

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

SPECIAL ISSUE

NOVEMBER 24, 1981

Price : Rs. 2.50

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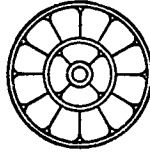
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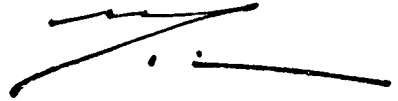


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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All correspondence to be addressed to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India

Editor's Phone: 4782

Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

Editor: K. D. SETHNA

Managing Editor: K. R. PODDAR

Published by: P. COUNOUMA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM TRUST, PONDICHERRY - 605 002

Printed by: AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry - 605 002

PRINTED IN INDIA

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers under No. R. N. 8667/63

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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXIII

No. 11

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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SRI AUROBINDO'S FIRST FAIR COPY OF HIS EARLIEST VERSION OF *SAVITRI*

SÂVITHRÎ

BOOK II

So she was left alone in the huge wood 925
By Death the god confronted, holding still
Her husband's corpse on her abandoned breast.
She measured not her loss with helpless thoughts,
She rose not up to face the dreadful god,
But over him she loved her soul leaned out 930
From a far stillness. There into some heaven
Of birth and silence lifted all that here
Is hope and sorrow and trembling passion, changed,
Losing their natures and what was once her heart
Became a hushed eternity of love. 935
Not in her body they grew. A strain delivered
Vibrant great chords of Force by Nature tuned
For her eternal music yet unheard
Which the stars dream of listening as they wheel.
So one day all our nature's sins shall find 940
Their strong redemption; slain they shall ascend
Into the purity from which they erred,—
Discords redeemed to help a music large,
Transfigured, lifted up on fiery wings.
Her mortal being seized by dreadful hands 945
Felt the last agony of passionate change
That was its quivering into godhead. It grew
A high and lonely ecstasy of will
That left her like a mighty eagle poised
In the void: thought perished and her mind seemed slain. 950
But from a growing secrecy of light
The greater spirit in some world within
Griefless above her, yet herself, unveiled

An old version, to which the present one of lines 936-39 seems a new alternative, runs:

Not in her body they grew, but somewhere high
Vibrant great chords of force silently strung.

Lines 952-53 originally stood:

The greater spirit she had felt, unveiled ..

The present version has been deciphered with some uncertainty: a possible reading from seeming variants could be:

The greater spirit in some unborn world
Griefless above her, yet within, unveiled .

Its frontal glories and miraculously
 Outlined its body of power. Leaned from above 955
 Ancient and strong as on a wind-free summit,
 Calm, violent, fiery-footed, puissant-winged
 Over the abyss one brooded who was she.
 Sole now that spirit turned its mastering gaze
 On life and things as if inheriting 960
 A work unfinished from her halting past
 When yet the mind, a passionate learner, toiled
 And the crude instruments were blindly moved.
 And like a tree recovering from the wind
 She raised her noble head. Fronting her eyes 965
 Something stood there unearthly, sombre, grand,
 A limitless denial of all being
 That wore the wonder of a shape. The Form
 Bore the deep pity of destroying gods
 In its appalling eyes. Eternal Night 970
 In the dire beauty of an immortal face
 Pitying arose, receiving all that lives
 Into its fathomless heart for ever. Its limbs
 Were monuments of transience and beneath
 Brows of unwearying calm large godlike lids 975
 Silent beheld the writhing that is life.
 The two opposed each other with their eyes,
 Woman and universal god. They seemed
 Two equal powers that stand unconquered, left
 The last huge-purposed among trivial things, 980
 Scanning each other in the eternal lists
 Like vast antagonists before they meet
 In world-wide combat to possess alone.
 Then to her ears silencing earthly sounds,
 Forbidding the heart-strings with its iron cry 985
 Arose a sad and formidable voice
 That seemed the whole adverse world's. "Unclasp," it said,
 "Thy passionate influence and relax, O slave
 Of Nature, thy grasp elemental. Wrap no more
 This spirit's body in the abandoned robe 990
 That with its texture coarse concealed the gods.
 Entomb thy passion in its living grave,
 Confess thy days an error and endure

The inevitable end of hope and love."
 It ceased, she moved not, and it spoke again 995
 Lowering its mighty key to human chords,
 "Woman, thy husband suffers." Sâvithrî
 Renounced the lifeless body from her clasp.
 Softly she laid it down on the smooth grass,
 As oft she had laid her living husband's head 1000
 When from their couch she rose in the white dawn
 Called by her daily tasks. So now as called,
 Unknowing to what work, because her spirit
 Above watched flaming silent still, she rose,
 Waiting whatever impulse should arise 1005
 Out of the eternal depths and cast its surge.
 Then Death the King leaned boundless down, as leans
 Night over tired lands, and as if freed
 Out of a physical dream, leaving uncared for
 His mind forsaken of that poor dead earth, 1010
 Another Suthyavân arose and stood
 Between the mortal woman and the god.
 He was or else he seemed a shape of light
 Found shadowy to the feeling out of mind
 Which missed the warmth of bright material suns. 1015
 Thus each sees what transcends his conscious touch
 And dreams things greater than himself are dreams:
 Therefore heaven's shapes are distant to our view,—
 The gleam of hopes we hardly dare believe,
 Far luminous symbols of a truth unseen 1020
 Kept for a happier sense in higher worlds.
 So now her senses, though rebuked, believed
 The dead corpse real, this a silent shade.
 Still for a while was that bright Suthyavân,
 Between two realms he stood, not wavering, 1025
 But in a quiet strong expectancy
 Like one who, sightless, listens for a command.
 But now he moved away. Behind him Death
 Went slowly like a shadowy herdsman dark
 Behind some wanderer from his mournful herds. 1030
 And Sâvithrî followed her husband's steps,
 Planting her human feet where his had trod,
 Into the silence of that other world.
 At first they seemed to her still on earthly soil
 To journey strangely with unhuman paces 1035

