

New Race

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK...

What could be the cause of degeneration in the Indian society despite imitating the best of Western concepts of aesthetics and work ethics? Today we have uniformly designed cubicles in the offices providing the worker with a good bit of comfort. People are spending exorbitantly for home decoration and landscape designing and find some calm back home. Yet in these offices and homes we find people who are more robots than human beings. Have they lost their sensitivity sitting in the AC rooms? Perhaps they have. People working in big companies especially have a peculiar line of thinking. Their lives revolve around meetings 'targets'. Hardly anyone is found indulging in something one likes to do. Perhaps there is an artist hidden within someone, perhaps a poet is silently awaiting expression, perhaps a secret philosopher conceals in the heart a great new philosophy! When would these find expression amidst the common rut of life? Are we not blindly imitating the West in their life, work culture, aesthetics, depressions and frustrations? Indeed we are. It is very sad that Indians have to go through all this.

India has the remedies for all the maladies of the world. We can say so because we are the children of such a culture: a culture which embraces diverse experiences and opinions; one that thrives on godward emotion; that advocates the discovery of the inner Veda rather than following an external scripture. Ours is a culture which practices freedom of the soul and promotes its discovery in every field of life. Swami Vivekananda too stress on this point: "Our life-blood is spirituality...This is the land from whence, like the tidal waves, spirituality and philosophy have again and again rushed out and deluged the world..."

Art and literature of India bears the testimony of the freedom and quest for the Supreme in every walk of life. A look at any piece of ancient Indian art or literature reveals to us about the attempts made at the discovery either of Truth or expression of Delight and Beauty which the Spirit expresses in Life. Such pursuits bring harmony and perfection as they are inspired expression of the artist. They have the power to move a person to delight or peace or uplifts them to gain wisdom. Therefore art and literature in India are not seen as mere expression of "powerful emotions" but are the channels to reach the highest truth, perfection beauty and harmonize oneself with them.

One may argue that he/she does not know much of Indian culture to imbibe this spirit. But Swami Vivekananda empathically says that whether we know or not, believe in it or not, all of us have this pursuit and quest right in our genes. It is perhaps a matter of re-exploring it.

Shruti Bidwaikar

TRUTH



*isha vasyamidam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam jagat
tena tyaktena bhunjitha ma gridhah kasyasvid dhanam*

All this is for habitation by the Lord,
whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion.
By that renounced thou shouldst enjoy;
lust not after any man's possession.

(Isha Upanishad, Translation by Sri Aurobindo)

THE OBJECT OF FUTURE POETRY

Sri Aurobindo

The future poetry, assuming it to be of the kind I have suggested, its object to express some inmost truth of the things which it makes its subject, must to be perfectly adequate to its task express them in the inmost way, and that can only be done if, transcending the more intellectualised or externally vital and sensational expression, it speaks wholly in the language of an intuitive mind and vision and imagination, intuitive sense, intuitive emotion, intuitive vital feeling, which can seize in a peculiarly intimate light of knowledge by a spiritual identity the inmost thought, sight, image, sense, life, feeling of that which it is missioned to utter. The voice of poetry comes from a region above us, a plane of our being above and beyond our personal intelligence, a supermind which sees things in their innermost and largest truth by a spiritual identity and with a lustrous effulgency and rapture and its native language is a revelatory, inspired, intuitive word limpid or subtly vibrant or densely packed with the glory of this ecstasy and lustre. It is the possession of the mind by the supramental touch and the communicated impulse to seize this sight and word that creates the psychological phenomenon of poetic inspiration and it is the invasion of it by a superior power to that which it is normally able to harbour that produces the temporary excitement of brain and heart and nerve which accompanies the inrush of the influence. The inspired word comes, as said of old the Vedic seers, from the home of Truth, *sadanadrasya*, the high and native level of a superior self which holds the light of a reality that is hidden by the lesser truth of the normal sense and intelligence. It is rarely however that it comes direct and unaltered, ready embodied and perfect and absolute: ordinarily there is an influx and a suggestion of its light and speech hidden in a cloud of formless lustre and we have to receive as best we can, to find and disengage or to reshape word and substance with the aid of our mental powers while they are still possessed and excited and enlightened by the influence. The word comes secretly from above the mind, but it is plunged first into our intuitive depths and emerges imperfectly to be shaped by the poetic feeling and intelligence, *hrdatastanmanisa*. An intuitive self in the depth of each of our parts of being, hid in sense, life, heart, mind, is the transmitting agent, a subliminal power concealed in some secret cavern within of which the curtained and crystal doors disclose only occasional and partial transparencies or are sometimes half open or ajar,—*nihitamguhayam, guhahitamgahvarestham*. The less we are near and awake to this agent, the more externally intellectualised and vitalised becomes the tone and substance of the poetic speech; the more we can bring in of its direct power and vision, the more intuitive and illumined becomes the word of our utterance. And the more we can light up the veil and have the direct transmission, the greater the force of inspiration and revelation and the nearer we shall get to an absolute and inevitable word straight from the supramental sight and language.



(Sri Aurobindo, *The Future Poetry*, "The Word and the Spirit", CWSA 26: 297-99)

THE MOST MOMENTOUS UTTERANCE OF THE MOTHER

Amal Kiran

Phani, my cherished friend,

Perhaps the most momentous utterance of the Mother in my memory is one which was no more than a brief passing whisper—a short unfinished phrase, spoken as if to herself and caught almost accidentally by me to make what I could of it.

The occasion was one of those afternoons when I was the only disciple left at the end of her morning's meeting first with the secretaries and then a few others who somehow had happened to be upstairs between the time she came down from her second floor rooms and the time she sat down for her lunch with Pranab on the first floor behind a screen. At about 12 everyone went home. Only I was left behind, sitting in the small passage between the staircase door and the bathroom. How I came into this exceptional role I can't recollect. But as I have recounted elsewhere, I sat by myself through her lunch—within earshot of her varied talk with Pranab. Usually I would leave a note under a paperweight on a small table by which she passed after lunch on her way to the bathroom through another door from a passage beyond the room where we used to do *pranam* to her and sit while she would give interviews in the Meditation Hall.

On this particular morning I had left no note and she came out towards me from the bathroom without any oral or written reply to my questions. I got up from my mat, knelt at her feet as she stood for a moment before passing on to her siesta in the lunch-corner. After blessing me she just let fall the five words: "To keep one body going...."

As they sank into my mind they got enveloped with a soft light yielding several successive shades of meaning. Evidently the body was her own. Also, it was a body all by itself. Further, its singleness was special. Not only was it special but also unique. Clearly, it was a body holding a consciousness immeasurably greater than any in the world. But it was a body too which Sri Aurobindo, before leaving his own body, had charged with a mighty mission: "You have to fulfill our Yoga of Supramental Descent and Transformation." The Mother has herself given a more distinct depth of significance to this charge: she has declared that hers was a body in which for the first time in human history the experiment of physical divinization was being tried- a most difficult and outwardly a most distressing experiment, entailing a lot of suffering under the tremendous pressure of a divine Power of immortality which had never before brought its unrelenting all-transformative light into a stuff of flesh and bone deliberately accepted to be like our own in essence so that whatever would be achieved in it could represent a general human possibility. Finally, the suggestion of her words was that this body should be able to continue its work on earth and for that it was necessary to do everything which could help. Most pointedly the words implied not only help from herself but from others as well- - and the second kind of assistance was rather crucial because sufficient realization of its need might not come to us. So her whisper connoted what she would never openly insist on: "You, my dear disciples, should see to it that you do nothing to hinder the going-on of my body which Sri Aurobindo has marked out for his work and on which future of the world depends."

How have we lived up to the duty to help her? Should we have taxed her less in the way of wanting to be with her? In fact she herself wanted to be with us as much as possible. To put her divinely developing

body in touch with our bodies was the *raison d'être* of her incarnation. Especially as Sri Aurobindo had withdrawn from us into physical seclusion, she felt the need to give herself more and more to our aspiration for spirituality. This feeling must have increased tenfold after he had given up his own body in 1950. And though she appreciated the attitude of those who did not wish to encroach on her time, she was very far from pushing away those who yearned to be in her physical ambience. To a backward yogi like me, being near her was half the sadhana and she never grudged the gracious gift of her bodily proximity. What was wrong at times was to consider our petty needs more than her convenience. Thus some of us unduly prolonged the pranam she daily allowed us to make or unnecessarily lengthened out our periodical interviews with her. On occasion we overlooked some physical needs of her. I distinctly remember one incident. She had come to a house where several people were lodged. The occasion was the birthday of one of them. She had granted him an interview in his own room. When the interview was over she came out to the verandah on her way to the playground. The inmates of the house offered flowers to her. One of them said: "Mother, I want to tell you something. Will you please come into my room?" The Mother answered: "If I come, I shall be late at the playground and have no time to take a little refreshment in my room there before attending to the playground activities." The person addressed just kept weakly smiling and would not say: "All right Mother. I shan't keep you." Obviously, there was a persistent wish to have the Mother in for a special talk. Seeing the disinclination to let her go, the Mother quietly went into the room as desired. She remained there quite a time and came out smiling as usual after the grace shown to one of her children. But she must have missed the refreshing rest of which her over-taxed body was in need.

She never let us know whatever strain she underwent. She used to stand for over an hour at times in the early morning in the passage-room I have spoken of, receiving pranams and giving blessings. And as she could draw endless energy from the Universal Consciousness she could compel her body to carry on to please her children. But at the time I heard those words, her body had reached the age of eighty years.

Even more of a strain than physical exertion was the non-receptivity of people or else their carrying undesirable states of consciousness to her. It was the most natural movement for the Mother to open herself completely to her children and quite a lot of psychological "dirt" would get into her and affect her body. There was also the classical case of her falling ill because of the Soup Distribution. She used to put something of her subtle-physical substance into the soup when she sipped it before giving the cup to the sadhak who was on his knees in front of her. The cumulative strain was so great that she fell seriously ill. That was the end of the period of Soup Distribution in the Ashram's history. Some sort of reciprocal energy-flow between the Mother and the sadhaks was expected, but evidently there was too little response from us to her and the giving was markedly one-sided. Hence. The physical breakdown on her part. Another kind of attack on her was the despatch of ill-tempered letters. Her son Andre once remarked that they affected her body. Even Sri Aurobindo was said to have suffered from such letters. Once a nasty epistle affected his eyes for a while. Our gurus' attitude to their spiritual children was so trustingly open that they were often caught off their guard, as it were, and had to exert special powers to get back to normal.

In a number of ways I must have been a considerable drag on the Mother. Was that why she let out that unfinished whisper in my presence? I have not heard of anybody else reporting such a hint. Or was she confiding in me a secret as a result of something having happened independently of me, which was more of a drag on her than other occasions? I shall never know. But since that afternoon I have

tried not to forget ever how precious, how invaluable, how packed with super-destiny, how centrally significant in the career of our evolutionary cosmos was that one body that held so much sweetness and so much strength for baffled benighted souls-

A body like a parable of dawn
That seemed a niche for veiled divinity
Or golden temple-door to things beyond.

(Savitri, SABCL 28: 15)

With my love always

Amal

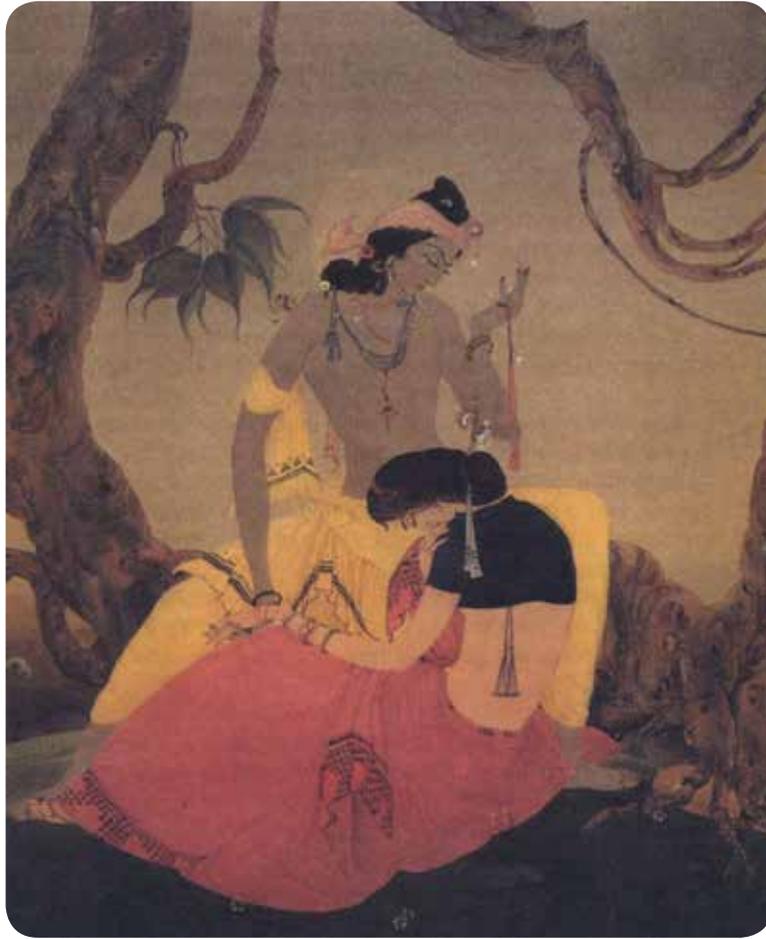
But Mother, we want it, we want it, we want to see this radiant and illumined body, this transformed body.

