2

Some of your criticisms bring forward questions of the technique of mystical poetry about which I wanted to write in an introduction to Savitri when it is published, and I may as well say something about that here.

Rapid transitions from one image to another are a constant feature in Savitri as in most mystical poetry. We are not here building a long sustained picture of the Dwam with a single continuous image or variations of the same image. I am describing a rapid series of transitions, piling one suggestion upon another. There is first a black quietude, then the persistent touch, then the first "beauty band" going from the "sacred well" to the "life gate" and the "luminous corner." Then comes the falling of the darkness, the same used ("a falling cloak") suggesting the rapidity of the change. Then as a result of the change of what was once a rift into a wide luminous gap—if you want to be logical and consistent you can look at the rift as a slit in the "cloak" which becomes a big tear. Then all changes into a "brief perpetual sign," the iridescence, then the blaze and the magnificence. In such a series of rapid transitions you cannot base me on a local chain of figures or a classical monotone. The mystical Muse is more of an inspired Bacchante of the Dionysian wine than an ordainedly housewife.

Your "barely," instead of the finer and more suggestive "hardly" in

Then through the pallid rift that seemed at first

Hardly enough for a trickle from the suns

Outpowered the revelation and the flame

falls flat upon my ear, one cannot substitute one word for another in this kind of poetry merely because it means intellectually the same thing; "hardly" is the word that does not invite to confusion. The line and that which follows it

Whose moved creative slumber kindles the suns.

"Stars" does not create the same impression and brings in a different tone in the mind and that which follows it—

And carries our lives in its somnambulist whirl—

bring in a general subordinate idea stressing the paradoxical nature of the creation and the contrasts which it contains, the drowsed somnambulist as the mother of the light of the suns and the activities of life. It is not intended as a present feature in the darkness of the Night.

Again, do you seriously want me to give an accurate scientific description of the earth half in darkness and half in light as so to spell my mystical iconography? or else to revert to the conception of the earth as a flat and immobile surface? I am not writing a scientific treatise. I am selecting certain ideas and impressions to form a symbol of a partial and temporary darkness of the soul and Nature which seems to a temporary feeling of that which is caught in the Night as if it were universal and eternal. One who is lost in that Night does not think of the other half of the earth as full of light; to him all is Night and the earth a forsaken wanderer in an enduring darkness. If I sacrifice this impressionism and abandon the image of the earth wheeling through dark space I might as well abandon the symbol altogether; for this is a necessary part of it. As a matter of fact in the passage itself earth in its wheeling does come into the dawn and pass from darkness into the light. You must take the idea as a whole and in all its transitions and not press one detail with too much insistence. If I present this passage in the usual eternally one partial view of life or another temporarily as if it were the whole in order to give full value to the experience of those who are bound by that view, as for instance the mystical conception and experience of life, but if any one changes me with philosophical incongruity, it is not only that he does not understand the technique of the Overmind interpretation of life.

I come next to the passage about the Inconscient waking Ignorance. In the first place, the word "formless" is indeed defective, not so much because of any repetition but because it is not the right word or idea and I was not myself satisfied with it. I have changed the passage as follows:

Then something in the inarticulate darkness stirred;

A nameless movement, an unthought Idea

Insistent, dissatisfied, without an aim,

Something that wished but knew not how to be,

Tossed the Inconscient to wake Ignorance.*

But the meaning of the Inconscient remains and evidently you think that it is bad poetic taste to tease something so bodiless and unreal as the Inconscient. But here several fundamental issues arise. First of all, are words like Inconscient and Ignorance necessarily an abstract technical jargon? If so, do not words like "conscientious," "knowledge" etc. undergo the same ban? Is it that they are abstract philosophical terms? if we have no real or concrete meaning, cannot represent things that one feels and senses or must often fight as one fights a visible foe? The Inconscient and the Ignorance may be mere empty abstractions and can be dismissed as irrelevant jargon if one has not once come into collision with them or plunged into their dark and bottomless reality. But to me they are realities, concrete powers whose resistance is present everywhere and at all times in its tremendous and boundless mass. In fact, in writing this line I had no intention of teaching philosophy or forcing in an irrelevant metaphorical idea, although the idea may be there in implication. I was presenting a happening that was to me something sensible and, as one might say, psychologically and spiritually concrete. The Inconscient comes in persistently in the cantos of the First Book of Savitri: e.g.

Opposites of the glory of grace

The black Inconscient surging its dragon tail

Lashing a slumberous Infastity by its force

Into the deep obscurities of form.*

There too a metaphorical idea might be read into or behind the thing seen. But does that make it technical jargon or the whole thing an illegitimate mixture? It is not so to my poetic sense. But you might say, "It is so to the non-mystical reader and it is that reader whom you have to satisfy, as it is for the general reader that you are writing and not for yourself alone."

But if I had to write for the general reader I could not have written Savitri at all. It is in fact for myself that I have written it and for those who can lend themselves to the subject-matter, images, technique of mystical poetry.

This is the real stumbling block of mystical poetry and not the mystical poetry of this kind. The mystical feels real and present, even ever present to his experience, intimate to his being, truths which to the ordinary reader are intellectual abstractions or psychological speculations. He is writing of experiences that are foreign to the ordinary mentality. Either they are...
Sri Aurobindo on "Savitri"—Continued from page 1

MOTHER INDIA, September 15, 1951

Two

Savitri is an attempt to conceive of the

unintelligible and to meet it in meeting them it flounders about as if in an obscur

desire or it takes them as poetic fancies expressed in intellectually

described images. That was how a critic in a journal condemned such poems as

Nirvana and Transformation. He said that they were more intellectual concep

tions and images and there was nothing of religious feeling or of a

spiritual experience. Yet Nirvana* was as close a transfiguration of a major

experience as could be given in language coined by the human mind of a

realization in which the world was entirely different from that into which it

locked and connection could at all exist. One has to use words and images in

order to convey to the mind some perception, some figure of that which is

beyond thought. The critic's non-understanding was made worse by such a line:

Only the invisible Permanent

Is here.

Evidently this too was technical jargon, abstract philosophy. There was no

room for the poet, no overpowering vividness the illusory or at least something which could not be described by another term and no other description except the 'Permanent' could be made of That which

alone existed. To the mystic there is no such thing as an abstraction. Even

what is vivified, a living mind which is not to me an image but a fact. If I wrote, "His anger clinched against me in a stream", it would be to the general reader a mere image, not something

that was felt by a living soul. I would only be describing a mental

term, what actually happened once, a stream of anger, a sensible and visible

crystallisation of it rising up from downstairs and rushing upon me as I sat in the verandas of the Guest-House, the truth of it being confirmed afterwards by the poet of the personal sense and needs the movement with

the visions of the stream, clear contact or identity and leave it to the general reader to understand or not understand or misunderstand according to his capacity. A new kind of poetry demands a new mentality in the recipient as well as in the

writer.

Another question is the place of philosophy in poetry or whether it has

any place at all. Some romanticists seem to believe that the poet has no right to talk about philosophy or religion, or at least to bring it in as a

forever implicit, or as a pre-conceived idea with which he is working. His right to talk about philosophy is too much taken for granted by many that I think too much and that when I try to write in verse, thought comes in and keeps out poetry. I hold, to the contrary, that philosophy has its place and can even take a leading place along with psychological experience as it does in the Gitâ. All depends on how it is done, whether it is a dry or a living philosophy, an arid intellectual statement or the expression not only of the living truth of but of something of its beauty, its light or its power.

