

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

SPECIAL ISSUE

APRIL 24, 1977

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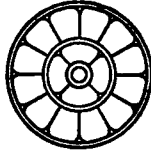
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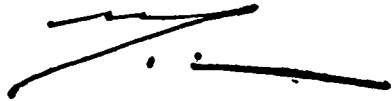


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

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. XXIX

No. 4

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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“A LIVING FACT, A REALITY”

REFLECTIONS APROPOS OF APRIL 24

It was on April 24 in 1920 that the Mother came finally to settle in Pondicherry by the side of Sri Aurobindo and work with him to establish on earth what he called the Supermind or Truth-Consciousness. It was on April 24, 1937, that she described her “return to Pondicherry” as “the tangible sign of the sure Victory over the adverse forces”. And it was on April 24 in 1956 that she at last announced the event which had taken place nearly two months earlier: the manifestation of the Supermind in the earth-atmosphere—that is, in the subtle-physical layer of terrestrial existence—as a new Power permanently settled to evolve the Divine Superman. In her message she called it “a living fact, a reality” and said that a day would come when even the blindest would recognise the presence of this Power.

Several years have passed, and the question has often been put: “No mahatma anywhere in India has felt the supramental manifestation. How is it that what the blindest in the future will recognise is unperceived by the spiritual seers of today? Are we to hold that the great Yogis are no seers at all? A scepticism either about spiritual faculty or about spiritual phenomenon threatens the unbiassed inquirer.”

The answer is that the problem is founded on a wrong conception. The Supermind is a Power on whose quest Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were launched for almost three decades after compassing all the realisations of traditional spirituality and finding those indubitable splendours still inadequate to bring about a complete transformation of earth-life. It is a supreme Creativity of which only rare glimpses have been caught in the past: the bringing down of it for a new collective divine world was never envisaged, though the vague drive that has always been in human history towards entire knowledge of the world-process, towards unflagging energy of earthly achievement, towards secure stability of the embodied being was the secret Supermind’s in an indirect and secular instead of a direct and spiritual way. The Supermind, in *persona propria*, has been a stranger, a magnificent X.

Its presence, therefore, in the earth-atmosphere is a special vibration, as it were, to which not even the usually developed spiritual sense is responsive. It is the ultra-violet which transcends the traditional mahatma’s vision of light. Whether the ultra-violet be far away in some remote star or down here in our own radiation-field, the vibration remains the same and hence equally elusive in essence to spiritual sight unless that sight has been in some manner *en rapport* with the Supermind above.

The great Yogis God-realised in the old ways are sensitive as much as the consciousness of the highest spiritualised mind allows; and each of them is further conditioned by his own specific mode and sphere of inner experience, the particular infinity opened to a particular finite door. Each has a sympathetic connection with other experiences and realisations, other expanses of truth attained by Godward turns similar in general to his own. But when a Truth that is beyond the past ranges

makes its appearance, it cannot be perceived until those who are familiar with the Spiritual on the mental plane extend their sensitivity and scope or until the new Truth itself breaks upon them and makes them see. If neither of these two possibilities has become actualised as yet, we must not conclude that the non-supramental Yogis are no Yogis. Their authenticity cannot be impugned. But much less can we conclude from their non-perception that there is no Supramental Truth or no manifestation of it.

One may add that the manifestation of the Supermind cannot remain hidden for long. The supreme dynamic Creativity cannot long seem as if static. The common saying "Truth will out" is all the more applicable when the Supramental Truth is concerned. Even now there is action, an intensely effective one, but mostly *incognito* and through natural-looking circumstances. So we may legitimately hope that before the blind of the future recognise it the seers of today will at least feel its heavenly heat and infer its luminosity.

But let not those who are followers of Sri Aurobindo forget in the midst of the Supermind's unlimited potentialities that the demand of all evolutionary process in man, the conscious soul, is conscious consent and co-operation. The need of a vigilant personal effort is a law inevitable: nothing can become organic in its absence—a superimposed and therefore impermanent miracle will be even the Supermind if the mental does not give itself to the Supramental. What, however, the new manifestation may have altered even in the law of evolution is that the effort required is an endeavour less to do things oneself than to let the Supermind do all. In other words, formerly one had to put in one's own work side by side with the larger movements of the higher Consciousness: now one may have merely to stop resisting and the higher Consciousness will do its miraculous work without depending on our smaller movements. Here is indeed a great difference, but even to stop resisting is a serious and all-time occupation and cannot be taken up as if just the thought of it were enough. Just the thought of it is insufficient not only for those who are still aspirants: it is so for those too who are spiritually advanced. Compared to the Himalaya of the Supermind, all mountains and valleys of soul-accomplishment are grades of one and the same abyss.

AMAL KIRAN

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

SOME STATEMENTS BEFORE AND AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY CENTRE ON APRIL 24, 1951

To unite East and West, to give the best of one to the other and make a true synthesis, a University will be established for all kinds of studies. Our school will form a nucleus of that University.

In our school I have put French as the medium of instruction. One of the reasons is that French is the cultural language of the world. The children can learn the Indian languages at a later stage. If more stress is laid upon the Indian languages at present, then the natural tendency of the Indian mind will be to fall back upon the ancient literature, culture and religion. You know very well that we realise the value of ancient Indian things, but we are here to create something new, bring down something that will be quite fresh for the earth. In this endeavour, if your mind is tied down to the ancient things, then it will refuse to go further. The study of the past has its place, but it must not hamper the work for the future.

*

When a child wants to impress you by telling you stories of the wealth of his family, you must not keep quiet. You must explain to him that worldly wealth does not count here, only the wealth that has been offered to the Divine has some value; that you do not become big by living in big houses, travelling by first-class and spending money lavishly. You can increase in stature only by being truthful, sincere, obedient and grateful.

*

There is one thing that I must emphasise. Don't try to follow what is done in the universities outside. Don't try to pump into the students mere data and information. Don't give them so much work that they may not get time for anything else. You are not in a great hurry to catch a train. Let the students understand what they learn. Let them assimilate it. Finishing the course should not be your goal. You should make the programme in such a way that the students may get time to attend the subjects they want to learn. They should have sufficient time for their physical exercises. I don't want them to be very good students yet pale, thin, anaemic. Perhaps you will say that in this way they will not have sufficient time for their studies, but that can be made up by expanding the course over a longer period. Instead of finishing a course in four years, you can take six years. Rather it would be better for them; they will be able to assimilate more of the atmosphere here and their progress will not be just in one direction at the cost of everything else. It will be an all-round progress in all directions.

September 10, 1953

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of January 1977)

(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 Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education but in a somewhat fragmentary incomplete form. The translation of 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 as a book in French, came out in book-form in 1973. We are giving this translation here)

MARCH 27, 1957

"Wherever thou seest a great end, be sure of a great beginning. Where a monstrous and painful destruction appals thy mind, console it with the certainty of a large and great creation. God is there not only in the still small voice, but in the fire and in the whirlwind.

"The greater the destruction, the freer the chances of creation; but the destruction is often long, slow and oppressive, the creation tardy in its coming or interrupted in its triumph. The night returns again and again and the day lingers or seems even to have been a false dawning. Despair not therefore but watch and work. Those who hope violently, despair swiftly: neither hope nor fear, but be sure of God's purpose and thy will to accomplish.

"The hand of the divine Artist works often as if it were unsure of its genius and its material. It seems to touch and test and leave, to pick up and throw away and pick up again, to labour and fail and botch and repiece together. Surprises and disappointments are the order of his work before all things are ready. What was selected, is cast away into the abyss of reprobation; what was rejected, becomes the cornerstone of a mighty edifice. But behind all this is the sure eye of a knowledge which surpasses our reason and the slow smile of an infinite ability.

"God has all time before him and does not need to be always in a hurry. He is sure of his aim and success and cares not if he break his work a hundred times to bring it nearer perfection. Patience is our first great necessary lesson, but not the dull slowness to move of the timid, the sceptical, the weary, the slothful, the unambitious or the weakling; a patience full of a calm and gathering strength which watches and prepares itself for the hour of swift great strokes, few but enough to change destiny.

"Wherefore God hammers so fiercely at his world, tramples and kneads it like dough, casts it so often into the blood-bath and the red hell-heat of the furnace? Because humanity in the mass is still a hard, crude and vile ore which will not otherwise be smelted and shaped; as is his material, so is his method. Let it help to transmute itself into nobler and purer metal, his ways with it will be gentler and sweeter, much loftier and fairer its uses.

"Wherefore he selected or made such a material, when he had all infinite possibility to choose from? Because of his divine Idea which saw before it not only beauty and sweetness and purity, but also force and will and greatness. Despise not force, nor hate it for the ugliness of some of its faces, nor think that love only is God. All perfect perfection must have something in it of the stuff of the hero and even of the Titan. But the greatest force is born out of the greatest difficulty."

Sri Aurobindo

Thoughts and Glimpses, Centenary Edition, Vol. 16, pp. 392-93.

AFTER all, the whole problem is to know whether humanity has reached the state of pure gold or whether it still needs to be tested in the crucible.

One thing is evident, humanity has not yet become pure gold, that is quite visible and certain.

But something has happened in the world's history which allows us to hope that a selected few in humanity, a small number of beings perhaps are ready to be transformed into pure gold and that these will be able to manifest strength without violence, heroism without destruction and courage without catastrophe.

But just in the following paragraph Sri Aurobindo gives the answer: "If man could once consent to be spiritualised." If only the individual *consented* to be spiritualised...consented.¹

Something in him asks for it, aspires, and all the rest refuses, wants to continue to be what it is: the mixed ore which needs to be cast into the furnace.

We are at the moment at a decisive turning-point in the history of the earth, yet once again. From every side I am asked: "What is going to happen?" Everywhere there is anguish, expectation, fear. "What is going to happen?"...There is but one reply: "If only humanity consented to be spiritualised."

And perhaps it may be enough if some individuals become pure gold, for this would suffice to change the course of events. ..We are faced with this necessity very urgently.

That courage, that heroism which the Divine wants of us, why not use it to fight against one's own difficulties, one's own imperfections, one's obscurities? Why not face heroically the furnace of inner purification so that it does not become necessary to pass once again through one of those terrible, gigantic destructions which plunge an entire civilisation into darkness?

This is the problem before us. It is for each one to solve it in his own way.

This evening I am answering those questions I have been asked, and my reply is that of Sri Aurobindo:

If man could once consent
to be spiritualised....

And I add: Time presses...from the human point of view.

¹ "All would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised; but his nature, mental and vital and physical, is rebellious to the higher law. He loves his imperfection."

THE BEST PRAYER OF THE MOTHER

(In Champaklal Speaks, p. 110, we read: "The Mother considered Prayer No. 373 in the old French Book to be the best of all." This is the Prayer dated March 7, 1915. We are giving here both the French original and the English translation as published in Prayers and Meditations, Enlarged Edition, 1948, p. 228)

Le 7 Mars 1915

IL est passé le temps du doux silence mental, si paisible et si pur à travers lequel se faisait sentir la volonté profonde qui s'exprimait dans sa toute puissante vérité. Maintenant la volonté ne se perçoit plus et le mental redevenu nécessairement actif, analyse, classe, juge, choisit, réagit constamment, comme agent transformateur, sur tout ce qui s'impose à l'individualité élargie au point d'être en rapport avec un monde infiniment vaste, complexe et mélangé d'ombre et de lumière comme tout ce qui appartient à la terre. C'est l'exil hors de tous les bonheurs spirituels, et, de toutes les épreuves, Seigneur, c'est certes la plus douloureuse que Tu puisses imposer. Surtout le retrait de la Volonté qui semble être un signe de si totale désapprobation. Forte est l'impression croissante du rejet ; il faut toute l'ardeur d'une foi inlassable pour que la douleur n'envahisse pas irrémédiablement la conscience extérieure ainsi abandonnée à elle-même....

Mais elle ne veut pas désespérer, elle ne veut pas croire au malheur irréparable; elle attend avec humilité, dans l'effort et la lutte obscurs et cachés, que le souffle de Ta joie parfaite la pénètre à nouveau. Et, peut-être, chacune de ses modestes et secrètes victoires est-elle une aide véritable apportée à la terre....

S'il était possible de sortir définitivement de cette conscience extérieure, de se réfugier dans la conscience divine... Mais cela Tu l'as interdit, et Tu l'interdis constamment: pas de fuite hors du monde; le fardeau d'ombre et de laideur doit être porté jusqu'au bout, même si l'aide divine semble s'être retirée; au sein de la nuit il faut rester et marcher, même sans boussole, sans phare, sans guide intérieurs....

Je ne veux même pas implorer Ta miséricorde, car ce que Tu veux pour moi, je le veux aussi; et toute mon énergie se tend uniquement pour avancer, avancer toujours, un pas après l'autre, malgré la profondeur des ténèbres et les obstacles du chemin; quoiqu'il arrive, Seigneur, c'est avec un amour fervent et invariable que Ta décision sera accueillie. Et même si Tu as trouvé l'instrument impropre à Te servir, l'instrument ne s'appartient plus, il est Tien...Tu peux le détruire ou le magnifier; mais lui n'existe pas en lui-même et ne veut et ne peut rien sans Toi....

March 7, 1915

The time of the sweet silence of the mind is past, the time, so peaceful and pure, through which was felt the profound will expressing itself in its all-powerful truth. Now the will is no longer perceived and the mind, having necessarily become active, analyses, classifies, judges, chooses, reacts constantly as a transforming agent on all that is imposed on the individuality which has been widened to be in relation with a world infinitely vast, complex and mixed of shadow and light, like all that belongs to the earth. It is an exile from all spiritual happiness, and of all ordeals, O Lord, this is certainly the most painful that Thou canst impose; above all, the withdrawal of Thy will which seems to be a sign of total disapprobation. Strong is the growing sense of rejection and it needs all the ardour of a faith that nothing can weary, to guard the external consciousness, thus abandoned to itself, from invasion by an irremediable sorrow.

But it refuses to despair, it refuses to believe that the misfortune is irreparable; it waits with humility in an obscure and hidden effort and struggle for the breath of Thy perfect joy to penetrate it again. And, perhaps, each of its modest and secret victories is a true help brought to the earth.

If it were possible to come definitively out of this external consciousness, to take refuge in the divine consciousness.... But that Thou hast forbidden and still and always forbiddest: no flight out of the world; the burden of darkness and ugliness must be borne to the end, even if all divine help seems to be withdrawn. I must remain in the heart of the night and walk on, even without any inner compass, beacon-light or guide.

