In fact it is the very body of Brahman, as it were, *Ākāśa-sarīram Brahma*, whose nature is Delight, *Ākāśa ānanda*. In a sense, we can say that it is the very nature, the unmodified *Prakṛti* of all existences, not the insentient *prakṛti* of the Sāṅkhyan system, but the Conscious *Prakṛti* of the early Vedāntas. Still, the difficulty is not solved; for the question still remains whether what we

call the elemental *bhūta* *Ākāśa* is the same as what the Upanishads refer to as the Delight, *ānanda*, body, *śarīram*, what we may call the *Prakṛti*, the substance, the material cause, so to say, of all existences?

We must pause and look around to see what we mean by *Bhūta* *Ākāśa*, before we can find the right answer. Certainly, it is easy to state that *Ākāś* is not this external visible *Ākāśa*, but the Inner, spiritual, what is called *Chidākāśa* that is meant by the term, for that is the Eternal Being, *Sat*, Brahman. But then, there is the danger of excluding the physical *Ākāśa* from being in any way related to the original Substance of Being. Besides, ordinarily our notion of *Ākāśa* is that we perceive space and that it is a void. Though such a conception is natural and inevitable, constituted as the human mind at present is, we can still appreciate the fact that our mind cannot conceive of space without a boundary, nor of boundary without space. This is because what we actually see is form and not the formless space which is nothing but an extension provided for differentiation in the beginning of things, an extension without which there could not be knowledge of differences, formation of distinct objects or forces of contact. And this Extension itself is finally and at first spiritual in character while in the intermediate term for manifestation it assumes a subtle and

¹ आकाशो ह वैनामरूपयोर्निर्वहिताते यदन्तरा तद्ब्रह्म तदमुत स आत्मा.

Ch. Up. VIII. 14-1.

Nir-vah usually means to carry out; here it means to bring out, for *Sankara* says Nirvahita means *nyākarta* and he says elsewhere (Ch. W. VI. 3. 2.)

व्याकरवाणि विस्पष्टं आकरवाणि.

Therefore निर्वह here is not analysis or separation as is mistakenly given in some of the English translations.

¹ Vedānta Sūtras: IV, I, 4.

² Vedānta Sūtras IV, I, 5.

psychological figure in the subjective and in the objective existence a grosser visual vastness imaging the Infinitude of the Eternal Being, Brahman. Nor is it an extension in the Void; it is an extension in and of the Substance whose real nature is Ananda, Delight of Being and is present everywhere. Therefore Ākāśa is the term applied to Brahman as the source and substance of all existences. It includes the Ākāśa, the element of our gross conception, though the later is just an aspect of the Infinitude presented to the outward mind. Because it is all-pervasive and subtle to grasp and yet impressive in a way and is the nearest image in the Physical of the Infinite, it is treated as synonymous with Brahman in those passages of the Upanishads where the source and support and substance of all creation or manifestation of world--existence are mentioned.

Indeed the Ākāśa conception proves itself an effective means to predispose the mind to allow the Idea-image or thought-vision of the Infinite to influence, dominate and face it from many fronts, above, within, outside and everywhere, so that the mind learns by habit to sense the Infinite, as it were, even in some of its aimless and mechanical runnings. And in order that such meditations on Ākāś shall not be a dull and dry affair, the Upanishad teaches that it is to be discovered within, in the heart of the living and the conscious, in the deepest centre of one's being, in the small, *dahara ākāśa*. But it takes care to say that though this *ākāś* is stated to be small, *dahara*, to the outward mind trying to draw inward, it is really as great as this vast *ākāśa* outside; it is *Bhumā, yāvan va ayam ākāśa* to *van eṣaṇtar hṛdaya ākāśah*.