The theory of the soul encourages the poet from thinking or at least from

thinking for the sake of the thought proceeds from an extreme romantic

temper, it reaches its acme on one side in the question of the surrealists,

"Why do you want poetry to mean anything?" and on the other in Hous

en's "Nothing but the thing itself". As the sentence stands, it seems paradoxically as a sort of sublime nonsense which does not appeal at all to the mental intelligence but knocks at the solar plexus and awakens a vital and physical rather than intellectual sensation and response: it is a vividness of tone, a feeling which disregards the mind's positive view of things and its logical sequences; the centre or centres it knocks at are not the brain-mind, not even the poetic intelligence but the subtle physical, the nervous, the vital or the psychic centre. The poem he speaks

from Blake is certainly not nonsense, but it has no positive and exact meaning for the intellect or the surface mind; it expresses certain things that are true and real, not nonsense but a deeper sense which we feel powerfully with a great stirring of some inner emotion, but any attempt to

interpret it as a utterment of statements which stereotypes their sense and spoils their appeal. This is not the method of Savitri. Its expression aims at a certain

force, directness and spiritual clarity and reality. When it is not understood, it is because the truths it expresses are unfamiliar to the ordinary mind or belong to an undreamen domain or domains or enter into a field of occult experience: it is not because there is any attempt at a
dark or vague profundity or an escape from thought. The thinking is not

directly intellectual but intuitive or more than intuitive, always expressing a vision, a spiritual contact or a knowledge which has come by entering into the

thing itself, by identity.

It may be noted that the greater romantic poets did not shun thought: they thought abundantly, almost endlessly. They have their characteristic

view of life, something that one might call their philosophy, their world-

view which they expounded with an unconscious pride. Here, again, it could

write, "To philosophise I dare not yet"; he did not write, "I am too much

of a poet to philosophise." To philosophise he regarded evidently as

mounting on the admiral's flag-ship and flying an almost royal banner.

The philosophy of Savitri is different but it is persistently there; it is not

merely a conscious effort or a mere rule of what is or is not poetic. It does not hesitate to employ terms which might be considered as technical when these can be turned to express something direct, vivid and powerful. That need not be an introduction of technical jargon, that always reiterates lines even when they are merely prosaic but which properly used can strengthen poetry and extend its range. That limitation I do not admit as

legitimate.

I have been insisting on these points in view of certain criticisms that have

been made by reviewers and others, some of them very capable, suggesting or flatly stating that there was too much thought in my poetry or that I am even in my poetry a philosopher rather than a poet. I am just as much a poet, I am as much a poet as the great troubadours were, in the "dare to philosophise": I agree with the modernists in their revolt against the romanticist's insistence on emotionalism and his objection to thinking and philosophical reflection in poetry. But the modernist went too far in his revolt. In trying to avoid what I may call poeticism he ceased to be

poetic: wishing to escape from rhetorical writing, rhetorical pretension to
greatness and beauty of style, he threw out true poetic greatness and beauty, turned from a deliberately poetic style to a colloquial tone and even idly and justly writing away exactness of expression, expecting to find the style in the prose or half-prose or rhythmical or no rhythm at all. Also he has weighed too much on thought and has lost the habit of intuitive sight; by turning emotion out of its intimate movement and giving a philosophical exhortation to make the dryness of much thought too much exaggeration of the lower vital and sensational reactions untransformed or else transformed only by exaggeration. Nevertheless he has perhaps restored to the poet that freedom to think as well as to adopt a certain straightforwardness and directness of style.

Now I come to the law prohibiting repetition. This rule aims at a

certain kind of intellectual elegance which comes into poetry when the

intellect is a reference and the call for something else predominates. It

regards poetry as a cultural entertainment and amusement of the

highly civilised mind, a sustained novelty of ideas, incidents, word

and phrase. An unsailing variety or the outward appearance of it is the

expression of this art. But all poetry is not of this kind; its rule does not

apply to poets like Homer or Vahniki or other early writers. The Vedas

might almost be described as a mass of repetitions; so might the works of

Vashishta poets and the poetic literature of the people. It is the

stating that whenever he was working on Homer; he mentioned specially that there is nothing objectionable in the close repetition of the same word in the Homeric way of writing. In many things Homer seems to make a point of repeating himself. He has stock descriptions, epithets

which are constantly repeated again and again when the same incident returns in his narrative: e. g. the line,

Doussetum de poetam arade le puse' eff auto-

Down with a loud he fell and his armor clanged upon him.

He does not hesitate also to repeat the bulk of a line with a variation at the

end, e.g.,

Be de kat' ou lumpolpo karâm chûmena kera-

Down from the peaks of Olympia he came, with a veiling his

heartstrings, and again,

Be de kat' ou lumpolpo karâm âzâana-

Down from the peaks of Olympia she came impetuously

daring.

He begins another line elsewhere with the same word and a similar action

and with the same nature of a human movement physical and psychological in a scene of Nature, here a man's silent sorrow listening to the roar of the

ocean:

Bê d' a' cônô para thina pulapalo bhôchô thalada-

Silent he walked by the shore of the uncurled ocean.

In mystic poetry also repetition is not objectionable; it is resorted to by many poets, sometimes with insistence. I may cite as an example the

constant repetition of the word Ritas, truth, sometimes eight or nine times in a short poem of nine or ten stanzas and often in the same line. This does

Continued on page 2
A MESSAGE
To the Society for the Spiritual and Cultural Renaissance of Bharat

LET THE SPLENDOURS OF BHARAT'S PAST BE REBORN IN THE REALIZATIONS OF HER IMMINENT FUTURE WITH THE HELP AND BLESSINGS OF HER LIVING SOUL

AUGUST 23, 1951

THE MOTHER

Aeroplane

Towards the visionary calm of night,
Like some pure liberator, soul of flight
To the immense unknown, the winged wonder
Kindled its aspiration, chose an under
The lofty darknesses of heavenly space,
Swung out into the quiet blossoming blaze
Of far immemorable beauty. O
The vast relief, the thrilled escape from slow
Vain horizontal hours' monotony
Of gilded gloom amid the feverish cry
Of transient rapture, to the inviolate
Divine abysses of celestial fate!

How must all-potent peace regard poor earth?
But look! what miracle has flamed to birth
Beneath our flight—a mute and limitless dark
Spangled with visionary stars a spark—
A silent sky of golden gleam below
Responding to the fathomless silver glow
Of sky above—a human infinite
Of trance with planetary joy all—
Burning disclosure of earth's hidden soul
Tense with the secret of a godlike goal!

K. D. SEETHA

Sri Aurobindo on “Savitri” —Continued from page 2.

not weaken the poem, it gives it a singular power and beauty. The repetition of the same key ideas, key images and symbols, key words or phrases, key epithets, sometimes key lines or half lines is a constant feature. They give an atmosphere, a significant structure, a sort of psychological frame, an architecture. The object here is not to amuse or entertain but the self-expression of an inner truth, a seeing of things and ideas not familiar to the common mind, a bringing out of inner experience. It is the true more than the new that the poet is after. He uses serri, repetition, as one of the most powerful means of carrying home what he has thought or seen and fixing it in the mind in an atmosphere of Light and beauty. This kind of repetition I have used largely in Savitri. Moreover, the object is not only to present a secret truth in its true form and true vision but to drive it home by the finding of the true word, the true phrase, the root just, the true image or symbol, if possible the inevitable word; if that is there, nothing else, repetition included, matters much. This is natural when the repetition is intended, serves a purpose; but it can hold even when the repetition is not deliberate but comes in naturally in the stream of the inspiration. I see, therefore, no objection to the recurrence of the same or similar image such as sea and ocean, sky and heaven in one long passage provided each is the right thing and rightly worded in its place. The same rule applies to words, epithets, ideas. It is only if the repetition is clumsy or awkward, too burdensomely insistent, at once unneeded and inexpressive or amounts to a disagreeable and meaningless echo that it must be rejected. I think there is none of your objections that did not occur to me as possible from a certain kind of criticism when I wrote or I re-read what I had written, but I brushed them aside as invalid or as irrelevant to the kind of poem I was writing. So you must not be surprised at my disregard of them as too slight and unimportant.