Through a thick stress of woods. For though to her vision
 Only were offered in a spaceless dream
 The luminous spirit gliding stilly on
 And the great shadow travelling behind,
 Her senses felt a vague green world of trees 1040
 Surround them and in troubled branches knew
 Uncertain treadings of a fitful wind,
 Earth stood aloof yet near; it offered her
 Its sweetness and its greenness mid a dream,
 Its brilliance suave of well-loved vivid hues, 1045
 Sunlight arriving at its golden noon,
 The birds' calling or the sweet siege of cries:
 She bore dim fragrances, far murmurs touched
 But then the god grew mighty and remote
 In alien spaces and the soul she loved 1050
 Lost its consenting nearness to her life.
 They seemed to enlarge away, drawn by some great
 Pale distance, from the warm control of earth
 And her grown far. Now, now they would escape!
 Then flaming from her body's nest alarmed 1055
 Her violent spirit soared at Suthyavân,
 As in a terror and a wrath divine
 A winged she-eagle threatened in her young.
 So with a rush of pinions and a cry
 She crossed the borders of dividing sense. 1060
 Her trance knew not of sun or earth or world,
 She knew not of herself or Sâvithrî;
 All was one boundless grasp of unnamed force
 And absolute possession,—quivering, seized
 Its prey, joy, origin, Suthyavân alone. 1065
 But when her mind awoke once more in Time,
 Compelled to shape the lineaments of things
 And live in borders, the three moved together
 Alone in a new world where souls were not,
 But only living moods. A strange, still, weird 1070
 Country was round her, strange far skies above,
 A doubting space where dreaming objects lived
 Within themselves their one unchanging thought.
 Weird was that road which like fear hastening
 To that of which it had most terror, led 1075
 Phantasmal between those two conscious rocks
 Sombre and high, gates brooding, whose stone thoughts

Lost their huge sense beyond in giant night.
 Nearer they grew like dumb appalling jaws,
 Waiting upon her road cruel and still, 1080
 The muzzle of a black enormous world.
 And where the shadowy marches now he touched,
 Turning arrested luminous Suthyavân
 Looked back with wonderful eyes at Sâvithrî.
 Then Death pealed forth his vast abysmal cry: 1085
 "Let not the dreadful goddess move thy soul,
 Its time-born passion dreamed the strength of heaven,
 To enlarge its vehement trespass into worlds
 Helpless, where it shall perish like a thought
 Safe only in its stumbling limits poor 1090
 Where he can crown himself mock sovereign.
 Dare not beyond man's faltering force, but waking
 Tremble amid the silences immense
 In which thy few weak chords of being die.
 Impermanent creatures sorrowful foam of Time, 1095
 Your transient loves bind not the eternal gods."
 His dread voice ebbed in a consenting hush
 Which grew intense, around, a wide and wordless
 Whisper and sanction from the jaws of Night.
 The woman answered not. Her naked soul 1100
 Stripped of its girdle of mortality
 Against fixed destiny and the grooves of Law
 Stood up in its sheer will, the primal force.

So like arrested thoughts upon a verge
 Where light begins to cease, they stood; vast Night 1105
 Beyond desired her soul. Then Sâvithrî
 Compelled her foot towards the yawning mouth
 And danger of the ageless waste. Moulding
 Their grander motion on her human tread
 They stirred. All as in dreams went gliding on. 1110
 So was the balance of the world reversed;
 The mortal ruled, the god and spirit obeyed:
 For she behind was leader of the march
 And they in front were followers of her will.
 They entered the dumb portals of the past, 1115
 They left the rock-gate's doubting walls behind;
 The twilit vestibules of a tenebrous world
 Received them where they seemed to move and yet

Be still, nowhere advancing, yet to pass,
 A dim procession in a picture dim, 1120
 Not conscious forms. Then huge and growing night
 Cavernous, monstrous, in a strangling mass
 Silent, devoured them like a lion's throat,
 The dumb spiritual agony of a dream.
 The thought that strives in things failed there, unmade: 1125
 They ended, all their dream of living done,
 Convinced at last that they had never been.
 Huge darkness closed around her cage of sense
 As round a bullock in the forest tied
 By hunters closes in no empty night. 1130
 She saw no more the dim tremendous god,
 Her eyes had lost their luminous Suthyavân
 But not for this her spirit failed. It knew¹
 More deeply than the bounded senses can
 Which seek externally and find to lose, 1135
 Its object loved, as when on earth they lived
 She felt him straying through the glades, the glades
 A scene in her, their clefts her being's vistas
 Offering their secrets to his search and joy,
 Because whatever spot his cherished feet 1140
 Preferred, must be at once her soul embracing
 His body, suffering his tread. Slow years—
 Time vacant measured itself by anguish long,—
 Like one who walks resisting a black dream
 Through an unreal darkness empty and drear 1145
 She lived in spite of death, stifled with void
 As in a blindness of extinguished souls.
 Then tardily a reluctant gleam drew near
 Like promise of life to those who lie forgotten
 By Nature, cast into her naked night. 1150
 The black and writhing gloom widened its coils,—
 For now it felt its giant reign attacked—
 And suffered shrinking from the approach of hope:
 But tyrannous still in its huge soulless strength
 Writhing and coiling ruled her struggling lids 1155
 Which slowly conquered back their brilliant right.
 One felt once more the treading of a god
 And out of the dumb darkness Suthyavân

¹ A comma should be understood here. (Editor)

Her husband grew into a luminous shade.
 Death missioned forth once more his lethal voice: 1160
 "Hast thou beheld thy source, O transient heart?
 Knowing from what the dream thou art was made,
 Still dost thou always hope to last and love?"
 The woman answered not. Her spirit repelled
 The voice of Night that knew and Death that thought; 1165
 She knew the mighty sources of her life
 And knew herself eternal without birth.