Now that we have an idea of

Brahman the *Ātman*, and Brahman the *Ākāśa*, we can proceed to the third term, Brahman the *Prāṇa* to which reference has already been made. If *Ātman* is the Sole Being, the Self-aware Spirit, *Puruṣa*, and if *Ākāśa* is the Substance, the Delight of Self-being, the sole essence of the All Existence, then *Prāṇa* is the term applied to the active conscious element inherent in the *Puruṣa*. Resting on the Self-awareness of the Spirit it acts on the Substance of Self-Delight and brings out the World-being in countless forms and spheres of the one Immense Existence, *sat*. Here a question may arise. Is it proper to extend the connotation of *Prāṇa* to Brahman as the active Conscious Power inseparable from the Spirit? If so, what is the justification? For usually, by *Prāṇa* we understand *Vāyu*, the vital air, life-breath or life itself. And what do the Upanishads mean when they apply it to Brahman? Certainly they do not use it in the sense that because All is Brahman, *Prāṇa* also is Brahman. The word is used in a special sense to denote an aspect of the Supreme Truth, a function, if we may say so, of the Spirit that is the Supreme and the Self, an active principle by which the one Existence lends itself to the All Existence, the one Being turns into many becomings, the One Self radiates into many selves, the One Formless moulds itself into many forms.

If we examine the texts of the *Bṛhmaṇas* of which the Upanishads form the crowning part where the beginning of things, creation, is described, we invariably find an idea expressed in the same similar way in these words: "He, the Sole Being, saw *aikṣata*, He desired, willed *akāmayata*, *aicchat*, that He might become the Many, *bahu*

śyām; tense in *tapas*, He created, *tapo'tapyata, asṛjata*." By *tapas*, the creative incubation, He fashioned and hatched the Cosmic Egg, *Brahmāṇḍa*. Again, we find it stated in the *Chhāndogya*: "By the life, *jīvena*, that is the Self, *Ātmanā*, I shall enter into (these divinities) and manifest *vyākaraṇāṇi*, Name and Form."¹ Here, it is by the Jiva which is the same as *Prāṇa* that the manifestation is effected. Thus we find that it is the Power of the Spirit, the active gaze of the *Puruṣa*, the *tapas*, which is the Self-contained Force of Consciousness, the Supreme Life that is the life of all lives that makes possible all activity and movement in the infinite field of the Indivisible limitless Sat, *Puruṣa*. It is this principal aspect of Brahman which is termed *Prāṇa* that is the efficient cause while *Ākāśa* is the material, *upādāna kārṇa*, of created Existence. For it is the dynamic factor that causes all manifestation and is indicated by various terms such as *cit-śakti*, *Tapas*, or the Supreme *Prāṇa*. That *Prāṇa* is not mere life, but a Conscious Power is reiterated by mention made of it as Consciousness in these texts, *Prāṇah prañātma* or *yā vai prañā sa prāṇah yo vai prāṇah sa prañā*—"What is Consciousness is life, and what is life is

Consciousness." Other texts declare that *prāṇa* (Vāyu) is the Deity that never sets, *anastamitā Devatā*, That *Prāṇa* or the Supreme Life is used in the sense of *tapas*, of Conscious Force which is creative and dynamic will be still more clear from the famous hymn of Parameṣṭhin in the Rig Veda—"That one breathed without air by the power of its own being "*Āntā avatam swadhayā tad ekam.*" Here, '*ānit*, simply breathed, shows that the One Being is in its own way active, or at least disposed to be active; it lives, it breathes, not by any means outside of it, but by its own way of holding itself, by *swadhā* which in later Sanskrit is *swadharma*, self-nature or self-law. When nought was there, no differentiation or duality could be thought of, that one existed with its own Nature of creative breath — this is the substance of the ṛk. This natural Breath is the same as *Prāṇa*, the dynamic agent, the cause of all formation, of all manifestation.

That *Prāṇa*, like *Ākāśa*, is meant to refer to Brahman in the sense we have made explicit will be still more evident from the verdict of *Bādarāyaṇa* in the *Vedānta Sūtras*.³ There is one other circumstance we may note in passing

1 Chandogya Upanishad VI. 3. 2.

जीवेन प्राणधारणकर्त्रा आत्मना

[illegible]

2 Rig Veda X. 129.2

स्वधा स्वस्मिन् धीयते ध्रियते आश्रित्य वर्ततेवा—सायनः

The power that is inherent in the Self.