What you have written as the general theory of the matter seems to be correct and it does not differ substantially from what I wrote. But your phrase about unpurpose repetition might carry a suggestion which I would not be able to accept; it might seem to indicate that the poet must have a "purpose" in whatever he writes and must be able to give a logical account of it to the critical intellect. That is surely not the way in which the poet or at least the mystic poet has to do his work. He does not himself deliberately choose or arrange word and rhythm but only sees it as comes in the very act of inspiration. If there is any purpose of any kind, it also comes by and in the process of inspiration. He can criticise himself and the work; he can see whether it was a wrong or an inferior movement, he does not set about correcting it by any intellectual method but waits for the true thing to come in its place. He cannot always account to the logical intellect for what he has done: he feels or intuits, and the reader or critic has to do the same.

Thus I cannot tell you for what purpose I admitted the repetition of the word "great" in the line about the "great unsatisfied godhead," I only felt that it was the one thing to write in that line as "her greatness" was the only right thing in a preceding line; I also felt that they did not and could not clash and that was enough for me. Again, it might be suggested that the "high" "warn" subtle other of love was not only the right expression but that repetition of these epithets after they had been used in describing the atmosphere of Savitri's nature was justified and had a reason and purpose because it pointed and brought out the identity of the ether of love with Savitri's atmosphere. But as a matter of fact I have no such reason or purpose. It was the identity which brought spontaneously and inevitably the use of the same epithets and not any conscious intention which deliberately used the repetition for a purpose.

Your contention that in the lines which I found to be inferior to their original form and altered back to that form, the inferiority was due to a repetition is not valid. In the line,

And found in her a vastness like his own,

the word "vastness" which had accidentally replaced "vastness" would have been inferior even if there had been no "wide" or "vastness" anywhere within a hundred miles and I would still have altered it back to the original word. So too with "sealed depths" and so many others. These alterations were due to inadvertence and not intentional; repetition or non-repetition had nothing to do with the matter. It was the same with "Wisdom nursing Chance": I if "nursing" had been the right word and not a slip replacing the original phrase I would have kept it in spite of the word "nurse" occurring immediately afterwards: only perhaps I would have taken care so arrange that the repetition of the figure would simply have constituted a two-headed instead of a one-headed evil. Yes, I have changed in several places where you object to repetitions but mostly for other reasons: I have kept many where there was a repetition and changed others where there was no repetition at all. I have indeed made modifications or changes where repetition came at a short distance at the end of a line; that was because the place made it too conspicuous. Of course where the repetition amounts to a mistake, I would have no hesitation in making a change; for a mistake must always be acknowledged and corrected.

(1946)

1 ibid.
2 Vol. I, p. 32.
The gradual modification of the ordinary mind into an intuitionsed mind was examined in the last essay; here its further transformation into a supramentalised mentality will be discussed.

When the influx of the higher light ceases to descend in the mind in intermittent flashes and gets canalised into a continuous stream, with a resulting transformation of the mental substance, the mind becomes intuitionsed but to its intuitive mentality is progressively formed and is able to dominate the various psychological activities of the total personality that a further step in the transformation becomes possible—the centre of vision and action can now be raised above the mind. In the consciousness gets poised on the head, the process of knowledge-apprehension naturally changes, for the communication between the Supernatural light and the personal consciousness becomes more direct. It now becomes possible to possess a higher central vision and have knowledge of the working of universal forces. But this new centre of vision, even though it is in a more direct contact with the Supermind than the mind, is not the Gnosis itself and cannot be said to possess the highest knowledge. It is only when the Supermind takes up the mental action and transforms it that the higher knowledge comes within sight. As the individual begins to rise into the Supermind the nether control of his personality is weakened and he begins to dominate the lower strata of his consciousness from above. His being is no longer conditioned by the subconscious and inconceivable levels; their hold is loosened and their strength gradually diminished by the action of the spiritual force from above. When the Gnosis itself is reached and its irresistible power works on the personality the lower levels are firmly and supramentalises the whole being and turns even the vital and physical sheaths into moulds of itself, responsive, subtle and instinct with its powers. Man then becomes wholly the superman. This is at least the natural and integral process.

Sri Aurobindo then proceeds to discuss the nature of consciousness on the Supermental level. Here the one thing that is always and constantly present, that which one has grown to and in which one lives always, is infinite being and all that is seen, felt, known, existed in as only substance of the one being; it is infinite consciousness and all that is conscious and acts and moves is seen, felt, received, known, lived in as self-experience and energy of the one being; it is infinite Ananda and all that feels and is felt is seen and felt and known, received and lived in as forms of the one Ananda. Everything else is only manifestation and expression of this one truth of our existence. This is no longer merely the seeing or knowing, but the very condition of the self in all and in all the self, God in all and all in God and all seen as God, and that condition is now not a thing offered to the reflecting spiritualized mind but held and lived by an integral always present, always active realisation in the supranatural sense. There is thought here and will and sensation and everything that belongs to our nature, but it is transfigured and elevated into a higher consciousness. All the senses and all that is experienced as a luminous body of substance, a luminous movement of force, a luminous wave of Ananda of the being; it is not an idea in the void air of mind, but experienced in the reality and as the light of a reality of the infinite being. The will and impulses are similarly experienced as a real power and substance of the Sat, the Chit, the Ananda of the Ishwara. All the spiritualised sensation and emotion are experienced as pure moulds of the consciousness and Ananda. The physical being itself is experienced as a conscious form and the vital being as an outpouring of the power and possession of the life of the spirit.

"The action of the supermind in the development is to manifest and organise this highest consciousness so as to exist and act no longer only in the infinite above with some limited or veiled or lower and deformed manifestations in the individual being and nature, but largely and totally in the individual as a conscious and self-knowing spiritual being and a living and acting power of the infinite and universal spirit..."

By this time the reader must have had a fairly good idea of the nature of cognition on the Supernal level. The gnostic powers which become natural to the consciousness as this level is reached will be discussed in the succeeding chapters. For the present it is enough to note here that in the field of cognition and will there is a triple action on the planes of the Supermind. The spiritual reason is lifted and broadened into a greater representative action that formulates to us mainly the actuality of the existence of the self in and around us. There is then a higher interpretative action of the supranatural knowledge, a greater scale less insist on actualities, that opens up yet greater possibilities in time and space and beyond. And lastly there is a highest knowledge by identity that is a gate of entrance to the essential self-awareness and the omniscience and omnipotence of the Ishwara.