(To be continued)

DESIRE AND SELF-CONSECRATION

AN INSIGHT FROM SRI AUROBINDO

INTO all our endeavour upward the lower element of desire will at first naturally enter. For what the enlightened will sees as the thing to be done and pursues as the crown to be conquered, what the heart embraces as the one thing delightful, that in us which feels itself limited and opposed and, because it is limited, craves and struggles, will seek with the troubled passion of an egoistic desire. This craving life-force or desire-soul in us has to be accepted at first, but only in order that it may be transformed. Even from the very beginning it has to be taught to renounce all other desires and concentrate itself on the passion for the Divine. This capital point gained, it has to be taught to desire, not for its own separate sake, but for God in the world and for the Divine in ourselves; it has to fix itself upon no personal spiritual gain, though of all possible spiritual gains we are sure, but on the great work to be done in us and others, on the high coming manifestation which is to be the glorious fulfilment of the Divine in the world, on the Truth that has to be sought and lived and enthroned for ever. But last, most difficult for it, more difficult than to seek with the right object, it has to be taught to seek in the right manner; for it must learn to desire, not in its own egoistic way, but in the way of the Divine. It must insist no longer, as the strong separative will always insists, on its own manner of fulfilment, its own dream of possession, its own idea of the right and desirable; it must yearn to fulfil a larger and greater Will and consent to wait upon a less interested and ignorant guidance. Thus trained, Desire, that great unquiet harasser and troubler of man and cause of every kind of stumbling, will become fit to be transformed into its divine counterpart. For desire and passion too have their divine forms; there is a pure ecstasy of the soul's seeking beyond all craving and grief, there is a Will of Ananda that sits glorified in the possession of the supreme beatitudes.

(The Centenary Ed., Vol. 20, pp. 77-78)

EQUALITY OF SOUL: ITS OUTLOOK AND IN-LOOK

LIGHTS FROM SRI AUROBINDO

SINCE all things are the one Self in its manifestation, we shall have equality of soul towards the ugly and the beautiful, the maimed and the perfect, the noble and the vulgar, the pleasant and the unpleasant, the good and the evil. Here also there will be no hatred, scorn and repulsion, but instead the equal eye that sees all things express or disguise, develop or distort, as best they can or with whatever defect they must, under the circumstances intended for them, in the way possible to the immediate status or function or evolution of their nature, some truth or fact, some energy or potential of the Divine necessary by its presence in the progressive manifestation both to the whole of the present sum of things and for the perfection of the ultimate result. That truth is what we must seek and discover behind the transitory expression; undeterred by appearances, by the deficiencies or the disfigurements of the expression, we can then worship the Divine for ever unsullied, pure, beautiful and perfect behind his masks. All indeed has to be changed, not ugliness accepted but divine beauty, not imperfection taken as our resting-place but perfection striven after, the supreme good made the universal aim and not evil. But what we do has to be done with a spiritual understanding and knowledge, and it is a divine good, beauty, perfection, pleasure that has to be followed after, not the human standards of these things. If we have not equality, it is a sign that we are still pursued by the Ignorance, we shall truly understand nothing and it is more than likely that we shall destroy the old imperfection only to create another: for we are substituting the appreciations of our human mind and desire-soul for the divine values.

Equality does not mean a fresh ignorance or blindness; it does not call for and need not initiate a greyness of vision and a blotting out of all hues. Difference is there, variation of expression is there and this variation we shall appreciate,—far more justly than we could when the eye was clouded by a partial and erring love and hate, admiration and scorn, sympathy and antipathy, attraction and repulsion. But behind the variation we shall always see the Complete and Immutable who dwells within it and we shall feel, know or at least, if it is hidden from us, trust in the wise purpose and divine necessity of the particular manifestation, whether it appear to our human standards harmonious and perfect or crude and unfinished or even false and evil.

And so too we shall have the same equality of mind and soul towards all happenings, painful or pleasurable, defeat and success, honour and disgrace, good repute and ill-repute, good fortune and evil fortune. For in all happenings we shall see the will of the Master of all works and results and a step in the evolving expression of the Divine. He manifests himself, to those who have the inner eye that sees, in forces and their play and results as well as in things and in creatures. All things move towards a divine event; each experience, suffering and want no less than joy and satisfaction is a necessary link in the carrying out of a universal movement which it is our business

to understand and second. To revolt, to condemn, to cry out is the impulse of our unchastened and ignorant instincts. Revolt like everything else has its uses in the play and is even necessary, helpful, decreed for the divine development in its own time and stage; but the movement of an ignorant rebellion belongs to the stage of the soul's childhood or to its raw adolescence. The ripened soul does not condemn but seeks to understand and master, does not cry out but accepts or toils to improve and perfect, does not revolt inwardly but labours to obey and fulfil and transfigure. Therefore we shall receive all things with an equal soul from the hands of the Master. Failure we shall admit as a passage as calmly as success until the hour of the divine victory arrives. Our souls and minds and bodies will remain unshaken by acutest sorrow and suffering and pain if in the divine dispensation they come to us, unoverpowered by intensest joy and pleasure. Thus supremely balanced we shall continue steadily on our way meeting all things with an equal calm until we are ready for a more exalted status and can enter into the supreme and universal Ananda.