There must be a milieu. There must be some persons who aspire for the manifestation. There must be persons of good will, an environment where men grow, men who aspire for the transformation, for the spontaneous collaboration and for harmony and peace and all that. There must be a suitable milieu so that I can descend. It is this that is still lacking. Is there one person who can say that he has no ego, that he is entirely for the Divine? Completely surrendered and without reserve? Is there one? ... Not yet. I wait.

We will see when it shall be done. Let us wait. We will see, we will see the day when the Supreme Lord will manifest Himself here below (indicating Herself).

(Blessings of the Grace: 26-27)

BEAUTY AND DELIGHT



INDIAN ART

The Indian artist sets out from the other end of the scale of values of experience which connect life and the spirit. The whole creative force comes here from a spiritual and psychic vision, the emphasis of the physical is secondary and always deliberately lightened so as to give an overwhelmingly spiritual and psychic impression and everything is suppressed which does not serve this purpose or would distract the mind from the purity of this intention.

(CWSA 20: 306)

**From this issue onwards we will make efforts to expound
some of the central ideas from**

The Renaissance in India

written by Sri Aurobindo between 1914 — 1920.

INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN PAINTINGS

C. Sivaramamurti

Moved by the charm of Nature around him, man has expressed his appreciation of it in works of art produced by him. This goes back to a time when he was still a primitive. Art has had a softening influence on him. The earliest paintings of the prehistoric age in the caves all over the world give us magnificent examples of the observant «eye and the trained hand even in man's savage state. The colours chosen, the movement portrayed and the expression suffused in the pictures really make us marvel, even if all of them are not of the standard of the paintings at Altamira. The prehistoric cave paintings in India give us a picture of life in those far-off days of the early man in India.

It is a great and true experience that Kalidasa expresses when he feels that even the happiest man is elated when he sees beautiful things or hears melodious notes. Though music like art deeply stirs the heart, it is the impression of beautiful form on the eye that has an even greater effect.

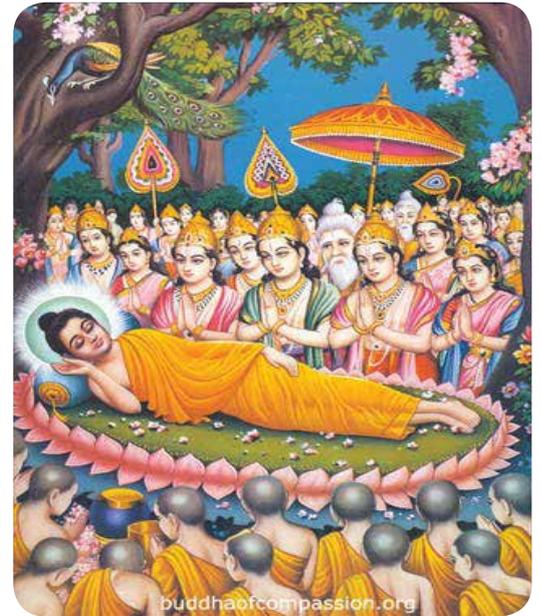
While in Chinese art, the delineation is as the eye sees, in Indian art, it is both as the eye perceives and as the touch feels. The depth of the figure is thus indicated. The pictures in India show an attempt at modelling.

This is corroborated by the fact that the concept of portrayal at its best in India is in terms of the figure in the round, styled *chitra*. The figure in relief, high or low, is *ardhachitra*; and the painting resembling sculpture is *chitrabhasa*. The term *chitrabhasa* itself indicates that the aim is to portray some kind of modelling to suggest depth. We may here appropriately recall the remark of Kalidasa, through the mouth of Dushyanta, *skhalativa me drishtirnimnonnateshu*, my eyes seem to roam over depths and elevations, meaning thereby the modelling of the body portrayed in the picture.

In the six limbs of painting or *shadanga*, modelling is given as an important one; others are variety of form *rupabheda*, proportion *pramana*, *bhava-yojana* or the infusion of emotions, *lavanya yojana* creation of lustre and iridescence, *sadrisya* portrayal of likeness, *varnikabhanga* colour mixing to produce the effect of modelling.

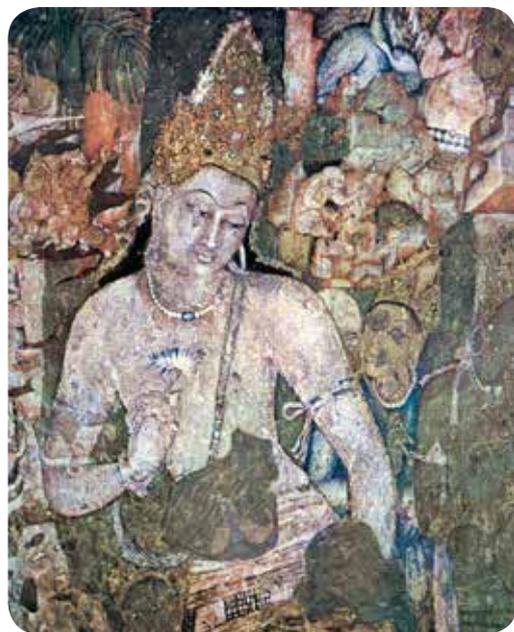
The *Vishndharmottara* further elucidates the process, and the strong points in paintings are narrated. The line sketch, the most important, firmly and gracefully drawn, is considered the highest achievement by the masters *rekhamprasamsantya-charyah*; there are others who consider shading and depiction of modelling as the best *vartanam apare jaguh*; feminine taste appreciates decoration in arts *triyobhushanaminchhanti*; but the common taste is for the splendour and glory of colour *varnadhyam itare janah*. This *vartana* or shading is of three kinds-*bindujavartana*, *patravartana* and *raikhikavartana*. The first is stippling, the second cross-hatching and the third fine line-shading silver point.

The best picture was with the minimum of drawing, *api laghu likhiteyam drisyate purnamurtih*, says the *Vidushaka* in the *Viddhasalabhanjika* as such figures suggest their full form. This is the greatness of powerful line drawing. Immoderate decoration and loud colouring were almost reckoned a blemish. In enumerating *chitragunas* and *chitradoshas*, i.e., merits and defects in paintings, an excess of any was considered a blemish.



The very classification of pictures like *viddhachitras* and *aviddhachitras*, i.e., portraits and studies from life in general, reveals a special effort to produce faithful portraits. There are many instances of portraits. The famous painting from Central Asia, depicting the gentle mode of breaking the news of the Master's passing away to Ajatasatru, with the aid of a *chitrapata*, or painting scroll, with several scenes from the Master's life, including the *parinirvana* of Buddha, shows how early such paintings were in vogue. In the *Dutavakya* of Bhasa, a painting of Dussasana molesting Draupadi in the court is presented and unrolled to be seen. The *Pratimanataka* describes portraits. It is a portrait that constitutes the theme of the *Viddhasalabhanjika*. In the *Kavyaprakasa*, a pathetic verse, depicting the pet parrot in the deserted household of a fallen king, begging painted figures on the walls of the princess and her attendants to feed him, mistaking the pictures for the live ones, suggests the ability of the ancient Indian painter at portrait work. But coming to the historic period, we have several portraits both in sculpture and in painting. The paintings of the Pandyan king and queen at Sittannavasal, Rajaraja Chola with his consorts at Tanjavur, Viranna and Virupanna at Lepakshi are telling examples of kings and noblemen responsible for larger portrait murals.

Emotion portrayed in pictures is best illustrated in such masterpieces as the mother and child before Buddha or the subjugation of Nalagiri from Ajanta. The form effectively presents *karunarasa*, while the latter shows first *bhayanaka rasa* in the stampede of the elephant Nalagiri, and *santarasa* where the furious animal lies humble at the feet of the Master. *Bhavasabalata* or the commingling of emotions is portrayed in such paintings as the host of demons desperately fighting with Tripurantaka, portrayed in the Brihadisvara temple at Tanjavur, the fierce aspect of the *rakshakas* determined to fight and win or die, contrasted by the tearful wives, clinging to them, dissuading them from fighting an impossible opponent, is an instance of *bhavasabalata* or the commingling of more than one emotion here, *raudra*, *karuna* and *sringara*.



The *Vishnudharmottara* has specially stressed suggestion as an important element in art. Different methods suggesting various aspects of nature are here enumerated; as for instance, portraying lotuses in bloom, rishis hurrying for a bath and so forth to suggest daybreak, prowling thieves, amorous damsels going to the place of their tryst and so on for indicating night, lotuses and aquatic beings for the suggestion of water, overcast clouds and white cranes flying in the sky to signify the rainy season, pleasant flower-decked forests and gardens to recall spring, travellers oppressed by heat and greatly fatigued to suggest summer and so on. All these devices are carefully followed in paintings and are to be understood in order to fully appreciate the meaning of a picture, specially in the later-day miniature paintings from Rajasthan, *baramasa* paintings and those portraying the loves of the *nayakas* and *nayikas*, in scenes of tryst with *sukla* or *krishna abhisarika*, *utkantha* and *viraha*, an overcast cloudy sky or the moonlit night when the pang of separation has its utmost poignancy which is all in the most suggestive language of the brush.

(Reprinted from IndianPainting, National Book Trust, 1970: 1-4)

FROM SHADOW TO SUNLIGHT

Devika Murthy

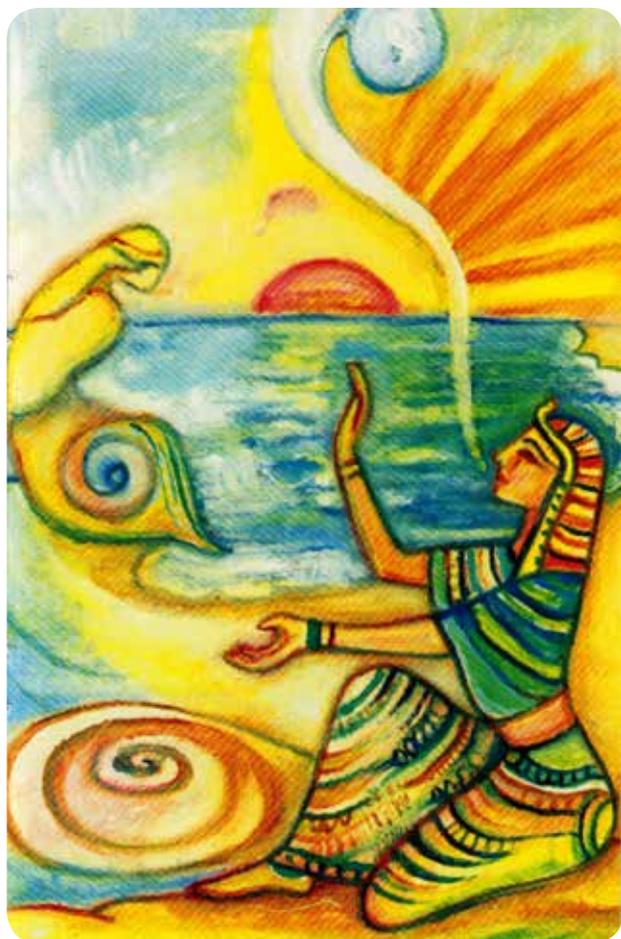
I truly wish i could live for thy sake:
so draw me to thy fathomless breast and take
me to simply serve none other but thee,
and fashion an instrument of matchless make.

Even as thou givest, if only i gave...
and nought but thee I could continually crave,
just how many more millenniums must revolve,
erei become they sweet unquestioning slave!...

When on my throbbing head thou layest thy palm
so soft and warm, then al within grows calm,
and all my scattered self is gathered in,
as from my depths rises a poignant psalm.

Do thou erase completely clear my slate,
of dark designs of unfolding fate,
do write afresh with strokes of pristine light,
and on my dim past close evermore the gate.

Bless that i may never succumb to gloom,
but like a fragrant blossom may i bloom,
an exquisite pattern of hues weave my life,
the warp of love and weft of bliss my loom.



THE LUMINOUS ABYSS

Ananda Reddy

Poised between two worlds-
 One, melting into dimness,
 The other, impatient to impress,
 I am lost in the wandering beams of memory.

The very cells quivered with joy
 By that Touch, soft as the flap of eyelids;
 Wrapped in the folds of silken dreams,
 That glorious impalpable Body I feel;
 The blue tumbling of the tyrant ocean
 Are but a hush in my heart's throb.

My faith, like the fisherman's,
 Perforated, full of the net's eyes;
 I burst my dreams, frayed my hopes;
 I, Judas, with the burnt lips,
 Kneaded by the crawling python agonies,
 Squeezed in the bowels of darkness,
 I ran towards dim lurid lights,
 for a breath of air, a puff of life.

Torture plunged into unwilling embrace
 Hoping to vibrate in bestial ecstasy;
 Forced the naked sea to reveal its night
 To be extinct under her breathless weight.