I will not even implore Thy mercy, for what Thou wilt for me, I too will. All my energy strains solely to advance, always to advance, step by step, despite the depth of the darkness and the obstacles of the way; whatever happens, O Lord, it is with a fervent and unchanging love that Thy decision will be welcomed. And even if Thou hast found the instrument unfit to serve Thee, the instrument no longer belongs to itself, it is Thine.... Thou canst destroy or magnify it; by itself it does not exist, and it wills nothing, it can do nothing, without Thee.

DIVINE DELIGHT AND THE WORLD-GAME

THE PROBLEM OF DIVISION, IGNORANCE AND SUFFERING

Extracts from a Talk of the Mother

...PERHAPS, when one knows it is a game and plays it for fun, it is amusing. But when one doesn't know it is a game, it is not amusing. You see, it is only when one is on the other side, on the divine side, that one can see it like that; that is, as long as we are in the ignorance, well, inevitably we suffer from what should amuse and please us. Fundamentally, it comes to this: when one does something deliberately, knowing what one is doing, it is very interesting and may even be very amusing. But when it is something you don't do deliberately and don't understand, when it is something imposed on you and endured, it is not pleasant. So the solution, the one which is always given: you must learn, know, do it deliberately. But to tell you my true feeling, I think it would be much better to change the game....When one is in that state, one can smile, understand and even be amused, but when one sees, when one is conscious of all those who, far from knowing that they are playing, take the game very seriously and find it rather unpleasant, well...I don't know, one would prefer it to change. That is a purely personal opinion.

I know very well: the moment one crosses over to the other side...instead of being underneath and enduring, when one is above and not only observes but acts oneself, it is so total a reversal that it is difficult to recall the state one was in when carrying all the weight of this inconscience, this ignorance on one's back, when one was enduring things without knowing why or how or where one was going or why it was like that. One forgets all that. And then one can say: it is an "eternal game in an eternal garden". But for it to be an amusing game, everybody should be able to play the game knowing the rules of the game; as long as one does not know the rules of the game, it is not pleasant. So the solution you are given is: "But learn the rules of the game!"... That is not within everybody's reach.

I have the impression, a very powerful impression, that a practical joker came and spoilt the game and made it into something dramatic, and this practical joker is obviously the cause of the division and the ignorance which is the result of this division, and of the suffering which is the result of ignorance. Indeed, in spite of all the spiritual traditions, it is difficult to conceive that this state of division, ignorance and suffering was foreseen at the beginning of creation. In spite of everything, one doesn't like to think that it could have been foreseen. Indeed, I refuse to believe it. I call it an accident—a rather terrible accident, but still, you see, it is especially terrible to the human consciousness; for the universal consciousness, it may only be quite a reparable accident. And after all, when it has been set right, we shall even be able to recall it and say, "Ah! it has given us something we wouldn't have had otherwise." But we must first wait for it to be put right.

Anyway, I don't know if there are people who say that it was foreseen and willed, but I tell you it was neither foreseen nor willed, and this is precisely why when it happened, quite unexpectedly, immediately something else sprang forth from the Source, which probably would not have manifested if this accident had not taken place. If Delight had remained Delight, conceived as Delight, and everything had come about in Delight and Union instead of in division, there would never have been any need for the divine Consciousness to plunge into the inconscience as Love. So, when one sees this from very far and from high above, one says, "After all, something has perhaps been gained from it." But one must see it from a great distance and a great height to be able to say that. Or rather, when it is left far behind, when one has gone beyond this state, entered into Union and Delight, when division and inconscience and suffering have disappeared, then one may very wisely say, "Ah, yes, we have gained an experience we would never have had otherwise." But the experience must be behind, we must not be right in the midst of it. For, even for someone who—this is something I know—even for someone who has come out of this state, who lives in the consciousness of Oneness, for whom ignorance is something external, no longer something intimate and painful, even for that person it is impossible to look on the suffering of all those who have not come out of it with a smile of indifference. That seems impossible to me. Therefore, it is really necessary that things in the world should change and the acute state of sickness should disappear, so that we can say, "Ah! yes, we have benefited by it." It is true that something has been gained, but it is a very costly gain.

That is why, I believe, because of that, so many initiates and sages have been attracted by the solution of the void, of Nirvana, for this is obviously a very radical way of escaping from the consequences of an ignorant manifestation.

Only, the solution of changing this manifestation into a true, truly divine reality is a far superior solution. And this is what we want to attempt now, with a certitude of succeeding one day or another, for, in spite of everything, despite everything, what is true is eternally true, and what is true in essence must necessarily become true in the realisation, one day or another. Sri Aurobindo told us that we had taken the first step on the path and that the time had come to accomplish the work, therefore one has only to set out. That's all.

9 January 1957

PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

A LETTER AND THE MOTHER'S REPLY

The Letter

14-6-1970

Dearest Mother,

Some time back I said to you that I would like to tell you something about my state of health and mind.

In 1956 or 1957 I had a dream. Some being was saying to me what my life would be like if I stayed here with you. I was shown everything. There was darkness, and big stones were thrown from all sides on my body, completely breaking it. Then the being showing me this said: "If you live with the Mother, this is what she will do to you." I replied: "Never mind. Let the body break."

Then again the being said: "Not only your body but also your mind will break." And again I replied: "It doesn't matter. Let her do what she likes."

Then I was shown the other side. If I left you, my body would be quite healthy and everything would be most pleasant. After seeing this, I still said: "I have chosen to live with the Mother."

So far, my eyes were shut during the dream. Then, in the dream itself, I opened them. Everything was quiet, and on the horizon I saw a band of light.

Mother, I want to know the meaning of all this. The dream has come true in regard to my body and mind. My body is becoming weaker and weaker. All my energy is going and I can't work even to occupy my mind. I feel as if I were being broken to pieces. And I get ideas which are not healthy. This condition is there not only in Pondi but more or less in Bombay too. The general feeling is as if you were breaking me in order to make from me something that you wish. Is that true?

And what about that band of light on the horizon? Is it something meant to be after this life or in this life itself?

Please let me know the truth.

With love,
SEHRA

The Mother's Reply

The eyes closed represent the ordinary consciousness which is blind to the truth. When you opened your eyes you saw the light of the truth towards which you are going. What is needed is the endurance and the patience to face the apparently unpleasant preparation that is making you ready to emerge in the light of the truth.

Keep your faith in the Divine and all will be well.

With love and blessings.

OCCULT PHENOMENA

FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH SRI AUROBINDO
BY DILIP KUMAR ROY

February 4, 1943

...THE next question was about certain occult phenomena like materialisation or levitation. I had had a discussion with a friend to whom Sri Aurobindo had said, when told of my scepticism, that these were by no means all trickery and humbug as contended by many dogmatic scientists...

"But you needn't be alarmed," he put in placidly, "For Yoga has for its ultimate object the realisation of the Divine and achieving the Divine and achieving the Divine Life. These are side-issues and as such need not be looked upon as germane to spiritual experience. So belief in them is not necessary, far less indispensable for realisation. You have the right of private judgment in matters such as these."

My heart-beat abated, and I said: "I am very much relieved. For I feared lest the inability to accept the Guru's view in every instance be looked upon by the Guru as a sure sign of one's unfitness to profit by the master's guidance."

"You may be reassured once more," he said kindly. "For you can take it from me that when I say or write anything it's only to state my findings or else explain my point of view. I don't insist on it as a law for others. And can you imagine, knowing me as you do all these years, that I should impose my outlook on others? I have never cared to be a dictator, neither do I insist that everybody's view must be moulded by mine, any more than I insist that everybody must follow me or my Yoga." He paused and pointed at a bronze image in front. "For instance," he said, "I find that image very beautiful. But if you disagree why should I mind?"...

"But," I hastened to add: "I revere you so much that even to have to differ from you on a small matter causes me a pang I want my mind to abdicate. But where is the new ruler whom I am to put on its throne?"...

"It would be easier for the mind to get the new light if it didn't insist as it does that its old ruler, Reason, was fully capable of coping with the situation. For, boiled down, it comes to an insistence, really, that the mind was the ultimate judge of all experience. But spiritual experience has it that you can never hope to understand—get to the root of—anything by your mind alone. The mind by its very constitution is unable to apprehend more than a very small fraction of the divine reality and its action. Of this action occult phenomena are an instance in point. You cannot understand the true nature of such phenomena with your mental probings and, since this is a fact, it would be better if instead of dismissing them as fraud you could suspend your judgment till you become competent to judge. For this deeper judgment only comes through the dawn of a greater consciousness by whose light alone can you hope to understand divine action behind its terrestrial or occult disguises."

"But—I mean—it's all right in theory," I still demurred, "but when one is actually confronted—for instance, take the case of Sri Bijoy Goswami who said that his Guru had spirited away his wife to a far-off place across the sky. Do you mean to say that it can be authentic or possible?"

"Whether what he claimed did happen in his wife's case is more than I can tell you," he answered. "But since levitation has been *seen* to be possible and can be verified by the Yogis and has been, I don't see how it can be dismissed out of hand as impossible. Thousands of experiences testify to phenomena which utterly baffle the mind. For, when all is said and done, experience is and must be the last touchstone of reality and experience has it that levitation or materialisation is possible..."

"There," I interjected, "You have just anticipated me. For I was going to ask you precisely about materialisation. One hears of such occurrences but I have so far met none who has seen these with his own eyes. One must have reliable evidence, you know—not merely hearsay..."

He smiled and said: "Let me tell you then what I have seen with my own eyes if only to obviate your objection about the hearsay evidence. And it was an occurrence witnessed by at least half-a-dozen people besides, who were with me....

"The stone-throwing began unobtrusively with a few stones thrown at the guest-house kitchen—apparently from the terrace opposite, but there was no one there. The phenomenon began at the fall of dusk and continued at first for half-an-hour, but daily it increased in frequency, violence and size of the stones, and the duration of the attack increased also, sometimes lasting for several hours until, towards the end, in the hour or half hour before midnight, it became a regular bombardment; and now it was no longer at the kitchen only but thrown at other places as well: for example, the outer verandah. At first we took it for a human-made affair and sent for the police, but the investigation lasted only for a short time and when one of the constables in the verandah got a stone whizzing unaccountably between his two legs, the police abandoned the case in a panic. We made our own investigations, but the places whence the stones seemed to come or might be coming were void of human stone-throwers. Finally, as if to put us kindly out of doubt, the stones began falling inside closed rooms; one of these—it was a huge one and I saw it immediately after it fell—reposed flat and comfortable on a cane table as if that was its proper resting place. And so it went on till the missiles became murderous. Hitherto the stones had been harmless except for a daily battering of Bijoy's door—during the last days—which I watched the night before the end. They appeared in mid-air, a few feet above the ground, not coming from a distance but suddenly manifesting and, from the direction from which they flew, should have been thrown close in from the compound of the guest-house or the verandah itself, but the whole place was in clear light and I saw that there was no human being there nor could have been. At last the semi-idiot boy servant who was the centre of the attack and was sheltered in Bijoy's room under his protection, began to be severely hit and was bleeding from a wound by stones materialising inside the closed room. I went in at Bijoy's call and saw the last

stone fall on the boy: Bijoy and he were sitting side by side and the stone was thrown at them from the front but there was no one visible to throw it—the two were alone in the room. So unless it was Wells' Invisible Man...!

"So far we had been watching or scouting around, but this was a little too much, it was becoming dangerous and something had to be done about it. The Mother, from her knowledge of the process of these things, decided that the process here must depend on a nexus between the boy servant and the house, so if the nexus were broken and the servant separated from the house, the stone-throwing would cease. We sent him away to Hrishikesh's place and immediately the whole phenomenon ceased; not a single stone was thrown after that and peace reigned.

"That showed...that these occult phenomena are real, have a law or process as definite as that of any scientific operation and that the knowledge of the processes can not only bring them about but put an end to or annul them."

(I must pause here to be able to explain the episode for the general reader. I was told afterwards by Amrita, who had been an eye-witness of the whole drama, that all this had happened in mid-winter in 1921 day after day. And fortunately, he had kept a record of the whole incident which he showed me. From this I gathered that a cook called Vattal was the author of the mischief. Infuriated at having been dismissed, the fellow had threatened that he would make the place too hot for those who remained. And he went for help to a Mussalman Faquir who was versed in black magic, and then it all began. I asked Amrita whether the stones could have been illusory. He smiled and said he had had them collected and kept as exhibits for months and that they had a very curious feature in that they were all covered with moss. I was also told that among those who were then on the spot there was the realist stalwart Upendra Nath Banerji who had at first pooh-poohed the black-magic story and girded his loins to unearth the miscreants who were responsible for it all. But even he had to confess himself beaten in the end as he could not make any sense out of the strange episode. But it all became clear when Vattal's wife came in an extremity of despair and threw herself at the mercy of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Her husband had realised that nemesis had overtaken him, for he knew occultism enough to realise that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had hurled the force back. When such occult forces are aroused against one who can repel them they inevitably recoil back upon the head of its original author. So her husband had fallen desperately sick. Sri Aurobindo in his generosity forgave the fellow and said in Amrita's presence: "For this he need not die." The cook recovered after that.)

"So you see," he said, at the end of his narration, "the Mother who had studied occultism in North Africa could understand it all because of her deep occult knowledge."

"And you?"

He smiled but deliberated for a split second before he answered: "I too have had hundreds of personal experiences about occult forces."

"What about the question of levitation?"

"I take levitation as an acceptable idea, because I have had experience of the natural energies which, if developed, would bring it about and also physical experiences which would not have been possible if the principle of levitation had been untrue."

"But why is it then," I asked after a slight pause, "that the modern mind is so definitely against accepting such experiences as valid?"

"I have answered that question in my various writings," he answered, "and have said there that the mind is an instrument of Ignorance growing towards knowledge. This does not mean that the mind has no place at all in the spiritual life; but it does mean that it cannot be even the main instrument much less the authority to whose judgment all must submit themselves including the Divine..."

"The popular notion that you can judge what is beyond the ordinary consciousness when you are still in the ordinary consciousness is untenable. So the best way is to make your mind as passive as you can and open to the Truth, delivered from these preconceptions. The thing is to grow in consciousness so as to be able to realise the higher truths. If you can do that and let your psychic being take the lead, it will, in due time, lead you to the opening you seek where the mind with its half-lit consciousness will no longer circumscribe your vision because a higher Light, descending from above," he pointed at a region above his head, "will then take its place and knowledge will pour in from the higher reaches of the mind up to Overmind and Supermind. That is my Yoga, as you know"...