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, Ed 1955, pp. 256-58.)

THE DIVINE AND THE MANIFESTATION

A POINTER FROM THE MOTHER

THE Divine is everywhere and in all. He is all. Yes, in His essence and His supreme reality. But, in the world of progressive material manifestation, one must identify not with the Divine as He is, but with the Divine as He will be.

30 June 1952

(*Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 297)

THE BIG DIFFICULTY IN MATTER

GUIDANCE BY THE MOTHER

THE big difficulty in Matter is that the material consciousness (that is to say, the mind in Matter) has been formed under the pressure of difficulties—difficulties, obstacles, sufferings, struggles. It has been, so to say, “worked out” by these things and that has left upon it a stamp, almost of pessimism, which is certainly the greatest obstacle.

It is of this that I am conscious in my own work. The most material consciousness, the most material mind is accustomed to act, to make an effort, to advance through whippings; otherwise it is *tamas*. And then so far as it imagines, it imagines always difficulty, always the obstacle or always the opposition, and that slows down the movement terribly. Very concrete, very tangible and *often repeated* experiences are needed to convince it that behind all difficulties there is a Grace, behind all its failures there is the Victory, behind all its pains, its sufferings, its contradictions, there is Ananda. Of all efforts it is this one which has to be repeated most often; all the while you are obliged to stop or to remove, to convert pessimism, a doubt or an imagination altogether defeatist.

I am speaking exclusively of the material consciousness.

Naturally, when something comes down from above, that makes, well...a crash, like that (*Mother makes a gesture of flattening*), then all is silent, all stops and waits. But...I understand well why the Truth, the Truth-Consciousness does not express itself more constantly, because the difference between its Power and the power of Matter is so great that the power of Matter is, as it were, annulled—but then that does not mean transforming, that means crushing. That is what they used to do in ancient times—they crushed all this material consciousness under the weight of a Power against which nothing can struggle, which nothing can oppose. And then one had the impression: “There you are! It has been done.” But it has not been done, not at all! for the rest, down below, remained as before, without changing.

Now it is being given the full possibility to change; well, for that you must allow it full play and not impose a Power that crushes it—this I understand very well. But this consciousness has the obstinacy of the imbecile. How many times during a suffering, for example, when a suffering is there, acute, and one has the impression that it is going to become unbearable, there is the little movement (within the cells) of Call—the cells send their S.O.S.—everything stops, the suffering disappears, and often (now more and more) it is replaced by a feeling of blissful well-being; but the very first reaction of this imbecile consciousness is: “Ah! we shall see how long that is going to last”, and naturally, by this movement it demolishes everything—one must begin all over again.

I believe that for the effect to be lasting—not a miraculous effect that comes, dazzles and goes away—it must really be the effect of a *transformation*. One must be

very, very patient—we have to deal with a consciousness very slow, very heavy, very obstinate, which is not able to advance rapidly, which clings to what it has, to what has appeared to it as truth; even if it is quite a tiny truth, it clings to that and does not want to move. Then to cure that, one must have very much patience—much patience.

The whole thing is to hold on, to endure, to endure.

Sri Aurobindo has said this many times in many forms: Endure and you'll conquer...bear—bear and you'll vanquish.

Triumph comes to the most enduring.

(Collected Works, Vol. II, pp 2-3)

A SUDDEN AWARENESS OF BEING AND TIME

ALL must be dedicated to this creative Force!

Learn our central intention:

to act, to be silent, to love.

Let us enjoy faith in a pure sincerity,

the red wine of our secrecy,

the summits of God,

experience:

with the life-force towards the Divine's Victory;

with the assured summit of sovereign goodness.

This life one cannot lead properly

until one lives with one's soul,

beyond word and act in the silent gaze.

His Force meeting, still, translucent,

walking on the road named

“the golden path of the Unseen,”

we collaborate for the Truth,

cling to the Truth, and luminously

we guard against clamorous outer needs

hundred roses of stillness.

ASTRID

NIRODBARAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

THE COMPLETE SET

(Continued from the issue of September 1981)

November 2, 1935

You say that my "grey matter does not easily open and it closes up also too easily" but where is "the automatic flow" to which it can accommodate itself, Sir ?

The automatic flow would be there but for the grey matter being adverse and perverse.

I find that if a current has opened up a little, a blessed counter-current of depression, dissatisfaction comes down and sweeps me away.

Exactly. That's its way of closing up. The three Ds seem to be your grey matter's forte—doubt, depression, dissatisfaction. If it were not for them when something came you would get the Ananda of creation and things would move a little.

If you advise me that one has to go on sitting and racking one's brain—inspiration or no inspiration—and then only the grey matter can open up, I'll say it is not a very royal road that you show me.

I don't think the inspiration usually comes in that way! It is better to put yourself in receptive attitude and let it come. If it doesn't come, try, try again but no need to sweat and swear and writhe.

Some are of the opinion that one shouldn't try to force the inspiration.

It can't be forced but it can be invited.

About J's book—the tangle has become worse and I curse myself for being involved in it.

"Cast your bread upon the waters and it shall return to you"—rather sodden!

On the whole I am strongly reminded of Galsworthy's drama The Skin-Game.

Don't know it. But skin or no skin, it is a game all right though not an amusing one.

November 3, 1935

Even if the three Ds were my forte why can't the Force push me on? Because of lack of cooperation?