Respite none to appease the torment,
 No glad communion of silent solace,
 In such moods, months mourn by—
 Silent my soul sits in stupor,
 Driven between the sun's twilight motions.

Swiftly, pensive peace poured into the deeps
 And wrapped me in its warmth.
 Slowly a soft flame sketched
 The vast inner skies and seas
 Imprinting its secret name and felicitous address.

Then removed experiences of remote states
 Instilled the being and lulled it to sleep:
 Flame-flashes quickened my imagination
 And maddened it with the music of silence
 That rent asunder the golden lid.

LOST IN MEDITATION

Deepshikha Reddy



GANESHA BEYOND THE INDIAN FRONTIERS

M. K. Dhavalikar

Of all the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, Ganesha is the most interesting not only on account of his importance, but also because of his iconographical peculiarities. He is depicted with an elephant's head, a bulging belly and in a variety of poses. In point of time the god appears to be a late addition to the hierarchy of Hindu deities but, at the same time, it is noteworthy that he achieves a very exalted position in the hierarchy of gods and goddesses within a very short space of time. The general opinion seems to favour the view that his worship began sometime in 6th century A.D. and during the following two or three centuries we witness his rapid rise to prominence, so much so, that by tenth century an independent sect — of course within the folds of Hinduism — commonly known as the Ganapatya comes into being. Ganesha was also borrowed by other religious systems such as Buddhism and Jainism, and his worship spread almost all over Asia (except the western regions) where Buddhism and other sects of Hinduism became living faiths. Ganesha is still accorded a very high position by the Hindus and it is one of the most important deities worshipped in India today . . .

It appears that the worship of Ganesha began in the Gupta period around 4th-5th cent. A.D. and spread to other lands quite early. The Buddhist lost no time in borrowing the deity in their own pantheon and Ganesha travelled to distant lands along with Buddhism. Thus in South-east Asia he was worshipped as a Hindu deity whereas in the Far East, he was adored as a Buddhist deity. The following account amply shows that the elephant-headed god was worshipped almost all over Asia (except West Asia), and as such he is perhaps the only Hindu divinity whose worship was so widely distributed in terms of space and time.

Afghanistan

There are quite a few images of Ganesha which can be ascribed to the Gupta period but they are supposed to be rather doubtful specimens. There are, however, some images in Afghanistan which have recently come to light. Of these, one was found some years ago at Cardez and was subsequently removed to Kabul where it is now worshipped by the Hindu residents of Kabul in Dargah Pir Rattan Nath near the Pamir Cinema . . .

On stylistic grounds also the image can be dated to the end of 5th and the beginning of 6th century. It depicts the god standing in the *alidha* pose, his hands, legs and the chest are muscular suggesting a strong Hellenistic influence. The trunk, which is broken, was turned to the left while the broken tusk is clearly indicated on the left. A close-fitting coronet on the head, a *necklet (kanthi)* fitting close in the neck are all noteworthy as in the Gupta sculptures of Sarnath. The ears have been camouflaged into foliage and this has misled earlier visitors into thinking that they were wings. The god had originally four hands, all of which are unfortunately broken. His *yajnopavita* is a snake with which he is said to have secured his belly full of *modakas* when, according to the story, the moon laughed at him from the sky. His undergarment is a short *dhoti (ardhoruka)* on which designs like lion's head (*kirti-mukha*), lotus buds and tasselled fringe of swallow's tail occur while the torso the belly, the *naga-yajnopavita*, the *urdhvamedhra* and various designs on his undergarment, all suggest that the inspiration is from Magadha. However, the anatomy of the figure, with an emphasis on muscular hands and legs, is clearly suggestive of the lingering Hellenistic influence.

Another interesting marble image of Ganesha is reported from Afghanistan. It was found at Sakar Dhar (Shankar Dhar), ten miles north of Kabul, from where are reported very interesting images of Surya and Siva.¹ It represents a standing Ganesha wearing an undergarment (*antariya*) which is characterised by the acanthus motif. What is remarkable is that the stem of the acanthus is intended to show Ganesha as

urdhvamedhra, for the acanthus design appearing to hang on it. The bulging belly is not, however, of huge proportions that Ganesha is usually associated with. He wears a *naga-yajnopavita* with the knot simulating the snake's head. The chest is muscular as is common in Gandharan sculptures. The trunk rests sufficiently high above the left shoulder, a trait of early date. The right tusk is intact but the left is broken, suggesting that the image is a product of the recognised form of Ganesha as *Ekadanta*. The ears are symmetrically spread fan-wise which, superficially studied, may give the impression of wings. He has four arms; the upper left arm is broken and missing. The two lower arms are seen resting on the heads of the attendant *ganas* who are looking up at Ganesha with devotion. The *ganas* superficially suggest similarity with Greek dolphins and actually show the curly locks of hair, the *kundalas* in the ears and the necklet which we meet in Gupta sculptures. The statue resembles the early Gupta sculptures and can therefore reasonably be dated to the 4th century. Stylistically it may fall in the transitional period of the art between the Kushana and the Gupta times. This can therefore be taken to be the earliest statue of Ganesha. It is indeed interesting that the Hindus of Kabul still worship this image in the Shore Bazar locality (Narsingdwara) of Kabul.

It is indeed curious and interesting, but equally significant, that the images of Ganesha of such an early date should be found not in the country where Hinduism flourished and still does but in a region where it did not survive. But it should be noted that even though Afghanistan is an independent sovereign country patronising Islam today, it was, at least, culturally a part of India — Vaishnavism, Saivism, Buddhism each by turn held its sway in this land of 'Ariana'. As a matter of fact parts of eastern Afghanistan formed a part of the Indian Empire of the Kushanas when Huvishka conquered that region. Besides, the image's of a number of Hindu gods and goddesses found in Afghanistan also amply testify to the patronage of the Hindu kings of Afghanistan. It is, therefore, not surprising that some of the early representations' of Ganesha should have been found in Afghanistan . . .

Nepal

It is difficult to state with precision anything regarding the exact date of the introduction of Ganesha in Nepal. According to one legend, Charumati, a daughter of Ashoka, built a temple of Ganesha in Nepal. This, however, is the legendary origin and there is no evidence to show that the worship of Ganesha was in vogue in Nepal at such an early date. The sculptural evidence demonstrates that his worship began sometime in the 8th century and became considerably popular by the 10th century. In Nepal he was worshipped by the Hindus, including the Buddhists. His adoration was taken over by Buddhism because he was the *Siddhidata* the 'bestower of success'. According to a Nepalese tradition, a mystic mantra in praise of Ganesha, called the *Ganapati-hridaya*, was disclosed to Ananda by Buddha at Rajagriha.¹



A large number of Ganesha images have been found in Nepal. Among these, mention should be made of two images at Kathmandu. They are rather unusual and are of considerable iconographical interest. They both

show a rat under each foot of the god. Both have one head, but one has four hands while the other has sixteen and both embrace the Shakthi.

Heramba was "the most popular form of Ganesha in Nepal. In this form he is usually shown with his *vahana* lion, has five heads, ten hands and on his lap is his Shakthi. However, an unusual image of Heramba Ganesha was found at Bhatgaon which is dated 1695. It has a rat instead of a lion as *vahana*. Yet one more interesting statue of bronze in the Museum für Volkerkunde in Munich shows a rat under one foot and a lion under the other.

There are some temples of Ganesha in Nepal. Among these, one near Zimpi-Tandu can be dated, on the basis of epigraphical evidence, to 8th-10th cent. A.D. Another temple of Siddha-Vinayaka is at Shanku. To the north of Thankot is a temple of Ganesha which has, in addition, the representations of *Sapta-matrikas*. It may incidentally be stated that the *Sapta-matrikas* are accompanied by Ganesha in India.

In the Nepalese harvest festivals, Parvati is represented as a young girl, accompanied by two boys Ganesha and Mahakala. It may be recalled in this connection that Ganesha is associated with harvest festivals in western India, particularly in Konkan.²

Tibet

Ganesha did not achieve as much popularity in Tibet as he did in Nepal. This may possibly have been due to the widespread Mahayana Buddhism in that land. However, a few images have been found in western Tibet where he was looked upon as a powerful guardian against demons and evil spirits. It is interesting to note that in this role of guardian his image was placed above the main entrance to Tibetan temples, including Buddhist temples. This is basically a Hindu tradition, for, we find in India from 8th century onwards that the images of Ganesha were carved on the entrance to Hindu temples. This entablature block-*Ganesha-pattika* is to be found in all the Hindu temples of later period. It is therefore most likely that the tradition travelled to Tibet from India along with the worship of Ganesha....

Female forms of Ganesha are extremely rare. In India the most noteworthy is the Ganeshani in the 64 Yogini temple at Bheraghat (M.P.) In Tibet also we come across female forms of Ganesha. The Buddhist in Tibet depicted the female and male forms of Ganesha, as being trampled upon by Mahakala, Krishnamanju-siri and other Buddhist gods.

Ganesha was most popular in Khotan.³ A number of bronze tablets and painted wooden panels were discovered by Stein in the course of his explorations of a stupa at Endere. Here some of the representations are in the classic Indian form whereas others can be distinguished by certain characteristics peculiar to Chinese Turkestan....

In the rock-cut temples of Bezaklik, there are several frescoes in which representations of Ganesha are found. They usually depict him seated with six arms, holding sun and moon, banner and probably the *matulinga*. Behind his head is a nimbus (*prabha-valaya*). An interesting feature of these representations of Ganesha is that the elephant face does not follow the usual representation of the god because the trunk somewhat resembles the snout of wild boar. However, the god being in the company of Siva and Kartikeya, there should be little doubt about his identity as Ganesha.

At Khaklik, about 75 miles from Khotan, two painted representations of Ganesha have been found. Of these, one depicts an emaciated Ganesha. Three of his hands are seen; they hold a bowl of sweets, goad (*ankusha*) and radish each. The upper left hand is not clearly seen. The god is shown wearing a *dhota*-like lower garment (*antariya*) and an upper garment (*uttariya*).

Another figure shows Ganesha seated on a cushion with *prabha-valaya* at the back. He wears a crown and jewellery on his person. The trunk is turned towards right and he appears to be looking at the female attendant on his left. He has four arms, each holding a radish, a *modaka*, an indistinct object and one hand is seen resting on the thigh. He wears a bluish lower garment.

Mongolia

With the introduction of Buddhism in Mongolia, Ganesha reached that land. Buddhism spread there through Tibet and the Tibetan monk Hphagspa carried Mahayana Buddhism in Mongolia in the 13th century and is said to have converted even the Emperor Kublai Khan. To the Mongols, Mahakala was only the manifestation of Siva and it was, therefore, quite natural that Ganesha should have become popular in Mongolia. The dancing form of the elephant-headed god (*Nritta-Ganapati*) is to be found among the "five-hundred gods of Narthan". He is shown on his mount (*vahana*) rat which holds the jewel *chintamani* in its mouth. The four hands hold each an axe (*parasu*), radish (*mula-kanda*), bowl of sweets and a trident (*trisula*) which normally is an attribute of Siva.

According to a legend, the father of Hphags-pais said to have invoked Ganesha who took him up with his trunk, carried him to the top of Mount Meru and showing him the country of Mongolia said, "Thy son shall subjugate this whole country", which proved to be true.⁴

Ceylon

Much has been said about the elephant-headed dwar (*gana*) which has been carved among the row of *ganas* sculptured on the Kantaka Cettinga stupa, near Mihintale which was uncovered in the course of excavations in 1934-35. The figure has been taken to represent the proto-Ganesha in the same way as Coomaraswamy is inclined to look upon the similar elephant-headed *gana* carved on one of the Amaravati railings in Andhra Pradesh. If, however, we accept the identification of these figures as representing proto-Ganesha,⁵ we can reasonably expect the evolution of Ganesha in the Buddhist panthe on which, however, is not borne out by the available evidence. The figures only represent *ganas* supporting the superstructure and we are reminded of the description of Ravana's palace in the epic which describes it as being supported by caryatids.⁶ Moreover the *Maha-bharata* mentions that one of the *Maha-parsadas* of Siva was elephant-headed.⁷ The Buddhists, probably, borrowed the idea of the *ganas* from the epics and very naturally the elephant-headed *gana* also came to be represented in Buddhist friezes of the early centuries of the Christian era.

A fine image of Ganesha is sculptured on a pillar in a Siva temple at Polonnaruva. It is carved in a niche crowned by a *Kirti-mukha*. The god is seated and has four hands of which the lower left holds *modaka*. In the temple of Subrahmaniam at Katargama, about 150 miles from Colombo, Ganesha occupies an independent position. He is worshipped even by Christians and Muslims.

Burma

The Burmese are professedly Buddhist and follow the Pali canon of the Southern school. Buddhism was introduced in Burma in the latter half of the 11th century. However, Hinduism appears to have already penetrated into Burma long before Buddhism. This is evident from innumerable images of Saiva and Vaishnava gods and goddesses which have so far been found in that country. There is abundant evidence — epigraphical and otherwise — to show the existence of a considerable number of Hindus, particularly Brahmins, in Burma as priests, astrologers, architects, etc., who probably occupied positions of influence and responsibility. This perhaps took place in the 5th-6th centuries A.D. during the time of the Imperial Gupta Rulers. It were these people who introduced and carried with them images of various deities of the Hindu pantheon.