The power that is inherent in the Self.
An to breathe, with the prepositions pra, apa etc. takes the five forms *prāṇa*, *apāna* etc. to denote the five vital airs.

3 I. I.22-23.

which goes to show that the Chhândogya seriously declares that Ākāś and Prāṇa are Brahman, the Uncreated, the Immortal. In affirming the creative Triad of Tejas, Ap, Anna,¹ it has omitted to mention the two primary elements, Ākāś and Vayu. This position is greatly strengthened by passages in other Upanishads² that Ākāś and Prāṇa are the Immortal *amṛtam* and whatever is other than the two is mortal. But the fact that they are in usage understood to be elements was recognised by the ancient teachers and the author of the Brahma sutras had to clear the misconception and establish that even Ākāś and Prāṇa as elements are created,³ though he had earlier in the first chapter concluded that they were terms of Brahman as already explained.

We have so far dwelt on the three terms of Brahman that mattered not a little to the *upāsakas* of the Chandogya branch of the Vedic learning. Put briefly, they are Ātman, Ākāś Prāṇa—each is absolutely the Brahman, inseparable from the other two. It is the sole Supreme Reality who is at once Ātman, the Self-aware Being; the Ākāśa Ananda, the Substance that is the Delight of Being; the Prāṇa, which is variously termed Chit-śakti (Consciousness that is Force). Tapas, Creative Incubation, the Supreme Life of all that lives and becomes. The basic conception of Brahman, then, is that it is the One in the Three as well as the Three in the One and certainly corresponds to the later triple formula of Sat-Chid-Ananda.

This fundamental idea is sure to go some way in aiding us to appreciate the

Prāṇa vidya with which we started. All those sādhanas taught in the upanishads that take the life principle for the starting point in the sādhana are covered largely by what is named Prāṇa vidyā. Even as this Upanishad starts with Ākāś in its grosser aspect as an image of the Infinite, so does it do with Prāṇa as an image, however gross and dark and refractory, of the Supreme Prāṇa, the Tapas in its highest form. For the Original Prāṇa is the Supreme, founding its forms in the lower manifestation, supporting its own fragments, reflections or radiations in the living beings here, so much so that the Upanishads speak of two kinds of Prāṇa. The Mukhya Prāṇa is the basis for individual life here, hence is called the Chief; all activities of the main life, of what we would call the sense-mind, are spoken of as Prāṇa. For the Upanishad which starts with concrete objects in Nature using them as symbols for upāsana, it is easier to advise the use of any of the Prāṇas—voice, seeing, hearing, all are termed Prāṇas here—by special means known to the sādhanas of the age, for effecting their union with the *mukhya-prāṇa*, their Chief from which they branch out for their different functions. It is the *mukhya-prāṇa* which is the individual centre here of the Supreme Prāṇa, that has to become its true image. The culmination of the Prāṇa vidya is the correct expression, the ideal formation of the Life Supreme in the individual that is at once a real reflection, a substantial figure, a canalised current, a focussed and focussing centre and vehicle in constant and conscious union with its Source, the Original and

Omnipotent Prāṇa of the Creative Self, the Tapas of Īśwara.

Though the scriptures do not give the actual method of the sādhana - and no book could ever give the sādhana - one fact is quite obvious from the passages of the text which refers to a symbolic rite in connection with the Prāṇa vidyā we are considering. There is a prayer here in *Brahmaṇa* prose: "Thou art Strength (ama) by name; 'All this' is, verily, at home in Thee; for He is the most Senior (pre-eminent) and Supreme, King and lord. Let him lead me to pre-eminence and supremacy, kingship and over lordship. Let me be 'All this'." ¹ What is remarkable in this prayer is to be found in the last line. It throws light on the fact that the prayer is not conceived in a narrow sense; it does not arise in the heart of a soul who is actuated by greed, impelled by passion for power and tossed by the dark and limiting forces of ignorance and egoism. Here ensouling the prayer, there is a will, a knowledge, a recognition that there is One who is the most senior, *Jyēṣṭha*, the One who is the Supreme *Sreṣṭha*, who is the Sole real Sovereign and Overlord and it is His supremacy and overlordship that one prays for, for share and enjoyment. ² And this is possible only when one realises that "all this" is for the enjoyment (food) for the One and

