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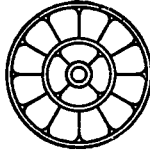
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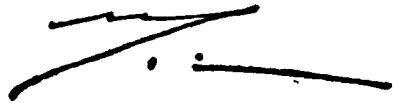


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXIV

No. 9

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail".

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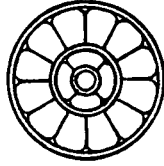
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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Q: I have received a rather pathetic letter from a reader of Mother India. He writes:

“Though I am sincerely trying to follow the Mother’s instructions in my life, I have been very much surrounded by difficulties — to such an extent that suicide is the only solution. So I request you to be kind enough to see that my prayer reaches the Mother’s personal notice.”

Mother, what should I reply?

Suicide, far from being a solution, is a stupid aggravation of the situation, that for perhaps centuries will make life intolerable.

12-6-1972

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of September, 1972)

(This new series of answers by the Mother to questions put by the children of the Ashram appeared for the first time in the Bulletin of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education but in a somewhat incomplete form. We now give, in a new English translation, the full text as it was taped, with here and there a few special additions or modifications made by the Mother at the time of its first publication in French in February 1968.)

July 11, 1956

I HAVE received three questions, one of which would require some fairly unpleasant remarks which I don't want to make to you.... There are the other two to which I could perhaps reply. One is about a sentence in *The Synthesis of Yoga* where Sri Aurobindo speaks of the psychic being as "insisting" on:

...*"beauty restored to its priesthood of interpretation of the Eternal."* (p. 176)

I am asked what this means.

To tell the truth, I don't know why I am asked for an explanation: whether it is because of the old ascetic idea that beauty has no place in yoga, or because of the words "priesthood of interpretation of the Eternal."

In the first case, I believe I have already said often enough and repeated that in the physical world, of all things it is beauty which expresses best the Divine. The physical world is the world of form, and the perfection of form is beauty. So I think it is unnecessary to go over all that again. And once we admit this, that in the physical world beauty is the best and closest expression of the Divine, it is natural to speak of it as a "priestess", who interprets, expresses, manifests the Eternal. Its role is exactly to put the whole of manifested nature in contact with the Eternal, through the perfection of form, harmony, and through a sense of the ideal which raises you towards something higher. So I think this justifies the word "priesthood" and explains and answers the question.

(Silence)

The other question is about a phrase I used (I believe last week) when I spoke of *the threshold of occultism*. So a question is put to me about this occult world, that is to say, the world invisible to ordinary physical eyes, and I am asked for explanations, or commentaries, on the beings living in these worlds, invisible to ordinary eyes.

I am even told that I speak very often of negative entities, that is to say, of hostile formations, of small beings formed from the disintegration of human beings after their death (disintegration of the vital or mental being after death), but that I have never spoken of great beings, magnificent beings or positive entities which help the evolution. I believe I have spoken to you about these quite often, but still I am again asked for explanations.

Well, the occult world is not one single region where everything is mixed up, which becomes occult simply because we can't see it. The occult world is a gradation of regions, one could perhaps say, of more and more ethereal or subtle regions; in any case, of regions further and further off, in their nature, from the physical materiality we ordinarily see. And each of these domains is a world in itself, having its forms and inhabited by beings with a density analogous, one could say, to that of the domain wherein they live. Just as we in the physical world are of the same materiality as the physical world, so in the vital world, in the mental world, in the overmind world and in the supramental world — and in many others, infinite others — there are beings which have forms of a substance similar to that of that world. This means that if you are able to enter consciously into that world with the part of your being corresponding to that domain, you can move there quite objectively, as in the material world.

And there, there are as many, nay, many more things to see and observe than in our poor little material world, which belongs only to *one* zone of this infinite gradation. You meet all sorts of things in these domains, and you need a study as profound, perhaps more profound yet than in the physical world, to be able to know what is happening, to have relations with the beings living there.

It is evident that as one goes further, if one may say so, from the material world, the forms and consciousness of these beings are of a purity, beauty and perfection much higher than our ordinary physical forms. It is only in the nearest vital world, that which is, so to say, mixed with our material life (though it lies beyond it and there is a zone where the vital is no longer mixed with the material world), of that material vital one may say that in some of its aspects it is yet more ugly than things here, for it is filled with a bad will which is not counterbalanced by the presence of the psychic being which, in the physical world, amends, corrects, puts right, directs this bad will. But this is quite a limited zone and, as soon as one goes beyond it, one can find, meet, things not favourable to human life, beings not on the scale of human existence, but having their own beauty and grandeur, with whom one may establish relations which may become quite pleasant and even useful.

Only, as I have already told you, it is not very prudent to venture out in these domains without previous initiation and, above all, a purification of nature which prevents you from entering there in a state that's heavy and deformed by your desires, your passions, egoisms, fears and weaknesses. Before undertaking these activities one needs a complete preparation of self-purification and widening of consciousness which is altogether indispensable.

There are also in these invisible worlds certain regions which are the result of

human mental formations. One can find there all one wants. In fact, one very often finds there exactly what one expects to find. There are hells, there are paradises, there are purgatories. There are all sorts of things in accordance with the different religions and their conceptions. These things have only a very relative existence, but with a relativity similar to that of material things here; that is to say, for the one who finds himself there, they are entirely real and their effects quite tangible. One needs an inner liberation, a wideness of consciousness and a contact with a deeper and higher truth to be able to escape the illusion of their reality. But it is something almost similar to what happens here: human beings here are convinced mostly that the only reality is the physical reality — the reality of what one can touch, can see — and for them, all that cannot be seen, cannot be touched, cannot be felt, is after all problematical; well, something quite analogous happens there. People who at the point of death are convinced, for one reason or another, that they are going to paradise or maybe to hell, *find* themselves there after their death; and for them, it is truly a paradise or a hell. And it is extremely difficult to make them come out of it and go to a place which is more true, more real.

So it is difficult to speak of all these worlds, these innumerable worlds, in a few minutes. It is a knowledge which needs a lived experience of many years, quite systematic, and requiring, as I said, an inner preparation quite indispensable for the contact to be harmless.

We all have the occasion of a little contact (very partial, very superficial) with these worlds in our dreams. And the study of dreams itself needs much time and care, and in itself may constitute a preparation for a deeper study of the invisible worlds.

I think that is all we can profitably say about that this evening.

(Silence)

The last question is from somebody who finds that I have made promises a little light-heartedly and that, after all, I haven't kept my word! ... Perhaps I expected more from humanity than it was capable of giving me — about that I know nothing. Perhaps it is purely a superficial impression.

I said more or less this, that those who are here in the Ashram will know of the descent of the Supermind (about that they can't blame me for not having informed them beforehand when it came, I made no mystery of it!) and will participate in it — indeed, I did not forbid anyone from participating in it! On the contrary, I believe I encouraged everybody to be open and receive it, and try to profit by it.

And so I said: "From that moment the transforming Grace shall radiate itself in the most effective manner." Well, I challenge whoever it may be to tell me the opposite!

But here's where it begins to be a little more... I added: "And fortunately for the aspirants this happy future (I don't think I put it in this way, but that doesn't

matter) this happy future will materialise for them in spite of *all* the obstacles that the unregenerate human nature may put up against it." I continue to hope that it will be thus!

But now that person, who is perhaps a bit impatient, tells me this: "Why have the difficulties increased for quite a big number of sadhaks?" (*The Mother puts down the paper forcefully on the table.*) Who tells you that it is not because you have become more conscious! and all your difficulties were there before, only you did not know?... If you see more clearly and see things which are not very pretty, it is not the fault of the Supermind, it is your fault! It gives you a light, a mirror in which you can see yourself better than you did before, and you are a little troubled because it is not always very pretty? But what can I do?

And this person concludes: "Doesn't the supramental Force work here in spite of all the obstacles the unregenerate human nature puts up against it?" Truly, I hope it does! for otherwise, there would be nothing to do about it, the world would never be regenerated. But I have explained to you why it seems more difficult to you. It is because you are a little more conscious now and see things you did not see before.

There is yet another reason. When the Force which is at work is stronger, more insistent, naturally that which resists also resists as strongly. And if instead (it is here I have to say something not very pleasant) if instead of being hypnotised by your difficulties, your little inconveniences, your small discomforts, your "big" defects, if instead of being hypnotised by all that, you tried to see the other side, how far the Force is more powerful, the Grace more active, the Help more tangible — in a word, if you were a little less egoistic and less concentrated upon yourselves and had a little larger vision in which you could include things not concerning you personally, perhaps your view of the problem would change.

Well, this is what I advise you to do, and then we shall speak about it later when you have tried out my remedy: don't think so much about yourself.

After all, that is the problem which interests you most, but it is certainly not the most interesting!

LIGHTS ON THE PATH

PASSAGES FROM SRI AUROBINDO FOUND BY THE MOTHER AND SOME DISCIPLES

(Continued from the issue of July, 1972)

(In 1931 a number of disciples used to meet the Mother in the Prosperity Store-room in the evening. One of the activities there for a short period was a reading of passages from Sri Aurobindo's works. Each day one or other of the disciples would concentrate a little and open a book anywhere with his finger or a paper-cutter and strike upon a passage for reading. The Mother did the same. This procedure went on from March 18 to May 2. We are publishing these passages in a series, both for their intrinsic value as lights on the path of Yoga and for whatever subtle side-lights they may throw on the inner movements of those who found them.)

THE liberated man has no personal hopes; he does not seize on things as his personal possessions; he receives what the Divine Will brings him, covets nothing, is jealous of none: what comes to him he takes without repulsion and without attachment; what goes from him he allows to depart into the whirl of things without repining or grief or sense of loss. His heart and self are under perfect control; they are free from reaction and passion, they make no turbulent response to the touches of outward things.

(Found by the Mother, April 24, 1931)

The one thing essential is the intense devotion of the thought in the mind to the object of adoration.... It is in its real nature not a still, but an ecstatic contemplation; it seeks not to pass into the being of the Divine, but to bring the Divine into ourselves and lose ourselves in the deep ecstasy of His presence or of His possession; and its bliss is not the peace of unity, but the ecstasy of Union.

*
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....This is the delight of the Godhead that passes human understanding.

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. IV. pp. 729-34.

(Found by Amrita, April 25, 1931)

An unpurified heart, an unpurified life confuse the understanding, disturb its data, distort its conclusions, darken its seeing, misapply its knowledge; an unpurified physical system clogs or chokes up its action. There must be an integral purity.

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Love, for example, is the purifier of the heart and by reducing all our emotions into terms of divine love the heart is perfected and fulfilled; yet love itself needs to be clarified by divine knowledge.

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This purification spells an entire equality of the nervous being and the heart; equality, therefore, even as it was the first word of the path of works, so also is the first word of the path of knowledge.

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The beginning of spiritual knowledge is the refusal to accept the limitations of the sense life or to take the visible and sensible as anything more than phenomenon of the Reality.

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. II. pp. 401-6.
(Found by Amrita, April 26, 1931)

When you give yourself, give completely, without demand, without condition, without reservation so that all in you shall belong to the Divine Mother and nothing be left to the ego or given to any other power.

The Mother, pp. 16-17.
(Found by Amal, April 26, 1931)

Divine grace... is not simply a mysterious flow or touch coming from above, but the all-pervading act of a divine presence which we come to know within as the power of the highest Self and Master of our being entering into the soul and so possessing it that we not only feel it close to us and pressing upon our mortal nature, but live in its law, possess it as the whole power of our spiritualised nature....

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. V. p. 353.
(Found by Nalinbehari, April 27, 1931)

We have to throw away the props of our weakness, the motives of the ego, the lures of our lower nature before we can deserve the divine union.

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. IV. p. 600.
(Found by Champaklal, April 28, 1931)

A transcendent Bliss, unimaginable and inexpressible by the mind and speech, is the nature of the Ineffable. That broods immanent and secret in the whole universe and in everything in the universe.... And this spiritual bliss is here also in our hearts.

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The very spirit of Yoga is this, to make the exceptional normal, and to turn that which is above us and greater than our normal selves into our own constant consciousness.

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. V. pp. 156-7.
(Found by Datta — The Mother, May 2, 1931)

This delight which is so entirely imperative, is the delight in the Divine for his own sake and for nothing else, for no cause or gain whatever beyond itself. It does not seek God for anything that he can give us or for any particular quality in him, but simply and purely because he is our self and our whole being and our all.

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. V. p. 95.
(Found by Datta, May 2, 1931)

There is no profit in disputing about these standpoints. Wait until you see God and know yourself and Him and then debate and discussion will be unnecessary.

The goal marked out for us is not to speculate about these things, but to experience them. The call upon us is to grow into the image of God, to dwell in Him and with Him and be a channel of His joy and might and an instrument of His works.

The Yoga and Its Object, p. 39.
(Found by Datta, May 2, 1931)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of September, 1972)

(These talks are from the notebooks of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others after the accident to his right leg in November, 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becharlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshankar. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)

June 19, 1940

P: The Berlin paper says that when Germany asked for peace in the last war, the Allies did not reply for six weeks. Why should they expect a reply in two days? Let them remember Versailles.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then what the Mother says may be true that the Germans will keep silent so that the French army may be crushed in the meantime.

P: Churchill says in his speech that almost all the British troops of about three and a half lakhs have been removed in a few days.

SRI AUROBINDO: Three and a half lakhs? Then he must be referring to the Flanders troops. For if they had sent such a big army the French people would not have quarrelled over insufficient British help.

N: But it has been said, "Three and a half lakhs during these few days."

SRI AUROBINDO: There must be some confusion. Pavitra may have made some mistake. Churchill is usually very clear in his statements.

N: In some papers there was a complaint against inadequate supplies to France.

P: That can't be true after Churchill's speech.

SRI AUROBINDO: No. They sent three and a half lakhs to Flanders and their best troops. After the Battle of Flanders, they sent only three divisions and Churchill has already said that it would take a long time to recover from the Flanders disaster. He asked that they should be properly equipped. Without the proper equipment it is sheer foolishness to send troops to fight against Germany. He promised Reynaud that he would send 50,000 men and all available help.

P: Besides, the British have to keep a sufficient number to protect their own land.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course. Otherwise it would be a great danger. No, no, it is all French over-sensitiveness and suspiciousness. This is exactly what happened during the reign of Napoleon III — different political parties playing at governing

the country and that is how he was defeated.

P: There is still a notion among people that England will fight to the last Frenchman.

S: If that is so why are they calling France to unite with them?

SRI AUROBINDO: They may say that to make France another dominion.

S: But England sent her best troops and equipment to Flanders.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so; besides if France falls, England knows that it will be difficult for her to survive.

P: Some eye-witness describes that there is no organisation, no equipment in the French army. They do not know what is happening. They think that a truce has been declared; so fighting is stopped and Germany is marching rapidly to take advantage.

N: And the troops also became demoralised after the truce proclamation.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, the loss at Flanders, the capitulation of Paris and the truce have demoralised them. They may think, 'What is the use of being killed when we are going to surrender tomorrow?' Of course as soldiers they will fight, but with no heart.

England has not shown any military genius but she has shown power of organisation while France has shown neither military nor organisational power. Gamelin is a fraud and Weygand and Pétain too old. Weygand has done nothing remarkable. Neither has any other military genius shown himself.

P: England is now preparing vigorously.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, if Hitler gives them one year more, they will be tremendously powerful. Both Daladier and Chamberlain seem to be impotent. They have done nothing at all.

The Mother says that Hitler has asked for all French colonies contiguous to the British. That means we go to Germany. (*Laughter*)

N: I do not think Hitler has heard the name of Pondicherry.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh yes. He knows every detail. In Germany they have schools for giving people such training and they know every town, every street in France and England. In the Kaiser's time it is said he knew even the location of trees in some places. Now it is more thorough. Japan and Germany are the most thoroughly organised countries.

EVENING

S: Some people here say that nothing happens without the sanction of the Divine Will and that nothing happens against Sri Aurobindo's Will. I want to know if that is so. Germany's taking Czechoslovakia, Poland and other countries and bringing about the War — was all this sanctioned by your Will? You said at that time you did not want war.

SRI AUROBINDO: The will was that there must be no war. But I didn't want

this will to be effected at the cost of betraying Czechoslovakia. Is the fight going on in France due to my will? It is due to her own Karma.

S: That is what I thought but you seem to have written to somebody that no major event happens against your Will.

SRI AUROBINDO: To whom and when have I written?