A good number of Ganesha images have so far been found in lower Burma, for in upper Burma Mahayana Buddhism held sway. Ganesha being the god who removed obstacles and granted success in any undertaking, his images were carried by merchants and traders who went out of India in order to achieve success in trade and commerce beyond the seas. Their journey was extremely hazardous and full of dangers. It is, therefore, very natural that they carried with them small portable statues of Ganesha. Professor Ray rightly observes that, "Ganesha found popular favour mainly with the commercial section of the population".⁸ In Burma, especially in the delta regions of lower Burma, Indian immigrants settled in large numbers. In this region, which was their commercial stronghold, a number of small images of Ganesha have been found. They are modest in size, crude in execution and are devoid of any artistic merit. They were probably carried from place to place by merchants and traders as they traveled far and wide in the country.

There are two interesting images of Ganesha in the Rangoon Museum. Both are small in size and are carved in low relief. One of them shows the god seated in *padmasana* and six armed. The attributes in his hands are not clearly visible. The upper left appears to be holding a discus (*chakra*) and a noose (*pasa*) while the lower hands hold the bilva fruit and the trunk respectively. Both the images betray poor workmanship.

Professor Ray has noticed fragments of images of Ganesha within the precincts of the Shwesandaw Pagoda, Pagan, where, along with other Hindu divinities placed at the corner of the different pyramidal structures as guardian structures as guardian deities of the Buddhist shrine,⁹ However, a most remarkable

Ganesha image was recovered sometime ago from the debris of the ruins of one of the temples of Pagan ...¹⁰

Thailand

Thailand (popularly known as Siam) came into contact with India at a very early period. The stylistic evidence shows the influence of the Amaravati school on Siamese art in the early centuries of the Christian era. Later still, the Gupta, Pallava and Pala elements are noticeable in Siamese art. It appears that the southern part of Thailand came first into contact with India. It was easier for Indian traders to push further eastward from lower Burma in Thailand. This should explain the strong Burmese Hindu influence on the Mon art during 6th-8th century A.D.

The Mons were devout Hindus. Notwithstanding the fact that the Thais adhered to Buddhism later, Ganesha was popular among them all. Several statues of the god have been found. Among those of the Ayuthian period are noteworthy. The early art of Ayuthia (Ayodhya) betrays strong Indian influence . . .

In the famous Hindu temple at Bangkok, there is an interesting bronze statue of Ganesha. He is shown with his legs superposed. He wears a *naga-ydjanopavita*. In his right hand is to be seen the broken tusk while in the left is a manuscript. This can be taken, with a reasonable amount of certainty, to be the representation of Ganesha as a scribe (*lekhaka*) for the sage Vyasa who is traditionally supposed to have dictated the whole *Mahabharata* to Ganesha. This is not unlikely in view of the fact that the great epic had already reached as far as Cambodia by 6th century. It may also suggest Ganesha's association with knowledge (*jnana*).

Cambodia

Legendary accounts show that India came into contact with Cambodia at quite an early period. Tradition tells us that about the early centuries of the Christian era a Brahmin by name Kaundinya journeyed to the coast of Cambodia and established a kingdom there. He Indianised the country completely, and the Chinese reports state : "They worship the Spirits of Heaven and made images of bronze. Those with two faces have four arms and those with four faces have eight arms".¹¹ These are obvious references to Hindu gods and demonstrate how deep the Hindu influence had penetrated into Cambodia.

Cambodia is extremely rich in sculptural remains and there are innumerable images of Hindu, including Buddhist divinities. Just as in Burma and Thailand, in Cambodia too a number of Ganesha images have come to light. As already observed, the *Mahabharata* was known in Cambodia as early as the 6th century. It, therefore, seems likely that they knew Ganesha from an early period. This is confirmed by the evidence from the inscriptions of Angkor Borei, dated 611 A.D., which records the grant of slaves to the temple which was dedicated to several deities of which one was Ganesha.¹²

One temple at Prasat Bak (10th century) was apparently dedicated to the worship of Ganesha. Ganesha is also depicted in the scenes in Bung Meglea and his statues have also been discovered in the vicinity of Kuk Trapeang Kul temple. Several other loose sculptures have also been found from time to time. Ganesha is known as 'Prah Kenes' in Cambodia and his representations can be distinguished on account of certain characteristic features. First and foremost, he is never shown as pot-bellied and bulky. He is usually shown sitting cross-legged and with two hands. The trunk is almost straight and curled down at the end; sometimes it is up-turned also. Another noteworthy feature is that the pre-Khmer images of Ganesha, as a rule, are not shown with head-dress of any sort, However, towards the 8th century we find Ganesha wearing an or natekaranda-mukuta. They are usually bare to the waist and are shown wearing a *naga-yajnopavita*.

One of the most remarkable images of Ganesha is in a private collection at Speak Thmar Kendal. It depicts the god sitting in a cross-legged posture. He has two hands and wears a tall conical head-gear. Curiously enough, he has four heads. It may be especially mentioned that four-headed forms of Ganesha are extremely rare and the only parallel that can be cited is from Ghatiala (Rajasthan) in India where four Ganesha images are carved on the top of a column in cardinal directions . . .

Champa

To the east of Funan and Cambodia was situated the kingdom of Champa, which is now occupied by the central and southern Annam. The very name Champa is thoroughly Indian and it is clear from the monuments, statuary and inscriptions found in that ancient country that the early civilisation flourishing there was due to strong influence from India. . . .

There is epigraphical evidence to show that temples were erected and dedicated to Ganesha. One such sanctuary was at Po Nagar. From the cultural evidence it appears that Ganesha was quite popular during 7th-8th centuries A.D. A most impressive statue of Ganesha was discovered at Mison where a Saiva shrine was found.¹³ . . . The statue is dated to about 8th century. As compared to the Khmer representations of Ganesha, this image appears rather bulky. It is characterised by rather coarse plastic treatment. Another seated image was also found at Mi-son.¹⁴ Yet the most interesting is the Ganesha image in the Saigon Museum. It is unfortunately in a mutilated condition. It shows the god seated, and with two hands. Curiously enough it has three deep-set eyes. He also has a small *prabha-valaya* at the back. According to Boisselier, it is the only representation of its kind in the whole of Southeast Asia ...¹⁵

Java and Bali

It appears that Java was known to Indians from a very long period, for the *Ramayana* refers to the islands as Yava-dvipa. In all probability the first contacts were made about the beginning of the Christian era, if not earlier. Hinduism began to spread in these islands during the time of the great Gupta monarchs in 4th-5th centuries, and Saivism became a most predominant faith. Innumerable sculptures of Brahmanical gods and goddesses have been found in Indonesia. In Java, however, there does not appear to be a cult of Ganesha and no temples were dedicated to him but his images have been found in the temples of Siva.

Among the statues of Ganesha in Java the most primitive is the one discovered in west Java.¹⁶ The carving is very crude and the statue appears to be unfinished. Some scholars would like to assign it a very early date only because it is so primitive. However, the image appears unfinished and it is therefore extremely difficult to date it with precision. Another early Ganesha statue is a small bronze which is now in the British Museum...)



The stone statue of Ganesha found on the Dieng plateau is believed to be the most ancient representation of the god in Java.¹⁷ It appears that, stylistically at least, it may be later than the preceding one. It shows the Ganesha sitting, with four hands; the proper right hand holding the broken tusk and the left the bowl of sweets while the upper two hold a *parasu* and a *akshamala*. He wears armlets, bracelets, a necklace and a *naga-yajnopavita*, but there is no crown on the head.

One of the finest statues of Ganesha from Chandi Banon is now housed in the Djakarta Museum.¹⁸ Practically nothing now remains of Chandi Banon, a Saivite monument near Borobudur. The statue depicts the god seated and wearing a flowered garment and jewellery. In the right hand he holds a broken tusk and a rosary while in lower left hand is a bowl of sweets. The object in the upper left hand is broken.

The use of skull ornaments in the representations of Ganesha images is a purely Javanese conception. This happened because of Ganesha's association with Siva who, in the form of Bhairava, wears a garland of skulls (*kapala-mala*). This is best illustrated by the Ganesha image of Bara. According to the chronogram in words on its pedestal it is dated 1239 A.D. in the early Singhasari period.¹⁹ The god carried his usual attributes but a number of skulls are seen on the pedestal. Ganesha is the god who removes all dangers and difficulties. In this case he is himself protected by a large Kala head against dangerous influences threatening him from the rear. The large canines and the long tongue of the Kala recall modern Balinese masks; The back hands of Ganesha are at the same time used for the claws of the Kala. Very similar arrangement of skulls is also seen in the statue from Chand Singhsari.²⁰ It shows the god standing with the usual attributes in his four hands. He wears elaborate jewellery in the making of which skulls are used.

Borneo

It is indeed surprising that Hinduism should have penetrated as far as Borneo in the 5th century or even earlier. This is evident from an epigraphical record discovered at Kotei which records certain Hindu rites performed by Brahmins... It seems that the idol is taken to be contemporaneous with the Kotei

epigraphs of 5th century and is thus supposed to be one of the oldest statues of Ganesha known so far. This dating however, is not supported by stylistic evidence. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that the statue originally belonged to some temple on the banks of river Mahakan whence it was brought and deposited in the cave. On stylistic grounds it can be assigned to 8th century.

Another statue of Ganesha from Borneo shows the deity seated with fan-shaped ears and almost straight trunk which appear to be the characteristic of Borneo statues of Ganesha.²¹ . . .



China

Ganesha probably reached China through Central Asia and Chinese Turkestan. However, it appears to have reached there at a very early date, for there are two early representations of Ganesha in China. One is a fresco in the rock-cut caves at Tun-huang and the other is a stone-image carved in low relief in the rock-cut temple at Kung-hsien. The former is depicted along with other Hindu deities such as the Sun, the Moon and the Hindu god of love, Kamadeva and the *Nava-grahas*. On stylistic grounds it can be dated to the 6th century. The stone image at Kunghsien can be dated on the basis of inscriptural evidence, to 531 A.D. It, thus, becomes the earliest dated image of Ganesha. He is shown seated in the true Indian cross-legged posture. He has two hands, the right one holding lotus and the left, the chintamani jewel. The inscription refers to him as the 'Spirit King of Elephants'.



Two forms of Ganesha were known to the Chinese and the Japanese. Of these, Vinayaka was the single form and the Kangiten was the double form. There are many representations of Vinayaka who is usually shown seated. He has two hands, left holding a radish and the right holding a parasu. Not with standing the fact that there is documentary evidence to show that the double form was secretly worshipped in China as late as 11th century no images of the double form have been found. This may perhaps be due to the ban on the worship of Kangi-ten imposed by Emperor Chen Tsung in 1017 by an edict.

Japan

It appears that Ganesha was unknown in Japan till 9th century. But once his worship was introduced by Kolso Daishi, a Buddhist, the god became quite popular and his statues in the Vinayaka form were made and temples were dedicated to him. He was often shown standing with two, four or six arms, and usually with a smiling countenance. In the Kakn-zen-eho form he was shown with three heads, each having three eyes and in his four hands he held a sword, a radish, a modaka, and sceptre. He was supposed to be seated on a mountain and was referred to as 'King of Elephants'.

In the double form Kangi-ten Ganesha was worshiped not publicly in temples but secretly. It was a secret esoteric cult, based on the doctrine of yoga.

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THE MOTHER'S ENCOUNTER WITH GANAPATI

There has been an interesting phenomenon. I had X told about a rather interesting encounter of mine with Ganapati¹ (quite a few years ago), and how he had promised to give me whatever I needed and actually gave it for quite a long time, certainly more than ten years, and generously so. Then everything changed in the Ashram. It was after the war, the children came and we spilled over; we became much more complex, much larger, and began to be in touch with foreign countries, particularly America. And I continued to be in contact with Ganapati; I can't say I used to do a puja to him (!), but every morning I would put a flower in front of his image. Then one morning I asked him, "Why have you stopped doing what you had been doing for such a long time?" I listened, and he clearly replied, "Your need has grown too large." I didn't quite understand, because he has at his disposal fortunes larger than what I needed. But then, some time afterwards, I had this told to X, who answered me from the height of his "punditism," "Let her not be concerned with the gods, I will look after that!" It was needlessly insolent. Then I turned to Ganapati and asked him, "What does all that mean?" And I clearly saw (it wasn't he who answered, it was Sri Aurobindo), I clearly saw that Ganapati has power only over those who have faith in him, which means it's limited to India, while I needed money from America, France, England, Africa... and that he has no power there, so he couldn't help. It became very clear, I was at peace, I understood: "Very well, he did his best, that's all." And it's true that I keep receiving from India, though not sufficiently; especially as since Independence half of India has been ruined, and all those who used to give me a lot of money no longer do, because they no longer can – it isn't that they no longer want to, but that they no longer can.

(Mother's Agenda: January 4, 1964)

THE LOTUS

Geeta Radhakrishna Menon

1
The beautiful lotus,
Standing on muddy waters,
Untainted - uncluttered –unhampered,
So pure- but arduous to attain!

The exotic flower!
Head poised above the dirty debris,
The anchor- a long green stem,
Strongly and firmly rooted!