Of course.

But I find that D's best creations come when he's depressed and his depression itself is worked out in that manner. Even in spite of depression he's as active as a giant.

D has a different temperament from yours. He has a magnificent vitality which, whatever road he goes on, can carry him galloping towards the goal. Only he has not yet learned how to put it at the service of the inmost psychic or spiritual realisation. He has been trying to do everything with his mind. One can do that up to a certain point provided the vital can accept the mind-control and the mind itself is wholly on the side of the central mind's will. But that has not yet happened. But the vitality serves to keep up his powers of activity and also to react at a certain point and drag him out of the depression.

Yours on the contrary is a slow plodding vitality. You can't expect it to give the same results. It can only go fast when the road has been prepared and opened. The road for the poetical self-expression is not yet sufficiently prepared and open.

On the other hand I see quite a number of people remaining cheerful and happy though the outer nature seems rather uncontrolled. I wish I could be at least happy and sunny.

That is a mere matter of temperament. There are plenty of people whose ordinary nature is sunny and cheerful.

However a yogi astrologer predicted that all my "dark age" will pass away at the age of 32 and the "gold age" will set in. The age of 32 has come but where is the gold?

Glorious! You must begin glittering at once—even if there are other things than gold that glitter. But are you through the wonderful year already? And is it the age of 32 or the 32nd year?

By the way I learned that Datta once belonged to this lamenting and repining group and spent about 5 years in such a crisis. True?

You are asking very delicate questions. I can only say that Datta has been with the Mother from the pre-Ashram, even the pre-Yoga times—her case is uniquely different.

November 4, 1935

*Can you tell me why D's friends kick him back for the good he has done to them?
Because he expects a return?*

Yes, partly for that. But only some are really grateful for benefits done except for the moment. A great many kick under the burden of an obligation. Human nature! You know Vidyasagar's immortal saying on the subject, I suppose: "Why is he so furious against me? আমি ত তাব কোন উপকার কবিনি।"¹

Can you, by the way, summarise my case and put the points before my myopic eyes apart from the three Ds?

Good Lord! don't expect me to be diagramming people all the time. Besides your personalities are not clearly marked out like D. Wait till they separate themselves to you in the Dance of Harmony.

About Datta, it was in one of a series of articles written by Barin about her. So everybody knows what I know.

Ah, then I understand. Barin's statements are always inaccurate. The 5 years must have been his own construction.

A is complaining loudly of her stomach pains—can't even walk in her room, etc. What are they? A little medical light, please.

November 5, 1935

I think A will be all right by a few days' rest, stopping all activity—even walking.

Perhaps. But if it is a moving kidney? She can't remain a non-walking statue all her life.

Her fever of yesterday doesn't throw any light on the main issue. Any supramental light?

None. Supermind says "O bother! don't trouble me with that, yet."

November 6, 1935

I send you a photograph of an intimate friend, Jatin Bal. Please have a look at it and tell me what you find—yogic or unyogic.

¹ I haven't done any good to him.

Refinement in vital, strong will, capacity for idealism—can't say more from a small photograph.

Don't mind the side show ! If you had seen me before, you would have exclaimed: "This fellow has no scrap of a chance for yoga !" But you will admit that I had health and vigour !

The general impression is martial and pugilistic. To be recommended to the Negus for Gorahai or Gergolubi.

November 8, 1935

You will see from the letter what has happened. I am absolutely moribund and gasping; don't see the way. Cursing myself every minute.

All that is rather excessive. It would be better to stop dying, gasping and cursing.

What have all these to do with Yoga ? I'm sure I didn't come for them.

It has nothing to do with Yoga. Usual human tangles, sir.

The yoga of oblation, sacrifice and severe austerities would be better—no hankering for fame, name or meddling with others' affairs.

There is no such yoga. That also is not yoga.

I have lost all faith, confidence, hope.

Good God! What a shipwreck in a tea cup! Kindly cultivate a sense of proportion. Learn the lessons of experience, ponder then in silence and do better next time—that would be more sensible.

November 12, 1935

How can I refuse the elixir ? Only give it tangibly, concretely.

A concrete elixir is your business, not mine—as you claim to be a scientist.

November 13, 1935

Again about the novel-tangle. D told J in your name—"All she did with regard to her novel was because of egotism and her love of vital drama." J was very much upset by hearing it said in your name.

That is what you might call applied mathematics. I made a general statement which could cover the whole animal and human creation up to Mussolini and the Negus and avoided all mention of the novel. I added that since he had received an *amende honorable*, the matter might be dropped and peace declared.

J says D might write all about it.

I hope not!

November 14, 1935

I heard from S that R is anxious to treat him. I replied that I have not the least objection.

According to R it was S who was anxious and requested him three times to treat him, while R himself was circumspect and indifferent. They both wrote about it but that was three or four days ago, before S's condition got bad. Versions, versions!

What do you say about giving R a trial in place of the French doctor? Won't that be good for S?

As he is getting better, we can do without either.

The Mother was knocked up in the small hours and informed that S was very bad and hiccoughing. I presume the French Doctor has been sent for by this time. If it is serious, let us have news 2 or 3 times a day.

No meal as yet, Sir. It is 9.30 p.m. No sleep, no rest. And still you express your surprise and grudge a doctor being given a certificate!

Poor doctors who give up rest and sleep and food, yet remain all unwept, unhonoured and unsung. Never mind! Perhaps in heaven they will have a big address given them one mile long and signed by all the angels—cherubim and seraphim together.

J asked me to fetch her book from her house to be sent to you, but I couldn't go early.