P: Oh, I know. I think he is referring to Dilip's letter. You once wrote to him during the Abyssinian war that you have seen that whenever you have willed something, invariably it has been fulfilled.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is a different matter. I willed in my boyhood that Ireland and Alsace-Lorraine should be free. Then I willed things which I forgot and afterwards they were fulfilled. Again, other things I willed, which I now don't want to be fulfilled, but they are and in a way which I don't want. I wanted the British Empire to be crushed and Hitler is now doing it in such a thorough fashion that I don't want it any more because Hitler has become a greater danger. (*Laughter*) Does it mean I willed that my leg should be broken? or France should be defeated?

S: That is what I said to them.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but that does not mean absence of consent. The Divine may consent to things and events happening, whose results may not be favourable for the present, but may lead to some utility in the future. The Divine doesn't see things from the human mental point of view or only from the present and immediate results. Perhaps people think that the Divine is like a Super-Mussolini according to whose Will everything must turn. And when a person descends to do some particular work for the Divine, he accepts the play of forces and works through that play so that ultimately the Divine Will may prevail and fulfill itself; for the moment the forces may conquer and the Divine Will withdraw, as said in the Bhagavad Gita. Did not Sri Krishna have to leave the battle? The Divine foresees and provides for everything in the original plan but that plan carries out through the play of forces whatever the ultimate purpose is. The Divine does not take up each particular thing and say that it must be done, that it must happen and so on—unless there is some Supreme Vision to be imperatively carried out.

S: Besides, when he comes down into limited matter he himself becomes limited to some extent.

SRI AUROBINDO: That limitation is a self-imposed limitation. Christ knew that he would be crucified and yet it was not the whole of him that wanted crucifixion.

Some human part didn't want it and he prayed, "O God, let this cup be passed to somebody else." Everything that happens can be said to happen according to the Divine Will.

S: That is a religious idea.

SRI AUROBINDO: Only people who have reached a certain stage of consciousness can say that. For they see and know what is behind the play of things. For others it is only faith. And faith is sometimes very ignorant.

N: Have you read Arthur Moore's article? He has pleaded very strongly for

Dominion Status.

S: Many Europeans are now coming to it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it is only the Bureaucracy, tied up in their old tradition and routine, that doesn't see things.

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

INLOOKS

AN imperceptible unworldly waft of air is here —
 A music that is tasted by heart's poise,
 Echo of some supremely perfect touch.
 Words break from lips moved by the beyond-limits of Grace;
 Hearts humble in a rapture auraed by Thy Godliness
 Are held forever between mighty Golden Hands.
 We look in the mirror of the past and see
 A vague vaporous mortality.
 The Lord gives a magic touch to all we are
 And, lightened, we lift to that ineffable Sun.

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The wind blows, the trees thrash their leaves against the rain,
 A grey veil falls.
 My quiet heart of peace and love comes forth —
 I speak not, and the truth is heard.

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OM-shrouded by the invisible, clinging to clay
 Are eyes that have opened upward their blind gaze —
 And in their seeded depths is the lighted sound
 Of the forgotten Infinite.

L

A TALK BY NIRODBARAN

WELL, friends, I am glad to find that you have taken interest in our medical correspondence, so I have the heart to continue. It is a special subject (medical) as all of you know, but very much made general by the marvellous and miraculous pen of our Master, as whatever he touches becomes gold.

There was a young man here whom the Mother sent to me for training when I was working in the Dispensary. He was a young man of bright promise, he had a pretty face, more like that of a girl but he had a very restless vital. He could not keep quiet for two minutes. He had read a great deal of Sri Aurobindo's literature and could perorate on Intuition and give me lectures on it! (*Laughter*) I think reading so much had done him a lot of harm. After some years he decided to go away because he could not educate his vital to the atmosphere.... I went to see him off at the station and the poor fellow was crying his heart out, shedding tears, tears, tears — flowing like the Ganges. So I wrote to Sri Aurobindo: "It is really a pity that J is going with so many divided parts in him. His vital was always very active." Sri Aurobindo wrote back: "He is going with tears and full of blessings. Perhaps it is the 'part' you speak of that calls him — his horoscope was found to be brilliant and almost Leninesque. Perhaps one day you will gaze at the figure of *pāglā* J. (I think that is Mridu's description.)"

Yes, the epithet meaning "mad" was Mridu's. Sri Aurobindo had the habit of picking up, from here and there, epithets or words of *rasa*!

His reply continued: "You will gaze at the figure of *pāglā* J... presiding over the destinies of a Communist India!! Why not? Hitler in his 'handsome Adolf' days was not less *pāglā* or pretty, so there is a chance."

MYSELF: "Really, how things happen here so suddenly! He had been laughing, joking, and dancing, then one day I find he has turned quite a different man, morose, muttering, etc.."

SRI AUROBINDO: "That is because he is listening to *voices* and feeling *influences*, Anilbaran's and others, *e.g.*, Nolini's. Imagine Nolini engaged in dark and sinister occult operations to take possession of somebody." (*Laughter*)

So J was dabbling in occultism and he wrote to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo about it.

MYSELF: "You said something about the 'intermediate zone'. I thought it was sex-trouble that was taking him away."

SRI AUROBINDO: "Sex-trouble, ego-trouble, occult-power trouble."

MYSELF: "I had an idea that the intermediate zone is something that one is likely to tumble into after doing a great progress in sadhana. I find that there is some similarity between him and X."

SRI AUROBINDO: "Anybody passing the border of the ordinary consciousness

can enter into this zone, if he doesn't take care to enter into the psychic. In itself there is no harm in passing through provided one does not stop there. But ego, sex, ambition etc., if they get exaggerated, can easily lead them to the path of X and Co.

"People who are ambitious, try to get power, try to become big Yogis etc., ... there is every chance that they will tumble into this intermediate zone and it will be extremely difficult to bring them out of it because it is a 'valley of false glimmer'."

Now this young man's ambition, you'll see —

MYSELF: "About himself, once he said to me that he was trying to solve the sex-problem of the Ashram!" — A boy of 19 or 20, imagine!

SRI AUROBINDO: "So did X — he solved it finally by joining his wife." (*Laughter*) While he was writing this letter, there were some blots of ink, so he wrote within brackets: "[N.B. Sir, it is your pen that is making these blots.]" I had sent him a pen as an offering. It was a big pen, somebody had given it to me. I had written to him:

"You will find something in my famous bag, which may startle you.... The size and everything will suit you best though the nib may not, and hence I send it to you that your writing may flow in rivers in my book, not in a few stingy lines."

Sri Aurobindo's answer:

"Good Lord! What a Falstaff of a fountain pen. But it is not the pen that is responsible for the stinginess; the criminal is Time and with a fat pen he can be as niggardly as with a lean one."

Then about J. I continued with the subject; I wouldn't leave him so easily because anybody going away from the Ashram gave me a great shock.

MYSELF: "Really I don't understand how, with so much love for you, such is the result."

SRI AUROBINDO: "Yes, but the vital got into the love and that always creates trouble, unless the vital agrees to be under the control of the psychic."

MYSELF: "It is as if the psychic is crying and crying but other parts are dragging him away."

SRI AUROBINDO: "Quite true. But the psychic is weak, the mind erratic, the vital restless and over-eager. Hence this result."

MYSELF: "Is this intermediate zone such a beastly thing that you can't draw anyone out of it in spite of his bearing so much love for you?"

SRI AUROBINDO: "The difficulty is that if I draw him out, he runs back to it. These people feel a tremendous attraction to the wrong influences and call them back. It is because in the absence of the occult experiences they feel ordinary and dull — and there are people who like to be extraordinary. I did pull out G but he became as flat as a pancake and would do nothing more in the sadhana, because naturally I refused to put any more power upon him as he might misuse it." — G is the person about whom Amal spoke to you in one of his talks, giving you the memorable phrase about his downfall: "Undermined by Overmind." Let us note that these experiences come because there is a key which opens their way, and it can at once close when it likes. We thought that it was our power, so many of us have run into nemesis, think-

ing we had become great Yogis and could become Gurus ourselves and establish Ashrams. So it is very significant. — “Others also when I cured their extravagances, complained that they felt so ‘ordinary’ and shouted for their extravagant influences back again. There are always plenty of forces ready to answer a call like that. How often did I cudgel B and bring him back to his senses and he became quite clairvoyant and lucid for a time. But always he went back to his central Extravagance — mistaking his Ego for the Divine.”

So this is the pitfall of the intermediate zone. That is why the Mother in the first page of her *Conversations* warns us that if we have any ambition we must not touch Yoga, it is fire. You have seen how some people have tried to concentrate and concentrate and pull the Force down, the result is not at all good, though they think that they have become great Yogis. But I am happy to note that there is no such danger among the young folk. The reason is obvious —

That ends this episode — Yogic, occult. Perhaps many of you won’t understand how a person begins well, but does not always end well; it is because of our impurities, in spite of which we try to achieve something.

Now the next thing is more medical, and I hope you will enjoy it.

SRI AUROBINDO: “René is sending me charts of the fever temperature of his cousin Bidrunnissa (an Ashram nomenclature) who has been suffering from typhoid enteric (so the Colonel Doc. of Hyderabad says) with affection of the chest which was suspected to be pneumonia. Now in his first chart the progresses were 104⁰, 103⁰, 102⁰, 101⁰ and an uninstructed layman could understand but what are these damned medical hieroglyphs

30 — 112
26 — 118
E 24 — 110
24 — 110 ”

— The Divine also swears, a very modern Avatar! (*Laughter*) When I first came across this word ‘damned’ in Sri Aurobindo’s writing, it gave me a good shock of delight. (*Laughter*) Then I said I could also swear as much as I liked, particularly when patients came to me — you understand. (*Laughter*) Then, I got a chance, since he didn’t leave me when he got a chance. Why should I miss mine? So I wrote:

“Now, Sir, about the ‘damned medical hieroglyphs’ you don’t understand, though I don’t understand why you don’t If you only read Sherlock Holmes, science of deduction and analysis which I have done lately you would have at once understood my remark.”

SRI AUROBINDO: “Sherlock Holmes arranges his facts beforehand and then detects them, unlike the doctors.” (*Laughter*)

MYSELF: “Well, Sir, keep the chart vertically, then it should at once be clear to you that the red line is the normal temperature line — 98⁰ 6 and the fever would be about 101⁰ 8. Then the figures below — what would they be? Well, your long association with doctors should have taught you that in a fever chart the pulse-rate is recorded

with the temperature. Didn't your doctor acquaint you with such a chart?"

SRI AUROBINDO: "Never gave me one, so far as I remember; I mean not of this problematic kind."

MYSELF: "If that be so, between those pairs of damned figures one must be of the pulse — and which is it? Surely not 30, 26 because with that rate no charts would have been sent to you. What are these 30, 26, 24 and 24 then? Just a little bit of cool thinking would again point out, Sir, that they are respiration rates — the normal being 20, or 22. Now is it all simple and easy or is it not?"

SRI AUROBINDO: "No, sir, it is not. What's the normal respiration rate anyhow? 32 below zero or 116° above? (N.B. zero not Fahrenheit but Breathenheim). Naturally, I knew it must be the pulse, but what are the unspeakable 30 and 24's attached to them? And I didn't want the pulse, I wanted the temperature. However your red line which I had not noticed sheds a new light on the matter, so that is clear now. I was holding it horizontal because of its inordinate length."

MYSELF: "Can you but say the same thing about your Yogic hieroglyphs? By Jove, no!"

SRI AUROBINDO: "There are no hieroglyphs in Yoga except the dreams and visions — symbols — and nobody is expected to understand these things." (*Laughter*)

MYSELF: "Let the Sherlockian vein be pardoned. One independent criticism. I don't know how they suspect pneumonia with a respiration rate of only 30, 26. It should bound up to at least 40. With a temperature of 102°, it is only 24!"

SRI AUROBINDO: "Well, both the Docs. did that and one is a mighty man there, the Doctor of Doctors. But perhaps it is the fashion in Hyderabad to breathe like that when one has pneumonia. Anyhow pn. seems to have dropped out of the picture, and the 'D of Ds' tells only of typhoid and impossible reactivity of inactive germs of tuberculosis.

But what about E? Extravagant? Eccentric? Épatant?" (*Laughter*)

MYSELF: I chuckled, Sir, to learn that you held the paper horizontally because of its length! And E is none of those high-sounding extravagant words. If you had just looked about you for a moment lifting your eyes from the Correspondence, you would have discovered that E stands for nothing but a simple *Evening*. Clear?" (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: "No. What has evening to do with it? Evening star? Twinkle, twinkle, evening star! How I wonder what your temperatures are!" But I suppose, sir, James Jeans knows and doesn't wonder. But anyhow E for Evening sounds both irrelevant and poetic."

MYSELF: "No, Sir, it is not at all irrelevant, though poetic. I swear it is Evening. You know they take the pulse and respiration rates morning and evening of which M and E are shorthand. One of these I suppose you will make Mad and the other you have divined! But what is this 'Jones Jones knows and doesn't wonder?'"

SRI AUROBINDO: "Jeans, Jeans, Jeans — not Jones!"

Sir James Jeans, sir, who knows all about temperatures, weight and other family

details of the stars, including E.”

Then he wrote to me after three or four days, perhaps after communication had gone on between Hyderabad and the Ashram, and the answer had come.

“By the way what do you mean by deceiving me about E in the Hyderabad fever chart? (*Laughter*) René wrote that E is the entry in the *Motions* column; it evidently means enema. Poetry indeed! (*Laughter*) Sunset colours indeed! (*Laughter*) Enema, sir! Motions, sir! Compared with that, ling bling” — I shall tell you about it later — “is epically poetic.” (*Laughter*)

Then I wrote back with an all-humble apology, as you can understand. You see he was not convinced, His intuition told him not to be.

MYSELF: “I beg your pardon, Sir! Enema didn’t strike me at all. But I hope it didn’t make any difference in the working of your Force unless you enematised the patient too much! It is, however, a pleasure to learn that one can deceive the Divine”. (*Laughter*)

He wrote back, he would never be defeated! (*Laughter*)

“If the Divine chooses to be deceived, anyone can deceive him — just as he can run away from the battle (*palāyanamapi*). You are evidently not up to the tricks of the Lila.” (*Laughter*)

A VISION ON FEBRUARY 21, 1972

AN American and a Christian Indian were looking for the American's girl friend, and came to Pondicherry. While walking in the streets they saw a huge crowd of people and decided to see what was happening. They asked a man nearby. He told them that this was the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, home of the Mother who was 94 years old today, Feb. 21st, and was giving Darshan in a few minutes. All those people were waiting to see her. The two fellows decided to stay and see what it was like.

After a short time, the Mother came out on the balcony, stayed for a few minutes, then went inside. The Indian said to his friend: "That lady was no more than forty! I thought they said she was ninety-four today." The friend said that he *had* seen a 94 year old lady. The Indian swore that she was no more than forty and began to question the people around him. He told them that they were all being tricked, that it was all a hoax, that someone maybe was masquerading as the Mother, but this lady was *not* 94. He became very intense, and finally some people took him inside the Ashram and showed him some pictures recently taken of the Mother. He said no, this was not She. He was convinced that the entire Ashram was under an illusion.

The next day, the American and the Indian went to see M. P. Pandit. The Indian showed obvious signs of strain and tension. He related to Pandit what he had seen. Pandit explained to him what this yoga of transformations was about, who the Mother was, who Sri Aurobindo was, and the fact that we are not composed of just our outer body, but of a subtle body also. This subtle body of the Mother's was what the Indian had seen. He had had an opening of the subtle vision, even unknown to himself.

Pandit later showed him a picture of the Mother taken in 1950, but the Indian said no, she had been even younger. He spotted another picture in the office, when the Mother had been in Japan in 1916, as a young woman with brown hair tied back in a bun. He said *that* was She.

Pandit later told the whole story to the Mother, who was very amused and pleased, and confirmed that the Indian had truly seen her as she looks in her subtle body. She sent down the picture to the Indian as a gift from her. He told Pandit that he was almost entirely convinced after listening to his explanation. He had never heard of the Ashram before and had been on his way to Australia. But he decided to stay a few days and see what it was like.

Pandit said that we only see the Mother's outer sheath, which is 94 years old. Her transformed subtle body is fully ready behind, but has not yet precipitated itself in the outer layers of the being, though some others also have had glimpses of it.

From L'OIZO GAZOUILLE, Montreal, Quebec, Canada,
partly revised by M. P. Pandit for *Mother India*.