A sailing ship that shall never sink,
Floating like a silky feather,
That you are gliding like a vessel
Is but my misguided illusion!

Mother Earth's wholesome creation,
The beginning and the end,
A remedy to life's problems,
And a key to many unsolved puzzles.

The inspiration of every sculptor,
Accurately shaped and perfectly designed,
Spreading the aroma far and wide,
Unpolluted by the muddy water underneath! Ambuja!

Sweet heart of the radiant Sun,
Blossoming at his tender touch,
Smiling at his playful gleam,
Blushing at his amorous embrace! Jalaja!

The petals like the sparkling eyes of a maiden,
Shyly unfolding at every spark of the beam,
Open only for few precious moments,
Delighting in the lustrous rays! Kamala!

The sublime white lotus,
With the virgin petals so velvet!
Padmasana- the lotus posture of the Yogis,
Transcending the heights of higher consciousness! Padma!



2

The irresistible pink lotus
 Held by Mahalaksmi –the goddess of wealth,
 The fingers that can jingle gold coins,
 Spin and spiral the world with prosperity! Pankaja!

The gorgeous golden lotus
 That seats Sarasvati -the Goddess of wisdom
 Blessing the world with
 Abundant light and learning! Saroja!

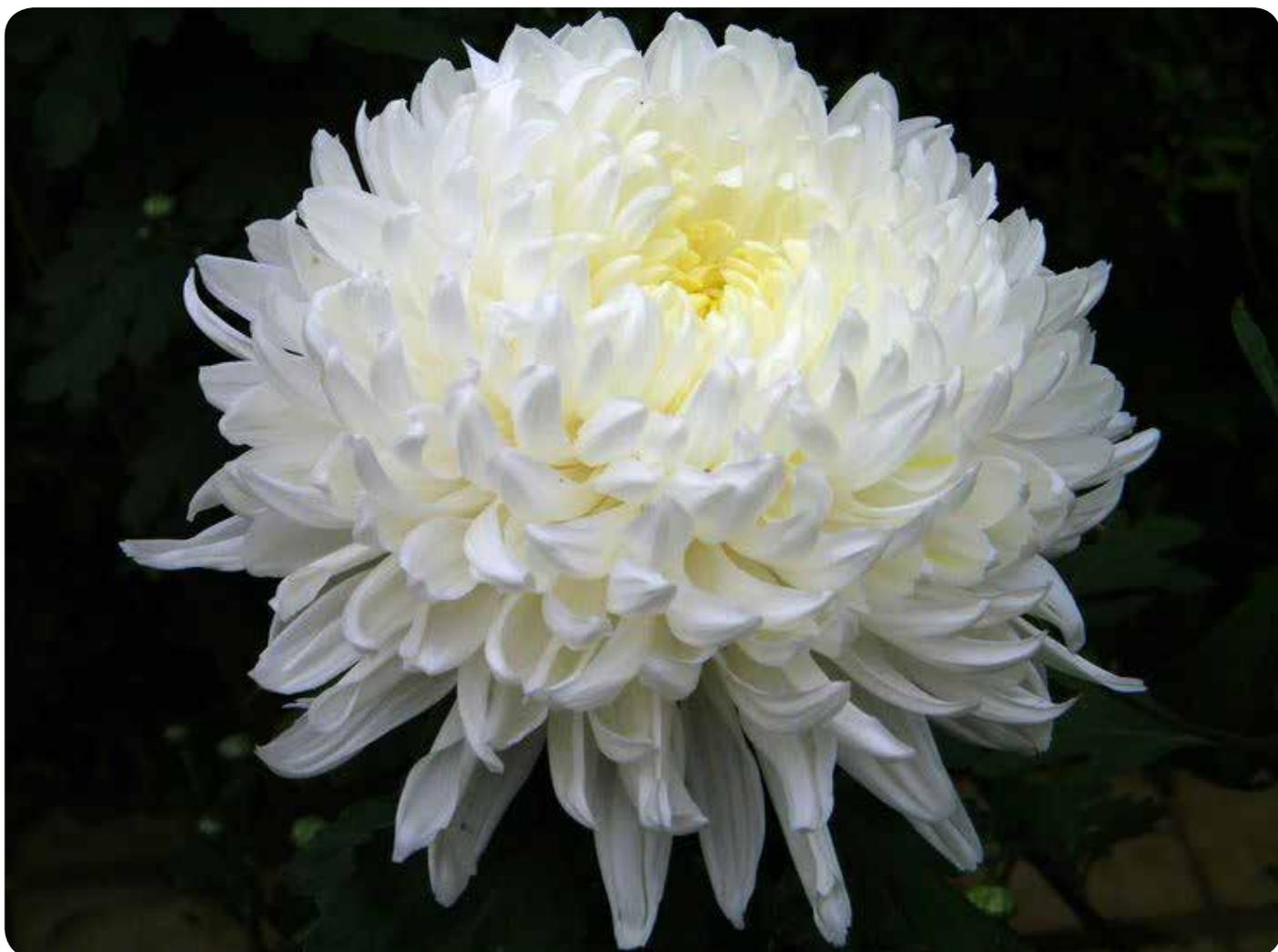
Birth and death are the strong arms,
 Yet, the very essence of life!
 The stem, leaves and the flower
 Of the golden lotus- the plant ultimate!

The past, present and the future,
 A tide - of time and space
 Life's relentless mission is the search
 For this precious lotus gem!

Note: Ambuja, Jalaja, Padma, Pankaja, Saroja are synonyms of Lotus in Sanskrit.

LIFE

Purified Dynamic Life Energy



Superb, indomitable, all-powerful in its purity

All power is within you;
you can do anything and everything.
Believe in that;
don't believe that you are weak,
Stand up and express the divinity within you.

(Swami Vivekananda)

SHIVAJI, JAYSINGH

Sri Aurobindo

JAYSINGH

Neither of us has prevailed. A third force has entered into the land and taken the fruits of your work, and as for mine, it is broken; the ideal I cherished has gone down into the dust.

SHIVAJI

For the fruit I did not work and by the failure I am not amazed nor discouraged.

JAYSINGH

Neither did I work for a reward, but to uphold the ideal of the Rajput. Unflinching courage in honourable warfare, chivalry to friend and foe, a noble loyalty to the sovereign of my choice, this seemed to me the true Indian tradition, preferable even to

the unity and predominance of the Hindu races. Therefore I could not accept your overtures. But I gave you the opportunity to accept my own tradition and, when faith was not kept with either of us, I saved my honour and assisted your escape.

SHIVAJI

God extended to me His protection and moved the heart of a woman to give me love and aid. Traditions change. The ideal of the Rajput has its future, but the mould had to be broken in order that what was temporary in it might pass. Loyalty to the sovereign of my choice, that is good; but loyalty to the sovereign of my nation's choice, that is better. The monarch is divine by the power of God expressed within him, but he has the power because he is the incarnation of the people. God in the nation is the deity of which the monarch must be the servant and the devotee. Vithoba, Virat of the Mahrattas,—Bhavani, incarnate as India,—in that strength I conquered.



JAYSINGH

Your political ideal was great, but your standard of means was abhorrent to our morality. Ruse, treachery, pillage, assassination were never excluded from your activity.

SHIVAJI

Not for myself I fought and ruled, but for God and the Maharashtra dharma, the religion of Hindu nationality which Ramdas enunciated. I offered my head to Bhavani and She bade me keep it to scheme and plot for the greatness of the nation. I gave my kingdom to Ramdas and he bade me take it back as a gift from God and the Mahrattas. I obeyed their commands. I slew when God commanded me, plundered because it was the means He pointed out to me. Treacherous I was not, but I helped my weakness in resource and numbers by ruse and stratagem, I conquered physical force by keenness of wit and brain-power. The world has accepted ruse in war and politics, and the chivalrous openness of the Rajput is not practiced either by the European or the Asiatic nations.

JAYSINGH

I hold the dharma as supreme and even the voice of God could not persuade me to abandon it.

SHIVAJI

I gave up all to Him and did not keep even the dharma. His will was my religion; for He was my captain and I his soldier. That was my loyalty,—not to Aurangzebe, not to a code of morals, but to God who sent me.

JAY SINGH

He sends us all, but for different purposes, and according to the purpose He moulds the ideal and the character. I am not grieved that the Mogul has fallen. Had he deserved to retain sovereignty, he could not have lost it; but even when he ceased to deserve, I kept my faith, my service, my loyalty. It was not for me to dispute the will of my emperor. God who appointed him might judge him; it was not my office.

SHIVAJI

God also appoints the man who rebels and refuses to prolong unjust authority by acquiescence. He is not always on the side of power; sometimes He manifests as the deliverer.

JAY SINGH

Let Him come down Himself, then, as He promised. Then alone would rebellion be justified.

SHIVAJI

From whence will He come down who is here already in our hearts? Because I saw Him there, therefore I was strong to carry out my mission.

JAY SINGH

Where is the seal upon your work, the pledge of His authority?

SHIVAJI

I undermined an empire, and it has not been rebuilt. I created a nation, and it has not yet perished.

(Early Cultural Writings, CWSA I: 483)



“Shivaji was the greatest Hindu king that India had produced within the last thousand years; one who was the very incarnation of lord Siva, about whom prophecies were given out long before he was born; and his advent was eagerly expected by all the great souls and saints of Maharashtra as the deliverer of the Hindus from the hands of the Mlecchas, and as one who succeeded in the reestablishment of Dharma which had been trampled underfoot by the depredations of the devastating hordes of the Moghals”

-Swami Vivekananda

VAT-SAVITRI: FROM RITUAL TO SPIRITUAL

Kalpana Bidwaikar

In *The Synthesis of Yoga* Sri Aurobindo describes the basis on which religion was born and rests. He says,

The fear of God...is the beginning of religion. But not fear of God only, for man does not act, even most primitively, from fear alone, but from twin motives, fear and desire, fear of things unpleasant and maleficent and desire of things pleasant and beneficent,—therefore from fear and interest. (CWSA 24: 553)

He elaborates that man conceives God as someone powerful to him and therefore needs to be propitiated in order that he fulfills all his desires and protects him from all dangers. “He [man] gets God on his side by praying to him and flattering him” (CWSA 24: 554). For this praying and flattering men have devised many methods and rituals of worshipping. Indeed in their origin all the rituals symbolized some truth in them. When the Vedic and Upanishadic rishis wrote about sacrifice and its process they focused on the inner sacrifice and consecration to the Divine and not on the externalities as were practiced later. In fact Sri Aurobindo explains that humanity lost or forgot or happily did away with the spiritual significance of all that was written in scriptures and concentrated more towards the mechanical observation of ritual. Whereas the motive that was to invoke God within oneself for the realisation of the Self was truly a spiritual pursuit. Sri Aurobindo explains how stage by stage we lost the spiritual aspect of our Godward emotion and became mechanical and outward looking.



The conventional stage of human society is born when the external supports, the outward expressions of the spirit or the ideal become more important than the ideal, the body or even the clothes more important than the person. (CWSA 25: 11)

However, one cannot fully condemn the role of rituals in its origin. Rituals were a means to consecrate the mind, senses and even the body to the one whom we worship or adore as the deity. While performing rituals if one is fully engrossed in the Divine, the rituals serve their true purpose. Sri Aurobindo elaborates upon the importance of rituals and external ceremonies and the spirit in which they are to be done:

It is possible so to turn life into an act of adoration to the Supreme by the spirit in one's works; for, says the Gita, “He who gives to me with a heart of adoration a leaf, a flower, a fruit or a cup of water, I take and enjoy that offering of his devotion”; and it is not only any dedicated external gift that can be so offered with love and devotion, but all our thoughts, all our feelings and sensations, all our outward activities and their forms and objects can be such gifts to the Eternal. It is true that the special act or form of action has its importance, even a great importance, but it is the spirit in the act that is the essential factor; the spirit of which it is the symbol or materialised expression gives it its whole value and justifying significance. (CWSA 23: 162)

We understand from this elaboration that rituals are valid only as long as they help us in an integral consecration towards the Divine. If one can have the Godward emotion in each and every act, if one can think of the Divine in all thoughts and feel him in all emotions, rituals could be dispensed with. Therefore, without the inner spirit and attitude and love for the Divine, all ceremonies and rituals have no meaning. It remains outer shell without any inner content.

This has happened to nearly all the rituals performed all over world. One such ritual that may be discussed here is “Vat-Savitri” puja performed in India by the women in order to prolong the lives of their husbands. The origin of this ritual lies in one of the stories described in the Mahabharata. According to the legend, Savitri, the daughter of Aswapathy is a devout woman and loves her husband Satyavan dearly. However, Satyavan is doomed to die on the completion of one year of their marriage. Savitri does not accept this fate and fights Yama to retrieve her husband. Towards the end of the legend it is described that she gets three boons from Yama owing to her intense tapasya and courage to travel to the nether world. In one of the boons she retrieves Satyavan’s life.