A VIBRANT ECHO

AMIDST the wild guesses of the brain
 And the impulsive seeking of the tremulous heart
 Something of the eternal Truth and Love
 Smote the stillness of the waking soul. . . .
 A vibrant echo thrilled the spaces of Time,
 A downpour of unbearable ecstasy
 Invaded the brooding being's very core . . .
 There no gulf was left uncrossed,
 All became a spontaneous service
 To man, God and World—
 A song celestial that rapturously repeated
 The secret splendour of God-mirroring souls.

VINAY

THE THEME OF HUMAN UNITY IN SRI AUROBINDO'S *SAVITRI*

Is 'human unity' possible? Rather, is it not the grim spectacle of human disunity that is starkly visible everywhere and almost all the time?

Thinker and visionary, Sri Aurobindo has pierced through the veils of disunity and reached the core, coming out with the nectarean promise of possible human unity. His views of present disunity and his vision of the future possibility of its opposite both find expression in eloquent prose and in lyric verse. He has also given a detailed exposition of the whole complicated problem in *The Ideal of Human Unity* which originally appeared serially in the *Arya* and has since been republished with a significant 'postscript' chapter. Finally, by boldly interlinking a world-view concerning human life in its entirety with the personal calamity annulled by a sovereign imperturbable will, Sri Aurobindo has promulgated this categorical assurance in his great futuristic epic, *Savitri*:

Thus shall the earth open to divinity
And common natures feel the wide uplift,
Illumine common acts with the Spirit's ray
And meet the deity in common things.
Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
The Spirit shall take up the human play,
This earthly life become the life divine.¹

Of course, a 'life divine' on earth involving all humanity in a gnostic brotherhood seems to us but a distant—if not quixotic—possibility. Indeed, the world today seems rather to present a totally dismal picture. Man is divided from man, and nations constantly war with one another. It is cold, lukewarm or hot war all the time! Sri Aurobindo was certainly no mere arm-chair dreamer and weaver of imaginative fiction. Even after his retirement to Pondicherry in 1910, he kept in close touch with world events. When tens of millions shuddered at each step in Hitler's rake's progress to establish a world-state under the yoke of the Nordic *herrenvolk*, Sri Aurobindo indited his famous poem, *The Children of Wotan*, in which the Nazi leaders shriek out their satanic defiance of humanity:

A cross of the beast and demoniac with the godhead of power and will,
We are born in humanity's sunset, to the Night is our pilgrimage.
On the bodies of perishing nations, mid the cry of the cataclysm coming,
To a presto of bomb and shell and the aeroplane's fatal humming,
We march, lit by Truth's death-pyre, to the world's satanic age.²

¹ *Savitri* (1954), p. 798.

² *Collected Poems* (1972), p. 112.

What hope for the future man, were Hitler and his hordes to goose-step over the millions of slaughtered innocents, yet register ultimate triumph?

Then, after Hitler's extinction, came the gigantic, though perhaps unavoidable, tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Horror piled upon horror. And the developing 'balance of terror'!

Yet, and yet, hasn't mankind—through the skin of its teeth as it were—snatched another lease of life on earth, and isn't humanity now desperately trying again to enact precarious co-existence? Perhaps this astonishing tenacity of mankind to endure and survive is itself a hint of the ultimate victory for human brotherhood! In *Savitri*, King Aswapathy may very well be this symbol of the representative man who has suffered and lived through the two world wars of our times:

In a world where neither hope nor joy could come
The ordeal he suffered of evil's absolute reign,
Yet kept intact his spirit's radiant truth.
Incapable of motion or of force,
In Matter's blank denial gaoled and blind,
Pinned to the black inertia of our base
He treasured between his hands his flickering soul.¹

On the credit side, much has been achieved indeed, and man has been able to preserve his sanity even in the midst of insanity, and he still dares to hope against hope for a fair future. No doubt, even between wars great or small the forces of evil have been quite on the rampage. But with seer-vision Sri Aurobindo peered steadily into the future, and inferred beyond the dark tunnel the certain light:

In the world outside there are much worse symptoms such as the general increase of cynicism, a refusal to believe in anything at all, a decrease of honesty, an immense corruption, a preoccupation with food, money, comfort, pleasure, to the exclusion of the higher things, and a general expectation of worse and worse things awaiting the world. . . I am not discouraged. . . after a time, the darkness will fade and begin to disappear and the Light will come.²

What sustained this unshakable faith in man's future was Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary vision derived from his own yogic experience. Life had evolved from Matter in which the Spirit had been immersed already; Mind had followed Life, though this advance had brought ambiguities and difficulties in its equipage. This double freight of good and evil, life and death, love and hate, had made mental man a transitional being, awaiting his self-transcendence into something far superior, in the visible mould of the Spirit. In a magnificent sonnet, Sri Aurobindo describes this upward sping of consciousness:

¹ *Savitri*, p. 261.

² *Sri Aurobindo on Himself* (1954), p. 244.

All is not finished in the Unseen's decree!
 A mind beyond our mind demands our ken;
 A life of unimagined harmony
 Awaits, concealed, the grasp of unborn men.

The crude beginnings of the lifeless earth
 And mindless stirrings of the plant and tree
 Prepared our thought; thought for a godlike birth
 Broadens the mould of our mortality.

A might no human will or force could gain,
 A knowledge seated in eternity,
 A joy beyond our struggle and our pain
 Is this earth-hampered creature's destiny.

O thou who climbedst to mind from the dull stone,
 Turn to the mirrored summits yet unwon.¹

Undeterred by the shocks of the world wars or the fissioning forces generated by phenomenal growthmanship in science and technology, Sri Aurobindo reiterates at the end of another sonnet the possibility of a spurt in evolution encompassing human unity:

Atom and molecule in their unseen plan
 Buttress an edifice of strange onenesses,
 Crystal and plant, insect and beast and man,—
 Man on whom the World-Unity shall seize,

Widening his soul-spark to an epiphany
 Of the timeless vastness of Infinity.²

“World-Unity shall seize”... Sri Aurobindo had thus never any doubt about the eventual coming of world unity, but even he found it difficult to describe exactly—that is, in material or physical terms—the configuration of this world unity. However, with cold logic, keen historical insight and an intuitive sense of developing possibility, he did attempt to lay down certain guidelines to the future in his massive exercise in political divination, *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

Almost at the beginning of this work, Sri Aurobindo states squarely the nature of the problem:

¹ *Collected Poems*, p. 164.

² *Ibid.*, p. 130.

Today the ideal of human unity is more or less vaguely making its way to the front of our consciousness...this ideal of human unity is likely to figure largely among the determining forces of the future; for the intellectual and material circumstances of the age have prepared and almost impose it, especially the scientific discoveries which have made our earth so small that its vastest kingdoms seem now no more than the provinces of a single country.¹

The League of Nations and the United Nations Organisation having both failed in large measure, because of their exclusions and inequalities and mental reservations, the near future must try to rectify these mistakes:

...it will be necessary to build, eventually at least, a true World State without exclusions and on a principle of equality into which considerations of size and strength will not enter. These may be left to exercise whatever influence is natural to them in a well-ordered harmony of the world's peoples safeguarded by the law of a new international order. A sure justice, a fundamental equality and combination of rights and interests must be the law of this World State and the basis of its entire edifice.²

Further on, Sri Aurobindo reviews divers possibilities and points out their limitations, the traps and dangers inherent in such material contrivances of artificial unity. Thus, an adjustment of frontiers or a redistribution of power and possessions, or a realignment of commercial relations, could not wholly or for long solve the problem. So, too, any unity reared only upon an administrative, economic, military, religious or linguistic base must prove inadequate in the end, and this might happen even when all these grounds of unity coalesced purposefully. Above everything else, then, it is the psychological unity resulting from a soul-change in man that alone can ensure lasting unity. Man must awaken to and live the brotherhood of mankind. This would be the future "religion of humanity", the recognition of the "divine Reality" or the Spirit within us all:

By its growth within us oneness with our fellow-men will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of cooperation, but a deeper brotherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality and a common life. There must be the realisation by the individual that only in the life of his fellow-men is his own life complete.³

Sri Aurobindo concluded that in the way of Nature two kinds of unity were possible. Firstly, a World State in which a central power imposes a dead uniformity, admitting of no variations or differences. But Sri Aurobindo abhorred such an ironed mechanical paradise, reminiscent of the Hitlerite State:

¹ *The Ideal of Human Unity* (1950), p. 19-20.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

Hater of the free spirit's joy and light,
 Made only of strength and skill and giant might,
 A Will to trample humanity into clay
 And unify earth beneath one iron sway,
 Insists upon its fierce enormous plan.
 Trampling man's mind and will into one mould
 Docile and facile in a dreadful hold,
 It cries its demon slogans to the crowd;
 But if its tenebrous empire were allowed,
 Its mastery would prepare the dismal hour
 When the Inconscient shall regain its right,
 And man who emerged as Nature's conscious power,
 Shall sink into the deep original night
 Sharing like all her forms that went before
 The doom of the mammoth and the dinosaur.¹

No: man was not meant to go the way of all the prehistoric giant beasts, but was rather marked out to carry forward Nature's evolutionary adventure. And so Sri Aurobindo prefers the second alternative, namely a loose world union that will recognise and manifest the brotherhood of man and at the same time allow and even encourage the individual continually to grow and exceed himself:

The free individual is the conscious progressive: it is only when he is able to impart his own creative and mobile consciousness to the mass that a progressive society becomes possible.²

It would thus appear that there is a vital new factor in Sri Aurobindo's vision of human unity—the emergence of the new man, the gnostic man, the pioneer and forerunner of the racial advance. But how is one to describe this new man, this new gnostic species, this nucleus of the new global society? Neither science nor mere logic is equal to the task; hence Sri Aurobindo turned to poetry to limn the new man, to articulate the new life. And by means of mantric poetry he has invoked the epic figures of Aswapathy and Savitri, the Forerunner and the Redeemer respectively, the former a King weighted with responsibility for the well-being of the race, a man of knowledge and wisdom and realisation, and the woman, his darling daughter, great in her love and adamant will to redeem the race of mankind.

Aswapathy voyages, in the course of his Yoga, through many symbol worlds, growing in knowledge about himself and the circumambient universe. He experiences the psychological unity without which all the scaffoldings of politician, economist, jurist, technologist and militarist must come to nothing:

¹ *Collected Poems*, p. III.

² *The Ideal of Human Unity*, p. 254.

In that high realm where no untruth can come,
 Where all are different and all is one,
 In the Impersonal's ocean without shore
 The Person in the World-Spirit anchored rode;
 It thrilled with the mighty marchings of World-Force,
 Its acts were the comrades of God's infinite peace.
 An adjunct glory and a symbol self,
 The body was delivered to the soul,—
 An immortal point of power, a block of poise
 In a cosmicity's wide formless surge,¹

Having first gained this puissance of freedom, Aswapathy the individual seeker and pioneer wants to help mankind in the aggregate also to win the same soul's joy and strength of freedom. Although his yoga is described with a unique splendour of elaboration culminating in his confrontation of the Divine Mother and his securing from her the promise of an *avatāra* to redeem mankind, in essentials the yoga is but a symbolic translation of what Sri Aurobindo has earlier stated in *The Ideal of Human Unity*:

The mind of man is to be released from all bonds, allowed freedom and range and opportunity, given all its means of self-training and self-development and organised in the play of its powers for the service of humanity. And all this too is not to be held as an abstract or pious sentiment, but given full and practical recognition in the persons of men and nations and mankind.²

Aswapathy, having achieved his soul's release and larger spiritual freedom, finally acts as the ambassador of humanity striving towards perfection, marching towards new goals of aspiration and achievement:

His soul was a delegation of the All
 That turned from itself to join the one Supreme.
 Transcended was the human formula;
 Man's heart that had obscured the Inviolable
 Assumed the mighty beating of a god's;
 His seeking mind ceased in the Truth that knows;
 His life was a flow of the universal life.³

Having at last won from the Divine Mother the boon of his seeking, Aswapathy returns to his routine, but now assured that the seed of a great change is already lodged in Time.

Like Aswapathy the Forerunner, Savitri the Redeemer is imaged in appropriate

¹ *Savitri*, p. 340.

² *The Ideal of Human Unity*, p. 311.

³ *Savitri*, p. 362.

terms, and her Yoga of preparation and readiness for her struggle with the Adversary has its own touches of universality. In the legendary story, she struggles to rescue her husband Satyavan from the clutches of Yama the Lord of Death. But in Sri Aurobindo's epic, behind this legend there is the potent symbol too, for here Satyavan is also "the soul of the world" caught up in an eclipse as it were. In the climactic passage, Savitri peremptorily demands of Death:

Release the soul of the world called Satyavan
Freed from thy clutch of pain and ignorance
That he may stand master of life and fate,
Man's representative in the house of God,
The mate of Wisdom and the spouse of Light,¹

And he is released indeed, and Savitri and Satyavan return at long last to this earth of "too too sullied flesh" to commence their work of man-transformation and earth-transformation.

Sri Aurobindo seems to say that for true brotherhood, what is really needed is the socialism or communism of the Spirit. We have for long forgotten the soul and the world-soul, and lost ourselves in the mazes of science and the Juggernath interstices of technology, political horse-trading, administrative red-tape and the weights and measures of the economic market-place. But the soul within has been allowed to be veiled or clouded by hypocrisy and self-deceiving. Trying to live for ourselves, we have succeeded only in destroying ourselves. What life have you if not in community? And where is community except in communion with the Divine? But if we can determinedly pierce the veil of hypocrisy and dispel the clouds of self-deceiving by the Flame of Truth-consciousness, the way will be prepared at last for durable human unity. As Sri Aurobindo has affirmed towards the close of *The Ideal of Human Unity*:

These three things (freedom, equality, unity) are in fact the nature of the soul. . . the eternal attributes of the Spirit. It is the practical recognition of this truth, it is the awakening of the soul in man and the attempt to get him to live from his soul and not from his ego which is the inner meaning of religion, and it is that to which the religion of humanity also must arrive before it can fulfil itself in the life of the race.²

It is this pressure of soul-unity that drives Savitri to prefer the "burden of universal love" instead of permanent residence in the Heavens above. Her return to earth with Satyavan is a symbol used by Sri Aurobindo to give us his ambrosial message regarding the future greatness of humanity. It is when more and more choice

¹ *Savitri*, p. 748.