SRI AUROBINDO: ARCHITECT OF INDIA'S FREEDOM

(Continued from the issue of July, 1972)

IV

BLUE-PRINT OF REVOLUTION

The Incentives

WHAT is it that made Sri Aurobindo's thoughts turn towards revolution? This is an intriguing question to which it is difficult to give a precise answer; one can only speculate, basing oneself on certain very meagre data.

In his letter to his wife, Sri Aurobindo refers to his desire for freeing his country: to this we have already referred.¹ There he says, "the seed began to sprout at the age of fourteen; at the age of eighteen, its foundation became firm and immovable."² We are left to speculate as to what exactly happened and under what circumstances.

In 1886, Sri Aurobindo went to St. Paul's. There, he mentioned once to some disciples in a private talk, "up to the age of fifteen I was known as a very promising scholar, after fifteen I lost that reputation."³ What had happened? Was it that his mind was turned more and more towards the problem of India? We know from his own statement that at St. Paul's, "in the last three years [that is, during the period from 1887 to 1889], he simply went through his school course and spent most of his spare time in general reading, especially English poetry, literature and fiction, French literature and the history of ancient, medieval and modern Europe...."⁴ He has also recorded that "his father began [perhaps about this time?] sending *The Bengalee* newspaper with passages marked relating cases of maltreatment of Indians by Englishmen, and in his letters, he denounced the British Government in India as a heartless Government.... His attention was now drawn to India and this feeling was soon canalised into the idea of the liberation of his own country. But the "firm decision" took full shape only towards the end of another four years [that is, at the age of eighteen already mentioned?]"⁵

Shall we then be justified in concluding that his father's newspaper cuttings fired him with indignation, that he plunged himself into a study of History, ancient, medieval and modern, to find out in detail how other peoples and nations had fought for their independence — ancient Athens against Persia and Sparta, medieval France against England, modern America and Italy against England and Austria — and that these studies had given a clue to the problem that led to the "firm decision"? We know it for a fact — and this will be illustrated more than once as we proceed with this story — that Sri Aurobindo never undertook anything serious without a thorough

previous preparation, and his "many revolutionary speeches" at the Indian Majlis at Cambridge could not have been the usual undergraduate stunts; had they been so, they could not have "had their part in determining the authorities to exclude him from the Indian Civil Service."⁶ It may be added that the literature of England and also of France, to which Sri Aurobindo devoted himself during the last three years of school, is a literature of freedom. And the course of training in British Indian History, British Indian Economics, Administration and Law, which he had to undergo as an I.C.S. Officer on Probation during his two years at Cambridge must have added fuel to the flame.

The Choice of Method

What precisely were his plans which he along with C.R. Das and many others used to make while in England?⁷

They were obviously not in line with the policy of slow advance through prayers and petitions which was at the time the Congress view of the matter; for we find him immediately on his return to India in 1893 exposing the hollowness of the Congress policy in the *Induprakash* articles. His plans may not have been to organise passive resistance and launch a boycott of British goods at once, although Napoleon's scheme of hitting England in the belly through his Continental System may have given Sri Aurobindo an idea. Napoleon's brilliant scheme could not succeed mainly because he could not get the nations of Europe to accept the boycott of British goods. If the scheme was to succeed in India, the nation must first be made ready to accept it, and there was no immediate chance of that in India. History had so far recorded only one means of freeing a nation from foreign domination, and that was war, either through a small number of decisive encounters in the open field, or through a series of small engagements spread over a number of years — the type that has come to be known as guerilla warfare. This too needed preparation, but once the preparations were adequate, the chances of success in a country so rich in potential man-power and resources were well worth the risk. This, we may guess, was the plan adopted by Sri Aurobindo in his early days.

Was it a utopian scheme? Sri Aurobindo has explained that it was not so at the time. "At that time, the military organisation of the great empires and their means of military action were not so overwhelming and apparently irresistible as they now are; the rifle was still the decisive weapon, air power had not yet been developed and the force of artillery was not so devastating as it afterwards became. India was disarmed, but Sri Aurobindo thought that with proper organisation and help from outside this difficulty might be overcome, and in so vast a country as India and with the smallness of regular British armies, even a guerilla warfare accompanied by general resistance and revolt might be effective. There was also the possibility of a general revolt in the Indian army."⁸ It is useful here to mention certain experiments of the past, to which Sri Aurobindo himself was to point, though necessarily in a veiled

reference, in his articles in the *Yugantar** on the question of war. America too was partially disarmed when it decided to fight the British empire; and it got substantial help from France and Spain once it had launched into war. The method of guerilla warfare accompanied by general resistance had shown marvellous results in the case of the Mahratta rising under Shivaji, and again in Spain against the Napoleonic invasion; its utility was to be proved again in the Boer war of 1899-1903, when a small number of armed peasants could hold at bay for a long time the much more numerous and better equipped British troops. The possibility of a general revolt in the Indian army could not be altogether discounted in spite of the failure of 1857; that failure, Sri Aurobindo was to point out in the *Yugantar*, had been largely due to the Indian troops engaging in open battle instead of resorting to guerilla warfare.

In sum, the choice of method depended entirely on the needs of the situation. "In a country where the government in power tyrannises over its subjects with the help of physical force, it is impossible to bring about a revolution or change of government through moral force. There the subjects too have to have recourse to physical force."⁹ And "any kind of war or political stratagem (*chālanā*) is pardonable, nay, is conducive to glory (*guaravajanaka*) for the preservation of one's country and freedom."¹⁰ These views, expressed through the *Yugantar* in 1906, seem to be amply corroborated by what Sri Aurobindo was to record later: "Sri Aurobindo is neither an impotent moralist nor a weak pacifist."¹¹

Planning Revolution

It was not the "morality" of revolution but the practical steps to bring it about that was to preoccupy his thoughts on his return to India.

One may note here that velleities of "revolution" had been present in some minds already. We know from Tagore's *Reminiscences* how they used to dream of freeing India through a revolution by lighting a few candles at dead of night and fixing them on a dead man's skull; this was perhaps meant to be a symbol of courageous action, one does not know. Vivekananda, says Sri Aurobindo, "had spells of revolutionary fervour",¹² but there is no evidence that this went far beyond the verbal stage, although it might have turned his favourite disciple Nivedita into a revolutionary leader: "whenever she used to speak on revolution it was her very soul, her true personality that came out."¹³ Sri Aurobindo also met several Rajput Thakurs (that is, small princes) who had revolutionary ideas and tendencies.¹⁴ In Bengal too, apart from one or two other sannyasis whom Sri Aurobindo mentions by name,¹⁵ and who he says had revolutionary ideas, a party of revolution had actually been formed in Calcutta around the turn of the century under the leadership of the Japanese patriot and art critic, Baron Okakura; but the party had no organisation at all, and "their programme was to beat up some magistrates", that is all.¹⁶

* A weekly paper that had been started at the instance of Sri Aurobindo, in Bengali, to preach open revolt against British rule. It did its work between April 1906 and September 1907.

It was obvious that something more was needed to free India of the foreign yoke, a more deliberate plan of action and systematic work to carry out the plan. Sri Aurobindo may have exchanged ideas with some of his closest friends in Baroda — K. G. Deshpande, Madhav Rao, and possibly Tilak. And he must have given some definite instructions to Barin Ghose and Jatin Banerji when they were deputed to organise the revolutionary movement in Bengal around 1902. He met Nivedita who came to Baroda about this time, and seemed to have secured her services as a trusted lieutenant; she “went about among the Thakurs of Rajputana trying to preach to them revolution,”¹⁷ and kept in touch with Sri Aurobindo while he was in Bengal. But all this was done with such consummate secrecy that no one outside the revolutionary group had the slightest inkling of what was going on in the mind of Sri Aurobindo. Dinendra Kumar Roy, who lived with him for some years in Baroda to help him speak Bengali, has recorded his immense surprise that Sri Aurobindo could turn into a revolutionary.¹⁸

What Sri Aurobindo planned to do was nothing short of high treason punishable with the direst penalty under the law. It was an act of supreme audacity, and secrecy was imperative.

Daring Disclosures

It was again an act of supreme audacity that prompted him to divulge some of his plans to the nation, through the *Yugantar* articles under the captions “*Bartaman Rananiti*” and “*Mukti kon Pathe*” (“Present-day Warfare” and “Which Way Freedom?”) The authorship of these articles is not entirely free from doubt, for they are not signed articles, and the exact date of their publication cannot now be ascertained with precision. We have it on the testimony of Sri Aurobindo himself that he “wrote some of the opening articles in the early numbers and he always exercised a general control” over the paper.¹⁹ But whether these articles on warfare appeared in the early numbers is more than we can say. All that can be asserted about them with some confidence is that they show a consummate mastery of the details of military history and the science of modern war, and the language and style are far enough removed from the racy vernacularism that marked the usual *Yugantar* manner. It seems therefore to be reasonably certain that these articles were from the pen of Sri Aurobindo himself.

“There are,” he says, “two stages in bringing about a revolution: first, the building up of public opinion, second, the collection of arms (*paśubala*). Both are indispensable...”

“Revolution is only for the good of the people; there cannot be a revolution simply in order to satisfy the whim of some particular persons. Therefore, the people have their work explained to them....”

“All cannot at once awake to the utility of revolution. For there are many who are ignorant, therefore afraid and reluctant, some are well-informed, but entirely self-seeking; only a few are endowed with the fullness of manhood. Public opinion

is created by these handful of spirited men; all work depends on the industry of these few.

“Their number is very small, but each one of them is like a spark of fire; these sparks create a forest fire out of the cinders of ignorance and ignobility. Such was the case in Russia, France, Italy....”²⁰

The following are some of the important means of creating this kind of public opinion:

1) Newspapers: nothing can do it faster than newspaper editorials; they can electrify the public mind.

2) Music: national songs can win the hearts of people by telling them of the glories of days gone by; they can create a keen sense of want, witness the use of Charan music by Shivaji.

3) Literature: novels and dramas have to fill the mind of the people with ideas of freedom, through appropriate characters and plots

4) Secret Societies: these are meant for the select few; they help them crystallise their plans of work, witness the Russian Nihilists.²¹

Next, the question of collecting arms.

Sri Aurobindo begins by an axiom: “if there is a firm determination and will to achieve, arms come of themselves.”

The question of morality does not enter here. “Even if it becomes necessary to collect money (for the arms) by thefts and robberies, there is no hesitating on the part of the nation that has set its mind on freedom...”

“Three chief methods are followed by every such nation:

1) Manufacturing arms in a secret place, witness America and Russia. The making of arms is not such an unheard-of thing as to be beyond our intellectual capacity. Men can be sent abroad to learn the techniques, so that they can teach them on coming back.

2) Import of arms from abroad: most countries have private arms manufacturers who thrive on the needs of revolutionaries abroad.

3) Help from Indian troops: in every country there are many among the regular troops who share the views and feelings of the revolutionaries. When they are explained the needs, they fill the needs of the revolutionaries when the time comes, witness the French Revolution.

4) Secret supplies from other States: witness France helping the revolutionaries of Italy.”²²

The Art of War

But in a country like India, especially with a people like the Bengalis who had not known the use of modern arms and were wholly unacquainted with the art of modern warfare — the last battle fought on Bengal's soil was in 1757 at Plassey and Plassey was little more than a skirmish — it was an imperative necessity to impart some knowledge about these two things. That is what Sri Aurobindo proceeded to

do in the long series of articles in the *Yugantar* entitled *Bartaman Rana-niti*, with consummate ability and technical knowledge. He begins the series with a detailed description of the types of fire-arms at that time in use, the respective qualities of the different manufactures — he had high praise for the Japanese and the German rifles—their range and fire-power, and the best way to handle them. He proceeds next to a masterly analysis of strategy and the many forms of tactics that were found to be of use in the two recent wars, the Boer and the Russo-Japanese; it showed how closely he had studied these wars, as if with the eye of an expert. And he managed to expound the science of successful war in the guise of an historical study, without presumably raising any suspicions in the minds of the authorities. For, it must be noted that the *Yugantar* was later prosecuted, not on the ground of preaching war, but because of its scurrilous attacks on the bureaucracy, and the penalty imposed on the editor was not death or transportation but a short term of prison. He concludes the series with a brilliant exposition of the qualities needed of the soldiers and the captains and generals who lead them. Among the qualities required of both, a high place has been given to the sense of righteousness (*dharmaprāṇatā*) and devotion to country (*svadeśa-prāṇatā*), in addition to those of courage, endurance, marksmanship, intelligence and strength of body. But victory in war depends, as everybody knows, more on the generalship than on the troops. And it was the qualities of generalship that he expounded at length in this early exposition. An immense patience and determination, a constant cheerfulness, and above all, an unflinching love and kindness towards the lower ranks are emphasised more than anything else.²³

It is obvious that these qualities and a mastery of the art of war can be acquired only with a long and systematic training, which cannot be carried out in secret. But “if Bengalis make up their minds to get this kind of training, they can at least acquire the war-like qualities of courage, strength of body, endurance, skill in horsemanship by their own unaided efforts. They can also master the secrets of the science of modern war through study and publicity.”²⁴ It is however not desirable to prepare for open war, until the possibilities of guerilla methods are exhausted, and — Sri Aurobindo emphasised this point in the *Yugantar* articles, — in a country like India where the distances are enormous and there is ample scope for obtaining cover owing to the geographical configuration, the methods of guerilla warfare are particularly suitable. “In this form of war,...the insurgents divide themselves up into a number of small units and cover the entire country like locusts, and render the enemy forces impotent (*akarmaṇya*) by looting their provisions, ammunitions and arms. Wherever they find an opportunity, they fall upon small units of the enemy forces and destroy them and, by creating disturbed conditions all over the country, dislocate the financial administration through the stoppage of all trade and commerce.... Even a huge army cannot beat these small units, because the entire country is turned thus into a huge battlefield.... The guerilla units get their supplies from the people;...and the longer the state of disturbance continues, the weaker becomes the power of the administration through the loss of trade and revenues and the resultant economic distress at home. ...

In course of time, the trained soldiers of the native army get infected with the spirit of revolt and...join the guerilla forces, as do the ferocious hill tribes who get excited at the sight of battle. Finally, the youth of the country gradually become experts in wielding arms; the guerilla war itself becomes an admirable training ground for regular war, if one becomes necessary.”²⁵

Here then was a complete blue-print of Revolution. How far it was to be worked upon, and the active part Sri Aurobindo was to play in it will be considered in the sequel.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

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THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE

A SEARCH APROPOS OF R. C. ZAEHNER'S STUDY IN SRI AUROBINDO AND TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

(Continued from the issue of September, 1972)

5

ZAEHNER'S INTERPRETATION OF TEILHARD, THE QUESTION OF TEILHARD'S PANTHEISM

(a)

APART from the subject of rebirth, Zaehner's broad-mindedness, getting naturally infused into his survey of Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard, has most interestingly brought in some shades which his fellow-religionists would repudiate and which he does not himself appear to have properly gauged. His view of Teilhardism creates a picture which slants it towards Sri Aurobindo rather than the Roman Church

Equating the pantheistic experience with "cosmic consciousness" he¹ not only says that Teilhard was a pantheist by nature and that his temperament was thoroughly pantheistic; he² also says that Teilhard was never ashamed of having such a temperament and that he considered the pantheistic experience as the necessary first step towards realising a universe finally converging onto a personal Centre which is God. Absolutely anathema to Roman Catholicism is "cosmic consciousness" in the pantheistic sense that the whole universe can be experienced by the mystic as an inter-connectedness of being, which is one substance with God and not a creation out of nothing and substantially other than He. But pantheism — the secret identity of the cosmos with God — as a part of a total spiritual realisation, in which God is more than Pantheos, is welcome to Sri Aurobindo.