Since times immemorial men and women in India have been motivated to grow spiritually. In fact spiritual growth has been the prime motive of life as taught by our rishis and Scriptures. This legend too was handed down to every woman in India inspiring her to become spiritually so powerful and enlightened that she may even conquer death. However, like many other legends this too was highly interpreted and misunderstood. The very fact that it was given to the men only is a mistake. For the story is symbolic and is equally applicable to both men and women. In the course of this paper we may see how this legend is a symbol and symbol of what!

According to the legend, Savitri performs certain austerities three days before the death of Satyavan due to which she gains spiritually and is able to face and conquer death. We may observe and the twist and perversion came in. The later humanity followed the ritual part of the story but no one cared or attended upon the spiritual strength that Savitri might have had before and what she acquired after performing the austerities. Each woman in India started performing the ritual of fasting as observed by Savitri. They also worshipped the banyan tree for it is supposed to be a sacred tree in India. It is a known fact that no one after Savitri has been able to retrieve anyone’s life from death. Then why do we till date perform such rituals? The answer lies in the explanation given above: fear and desire. Women perform this puja out of the fear of death of their husbands and the desire to prolong their lives. That surely was not the motive of the legend. Savitri could go through that pain of Satyavan’s death only because she had great spiritual strength. Satyavan too was a great spiritual seeker and was a worthy price. Their lives were important for the progress of the society and therefore the struggle is valid. Also, the austerities that she performed for the three nights were not just external rituals. They had their inner significance much more than the outer performances. Today, we may imagine how far we are from the truth of what Savitri did and experienced.

What then is the truth of the Savitri legend? What is its symbolism? Does it have any relevance to the present day humanity? The legend found its true significance and meaning in the hands of the seer-poet, Sri Aurobindo. He explored the truth of Savitri and Satyavan through his spiritual consciousness and expressed it in the epic *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*. Without going into particular details about the deeper symbolism of *Savitri*, it would suffice us to find instances from the epic about the greatness of Savitri and Satyavan because of which they could not only confront death but Savitri could conquer Death as well.

Sri Aurobindo describes Satyavan as

His look was a wide daybreak of the gods,
His head was a youthful Rishi’s touched with light,
His body was a lover’s and a king’s.
In the magnificent dawning of his force
Built like a moving statue of delight
He illumined the border of the forest page. (*Savitri*: Book V: Canto 2)

Such was the Godly figure and stature of Satyavan. His magnanimity is further described in the

words of Devarishi Narad:

Delightful is the soul of Satyavan,
 A ray out of the rapturous Infinite,
 A silence waking to a hymn of joy....
 His speech carries a light of inner truth,
 And a large-eyed communion with the Power
 In common things has made veilles his mind,
 A seer in earth-shapes of garbless deity....
 His strength is like a tower built to reach heaven,
 A godhead quarried from the stones of life. (*Savitri*: Book VI: Canto 1)

Sure this description is not less than that of a God or some heavenly being. The strength, the grandeur, the beauty and eloquence are all unearthly. It is with this person that Savitri chooses to marry. It is therefore important to understand the stature and persona of Savitri as well.

A friend and yet too great wholly to know,
 She walked in their front towards a greater light,
 Their leader and queen over their hearts and souls,
 One close to their bosoms, yet divine and far.
 Admiring and amazed they saw her stride
 Attempting with a godlike rush and leap
 Heights for their human stature too remote
 Or with a slow great many-sided toil
 Pushing towards aims they hardly could conceive;
 Yet forced to be the satellites of her sun
 They moved unable to forego her light,
 Desiring they clutched at her with outstretched hands
 Or followed stumbling in the paths she made.... (*Savitri*, Book IV Canto 2)

This is a small description of Savitri which could not be understood or matched by any of her comrades. She is a like a Goddess whom they adore and have an awe for. But they can follow her with great difficulty. Therefore we understand that neither Satyavan nor Savitri were of ordinary kind. They had great spiritual strength in them and it is because of this strength Savitri could conquer Death. About her strength we come to know when, despite knowing the fact that Satyavan would die after one year of their marriage she does not break-down or change her decision to marry him. She is firm and declares:

Once my heart chose and chooses not again.
 The word I have spoken can never be erased,
 It is written in the record book of God.
 The truth once uttered, from the earth's air effaced,
 By mind forgotten, sounds immortally
 For ever in the memory of Time.
 Let Fate do with me what she will or can;
 I am stronger than death and greater than my fate;
 My love shall outlast the world, doom falls from me
 Helpless against my immortality.
 Fate's law may change, but not my spirit's will." (*Savitri* Book VI, Canto 1)

Savitri has the strength to alter her fate when she says "I am stronger than death and greater than my fate". It is with this strength Savitri fights death and retrieves Satyavan. It may now be understood that

every man and woman is required this strength, this purity and this conviction which comes from the soul and is not a vital-emotional impulse to be able to evade or alter the fate. It is not by some puja or fasting or rituals and ceremonies that women can get a long life for their husbands. Only after inculcating spiritual strength of the level of which Savitri had can one make a difference. Savitri's path is not an easy one. It requires great sadhana, great tapasya. Can the women and men actually undertake such a great tapasya, can one find one's soul that its strength can alter one's fate. It is surely for each individual to discover. But it is sure that without tapasya like the one Savitri did and is explained by Sri Aurobindo, one cannot conquer death. One may have great realisations but may not still conquer death.

A n d

each time I came down for the
'Special Blessings' during the pujas, all the gods
and the goddesses accompanied me to have a privileged
'darshan' of me and also to participate in what I used to bring
down in the terrestrial atmosphere to transform life. There were,
naturally, these four Powers like Mahasaraswati, Mahalakshmi, Mahakali
and Durga..., but there were so many other gods that I do not remember
their names. There were also the gods of the Vedic age and then other gods
who were there to be transformed. In fact, there was a crowd before me. One
after another they came near me to announce their presence and I greeted each
one of them happily. It was truly a sight; especially when I saw Krishna among
them. It was charming. And the atmosphere was full of joy and assurance. And each
one participated in his way. It was like a manifestation. And today the presence of
Mahasaraswati is palpably felt....

If you have an imperious need of perfection, - in your heart, in your actions, in all that you do, even in your attitude, - to be more and more perfect, then be sure that you are under Mahasaraswati's influence. You must aspire towards this perfection and accomplish it in your daily life. this thirst for perfection should be one of the aims that you pursue, the perfection which strives towards a greater perfection, always progressive, complete, global, with an amplitude and a certitude, more and more vast and infinitely true. The consciousness must turn towards this state or mode which requires and which is satisfied only by the need of perfection, only to find the perfection in whatever we do in life; then it is a solid base for our yoga of transformation.

(Blessings of the Grace: 91-92)



Yesterday, I reincarnated like a phoenix, reborn from its ashes, I rejuvenated after transforming my degenerated self, the result of a cathartic moment. The dark grey sky boded ill; accompanied by lightening, thunder and a fierce wind, it signalled a very wet and stormy evening. Nevertheless, I ventured out. Wearing a beautiful dress, I dared to make a twenty-minute walk to the Ashram. The walk was peaceful as the usually vehicle-infested streets, were devoid of zooming bikes, making it hard for the pedestrians. The black weather was, responsible for the dismal number of bikers and pedestrians. As I crossed street after street in a leisurely fashion, I wondered if it should come to power before reached my destination, judging from the fast-gathering cumuli.

On entering the Ashram, I exhaled a sigh of relief on finding a small number of devotees surrounding the Samadhi, thereby, giving me ample time and space to sit and rest my head against it, without being huddled. After praying my fill, I walked towards a shaded platform, spotted a quiet corner and sat down.

From my lonely spot, I could see the service tree standing tall despite its aging years. Planted right next to The Samadhi, it stood like an aged knight, regal in its ancient glory, lovingly protecting its, source of all passion and devotion, the Samadhi, from all harms' way. It is as, if nature took upon herself the Herculean responsibility to serve and safeguard the Divine from her wild and destructive self, bent on annihilating the imperfect, the undivine. I saw the service tree in a new light, that of a worshipper, paying homage to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

As I continued to measure its towering height and expansive width, embracing the Samadhi and its surrounding area, the sky rumbled and huge drops of rain darkened the dry earth in a matter of twenty

bare seconds. As the wind picked up speed and the rain grew heavy and the scanty crowd ran for cover, I came out of the shade and walked towards the Samadhi.

I leaned down to smell the fresh flowers decorating the Samadhi, raindrops trickling down my bent back. Unlike a hot drink, going down one's throat, warming the gut, the cold rain slithered down my spine, shocking me with its arctic intimacy, whipping awake my dormant being. My body screamed in protest, but to no avail. As the rain continued its slow and deliberate plunder, I experienced a distinct force behind its apparent torture. This force decreed me to discontinue my present stake of stagnancy and abjection, considering it time for me to commence the soul-transforming climb towards Shangrilla, the city of the eternal.

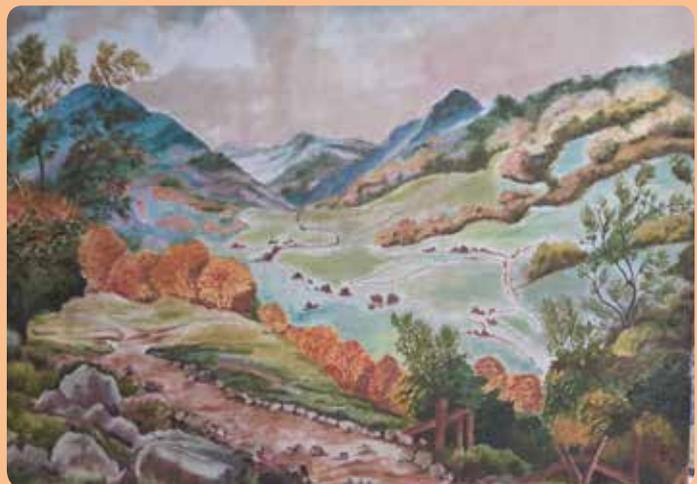
As my body transfigured into a giant bird's my human hands stretching into huge feathery wings, my avian feet shuffled for a titan leap. But I was no blundering Icarus, only partially prepared to face the sun and melt my waxen wings, the consequence of a half-hatched human mind which could not comprehend the whole truth. I was instead Garuda, the mount of Lord Vishnu, who is said to be gigantic enough to block the sun, may be not block it but engulf it, which could be interpreted as possessing the knowledge of the Divine. Therefore, I was the real deal.

I soared towards the stormy heavens my wings flopping hard against the raging wind and rain. As I mounted altitudes, representing various states of my consciousness, I identified myself with the Service tree: as it safeguarded the Samadhi from all natural calamities, I spanned my wings, nestling the world between them, serving and being its creator in one comprehensive embrace.

FORGING LIFE

Debaleena Guha

Empty eyes, soulless voice,
 Forgotten strength, crippled mind.
 The bright stars shine no longer above.
 The lonely sky stares.
 The evident truth is hidden from man
 As he trudges along, listlessly, a long journey
 To redemption, his quest of freedom.
 The earth dreary from age-old sores,
 The sole witness of evolution,
 Moans of a fruitless, endless, monotonous life.
 But the journey must be fulfilled,
 Under fate's watchful eyes
 Lest man gives up,
 And hinders aeon of the Divine's work
 Of a luminous eternity.



Anjali

A STORY OF INNOCENCE

Deepshikha Reddy

Ratan was born a nitwit. He lived all his life in old Calcutta, an area with many landmarks matching stories told by the elders. He was the only child in the family of four uncles, his parents and two aunts who had all the time for him. It took them pretty many years to know for certain that Ratan was a brand by himself, not a peg that could fit any machine. His unique thinking and behaviour puzzled many, humoured many, amazed many and tensed many more. He would be on time for the school, well dressed and combed, shoes buckled, with pencil, sharpener and kerchief in place, but he would not study. If the teacher fumbled for the chalk or the scale, he would find them for her in a gift. He would lend his things to others, even share his tiffin most happily but study, he refused. When asked he said that it was not meant for him. Why did he then come to the school? Only to please his people at home! Homework was assisted by his third uncle who thought till the end if a day would ever come when he would see Ratan improve. Blind was his love for him. Ratan got all his pocket money from him. What did he do with that? Ask his school friends. He shared it generously with other boys, a beggar and 3 dogs near him.

When little Badal fell in a dangerous pit, he could not be located owing to its complex contours - we could only hear his cry. Everyone looked on, unable to help. Ratan from nowhere brought a big rope, tied himself on the waist and jumped inside requesting others to hold the rope tight. It was a risky task in the late evening that too under a big banyan overshadowing the pit. There came stillness for a while. Wailing stopped as if a prayer rose up from all. It took some time. Lanterns were lit up. Some movement could be felt by the rope-holders. Little hope still remained. Then he came up with little Badal unconscious in his arms and himself bruised and bleeding all over as the sandy gravelled passage inside the pit was winding, narrow and rough. All he said after the great rescue was that Badal should have told me before that he wanted to jump in that winding narrow hole! People say I am stupid. He seems to have bowled me over.

Nothing dynamic ever interested Ratan. He was passive, quiet, looked a thinking mind with a lot of responsibility in his head though we could not ever guess his thought patterns. He criticised the text books saying that several things written there are not true or practical. Did he then analyse his lessons sometime, we wondered. When asked how would he manage himself in future if he did not study, he simply said that he would sit beside the beggar uncle and eat whatever is given to the dogs.