lives in complete union with Him, the Sole Life, offering whatever he egoistically is, in order to become 'all this' which is really for that Supreme's enjoyment, like food.

That this is the spirit of the prayer becomes transparent to us from the *Rk* which is used immediately in the symbolic rite, for concentration and prayer—"Of Savitr Divine we embrace that enjoying, that which is the best, rightly disposes the all, reaches the goal, even Bhaga's, we hold by the thought."³

In the light of what has been stated about the profound character of Prāṇa it is hardly necessary to strike a note of caution that the Prāṇa vidyā should not be mistaken for *Prāṇāyāma*, the breath-control or similar devices of the Yoga sādhanas of later times. It is idle to attempt to go back to a distant past and discover the exact form and details of the Upāsanas of the Upanishadic teachers from whom we are removed by a space of two to three milleniums. Even when we grasp the spirit of these ancient teachings, it is unreasonable to suppose that we receive the substance in the same form—time cannot be annihilated that way. Nor is it necessary; for the spirit and ideas of these Vidyā Sādhanas have survived, though in fragments forming the bases of many systems of practical value, of spiritual disciplines that have come down to

¹ Chandogya V. 2. 6-7

अमां नामासि अमाहिते सर्वमिदं सहिज्येष्टः श्रेष्ठो राजाधिपतिः समाज्यैष्ट्यं श्रेष्ठं राज्यमाधिपत्यं गमयतु; अहमेवेदं सर्वं असानि.

² Vedanta Sutra IV, 4. 21

भोगमात्रं साम्यलिङ्गाच्च.

To share the Bhoga of the Īśwara is legitimate and possible.

³ Rig Veda V. 82. I. Translated by Sri Aurobindo.

तत् सवितुर्वृणीमहेवयं देवस्य भोजनम् । श्रेष्ठं सर्वधातमं तुरंगमस्य धीमहि ॥

¹ Vide THE ADVENT, (Feb. 1945), page 45.

² *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* II, 3.

³ II, 1-7.

us in different forms suited to the changing conditions through the ages. But to know about these sādhanas is just to be informed of them and is at best a mental equipment and a preparation. When all is said, the fact remains that a definite entry into the sādhana, the awakening into the Spirit within, the actual building of the inner Life, usually begins only when one has a Satyakāma, the teacher, to transmit the tangible secret and light the life within of the seeker or one happens to be a Satyakāma, the disciple, whom the Gods looked upon with favour opening his eye of vision to the Supreme Truth.

The Upanishads, then, are not a book of dry knowledge, they are throughout moistened with the *rasa* of Sādhana, inseparable from every aspect of the Truth that is aimed at severally or conjointly, for realisation. Of all the Vidyās of the ancient Vedāntas, the *Prāṇa vidyā* is the most powerful, for in the higher and wider reaches of the

sādhana, it is *Brahma vidyā*, *par excellence*. It is the living Breath of the *Puruṣa*, the Puissance of the Creative Consciousness, the Power of the Sole indivisible Spirit that is the basis of the *Prāṇa vidyā*; its aim is not *laya*, absorption or going to the Beyond,—there are other Sādhana that aim at it—but the realisation and successful formation of the individual Life—a Life that carries out its function as the function of the Life universal, having no divided Will of its own, but the One free Will and Tapas of the *Iswara*, and extends its activity as part of the Life of the Supreme Spirit to a wider range, quite naturally, in such a way that one can exclaim with Satyakama:

“If one were to tell this to a dried-up stump
Sure, branches would shoot forth
and leaves spring from it.”