Even outside the question of cosmic consciousness, Zaehner inclines Teilhard towards Sri Aurobindo and not Roman Catholicism. Does he³ not say, as if both Teilhard and Sri Aurobindo meant the same thing on a basis of common spiritual metaphysics, that what Teilhard calls the "Soul of the world" and Sri Aurobindo "Supermind" is already in matter in an embryonic form? Again, he brings Teilhardism and the Gita into a common focus when he⁴ writes. "Christ, because he is both God and man, is the Centre to which all human 'centres', human 'selves' or

¹ *Evolution in Religion: A Study in Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 6, 20.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

'parts of God', as the *Gītā* (15.7) puts it, must look." To make the human self a part of God instead of a created entity is to assimilate pantheism into one's philosophy, as does the *Gītā* as well as Sri Aurobindo. Expounding the latter's view on the divisive "ego" born of Ignorance and preventing us "from seeing the whole universe as an interconnected and harmonious whole centred through the channel of Supermind on to the undivided Trinity from which it proceeds", Zaehner¹ rounds off with the words: "original Ignorance or original sin consists in identifying oneself with the body and mind rather than with the immortal 'person' which is eternal and a 'part' of God as the *Gītā* (16.7) puts it." The *Gītā* is quite in place in relation to Sri Aurobindo: if it is deemed equally in place in reference to Teilhard, Teilhardism is certainly unfrocked of its Jesuit priesthood and given an Aurobindonian garb.

Zaehner, in my opinion, is, in the last analysis, right in regarding pantheism as an ingredient of Teilhard's world-view. But the way he shows him to be a pantheist is an over-simplification. Teilhard could never really reject the label "pantheism" for his own religion, but he tried hard to distinguish false from true pantheism and called himself a Christian pantheist as opposed to a pagan one. Zaehner² explains what pagan pantheism is in Teilhard's eyes: "the vision of the inter-connectedness of all things in matter which does away with all that is conscious and personal, sacrificing it all to 'the rudimentary and diffused modes of being' characteristic of emergent life." A serious complication in this context is that "paganism" is a term, as Zaehner³ tells us, "by which Teilhard means Hinduism and Buddhism as well as nature mysticism in general". We shall touch on the complication later. At the moment we are concerned only with Teilhard's notion of non-Christian pantheism—namely, in Zaehner's words,⁴ "to merge back into the diffused state of primal matter, a state in which neither self-consciousness nor conscience has yet appeared". While referring to Hinduism and Buddhism as envisaged by Teilhard, in terms of pagan pantheism, Zaehner⁵ informs us of what Teilhard saw to be their revelation: "It is not a broadening of consciousness directed towards a universal Centre which is for him the Cosmic Christ but a merging and dissipation of the infant ego into the unconscious matter from which it had so laboriously evolved. It is essentially retrograde and the enemy of all progress." Well, how then can a revelation leading definitely away from the Universal Centre that is the Cosmic Christ be considered by Teilhard the sole possible beginning of a movement converging onto a personal Centre which is God? Surely Zaehner has tripped up here and landed in self-contradiction.

The cause of the mischance is Zaehner's idea that for Teilhard "cosmic consciousness" (or its equivalent "cosmic sense") and "pantheism" are interchangeable terms. So far as explicit statement is concerned, the exact opposite is the case. Teilhard uses several expressions in treating the theme "Cosmic mind" is one of them

¹ *Ibid*, pp. 39-40.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20

⁴ *Ibid*, pp 18-19.

³ *Ibid*, p. 18

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 18.

and he¹ has the phrase: "the cosmic mind (of which the pantheist mind is *only one particular form*)." He goes on to say that, facing the plurality of things, "the cosmic mind (which enjoys a cosmic vision) is primarily aware of *their common basis*. This basis seems to it to become continuously more luminous, real and individual — so much so that the particular determinations of concrete things tend to interest the soul less and less, as though they were dissolving into a higher entity. This transformation (or manifestation) of the universal stuff of the world, we should note, is an experienced psychological fact; in other words, it is an intuition, pre-intellectual in order and is not the fruit of a chain of reasoning. It is basically, therefore, beyond the reach of criticism: *it exists*. However, when we try to explain this — when the man who has that intuition tries to interpret and rationalize his feelings — we find ourselves at a loss. However the explanation may be expressed, it is generally wrong because the terms it uses are pantheist. In the language of pantheism the 'universal element' we glimpse is sought for in the direction of matter, or is, at least, conceived by *analogy with matter*". In another place Teilhard² observes: "Thus there develops in souls that have an unusual capacity for this special intuition a specifically characteristic psychic state — 'cosmic consciousness'. . . The pantheist universal element...does not meet the demands of cosmic consciousness, even though it is nevertheless presented as alone capable of satisfying its desires" In this context, too, he concludes: "Pantheism cannot satisfy a truly cosmic mind."

So just because "Teilhard himself admits that only a greater diffusion of the 'cosmic sense' can point the way to the cosmic Christ whom he sees at the end of our heavenward journey"³, Zaehner is not justified in dubbing Teilhard an open pantheist. And his mistake seems to have arisen from his own uncertain understanding of "cosmic consciousness". On the one hand, besides describing it in the words we have already cited, he⁴ quotes Bucke as saying: "cosmic consciousness shows the cosmos to consist not of dead matter governed by unconscious, rigid, and unthinking law; it shows it on the contrary as entirely immaterial, entirely spiritual and entirely alive; it shows that death is an absurdity, that everyone and everything has eternal life." And he⁵ also says: "what the mystic experiences in cosmic consciousness transcends time — he sees all things in one all-comprehensive sweep, in eternity, as God sees them." Then he makes the criticism that cosmic consciousness bypasses the problem of evil inasmuch as for it — to quote Bucke again — no evil ever did or ever will enter the universe. "For the mystic," Zaehner⁶ tells us, "the Absolute transcends all opposites; and it must therefore transcend good and evil too, fusing and uniting them in a higher synthesis." The by-passing of evil is done "either by writing it off as illusory or at most an appearance, as with Śankara, or by subsuming it and 'negating' it into that all-comprehensiveness which cosmic consciousness reveals".⁷ From this notice of what he calls "the great defect of mysticism"⁸ Zaehner proceeds to assert that cosmic

¹ *Writings in Time of War* (Collins, London, 1968), p. 270

² Zaehner, *Op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 6

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 291

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁸ *Ibid.*

consciousness destroys the distinction between good and evil because this consciousness is "the reflexion of the totality of matter within us".¹ Thus Bucke's experience of the entirely immaterial, spiritual and alive is turned into its antipodes. What is still more alarming, Zaehner² attributes to the Upanishads and to Sri Aurobindo the view that to have the cosmic consciousness is "to merge back into the diffused state of primal matter" — and he declares that "for the man who is merged in cosmic consciousness, in Brahman, good and evil no longer have any meaning", so that he is free to do anything, "for matter is not concerned with morals".³ Quite a tangled skein is here. The immediate thread we have to catch is that the cosmic consciousness which transcends good and evil in a higher synthesis is identified with the state of matter in which, because "neither self-consciousness nor conscience has yet appeared", "there is no sense of good and evil".⁴ So this consciousness is made to coincide with pantheism as Teilhard conceives it. a seeking of the "universal element" in "the direction of matter".

An additional inducement to paint Teilhard as an open pantheist is there in his double-aspected attitude to matter, and Zaehner appears to have succumbed to the snare. For, Teilhard does not stop with telling us how he, prompted by "the cosmic awakening," yielded to the enchantment of matter "in its most simple and unevolved state", "tried to extend myself throughout the universe, — boundlessly and without discernment", but found "that the light of life was being darkened within me."⁵ He goes beyond the conclusion of his experiment, namely: "To grow in the truth we must travel with our backs turned to matter and not try to make contact with it once more so as to merge into it."⁶ Being too much in love with matter to look down on it altogether, Teilhard, as Zaehner⁷ informs us, shows "with astonishing power in his little parable entitled *The Spiritual Power of Matter*" how worship of matter can "be pressed into the service of the new evolutionary mysticism which he calls the 'mysticism of the West'." By a new approach to matter, at once grappling with it and giving way to it and drawing upon its forces, a secret living intensity is discovered in its depths: "A Being was taking shape in the totality of space, a Being with the attractive power of a soul, palpable like a body, vast as the sky; a Being which mingled with things yet remained distinct from them; a Being of a higher order than the substance of things with which it was adorned, yet taking shape within them."⁸ Zaehner,⁹ though not unaware of the change involved, is still disposed to see a play of the "cosmic sense", and consequently of pantheism, as a stepping-stone to the Cosmic Christ when Teilhard says in *The Spiritual Power of Matter*: "Son of man, bathe yourself in Matter. Dive into it where it is at its most violent and deep. Struggle in its current and drink of its waves. It is she who cradled you when you were yet unconscious; and it is she

¹ *Ibid*, p 51.² *Ibid*, pp. 51 18-19.³ *Ibid*, p 21.⁴ *Ibid.*, p 19⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 20-22.⁶ *Ibid*, p. 22.⁷ *Ibid*, p 22.⁸ *Hymn of the Universe* (Harper & Row, New York, 1965), p. 68.⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

who will carry you right up to God."¹

Unlike his careful and perspicacious self in several parts of his book, Zaehner in all this context is rather badly mixed-up. However, the impetus to such a condition must be traced to a subtle ambivalence in Teilhard himself.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

Correction

In the Special Issue of August 15, 1972,
the footnote on p. 497 should read:

P. Barbier St. - Hilaire

¹ *The Hymn of the Universe*, p. 65.

THE ANTINOMY BETWEEN THE DIVINE PERFECTION AND THE PHENOMENAL WORLD

TWO LETTERS TO DR. J. N. CHUBB

I

YOUR talk¹ brilliantly weaves together quite a complex of philosophical and spiritual points of view. But I am rather fuzzy about one of them which may be formulated under two aspects shading off into each other.

You state as an undeniable fact of spiritual experience that, although from our imperfect world we can look towards the transcendent Perfection, once that Perfection is realised in inner experience there is nothing imperfect left. From the poise of the Transcendent we do not look towards anything imperfect: only the Perfect, the Divine is present everywhere. Thus the relation between the two — the Absolute and our phenomenal existence — is not bilateral but unilateral: the relation goes one way but does not return. This is the first aspect. The second is connected with the question of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga — the Yoga of Supramental Descent and Transformation. Raman Maharshi remarked, "Where is the Divine to descend from? The Divine is already here." And there is the reply of Anandamayi to the query whether, if we did this, that and the other, the world would become perfect. She said, "It is perfect already."

What do Raman and Anandamayi really mean? There are several meanings possible. (1) The world does not exist at all and what was taken as the world is seen as Brahman and nothing else. (2) The world exists but is seen in its inner reality and found, in the light of that reality, to constitute a divine harmony. (3) What existed as the world is seen, in the midst of an ineffable infinite absolute Reality, as a mere floating phantom which one would hardly honour with the name of definite existence.

The first is positively ruled out, for the contents of the world are certainly present to both Raman and Anandamayi when they are saying that what all, including Raman and Anandamayi, find around them is divine and perfect. Nor is the third meaning operative since they were not in the extreme state in which Sri Aurobindo was when he had the overwhelming Nirvanic experience and saw the city of Bombay like "a cinema's vacant shapes". As for the second meaning, it would still leave the world, in one mode, as what it is — a huge mass of undivine and imperfect material — in spite of a perfect and divine inner reality of it, and the divine harmony seen is the Great Whole where everything is found in its proper relation to everything else and to the Totality which acts in all and integrates all. This is

¹ "The Final Antinomy and the Two Truths, *Mother India*, July 1972, pp. 387-93.

the Cosmic Consciousness *à la* Bucke. But here a perfect Whole is achieved by harmonising imperfect parts. The imperfection of the parts — the non-divineness of the constituents — remains. So Raman and Anandamayi are to be understood not quite literally but somewhat Pickwickianly.

This does not render their revelation false, but their revelation can't be made the basis of the assertion that by their experience we get a one-way relation between the Divine and the world. It does not entail that when the Divine is realised, there is nothing imperfect left. Even in the illusionist experience a phantasmal world still persists, giving rise to the paradoxical concept of a real-unreal. In no spiritual experience — I mean no experience had in the waking state and not in a kind of super-sleep — does the world disappear as a *locus* of imperfection, an imperfection existing within a perfection. That, I suppose, is as it should be since the Upanishadic pronouncement has not only that Brahman is all and Brahman is in all but also that all is in Brahman.

Of course, on the higher planes the triple formula of the Upanishad indicates only the three existence-modes of the One who is the Many, the Identical who is the Diverse, whether manifested or unmanifested — and there is no question of imperfection: there is only the question of levels of perfection. But on the plane of evolution from an initial involution of the Divine, a starting from what seems the opposite of the Divine, the imperfection of objects cannot be negated or annulled by any spiritual experience. Sri Aurobindo realised even the physical bodies of Nirod, Champaklal, Purani and the others attending on him to be Brahman but he was aware at the same time that these bodies were in sore need of divinisation. He realised too that his own body, as well as the Mother's, needed to be transformed. In any spiritual realisation obtained so far, there has been no way of getting round the fact of "this transient and unhappy world", as the Gita puts it. The antinomy of the Absolute and the Relative has never been resolved. And nobody has even rightly conceived the proper terms of this antinomy, for they can be rightly conceived only in the present age of Aurobindonian Evolutionism. In this Evolutionism we have the transcendent Supermind holding high above our human condition a divine mind, a divine life-energy, a divine physicality and pressing down with them in answer to a cry from that delegate of itself in us, our soul, which develops from birth to birth, and helping the emergence of the divine mind, the divine life-energy, the divine physicality which lie hidden below our human condition in the depths of matter, the infinite Inconscient the Spirit has figured forth as its own contradiction and as the transcendent Supermind's hiding-place.

2

Your reply runs:

"I think the three possible interpretations you have given of the view that the world is already divine and perfect are not exhaustive. The Advaitic view is not that

the world does not exist or that it constitutes a divine harmony or that it is 'a mere floating phantom' but that the world exists (and is seen by the wise) as the non-dual Brahman. It is not the view of the world *sub specie aeternitatis* but as non-different from the Eternal Brahman. I do not think it is correct to say that 'in the illumined experience a phenomenal world still persists....' With the dawn of Knowledge illusory appearances disappear totally and the vision is only of the self-shining Brahman: *anirvacamya*¹ *māyā* is not presented to the eye of Knowledge since it is reduced to *tuccha*² *māyā*.

"I should like you to clarify the notion of 'levels of perfection'. How can any perfection be at a lower level? Is the lower level not a mode of imperfection?"

I shall begin with the Advaitic view (Shankara's, I suppose) which you summarise. It passes clean over my head by its giving with the left hand what it takes away with the right and by its running with the hare and hunting with the hounds and its wanting to eat its cake and still have it.

If the multiple world is non-dual to the eye of Knowledge and is only Brahman, then what exists is but non-dual Brahman: the multiple world has totally ceased to exist. If you tell me that what once existed as a multiple world exists now as the non-dual Brahman, I can understand your proposition, though without accepting the ultimate non-existence of the "snake" which the "rope" was taken for. It would amount to the "rope" being seen as a "rope" instead of as a "snake". But how am I to grasp the proposition that the "snake" exists and yet is seen wholly and exclusively as the "rope"? I submit that it is impossible to attach any meaning to the word "exists" under these conditions.

Raman Maharshi's remonstrance merely negates the existence of "overhead" planes from where Sri Aurobindo wants the Supramental Divine to descend or else Raman affirms the sameness of the Divine whether "overhead" or not and thereby sets aside the necessity of any alleged descent. I cannot read here a denial of the phenomenal world's existence in the illumined experience.

Anandamayi's assertion — supposedly in the midst of her illumined experience, which was permanent — has obviously a reference to a phenomenal world forming the common subject of the discourse between her and her interrogator and present to both at the moment. At least the interrogator, as part of the phenomenal world shot with ignorance of the Perfect, was present to her no less than to the fellow himself: if he were not, her answer would be impossible to make and would have no point.

I can't see how, within the Advaitic context *à la* Shankara, one can go beyond the real-unreal position for the world — without reducing all occasion and all interchange to self-contradiction. And I am convinced that nowhere in the major Upanishads is there any authority for the complete disappearance of the phenomenal world

¹ Incomprehensible, indescribable

² Negligible, inconsequential, empty, null

in the illumined experience or that Shankara ever knew such disappearance. The argument for it in his works strikes me as superlative logomachy basing itself on a subtle shift from essential oneness to numerical oneness as the meaning of the Upanishadic Brahman's non-duality. Numerical oneness would cease if there was multiplicity and so the assertion of it would necessarily negate multiplicity. Essential oneness would remain unviolated in the midst of infinite diversity of existence: it would run through all of it like a universal through all particulars — “the one and the same gold” of the Chhandogya Upanishad, “which is moulded into a variety of ornaments and vessels” — and the diversity, the variety, would be no negation of its presence. The phenomenal world would not need to be denied nor its actual existence in the illumined experience required to be argued away as *tuccha māyā*. Of course, I am referring to waking Brahman-consciousness and not to a spiritual sleep shutting out our world.