"It must not however be supposed that these super-imposed stages are shut off in experience from each other. I have placed them in what might be a regular order of ascending development for the better possibility of understanding in an intellectual statement..." "It is thus that the supermind acting as a representative, interpretative, revealingly imperative power of the spirit's knowledge by identity, turning the light of the infinite consciousness freely and illuminatingly into substance and form of real-idea, creating out of power of conscious being and power of real idea, stabilising a movement which obyces its own law but is still a subtle and plastic movement of the infinite, uses its thought and knowledge and a will identical in substance and light to the knowledge to organise in each supernal being his own right manifestation of the one self and spirit."
SAVITRI
By SRI AUROBINDO

BOOK VII: THE BOOK OF YOGA: Canto 4: The Triple Soul-Forces

Continued from previous issue

Ascending still her spirit’s upward route
She came into a high and happy space,
A wide tower of vision whence all could be seen
And all was centred in a single view
As when by distance separate scenes grow one
And a harmony is made of hues at war.
The wind was still and fragrance packed the air.
There was a rick of birds noisily at ease,
And all that is common and natural and sweet,
Yet intimately divine to heart and soul.
A nearness thrilled of the spirit to its source
And deepest things seemed obvious, close and true.
Here, living centre of that vision of peace,
A Woman sat in clear and crystal light:
Heaven had unveiled its lustre in her eyes,
Her features moonglow, her face was a bright sun,
Her smile could persuade a dead lacerated heart
To live again and feel the hands of calm.
A low music heard became her floating voice:
“O Savitri, I am thy secret soul.
I have come down to the wounded desolate earth
To heal her pangs and hush her heart to rest
And lay her head upon the Mother’s lap.
That she may dream of God and know his peace
And draw the harmony of higher spheres
Into the rhythm of earth’s rude troubled days.
I show her the figures of bright shadows
And bring strength and solace to her struggling life,
High things that now are only words and forms
I reveal to her in the body of their power.
I am peace that steals into man’s war-worn breast,
Amid the reign of Hell his acts create
A hostel where Heaven’s messengers can lodge;
I am charity with the kindly hands that bless;
I am silence mid the noisy tumults,
I am Knowledge poring on her cosmic map.
In the anomalies of the human heart
Where Good and Evil are close bed-fellows
And Light is by Darkness dogged at every step,
Where his largest knowledge is an ignorance,
I am the Foe that labours towards the best
And works for God and looks up towards the heights.
I make even sins and error stepping stones
And all experience a long march towards Light.
Out of the Incense-land I build cocoons
And lead through death to reach immortal life.
Many are God’s forms by which he grows in man;
They stamp his thoughts and deeds with divinity,
Uplift the stature of the ignorant and sullen,
Or slowly transmute it into heaven’s gold.
He is the Good for which men fight and die,
He is the War of Right with Titan Wrong,
He is Freedom rising deathless from the styre,
He is Valour guarding still the desperate pass
Or lone and erect on the shatterted barricade
Or a sentinel in the dangerous echoing Night.
He is the crown of the martyr burned in flame
And the glad resignation of the saint
And courage indifferent to the wounds of Time
And the hero’s might wrestling with death and Fate.
He is Wisdom incarnate on a glorious throne
And the calm autocracy of the sage’s rule.
He is the high and solitary Thought
Acolad above the ignorant dreary horde.
He is the prophet’s voice, the sight of the seer.
He is Beauty, nectar of the passionate soul,
He is the Truth by which the spirit lives.
He is the riches of the spiritual Vast
Poured out in healing streams on indigent Life;
He is Eternity hused from hour to hour.
He is Infinity in a little space;
He is Immortality in the arms of Death.
These powers I am and at my call they come.
Thus slowly I lift man’s soul nearer the Light.
But human mind clings to its ignorance,
And to its littleness the human heart,
And to its right to grieve the earthly life.
Only when Eternity takes Time by the hand,
Only when infinity wedds the fleeting moment,
Can man be free from himself and live with God.
I bring meanwhile the gods upon the earth;
I bring back hope to the despairing heart;
I give peace to the humble and the great
And shed my grace on the foolish and the wise.
I shall save earth, if earth consents to be saved.
Then Love shall at last unwound tread earth’s soil.
Man’s mind shall admit the sovereignty of Truth
And body bear the immense descent of God.”
She spoke and from the ignorant neither fate
A cry, a warped echo naked and shuddering came.
A voice of the sense-shackled human mind
Carried its proud complaint of Godlike power
Hedged by the limits of a mortal’s thoughts
Bound in the chains of earthly ignorance.
Imprisoned in his body and his brain
The mortal cannot see God’s mighty whole
Or have in his vast and deep identity
Who stands unguessed within our ignorant hearts
And knows all things because he is one with all.
Man only sees the cosmic surface.
Then wondering what may lie hid from the sense
A little way he delves to depths below;
But soon he stops, he cannot reach life’s core
Or commune with the throbbing heart of things.
He sees the naked body of the Truth
Though often baffled by her endless garbs,
But cannot look upon her soul within.
Then, furious for a knowledge absolute,
He tears all details out and stabs and digs:
Only the shape’s contents he holds for use;
The spirit escapes or dies beneath his knife.
He sees as a blank stretch, a giant waste
The crowding riches of infinity.
The finite he has made his central field,
Its plan dissects, masters its processes.
That which moves all is hidden from his gaze,
His poring eyes miss the unseen behind.
He has the blind man’s subtle unerring touch
Or the slow traveller’s sight of distant scenes;
The soul’s revealing contacts are not his.
Yet is he visited by intuitive light
And inspiration comes from the Unknown;
But only reason and sense he feels as sure,
They only are his trusted witnesses.
Thus is he baulked, his splendid effort vain;
His knowledge some bright pebbles on the shore
Of the huge ocean of his ignorance.
Yet grandiose were the accents of that cry,
A cosmic pathos trembled in its tone.
“I am the mind of God’s great ignorant world
Ascending to knowledge by the steps he made, I am the all-discovering Thought of man.
I am a god fettered by Matter and sense,
An animal penned in a fence of thorns,
A beast of labour asking for his food,
A smith tied to his anvil and his forge.
Yet have I loosened the cord, enlarged my room.
I have mapped the heavens and analyzed the stars,
Described the orbits through the grooves of Space,
Measured the miles that separate the suns,
Computed their longevity in Time.
I have delved into earth’s bowels and torn out
The riches guarded by her dull brown soil.
I have clasped the changes of her stony crust
And of her biography discovered the dates,
Rescued the pages of all Nature’s plan.
The tree of evolution I have sketched,
Each branch and twig and leaf in its own place,
In the embryo tracked the history of forms,
And the genealogy framed of all that lives.
I have detected plum and cell and gene,
The protozoa traced, man’s ancestors.
The humble originals from whom he rose;
I know how he was born and how he dies;
Only what end he serves I know not yet,
Or if there is aim at all or any end
Or push of rich creative purposeful joy
In the wide works of the terrestrial power.
I have caught her intricate processes, none is left:
Her huge machinery is in my hands.
I have seized the cosmic energies for my use.

Continued on next page
Since I set foot on the Indian soil on the Apollo Bunder in Bombay, I began to have spiritual experiences, but these were not divorced from this world but had an inner and infinite bearing on it, such as a feeling of the Infinite pervading material space and the Immanent inhabiting material objects and bodies, at the same time if I feel the vision of entering supraphysical worlds and planes with influences and an effect from them upon the material plane, so I could make no sharp divorce or irreconcilable opposition between what I have called the two ends of existence and all that lies between them. For me all is one...I have not found it possible to do this in order to have peace.

In my Yoga also I found myself moved to include both worlds in my practice—of the spiritual and the material—and to try to establish the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Power in man's hearts and earthly life, not for a personal salvation only but for a Divine life here. This seemed to me as spiritual an aim as any and the fact of this life taking up the earthly pursuits and earthly things into its scope cannot, I believe, tarnish its spirituality or alter its Indian character. This at least has always been my view and experience of the reality of the world and things and the Divine: it seemed to me as nearly as possible the integral truth about them and I have therefore spoken of the pursuit of it as the Integral Yoga.