² *The Ideal of Human Unity*, p. 315.

spirits like Savitri and Satyavan prefer to live for others, it is then alone that the new golden age of human unity will be ushered among men:

All then shall change, a magic order come
 Overtopping this mechanical universe.
 A mightier race shall inhabit the mortal's world.
 On Nature's luminous tops, on the Spirit's ground,
 The superman shall reign as king of life,
 Make earth almost the mate and peer of heaven...
 Then in the process of evolving Time
 All shall be drawn into a single plan,
 A divine harmony shall be earth's law,
 Beauty and Joy remould her way to live:
 Even the body shall remember God...¹

PREMA NANDAKUMAR

*[Paper contributed to the International Seminar On Human Unity
 held at New Delhi in 1972].*

¹ *Savitri*, pp. 793-4.

PROFIT AND LOSS

I

If you do not want to lose
 Do not expect gain.
 Gain is in proportion to loss.
 If you do not want to lose
 Your base matter,
 Do not expect the gold
 Of Ambrosia.
 If you do not want to break
 Your present constitution
 Do not expect transformation.
 A new birth always presupposes a death.

2

Anything that costs you nothing
 Is worse than worthless.
 Bowing to God is worthless
 If it does not cost you your ego.
 Did it not cost Draupadi
 Her pride of being somebody in her
 own right
 Before she got Krishna's help?

GIRDHARLAL

RECENT TRENDS IN BIOLOGICAL THEORY AND PSYCHO-PHYSIOLOGY

SOME SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES TOWARDS SRI AUROBINDO'S VISION

(Continued from the issue of March 1977)

2

APROPOS of Alister Hardy, let us glance at a subject he treats in his second series of Gifford Lectures. He tells us that "a number of scientists with greater vision are now realizing that the problem of the nature of consciousness, embracing that of the mind-body relationship, is one of the most important facing mankind today."²⁸ Jacques Monod, whom we have called the foremost apostle of "chance" in genetics, has himself the following confession, though still with a materialistic undertone and with desperate anxiety-allaying assumptions:

There lies the frontier, still almost as impassable for us as it was for Descartes. Until it has been crossed a phenomenological dualism will continue to appear unavoidable. Brain and spirit are ideas no more synonymous today than in the seventeenth century. Objective analysis obliges us to see that this seeming duality within us is an illusion; but an illusion so deeply rooted in our being, that it would be vain to hope ever to dissipate it in the immediate awareness of subjectivity, or to learn to live emotionally or morally without it. And, besides, why should we have to? What doubt can there be of the presence of the spirit within us? To give up the illusion that sees in it an immaterial 'substance' is not to deny the existence of the soul, but on the contrary to begin to recognize the complexity, the richness, the unfathomable depth of the genetic and cultural heritage and of the personal experience, conscious or not, which together make up this being of ours, unique and irrefutable.²⁹

All this double-faced rhetoric is empty. Spirit's or consciousness's existence as an irreducible fact cannot be called "an illusion". Monod, a few sentences earlier than the cited passage, has declared of "this marvellous instrument" of "subjective experience": "Physiological experimentation has so far been unable to help us."³⁰ Does "the analysis of language" give us help? Monod tells us that this analysis discloses the subjective experience only after it has been "transformed" and "certainly does not reveal all its operations".³¹ What then remains? The "genetic heritage" cannot enlighten us, for genes are as physical as the brain and belong just as much to the one side of the "duality". Looking at the "duality" from the materialistic angle which Monod stubbornly chooses, we have no reason to use the adjective

"seeming", no cause to count as an "illusion" our seeing here an entity that is "immaterial", whether we rate it as a "substance" or not. Our "immediate awareness of subjectivity", standing opposed to all that we define in science as material, cannot but be considered "immaterial" until such time that this "area", labelled by Monod elsewhere as "still 'reserved' " ³², has been covered by what he pins his hopes on: "development in molecular biology", which, in his eyes, "over the past two decades has singularly narrowed the domain of the mysterious" ³³. The view scientists like Monod take of matter, regarding it as blind mass or energy, a phenomenon never to be interpreted "in terms of final causes—that is to say, of 'purpose' ", ³⁴ can never cope with "subjectivity" whose "witness to itself" Monod cannot help admitting to be "irrefutable" and incapable of being dispelled.

If we are to dissipate dualism we must proceed the other way round and explain genetics and physiological events by a hidden or disguised consciousness at work—matter being veiled life, life veiled mind, mind veiled Supermind, as Sri Aurobindo would have it. After all, what we know as matter is, to make a pertinent pun, a matter of experience and of conceptual extrapolation of experience—in other words, the same awareness which is witness to our self is here an encompasser of the not-self: the so-called objective, too, is known only through and within the subjective. A greater Self in which all that we now consider not-self is also covered, a supreme experience-holder, must be taken to find expression in both sides of our experience.

Anyway, Hardy draws our attention to the fact that master neurologists and brain-specialists refuse to equate consciousness with the cerebral organ. Thus Sir Cyril Hinshelwood, in his Presidential Address in 1966 to the British Association at Cambridge, entitled "Science and Scientists" says: "...what remains utterly incomprehensible is how and why the brain becomes the vehicle of consciousness.... Some philosophers have wanted to talk away the mind-matter problem as a verbal confusion. I suspect that at bottom they simply attach no importance to the scientific description of things and are therefore indifferent to any divorce between it and the language which describes the world of experience." ³⁵ A little earlier in his Address Hinschelwood remarks about Sir Charles Sherrington: "Though he more than any other man elucidated the nature of nervous reflexes, he was strongly opposed to any mechanistic view of the world. 'Mind,' he writes, 'knows itself and knows the world; chemistry and physics, explaining so much, cannot undertake to explain Mind itself.' " ³⁶ Hardy adds on his own a passage from Sherrington's Gifford Lectures, *Man on His Nature*:

...mental phenomena on examination do not seem amenable to understanding under physics and chemistry. I have therefore to think of the brain as an organ of liaison between energy and mind, but not as a converter of energy into mind or *vice versa*.

We have, it seems to me, to admit that energy and mind are phenomena of two categories. ³⁷

Then Hardy turns to the views of Lord Brain. In his book, *Mind, Perception and Science*, Lord Brain answers the question: "What have you to say about [Gilbert] Ryle's view? Hasn't he finally demolished 'the ghost in the machine' and with it many other functions you evidently attribute to the mind?" Lord Brain says: "It would take too long to discuss all the views which Ryle expresses in *The Concept of the Mind*, but I must comment on his ideas about sensation, observation and imagination, since if he is right about these I must be wrong and, incidentally, his approach to these topics will illustrate what I believe to be the fundamental defect of his book."³⁸ Lord Brain goes on to demolish, on neurophysiological grounds, Ryle's argument.

Hardy continues: "Sir John Eccles, one of our leading physiologists of brain action, in his Waynflete Lectures at Oxford in 1952, to the astonishment of many supported the concept of the 'ghost in the machine'."³⁹ Finally, Hardy refers to Sir Cyril Burt who "has recently in two important papers, 'The Structure of the Mind'⁴⁰ and 'The Concept of Consciousness',⁴¹ shown the absurdity of both the epiphenomenal view of mind and the old behaviourist* type of psychology. . .⁴² The shallow materialism of those biologists and psychologists who imagine that, in reducing all life to physics and chemistry, they are taking the only truly scientific course, is now giving way to a wider vision."⁴³

Doubtless, the view of perception taken by Sherrington, Hinshelwood, Brain, Eccles and Burt is not without difficulties from the philosophical standpoint, but so are all other theories. What this view stresses is the physiological mechanism science cannot ever overlook and which must involve a radical difference from subjectivity. From the joint operation of subjectivity and the physiological mechanism three problems arise: (1) How does a subjective state interact with a mechanism composed of material factors? (2) How does the experiencing subject, which is connected only with complex nerve-operations, get the sight, sound, smell, taste and touch of a manifold world of objects? (3) Confined to interaction with neural events, how can the experiencing subject know that its experience of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch corresponds to what objectively exists?

We have already indicated the direction in which the answer to the first question must lie: a more-than-human Consciousness relates itself to itself in the form of mind, life-force and matter which are all projected experience-moulds of that Consciousness. But, from the argumentative angle, no answer is immediately necessary. For, the alternatives to the interaction-theory pose equal difficulties. If we say, as some older philosophers did, that physical events and mental events constitute two parallel series corresponding to each other in their own peculiar terms, we may ask how two such unlike series, each supposedly irreducible to the other, could have come together to constitute a parallelism. Or if we say, as many modern materialists have done, that the mind is a mere epiphenomenon, a state caused by brain-activity but

* Not to be confused with the modern behaviour studies, the investigation of the behaviour of animals under natural conditions which has developed to become a new branch of biology now called ethology.

with no active effect back upon the brain, a similar query is legitimate: how could brain-activity which is alleged to be so different from a mental phenomenon ever come to cause it? Besides, how could a phenomenon, so useless as an active agent, have not only persisted as an evolutionary feature but actually gone on increasing in biological history? On the ground of dissimilarity, all theories are on a par as regards conceptual hurdles.

The two other questions hang together. And if the scientific description of what is involved in perception is correct—and surely scientists can fundamentally give no alternative account—then there is only one solution. Sri Aurobindo has hinted it.⁴⁴ An intuitive activity of several kinds intervenes and establishes an immediate intimacy with the external object to be perceived. There is a sense-mind intuition which seizes the suggestion of the image or vibration touching off the nerve-message. There is a life-force intuition which seizes the object's energy or figure of power through another sort of vibration created by the sense-contact. And there is an intuition of the correlating mind which at once forms a right idea of the object from this double testimony. But Sri Aurobindo adds that all here is an action through a dense medium, as it were, and the image thus constructed is somewhat deficient. What is deficient is filled up, as far as the field or the scale of experience concerned permits, by the intervention of the reason or the total understanding intelligence. Nothing except such a direct perception, an extra-sensory perception, can disclose the manifold world of objects to us and enable us to judge the correspondence of that world with our experience of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.

The Aurobindonian view explains why in perception we feel not that there are the percept and the perceived but that the two are one and the same. The direct intuitive impression is superimposed upon the response of the mind stimulated by the code-message of the nerves. The Aurobindonian view also establishes at the very outset a kind of supernormal knowledge exceeding the conditions under which the mind has to work in the present state of affairs—namely, the arrangement of neural stimulus and mental response. In fact, the very language we have to use in talking of perception assumes such a knowledge. For, neural stimulus is as much a part of the ordinary world of objects as are clouds, cascades, flowers, fruits and stones, whose message is conveyed in code by neural movements. Thus consciousness is proved in even its most elementary act to be not clamped to the brain, not inseparably associated with the grey cells. It is something independent, however limited and covered-up its usual functioning. Hence the evidence recently accumulated of extra-sensory perception and of other forms of paranormal cognition is demonstrated to be nothing utterly out of the ordinary. A *prima facie* case for their authenticity is created.

Sri Aurobindo does not seek to bypass science's account. It is valid to him but must be very significantly supplemented. Science, on its side, cannot bypass the fact of "mind" and indeed has to make this fact all too patent when it speaks authoritatively through its master neurologists and brain-specialists.

To round off our discussion we may close with a remark of Hardy's, side by side

one from another source. There is the point Hardy brings up when reflecting on his idea of telepathy being a general phenomenon in biology, rendering it possible for us to imagine a pattern of shared "unconscious" experience, a kind of composite species-pattern of life. He comments on the mysteriousness which may be alleged against this experience:

It is important to remember that in the concept of the individual mind we are faced with a mystery no less remarkable. The mind cannot be anchored to this or that group of cells that make up the brain. The community of cells making up the body has a mind beyond the individual cells—the "impression" coming from one part of the brain receiving sensory impulses from one eye and that from another part of the brain from the other eye are merged together in the mind, not in some particular cells as far as we know. The mystery of the mind and body seems to be as inconceivable as the speculation I am suggesting.⁴⁵

Once more we are in the midst of things in common life which are impossible for science to reduce to any materialistic phenomenon.

Perhaps Hardy, who has quoted so many authorities on cerebral processes, would appreciate the last word being given to one more such name, the most renowned at the moment, Dr. Wilder Penfield. In his latest book, *The Mystery of the Mind*, Penfield confesses that all his attempts to understand mental experience—the mind—on the basis of brain-studies have come to nothing. He concludes that the mind is a peculiar energy whose form is quite different from the electrochemical energy in the brain's nerve-pathways.⁴⁶

Thus here, as elsewhere, scientific attitudes and contemporary world-insights are not so simple and naive and single-tracked as superficial commentators may pretend. They leave ample room for and even demand a vision, like Sri Aurobindo's, of the universe and man.

(Concluded)

K. D. SETHNA

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A MYSTERY

FOR behold I unfold unto you a mystery:

Even as you can unite in spirit with one person;
Even as you can unite in spirit with a city of thy heart;
So can you unite with Me: And even greater and more profound
will be your experience and the mystery of your heart.

For you have left the insignificant for the significant.
You have left the little me with all its unresolved wonderings;
and united with the Big Me:—which is all Height:—
Beyond all Heights: The depths of your little being:—Beyond your
imaginings—the breadth of all Being.

Into this all vanishes, yet does not vanish: For your conscious
uniting makes it Manifest.
You are no longer bound by the bricks of the little house
in which you have been made a servant by the tyrant.
You have inherited the Kingdom of Eternity which spreads before
you wall-less and roofless.

All colors, harmonies and untold feelings of love not heard of
or spoken of by man; though he style himself the Great One;
and can prove his greatness. Or the man, who through you hopes
to become great.

It is not as said: “A Teacher will take thee as far as thou canst go.”
No, it is thus: “Thou canst only go as far as the Teacher—unless
the Teacher has learned the great secret of union with Me.
Then unshackled and unburdened thou mayest go on Becoming forever.”

For I am not a Person; though I am a Person When I manifest
my Force through the one who desires Me, often he forgets and
becomes Me. He cannot.
I am not as it was said a jealous God; for my creation is Myself.
I am as large as it is: But you, man, always want Me to become as
small as yourself. This I cannot do. For I never can become small;
For I Am the All—Therefore I say, “Unite Thou with Me—if only
for a moment; and taste the ecstasy of Unspoken and Unthought Love.”

Thus is the mystery, which is not a mystery: Only to the small
desires and ways of those trying to explain that which cannot
be explained.

FLORENCE RUSSELL

TWO POEMS

ASCENT AND DESCENT

MAKE firmer my foundation, fix my feet
Like bedrock, to upbear my heart of fire,
An ardent chapel, whose high-reaching spire—
Like infant lips enamoured of truth's teat,
Extended downwards from the mystic seat
Of supernature—dizzy with desire
And drunken rapture, leaps up higher and higher,
Into the space where the two parents meet.