In connection with Sri Aurobindo's experience of Nirod and others around him as Brahman the Shankarite would say that what he realised did away with Nirod as such and what existed was only Nirodian Brahman — Brahman with a transparent *nāma-rūpa*, name-form, of Nirod. I would say that there existed also Brahmanian Nirod and this would not merely be such name-form as to make little difference to the Brahmanhood: along with the Brahmanhood a phenomenal world would be there, the former at the back of the *nāma-rūpa*, the latter in front of it. Even if a solid Nirod were not present in the experience, there would be by virtue of the name-form a phenomenal tinge, a real-unreal, ready to fill out into solidity in a complete experience like Sri Aurobindo's in the period in which he made his declaration.

Thinking on these lines I should conceive somewhat differently the solution of what you call the “final antinomy” of the Divine Perfection and the phenomenal world. Your solution presupposes that the relation between the two is unilateral. So, while finding it necessary not to do away with the imperfect phenomenon, you have still to interpret in terms of utter perfection this phenomenon when it forms part of a supreme spiritual vision. You say in effect: “Since Sri Aurobindo, unlike all other seers, has discerned a process of evolutionary transformation in which the imperfect phenomenon can be and will be turned into a perfect one, the final version of Reality must be twofold: (1) the world is already perfect, (2) the imperfect world becoming perfect even as a phenomenon is itself a dynamic expression of the divinely Perfect. By means of this twofold version we avoid on the one hand the view which, seeing the world as already perfect, withdraws the gaze from the manifestation to the underlying essence and, on the other hand, we avoid the opposite view that there is fundamental imperfection in the phenomenal world, which can be done away with only by that gaze-withdrawal.” I would add that in the supreme spiritual experience, which integrates the phenomenal time-order with the transcendent eternity-order, the sense of the imperfect world does not disappear: it does not just become part of a perfection in dynamic process. Here is something else than a Perfection unfolding in time by a graduated movement, so that it is all a matter of the hidden Divine trium-

phantly manifesting himself in stages and by degrees, without any real risk, any struggle and pain. As you have yourself mentioned, the beginning of the process of manifestation here is the formidable “inconscious” or, in the words of the Vedic sages, “darkness covered by darkness.” In such a movement the imperfection to be turned into perfection is not a partial aspect of the perfect: it is a positive factor so set as to oppose and obstruct the Divine as far as possible. In addition to what you have enumerated, the supreme spiritual vision would, to my mind, be aware of — to go back to the Aurobindonian example — a solid Nirod to be transformed and perfected. Else the poser of Raman and Anandamayi will recur in a new guise: “Where is the need to perfect anything? The Perfect is already there in one active evolving shape or another.”

This brings me naturally to your puzzlement over my phrase: “levels of perfection.” Haven’t you come across the term “perfect perfection”? In general I would mean that various kinds of inspired “forms” are possible, forms that have a beautiful life in every part and are a total harmonious unity. Thus there can be an inevitable expression of different sorts, in different styles, all perfect but at a higher or lower key, of greater or lesser life-range, in a deeper or more surfacy mode of consciousness. Sri Aurobindo distinguishes four grades of stylistic perfection — the adequate, the effective, the illumined, the inspired — each having its own inevitable culmination — and over and above them what he calls the pure inevitable or what, on the analogy of “perfect perfection”, we may dub the inevitable inevitability, a style which cannot be designated or classified and whose examples can be of widely dissimilar types: Virgil’s

O passi graviora! dabit deus his quoque finem,
(Fiercer griefs we have suffered; to these too God will give ending,)

Or Keat’s

magic casements opening on the foam
Of perilous seas in fairy lands forlorn,

or Wordsworth’s

a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

I believe Shakespeare’s

After life’s fitful fever he sleeps well

can be put alongside of these lines. But this kind of Super-style does not take away the perfection reachable on the other levels, as in Wordsworth’s imaginatively effective

Her eyes as stars of twilight fair,
 Like twilight's too her dusky hair,
 But all things else about her drawn
 From Maytime and the cheerful dawn,

or his visionarily illumined

They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude,

or his raptly inspired

A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
 In springtime from the Cuckoo-bird,
 Breaking the silence of the seas
 Among the farthest Hebrides.

Even the perfection of his lucidly adequate

The waves beside them danced but they
 Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
 A poet could not but be gay
 In such a jocund company

about the thousands of daisies he and Dorothy once saw at a glance cannot be denied.

And all the five styles may be found operating on diverse "planes" — the subtle-physical, the vital, the mental, the Higher Mind, the Illumined Mind, the Intuition, the Overmind. The "planes" constitute another series of perfection-levels. They are what I had in view when I wrote of such grades. But I tacitly distinguished the overhead from the non-overhead planes and applied the term to the former in the context I was dealing with. For, though all "typal" non-evolutionary worlds carry some aspect or other of the Divine in a perfect manner and resemble one another by their modality of single-tracked perfection, the overhead planes are those of Cosmic Knowledge whereas the non-overhead are those of Cosmic Ignorance: the overhead have automatically the experience of the One and Infinite Self. This experience is both dynamic and static. In the matter of status, we must say that the same perfection obtains everywhere, on all the overhead levels, and your question — "How can any perfection be at a lower level?" — becomes pertinent. The question misses the mark where dynamism is concerned. The world-play of the Higher Mind has a light less intense, less rich, less intimate than that of the Illumined Mind's world-play. The world of the Higher Mind lives principally by a force of spiritual thought, the Illumined Mind's

world lives principally by a force of spiritual sight. Passing beyond we enter a still more intense, more rich, more intimate light-force, a greater perfection, until in the Overmind we attain perfection's acme within the cosmic series of Spiritual Mind. The Supermind, transcending Spiritual Mind, gives us "perfect perfection".

No doubt, it is possible to reserve the label "perfection" for the Supermind and call everything below it a species of imperfection; but, logically, imperfection applies only to an evolving world, a world moving from incompleteness towards completeness, bringing out powers that were all involved, buried, suppressed, seeming even lost in the beginning, and not merely subordinated under any one power as in the typical universes. And among the latter we may, as I have suggested, draw a line between the spiritual and the non-spiritual typical.

In the evolving world itself we may speak of "levels of perfection" in a certain sense. Thus Racine's perfection of poetry is of a lesser kind than Shakespeare's because Shakespeare has heights and depths and widenesses beyond Racine's range of imaginative capture of the precise and moving word. Surely, Racine at his best cannot be considered imperfect by any standard; but his perfection is of a lower level than the Bard's, though a Frenchman is likely to kick you in the stomach if you say so. But a Frenchman himself will not hesitate to speak of levels of perfection among his own poets. He may, with Voltaire, regard the Elizabethan dramatist as a drunken barbarian, but he will certainly declare that Corneille, though perfect at his best, is yet not so great as Racine. (Sri Aurobindo, by the way, is of the opposite opinion as between these two French dramatists.)

I hope my phrase has acquired some sense by now.

AMAL KIRAN

POETIC MUSIC

PROMPTED by an observation very positively tendered by the constantly embattled Miguel de Unamuno, to the effect that what is poetry is something that is not music, and that only what is heavy remains and endures, I find that I am putting forward yet more remarks myself on this vexed subject. For it seems that there must be unremitting conflict between those who consider sweetness and melodiousness of language to be indispensable to poetry and those who consider it an unimportant adjunct, and something not to be trusted.

In the early years of this aesthetically most miserable twentieth century there was a large supply of effete poets who had learned much of rhythmical and verbal harmony — of verse technique — but had little or nothing for which to employ it: who succeeded but in giving the world the maximum of artistry (though usually only of a finicking, minor kind) with the minimum of significance. It is this that Unamuno combated without stint of his rough vigor. He saw nothing but a vapid if lilting wordiness in the Spanish poetry of his time — something that lulled the faculties to sleep — and he wanted to awaken people, to grip them, with linguistic substance and power. Not for him the exoticism and formalism of a Rubén Darío, who learned from a decadent like Verlaine: no! — and no “symbolistic” vagueness and frozen inhibitions, but concrete and pulsing life — the authentic voice of the soil, as it were, and the here-and-now of “human nature” existing so problematically in such a hard world. He could find no music — which to him was only an illusion and a weakness — in what he thought was “reality.”

One may be reminded of Carlyle, who abominated the “fiddling” so much indulged in by the minor Victorian poets — or the major ones, for that matter — the overbalancing of substance by expression, which thus becomes not really expressive. This is always a danger for poets who are *artists*, that is, much concerned with form: it is hardly avoided in much of the Elizabethan sonneteering, and the old Gaelic poets probably carried it to the furthest extent possible, codifying and learning hundreds of ways to express — well, whatever little bit could get through. But for Carlyle music was more than a light surface melodiousness: he felt something of the great harmony at the heart of nature, which is only betrayed by the “musical” poets who play on and with the Superficies.

While I do not believe that the truth of a matter is always to be found comfortably at some undetermined point between two extremes, I will say here that both Carlyle and Unamuno are both right and wrong. It *is* the substance and weight that remains and endures, it *is* the deeper music that is most important: but the surface of the sea is as much an existing, an “existential” thing as are the depths, and “the force that through the green fuse drives the flower” does just that, as if its very goal and purpose were just the flower, and not only some rough and undisciplined energy, not

culminating and not expressive.

And how does one get the weighty and gravid substance of poetry? Not, certainly, by caring only for sweet chimes, that charm briefly and pass away. But yet the chime, the resonance and the melody are a necessary part of the full being of language. A thing *means* more when harmoniously and sweetly expressed: more of its substance and reality has been caught by the poet, than if he just brought out his "frank" feelings and observations without the felicitous forming grace and power. Just to be "musical" is not enough, and so "poetry" that is only pleasant verse is quickly forgotten; but *not* to be musical, in the more obvious as well as the deeper sense, is not to be a poet — or at best is to be a poet *manqué*. Poetry must be expressive, and expression is a *bringing forth* — in a well-rounded and living form, that gives the depths their meaning in the beauty to which they rise and in which they are enclosed. This is the true *organic* way, that most opponents of form confusedly would champion. (And if "life" dissociated from formation has a meaning it is hardly what they want, whatever that is.) All art reconciles and harmonizes contradictions and extremes; and it may be instructive even in the twentieth century to remember or to come to observe that all the greatest poets, those accepted as such without serious demur, have been supreme artists because they have had so much to say, to present, to disclose: they have naturally brought forth their great burden most musically, in deathless beauty. The two are one, and the greater the vision and the depth of apprehension the greater is the beauty. The fight between "meaning" and "music" is an unseemly noise of small poets and semi-poets and non-poets after all; and to speak of a "poet" without expressive power is to speak nonsense. In the sense of a poet who is not able to write poetry there is no such thing as a "mute Milton"; and a phrase like "poetry of life" is a meaningless subterfuge, indulged in by those "vigorous" people who are so abjectly vulnerable in their emotional natures. Poetry is not just "living", but the heightening of life in the expressive word. And the winged horse is not precisely a weightless being; and those who insist on the "depths" are too often just shallow self-tormentors. That music that is the true poet's voice does not "fly off into the air": it is built deep into the cultural substance of the world.

JESSE ROARKE

YOGA AND MUSIC

YOGA, whatever be the method, should aim at self-perfection, self-extension and self-fulfilment in the realities of soul, world and God. Music, whatever be the type or the form, should endeavour to express man's joy, the profound nostalgia for 'something afar' with an intensity and directness no words in verse or prose could bring. But in actuality both have been poles apart — one belonging essentially to the ascetic, the other to the artist, each following a widely divergent ideal, which may seem unpromising. In the present age both have turned most unfortunately into commercial ventures and become props to man's vanity and egoism.

Yet there is a meeting point. There is a common truth which can link them. In fact, at a certain point the aspiration of Yoga and the creativity of music can become complementary. They can fulfil each other, for if we touch the source both would appear to have a common origin, a common aim and a common background. The divergence that meets us is only external and has been caused by factors of egoism, vanity and the materialistic cult that have come to influence all man is and does today. To discover this meeting point we would have to ignore, for the moment at least, these aberrations and falsities. We may have to brush aside popular fallacious beliefs and commonly accepted notions. And it is not unlikely that we may discover some very interesting facts into the bargain.

Yoga is a loose term expressing many aspects of man's inner and outer activities; it bears many significances, sets forth almost diametrically opposite aims and follows different methods. Yoga has come to be accepted as Hatha Yoga dealing with bodily postures and glandular functions. Throughout the many centuries India, Tibet, China, Japan, the Middle and Near East have had their own peculiar yogic systems, which set forth different goals of moral, mental and emotional perfection through a series of disciplines. Perhaps the most original and peculiarly western concept of Yoga recently published in a French journal *Planète*, illustrated by a few photographs was of 'mithunas' of Khajuraho and Puri. The article was entitled 'L'yoga de la sexe'.

Music is a vast domain parallel to Yoga. From the primitive barbarian up to the most sophisticated man of today it has been a vehicle to express joys, sorrows, longings, passions, moods of devotion, dejection and bliss. Man expresses these in many ways, in multitonal harmonies with their rich abundance of vitality and energy or linear melodies ranging from the weird cries of the African, the Australian and the natives of North and South America to the abstract notes of Japan and the mellow Raga formations of India. If we survey the panorama of world-music, we shall be amazed by its variety of patterns and ways, which can be summed up as the whole gamut of human existence.

Having in view only the essences of Yoga and music, we shall deliberately ignore the abhorrent degradations that are prevalent in each as noted earlier. For we begin our inquiry with the premise that the two are complementary elements.

Music in its origin is sound. And sound both scientifically and esoterically is vibration. Our being, like a musical instrument, is susceptible to vibrations with their frequency and pitch and it is capable of responding to them according to

our capacity. The ancient Indian seers, who were both poets and singers, and also outstanding yogis, discovered this truth as revealed specially in the *Samaveda*, and later codified in the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads*. Later still seers like Manduka, Narada (not the sage of the Indian tradition) and Bharata made these musical revelations precise, classifying, analysing and codifying them in different treatises like the *Natya Shastra*. This work yet stands as a supreme authoritative text on Indian music, dancing, and other allied arts.

The sound in its origin was discovered as Fire and Energy and as the primal cause of things. Physics informs us that both sound and light are vibrations. Later, basing itself on this Vedic revelation, the Chhandogya Upanishad postulated seven notes of the musical gamut, each possessing its own deity as follows:

The first note *Vimartu* had its incarnate godhead as *Agni* or fire; the second note *Anrukta*, had for its presiding deity *Prajapati* or Jupiter; the third note *Nirukta* was crowned by *Soma* or the moon; the fourth note *Mridu* had *Vayu* or the wind as its daemon; the fifth note *Slakna* was possessed by *Indra*, the king of the gods of the mental region; the sixth note *Krauncha* was ruled by *Brihaspati*, the power of the soul; and the king of the seventh note *Apandhati* was *Varuna*, or Poseidon. (Free adaptation from the Bengali book *Sangit O Samaskriti* by Prajnananda, p. III.)

Even during the ages of the Puranas when the true mystic significance was eclipsed by rituals and rites, Rishi Mandukya mentions the colour, the planetary position, the 'gotra' or caste, the temperament of each of the twenty-two minute notes (the common scale has only twelve subdivisions which include all the sharps and flats) of the octave. Such details may appear utterly fanciful and arbitrary to the modern mind, which has lost the occult perception of things. In modern times the theosophists attempted to re-discover the lost truth. One musical composer among them asserted that "there is a region in which all things exist as ideas, then a lower region in which vibratory motion becomes their clothing. Vibration and sound are synonymous to those who have ears that can hear. From this sound-substance forms are called forth by an imperative sound. 'In the beginning was the Word .., and God said, Let there be light! and there was light'." (*The Music of Orient and Occident* by Margaret Cousins, p. 10.)

The Mother expresses this truth in a clear manner shorn of esoteric symbolism. She says, "There is a graded scale in the source of music. A whole category of music is there that comes from the higher vital...it is very catching, perhaps a little vulgar.... As there is vital music there is also what can be called psychic music coming from quite a different source; there is further a music which has a spiritual origin. In its own region this higher music is magnificent; it seizes you deeply and carries you away somewhere else." (*The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*, Part VII, p. 184, ed. by Nolini Kanta Gupta.)

(To be continued)

THE MAGICAL CAROUSEL

A ZODIACAL ODYSSEY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

(Continued from the issue of September, 1972)

(This is the story of a being in Manifestation. The children represent two complementary poles within the individual. It is also a treatment of astrology, each image evoked being a key to the deeper meaning of the signs.)