Everyone is, of course, free to reject and disbelieve in this kind of integrity or to believe in the spiritual necessity of an entire other- worldliness altogether but that would make the exercise of my Yoga impossible.

My Yoga can include indeed a full experience of the other worlds, the plane of the Supreme Spirit and the other planes in between and their possible effects upon our life and material world; but it will be quite possible to insist only on the realisation of the Supreme Being or Bhagavan even in one aspect, Shiva, Krishna as Lord of the world and Master of ourselves and our work and the Universe and Universal and achieve the essential result of this Yoga and afterwards to proceed from them to the integral results if one accepted the ideal of the divine life and the material world conquered by the Spirit. It is this view and experience of things and of the truth of existence that enabled me to write The Life Divine and Savitri. The realisation of the Supreme, the Iswara, is certainly the essential thing; but to approach Him with love and devotion and dedication, to serve Him with one's work and also with knowledge, not necessarily by the intellectual cognition, but in a spiritual experience is also essential in the path of Integral Yoga. If you accept Krishnaprem's insistence that this and no other must be your path, that it is this you have to attain and realise, then any exclusive other-worldliness cannot be your way. I believe that you are quite capable of attaining this and realising the Divine and I have never been able to share your constantly recurring doubts about your incapacity and their persistent recurrence as well as for believing that they can never be overcome. Such a persistent recurrence has been a feature in the sadhana of many of whom have finally emerged and reached the goal; even the savitri of very great Yoga has not been exempt from such violent and constant recurrence with the same adverse resistance, the same thoughts destructive of all belief and faith and confidence in the future of the sadhana, frustrating doubts of what one has known as the truth, urgings to the abandonment of the Yoga or to other disastrous counsels of desolation. The course taken by the attacks is not indeed the same for all but still they have a strong family resemblance. One can eventually

I have pored on her infinitesimal elements
And her invisible atoms have unmasked;
All Matter is a book I have perused;
Only some pages now are left to read.
I have seen the ways of life, the paths of mind;
I have studied the methods of the ant and ape
And the behaviour learnt of man and worm.
If God is at work his secrets I have found.
But still the Cause of things is a riddle,
Their truth flees from pursuit into a void;
When all has been explained nothing is known.
With a stress of passion, what was once never sprung
I know not and perhaps shall never know.
A mystery is this mighty Nature's birth;
A mystery is the elusive stream of mind,
In this, its path unknown.
What I have learnt, Chance leaps to contradict;
What I have built is seized and torn by Fate.
I can foresee the acts of Matter's force,
But not the march of the destiny of man:
He is driven upon paths he did not choose,
overcome if one begins to realize the nature and source of these assaults and acquire the faculty of observing them, bearing them (without being involved or absorbed into their gulf), finally becoming the witness of their phenomena and understanding them and refusing the mind's sanction even when the circumstances warrant it. This outward physical mind still reflects the adverse suggestions. In the end these attacks lose their power and fall away from nature; the recurrence becomes feeble or has no power to last: even, if the detachment is strong enough, they can be cut out very soon or at once. The strongest attitude to take is to regard these things as what they really are: incursions of dark forces from outside taking advantage of certain openings in the physical mind or vital part, but not a real part of oneself or spontaneous creation in one's own nature. To create a confusion and darkness in the physical mind and to throw it or awaken it in its mistakes, ideas, dark thoughts, false impressions is a favourite method of these assailants, and if they can get the support of the mind from over-confidence in its own correctness or the natural rightness of its impressions and inferences, then they can have a field day until the true mind reasserts itself and blows the clouds away. Another device of theirs is to awake some harm or rankling sense of grievance in the lower parts and keep them hurt or flailing as long as possible. In that case one has to discover these openings in oneself and learn to close them permanently to such attacks or to throw out intruders at once or as soon as possible. The recurrence is no proof of a fundamental incapacity; if one takes the right inner attitude it can and will be overcome. One must have faith in the Master of our life and works, even if for a long time He conceals Himself, and then in His own right time He will reveal His Presence.

“You have always believed in Gururude— I would ask you then to put your faith in the Guru and the guidance and rely on the Iswara for fulfillment, to have faith in my abiding love and affection, in the affection and divine good will and loving kindness of the Mother, stand firm against all the hindrances which lie towards the spiritual goal and the all-fulfilling and all-satisfying touch of the All-blessful, the Iswara.”

This long and loving letter infused as it were a new life-blood of hope into my resigning heart. But although I could see that by giving me a long rope he was attempting to convert my discontent into success—as he had done with many another—I could not yet feel strong enough to “screw my courage to the sticking place.” My ego was still very much alive and blustering. Otherwise I should have joined the sports then and there if only to pass the test to which I was now subjected—as all have to at every step. And my crisis made me realise as never before, that however honest and sincere one may feel in the abstract realm of aspiration, whenever it comes to the pinch one must accept the course which will lead to the change. In other words, the last test of sincerity is not breaking out into emotional fervour which goes by the name of bhakthi—though this too helps—but whether one’s selfless work is in shape or form. The question was not sports (or this or that) but—as it must be every time and in the last analysis—doing the Guru’s will. I felt, indeed, genuinely pentent, but could not find the will and self-will yet to bend down before the Guru’s. In a word, I tempered: “Why hasten to join the sports now that Gururude and Mother have both assured that it is unnecessary? Let’s wait and see...”

To do not say that everybody has to join the sports to feel that he has crossed the Rubicon. My point is that since realised that here I reacted violently against the Guru’s will, I ought to have forced myself to bow to that will rather than pamper my own. But here again all sorts of sophistries cropped up and I stayed away from the sports and went on working harder than ever—hoping that work would soften the knot of the ego till it could be cut without too much bleeding.

Just at this time—or rather a few months later—an avowed disciple of mine fell very ill. If I were free to write about her in detail, as I would like, she would have made this one of the most interesting chapters of my Ashram-life from the point of view of the general reader, but as she is utterly opposed to my presenting her spiritual experiences to the public I will confine myself to this that in my life of varied experiences I have seldom met a stranger personality who, so young and healthy, seemed so astonishingly mature for the spiritual life. I was deeply impressed by her sincerity, truthfulness, intelligence, power of sustained work, poetical gift, capacity for love, for all, her incredible purity of character. But being exceedingly sensitive she has suffered much which all but ruined her health. She fell very ill in November 1949 and her condition rapidly deteriorated till her life was despaired of. Advised by Gururude and Mother I went to her in December. She was totally bed-ridden and could not even turn over from one side to another without help. It was now a case of touch and go. She had been vomiting blood twice a day for some time past and though after I had written to Gururude about it the vomiting stopped, she lay bed-ridden in the last stage of prostration. When I saw her in December, 1949, she was reduced to a shadow—a ghost of her once radiant and beautiful self. Her husband was effusive in his gratefulness to me. ‘Now she would recover,’ they said because I had come with Gururude’s force and Mother’s blessings. But when I saw her my heart utterly misgave me, for though I knew that she had already been called and chosen, I did not see how her terrible convulsions were going to be stopped... Gururude had, indeed, written to me that she had achieved “in advanced spiritual consciousness and and abides...” and till the end; for my experience is that even a hopeless effort in the fields of the working of the spiritual force is often better than none and can bring in the intervention of the ‘miracle’. But having been temporarily somewhat shy of the word ‘miracle’ I wrote to him:

“You remind me, Guru, of Shelley’s characterisation of ‘love’ as a word ‘too often profaned’. I have often felt that he had been born in India be and have substituted the word ‘miracle’...”