—T. V. Kapali Sastry.

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Pain, Sex, and Time. By Gerald Heard.

“Pain, Sex and Time” is a notable contribution to the march of human civilisation; it is a masterly attempt to lead man out of his present impasse on to the further scopes of evolution. The diagnosis which it makes of the root cause of the present colossal upheaval through which we are passing has the correctness of a profound and penetrative insight. Mutual destructiveness is a characteristic feature of our present day civilization; the present war which has shaken the world to its foundations is a logical sequel thereto. With the unerring insight of a master physician, Mr. Heard points out that the present crisis can be eventually traced to one basic factor, namely, the strangulation of human consciousness and the utmost development of exclusive or separative individuality. To put it in other words, the root cause of the present crisis is the utmost swelling of the ego—the senseless flattering of egoism, both individual and national,—and the shutting out of oneself from the currents of universal existence. This is due to the lack of balance in our development. We pride ourselves on the spectacular progress made by Physics and other natural sciences; we feel glorified at the immense accumulation of means and powers which the rapid development of science has placed at our disposal. But there has been no corresponding development of Psychology. The accumulation of means and powers has not been accompanied by a corresponding clarification of ends and a heightening of ideals. As a consequence, we have lost our soul in our endeavour to gain the world; we have neglected our psyche in our victorious march over external nature. The present impasse is a logical sequel to this our unbalanced development; it is the dire consequence of “the strangulation of individualised consciousness” inspiring an improper and destructive

employment of the immense powers yielded by Science.

The remedy suggested by Mr. Heard is the expansion of consciousness to the extent of universalisation. Individuality and Time are the two distorting media of our apprehension. “The ego, the individualised self-consciousness, is not an end but a phase in the development of consciousness, and time is that distortion and misapprehension under which individualised consciousness perceives reality, and so finds itself involved in inextricable conflict—(P. 214). We must transcend the fatal limits imposed by them, and make direct contact with that universal consciousness which alone can lay the foundation of one integrated human family. We can do this by what may be called a Copernican revolution in Psychology and by a mutation of consciousness. (P. 256). Specifically, human evolution is the development of his psyche, the development of consciousness and not of organ, the dilation of awareness, and not mere heaping up of technological wonders. Man’s enormous capacity for pain and his unlimited sex vigour are unmistakable indications of the presence within him of an unused store of primal evolutionary energy. While animals are living fossils, the presence of this unused evolutionary energy makes man highly rich in potentiality and fit to carry forward evolution to higher stages. What is essentially needed is a channelled release of his thwarted energy towards the energising of his higher centres of consciousness.

The celebrated author of this book under review critically examines three distinct methods of effecting dilation of consciousness characteristic of three phases of psychic evolution, to wit, the Shamanistic, the Fakiristic and the Yogic. The Shamanistic method consists in violent movements aided by drugs producing dissociation, the Fakir-

istic method is mortificatory, and passes through self-imposed pains and tortures; and the Raj Yogic method is ascetic and proceeds through sex-sublimatory suppression. The author contends that Yoga and quakerism should be blended in an original synthesis so that a highly developed community sense may be joined to the knowledge of practical psychophysiology (p. 226). He lays stress upon the learning of a new technique of attention by means of which, through intense effortless contemplation, one may have direct contact with that unifying awareness of which every individual is a strangled extension.

Since our society is the reflection of the psyche, the first thing needed is the reintegration of the individual, the transformation of the fissured distracted contemporary man into an integral whole continuous with his fellow beings. We need, in other words, an effective psychiatry for uniting and expanding the individual. On such a psychiatry should be based an appropriate economy for re-integrating the group, or for sustaining and forwarding the like-minded people. Finally, we must have an original policy for reintegrating society as a whole by showing that all humanity could live in peace, in plenty and in hope, once men realise the truth about evolution. Such an original policy would include the adoption of an organisation resembling the caste system purged of its rigidity. The neo-Brahmin, the new prophetic type and fore-runner of the succeeding world order, would be the full term and development of the new dynamic caste. Having no property and no exclusive power, he would be the incarnate conscience of mankind. The neo-Brahmin would rise out of the neo-

kshatriyas, the mastership administrator rank, and they again would spring from and lead the neo-vaisyas, the novice technician rank. Neo-Brahmins would perform the same function in regard to mankind as the white cells do in regard to our body, namely, the function of immediately proceeding to any place threatened by breakdown or afflicted by tension. They would be members of some new World Civil Service armed with the power of love and filled with the peace of unifying consciousness.