Chapter VIII

Death and Liberation The Vital Force Released

THE voices fade in the distance as the chariot is pulled through the infinite blue by the winged horse, farther and farther away, on to the realm of the Unknown. They glide through the clear sky for a long time until they are plunged into a thick grey mist that becomes darker and darker as they penetrate.

Suddenly, completely taken by surprise, the children are snatched up by two powerful, enormous claws that pull them with great force out of the chariot and into the mist. Val looks up to see what has stolen them, yet she sees nothing but the claws of some obviously huge bird, whose body remains completely covered in the dark grey blanket.

They seem to descend and the air becomes very hot and sticky. There is such tension as that felt before the release of rain; it is almost suffocating. The bird stops its powerful flight, hovering slightly, and Val and Pom-pom can just make out below them a somewhat rocky land of intense sombre colours. And as the bird comes closer, carefully selecting the right spot on which to deposit them, they notice that the intense heat causes steam to come from the rocks, filling the air with an eerie fog.

The bird sets them down and now the children can just barely make out its shape. They seem to have been carried by a great Eagle whose huge shadow disappears through the fog.

Val and Pom-pom are fixed to the spot. With the mist it is impossible to see very far and the heavy air makes it difficult to move. The tension rises and rises and the air becomes even heavier until a resounding clap of thunder is heard and buckets of rain begin pouring down from the invisible sky. Now they *must* do something and also, with the falling rain, the tension is lifted and movement becomes easier. Hand in hand the children rush to find shelter from the heavy downpour.

They are completely drenched by the time they spy a cave in the rocky land-

scape. Careful not to slip on the wet rocks, they dash toward it and are soon inside, away from the falling water. As they penetrate, Val and Pom-pom can no longer make out their surroundings in the pitch dark. This is really going into the unknown, they think....

“Valie, are you frightened?” asks the tiny voice of Pom-pom.

“Ahem .no...what makes you think I’m frightened,” responds Val, as she clutches Pom-pom’s hand so tightly she almost squeezes the life out of it.

“Well, in case you were, I just wanted to tell you not to be afraid, because I have the Golden Sword to protect us. Remember?”

The Golden Sword....

“The Eagle must have been thankful for that since it surely made his load more balanced,” replies Val, half to herself.

They remain completely still in the dark cave until finally the sounds of the tempest cease and they decide to go out and see what they will find. Advancing carefully along the wall of the cave they soon see the entrance, but silhouetted against the light, blocking the way with his stinger arched high is a sinister, gigantic Scorpion!

Val and Pom-pom are so frightened they cannot even scream; and even so, who would hear them? Pom-pom grasps the Sword tightly with his two hands and steps courageously before Val, ready to strike if necessary. Of course the Sword is trembling madly for he is really quite scared, but at the same time excited by the danger. Then a squeaky, wiry voice echoes through the cave. The Scorpion speaks:

“You think you are very brave with that! What can you do with one Sword against the power of a Scorpion? Yet since you are so brave I will show you what real power is and how to obtain it. I will lead you to someone who knows many secrets and magic formulae. If you are willing you can learn things which very few beings know....”

The Scorpion moves away from the opening and Val and Pom-pom hurry after it, completely forgetting the possible danger of his raised stinger, almost as if the voice had hypnotised them.

Outside the air is still hot but much less heavy and the fog has lifted considerably. The landscape is very mysterious and the dark brown colour of the slightly hidden vegetation gives the children an uneasy feeling.

They continue following the Scorpion who then leads them to a bed of water, beyond which lies a sinister-looking construction almost entirely covered by trees. The still water seems rather shallow. It is stagnant and gives off an unpleasant odour.

The Scorpion motions the children to board a waiting raft and then he remains ashore and artfully pulls a rope which ferries them through the still waters. They hear his voice echoing after them:

“It is October 23rd in Scorpioland. .. The yearly secret ritual will soon begin.... You must be brave and abandon all fears...”.

A new land?... The children thought they had been banished from Zodiackland. As they near the construction, their journey is blocked. They are faced with what

appears to be a door under the dark foliage. Coming closer they see the symbol \mathfrak{M} ¹ on it and the number 8. Val inserts the proper key and the door gives way before them, making it possible for the raft to continue its course. Once on the other side it slams shut and they are covered in darkness and silence. The only sound is the slap of the water against the moving raft,—for a long while just this sound, until slowly the children become aware of the beat of drums far off in the distance. As they move on, the drums are heard nearer and nearer, a rhythmic, incessant beat which greatly stirs them.

Some light seeps through the darkness and Val and Pom-pom realise they are proceeding through a sort of tunnel in the foliage that leads them closer to the beat of the drums and toward a shore. To their fright they can now see a group of people awaiting them, no bigger than Val, all dressed in a primitive warrior fashion and looking very ferocious. The raft moves on and there's no stopping it; the children can neither get off (for they don't know how deep the water is) nor change course. And so they are carried in spite of themselves to the inevitable end of their journey, right into the warriors' hands. They grab Val and Pom-pom and place them in a sedan-chair; the curtains are closed on all sides and the vehicle is lifted. The children feel themselves moving forward.

After a fairly long journey the chair is placed once again on the ground and the curtains are drawn back. Val and Pom-pom are made to descend and are then escorted into a tent.

It is rather dark inside and difficult to make anything out. There are strange odours and perfumes emanating, smells of exotic herbs and flowers. They remain thus, immersed in the semi-darkness for a long while in silence. Then a deep, full and mysterious voice speaks from a corner:

“Two—this time you have brought two And one carries a sword! Our ritual will be especially powerful and for this you will be well rewarded. Take them away and prepare them.”

The children have now become accustomed to the darkness. They are caught by the penetrating gaze of a pair of beautiful eyes that seem to match the hypnotic voice so well. Both want very badly to see this person who has completely fascinated them, but in this land everything is so mysterious and hidden. Will they ever be told what is happening or going to happen?

The warriors take them into another tent where they are left to sleep for a long while. Both have the strongest and most vivid dreams they have ever experienced, some quite tormenting. Then they are brusquely awakened as a group enters and begins preparing the children, sprinkling them with different scented waters, combing their hair and decorating them with odd flowers of the heaviest perfumes. No one speaks, they all just carry on with their duties which they fulfil thoroughly and with great attention.

¹ This symbol is not entirely correct. The tail of the M should end in the head of an arrow.

The children are soon ready and are told to wait as the group departs. Val and Pom-pom become aware that the drums have ceased outside and throughout the camp silence reigns. For a long time they can only hear the sound of their own breathing. Suddenly splitting the heavy silence, a gong is sounded, filling the air with its vibrant, long-lasting tone. The canvas door of the tent is flung open and the children emerge to find there is not a soul about. As they approach the centre of the encampment they see a curious, high altar, before which rest two massive chairs on either side of a throne.

"Be seated," says a very low, slow voice, and Val and Pom-pom spin around to find a tall, fascinating woman before them. She is covered in long, flowing wine coloured robes, with thick, dark hair falling over her shoulders. They are captured by her penetrating stare and recognise the eyes that so enraptured them in the tent. All the warriors are behind her, bowing low to the ground. They seem to have emerged from nowhere. Silently she approaches and her movements recall those of a fine cat.

Hayala—for so she is called—carries two silver chains in her hands and coming up to the children she places them around their necks. A silver, heart-shaped vessel containing a sort of liquid dangles from each one.

"You will drink the potion that is inside when I tell you, and not before," and after saying this she takes her place on the throne.

The children feel such power emanating from her that never could they or would they want to do anything contrary to what she ordains. Hayala claps her hands and a long ceremony begins.

The entertainment is very peculiar and not very entertaining at all for Val and Pom-pom. They never really understand what's going on. All partake of a heavy wine and exotic fruits are passed around. Strange birds and serpents in huge cages are brought to Hayala and offered as gifts which seem to greatly please her. She then lifts a sinewy hand and a prisoner is escorted in. When he appears the crowd begins jeering and gesticulating at the poor creature. Hayala turns to the children and explains:

"He participated in last year's ceremony but is no longer needed and for motives I cannot reveal, he must be sentenced."

She makes another sign and he is carried off, as the whole camp cheers the pronouncement of their mistress.

All of a sudden Hayala stands up with her arms outstretched toward the heaven, chanting and swaying back and forth. The warriors fall to the ground and hide their faces so that they cannot see what is to take place, as one by one they join in the chant and soon the entire land is filled with a strange drone.

Hayala bids the drums to quicken and these mysterious instruments, which seem to be placed under the ground in the very core of the land, gradually beat faster and faster, moving towards a frenetic, powerful rhythm. She begins dancing in the clearing before the children who are completely amazed at the scene. She twists and writhes in a way which makes them think she is both cat and serpent, a bewitching movement they have never seen before. As she dances she emits strange cries and

mutters unfamiliar words that seem to make the warriors tremble. On and on she dances to the frantic beat of the drums and at what seems to be the climax another gong sounds and the gigantic Scorpion reappears. Hayala calls to the children:

"Now drink the potion! Drink and you will never be in need of anything! You will learn the secrets I possess and shall never want to leave Scorpioland! Drink!"

While she speaks she continues dancing and appears to be completely enraptured and unaware of the Scorpion's presence. Slowly this animal approaches, ever so slowly, as she writhes and continues chanting in her heavy voice and urging the children to drink. The drums become even louder and more rhythmic, drawing the Scorpion closer and closer, with his stinger raised high apparently ready to attack.

Completely forgetting Glow's instructions, the children are about to take the potion. Time is almost up and if they drink they will remain in Scorpioland forever. Finally Val can stand it no longer. She springs to her feet and cries:

"Pom-pom, we must do something! He will sting her! We must save her!"

Pom-pom rushes forward, clutching the Golden Sword tightly with both hands. Hayala still frantically dances and the Scorpion is almost upon her, ready to sting. Pom-pom begins whirling the large Sword above his head until it swings so heavily that almost by itself it whizzes around and slices off the raised stinger, just in time. The Scorpion emits a weird, anguished screech and Hayala abruptly halts her dance. The warriors stop chanting and the drums cease. For a long while that seems an eternity, the entire camp is petrified.

The silence is broken by the clang of Pom-pom's Sword as it falls to the ground. Then Hayala speaks, almost in a whisper, as her voice fails and she tries to control herself:

"My power...you have destroyed my power! What have you done? He could never harm me...Now all is lost. You would have learned many things, many secrets...now...now..." and she falls to the ground.

Pom-pom and Val are horrified at what has happened. How could they have known? She was so lovely! They had to save her. They try to explain but one by one the warriors rise and come toward them. Val and Pom-pom back up, farther and farther, until they reach the altar. They jump on top by the use of Hayala's throne and become encircled by the men. There is no way to escape, yet just when the first warrior is ready to climb after them the dark sky is lit up by a great flame that shoots through the air and falls on Hayala's tent, setting it ablaze.

The soldiers become frantic. They rush to save themselves as the sky is filled with flaming arrows. The place is turned into a battleground for in spite of themselves the warriors turn against one another in their desperation to escape the fire, and a mass destruction commences.

The sound of galloping hoofs and a hearty laugh come from the distance, growing increasingly louder, and all at once a glorious, radiant archer charges into the encampment, shooting his arrows of fire into the sky. He is not an ordinary archer for the back half of his body is that of a horse, a lively, spirited animal that gallops through

the camp and up to the altar. There the Archer whisks up the two children, placing them on his horse back, and rides off as the warriors continue their destruction. In a last attempt to avenge his mistress, the stingless Scorpion chases after them. They race through the land that Val and Pom-pom crossed on their arrival, on to the beach and through the tunnel of shallow water which the Centaur lights up by the use of his fiery arrows. The door blocks their way and the Scorpion is just behind them, at the Centaur's hoofs splashing in the water, when the Archer sends a mighty arrow into the construction, immediately setting it ablaze. With the children clutching to him tightly, his horse half leaps through the flames and on to the other side. The Scorpion is left behind, fortunately without a stinger to use upon himself, and rendered impotent by the fire.

Scorpio is a Water sign, of Fixed Energy Quality. It is feminine and ruled by the masculine planet Mars, representative of the vital force. This combination seems to be a contradiction; that is, the Water element requires, it would appear, either a Cardinal energy flow or Mutable. Here it is Fixed, and coupled with the forceful, destructive power of Mars and its fiery character, one can almost feel the waters of Scorpio as stagnant, blocked, lacking the adequate movement, hence they become poisonous. Therefore Scorpio is the sign of self-destruction, being in fact the only animal in the Zodiac capable of causing its own end.

But what is the deeper meaning of the sign?

It has always been connected with death, and rightly so because here the individual faces spiritual death or liberation. At this point all the force of the lower nature is awakened, but in its most primitive form, that of pure sexual energy. Later on in the wheel the subtler plays of the awakened vital force must be dealt with, but they cannot be conquered unless the individual makes the first preliminary and basic step toward liberation. He must release the energies, look at them, reject the usual expenditure indulged in by most of humanity and thereby give birth to the soul. Thus this is the sign in which the Kundalini is awakened, as seen in the hieroglyph. Scorpio is the second Water sign; what was gestated in Cancer and came forth in Virgo as yet dormant, is here liberated. The tail in the Scorpio hieroglyph juts out, in contrast to that of Virgo, but otherwise both symbols are identical. In Scorpio the tail ends with the head of an arrow, identified therefore with the symbol of Mars, ♂ ruler of the sign.

Scorpio represents Power, but for the integral development of the individual he must not be satisfied with power for power's sake. Hence the children are allowed to partake in the ritual, are tempted to remain in the land and learn the secrets Hayala will reveal. She awakens the force which can signify degeneration or regeneration, tempts them by her magic and hypnotic power; if she succeeds it is spiritual death, as that of the prisoner of the previous year's rituals. Therefore in either case, that is, if the individual expends the vital force by means of sexual indulgence or reverts it to the acquisition of Power as an end in itself, he

drowns in the poisonous waters of Scorpio. This is death as represented by the sign, and no other—for death on the material plane is not looked upon in astrology as we usually do with our limited vision. Physical death is only a symbol.

It is the call of the soul that liberates the children. Val, the feminine element and hence more identified with the psyche, awakens to the call, springs forth moved by love, urging Pom-pom to save Hayala. Thus, Love is the saviour, at one with the very essence of creation. And Pom-pom who carries the Power of Truth in his hands, as opposed to Hayala's power of darkness, swings it at that which the children feel will signify her own ruin, for the goal of Love is to transform obscurity and not destroy it. Truth being the very breath of life, "almost by itself it whizzes around and slices off the raised stinger."

As the soul is victor over the ordeal, a response comes from regions afar and the Centaur with his fiery arrows appears to save them. His fire casts light into darkness; spirit comes to gather up the soul and carry it to its destiny of unity.

Thus we see that the popular usage of destroying scorpions by fire, as also that of its usage for nullifying the very effects of a scorpion bite, is another proof that what takes place in the realm of consciousness has also its physical counterpart.

The children are carried into the land by the Eagle, the symbol of the highest possibilities of the sign, the Power to conquer death. It remains veiled and appears to be only a vision not fully realised. Yet they were brought into the land by this creature and not the scorpion; this is important to note and a very meaningful image. Man's rightful heritage is immortality and, having cut away that which binds him to the lower nature, he is now free to unveil the divinity residing in the higher part of his being.

(To be continued)

PATRIZIA

SEVEN LIVES

A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL

PROLOGUE

SHE could not remember when she had been born. Nor could she ever recall having been an infant. For at the beginning of time the Great One and the Universal Mother together had created her as a Venus full-grown, so that she bore only the memory of an initial exuberance, an initial aureate coming to life that she might loosely term thereafter her youth.

After those beginnings stretched the centuries of unfoldment, the millennia, and the ages of her endless, patient working...of silence and of an infinity of unmarked footsteps through the golden dust before the Great One's feet. None could guess how many secrets she had shared only with him and her divine Creatrix. For only they knew of the matchless patterns that came to being each time their daughter's feet passed over the spaces of time. Only they cherished the cycles of history and human action set into play by her movement. Only they could transmit their own wonders, their own incredible inspirations to her through the secret joy of her silence.

Yet despite her favoured position, for her divine parents loved her with a special tenderness, she was created pure and harboured no self-aggrandising illusions, nor falsehood as human beings knew it. She knew that to the Great One she was, though a goddess, but one among many others; she knew too that she had been born to do her own appointed work and no other; and she was aware above all that the river of her being flowed directly from the Great One's heart, with each drop and particle of it eternally conscious of its divine source, and each instant of her life utterly dependent upon his will.