Make my foundation wider than the earth,
Extended as a woman giving birth
Is utterly extended to deliver
The burden of her womb, so I can be
Delivered upwards into ecstasy
And, fixed below, receive the rushing river.

THE ARYAN'S PRAYER

RELEASE me, Mother, from earth's limitation,
Drawing me like a sharp sword from its sheath—
Flashing, exultant, leaving blindness beneath
And plunged deep into skies of liberation.
There cleave out crystal streams of inspiration
To make the crown a charged unfading wreath,
And drive me back into earth's virgin heath,
A plough to break the ground of the new creation.

Make me the Aryan, warrior and king,
Illumined cultivator of truth's soil
And servant in the sacramental toil
And give to me the seer's lips that sing
Of mortals bound for immortality
And, as I sing, reveal yourself to me.

PETER HEEHS

(From the author's forthcoming book, *Image of Adoration*)

THE CHAMPAK GARLAND

THOUGH shyness shone within them like a secret prayer,
Mute was that perfumed murmur to me, lying there
As strange and white with silence as a snowspun wood
Woven into crystal stillness by some pale, swift Hand,
Until my heart touched quietness and I understood
That what can bloom beyond my passion's stormproud sand
Can be as dim with dreams, as fragrant and as rare,
As the silver whisper of the moonlight on the desert air...

Since dawn my soul had walked in ways of dusk, not day,
And through a drift of twilight shadows seemed to stray,
Listless as a coil of lonely autumn smoke,
Singing only sorrow to the slow beat of the rain,
Until those flowers gently smiled at me and spoke,
"Fierce and sweet His sundrunk Feet shall sweep your pain,
Bringing flames of morning laughter to your wavedrenched play,
Flinging rapture through you like the foam on the wild seaspray."

Now high and clear, their promise rings
Like radiant music in my mind,
They gave my darkness joylimned wings
And I shall soar until I find
The Flute that makes the planets dance
Along the shining paths of night,
And the stars spin in a sapphire trance,
In a drowsy ecstasy of light,
Whirl breathless to that wild bright tune
Until my heart forgets to weep,
And from the clouds that veil the moon
He weaves a cloak of violet sleep...
And when I awaken I shall dress
In the saffron shimmer of the dawn,
In tints of fire and tenderness,
Mists of iridescent lawn,
Drain His cup of amber madness,
With the winds of morning race,
Bathe in streams of golden gladness,
And lift my soul towards His luminous Face.

She speaks to Radha:

*"Shining one, golden as the champa flower,
the god of fate has given your radiance to you
in sacred offering.*

*Fortunate one, blessed and golden one,
his dark body shall wed with yours.
Waste nothing of the light of youth,
Go quickly to him..."¹*

JEAN

¹ From a Bengali devotional lyric.

A NOTE FROM HUTA

I HAVE received quite a number of letters asking when I would publish my other books.

The questions are prompted by my having mentioned in *Salutations* and in the Matrimandir brochure their future publication. I still hold to my plan. I do not wish to keep back from my fellow seekers all that the Mother has given to me. But certain circumstances have made me feel that the proper time for these books has not yet come. When it comes, everything will be published exactly as the Mother has indicated to me.

HUTA

A SHEAF OF SYMBOLS

7

LIKE a child inveterate, ever found at play
With toy after toy, or in game on engrossing game
Soon cloyed with one, running after another fast:
Expecting all to fall into instant line
Of his wayward vagaries or veering whims,
Or else imposing penalty on all
To bear the brunt of vandal-workmanship:
And, paying full penalty to himself, too late,
In sob after sob of spent-out past misfires:
Like that fond child of mother nature dear
Permitting this long-rope play out of sheer love—
I, too, have been playing, playing all my life
With words, ideas, images, verse-patterns, schemes:
Playing with Fireworks of Aspiration high
And Flashes of Indignation short-circuits:
Playing with young and old, compeers found
On intellectual or else on psychic ground:
Playing with fateful Dice of Destiny—
Even like Ulysses, in eventide of life,
Setting sail off Ithaca shores for uncharted seas,
To One Far End of Perfectibility dim—on Horizon's rim!

8

Speak but a word, O Friend, a reassuring word!
Why lie so listless on this bleak terrain?
What, breathing so hard? So overborne, 'exhaust'?
And so much yet to scale uphill, dear soul!...
Such faint-heartedness an Aryan never behoves,
So stricken in spirits a sadhaka never behaves!

Remember how, with pilgrim-staff in hand,
We forth embarked on that Eventful Day:
How our spirits leapt up to Excelsior-Call,
And we staked our all, renouncing home and hearth!
Never did you care for comforts of creature-kind,
Nor ever cared for Kith and Kin's regard:
How is it then today thus—this craven's stance?
Where has that ardour gone? That heroic fire?...

Call back to mind the first fine rapture-hours,
Call back the Benedictions showered on us:
Call back, O call, the Fortitude bedewed
Evinced as 'Souvenir' by new-wed tender hands!
Remember the razor-sharp Initiation-word:
"Never by weaklings is won the Spirit's Prize!"
Rise, Brother, rise! The Highest holds out the Prize: To Occasion rise!

CHIMANBHAI

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THERE WAS NO GATE

He was—and is—a most modest child of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, an 84-year-old child without any pretension of being even yet on the path of yoga. But during his whole life he always tried to do his best in every circumstance, with trust and love.

His first love and admiration was for his mother, a beautiful woman with pale grey eyes, who found it necessary, after an accident had happened to her husband, to earn the living for the entire family. She combined poverty with dignity, and hard work with generosity. Slowly but surely the financial conditions of the family improved. There were eight persons to feed, including two orphans, but they all would have felt ashamed to eat even their frugal meal alone, so a ninth seat was reserved for the first hungry North African to be met in the street. And there were always many wandering about without work in this Mediterranean harbour of southern France.

The First World War put an end to the child's studies. He found himself, at 21, with a gun in his hand and an incapacity to fire it against any living being. For four years, in one of the most exposed of French regiments, he served as a messenger from trench to trench. He resisted the easy consolation of tobacco and alcohol. Most of his war comrades fell, one after another, around him.

Two years after the end of the war he married a vivacious friend of his sister. His love for and trust in his mother found their natural extension in his love for and trust in his wife. They decided together that they would have only a single child and would give her everything they could. For she was to be a girl, born just before the summer. Her name was already known. Quietly for four years they waited until they felt ready to conceive her.

Their love for and trust in that child led them to believe that she was more and knew more than they, so when she reached a certain age they declared themselves her children and asked her for inner guidance. They did and tried whatever she suggested, and so developed a new view of the universe.

One day their daughter left France to live in India, in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. It was clear that India was to become their mother country and the Ashram their home. The Mother of the Ashram said, "They should come at once." But for three years, until they felt ready for this great moment in their life, they waited.

When they met the Mother for the first time, they realized that they had known her always. Their spontaneous capacity to trust and to love was now completely satisfied.

Like children they marvelled at each building of the Ashram, each sadhak they met, each collective activity in which they participated. He was the more enthusiastic: "All this is ours!" He had found his kingdom. He asked the Mother to remove from his memory the nightmares of the war. She did it with a light blessing finger and he never remembered them again.

When his first Indian summer started, it delighted him, as did everything else: the Ashram food, the simple clothing, the Mother playing tennis (he bought a new tennis net for her), the distributions of flowers and sweets. Nevertheless, a dermatosis developed on his hands. Since his childhood he had had it in a recurrent form which manifested every summer. But in this tropical climate it took dramatic proportions. One morning he nearly fainted in front of the Mother. "It is nothing," she said, and she recommended daily washing of his hands in boiled salt water. She gave him a cream to use when the ulceration disappeared. He followed this treatment, and the recurrent 60-year-old dermatosis that no specialist had been able to cure never reappeared. The recipe for this healing was a beauty cream of the Mother and his total faith in her.

His wife had been very sick in France before coming to India, and had been treated for an ulcer. She had been operated on but the surgeon, finding the external appearance of the stomach to be good, chose not to open it. Still she remained unwell until one day the Mother told her, kissing her, "Next year, for your birthday, you will tell me: 'Mother, I am healed'." There was no place for doubt in their trust and faith.

Some months later, one evening the wife vomited a most horrible stuff which had been rejected by the stomach. Actually the phenomenon resembled an abortion. The next day she was able to resume her normal life, after a two-year illness which suddenly seemed far away and unreal. The Mother had used the unobstructive faith of two willing children to give them health, happiness and peace.

When old age and an impoverished brain circulation impaired his mental faculties, he wakened every morning in a prophetic mood, and often expressed in a few words the nature of the coming day. The daughter learned to respect his mind's impotence and to wait for the flights of knowledge that eventually came through. On two beautiful occasions he cried with joy, seized by a holy mirth as he faced the immense joke of the universe.

One morning, at prophecy time, he said, "I am to leave this body soon."

"Is there any reason?" the daughter asked. And he answered:

"The reason is that I cannot manifest what I have to manifest." A few days later he fell ill. Quietly he refused to swallow any drugs.

"Why all this?" he asked, "It is useless!" So they treated him by injection. He firmly refused also to go to bed, even at night. He wanted to remain sitting, well erect, looking at the garden of Auroville which surrounded him and which he called "the garden of the Mother."

The process of leaving his body started one evening by a movement of expansion, an overflowing of gratitude and joy. He identified himself with all that his consciousness met—human beings, houses, trees—penetrating them with a substance as light and egoless as a comet's tail.

The following morning the heart failed, and after two gasps the body was still. The doctors declared it dead.

"How easy it is!" exclaimed his wife.

He remained sitting, erect, an imposing figure now. The external mask was replaced by his true visage, with every line beautifully carved and significant. He had become what he always was, the charioteer who unerringly follows the royal path from apparent birth to apparent death, from life to life.

From immemorial times he had been travelling, and that special morning, at 10 o'clock, there had been some kind of small irregularity, a slight bump on the road—the Mother's road of course in the garden of the Mother.

Nothing had halted or disturbed his journey, neither altered in any way its continuity nor changed its direction or its rhythm—his voyage of becoming more and more himself. There was no landmark, no signpost, no questioning deity. He had become the road.

We looked and looked at this beautiful endless road, towards the past and towards the future. Nowhere was there any gate. There was only life, a life which did not stop breathing, dancing and transforming itself—the life eternal.

On the earthly stage, there began a joyous festival. Hundreds of village people came and visited him—with their children and their dogs. "Look, he is breathing!" "He is not dead!"

YVONNE ARTAUD

SOME DREAM-MESSAGES

The Soul's Aspirations

I FOUND myself standing on the plateau of a big mountain. There was calm and peace all around in the atmosphere. I observed several peaks of mountains on my right side. There were no trees or any vegetation anywhere on the mountains. On my left I saw a great vastness without limit and without any animate or inanimate objects. The whole looked like an enormous space filled with a pale yellow mist-like substance—really indefinable and indescribable!

While I was still standing, I looked at the sky. I saw the moon but it was running slowly across the sky far above the horizon. Then suddenly to my great surprise I saw another moon in the sky chasing our moon. Both the moons sometimes disappeared in the clouds and came out again and again but still the other moon was quietly following our moon. I found our moon absolutely clear and shining but the moon following it had some delicate patch-like embroidery in the middle.

I enjoyed greatly the play of hide-and-seek performed by the moons. I do not know how this scene came to an end.

After this, I happened to be amongst some Ashramites in the basement of a building. I saw K.D. Sethna in the group and I wanted to tell him about this dream. I approached him but he was moving about here and there, so I could not tell him. Then I came up the stairs and waited for K. D. S. at the landing of the lift but he did not turn up.

21-1-1976

Mahakali's Emanation

I was standing on a parapet and looking out at a far distance. Suddenly from my right I saw a human figure running at a tremendous speed which no human being is capable of, and as the figure came in full view I saw that it was that of a woman of dark complexion but I could not fix the outlines of her face. She was of a short stature and dressed in a dazzling gold sari.

As she passed in front of me I heard the tinkling sound of her anklets which was soft, melodious and perfectly rhythmic. She looked as if she were dancing to the accompaniment of a rhythmic sound like "chum-chum" from her anklets.

22-1-1976

The Mother's Night

In my dream, last night seemed to be the Mother's night. Why? The whole atmosphere was calm and peaceful. Besides, the entire apartment was pervaded with a whitish aura. There were people of all communities including foreigners. I could feel the Presence of the Mother in the physical. We were talking about the Mother and her Grace was experienced by the assembled persons. She had worn white cottons and was moving gracefully among the assemblage. I felt the whole night one stretch of calm and peace.

11-3-1976

D. S. PATHARE

THE ART OF PROMODE CHATTERJEE

AND

SOME REMARKS BY THE MOTHER

"It is because Art reveals what Nature hides that a small picture is worth more than all the jewels of the millionaires and the treasures of the princes."

Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Aphorisms*, Jnana, Art, p. 23.

ON page 407 of the *Mother India* for August 1970 Nirodbaran states: "It was in 1956 or so that our artist sadhak Promode Chatterjee made a painting from Sri Aurobindo's boyhood picture and brought it before the Mother. We were there sitting by her side. The Mother remarked, 'You have caught something of the spontaneity and freshness of the nature and something candid with which he came into this world. His inner being was on the surface. He knew nothing of this world'."

I should inform here, briefly, that this uncanny capacity of rightly catching the true nature or character of a person or an object was unfolded by the assiduous practice of yoga, which Promode Chatterjee began in his youth, as well as by rigorous self-training in drawing. Although art had been his *grande passion* from a tender age, yet he could not fall in line with Oscar Wilde's wisecrack: art for art's sake. The pure grace of the spirit is the first entry in his list of mystic experiences, and he always took the opportunity to express in his works of art the beauty and purity of the spirit which is superimposed upon and inwoven with all nature. His motto—art for the sake of spirituality.

Is it any wonder therefore that many of his paintings should be inspired by mystic visions? But although he always depicted these plain visions or dream-visions faithfully and charmingly in colourful strokes on canvas or paper, yet their full truth or deeper significance would often elude his mind's grasp. The Mother, more than once, indirectly pointed this out to the sadhak artist, in her refined manner, by lovingly changing the titles of his works.