No one dared give him any advice or sense. His very disdainful look would dissuade all. His house had a small grocery shop that was their source of earning. Uncle would take care of that. Materials had to be brought, classified, price-labels put, things properly arranged and placed, notebooks of accounts and stocks were to be maintained. Uncle thought at least, if not in studies, Ratan could be of help in this homemade store which was their life-line other than that ancestral house.

Ratan was taught everything over and over — made to sit in the shop - made to go for marketing and carry things back — but all went in vain when it came to be known one afternoon that he had been giving things free to people on request without even keeping an account of who they were or what the amount was. He was given the slot in the afternoon to manage the shop when elders go for a siesta. Within a week the loss was discovered and he got removed from the seat. When asked why did he do so - he showed visible anger and said- why can't you believe that they will pay later? Is not getting food more urgent than getting money? Uncle keeps on hoarding money in the cash box everyday- is not that enough? Who do you think can dare argue with his logic? You may try hard but you will just get exhausted and leave him to his fate.

Afternoon sleep became a nightmare. Ratan was no more admitted in the shop. The shop was kept closed for a while after lunch.

People at home were in great worry about him while he was cool and quiet unperturbed with a philosophic look of objectivity all around him. Plans of future neither worried nor disturbed him. If ever asked about his future he would admit that he would need a walking stick perhaps like his grandfather. But that was not really a worry.

Once when he escorted his uncle to a doctor and money fell short for the test, he simply reminded him that it was their duty to do the tests just as it was his duty to go the school. Money need not come in between. His simple pronouncement surprised everyone around embarrassing the uncle. He stayed many long years in the school until the school decided to retire him to his fate. He did not understand the reason but kept going to his beggar friend regularly.

Ratan was a happy young man doing nothing except occasionally helping others around him. He was pleasant looking and always had a contented smile. Now his parents thought of getting him married if that could bring upon him a change with some sense of responsibility. After all the house was in his name and the shop could be depended upon for carrying on life. When asked for marriage he did look a bit shy but relented to it in his own manner with dreamy eyes. The girl was found, a sweet young one perhaps with no idea of what she was getting into in her future life. Marriage over, they were given a room done for them that surprised him. I met him on the way one day and he complained as to why that girl had to live with him daily. He was open and frank with me as always. I told him what marriage meant to which he wondered if she did not miss her house and parents. That seemed rather unjust to him.

However, life moves on with all of us. Within a couple of years Ratan lost his elders, parents, uncles and everyone. Bindu and Ratan were the only ones in that house. The shop had to be closed. Income became an issue. Ratan never worked. Bindu let out a couple of rooms on rent and started doing some embroidery works for sale. She was practical and a mature girl given to her fate with Ratan. But she loved him for his utter honesty and pure selfless goodness. She knew for sure that he would never be able to earn any money. In sometime as God would have it, they got a sweet little child — a son.

A normal kid, fair and bonny, Bindu looked very happy. I was out of Calcutta on errands. When I met Ratan one day, while conversing he said that the kid was very intelligent and fearless. He does things that you cannot imagine. He does not mind swallowing sand or touching fire or standing on the edge of the balcony. What if he fell down! But no, Bindu is always with him. Poor Bindu does so much work and also earns some money. I think I should earn some money too. What do you think Kaka?

I said what do you think you could do? May be I could sell sure goods in a shop. I said the shop would shut down with you on the counter. However, some kind of an errand boy was needed in a shop. I fixed him there. Later I learnt that for the whole days work he was being paid only Rs.50. It was a full scale exploitation. He was not paid for Sundays even, neither given any tea. He would spend Rs12 for 2 teas and another Rs14/- for the bus fare. For the rest of the 24 Rupees he sat in the shop for the whole day. I wondered how people could be so heartless with a simpleton like this. He didn't complain anything. Only said that he missed seeing his son the whole time. With that bare amount he would buy a salty snack for me each time I met him after a longish break. His memory was more than perfect. He would perfectly remember the date and time of events that happened in the family or elsewhere.

He remarked he had to go somewhere with his family for which his employer refused to give him leave. His wife told him to tell a lie and present an excuse. He did so but did not like it. Then he told his

employer that he had to lie out of compulsion which was not right, but not to be granted leave was also wrong. The employer started paying him for Sundays and let him have 2 free teas and agreed to grant a few leaves.

The ancestral home was pretty old and needed repairs. Cracks made large design on the walls, painting may have been a century long story. Now even the cement couldn't cover the red bricks. I helped him out a couple of times financially through their health issues as much as I could. House matter was too big a thing. We talked things out and decided to finally sell off this property and go for a smaller two bedroom flat as is the trend today. As well as this sale would give them a surplus to take care of their future. Bindu perceived light on the horizon. The promoters had been talked to, the house shown and examined over and over, price bargained up and down, papers verified... it was a different kind of commotion altogether. The little boy looked dazed. A sweet little kid he was always by his mother, trying to understand the strange nuances of his loving father that always puzzled him. More mature than his age, he was quiet and serious as if leaving his childhood behind in his past birth.

One day he asked Bindu – I like to sleep with you on this bed. Why do we have to leave, ma? Bindu said – Babai we will go to a better room with sunlight peeping in there. He said – oh that will help me in my homework and drawing.

I had to go in and out of Calcutta because of my work. I was watching a cousin of Bindu frequenting their house of late who did not seem to be of clean motive to me. I had warned both Bindu and Ratan to be aware of him, his gifts and good food, his chocolates for Babai, his fruits for Bindu, his concern for Ratan's job and failing health. In relation he was a Mama to Babai but my sixth sense somehow made me uncomfortable about this character.

For a particular assignment from the office I had to be away for a couple of months to Bangalore. Occasionally, I would keep in touch with the buyers and the interested parties, though Ratan could not be of any help in this. My work engrossed me and I returned, fatigued and exhausted around three months later. Barely did I catch up the strings back home, one morning who came to my door was Bindu and Ratan, looking desperate and shattered, I mean Bindu. She could not speak a word, crying away and wiping tears. After settling them I asked the reason. Ratan boldly said – Kaka, I finally did it. I taught him a befitting lesson. Remember that cousin of Bindu? You know how much he had been harassing me about the house – no end of asking questions, blaming me as a son, as a husband, as a nincompoop, as a worthless guy – how much can one take? I said – we did not need his gifts and tasty food items and sari for Bindu – why did he at all come to our house? So one day I handed over all the papers of the house to him and he took me to, he said, what we call an advocate and took my signature. Kaka, now let him face the music. Let him now maintain and repair the house. What do we care? If he is so concerned let him take care of the property. I handed over everything to him kaka. How dare he comes to disturb our peace?

Earth shook off under my feet. I just managed to ask if he gave any money to you. Why should he give me kaka? He has to spend his money now to repair the house. Let him understand now? Didn't I teach him a good lesson kaka?

I was speechless without any reaction. Eventually because of my work schedule in and out of Calcutta I lost contact with them. I do not yet know if Ratan ever realized the consequences of his action. But I am sure God must have been kind to such an innocent and pure soul.

FOUR PILLARS OF MANAGEMENT

(A talk given at the seminar on 'In Pursuit of Managerial Perfection')

Ananda Reddy

"In works aspiration towards perfection is spirituality" said the Mother. Here, we get a new perspective of "Spirituality" as we come to understand that it is wide, all inclusive and applicable to our day to works. This is the basic difference between spirituality and religion, I suppose. If spirituality is all — embracing, making a life's activities a means to attain a higher consciousness — of course with the pre-requisite of "aspiration, religion divides life's activities into mundane and religious, into activities that lead you godward and those that condemn you to hell. All religions have — great truths and realisations but they have gathered over the centuries the moss of rites and rituals and superstition. This "moss" of bigotry does not allow the common religious seeker to experience the essences of religion.

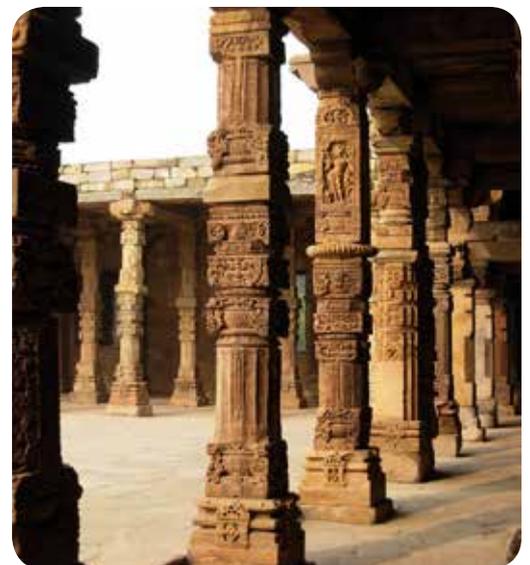
If in works the aspiration towards perfection can lead us to the deeper spiritual truths, then all pursuit of religious "isms" becomes, redundant. We could continue to be materialists, not withdrawn enjoyment etc and still be spiritual. In this manner, a true materialist aspiring to perfection in all that he does can be a true spiritualist. There need not be any division between them.

Spirituality; similarly in life aspiration towards harmony is spirituality; in thoughts aspiration towards power is spirituality and on the psychic level, aspiration towards wisdom is spirituality. Therefore I can be spiritual on all the four levels – physical, vital, mental and psychic by aspiring towards what are called perfection, harmony, power and wisdom. These, I guess, could be our new paradigms of Management.

Now connect these four aspects to the terminology of Management. When we speak of "perfection" in work, we mean bringing out the best in performance. The organization of material things. Similarly, when we talk of "harmony" it relates to the inter-personal relationships, the Human Resource development and its application. On the level of thought "power" comes into play. The higher level management has to deal with the "power" of thought, of planning, of setting up realistic targets, and on the financial aspect. Looking at something from a deeper angle is what is called "wisdom". Now we understand that Perfection, Harmony, Power and Wisdom are the psychological aspects and qualities of one's being.

If we move on to analyse the definition given by the Mother we have to now focus on the term "perfection". What is the definition of perfection? In fact, there can be no final definition of "perfection" applicable to all things or events or objects. If we are, say in a depressed mood, we cannot find anything perfect in the otherwise perfect sunrise or sunset or a flower. However, what we can say at best is that there is something "common" to the definition of perfection and that is "it cannot be bettered". In this sense, We could say all things in Nature are "perfect" — the golden sunrise, the meditating animals and the birds. The sense of perfection is innate in all of us. Therefore, we all project an innate image. We all carry the archetypes of perfection in ourselves and therefore when we see the objects of nature we find them perfect because it resembles the pre-existing archetype.

But, can we say the same thing about man? Cannot be replaced but man can be replaced and bettered. All other creatures of the Nature are complete but man alone is incomplete. So, man has to be replaced by a better and more "complete" person. But how to know that "perfect" man? Where or how is he to be found? Actually, we all carry within each one of us an innate image of a perfect man, an archetypal man. All our efforts through ethics, morality, religion, science and technology are only attempts to approximate that innate image of the perfect man.



The sense of perfection that we all long for is within us and we call it God or conscience or the thirst for perfection. This thirst is there because there is "someone perfect" within each one of us. Man can improve himself and move towards his inner image of perfection. In fact, it is the process of Yoga which gives us the possibility of moving towards perfection which is already present within each one of us. The more perfect we become we become more godlike. We may not become God himself but we can go closer to nature of the Godhead. That is what the Gita means when, it speaks of Sayujyamukti, salokyamukti etc.

Now coming to practical application of this interpretation of "Perfection" in the field of Management, we understand that on the level of work we all have to deal with material objects. And in today's commercial world we all have a tendency of use and throw. A car that is so precious to us today becomes "junk" after five years. It is all an attitude of profit-making. This attitude is harmful for the spiritual consciousness. Indian philosophy tells us that God is there in Matter too and therefore nothing should be neglected. We believe that Matter and Spirit are one and therefore all needs to be looked after equally.

In India we perform the "ayudhapooja". On this day all the instruments and the tools are cleaned and worshipped. In reality this pooja, this respect ought to be given to the instruments every day and not just on one day. No matter how cheap or expensive a thing is, we should always respect it because it is pregnant with spirit. All we need to do is change our attitude towards material objects. We need to respect all material things. Like we do pranam at the walls and steps and pillars of the temple, can we not do the same with all things and objects around us on a daily basis?

Next pillar of Management that we have been discussing is "power". Especially with the leaders in Management, "power" gets on to their heads and they think all others to be subordinate to them. This is where again leadership is failing. They all try to rule by power and forget the role of love in leadership. Till now God was conceived as power — as Shiva, Kali, Durga etc. But, if we portray the Divine as Love we will never ill-treat others, and rule with heady power.

The third paradigm is that of "harmony". It is concerned with the interpersonal relationship. But it is not only about human relationship and our relationship with environment and animals that different environmentalists are talking about these days. The real reason for which one should respect and preserve Nature is because we believe in the philosophy of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam. By following this philosophy we are trying to become conscious: conscious of the spirit Nature and in Man. To give you an example: In the Ashram there was an instance where a large branch of a tree was looming low. It was obstructing the path of the people. It was suggested to the Mother that the branch be cut down so that the passage could be made clear. But the Mother instructed people to find another way or bow down and go. The tree should not be harmed and should be respected. This is the attitude we were taught — that a tree is as important as man. Such is the philosophy we were taught about Nature and our ego which reminds us of our relation with everything around us.