All those who actively think about the future of human civilisation will find the book under review a storehouse of very fruitful suggestions and brilliant flashes of insight. As regards his diagnosis of the chief malady of the present age, his survey of the course of human evolution, and his recommendation concerning human progress through social and psychic mutations, it may be said that the author is largely on the right track so far as he goes. Only, he does not perhaps go sufficiently far. It is not enough to transcend the limitations of time and individuality. It is not enough to make direct contact, or even enter into, the universal and unifying consciousness. An integral realisation of the spirit both in its cosmic universality and its supra-cosmic transcendence is of the utmost importance. Our life should be refashioned on the basis of such integral realisation. The highest power of the spirit must be brought forth into operation in our life in order that humanity may advance to the next higher stage of evolution. Not only expansion of consciousness, but a total conversion of it, its integral transformation by the sovereign dynamism of the spirit, is the supreme necessity.

—H. C.

Rigvedic Culture of the Prehistoric Indus. By Swami Sankarananda of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Published by Messrs Das Gupta & Co., 54/3 College St., Calcutta.

We are all familiar today with the names of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, the two long-forgotten cities of North-

western India, which have been dug in recent years and whose ruins have disclosed the existence of a remarkable

civilisation in ancient India, three to four thousand years before Christ. The important point that arose out of the discovery of these remarkable archaeological finds was the relationship between the Vedic culture and the newly disclosed culture of the Indus valley. Marshall is responsible for the view that the religious symbols and other relics found at Mohenjodaro and Harappa "exhibit the Indus peoples of the fourth and third millenniums before Christ in possession of a highly developed culture in which no vestige of Indo-Aryan influence is to be found." This opinion was by no means universally accepted and Ramaprasad Chanda, an eminent Indian archaeologist, protested against it on perfectly valid grounds. For several decades before these new discoveries European savants, and many Indian scholars who followed in their foot-steps, had held it established that in the second millennium B.C. a migration of Indo-Aryans into India had taken place. Not only this. But it was held that these Indo-Aryan immigrants were a fair-skinned, blue-eyed, long-nosed, long-headed people, cousins of the present day Europeans, a civilised race who by strenuous fighting subdued, killed or drove out into forests the black snub-nosed flat-headed barbarians whom they found in occupation of this land. This idea was not only accepted but was cherished possibly because it appeared to be in line with what the European nations did later on in Asia, Africa, America and Oceania.

But, unfortunately, facts do not justify the conclusions of these eminent people. There is nothing in the Vedas to show that the Aryas had come into this country from somewhere outside. There is, no doubt, a prayer to the Gods for a hundred winters, there is likewise an occasional hankering after a colder climate, but the former home of these hymn-writers, Uttarakuru, was in all probability not farther north than Kashmir in the colder Himalayan region. The Vedic people, we gather, wore the simple clothing of a warm climate and not trousers and boots like the Medes and Persians. Winternitz

takes a more rational view than many others when he states, "No power on earth can any time be sure whether the Vedic hymns were composed 1000 or 1500 or 2000 or 3000 years before Christ." The fixing of Vedic chronology by Maxmuller was characterised by this scholar as "purely hypothetical and completely arbitrary." It is astonishing how a mere plausible theory assumes in time the appearance of a scientifically proved fact. Tilak sought to trace some of the Vedic hymns back to 6000 B.C. on the strength of astronomical data, while Jacobi fixed about 4500 B.C. as the commencement of the Vedic cultural period. Indian tradition knows of no Aryan immigration. Moreover, so many great Teachers of India who had the inner vision have confirmed the traditional view. Our own conviction, in the absence of reliable evidence to the contrary, is that Aryan culture arose in this land in the hoary prehistoric past, and underwent through millenniums its own evolutionary progress. There have always been impacts with other cultures that came from outside, and the action and reaction between the indigenous culture and these extraneous influences have determined the gradual unfolding of what we know as our Indian civilisation.