The big-size work which the artist had flatly named "Shiva-tandava" is an instance in point. A photo-print of this can be found in *S A. I. C. E. Bulletin* of Feb. 1959. The theme of this exquisite painting is the dance of the God Rudra (Shiva's destructive aspect). What is remarkable about it all is that the mood of destruction is very subtly conveyed. At first glance the viewer would be so carried away by the divine loveliness and delicate, almost feminine beauty of the deity's figure that for a moment everything else in the picture would as if vanish from his range of vision. The expression of the face could not have been sweeter. One would find nothing in it to think of destruction. But wait. As the intensity of the spell cast by the central figure grows weak, the viewer discovers to his horror a sensuous couple lying on the soil, locked in unrestrained embrace, being trampled upon by the Destroyer.

The Mother appreciated the work very much and renamed it, aptly, "A Vision of Shiva Above Human Passion."

Another painting to which the Mother gave a long and noteworthy title was first named by its creator "Two Swans."

Everybody who visits Sri Aurobindo's room on Darshan days sees it, without knowing its history, and also perhaps the name. It is easy to locate it: as one leaves the Master's room one enters a passage, then one has to cross another threshold to find immediately on the left an almirah on top of which there is a painting of the snake goddess Manasa (from a vision of the devi that Chatterjee had long ago). Then one stands in front of an open room on the left and sees from the threshold the sofa on which the Master and the Mother sat together to see devotees file past. At the foot of this sofa is the painting of the two swans. Considering the special treatment and high status that this work of art enjoyed from the Mother herself, its history too should deserve recording.

Mr. Chatterjee came to this Ashram, for the first time, in October 1958. Before that year he knew nothing about our Ashram and its *raison d'être*. A day had been fixed for him to show his art works to the Mother. He took along quite a few of his paintings which he had painstakingly completed in his atelier in Calcutta. The radiance of the Mother's smile[†] fell on all the pictures and she spent quite some time admiring each of them separately. When the turn came of the painting of the swans she was instantaneously and surprisingly attracted by it. Not only that, she even went into a trance. A little later when she stirred, with a beam of delight she eagerly questioned, "Very interesting. When did you do this?"

It was at Calcutta way back sometime in February 1956: before sun-up the sadhak artist saw a vision, too vivid to be forgotten. A pair of divinely beautiful swans, golden, streaking through "*chidakash*" (the ether within the heart) at dawn. An artist to the finger-nails the first thing he did when the beatific vision faded was to make a pencil-sketch of it. Later on he had applied the colours. Although he had found this vision rather remarkable, he had no idea that he had become an unconscious witness of a momentous happening.

The Mother put him wise—to the obvious delight and astonishment of the painter, she spontaneously wrote, then and there, the caption of the picture on its lower margin,

"Les annonceurs du monde Supramental."

"The Heralds of the Supramental World."

Chatterjee had named it simply "The Two Swans." Come to think of it!

This picture is a genuine and unsolicited testimonial of the Supramental Manifestation upon earth; as I said, at the time of this visionary experience Promode Kumar knew nothing about Pondicherry's Ashram and had heard nothing about the Great Event. "On the 21st Feb. 1960 the Mother gave everyone a card in a special envelope showing a pair of golden swans.... They had appeared in 1956 in a vision to the painter, Promode Kumar Chattopadhyaya."¹

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¹ *Life in Sri Aurobindo Ashram* by Narayan Prasad, p. 163.

Back in October 1960 Pondicherry was rocked by storms accompanied by heavy rain, blinding lightnings and frequent ear-splitting thunders. It being Diwali season, you can well imagine what our condition was at that time. On the one hand there were the children who started playing with noisy fireworks in your streets or compounds and thus murdering your work or repose. Then they got an ally—the storm.

On the tenth night the cloud-burst reached its climax; and the thunders were so loud that one could be pardoned for taking the noise as the crack of doom. The 75-year-old sadhak tossed and turned on his bed in a first-floor room of Golconde (a plush guest-house). Try as he might he could not get even a wink of sleep. Finally he climbed down from his bed and went to recline on the couch. He did not want to switch on the light. Outside his room, at a little distance in the lobby a dim night lamp kept vigil.

Closing his eyes he tried to be calm. The thunder-peal, however, prevented him from being self-rapt. At that moment one of those happenings took place. He sensed that he must open his eyes and see. What is usually a common feature in gripping nightmares became a standing reality in his room while he was wide awake. He suddenly witnessed, as though from the magic lamp of Aladdin, a whitish figure materializing in front of his eyes, *sans phrase* and *sans cérémonie*—it was really a perfect nonplus and baffle to all human understanding!

Old Chatterjee threw up his eyes, as who would not! but an artist *par excellence* he simply felt that this once-in-a-life-time moment must be caught, somehow, immediately. Blessed with an unusual presence of mind and the old adventurous spirit intact, he picked up the slate (white with scriblings in infantile French on both sides) off the floor and hastily rubbed it with his palm. His trembling, fumbling hand by chance succeeded even in that darkness in clutching rightly at the chalk which lay hidden on a nearby stool amidst other things. And then it began—the portraiture of, ostensibly, a *revenant*.

The motive of this apparition was transparent; he wanted to be portrayed—snappily. And the artist also was tremendously anxious to capture his form as rapidly and as perfectly as possible. So both were overpowered by a get-the-job-done spirit. He could not see what his fingers drew on the slate. Inspiration, experience and dearly-earned skill were his only light.

With an incredible turn of speed the sketch was completed within the short moment granted to the artist by this mind-boggling phantom. When it melted into the *ewigkeit*, Chatterjee's normal senses bounced back and he got up to sit at his table. Switching on the table lamp he found to his astonishment that the sketch was almost perfect and it had hardly any need of finishing touches.

The next morning he went prancing in triumph, in his child-like way, and held up the "feat" before the eyes of Mrs. Mona Pinto (the in-charge of Golconde). Hearing from the artist the spine-chilling account of the previous night's happening she exclaimed,

"Too utterly fantastic!"

"Enough to puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer!" quipped Chatterjee.

That same morning when she went to the Mother as usual, Mona could not leave that slate behind her, and she repeated to the Mother everything that Promode Kumar had claimed as having seen or done.

"It is true," the Mother confirmed as she gazed appreciatively at the chalk-sketch. "He came to me also last night. It is the spirit of storm. He told me—What are all these teeny-weeny puny crackers that the mortals are playing with? Listen to *my* crackers!"

Mona heard with wide-eyed wonder the Mother's experience.

A glass had been attached on the slate to protect the drawing. It was also photographed and then the slate was exhibited in the Ashram's Dining House. All this had been done following the Mother's own instructions and on that same morning. Despite the glass-covering, the chalk-marks, alas, are fading.

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The one portrait, for which the Mother sweetly exclaimed, "Excellent", in French in her musical voice, is an oil painting of our Master. The Mother had asked Promode Kumar to make a portrait of Sri Aurobindo which was to be permanently preserved in the Government Art Gallery in the Rashtrapati Bhavan at New Delhi. She decided on this particular portrait which Chatterjee did zealously.

He did it from a photograph of the Gurudev which had been taken at Calcutta sometime in the 1900's. What should be kept in mind while looking at this portrait is that, excepting merely the semblance of the face, he took nothing else whatever from the photograph. All is from his imagination—the dress, the background, the tilt of the head with one hand supporting it, everything.

Not that the Mother had invariably nothing but praises for his art-works. Sometimes she could be terribly critical. Once I remember that she had put the eighty-year old nose of the artist out of joint, so to say. But about that later on.

GURUDAS

THE CHARACTER OF LIFE

CONSCIOUSNESS APPROACH TO SHAKESPEARE

(Continued from the issue of March 1977)

4-

The Character of Life in *Macbeth* (Contd.)

IT remains for us to consider the events following Macbeth's murder of Duncan, up until his own death at the hands of Macduff. We feel in reading the play that Macbeth must suffer for his sins and we are relieved both for him and the society when he finally falls in the last scene. What is it that lends this feeling of inevitability to his death? Surely we cannot accuse Shakespeare of resorting to poetic justice or succumbing to the moral principle that evil must be punished. If he did so, we would not feel so deeply the truth of his works. Rather we must look to the conditions and forces of life itself for our explanation.

Scotland is the scene of an open conflict between forces of civilised order and primitive impulses of destruction and evil. The threat comes not from without but from within. Virtue and good in the person of the king lacks strength. In order to preserve the kingdom he must utilise forces of violence and destruction. But by the nature of action (IV) a force once released tends to increase in intensity and to multiply by repetition. To use violence for good, one must be stronger than the forces he puts into action. Otherwise those forces continue on their own initiative and fall back on the user. This happens to Duncan as he attempts to protect his country and his rule. Later it happens to Macbeth who seeks to profit by murder.

As Knight has pointed out, conflict of forces is reflected in the characters of Macduff, Malcolm and Banquo. Duncan's murder is discovered by his loyal supporter Macduff. It is the intensity of his devotion to the king that brings him to the castle just at the time of the murder and makes him the first to see the dead body, "The Lord's annointed temple" as he calls it. Had Macduff's loyalty been supported by corresponding strength he could have come in time to save Duncan. But as Duncan displays goodness and virtue without sufficient power to maintain his rule, Macduff's capacity for pure loyalty is not combined with the strength required to express it. When soon afterwards he goes to England in support of Duncan's son Malcolm, his wife and children are left to be murdered by Macbeth. His personality lacks the energy to sustain both the commitments of his loyal heart. In expressing his loyalty to the dead king he ignores his equally great commitment to protect his family.

Macduff returns from the scene of Duncan's murder crying "O Horror, horror, horror!" The response of the other lords is revealing. Lennox simply asks "Mean you his majesty?", no more. The king's sons arrive. Donalbain is silent. Malcolm

says "O, by whom?" Except for Macduff there is no expression of horror, outrage or grief by those present. With the exception of Macduff and the king's sons, all the lords attend Macbeth's coronation and pledge him support though they have good reason to suspect he is responsible for the murder. Banquo becomes his close counsellor though he surely knows the truth. In the country at large there is no uprising against the usurper, only strange and horrible events in nature signifying a great evil in the air.

This conflict of forces is clearly seen in Banquo whose response parallels and contrasts with that of Macbeth. He is definitely moved by the witches' prophecy of kingship for his descendents:

But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them—
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine—
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well,
And set me up in hope? (III.i.5)

And he harbours a strong hope that he may gain what is promised. But, unlike Macbeth, Banquo refuses the temptation of evil to act on the prophecy.

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep: merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose! (II.i.6)

He is willing to discuss the witches' prophecy with Macbeth so long as his soul remains free and his loyalty to the King is preserved.

So I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchis'd and allegiance clear,
I shall be counsell'd. (II.i.26)

But once Macbeth is king, Banquo becomes his closest counsellor and by his silent consent is implicitly involved in the guilt. He pays for his complicity with death.

We have already noted Malcolm's silence at news of the murder. When Macduff meets him in England to pledge allegiance to him as the rightful heir, Malcolm's first words are:

Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty. (IV.iii.1)

The cause of his weeping is not merely his father's death. The English king has offered ten thousand soldiers to fight against Macbeth. But will Malcolm be a better king than the tyrant Macbeth? He says rather that in comparison to him "black Macbeth will seem as pure as snow" and proceeds to spell out his own vices. Shortly after, Malcolm takes back his self-abuse, claiming himself free of the "taints and blames" he admitted a moment earlier. But we understand that his confession testifies at least to weakness and want of character, certainly not the traits required to reunite the country.

What we have found in Macduff, Banquo and Malcolm corresponds with our study of Macbeth and Duncan. Everywhere the general state of the country is mirrored by the inner conditions of its subjects. Good exists in all of them—even Macbeth was known by his countrymen to be honorable, trustworthy and loyal—side by side with weakness, incapacity or extreme egoism. The nature of these characters is a measure of the quality of the society in which they live. There is an outer form of civilisation and order but much lies below, neither assimilated nor sublimated by the force of cultural development.

We need mention only one more indication of the social life of the country. When Banquo's ghost appears in his seat at the banquet, Macbeth says:

Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden times
 Ere human statute purg'd the gentle weal,
 Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
 Too terrible for the ear: the times have been,
 That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
 And there an end; but now they rise again,
 With twenty mortal murders on their crown,
 And push us from our stools. (III.iv.76)

He says that no longer can man murder and go free as in the days before human law was organised to maintain and protect the general welfare. Today good in life does have a power to resist evil and if it cannot wholly prevent the actions of evil forces, it can at least avenge them. The channels of social character have evolved far enough to be effective in life against forces of destruction. It is this fact reflected in the words and deeds of the leading figures that reveals the inevitability of Macbeth's fall.

Let us now trace the steps leading to his death. In the initial stages of his action, Macbeth is in a constant inner conflict between ambition and conscience while the society around him is stunned and disorganised by the ravages of war and the sudden death of their king. This inner struggle is at its height shortly before and after Duncan's murder. We see it diminished substantially after the execution of Duncan's two attendants and almost fully resolved with Banquo's murder. What was initially a living act has become by sheer repetition a habit and lost its haunting intensity. Gradually, ambition, or more accurately the evil life forces expressing through it,

drown out conscience and his acts take on a more violent expression. When Macbeth resolves the inner conflict he ceases to be a man, and we recall his premonition:

I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none. (I.vii.46)

The outer movement of life corresponds with his own development. As Macbeth moves toward final commitment to the methods and fruits of evil, the lords are able to see clearly the force that confronts them, threatening the country's existence. They begin to form an organised opposition. In the Fourth Act Macbeth again seeks out the witches for guidance, but this time Hecate, the Goddess of the underworld, is present behind the scene. No longer is he dealing with human representatives of evil, but with the pure force of evil itself and to this influence Macbeth fully responds. The slaughter of Macduff's family is the immediate result. Simultaneously, Malcolm and Macduff gain the support of the English king and an army of 10,000 men to oppose Macbeth. We find the country organising itself for the first time, yet even here the support comes mainly from outside. Scotland itself is too racked by evil to powerfully oppose it. But its neighbour which harbours a long tradition of monarchy and civilised order feels called to help. England at this time is blessed with a king of great stature, possessing the power to cure the disease called "the evil" as well as others, incurable by science, who solicits heaven and cures with a golden stamp "put on with holy prayers".

He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace. (IV.iii.7)

The English king seems to be a sun of light among men opposing the evil in Scotland and we may assume that higher powers of light and truth have found through him an instrument to combat the evil abroad and preserve the civilisation from destruction.

Though this force of light appears only late in the play we understand that it is a more organised form of the light which survives in Scotland throughout the drama. This explains the fact that when Duncan and Banquo are murdered, both times their sons escape death to become kings later. The tradition of good is organised enough to protect itself through the events of life. Had this not been so, it is likely Macbeth would have survived as an evil king and his wife might have retained her sanity.