It was her version of the quarrel with D. D has not told his story, but made his remarks which indicate a different version. Versions, versions!

Nirod,

Is the condition of S dangerous or critical? If it is so or if it becomes so, it will be better to send for a French doctor who will take the responsibility of the case.

SRI AUROBINDO

November 15, 1935

Nirod,

As the Doctor has approved of R's treatment and S himself says he feels better under it, it is better to continue it. I expect you to put your medical feelings under a glass case in a corner for the time and help the unspeakable (?) Homeopath so far as nursing and other care for S goes. To quote Dilip "Qu'en dites-vous?"

SRI AUROBINDO

Very well, sir. What the Guru expects, the disciple respects. I shall obey your command. You have heard all about the diagnosis. You can judge for yourself. I won't say a word on it. I fervently hope no occasion will arise to break my seal.

Let us hope so. The French doctor (Val, Vahl, Valle? What the devil is his name?) said the case was not dangerous except for the possible crisis of the heart. So let us hope for the best in spite of the differences of the doctors.

November 16, 1935

Let me ask you how much you are guided by our reports, whether an accurate report is essential for your action. If so there are quite a number of things that one would object to in R's report.

It is absolutely essential. Wrong information or concealment of important facts may have disastrous consequences.

He says in the evening's report that he didn't want to stop the vomiting; he has done that only because S wished it.

He has reported at 9 o'clock to Pavitra that he has succeeded in entirely stopping vomiting and hiccough. Is it true?

His condition at night will be critical; are you sure about his life?

No. From the beginning of the case I have not been sure of it. I understand however that Valle had said it was not a dangerous case, apart from the danger of heart-failure which he did not suppose to be very great and could be avoided. But the circumstances have been very contrary and there has not been the usual response to the Force which makes recovery only a matter of time. It seems to me that it is an old illness which has suddenly taken an acute and perilous form. If tomorrow morning there is no improvement, we can call Philaire (I hope it will be in time). Pavitra is writing a letter which you can take to Philaire and learn from him when he will come over. If

you and Philaire can understand each other, it is all right. Otherwise inform Pavitra of the hour and he will go at that time.

Accidentally I met Valle in the hospital. He asked me to call Philaire, if necessary.

He did not say that then, but gave an optimistic view of the case. But is surgical intervention possible in a state of extreme weakness?

November 17, 1935

You have heard of S's sudden good turn, putting him almost out of danger. It came about in this way: at 9.45 a.m., the time when Mother came down for Pranam, he went into a sound sleep and I too into a little concentration. I found, on opening my eyes, S in deep sleep with the cessation of hiccoughs. At once I had the impression that he was out of danger. R says that he himself was deep in meditation in the Pranam hall, when a great sense of joy pervaded him along with the idea that S had passed the danger zone. He opened his eyes and caught Mother looking at him. Mother's fixed reassuring grip of his hand confirmed his intuition. Is all this true?

There was something—a sense of a danger passed and a Force put out. There was also a pressure on R which amounted to this: “No more bluff—bluff won't do here. You must now justify your bluff and cure S.”

Things must have changed after you wrote to me that you were not sure of his life. You must have done something definite and imperative meanwhile.

There is a change in so far as S's physical has begun to respond while before it was not responsive at all. There is therefore no longer the predominance of the dark forces that there was before. But the response has to increase before one can be absolutely sure of the result. The obstinacy of the hiccough is a dark point that ought to disappear.

I don't agree with R when he says that hiccough will have some good effect on the intestine.

!!!

November 18, 1935

R showed me your reply regarding your disapproval of Bovril and remarked that you did it from motives we don't understand. But have you disallowed it because of my disapproval or do you and Mother concur with my opinion?

We concur. Besides, she considers it too heavy for a patient like S. Even as a convalescent—which he is not yet—he cannot be treated like other convalescents or fed up without consideration of the fundamental and constant weakness of his digestive organs.

S complained of acidity because he was given too much lime juice.

Why do you all call it lime juice? It is orange juice that is being sent. If it had been limes, I suppose S would have been dead by this time. But even this orange juice represents more than 20 oranges a day. Mother looks askance at this enormous quantity—how can he digest and will it not increase the hyperacidity, burnings, eructations, hiccough?

R resented S's complaint and wants to stop treatment. I said it would be absurd.

That is what he wants to do. We have said "no".

Shall I write to you my opinion about things as in the Bovril case or would I put you in a fix as to whom to hear?

It is better if you write.

No, the fix is how to get R to be reasonable.

You must have marked that he has suspended giving brandy.

If he has stopped it, all right. But it was a monstrous imprudence. He does not seem to realise that S's is a special case—that of a man who even in convalescence and apparent good health, cannot be allowed to take what others take.

He told me just now that S's black vomit was of blood but he kept it from me because it would make me nervous. In the report also he wrote "Black vomit of yellow fever". Did he write to you that it was blood?

No, he did not write it was blood—only that absurdity about yellow fever.

November 19, 1935

By 'lime juice', I meant orange juice. R would call it 'sweet lime juice', not orange which is supposed to be different.

Perplexing! Why should juice of oranges be called 'sweet lime juice'? I suppose in that case juice of sweet limes should be called orange juice? Vice versa? Mutual

transmutation? or what? Orange is certainly supposed to be different from sweet lime and it is oranges and not sweet limes we are using. R seems to live in a world of his overmental construction which has nothing to do with this poor earth and common "humanity".

R complains of the delayed supply of nourishments and has written to Mother about it, he says.

He seems to think that things can be supplied at his orders by some process of magic.

R told me that somebody has written to you about the orange juice and its production of hyperacidity.