The last aspect we think about is money or the financial aspect in Management. Do we believe "money is not meant to make money"? A finance student would argue against it. He would say, we are taught "money is meant to make money." But from a spiritual angle we say that money is meant to make wealth. Money is a personal property. One multiplies money for oneself. But wealth is a wider term and usage. Wealth is concerned with the community, society and for a larger collectively for which we generate prosperity. This takes away the selfish attitude of generating money for oneself. One then strives to work for the community's welfare. It is in that way that we become better citizens working for the country. It is important to understand that money does not belong to anybody. It is a collective force. It grows only in circulation. And therefore it has to grow in the collectivity.

These were the four pillars of Management — the Indian ways of looking at Management. They make us more humane as well as open doors for being more spiritual. These principles if explored further can form a firm foundation of Indian principles of Management.

THE ALPHA, BETA AND GAMMA OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Ashok Kumar Bhatia

Interpersonal relationships happen to be a key factor in achieving success in a managerial career. Even otherwise, positive relationships boost our Happiness Quotient in life. Here are few insights on relationships based on some well-known scientific principles.

FB and the Roentgen Effect

Never take a person at face value. Be ruthless in acting like a X-ray machine, ascertaining the inner motives of the party of the other part. Create your own Facebook – a filtered version of the bosses, peers and subordinates you come across. Categorize them into, say, Close-Friends, Friends, Acquaintances, Foes and those Vehemently Opposed to whatever you say or do. Deal with them at their respective wavelengths. You would vibe well. Be sceptical of sudden unwarranted praise. A very tough project could be coming your way. The lynching mob could be sharpening its arsenal by the time you gleefully accept to drive a car all the way to the Moon.

Relativity and Relationships

The longevity of a relationship is directly proportional to the match between the Frames of Reference of two individuals. The closer the two persons or organizations in their shared values and principles, the longer the relationship would last. The more complimentary their needs happen to be, the better the longevity of the relationship.

All teams work on this principle. With each member bringing a unique strength to the table, the team emerges stronger.

The speed of Time in Relationships

The more you like a person's company, the higher the speed of time spent together.

The more you hate a person, the lesser the speed of time spent together.

Laws of Motion of Relationships

Newton was dead right when he said that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Hate a colleague. She would catch your negative vibes and return the same. Be fond of a colleague and she could reciprocate the sentiment. Both of you could then produce some great results together.

The Optics of a Relationship

The way a relationship looks on the surface is often an optical illusion. Dive below the surface and you could be in for a surprise. Principles of reflection, refraction and diffusion work in the realm of relationships as well. Take the case of a spouse. A perfect one cannot make us complete. He/she can only act as a mirror and help us in discovering ourselves and in becoming the right person.

The Orbit Effect

Those who happen to be Yes-men electrons with a negative charge can be readily seen orbiting around a boss who has a few protons of positivity up his sleeve and behaves like a pompous nucleus. Once the nucleus gets hit by powerful rays of adversity, the Yes-men are forced to scurry for cover and look for another nucleus.

The Half-life of Relationships

Much like radioactive substances, almost all relationships suffer from exponential decay. Constant emission of alpha particles of Anger, beta particles of Benevolence and gamma rays of Greed lowers the warmth in a relationship.

At a personal level, infusing the relationship with innovative ideas often helps to arrest the trend. In case of organizations, dealing with gifted high-performers can be a ticklish challenge. Prompt steps need to be taken to stem the rot. Job-rotation, job-enrichment, flexible working hours, higher level of empathy and engagement with the family members can be some of the techniques deployed by HR professionals to address this issue.

The Valency Factor

Two individuals whose Valency happens to be the same would intrinsically vibe well with each other. The compound they make together is bound to become a formidable team. One risk here is that they could end up becoming a Mutual Appreciation Team, leading to lofty expectations and a self-belief which could be misleading in critical situations. Their bosses need to worry about this.

Another risk is of a more sinister nature. If one party is from amongst the tribe of the delicately nurtured and another from the so-called sterner sex, an amorous alliance could emerge. This could have even more serious implications if there is a hierarchical gap between the two individuals. The boss has to then act like an anti-catalyst to defuse the reaction so the reputation as well as the work of the organization does not suffer.

The algorithm of Relationships

Relationships are a complex non-linear function of Expectations, Realizations and Time. Expectations evolve over a period of time. If not matched with realizations in a dynamic manner, deterioration in the quality of the relationship is bound to follow.

Having clawed your way up in an organization, do not expect to be treated the way you were treated the very first day when you walked in. Do not rest on your laurels. Let successes not make you complacent.

The Warmth of a Relationship

The Coefficient of Warmth of any relationship is directly proportional to the love and trust put in to nurture the same; it is inversely proportional to the benefit expected in return. Organizations which value their Brand Equity ensure they treat separations with kid gloves. An employee speaking well of her previous employer is a great asset to have. Here is a relationship which has a lingering warmth and sweetness.

Laws of Thermodynamics

Zero-th Law

If two persons/entities are in the equilibrium of a good relationship with a third person/entity, it follows that they must be in a good relationship with each other as well.

First Law

The Law of Conservation of Energy applies. There is a limit to which you may work on improving a relationship. If the party of the other part fails to reciprocate, it is perhaps time to move on.

Second Law

Entropy or disorder is bound to increase in a relationship. The only way out is to keep cleansing your system of negative thoughts at regular intervals. Talking to the party of the other part about your areas of discomfort, and encouraging the other one to share her thoughts likewise alone helps.



The Botany of Relationships

Relationships happen to be like tender saplings. Given the right soil conditions of our own character, regular exposure to the sunlit warmth of care, routine watering by the elixir of affection, and occasional nourishment by pleasant surprises, the plant grows. Its roots become stronger. Its branches and leaves provide the perfect shelter.

A relationship which is either not nurtured thus, or is planted on the soil of fear and necessity alone, tends to wither away over a period of time.

All these laws govern professional as well as personal relationships. Smart managers utilize these to grow in the organization they work for. They also deploy the same to keep the boss at home happy and grinning.

Post script

How about the relationship that we have with our own inner self? Do we under-rate ourselves? Or do we end up dominating those around us? When was the last time we patted ourselves on the back? An introspection of this nature improves our inner resilience and reduces stress. Our dependence on others to determine our state of happiness comes down. Our chances of having positive interpersonal relations improve.

***Savitri: A Study in Style and Symbolism* — Madhumita Dutta**

Publisher: Avenel Press, Burdwan, 232, pp, Rs 200.

“*Savitri*, the poem, the word of Sri Aurobindo is the cosmic Answer to the cosmic Question,” said Nolini Kanta Gupta. This epic poem of Sri Aurobindo has invited the attention of many scholars. *Savitri* is that Word of the seer-poet which inspires scholars and devotees alike. Sri Aurobindo calls it “A Legend and a Symbol”, which gives us a stronger ground to delve into its symbolism. It is a modern epic, written for present-day humanity, and as “future poetry” it presents the possibilities of writing mantric poetry.

Savitri: A Study in Style and Symbolism by Dr. Madhumita Dutta is a scholarly exploration of the symbolism and style of this magnum opus of Sri Aurobindo. The themes in the book are well researched. All the proofs and arguments amply support the thesis put forth by the author. It is commendable that the author has taken pains to unveil as many levels and shades of symbolic meaning as may be found in the epic and would be relevant to our understanding.

This book provides a comprehensive overview of the epic and then delves deeper into its symbolic and stylistic nuances. It is divided into seven systematic chapters which though suitably connected can be read independently as well. For a new reader the elaborate introduction to *Savitri* given in this book is of considerable help. At once we get the source, the genesis, and a history of the development of the poem.

The author humbly submits in the very opening sentence that the wide range of its subject matter and the complexity of its themes, added to the poet’s own yogic experience and spiritual vision, perhaps place the poem beyond the grasp of any of the usual rules of poetic appreciation. She writes: “Of all the works of Sri Aurobindo, his epic *Savitri* is perhaps the most difficult to comprehend and virtually impossible to assess on general principles of criticism,” but, she adds, “It is rewarding to read *Savitri* and get into the spirit of its *mantric* poetry.” (p. 11)

Although the book carries the subtitle “A Study in Style and Symbolism”, a major part of the work is devoted to symbolism. The two chapters “Symbol of the Two Voyages” and “Love and Death: Symbolism of Transformation” cover the whole range of symbolism on various levels in *Savitri*. In the first of these chapters, Dr. Dutta specifies the nature of the two voyages and then sets out to explore their symbolic significance: “In fact, these are two stages of a single yogic journey; one is the preparation, and the other, the completion of the Yoga, through which all the depths and heights of consciousness are explored” (48). The author has established, with quotations and instances from the text, Aswapati’s symbolism as representative of the aspiration of the whole of humanity and also of the individual. “Aswapati represents mankind, carrying in his heart the desire of the entire human race for ultimate liberty” (52). He is a prototype of the intermediary race envisioned by Sri Aurobindo. While explaining the symbolism of Aswapati, the author has discussed all the stages of his yoga and simultaneously established it as Sri Aurobindo’s own experience and experiments in yoga and poetry. The book establishes philosophically how Aswapati’s is a quest for immortality and his yoga is the fulfillment of all the ancient yogas.

Dr. Dutta keeps a wonderful link all through the different chapters of how *Savitri*’s and Aswapati’s yogas are complementary to each other. His yoga is “a precursor and also a pre-requisite for the appearance of the supramental race, of which *Savitri* is the symbol” (53). While discussing *Savitri*’s yoga and its symbolism, she writes: “*Savitri*’s Yoga is the culmination of the Yoga begun by Aswapati”. *Savitri* stands for

the “Divine illuminator, creator and sustainer of the universe”; hers is “a ‘divine birth’, an answer to Earth’s prayer” (88–9).

The entire journey of Savitri from her foreknowledge of the impending doom to her *tapasya* to conquer and transform death is well charted out by the author and leads us to the next chapter “Love and Death”. When Nolini Kanta Gupta commented that *Savitri* is the cosmic Answer to the cosmic Question, it is not only in the aspiration of Aswapati and the descent of Savitri that it is cosmic. It presents the age-old search of mankind for immortality. In *Savitri* Sri Aurobindo establishes that Divine Love is the only answer to this question of the search for immortality. In this chapter, the symbolism of Satyavan has been explored: “Satyavan symbolizes man in his present state of evolution—subject to the laws of mortality, in the grip of ignorance and death” (111). We find a telling analysis of the relation between Savitri and Satyavan:

Her mission is to retrieve the soul of Satyavan, for it is only with him that the task of Transformation can be accomplished, together with him can she bear the ‘ancient Mother’s load’. Savitri and Satyavan symbolize the divine principles of the universe in their feminine and masculine aspects, they are the ‘twin-souls’ who are essentially one.” (117)

The author has established the complementarity of the yogas of Aswapati and Savitri and the symbolic significance of the *purusha* and *prakriti* principles joining together as Satyavan and Savitri to accomplish the work of transformation. In almost a hundred pages the reader gets the gist, the symbolism, the story of Savitri and Satyavan, supported with lines from the epic.

In the chapter dedicated to stylistic analysis, Dr. Dutta has taken pains to analyze all the stylistic devices employed by Sri Aurobindo in the epic. “Sri Aurobindo himself alludes to four different kinds of style (in *The Future Poetry*)—the adequate style, the rhetorical, the illuminative and the revelatory or intuitive style. Almost all these varieties of styles are employed in *Savitri*.” (152). It is quite interesting to see the impact of repetition and alliteration, and the use of metaphors and similes, rhetoric and lyrics, mystic and symbolic devices, and, at places, a simple, unadorned style of writing. Many thanks to the author for including this chapter and giving us a glimpse of Sri Aurobindo’s adept use of stylistic devices. A student of literature, linguistics and stylistics will appreciate how the book brings out the symbolic and structural beauty of the epic.

The last two chapters deal with the criticism aimed at *Savitri* and its relevance today. Dr. Dutta has tried to prove how such criticism is based on an incomplete understanding of the poem. She explains that “Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri* appears at a critical phase in man’s evolutionary journey of which it is a profound exposition” (210). And she concludes: “In *Savitri*, the poet is the seer, who lived out the philosophy of the Scriptures, confirmed their truths and made them accessible and applicable to modern times. It is in these perspectives that we may assert both the *need* and *possibility* of an epic like *Savitri* today.” (213)

Surely, well researched books like this facilitate us to move a little closer to the spirit of *Savitri*. Perhaps someday we would be able to realize what the Mother said “*Savitri*” is “The Supreme revelation of Sri Aurobindo’s vision”.

Institute of Human Study

Some shall be made the glory's receptacles
And vehicles of the Eternal's luminous power.
These are the high forerunners, the heads of Time,
The great deliverers of earth-bound mind,
The high transfigurers of human clay,
The first-born of a new supernal race.

Sri Aurobindo

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