In the last act the civilised forces in Scotland join with the English army and easily defeat Macbeth's forces who act only by compulsion.

Those he commands move only in command,
Nothing in love. (V.ii.19)

Macduff, excited to angry intensity by his family's murder and his own sense of guilt, is able to defeat Macbeth, the man who released that strength in him.

We have only to recall Macbeth's pondering before the murder when he enunciates a basic principle of life:

We still have judgment here; that we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
 To plague the inventor; this even-handed justice
 Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
 To our own lips. (I.vii.8)

It is as though Sri Aurobindo had Macbeth in mind when he wrote,

It can often be observed that when a self-assertive vital egoism goes on trampling on its way without restraint or scruple all that opposes its will or desire, it raises a mass of reactions against itself, reactions of hatred, antagonism, unease in man which may have their result now or hereafter, and still more formidable adverse reactions in universal Nature...the very forces that the ego of the strong vital man seized and bent to its purpose rebel and turn against him, those he had trampled on rise up and receive power for his downfall.²⁸

(To be continued)

GARRY JACOBS

NOTE

28. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, p. 813.
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DIALOGUES

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1977)

Synopsis:

The soul, incarnated as the Frenchwoman, Martine, flees the terrors of the French revolution and finds shelter in a remote corner of the countryside. There she lives out her days, till age and infirmity drive her being on to a new birth.

Her soul awakens early to her new existence as a child among a primitive tribe in an untouched Asiatic region of the Soviet Union. But when the girl Ika is seven years old, a government commission comes to her people and attempts to educate them. Ika is particularly enchanted by the films of the Moscow Ballet, and determines to be a dancer herself.

Chapter XV

THE arrangements for Ika's stay in Moscow were not difficult to make, though they stretched over a period of several months. Ika's parents were surprisingly obliging and made no great fuss over the imminent loss of their daughter, for they had a large enough family to look after as it was. To know that one of their children was receiving training in a distant and legendary centre of learning would be an honour rather than a deprivation. It was the arrangements in Moscow itself that took time, but finally all was ready, and Piotr himself was deputed to take the child on the long journey north.

It turned out to be a quiet trip, for Ika asked hardly any questions, and answered her guardian, whenever he addressed her, in monosyllables. She made no demands even for food, until he began to worry about her. "Is this a good idea after all?" he asked himself. In her home she had been such a happy child.... But he need not have concerned himself. She was simply trying to take this enormous new world in, in her own way, and rather than seek comfort in her human companion she was finding it in the heart of the great Mother Divinity from whom she had sworn never to be separated.

"Great One, look after me, please," she would pray as she looked fixedly out of the train windows or out of whatever vehicle or temporary dwelling in which she happened to find herself. "I have left the place you gave me when I was born, and I don't know any more where I am going—please let me not be afraid..." And then immediately the all-healing answer would come—"My dearest little child, have you forgotten? We are going to Moscow so that you may learn to dance. You had asked for it yourself, remember? And why should you ever be afraid? I'm always here, am I not?"

At this, Ika would smile quietly to herself—a small private smile that neither Piotr nor anyone else would see, and be content. Even so, there were two nights when

Piotr awoke to hear her sobbing, only to find that she was crying in her sleep. Both times he lifted her out of her bunk and took her into his arms. Had he ever loved anyone so much in his young life—child or adult? He could not recall that he had. She too found that all her dream phantoms vanished in her closeness to him. No one had held her so since she had been a baby, and even then, had it been with such an intimate sense of caring? Her mother had had so many children that Ika had quickly become one among the others. With Piotr, she felt his love to be for her alone.

Once they arrived in the great city, Ika was too taken up with the immensity of her new environment and the new life she was about to begin to think at all: her new foster parents, her new school, companions, routine—the perfection of the language she had only just begun to really use. She was almost too occupied to realize a week later that even her last known link with the existence she had formerly known—Piotr—had disappeared. For he had had to return to his assignment among Ika's tribal people. It was only after he had left that it dawned upon her that now she was truly on her own. Her foster parents were still only faces—kind but not yet close, her school mates still not yet friends.

The first year was the hardest. Ika cried often, but never before others, for she disdained appealing to any human being. She cried only before the divine within her, and each time, unlike the fallible human creature, the goddess gave her just the strength and solace that she needed. Subsequently, the entire pattern of her life, the entire focus of her attention changed. She no longer had to struggle with the Russian language. She was no longer considered a foreigner by the other children, and she began her elementary lessons in dance. This made the greatest difference of all, for quickly, she ceased to have any other interest, any other thing that mattered to her in any way whatsoever. Her ballet teacher noted her single-mindedness almost immediately, for although it would be expected in a serious student of twelve, it was more unusual at nine. She also noted that the child was perfectly built for the dance with an innate sense of expression in movement that was exceptional at any age.

As Ika progressed year by year her qualities came to be recognised by all her professors in the ballet school. By thirteen, she was known to have all the hallmarks of a future star. They started to pay her special attention, yet she seemed scarcely to need any, so quick and perfect were her responses. She appeared somehow to always know what they wanted, and then to give that extra touch of creative feeling that could come only from the artist herself. If a flaw or defect were pointed out in her technique, she would spend solitary hours working on it, coaching herself, training her reflexes till she had overcome it. No one ever had to force Ika, or urge her to work. She did everything with a silent intensity of dedication that was entirely spontaneous.

For Ika's part, her working was indeed so spontaneous that she scarcely felt the effort. So utterly absorbing did she find the art that she was imbibing, that she felt no strain of work, nor the slightest difficulty in the enormous output of energy and concentration she expended upon it each day. Like one in love, she soared

on the wings of her desire—exquisitely, effortlessly, passionately. In fact, when she truly danced she felt she had not a body but an astonishingly malleable form that moved and breathed to the music alone as an integral part of its expression—like a wave surrendered to the great currents of the sea. Sometimes she would even wonder at herself, and call out within her heart: “Mother, look—I am dancing—at last I am dancing—because of you, for you. You have brought me here, and taught me all I know. I want to die of happiness.”

And the answer would come, “Beloved, I too find my joy in you when you dance. You are the beauty of my thoughts and of my love playing through space. Live and be happy in the perfection of your art. I am always watching, always here.”

Ika appeared on the stage for the first time late in her seventeenth year as a supporting dancer to the lead. Piotr arrived the same morning to wish her well and see her perform in the evening. He found her all but breathless with anticipation, delight, and that mixture of terror and eagerness unique to stage artists.

“Oh, Piotr, tell me I’ll be all right,” she insisted after they had exchanged greetings. Now once again, as he had done long before, he took her in his arms and she felt flow into her, as she had then, the intimate warmth that can only come from another human being who loves. But of course, this time, the love was not the same and both of them knew it. For him she was already a spectacularly beautiful young woman, a budding star—that most unattainable yet desirable thing for which a man could wish. For her, he was the one who cared most about her as a human being and the one to whom she had long since opened the gates of her heart. Only now he no longer appeared to her as an elder brother or uncle, but as Piotr, the man she loved, and the one to whom would belong whatever private life would be vouchsafed to her as a première danseuse of the Bolshoi. Both knew even then that it would not be much—a few hours in the week or month snatched from here and there between the rehearsals, classes, the costume fittings and, above all, the performances. Piotr too would have his work. An anthropologist in the field does not sit in Moscow with his career before him. He was still only thirty-one and his professional life had scarcely begun... who knows, he would certainly be away for months at a time, perhaps even years. Neither Piotr nor Ika were fools and later when the issue arose, they decided not to marry—a decision which was to strengthen rather than weaken their tie.

But today, at this moment, all that still lay in the future. As she looked into Piotr’s face before he left her—for they only had a few moments together—she merely knew that she was in love not only with him but with everything in the world; that she would dance for that love tonight, and that she would allow no fear or nervous trepidation to cast its shadow upon her effort.

At last the great moment for which she had been so vigorously groomed and drilled for the last eight years was upon her. Gorgeously attired in her sequined costume, she looked out from the wings upon the vast, resplendent stage, and prayed.

“Mother,” she whispered in her softest inner voice. “Can I do it? Isn’t it

too big for me? Help me....” And then of a sudden the music arrived at the climactic instant when from utter immobility she must project herself into the pitch of action and expression—and she found herself automatically carried upon the stage by her meticulously trained, ever-obedient feet.

The shock of actually being there lasted only for a second. Then all at once, there were no more prayers, thoughts, feelings, ideas, memories—nothing but the reality of the magic she must create before that huge expectant audience, with her own body and the resources of her own being. That reality entered into her now like a great wave and at that moment the fantastic imaginary world that had been born in her on a Versailles evening sprang to life. The fairy-land setting returned—more lavish, more breathtaking than before. And in it she herself dwelled not like an evanescent visitor but as its chatelaine. She commanded, she conjured up what she willed, she bewitched, she entranced, she toyed with the audience as though they existed in her own private kingdom. Then scarcely before a stunned house knew what had happened, she vanished, her dance over, her brilliance scarcely shed, for so great did her resources seem that she had barely appeared to drain a cupful of the great reservoir of possibility within her. Nor was the public’s assessment of her mistaken. She flew into the wings at the end of her piece as though aflame.

Her director was waiting for her, opened his mouth to speak and could not. What was there to say to this dancer who burnt so intensely with her own fire? She too found herself beyond speech. For a moment she wondered at herself as her elation began to gradually wear away. Where had she been and what had she done? Had she really danced well or had she merely been carried away in a transport of she hardly knew what? Before words came to her she found tears in her eyes urged forward by a dreadful uncertainty. She looked at the man in front of her as they spilled down her face. Surely he would tell her whether she had failed, and if so, how badly. But his face showed no reproach. Instead, incredibly, through the watery haze of her own vision she saw the director’s own tears stream down his handsome, masculine face. She saw her instructors and some of her fellow students materialize from nowhere, smiling, delighted, arms outstretched, and in an ecstasy of relief she broke away from them all and fled to the dressing room.

That night was only the beginning, as it had promised to be. The next time Ika appeared on the stage in a new role she had top billing, plus a stage name—the one the Russian public would know her by thereafter—Tatiana Irinova. Indeed she was furnished with all the trappings of a Bolshoi prima ballerina. And once again she did not betray the trust all those behind her reposed in her capacities. She soared into the star firmament and stayed there, an endless reservoir of inspiration and energy, of dedication and a vigorously self-imposed drive for perfection. Only her style was rigidly classical, her forte all the classical roles so beloved by her audiences. But she proved herself equally successful in the score of ballets that were created for her at regular intervals throughout her long career, for she aged but imperceptibly over an extraordinary span of forty years—abstractions

of pure dance in which her technique shone like a sharply cut diamond, phantasies where she created other worlds of mystery, wonder and unearthly beauty, folk tales through which she brought forth all the versatility of expression of which she was capable, all the joy and exuberance that lay latent within her. Air sprite, water nymph, fire bird, swan, princess, queen, village girl, gypsy—all dwelt in her being in that strange and exotic harmony that makes up the heart of a great artist.

But always, somewhere in the background, faithfully, unwaveringly, unfailingly present in the reality of physical life away from the Bolshoi's great banks of lights, would be Piotr. She knew that whatever happened, his kind smiling face, his deep inexpressible feelings, his steady healing touch would always be waiting for her, would always be there to support and revive her in her hours of exhaustion, when she had given everything in a punishing performance, or had returned from tour, having had to dance each night after travelling all the preceding day.

Yet even behind the sustenance Ika found in Piotr lingered always the presence of the secret divinity she had brought with her from her childhood home, and about whom she never spoke to anyone. It was to her that she appealed when in the middle of a performance she needed to draw the deepest and best from within her. It was to her that she dedicated the last ounce of her strength, the ultimate resources of her grace and artistry when she wished to excel herself. It was to her that she prayed before every great or new creative effort—a new role, a new interpretation, or a new dimension of character. And finally it was to the goddess that she offered all the joy of her successes, the sorrow of her professional failures, known only to herself, for she would measure them by what she had attempted and failed to achieve. Only the goddess could equalize both within her, the good and the bad, the heights and the depths. Only the goddess could say to her innermost being:

“Come, child, each day we must start again as though there had been no other before it. Each day for us shall be as fresh and new and untainted as though it knew nothing of yesterday's clamour or struggle. Come to my arms then and let me embrace you before we begin. Today we shall dance in the halls of the gods.”

Ika was nearing sixty before she began to have the feeling that she had danced out all her heart and soul. It was not merely old age that forced the realization upon her but a true inner sense of fulfilment and satiation. What role was there left that she had not tried? What element of technique that she could not repeat automatically even in her dreams? She had been inundated by adulation, by renown, by praise that already, for many years, held no meaning for her. And she knew it was time to go.

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

TAMIL SOCIAL DIALECTS PROJECT

A PILOT STUDY

Introduction

As sciences, ethnology and linguistics demand that attention be concentrated primarily on empirical data and that all theoretical ideas be examined in the light of such concrete material and be, where necessary, modified accordingly. But data mean nothing without generalisation, and other forms, and are the more significant the more appropriate the theoretical ideas are that are put forward as explanation.

The theoretical ideas brought to this project are necessarily tentative and arise naturally from the field of linguistics. They arise from an examination of the field of linguistics in general and from the relation of language to culture in particular. This latter area of study is categorized as ethno-and socio-linguistics and it is contended that in this field the data already described by linguists lend themselves to a possible general theoretical explanation answering the question central to this field, namely, 'How is speaking rule-governed?' More widely, the interpretation offered is a hypothesis as to how language and culture are created. It is, therefore, wide in its range.

For such a large-scale hypothesis to begin to stand up to test, however, it must, in this case, at least begin by being an appropriate explanation of a language and culture far removed from the writer's own, and independent of his previous experience. Thus the 'Tamil Social Dialects Project.'

Should this theory be valid, it might be an important step in the social sciences, since, among other advantages, it would link cultural studies and linguistics in one general theory. The potential interest of these ideas goes further, however. Interest lies also in the possible relation of such explanation to the thought of Sri Aurobindo.

A sociological theory (and here we include linguistics) is of interest to the extent that it generates models which 'fit', and thus explain, real social phenomena. In the thought of Sri Aurobindo, consciousness generates the universe, *i.e.*, a defined operative structure generates forms. In consequence, it would appear—on examination, for example, of *The Life Divine*—that there is a close similarity

1. between (a) the operation of consciousness as described by Sri Aurobindo,
and
(b) the culturo-linguistic theory here proposed; and
2. between (a) the complex structure of consciousness described by Sri Aurobindo, and
(b) the cultural and socio-linguistic models generated by the theory proposed.