In this way, though she existed as a separate entity, it would not have been the kind of separateness she could have explained to the external consciousness of *homo sapiens*. For to man with his human ego-awareness, it would have appeared that she existed only as a phantom of her Lord, or as an ephemeral chimera in the mind of the Universal Mother. But such a warped conception would merely have reflected the normal level of human comprehension, because the state and form of her being were as invisible and as unknowable to all but the inner soul of humanity as those of her godly kin or of the Great One and the Divine Creatrix herself, for that matter.

Yet how inextricably she was bound to the fate and actions of human kind! For some portion of her dwelt in each human being as indeed did all the other portions and endowments of the Great One handed down through his various deific sons and daughters, so that the fabric of human existence might unfold in all its multi-coloured splendour. But hers were among the gentler gifts, or the ones that shone with a

quieter brilliance, such as one sees in spiders' webs caught in a winter's dew, or in a snow plume drifting with gossamer lightness from a mountain height. The laugh she brought to people's lips was as the ring of temple bells on a Himalayan slope, a ring that sounded and then vanished into the great valleys where the gods roamed. The dignity she bestowed was the dignity of an elvan queen, while the particular kind of joy she breathed forth into all things, was like the joy of a summer evening when the sky in all its crimson clarity stands still to watch the birds fly homeward into silhouetted forests.

Of the many, more forceful and more eye-catching elements in his treasure-house, the Great One had entrusted none to his silent daughter. Others sang of war and conquest, of power and dominion, of grandeur, pomp, and public display. Others dwelt, as Pallas Athene, gold and ivory adorned, in the marble temples atop the earth's Acropolises. For herself, Silent One knew neither temple nor worshippers' throng, her only solace and refuge throughout history having remained the living silence of the Great One himself.

Silence... Yet what a magical state it was! What was there that did not seem to exist or find genesis in that silence? Within it, Silent One gave birth to saga upon saga, deep buried knowledge upon knowledge, until — if it had been given to her to speak — she would surely have proven herself an epic raconteur without equal.

Nevertheless, she spoke no human tongue, and the history that follows was necessarily caught willy-nilly as it drifted through the air to find imperfect expression in the scribbings of a human pen.

CHAPTER I

Many ages of man had slipped away since his beginnings, not all of which had proven equally dear to Silent Daughter. The periods when mind or narrow morality dominated were not her favourites, nor those materialistic times in which man had forgotten how to dream. Yet through all ages good or bad, she recognized her special human charges and nurtured them dearly as her own soul children, for they reflected the gifts she had bequeathed them more clearly, more deeply, and in greater measure than all the others among human kind. Friends from her own immaterial realms too she cherished and retained, those that had seen her loved ones through many a vicissitude, those that had borne her gifts during their own earthly time and had defended them with valour, and those that helped her now, fighting for her and repulsing the enemy, sometimes by assault sometimes by stealth, so that her various glimmering lights among men might pursue their so often precarious paths.

And surely in these dark days she needed her friends and helpers more than ever. The Adversary was everywhere and the times were threatening. The Great One had sent whisperings abroad upon the winds that a new age was due for birth and the entire creation was alert to the warning, the Adversary above all.

Busily, ferociously he made fast his strongholds. Earth's air became turgid with

his activity, and men, forever eager puppets in his hands, became his weaponry, his armour, and his gun fodder in a war that knew no price.

But Silent Daughter had lived too long, and picked her way through the carnage of too many battles to be daunted, when the summons came for her own intervention. After all, she knew herself to be the Great One's daughter and one of the Immortals. She had nothing to fear but her own heart's pain in the troubled action of man's world, and that too she would survive yet another time. For suddenly she heard love call to her, the cry reverberating like an echo through her spirit, and she was incapable of denying its appeal.

It came to her first across the infinities of a night sky, threading its way through the maze of the stars from the far world, drawing her from one of her occasional reveries, and pulling at her with its urgency. Bestirring herself, she remembered — yes, it was some time since she had turned her eyes towards the world and the affairs of men. How long? She couldn't say. The reveries of the gods knew no measure...but now this cry — it was the cry of a child she knew instantly to be her own. How long had her children stumbled on in their mechanical way all the while she had been dreaming in her ethereal heavens? Too long, and here was one at last who would not allow himself to be forsaken any longer.

She sighed as she turned to face the insistent sound. How sweet was the detachment of her present state, and how distant earthly despair and earthly longing. Yet her hesitation remained as momentary as a diver's before plunging into the depths, for the invisible fibres of her being pulsed with the loves she bore, and when one of them beckoned, she would gladly have faced Armageddon to answer its demand.

Cloaked in the majestic dignity of her godhead, she passed with hastening steps through the stars and made her way earthward. Soon the green and lovely globe emerged before her gaze, rising out of the dark stillness of space. She heard it crooning its mystic lullaby as it travelled along its unmarked cycle, and she saw the hands of the Universal Mother surrounding it and protecting it on its journey, more gently and more delicately than an envelope of the softest summer air. As she came still nearer the verdant valleys sang to her, the flowers of forests and gardens trembled, and Poseidon rose from the ocean to salute her as an honoured guest. She greeted them all in turn, her old acquaintances of earth, and wished she could linger with them, for with the changing times they would have had much to exchange. But she was compelled to slip by, murmuring, "Later," as she pressed on.

Ghost-like, she journeyed until she had penetrated to the very core of human habitation. And there, buried among the multitudinous artifacts of human existence she found the one she sought. He lay within a human body she scarcely noticed so absorbed was she at the sight of his inner self, a golden child who slept and cried by turns, but of such a delicate beauty that, captivated, she ran to him and gathered him in her arms. He responded and clung to her for one brief instant before falling asleep again — the deep and comforted sleep of an infant reassured.

It was then that she looked up and saw him. Earnest concern showed in his

demeanour as he bent towards her over the unconscious child.

"How anxiously I've waited for you," he said. She reached out to him and grasped his hands as she prepared to answer him, for though silence marked her native state, she could speak eloquently when required, or communicate through the wordless language of the spirit as she now did, though for human comprehension the exchange must be translated into words.

"Brave soldier," she began, "How can I thank you for your ceaseless vigil? And how many times you must have come to me already to find me self-absorbed, until the infant's cry itself broke through my trance and re-awakened me to the urgency of the work".

He nodded, and they looked delightedly into each other's face, for his world of being was one with hers, and she knew him intimately as the divine worker that he was, a guardian warrior of the Great One entrusted to watch over the unwary, or the soul in peril. Tirelessly, he and his companions strove behind the veils of human life to do what they could for the Great One's intention, achieving a victory from time to time, yet for the greater part grappling moment to moment with the Adversary in his unnumbered forms, seeing their own pure substance despoiled in his hands, or withdrawing rapidly with silent regret when the human consciousness they wished to aid all too anxiously rushed from them into the Adversary's seductive embrace.

Silent Daughter, knowing full well the burden the Great One's guardians bore, became radiant with gratitude. She put her hands on the divine warrior's splendid shoulders, and her thankfulness surged out of her in glowing waves that swirled about his body and caressed him with airy filaments of joy.

"Tell me about the child," she resumed.

"Laden with your gifts, he has waited all this time for your return," the guardian replied. "See how he exudes sweetness like the perfume of an exotic rose from some princely garden. ... How even in sleep somewhere within himself he knows and understands all — knows that he was with you once — and knows that he must seek you again because only with your aid will he be able to find his life's true purpose and meaning. And yet he is compelled to sleep on for he has been drugged, and I can do nothing to save him from the effects of the terrible dose.

"There was a time in the human childhood of this life when the being, already a limber, golden hero full of a subtle beauty to match any god's, had been awake and had fully known how and for what he had come to existence once again. It was then that he had first remembered your face mirrored upon his soul. It was then too that he had turned his eyes, shot to their depths with peerless shafts of a sacred light, to the throne of the Great One and once more recognized him to be the source and origin of all that was and is. But the miracle of awakening was not to last, Queenly One. It seems the transient wonder was born to pass. As the human body of the Golden One grew to maturity, the Dark Powers with practiced treachery fed him a deathly potion so that the marvellous being was instantaneously struck blind and fell into a stupor. The light died in the golden form till it became a mere shadow, and then

slowly day by day began to shrink.”

Dismay darted into Silent Daughter’s face. “When will this terror end?” she exclaimed. “How unbearable to see one child struck down after another and yet remain helpless! How many more times am I to suffer the defeats of my loved ones? But finish your story, Valiant One. Your words lead me back over once-trod ways that open again before me in all their fierce and poignant colour the pageants the Golden One and I had lived together upon earth’s stage. Yet first I wish to know how this, my most precious child, has regained the radiance I see in him and retained the form of a godly infant, despite the Dark One’s curse.”

“Of course, I will tell you all I have come to know. It seems the Great One had set his heart on a survivor in this season of the Dark Powers’ supremacy, and on this Golden Child in particular, for in some age now buried in time, this same being had called out to the Divine Lord. His prayer had soared forth as the pure chime of bells through the stratospheres — ‘Lord of all, make me yours forever, I wish to know none but you, serve none but you, adore none but you.’ And the Great One had responded, while pouring forth his beatitude in a dazzling stream of white brilliance. It was because of this that the potion of the Dark Powers could not take its full effect. Though the once-golden soul continued to shrink, no deforming retrogression could fatally mar him. Instead, he returned to the form of an infant, neither warped, nor blighted by the dreaded poison. In sleeping the sleep of the unblemished newborn, the golden glow revived and reinfused his slumbering limbs. But even then, the Adversary was not to be turned aside, and he threatened every moment of the infant’s existence with apparitions of death and decay. So like an arrow from the Great One’s bow I sped to his side to keep him from further harm or torment as best I could. But it is no longer a simple task, Silent Daughter. His human body having grown to adulthood, the snares of the Dark Powers lie ready for him on every side.

“Yet through every vicissitude his innermost heart has longed for you, you whom he remembered from some ancient past as the handmaiden of the Great One and the chosen deity of the soul’s Love, Joy, and Beauty — elements of which his own golden being was so largely made. Such knowledge, with the aid of the Divine One’s boon, neither poison nor sleep nor infancy could steal from him. So it was and he called for you and succeeded in bringing you where I, despite my anxious efforts, had failed.”

Silent Daughter looked at the guardian for a long moment after he had finished speaking.

“I remember — I remember everything.... Let the child remain with me,” she said at last, not with her customary buoyant joy but with the same anxiety that masked the faithful warrior’s face. “But see what is all around us here — ”

“Yes, Silent Daughter, it appears to be an abyss of little hope; giant walls surround us while through their chinks appear rocky crevasses of deep menace.”

With her hands still lightly resting on his strong, glowing shoulders, Silent Daughter began to muse as she continued to look around the dismal place, her voice a

soft rustle as of breezes through the foliage of Spring. "And you have been here all this time taking the brunt of the hostility that lurks everywhere — facing every ill-omened assault.... Your lone courage wafts me back to the time when I saw our warriors whom our Lord had despatched descend towards the deeps of a new and suddenly threatening darkness. All were as dauntless as you, Brave One, all were your brothers in kind and soul, all on this occasion mounted on fierce, sturdy horses that kept teeth and hoof at the ready for the attack. Each creature had, like all of us, been created as a dear and loyal pet of our Divine Master, with no life to live, no work to do but his. And so I watched the splendid band united in their divine resolve scramble down the banks of tumbled, shiny rock to where the Dark Ones waited to receive them in a pit of erupting red flame and belching smoke. The lurid glow rose high from the dreadful gorge, and yet I couldn't make out the forms of the Adversary because beneath the hot red light the smoke acted as a screen that hid them. But our warriors showed no fear. With the Great One strong and sure in their hearts, they flung their divine weapons into the enemy's midst while the horses rose up and shrilled their defiance. Then all at once it happened, and I shiver even now to think of it — while one of our soldiers was looking elsewhere for the briefest unguarded instant, a dark arm reached out of the turbulent shadows and grasped his leg as he sat astride his mount. A black stain spread from the terrible palm and marked both rider and beast with fetid patches till their very substance seemed to rot before my eyes. Instantly a paralysis swept over the warrior and he was dragged helplessly from his seat. A second later he had disappeared, lost in the smoke, yet can I ever forget my last glimpse of his face — his diamond tears streaming down his face, his features frozen in inexpressible horror and shame? The horse was more fortunate. Defiled and disfigured, in one last desperate gesture it had flung itself upwards. The rider behind succeeded in grasping its thick, bristling mane and helped it to haul itself to safety. There in the purer air how quickly it had healed; but its rider? Who can say when we will recover him, Brave One, and what torments he will have to bear throughout his being before he can rid it of the Dark One's sicknesses, and the taint of the Adversary's unconsciousness."

"As you know, dear Queen, this is the risk and burden we must take upon ourselves —"

"It wasn't always like this, my warrior."

"True. The times have changed drastically. The straightforwardness of mankind's youthful battlefields at Troy and Argos have long since passed away. The halcyon age of the Vedas is scarcely remembered.. ."

"Please say no more, or I shall once again lose myself in reverie while contemplating and reliving the bliss and the beauty of the ages your words re-create. For, since an unconscionable length of time, I have been warned of this present age that we now see about us — and for long I have sought to turn my back on it. Indeed how many thousands of earth years it has been since all of us have known that the Dark Era would come! How many visions have flashed before us showing the time when all

the petty fragments of darkness, all the flitting bats of ignorance nurtured since Paleolithic days — gorged from those twilit aeons till today on the unilluminated elements of the human consciousness — would coalesce in one vast mass and stand in solid phalanx before the light.... No longer would we see the evil dispersed, as a native and redeeming innocence welled through man's dark crust and rescued him from his own degradation. In such an age, even the last vestige of the infant's purity would vanish from man's nature, and many would come to life corrupted from the womb itself. Where in such a world would our place be, my warrior? No light, no chink could I see in the black vision, and so it was that I had lost myself in dreams, for my dreams and memories at least were living things, while the earth seemed mired in death and vulgar putrefaction; and even my beloved ones lost themselves in lives of no meaning, so that I had resigned myself to greeting them again only when death returned them to my embrace.

"But observe how even the wisdom and vision of the gods are as nothing. Who among us can fathom the miracles of the Great One's working? Shouldn't I have known that no age could come to being in which the Divine Master's light would not glow? It is said that he lives in the heart of the blackest night, that his face can be seen through the smoke of even the Adversary's greatest triumph, indeed that such a triumph itself might presage the brightest dawn.

"So you yourself can judge what a fool I have been, Brave One, to think of dreaming when we are all called to act and do the Great One's bidding! And my children, the Golden Being foremost among them — how great must be their need of us at the moment of the abysm."

Her eyes flashed with a white flame that leapt upwards dancing higher and higher till it disappeared far above her head. A molten fireball of concern emerged in its place and plunged into her heart where it seared away the last vestiges of diffidence and then transformed itself into a cold, immovable determination. Now no tremor remained within her for she had become as immobile as a frozen sea, until finally, breaking her own silence, she looked directly into the warrior's eyes and said, "We will see it through whatever the price."

Now it was his turn to respond and he did so with a surging cumulus of joy.

"We must," he replied. "The divine air sings of the change in the making, of some great divine intention in the unfolding and we are bound not to fail its call. But we must be careful —"

"Careful, Brave One? Why, we must give our lives for each hair, each speck of dust, each tiny breath that speaks for our Lord. But have no worry on my account — throughout time I have survived while protecting the intricate detail, the minute expression of every God-bent inner impulse, and now all that attention and more I shall bring to the delicate task — to what must be done for the new and infinite splendour that cries to be born after these long millennia of travail."

"Then I shall leave you with your charge, Silent Goddess. The Great One calls me to other duties. But I shall return at your slightest indication, and my thoughts

shall linger by your side.”

He drifted away and her eyes, deep-pooled with love, followed him through the darkness, till the air became empty of his form and presence, and she found herself alone with the sleeping child.

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

(Continued from the issue of September, 1972)

GOD AND LIFE

THE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

WE have seen how child-life begins in the Ashram. The school children spend two to three years in kindergarten, four in the primary section, six in the secondary course and three in the higher course. Once accepted, the children can have their entire education from kindergarten to the higher courses in arts, science and technical studies at one place.