All these things and much more, have been brought out by Swami Sankarananda in the book under review—a monument of patient research. Not less remarkable than the book itself is the learned foreword written by Dr. Bhupendranath Datta. We do not profess to be more than a student of early Indian history and shall in the present short review be satisfied with merely introducing the subject matter of the book in a general way to the reader of this journal.

Dr. Datta is a scholar of established reputation and his opinions on points of Indian archaeology, etymology and sociology is entitled to the highest respect. Moreover he has in his foreword here quoted profusely and considered minutely the opinions of older savants, and we have not detected in his arguments any signs of prejudice

and unreasoning bias. The Swami is a comparatively new man in this field but promises to make, in the near future, a name for himself as an honest and patient research worker. He has in his footnotes quoted original authority for almost everything he says, and his clear vision has enabled him to take a broad sweep and bring into his book, for a comparative study, the ancient symbols and rites and myths of so many lands. The subject-matter of the present book is such that it does not admit of mathematical proof. But short of such proof the author and Dr. Datta have made out a very good case, at any rate thrown considerable doubt on Marshall's conclusions.

From what we have stated above it is clear that speaking chronologically, it would be rash to state that in the fourth millennium B.C. there was no Vedic culture in India. So far Marshall's case fails. That Indus valley culture was anterior to the Sumerian is established beyond any doubt. The more primitive parabolic saw and the spear-blade with the undeveloped mid-rib, features of the Indus culture, are not to be found in the Sumerian ruins, where the spear-head had a well-developed middle rib. In the 2000 B.C. strata in the Sumerian sites there have been found Indus valley pictograms. All such facts seem to demonstrate the priority of Indus culture in point of time over the Sumerian. The civilisation of Mohenjodaro and Harappa is thus definitely Indian.

Now the question that arises is, was the Vedic civilisation also later than the civilisation of the Indus valley? The latter was admittedly in the Chalcolithic stage. What about the Vedic? There is mention of *Ayas* in the hymns, but according to our author it is doubtful if the word meant iron. Zimmer takes it to be bronze. The Rigveda is full of references to implements and utensils made of stone, wood, copper, bronze and leather in common use. The Taittiriya Brahmana, a later book, mentions a copper razor for shaving the head of a Brahmin. From all these considerations Dr. Datta places the Vedic civilisation in the Chalcolithic stage. But

this view is by no means established beyond all doubt.

We next come to a rather important point to which the learned author has devoted a number of pages. Here is his argument. The Indus people did not know the horse. So, if the Vedic *rishis* were familiar with that animal their civilisation would obviously belong to a much later period. The Rigveda, as we know it, must have taken centuries to compose. The earlier hymns refer to an Aswamedha sacrifice where *aswa* clearly means the Sun. But in the later *viks* it came to imply the animal horse with which the *rishis* had become acquainted through the Turanians who probably entered into India about that time as invaders and conquerors. The Swami gives a number of quotations from the Samapatha Brahmana showing that the Aswamedha sacrifice pertained to the Sun. The guarding of the sacrificial Aswa meant the vigil kept from sunrise to sunrise—a ceremony observed even to our day. It is not easy to prove anything definitely relating to these remote ages. But we doubt if it can be seriously contended that the Vedic Aryans did not know the horse. Aswa the author takes as literally meaning "not tomorrow", i.e., the sun that is born anew everyday—the old word for a horse being *Turaga*. But all this seems to us rather fanciful. Aswa is more easily and naturally derived from *As*, to enjoy. Aswa according to Sri Aurobindo is the symbol of vital force and enjoyment. *Turaga* simply means that which goes fast. However to follow our author, the Vedic Aryans used fish in their sacrifices and ate them in due course. The Indus ruins have disclosed a number of ancient fish hooks indicating that like the Aryans of the Veda they were fish-eaters.