“No, Guru, I have never had a strong weakness for what we, Indians, so wishtfully call ‘faith in miracles’. So I can only hope, against hope, that its agency may come to our rescue not just too late. For I have gathered from the doctors that she has been suffering from chronic asthma, deep thrombosis, dilatation of the heart, osteo-arthritis, low blood-pressure, utter lack of appetite, anaemia and God knows what else, still undiagnosed. So I am afraid you will have to invoke a major miracle if you really mean business.”

But the major miracle did happen—at the eleventh hour: she recovered. This made a difference even to my sceptic mind in that I here found a point for my faith in the spiritual powers given to me by the Master, albeit only as signs and not as miracles which I can only describe as too incredible to be discredited. But I prefer to close this episode with a relevant letter which Gururude wrote to me at this time in reply to some questions of mine which will be easily inferred from what follows:

“I might say a word about Sri Ramakrishna’s attitude with regard to the body. He seems always to have regarded it as a means of spiritual force to utilize it for preserving the body or curing its ailments or taking care of it. Other yogis do not speak of the body, or of the mind. From this it justifies to develop Yogic addhas—have not had this complete disregard of the body: they have taken care to maintain it in good health and condition as an instrument or a physical basis for their development in Yoga. I have always been of the same opinion with this view. The mind has never had a hesitation in the use of a spiritual force for all legitimate purposes including the maintenance of health and physical life in myself and in others—that is why the Mother gives this result as a blessing but as a help in illness. I put a value on the body first as an instrument, dharmashakti, or, more fully, as a centre of manifested personality in action, a basis of spiritual life and activity as of all life and activity upon

*Editor’s Note: It has now been decided on better advice to make public some of the spiritual experiences referred to. See page 13 of “Mother India.”*
But why did such a lovely flower fade away prematurely before even blossoming—thus casting a gloom on all who knew her and loved her for her exquisite singing and snow-pure character? And then look at the face of the world, it is so tragic. In Greece it acts, I take it, only under certain conditions which are not known to us. I believe to be fulfilled by recipient such as we. So why waste your precious time and energy on such a world where the divine guidance looks almost accidental and offers no guidance? I was not writing at all in those days. In fact since 1938 he had all but stopped writing to us. Yet as soon as he received my sad query—

In February, 1942—he answered and an answer of light it was to my groping soul.

"The question you have put raises one of the most difficult and complicated of all problems and to deal with it all adequately would need an answer as long as the longest chapter of The Life Divine. I can only state a few of my own knowledge and not of the former—there is no need to say whether there is such a guidance and that nothing is in vain in this universe.

"If we look only at the outward facts in their surface appearance or if we regard what we see happening around us as a definite, not as processes or in contact with an inner knowledge and vision, we begin to see at most we see intercessions occasional or sometimes frequent. The guidance can become evident only if we go behind appearances and begin to understand the forces at work and the way of their working and their secret significance. To be sure, I know that as the creation of the Inconscient," he decries to accept it at its face value because what we call the Inconscient is an appearance, a dwelling place, an instrument of a secret Conscienctia, a Superconscienctia which has created the whole universe. It is the world creation of Chaos or governed by a mechanical Inconscient Law or whether there is a meaning in it and something beyond its present appearance towards which we move. If there is a meaning and if there is anything towards which things are evolving or being drawn by the creative force of a guiding—and that means a supporting Consciousness and Will is there with which we can come into an inner contact. If there is such a Consciousness and Will, it is not likely that it would stultify itself by impeding the world's meaning or turning it into a perpetual or eventual failure.

"This world has a double aspect. It seems to be based on a material foundation, error and prejudice, death and suffering, but it is an imperfect creation. Because, I think it is the result of something that is more scientific knowledge comes by going behind the surface phenomena to their hidden process and causes. It is quite obvious that this world is full of suffering, and afflicted with transience because what justifies the Gita's description of this as this "unhappy way of existence", ungodly man. The shadows, the sufferings, the tears, the indiscipline, the crimes, the wars, the wars of Creation of Chaos or governed by a mechanical Inconscient Law or whether there is a meaning in it and something beyond its present appearance towards which we move. If there is a meaning and if there is anything towards which things are evolving or being drawn by the creative force of a guiding—and that means a supporting Consciousness and Will is there with which we can come into an inner contact. If there is such a Consciousness and Will, it is not likely that it would stultify itself by impeding the world's meaning or turning it into a perpetual or eventual failure.

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SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME—Continued from page 8

constant vicissitudes, but still there is something in it that drives towards the meagre self-survival for which it is most taken seriously, and follow them in a smaller and more intimate field of the individual consciousness and life. What happens at a particular juncture of the world-action or the life of humanity, however catastrophic, is not ultimately determinant. It is too small a play of forces in a particular time but also the inner and secret play, the far-off outcome, the event that lies beyond and the Will at work behind it all. Falsehood and Darkness are strong everywhere on the earth, and have often been as popular as they have been because they have also been not only gleams but outbursts of the Light. In the mass of things and the long course of Time, whatever may be the appearance of this or that epoch or movement, the growth of Light is there and the struggle goes on. It is the story of the whole, and not that of the Falsehood and Darkness have gathered their forces and are extremely powerful; but even if we reject the assertion of the mysteries and prophecies since early times that such a coming has taken place, Man has never been a sign of its approach, yet it does not necessarily indicate the decisive victory—even temporary—of the Falsehood. It merely means that the struggle between the forces is in the ascendant. The result, may very well be the stronger emergence of the best that can be, for the world-development often works in that way. I leave it at that and say nothing more.

"Hashi (Una) had reached a stage of her development marked by a predominance of the animal nature, but not a strong vital (which works towards a successful or fortunate life) or the opening to a higher light—her mental upbringing and surroundings stood against that and she herself was not ready. The early death and much suffering may have been the result for some, but it was more as if her own psychic being as a passage towards a higher state for which she was not yet prepared but towards which she was moving. And this is the non-fulfilment of her capacities could be a final tragedy if there were to be none.

Yes, he was always like that: so ready to comply whenever I invited him to help—to no matter what it was. And it was with the same kind interest that he dealt with a genius to a multi-millionaire as with a pauper or an orphan. Also he did it so spontaneously—almost as if it were the least he could do—that it was sometimes, indeed, difficult to be grateful to him or even to recognize it for compassion. How often have I wondered whether he had not come about it as his way of giving help—though he simply had to come to people’s help without criticizing them at all. I wrote to him once that his way of “reforming love as love and reprimand” did remind one of Vivekananda’s famous dictum: “Every step that you have really gained in the world has been gained by love; criticism can never do any good; it has been tried for thousands of years. Condensation accomplishes nothing.”

And yet what was this love which he bestowed? Vivekananda so vividly realized, I thought, the meaning of this love of the human level? What was the love which made him stave everything dear to mortals for something for which we do not even understand—the Superman, whose “advent” he prophesied to be “miraculous,” not of this world but of another? Some of his words about his own change are remarkable. Once I had written to him that these pooled him because he was hushing for greatness and wanting to achieve something which even Krishna did not succeed in establishing on earth. To that he wrote:

“It is not for personal greatness that I am seeking to bring down the Superman. I care nothing for greatness or littleness in the human sense. I am seeking to bring some principle of inner Truth, Light, Harmony, Peace into the earth-consciousness; I see it above and know what it is—I feel it ever gleaming down on my consciousness from above and I am seeking to make it possible for it to take up the whole being into its own native power, instead of the nature of man continuing to remain in half-light, half-darkness. I believe the descent of this Truth opening the way to a development of divine consciousness here to be the final sense of the earth-evolution. If greater men than myself had not had this vision and this ideal before them, that is no reason why I should not follow my Truth-sense and Truth-vision. If humanity regards me as a fanatic, I do not hold the least care. There is no question of X or Y or anybody else in that. It is a question between the Divine and myself—whether it is the Divine Will or not, whether I am sent to bring that dawn, to open the way for others. Let all men jeer at me if they will or all Hell fall upon me if it will for my presumption, I go on: till I conquer or perish. This is the spirit in which I seek the Superman, no hunting for greatness for myself or others.”