Rubbish! It was the Mother who from the first had this objection long before you wrote about it. She gave the juice in the quantity asked for only because R insisted on it.

He adds that you come down to common human consciousness level and listen to these suggestions. He also says you have no time to go into higher consciousness to ascertain the validity of these statements.

What an imbecile! As if one could not know about orange juice and its effects without shooting up into the Supermind. Does he think his extraordinary theories are supramental?

(To be continued)

MERCI, MÈRE

THERE are two very beautiful words in the English lexicography: one is humility, the other is gratitude. The Thesaurus gives us alternatives for these words: sacredness, godliness and consecration for humility; thankfulness, thanksgiving for gratitude. But all these remain beautiful verbiage before we have met the Mother. After meeting Her we actually start to experience the true sense that lay behind these marvellous words. Her contact awakens in us our inner being who is Her child and the heavenly influx that comes from Her to us teaches us the essence of humility and gratitude. Is there anything more heavenly for a human heart than to run up to Her, offer Her a flower and in return receive from Her another, and say with a smile, "Merci, Mère"? And on such occasions She will look at you from paradise and Her eyes will say to you, "I am enjoying your humility and gratitude." This revelation reminds one of Her own lines: "Grace de la Mère Divine est l'assentiment du Suprême" ("The Grace of the Divine Mother is the assent of the Supreme").

On the 17th of November falls the eighth anniversary of Her Withdrawal. On that day people from all over the world will come to pay homage to Her. The return of this day again and again reminds us that She came to the earth. Unworthy though we were She came with a great power and light to uplift us. But now She is gone. Weep we will, as long as we live but with it will go out our hearts to Her in renewed humility and gratitude. She came down leaving Her beatific state to bring solace and to teach us that we can be the children of God, as She had put it so gloriously in her book *La découverte suprême*. She said: "Nous et notre origine, nous et notre Dieu sommes un" ("We and our origin, we and our God are one").

The soul of the world seemed to remember that once upon a time She had promised to come and She kept Her promise. While the Mother walked on this earth with Her moon-gold feet men sensed some change in the world atmosphere, but did not know where to look for the light that beckoned them. I have heard of a story that a great yogi once commented: "The Mother has come down to earth but She would not let me know where She is." He felt Her presence and was overwhelmed.

Did he hear something like this?—

The immortal music of her mind
Sweeps through the earth a lustrous wind—
"Renounce, O man, thy arduous oar
And, opening out faith's song-charmed helpless sail,
Reach on my breath of love the ecstatic shore!
My rush is truth self-beaconed, not thy pale
Stranger-surmise:
I am a cyclic gale
That blows from paradise to paradise!"

(Amal Kiran)

She is gone, no doubt, leaving us a loneliness that nothing can fill, yet it is far better to have lived to see Her than to have never seen Her at all. How uniquely blessed we were to receive from Her physical hands flowers and gifts! Have we not witnessed Beatitude in Her lovely face? A poignant sorrow fills us for not having expressed our thanks when She was there. Was our heart's gratitude deep enough to measure up to Her labour for us? Hardly. So She left us. The world was not ready for such a stupendous change as She had envisaged. A very poor consolation, this, and our heart weeps forever. A.E. had felt very keenly the human heart's sorrow and written:

When king and queen feast in the heart,
 They squander all the gold of years
 To make their banquet gay, then leave
 A ruined heart, and a house of tears.

The Mother's *Prières et Méditations* is our Bible, for does it not teach us, apart from other things, how to be humble and grateful before the Lord and the Mother? The Mother's life is an open book for anyone to learn humility and gratitude. On the 17th evening the Ashram people were at a cinema show, in the playground, when the Mother chose to withdraw. No one knew anything except those who attended on Her personally what a tremendous thing was taking place in that room on the second floor. She chose to lie in state downstairs on the ground-floor. For this the Mother had given Her constant companion a thorough training as to how to manage the whole affair when Her body would become inert. He did his part to perfection. The Mother would not lie up there but on the ground-floor almost below the place where Sri Aurobindo had lain in state during those fateful days in 1950. In a tropical country where matter deteriorates earlier than in the temperate zone, Sri Aurobindo could keep his body full of light for five days. The Mother could have done that too. She too could have stayed for five days. But no, she chose to be second to the Lord, and chose to stay just a little less than the Lord. This was the Mother all over. How utterly and truly sweet of Her! Was this not a unique example of humility? And She would not have a separate Samadhi. She did not exist without the Lord, she had said. True to Her words She chose to be lost to the outer world and be interred in the same Samadhi. Nowhere in the world can you point out and say, "There, there is the Mother's Samadhi." Her self-immolation and self-abnegation have no parallel in human history.

For all our knowledge that She is only gone physically and that She is still there, our hearts must weep and weep like the winter rain. Nolini-da consoled us by saying, "She has only postponed Her work, She has not really cancelled it." *Her Promise Abides* was the title of an article by Sanat.

CHAUNDONA BANERJI

AT THE FEET OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

RECOLLECTIONS BY SAHANA

(Continued from the issue of October 1981)

9

As the consciousness gets gradually awakened because of our stay here, all of us can to a certain extent understand, if we are sincere, why we can do some things, why we cannot do other things and why, where and when we fail, though the help and force given by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo are always standing behind all our effort and work like wakeful sentinels.