The next important thing relied on by Marshall is what he calls the phallic symbol. Swami Sankarananda seems to show that the symbol in question is derived from the Vedic Yupa, called by various names the bull, the Aswatha tree, the vilva, the udumvara, the kalpa-vriksha (tree of imagery), all standing for the Sun, and having no sex significance at all till a much later period. The

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buffalo of the Indus valley ruins is the *Mahisha*, a name of agni in the Vedas, and not by any means a pre-vedic symbol.

In the Indus ruins we find a female figure out of whose genitals springs out a tree. The tree is taken as the symbol of the Sun. The Swami easily identifies the figure as Aditi the mother of the Sun and other Vedic gods. Similarly the serpent that appears so often in the Indus ruins is identified by the author as Ahi or Vritra or the Cloud in the Veda whom Indra killed by his lightning in order to bring down rain, according to the naturalistic interpretation. If Marshall had gone deep enough he would have found out that the Mohenjodaro and Harappa religious symbols have a distinct Vedic affinity, if not origin. In all this however, we find the solar myth somewhat over-emphasised. The perceptions and experiences recorded in the Vedas had other equally significant symbols—Agni, Varuna, Indra, Matarisva. All the same, our author's view-point makes a consistent picture.

Now, a few words are necessary about the Indo-Aryan race who are said to have immigrated into India. It is now well known that the word Aryan has only a linguistic cultural significance and does not really imply a race, a biotype. So it is idle to look for a homogeneously dolicephalic fair-skinned race in India. For the purpose of Marshall's school it is necessary to prove that the Indus valley people were all brachycephalic blacks. But the bones found do not justify such an assumption. In the Indus valley ruins as well as elsewhere, there is a medley of all kinds, the Nordic type, the Alpine type and the Mediterranean type of human skulls and bones. Dr. Datta seems justified in calling the racial description Indo-Aryan hypothetical like Indo-European and Indo-German. It is an interesting fact that Dravid in the Veda was the name of a tribe, just like Kuru or Panchala, and not a race apart. Yet it is not all plain sailing as some savants try to make out while developing a pet

theory. The expression Arya-varna in the Veda has to be explained. Likewise some explanations are called for to account for the existence of tribes in Central Asia bearing the names of Arya and Sudra. From the Mauryan period the word Arya appears to have assumed a racial significance, while still retaining the old meaning of noble and generous.

As to the funeral rites and disposal of dead bodies, there seems to be but little difference between what we read of in the Rigveda and what has actually been found in the Indus valley. A partial cremation and subsequent burial, mostly fragmentary, seems to have been the usage, more or less, in both cultures. In a mythological picture painted on a burial jar found at Harappa we find even figures of Yama's dogs of Hades and of the Vaitarini cow. It is indeed idle to say that in the Indus valley remains there is no vestige of Aryan influence.

We have as yet no data about the language spoken in the Indus valley in the fourth millennium B.C. Nor can we say if there was a connection between that language and Sanskrit. Sanskrit means "refined", and obviously implies that it is the refined and regularised form of an older Indo-Aryan tongue, the Vedic or the Arsha. But there is nothing in the Vedas to show that the Vedic language was derived from an alien tongue. The affinity that we find between Sanskrit and the other so-called Indo-European languages is due to the probable fact that from the earliest times the culture of India was constantly travelling westward, as indeed we know it to have been travelling during later centuries.

We shall close our rather scrappy review here, congratulating Swami Sankarananda on the writing of an excellent readable book. It strikes a happy mean between abstruse research and popular elucidation, and will give the lay reader an understanding of the Indus valley culture, corrective of some, at least, of current scholarly legends.

—C. C.

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