Fortunately, human nature has a penchant for sectarianism which seems to be all but ineradicable. That is why even such a soul-stirring and unexceptionable letter was misinterpreted by some who accused him of belittling Krishna’s greatness! But though by nature humorously ruthless if and when his vision demanded it: he would then cut away from his moorings however safe and sacrosanct, and count no price too great to pay for following the inner call of his Faith. Unfortunately, we who have learnt to swear by reason alone have too little too fond of regarding faith somewhat as a Don Quixote who may, on occasions, be lovable enough, but a little too simple for serious earnest. We choose to see, and rightly so, reason as the basis for the heart. But let reason divine the faith we forget that two can play at that game, and Faith may retort that Reason too may sometimes behave as the knight of famous folly when it

Sits on a high horse—back of argument.

To tilt with ever a woody lance.

In a mock tournament where none can win.†

But though his faith appealed to us, moderns, because it originally emerged as an impact better suited to the atmosphere we have also been not only gleams but outbursts of the Light. In the mass of things and the long course of Time, whatever may be the appearance of this or that epoch or movement, the growth of Light is there and the struggle goes on. It is the story of the whole, and not that of the Falsehood and Darkness have gathered their forces and are extremely powerful; but even if we reject the assertion of the mysteries and prophecies since early times that such a coming has taken place, Man has never been a sign of its approach, yet it does not necessarily indicate the decisive victory—even temporary—of the Falsehood. It merely means that the struggle between the forces is in the ascendant. The result, may very well be the stronger emergence of the best that can be, for the world-development often works in that way. I leave it at that and say nothing more.

("Inspired Talks", p. 75.)

† "Swiftly": Book II, Canto X.

And the heart fails and only are death and night,

God-given her strength can battle against.

Even on a breast so near it is often close:

And no human strength can hinder or can help.

(Continued on page 11)
HUMAN personality is a profound and complex phenomenon. Time and time again its behaviour comes as a challenge to all known and accepted criteria of life and we look at it with wide-eyed wonder if not incredulity. The Yoga-Asram of Sri Aurobindo with all that it stands for, spiritually, is—even apart from its spiritual outlook—very different from the normal life-movements of the world. No wonder many things, which appear abnormal and therefore unbelievable outside, are felt as normal and natural here. But what we are going to describe was, even for such an Ashram atmosphere, exceptional: the phenomenon seemed to be almost phenomenal.

About three months ago a Punjabi lady came here to our Ashram. We shall call her by her Ashram name, Indira. She came first to the Ashram in February, 1949, and then again in July. When she returned to her home she started going into what is commonly called "trance". But as the word means, her mental condition in different ways, we shall use the Indian word samadhi.

(Sri Aurobindo wrote to Dilip Kumar Roy last year that "her samadhi was of the savitrika kind."). This happened mostly when Dilip Kumar sang bhajans, but it happened at other times as well and lasted longest, even to midnight when she would, often enough remain self-absorbed, sitting upright and immobile for hours. Once in Bombay, last November, Dilip Kumar as well as many others saw her thus sitting for more than eight hours at a stretch. When Dilip Kumar sings, the samadhi induced lasts for about an hour or two. An American visitor sent me last year an interesting description of this which I may well utilize here by way of introduction, the more as he has given a very graphic and faithful description of what happens at such times.

"The most interesting thing I saw at Sri Aurobindo Ashram," he wrote, "was a girl, sitting alone in a circular room because this was not a usual girl. Indira was physically an exotic-looking creature. She is in her early thirties—slender, graceful and the daughter of a multi-millionaire. When I saw her around the Ashram I was interested, but one day soon I was enchanted. On that day I attended an Indian music programme given by the Ashram's famous musician and poet, Dilip Kumar Roy.

"When I entered the room where the programme was to be given, I took a seat on the man's side. Just as the music started, Indira came in on the woman's side and seated herself, unexpectedly, back against the wall. She sat comfortably with her hands clasped around her knees and eyes closed. When Dilip's music began to warm up (religious songs with a wonderful subtle rhythm) she began to sway gently with the music. After about fifteen minutes she slowly and naturally assumed a perfect yogic position. She was absolutely still. I got a very peaceful look on her face. I looked at her very frequently for the next hour and a half that the music continued, but never saw her move once. She was absolutely motionless except for a slight change in breathing.

"When the programme was over and the audience began to disperse, Indira sat motionlessly on. She appeared behind watching her until all the guests had left. Dilip came over to me and in response to my questions divulged a minimum of information. Indira had been going into trances like this for the past year, often indeed by music or meditation. While in them she was oblivious to the outside world. Sri Aurobindo knew about them and called them belonging to the category of savitrika samadhi. Frequently in this state she had visions and usually, just before awakening, she would get a beautiful smile on her face. Uninvited, I sat down to watch and wait.

"In about half an hour she coughed once and began to move her head very slightly. Then she began to smile: almost imperceptibly at first, then slowly it grew into a full lovely smile with her eyes still closed. It was a smile no artist could paint, unperturbed and peaceful, it seemed to have an inwardness, yet an outwardness bright enough to fill the room.

"In the middle of my spellbound observation, Dilip came back in the room and asked me to leave. He virtually had to use force but he modified it by saying that Indira would be embarrassed if she awoke and found anyone watching her. Most reluctantly, I agreed and the music continued only half bolstered up by an invitation to tea that afternoon with her.

"At tea, I found that Indira, like many Hindu girls, was a very bashful conversationalist. The situation was not helped by Dilip telling me, in her presence, how shy she was. We fumbled through cream-passing and biscuit-crunching till I finally hedged around to the solid subject of her background and today's trance.

"The first bit of information that surprised me was that Dilip was her Guru—by her choice and Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's consent who are Dilip's Gurus. About a year ago Indira was on her deathbed, doctors had given her up and she was actually gasping. Dilip went there and had written to Sri Aurobindo to save her. He wrote back that divine intervention was expected. She recovered and everybody concerned attributed it to Sri Aurobindo. During this illness she had an intuitive feeling of the death of a close friend which soon after proved correct.

"The friend who died was a very close girl friend of Indira's. When the deceased girl's husband informed Indira that he did not want to go by means of a letter to Dilip with a request to break the news gently. One phrase in the letter, which Dilip let me read, stands out in my mind. After requesting him to inform Indira with the utmost tenderness it said: 'You don't know what she means.'

"When I asked her about today's trance she replied after a long pause that she saw Sri Aurobindo come and put his hand on Dilip's head.

"After we had finished tea, Dilip had to leave to do some work. Indira then became a little more communicative. She told me about her eldest son of ten years of age who is quite remarkable and reads the Gita daily and performs pujas, prayer etc. and I told her about my spiritual inclinations. She was very modest about her own spiritual development. She said that no one in her family, except her son, showed any spiritual inclination. Further she modestly stated that it had all been a gift to her. She had not worked for it and even now meditated infrequently and then not for any desire for development but because, in her words, 'it was difficult not to meditate.' Now she mediates only ten or fifteen minutes about twice a day, usually with Dilip. She said that Mother, whom she saw twice daily, had helped her a lot.