From the kindergarten section the young ones are promoted to *L'Avenir* (The Future). Here begins the teaching of English especially with the older children. Regular subjects are French, English and Mathematics. Children below 12 can seldom organise themselves, so they have regular classes in the morning. In the afternoon each one attends his vernacular class. Formerly only French was taught in the kindergarten and the *L'Avenir* with the exception of the last section. Four years ago Sanskrit was started on a large scale.

“As the child grows in capacity and understanding, he should be taught, in the course of his education, to add aesthetic taste and refinement to power and precision. He must be shown, made to appreciate, taught to love beautiful, lofty, healthy and noble things whether in nature or in human creation. It must be a true aesthetic culture and it will save him from degrading influences.”¹ If the love of beauty and beauty consciousness is developed from an early age, says the Mother, “many bad habits will be avoided and harmful influences eliminated.”²

The fundamental quality required of a teacher is the ability to see and think as a child in a given situation and chalk out a programme that awakens curiosity and inquisitiveness and provides an incentive to the growing child.

In *L'Avenir* there are seven classes. Almost every year a teacher of one of these classes chooses a subject and collects pictures depicting it. For 1972 the theme was dolls from various countries. As part of class work these pictures are shown to children (aged 6 to 9) and they write sentences about them. Out of these the best sentences are selected and the children copy them on a fine piece of paper. The pictures are pasted on sheets and finally made into an album. This is presented to the Mother as an offering from the whole class. To arouse artistic taste in the children there is also handwork and drawing classes with crayon, *e.g.* making flowers from

¹ *Bulletin* August 1951 page. 31.

² *Bulletin* August 1951 page. 29.

paper and putting them in handmade vases. All this makes the class lively and rarely dull or boring.

Appraising some of the activities of her class a teacher of the same section said that one day she asked the children to think and meditate on the words "gold" and "golden" and then say what they felt. After a time each of them wanted to say something. Some of the sentences conveyed beautiful ideas. They didn't know English very well, but their expression was spontaneous and the teacher noted them down. Later she gave a hand made paper sheet duly ruled to each and asked them to write out their sentence as neatly and as beautifully as they could. In this section all the teachers insist on good handwriting. These sheets were sent to the Mother and the procedure explained to Her. She sent word that She appreciated the work.

A word from the Mother, a ray of Her Grace, — this is the reward. They expect nothing else. No payment or award of merit — only to be dedicated in their services.

A teacher of the Primary Section, who did her M.A. in Sanskrit, learnt French in a spirit of dedication, for it formed part of the work assigned to her. It is the attitude that counts.

A professor of Physics from France, whose connection with the Ashram began in 1935 and who teaches a regular class in Physics whenever he is here on a long stay, observed: "The eye of the teacher here is not fastened on money, on position. He does not treat the students as they are treated in other schools. The relation of teacher and taught is that of family members. Future education, I suppose, will tend to be a family education. Students will meet the teacher, not as in a school but as family members. The students are permitted by the Mother to come to my house and I treat them as my children. When I come here I take up teaching but I am not asked to attend school. Like my children they come to me. I feel as if I were their father."

In a talk with me a teacher of *L'Avenir* stated: "I don't inflict the little ones with the conventional do's and don'ts. I have established a sort of affinity with each of them. There is no sense of fear in my class. They treat me as their own and hence do not hide anything from me. I know their needs; what they love to do. I direct their energies that way. The change in their manners and behaviour must come in a natural way or else it will amount to suppression. Suppression breeds revolt. Affectionate dealings help to create a healthy and homely atmosphere.

"One day I asked one of the kids, "What do you like the most?" "Sweets." "How do you get them?" He hesitated a moment before he answered, "I steal them if I do not have them." Such frankness gives an opportunity to bring out the irregularity into the open. The day he grows a bit conscious, the habit of stealing will stop by itself.

The Mother says, "A teacher has to be a yogi." What does it mean? I reproduce the exposition of Nolini Kanta Gupta:

"It does not mean that he is to be only a paragon of moral qualities, following for example the ten commandments—not to tell a lie, not to lose his temper, to be patient...but something else is needed for the true teacher.... The consciousness of the teacher has to be other than mental, something deeper.... Do we then prescribe

the supreme Brahman-consciousness for the teacher? Not quite. We mean the consciousness of the soul, the living light that is within every aspiring human being.

“When the teacher approaches the pupil, he must know how to do it in and through that inner intimate consciousness. It means a fundamental attitude...rather than a scientific procedure: all the manuals of education will not be able to procure you this treasure. It is an acquisition that develops...by aspiration for it.”

I was told by the teacher referred to earlier: The general level of the students here is much higher than elsewhere. Outside children usually study out of fear — fear of incurring the displeasure of teachers, fear of securing low marks and fear of failing examinations. That is not the case here. The consciousness of freedom, even in the little ones, is so strong that you can't compel them to do your bidding. I give you an instance: X didn't show interest in the study of Hindi. At home he was asked to write essays in Hindi and to do this and to do that. He was very much afraid of his teacher. He did what was told but out of fear. So the thing he was forced to do he later refused to do. Unable to make him read the subject his mother asked him to write to the Mother. To this he agreed at once. In reply the Mother advised him to read Hindi, but if he couldn't he might read Sanskrit. The very mention of Sanskrit was music to his ears and he took great delight in its study and is doing very well. This is an example of how children are helped to become capable of making their own choice regarding the line of their study. This freedom has to be channelled in a proper way. It had been tried in Summer hill, England, but the result was not very encouraging.

“Why has the Ashram school succeeded where other schools have failed?” The aforesaid French professor emphasised that it was due to the predominance of Spiritual Force. As a child breathes so he shall be. Here children breathe spirituality, live spirituality, soar in the sky of spirituality, not religion, mind you. No religion is preached here, no teaching, no sermons, but there is something, very marvellous, constituting a powerful factor — a discipline is there, not outer but inner, it might be termed a spiritual discipline.

“Everyone silently tries to be sincere to the call, sincere to the chosen path. Even a child is taught from his earliest years to be sincere in his efforts. He is given a chance to act as prompted from within and is not imposed on by teachers.

“Another thing of importance is the fact that it is from one source that both the teacher and the taught draw their spiritual sustenance. That is the key of success here.”

Yes, it is She who holds both heaven and earth in the palm of her hand — though full of divinity She is so human.

Towards the end the professor said, “The whole emphasis on education here is not on mental, vital, emotional or even the physical but on the psychic. It is the psychic education that can bring a real change — pour new life into the dead bones of modern education.”

(To be continued)

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo (Part II) by Nirodbaran, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Price Rs. 4.50.

AMONG the several myths and superstitions relating to spiritual life exploded by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is the notion that spirituality is all solemnity — always and everywhere — and laughter is out of place if not taboo.

Readers of Nirodbaran's *Correspondence* and *Talks* have had a glimpse into this little-known side of Sri Aurobindo who was once described by an English observer as 'the man who never smiles'! The present collection of letters and notes exclusively dealing with Sri Aurobindo's humour does full justice to the subject. His 'divine levity' — to use a happy phrase of the writer — has bridged the yawning gulf between the human and the Divine in innumerable instances, leavened the existence of many a struggling seeker on the "bleaks" of Yoga, and above all helped to preserve a sense of proportion, a bright perspective in which God, Nature and Man weave a pattern of Beauty, Joy and Truth.

Like the Master, disciple Nirodbaran is also singular in more ways than one. None were fortunate to draw out this *lilā* (sportive) aspect of the multifaceted personality of Sri Aurobindo to the extent he has done. He complains, he petitions, he challenges, he spars with the assured abandon of a privileged child and the Grace cascades in delightful hues. Whether it is the doctor in Nirod that reports and consults or the aspirant that complains about the seemingly never-ending tracts of depression and despair or the budding poet quarrelling with the reluctant Muse, Sri Aurobindo answers with playful admonition that corrects, humour that drives away clouds of depression, love that soothes and heals.

How many of us who had occasion to be patients of Dr. Nirod in the 'thirties' would not whole-heartedly approve of Sri Aurobindo's portrait of the doctor-yogi? "Well, I don't know why but you have the reputation of being a fierce and firebrand doctor who considers it a sin for patients to have an illness! You may be right, but tradition demands that a doctor should be soft like butter, soothing like treacle, sweet like sugar and jolly like jam."

Behind these flashes of wit and humour there is always a note of spiritual truth. Look for instance at this banter:

N: People say I am getting absolutely bald, Sir; two things I feared — one a big tummy and the other a damned baldness. Couldn't be saved from one. If you can't grow new hair, please help to preserve the little I have, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO: What one fears most, is usually what happens. Even if there were no disposition, the fear calls it in. Who knows if you had not feared, you might have had the waist of a race-runner and the hair of Samson.

Or, on the nature of medicine to prolong itself:

N: The ophthalmologist said that N's eye-condition has improved. He has advised to give salicylates for past rheumatism.

SRI AUROBINDO: All right — salicylate him as much as the Opth. likes. Queer! One has to be dosed not only for present and future but past ailments. Medicine like the Brahman transcends time.

Humour and understanding stand out in another letter:

N: Why the devil does A write all these things to you? Are you prescribing or are we? He could have asked me.

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, what about the free Englishman's right to grumble? This is not London and there is no *Times* to write to. So he writes a letter to me, instead of to the *Times*.

Finally, the exchange between the disciple-poet and the Master-Poet:

N: My brain is now less hampered by the body's indisposition.

My boil has burst and as you see
From the depression I am free.
Thanks Guru, thanks to thee!

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, I got irritated last night by your persistent boiling and put a gigantic Force which, I am glad to see, burst the little boil.

Thank God for that!
Free from boil,
At poems toil,
Laugh and grow fat.

Each page is replete with such endearing humour. Who can say, after reading this book, that Yoga is dry or that the Divine is stern and austere? The Divine is all Delight, *ānandamāya*, and His laughter of the joy of manifestation not only peals on the peaks of Existence but also rings in the heart of life, if only one has the ear to hear.

M. P. PANDIT

STUDENTS' SECTION

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

12TH AUGUST 1972

THE Ninth Annual Conference of the New Age Association was organised specially to celebrate the Birth Centenary of Sri Aurobindo, with the approval and Blessings of the Mother. She herself, when requested to give a subject for this Conference, gave the following:

“Sri Aurobindo reveals the future.”

The Conference was held in the Theatre of Sri Aurobindo Ashram on the 12th August 1972 from 8.30 a.m. to 11.20 a.m. The following eleven members of the Association spoke on different aspects of the subject as shown below:

Anand Arya	— Sri Aurobindo and the Future Spiritual Revolution
Aveni Shah	— Sri Aurobindo's Conception of the Future Superman
Basabjit Deshmukh	— The Role of Wealth in the Future Life
Vimala Sadalingam	— The Advent of the Future Spiritual Society
Romen Palit	— Man and Woman in the New Age
Chetna Bhatt	— The Future Destiny of the Individual
Indra Arya	— The Future Destiny of India
Jyoti Reddy	— The Education of the Future
Manju Jhunjhunwala	— The Future of Poetry
Maria Jain	— The Future of World Unity
Sunayana Palande	— The Supramental Manifestation

The programme began with listening in silent meditation to three short records, one of the Mother's music, another of her reading of some lines from *Savitri*, and one more of her reading of the following message on Sri Aurobindo given by her sometime ago:

“In the eternity of becoming each Avatar is only the announcer, the forerunner of a more perfect realisation.

“And yet men have always the tendency to deify the Avatar of the past in opposition to the Avatar of the future.

“Now again Sri Aurobindo has come announcing to the world the realisation of tomorrow; and again his message meets with the same opposition as of all those who preceded him.

“But tomorrow will prove the truth of what he revealed and his work will be done.”

Then Kishor Gandhi, the Chairman, read out the following message of the Mother given by her specially for this Conference in her own handwriting. As the message is in the form of an answer to a question, it is reproduced below along with the question.

Q: In Your message of the 2nd January 1972, You have said:

“In this year of his centenary, his help will be stronger still. It is up to us to be more open and to know how to take advantage of it.

“The future is for those who have the soul of a hero.”

Will you please explain what you mean by “a hero” in the above message?

A: “A hero fears nothing
 complains of nothing
 and never gives way.”

11-8-1972

THE MOTHER

After this, Kishor Gandhi made the following introductory remarks:

Friends,

The glorious future of humanity and the world which Sri Aurobindo reveals to us is not of the nature of a philosophic speculation or a poetic imagination or a futuristic dream. Throughout human history, from the most ancient down to the most modern times, philosophers and poets, historians and social thinkers have produced innumerable utopias embodying their speculations and dreams and imaginative hopes of a bright millennium for humanity. Fascinating though they often are to our mind, we are also sadly aware that none of them have fulfilled in concrete result even a fraction of the promise they have held out before mankind.

The point I wish to emphasize is that Sri Aurobindo does not belong to this band of ineffective utopian visionaries. His vision of humanity's future is not a product of intellectual conception or a construction of imaginative fancy; rather, it is derived from a direct and living realisation of the infallible truth of the Supermind which always carries with it an invincible power of perfect realisation. The supramental Truth, which by its full manifestation will create a new age in the terrestrial evolution, is not only a self-luminous Knowledge but also a self-determining and self-effectua-

ting Will. For this reason, the promise of a new age in earth's history which Sri Aurobindo holds out before us is not merely an ingenious theory or a fanciful conjecture but a self-fulfilling Truth which is 'the inevitable destiny of mankind.

Sri Aurobindo bent all his energies during his life-time to bring down and establish this Supermind as an overtly operative power in the earth-nature, and even after his withdrawal from his physical body he has been exclusively concentrated upon this work. As a result, the Supermind in its initial power manifested in the inner regions of the earth on the 29th February 1956 and since then has been incessantly pressing forward to emerge fully in the external life of the world. It is the resistance to this pressure which has created acute tensions everywhere in the life of humanity.

At this juncture, when world-conditions have become extremely critical, this year of Sri Aurobindo's centenary has a momentous significance, for it marks a decisive stage in the action of the supramental Force for the conquest of the resistance in the earth-nature and in the life of humanity to their inescapable transformation and divinisation. At this moment, it is of the utmost importance for us to hold firmly to our faith in Sri Aurobindo and to remember that he is not merely the *revealer* of humanity's future but also its assured *realiser*. Vision and realisation, which are separated and unequal powers in the mind, become equal and integrated in the Supermind. So the revelation of humanity's future which Sri Aurobindo has given us is bound to translate itself into a perfect realisation. That realisation is not merely a hope but an absolute certitude. To make our faith in this certitude secure we can do no better than to repeat constantly in our mind and heart Sri Aurobindo's own words of mantric potency written in his own hand:

"It is not a hope but a certitude that the complete transformation of the nature will take place."

After this the eleven speakers were called in the alphabetical order of their names to read their papers. It is intended to publish their papers in the ensuing issues of *Mother India*.

Compiled by KISHOR GANDHI

EYE EDUCATION

RELAX AND SEE

(Continued from the issue of September, 1972)

DR. R.K. Puri of Jipmer Medical College, Pondicherry, writes:

“My son, Rakesh, was complaining of watering and tiredness in the eyes specially while reading. The doctor-in-charge of the eye department examined him under Atropine and prescribed glasses of + 1.5 for the right eye and + 2.5 for the left eye. By the use of these glasses watering did not stop and a sort of depression and irritation appeared in the temperament of the boy. Why such a thing happened suddenly, we could not understand though the boy had improved his vision with glasses. We took the boy to the School For Perfect Eyesight. When the treatment started glasses were discarded. This itself greatly relieved the boy and he felt very happy. At the end of the treatment his sight was again tested and it was a surprise to us that he had normal sight both for distance and near and all his watering and strain vanished in three days and we found his temperament also changed for good.

“It is evident that most ophthalmologists consider hypermetropia as incurable. Due to such a fixed conception no research is being made. The result is that loss of eyesight and blindness is fast increasing amongst the educated class.

“According to Dr. Agarwal preservation of good eyesight is almost impossible without eye education.”

In the School For Perfect Eyesight we have evolved a system for practical working based on the synthesis of all the systems of medicine. We believe that all the methods of treatment such as glasses, medicines, operation have their utility but eye education through Relax and See plays a very important part in the treatment of most eye troubles.

We aim to create a new type of doctor who will bring perfection in eyesight. His knowledge will be based on the synthesis. He will be more concerned with the health than with the pathology. To achieve this aim the School for Perfect Eyesight provides a course in Ophthalmic Science. Prospectus on application.

(Concluded)

DR. R. S. AGARWAL