In fact, if consciousness be one, we would expect the forms of language and culture generated by man's consciousness to be explicable in terms relating to the opera-

tions and structure of consciousness itself.

It is in this light that the research is being undertaken, although, essentially, it accepts the scientific need to begin with the facts, to look thoroughly at them and to bring only whatever theoretical explanation is appropriate to those facts. The theory put forward, nevertheless, like any theory, has emerged from prior thought in this area of study. The facts, therefore, have to be related to other facts in the field, just as the theory will have to be examined, even if it be valid here, in relation to further data elsewhere.

In the following pages the aim is to set the approach in the context of present-day linguistic preoccupations in the English-speaking world and, subsequently, to relate this area to the thought of Sri Aurobindo.

The Theoretical Field

The theory proposed as an explanation of the problem, 'How is speaking rule-governed?' is set out in draft form in a separate paper entitled,

'A Tentative Theory of the Ethnology of Speaking'.

It maintains that implicit in any culture and language is a relatively simple structure, which may be set out in formulaic terms, and which defines the structure of consciousness in, and the actual operations of, a specific language and culture. This formula is based on a small number of decisions referring to the operations of conception and perception of the organism in an environment. It is this, it is maintained, which produces other formulae by the operation of simple rules. These other formulae are the forms—potentially habitable by human speech and action—which go to make up actual human behaviour. Such formulae—which may appear as rules of behaviour—interact and interlock into systems which may be seen as 'models' in process of change. This is to say that 'behind' human culture and language there are operations which are determinative and are on a level which could be termed 'metaphysical'.

Benjamin Lee Whorf, an American anthropologist who died prematurely, saw this and said,

Thus the Hopi language and culture conceals a metaphysics, such as our naive view of space and time does, or as the relativity theory does, yet it is a different metaphysics from either.¹

And earlier he had said,

Moreover, the tremendous importance of language cannot, in my opinion, be taken to mean necessarily that nothing is back of it of the nature of what has traditionally been called 'mind'. My own studies suggest to me that language,

¹ An American Indian Model of the Universe, in *Language, Thought and Reality*, 1956.

for all its kingly role, is in some sense a superficial embroidery upon deeper processes of consciousness.¹

He was suggesting, in opposition to the then current structuralist approach, which was seeking to keep 'mind' out of the picture, that language could never be fully understood independent of the culture it existed in and that behind both was some other level of explanation. Leading linguists, Noam Chomsky included, have now, with various provisos, accepted this position of Whorf's, although not his idea that language determines thought.

Language, however, does *have* also to be examined as if it were a phenomenon independent of other cultural factors; and such examination, since Whorf's time in particular, has led to mainly 'generative' theories of language whereby it is seen as created from limited sources referred to in different theories as, for example, 'basic sentences', 'phonemes', or 'semantic markers'.

John Lyons gives a definition of 'generative':

When we say that a grammar generates the sentences of a language we imply that it constitutes a system of rules (with an associated lexicon) which are formulated in such a way that they yield, in principle, a decision-procedure for any combination of the elements of the language...²

And this is the central problem in linguistics, to give an adequate description—this is to say, theory—of the system or systems of rules which 'generate' the language in question. Specific grammatical theories are thus normally theories as to the nature of the generative rules and their interrelations. Such theories may see the rules as falling into a most complicated pattern but, since ultimately they are perceptual-conceptual, still structured in such a way that they permit simple choices, possible for the normal average mind, to be made at a number of points. The choice between 'objective' and 'subjective' would be such a choice, for example, as well as that between 'general' and 'particular' and between 'subject' and 'object'.

Linguistics, however, has not yet reached the point where, as in physics, a general theory has been put forward. In the case of linguistics such a general theory would have to take account of language 'universals', explain systematically the rules of any language and be able to predict the forms of, *i.e.*, generate models fitting, language in actual use under a variety of circumstances. It would have to explain, for example, how language in a society is used by persons having particular roles and occupying particular positions in the social strata.

Linguists, therefore, is again coming to that point where it is ready to believe that any general theory of language must take account of the context, the culture,

¹ *Language and Logic*, April, 1941.

² *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* p. 156.

in which it is used; returning, thus partially, to Whorf's position. Ethno- and socio-linguistics are the areas now dealing with the meeting of language and culture, and Dell Hymes of Pennsylvania University is one of the leading thinkers in this area. He states (1964):

In ethnolinguistic theory acceptability in a given community is governed not only by a theory of sentences, but also by a theory of speech acts and settings as well.¹

In other words, an ethnolinguistic theory, which explains what can be said in a community, must take account of the variety of ways speech acts take place and the social conditions in which these acts occur. We wish to know why people speak as they do when they do and not differently, why these utterances are acceptable and not others.

In seeking a theoretical explanation, an important problem is that there is an infinite number of cultural contexts in which speaking may take place. Understanding of the rules governing speaking, therefore, would appear not to lie along the way of a description of these contexts as given, but in putting forward the hypothesis that these contexts are formulated in the same way, *i.e.*, generated, as is the language spoken within them.

Generative grammar suggests how this takes place...with the spreading out of networks of behavioural forms, including language, from underlying elements. Normally, these underlying elements are envisaged as concrete linguistic phenomena such as 'basic sentences', 'phonemes', or 'semantic features'; whereas in the theory proposed here the underlying elements are constituent terms of the theory itself. This will be a little clearer if the following quotations are considered:

...a well-motivated model of Ethnoscience must be able to construct a model of his (the culture-bearer's) knowledge, rather than a model of behavioural data description.²

In place of 'Ethnoscience' we would, however, put 'Ethnoscience and linguistics', and we would change 'rather than' to 'as well as'.

This is to say that an ethnolinguistic theory should show (a) what operative rules and data the actor must have and be able to work with in order to live in the culture, as well as (b) setting up objective models of the culture and language as the social scientist sees them. Here is a most important point, since it appears essential to us that we describe culturo-linguistic operations in terms of the actor's competence. Clearly, too, however, an actor sees objective aspects of the culture and language, or he could not move around in them. That which the actor sees objectively in part

¹ *Directions in Ethnolinguistic Theory.*

² Durbin, 'The Goals of Ethnoscience' in *Anthropological Linguistics*, 1966

is that which the social scientist must seek also to describe in its totality. An appropriate description, therefore, must be a unified theory which embraces the actor's competence *and* describes models of behaviour generated by that theory, which is to say the total language and culture. We must see (i) an actor with specific knowledge, moving with competence in (ii) clearly stated models of behavioural potential.

The nature of the actor's competence is thus a primary matter. What *is* this competence that humans appear to have and about which modern linguistics is constantly theorising?

J. B. Pride, in *The Social Meaning of Language* states,

...the contribution made by the organism is clearly of great importance, but because of the limited capacity of the human brain it can only result from the acquisition of a finite set of abilities; this in turn means that the human being in acquiring the ability to handle the infinite variety of language has mastered a finite set of rules; that the rules are 'internalized' as 'grammatical competence' by a process of inference on the part of the language user, who is genetically endowed to do this...

Competence is therefore ability to operate a set of rules operating on data. In analysing language in culture, therefore, we seek to discover these rules (of linguistic and other cultural behaviour) and we assume that they will be a finite set. Further, since the competence of the normal average brain is limited in specific ways, we assume that these finite rules are of a very limited number. The theory put forward, and to be examined and tested, is that the rules stem from a small number of decisions which then permutate out (operating on a wide variety of data which is itself created by the rules and learned progressively by the actor).

It would appear to be true, we believe, that

One's attention has to be turned to the power capable of organising the data in the first place.¹

This, Chomsky, one of the world's foremost linguists, has suggested very often.

The theory demanded by such considerations is, therefore, in general terms, that the human organism in its environment has a structure of consciousness which unfolds out of its necessary relations with that environment of which it becomes progressively aware. In becoming aware, the organism is forced to make a (limited) number of decisions, such as: whether to be conscious of sense data or not; whether to be conscious of the sensational content of sense experience or of its form, etc. A small number of such conceptual-perceptual decisions in a

¹ J. P. Thorne, *Journal of the Philological Society*, 1964.

sequence, which is a form of unfolding, is sufficient to serve as a formula from which a language and culture unfolds; and, the decisions once existent in the culture, the actor is provided with the basic principles enabling him to judge and interact systematically. Such a limited number of sequential decisions may be seen, we have maintained, as the interrelating terms of a theory, a theory which is both the social scientist's generative explanation of language and culture, and the essential form of the actor's competence in a particular society. These combinations of terms, which are the functions of consciousness, yield various forms which, in keeping with rules generated (which we may interpret variously as 'grammatical' and 'sociological' rules), yield linguistic and cultural forms (or models of behaviour). These are the systems of language and culture which man operates and which, since they are generated by his own consciousness, operate him... possess him; whilst human consciousness itself, in its particular cultural form, is simply a specific aspect of this process and explicable in the same terms.

The primitive, *i.e.*, indefinable, terms of the theory, such as 'ground,' 'field' 'form' and 'sensation', and related terms, such as 'unit versus mass' (we might say 'matter'), 'universal versus particular' (we might say 'spirit') and 'focus' (we might say 'that act of consciousness which is the basis of all division'), are features common to all human consciousness, we assume, but the series of decisions necessarily vary, being various combinations of these terms, or elements—basic elements—giving us various cultures and languages and various related types of human consciousness. One decision structure formula gives the Hindu, for example, and a variation of it gives the Tamil culture and language; another gives the German, another the French.

Moreover, the components of the decision path being common to all humans, it is maintained, it is the interrelation of these components or elements which structures 'aspects' of phenomenal consciousness that we call 'thinking', 'feeling', etc. and gives the dominant form of a culture, essentially intuitive, for example, in various Eastern countries, or dominantly cognitive like the German, or sensual like the French. There are various sub-types, and each type and sub-type may be clearly defined. It is not a question of being 'somewhat intuitive', or 'rather cognitive'. The formulae basic to the culture determine in the most precise of ways *how* the particular culture will manifest the functions of cognition, feeling, etc.

Similarly, the theory states that the formulae will determine what is 'in' and 'out of' consciousness in any particular culture and where the veil shall be that lies between.

In sum, when, from the empirical data, we can infer the decisions basic to the culture or sub-culture, we should—since in understanding the specific structure of consciousness we shall understand the whole process—be able systematically to give a model of the culture and language and explain why the typical actor acts as he does. We should see how the actor is a mechanism which operates him, keeping him firmly in place and where he may act freely.

Further, we believe, it is probable that the structure of decisions giving human culture and language is a description of consciousness in operation which is related systematically to that total operative and creative consciousness described by Sri Aurobindo.

ERIC WHITTLE

ANNOUNCEMENT

Sri Aurobindo Yoga Mandir
Hardwar Road, Jwalapur (Hardwar)

Sadhana-Satsang
9th-13th April, 1977

Programme

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 5:30 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. | Meditation, Music and some clarifications on the practice of meditation. |
| 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. | Collective study of selected passages from the Mother, and free spiritual inquiry. |
| 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. | A talk on the Mother, Her personality, Her working, Her inspiration. |

All interested are welcome. Arrangements for board and lodging exist at the Ashram.

PREM MALIK

ASTER PATEL

HARGOPAL SINGH

INDRA SEN

Student's Section

TWO ESSAYS BY A 16-YEAR OLD

EGO

EGO is one of the demons in us. He is our master, we are often in his kingdom and under his control. Ego is a traitor, he takes us to the peak, then pushes us down and he stands at the top and laughs as we tumble down the hill. He is an iron bar, stopping us from meeting the Divine. When we are possessed by him we do not care for anyone except for that little "I" which is just a minor particle of sand in the cosmos. And that little microcosm pulls us into the dark pit of demons.

When we are in King Ego's realm then we can never reach the Divine. We must try to flee from his prison. But when we are captured by him then we must tell ourselves, "I am entering the attractive but illusory palace of Ego. I must not step in. I must run away or I shall be demolished."

So long as we are in the firm grip of Ego, we shall never be ready to take the plunge into the river that flows towards the Supreme.

First, before transforming our being, the little "I" should become immortal; only after this our whole being can be immortal.

When we move out of that dark pit into the enlightened world of the Supreme, we can unite with the Divine, fuse into Him. Then no other barrier can separate us, not even the powerful stroke of a whetted and glittering steel sword.

We are the slave of Ego, instead we should become the master of him .. We should always think, "Whatever I have done is not done by me but by the Divine, I am just His instrument and I am guided by Him. He leads me on my way towards the True Purity. I can do nothing, if He is not there. If He was not there, would this earth exist? And then would there be any human being? Would I be here then?"

No. So He rules the whole cosmos, and we should surrender to the Lord, the True Purity.

To get out of suffering and pain we must be free from Ego.

FALSEHOOD

Falsehood is one of the devils or anti-Divine forces in us. He has a huge hefty body and big round burning eyes like fire. He has made a permanent residence in us. He has a firm grip on the earth. He blindfolds our eyes by his bossiness. We have made him our eternal guest or, in other words, habit. Just to escape from some punishments or some beatings we tell a lie; in this way we save our petty self. Because the kingdom of Truth is so dazzling, so vast and so full of Divine forces,

we evade entering it. Instead we get into the attractive illusory palace of Falsehood.

When Falsehood was born he was just a tiny mite but now he has augmented himself so much that he tramples down the whole world under his feet.

Sometimes we know that what we say is falsehood but yet we cannot help it, for we are his slaves and he has trained us in such a way that we cannot flee from his grasp and we are compelled to tell a lie.

When we are possessed by Falsehood our consciousness is degraded to a lower nature. Mentally and physically, from both the sides, we are attacked by adverse forces. He pulls us down into the obscure hell where we are haunted by other bad forces. He prevents us like a huge rift from reaching the Divine.

On the earth, as the Divine's work increases, the devils are also busy in their work trying to destroy the Divine. Now at present, on earth the Divine's work is in full swing, but at the same time the busy Falsehood is also running together, he is not left behind. The whole earth is influenced by Falsehood. He has put up his kingdom on the earth. But no. All that is only a pageant show. If we go on striving hard without despair and with immense courage, we can conquer him and slay him.

The Lord is always ready to help us, He responds to all the true prayers, but we are not aware of His answer. When Truth shall manifest upon earth, the earth shall be enlightened by the Divine's Light. The doors in us shall remain ever open for the ethereal Light to flood our hearts with its presence.

But to step into this palace of Truth we must keep burning a steady flame of aspiration; we must have an immortal hope and an eternal faith.

UMA JOSHI
Aged 16