"Her manner had a humble and childlike quality to it. When I asked what sort of Yoga she followed she said she did nothing but follow her Guru's advice and keep God uppermost in her thoughts. Though she is still far from well she eats practically nothing—only a few cups of tea and a bowl of soup per day.

"Her one complaint was that people would continually barge up and ask her questions about her spiritual experiences which she couldn't possibly answer, and, rightly, that such people never asked her about her love experiences with her husband and yet they expected her to talk freely about her spiritual experiences which were far more intimate. She also said that she felt friendly vibrations with some people.

"The last night I was in Pondicherry, Dilip gave another music programme. I went and was surprised, shortly after the programme started, to see Indira quietly got up and leave the room. When the music came to an end I again lingered behind. Dilip knew why I stayed on and without a word went into the next room and switched on the light. There, on the floor, against the wall, was Indira sitting perfectly erect in her Buddha-like yogic position, peaceful and motionless, with her eyes closed. Such a saintly expression was on her face that it defies description—a feeling, no, a look, a blessing just to see. On peace Oh . . . ."

During the time her trance lasted, while she would stay utterly lost to outer consciousness, she never became unconscious herself since, on coming to, she would give a full account of all that she had seen and experienced the while, not the least interesting feature of which was her vivid encounters with holy beings. One woman whom she saw—day after marvellous day and large and indubitable as life—now singing, now talking, now explaining to her spiritual mysteries in similes and images—in short, discussing things with her as a friend to friend, sometimes even defending her own viewpoint against her. And last, though not the least, Indira gave a detailed description of Mira's garments, ornaments down to little dainty moles on her neck and palm and lovely dimples that showed when she smiled—almost like a fairy story! As days passed, this relationship between the two developed till something Mira actually started telling her beautiful parables which took many of us by storm as it were. But to come back to her songs.

There can be little doubt that the songs which have been heard by Indira are different in style from the rest which she has composed in her normal consciousness. And their distinctiveness lies in this that the atmosphere, or rather the Stimmung, they conjure up is not modern and does seem
I have just one more thing to add.

One day, as I was discussing with a friend Indira's daily intercourse with Mira Bai, he remarked, "Does it mean then that Mira has not taken upon herself another burden, another yoke, of her own accord?" I could not help asking, "And how could we not have been thus available to another to be contacted day after day in this way?"

In a word, he found it somewhat mystifying, and no wonder, since every true spiritual quest must start with wonderment—even bewilderment, shall I say? So there can be nothing wrong about being puzzled to start with. What is to be depreciated is our unwillingness to be spurred by our surprise, which is responsible so often for our not pursuing the quest to the end. We seek comfort of the all-too-easy satisfaction at the hands of known facts and banal reasons which may indeed help us in our life of day to day but seldom throw any substantial light when we bring them to bear on supraphysical phenomena such as these. To put it differently, one who is so tethered to one's inexpansive rational intellect must find such worlds of occult experience baffling for the simple reason that the categories and the terms of the common run of experience—belonging to this our world of sense-data—must find themselves utterly out of place here. But the seeker who has an opening to or even a flair for the deeper and wider ranges of consciousness will willingly observe, watch and welcome any new data of experience which the Infinite Reality has held in store for us from the dawning of time. But as only few are, here and now, receptive to mystic or occult truths, these have been hidden so far by occultists in general. With evolution, however, things must change. Did Christ himself prophesy: "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known'?

Mira has said the same thing to Indira again and again and again in the name of the "Spirit"—a process which has also been taken up by all.

So I shall leave it at that and conclude with a few extracts from three letters which Sri Aurobindo wrote by way of commentary to Dipak Kumar last year when Indira's mystic experiences first began to crystallise.

"There is nothing impossible," he wrote in the first, "in Mira Bai manifesting in this way through the agency of Indira's trance, provided she (Mira) is still sufficiently in touch with this world to accompany Krishna where He manifests and in that case there would be no impossibility either in her taking the part of Indira as God in Indira's vision of her and her action, if Indira wrote in a Hindi with which she was not ordinarily familiar or in which she was not used to write and it was under the influence of Mira Bai, that would be a fairly strong evidence of the reality of Mira Bai's presence and influence on her." (5-3-50)

"It is evident," he explained in another letter, "that Indira is receiving inspiration for her Hindi songs from the Mira of her vision and that her consciousness and the consciousness of Mira are collaborating on some plane superconsciente to the ordinary human mind: an occultist also finds his consciousness is not an illusion but a reality, otherwise the thing could not happen as it does in actual fact. Such things do happen on the occult plane, they are not new and unprecedented." (5-3-50)

"In any case," he added, "the poems Mira Bai has written through Indira — for that much seems to be clear — are beautiful and the whole phenomenon of Indira's writing in the Hindi language should be a truly remarkable and very convincing of the genuineness of the whole thing. The Mother has sanctioned the publication of her poems in our Press and so that would be all right." (11-6-50)

These words of Sri Aurobindo can give us a complete guidance. Naturally, we should look forward to some fresh additions to our experience in Indira's spiritual evolution, the more as the Mother herself has recently added her verdict to his, endorsing her supraphysical experiences as "genuine" and observed that she has a "remarkable power of true vision."

"The Mother read these extracts with the clotting paragraph and put her final seal on them on 2-8-51.

SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME  
(Continued from page 9)

A new faith burgeoned deep down in my core as the new vista opened when I beheld for the last time his radiant face lying in the repose of Yoganidra with a light on it which seemed reluctant to leave him.

Then I saw the Mother, "too unlike the world she came to save and save she is told to me: "Sri Aurobindo is here, with us, as living as ever."

I confessed I did not quite know at the time how to take it, but this I was sure of—that she could never utter a vain plaintitude, far less bow to what was not flawlessly true. I felt near to her as never before. To do now what she wants has suddenly become not only incumbent but a simple act of joy. But this time I was determined not to achieve what I had to in a half-hearted way, nor stay satisfied with a mere inner surrender to the Guru's will. The inner resolve has, at some time or other, to be tested by outer action. So I joined the procession.

To the general reader this may well sound almost like an anti-climax.
BOOKS in the BALANCE

THE ROMANCE OF INDIAN EMBROIDERY

By Kamala S. Dongerkery

(Thacker & Co., Bombay. Rs. 12.62)

Biographies and autobiographies of novelists, poets, and other personalities in the varied fields of arts, science and sports are making a kind of a vogue felt in this country of a prime order which is fast disappearing, and that the art of embroidery is a manifestation of the spiritual and religious yearnings of a sober people who have a strong disposition to give up their material from a variety of sources and in seeking the advice of people more to their liking in authority. Further, she is an artist herself, she paints and signs and writes poetry, she has a friendship with the Women's Movement in Bombay, and has already shown proof of her taste and her ambition to be a skillful writer. "Jewellery, Life and India". Indian Embroidery is a peculiarly feminine art, and it is appropriate that Mrs. Dongerkery should be its historian and interpreter.

In his learned Introduction to the book, Dr. Ghurye sets Embroidery in its right perspective in other fine arts, and Indian Embroidery in its proper place in world art. The House of Beauty is one, yet are there many distinctive Halls—divided from each other by an unbroken line. The beauty of the Kantha, Kalamkari, Chikan, Zari, etc., is made more by the immense store of material from a variety of sources and in seeking the advice of people more to their liking in authority. Further, she is an artist herself, she paints and signs and writes poetry, she has a friendship with the Women's Movement in Bombay, and has already shown proof of her taste and her ambition to be a skillful writer. "Jewellery, Life and India". Indian Embroidery is a peculiarly feminine art, and it is appropriate that Mrs. Dongerkery should be its historian and interpreter.

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