When one can throw oneself in the stream which the force of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo has set going in order to take us in a certain direction and is constantly striving to do so, strange things are found to take place. Firstly, life moves in another rhythm, it has another taste and one enters into another kind of existence. Falling in that current, one loses one's identity. All that is to be done, shunned or accepted is achieved spontaneously. No effort, no question troubles and no pain is felt in rejection nor even joy in becoming something. One has grown a different person, is living in another world and seeing things in a new way from a new place. Everything holds an endless interest and towards all one feels an affection, a love is born whose very character and quality are different. All this is a natural movement and law and aspect of that consciousness which has been received from the original source of Consciousness. And what is most wonderful is that the 'I' no longer stalks about with a superior air. One perceives clearly the truth that when the trial comes the mind cannot keep to the right attitude, and the result is failure and confusion. We realise that we have in fact lost our inner connection with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Hence we fall down into the bottomless waters from the bridge we had come to cross. The intensity, alertness and awareness are forgotten; everything gets clouded and we slip back into that domain where the ego is the lord, where the vision is muddy and from where starts all pain and suffering.

Regarding this condition, Sri Aurobindo wrote to me the following letter:

"The automatic tendency is a good sign as it shows that it is the inner being opening to the Truth which is pressing forward the necessary changes.

"The attitude you describe (in regard to your going to X's) is quite the right one,—also in regard to Y's affair.

"As you say, it is the failure of the right attitude that comes in the way of passing through ordeals to a change of nature. The pressure is becoming greater now for this change of character even more than for decisive Yoga experience—for if the

experience comes it fails to be decisive because of the want of the requisite change of nature. The mind for instance gets the experience of the one in all, but the vital cannot follow because it is dominated by ego-reaction and ego-nature or the habits of the outer nature keep up a way of thinking, feeling, acting, living which is quite out of harmony with the experience. For the psychic and part of the mind and emotional being feel frequently the closeness of the Mother, but the rest of the nature is un-offered and goes its own way prolonging division from her nearness, creating distance. It is because the sadhaks have never even tried to have the Yogic attitude in all things—they have been contented with the common ideas, common view of things, common motives of life, only varied by inner experiences and transferred to the framework of the Ashram instead of that of the world outside. It is not enough and there is great need that it should change.

9.9.36

“No, what I have written should not be sent to Z; for it was not meant for her. I am not her Guru and she has a right to her ignorance. I objected only to her trying to force it on one who has taken up the spiritual life.”

From all these letters and their answers one can have some idea of our mode of life; some aspects of it may also be grasped. What we usually write about are the events of the outer existence which may not give any true picture of the basic character of our life. Still, many hints regarding the inner life can be seen in the incidents of the outer existence. However, to write about sadhana is not my object. What I want to do is to write about the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. So let me present them through their own letters which will give a better knowledge of our sadhana. Our hearts get filled up when we write about those blessed events—in them we feel their touch, their presence; we get an opportunity, while writing about their measureless grace, to recognise our gratitude to them and feel a new taste in it.

Now I shall speak about the Mother through some of her letters. She writes:

It is very good to have recovered the calm. It is in the calm that the body can increase its receptivity and gain the power to continue.

With my love and blessings.

Sahana,

I fully approve of your singing in your room and see no necessity to stop it.

As for the change in the vital, it will come by itself when you will take the habit of remaining in your higher consciousness where all these petty things and movements are tasteless.

17.4.39

With love and blessings.

Sadhana is always difficult and everybody has conflicting elements in his nature and it is difficult to make the vital give up its ingrained habits.

That is no reason for giving up Sadhana. One has to keep up the central aspira-

tion which is always sincere, and go on steadily in spite of temporary failures and it is then inevitable that the change will come.

Our help is always with you.

With my love and blessings.

Sahana, my dear child,

For your own sake, I must tell you that you are bound to receive shocks and hard blows too so long as you indulge in such false ideas as "my taking sides" with one or another etc. This is completely wrong and baseless and you must get rid of this way of thinking altogether if you wish to be close to the Divine.

With my love and blessings

Sahana,

I am very glad to hear of this new opening and fine experience. Always when one faces difficulties and overcomes them it brings a new spiritual opening and victory.

Our love and blessings.

Sahana,

I shall be waiting for you at 9:30 and expect you to come. I accept none of your excuses which surely do not come from any psychic source.

17.5.33

Love and special blessings to my dear child Sahana.

Let this day be for you the day of a new birth and a new start in your sadhana.

17.5.39

Sahana, my dear child,

You have indeed passed from one life to another, but it is in your body that this new birth took place, and now the road is wide open before you for a new progress.

With my love and blessings.

19.4.60

(To be continued)

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of October 1981)

The Mother's Message

This is the
interesting story of
how a being discovers
the Divine Life



A FEW days later the Mother spoke to me about the meditation she was going to give and asked me to attend. I was confused as to where to sit and asked her about it. She answered:

“Just now I received your note; it is about the meditation I give on the 5th

December at 9.30 in the morning. I said to reserve a place in the upstairs Meditation Hall for you—it is there that I sit myself on my chair. If you come early you can sit at the place you choose.”

When the day arrived I went up to the Meditation Hall—this was the room where she had seen me on my birthday. In spite of my being early I found the room packed. People stared at me and made me feel nervous. I didn’t dare to sit near her chair, but took a place slightly far from it against a wall.

It was a little before 9.30 when the Mother entered the room in a snow-white gown. Her face was rather grave. It was the 5th anniversary of the day Sri Aurobindo had left his body. Now she sat on her high-backed chair.

We all meditated for half an hour. During the meditation I often opened my eyes to look at her. I noticed that she was meditating with her eyes wide open—they shone like diamonds. At that time I could not understand anything except that I had an experience such as I had never had before.

That evening she asked me about the meditation. Then after a pause she said:

“Next time you will sit on the threshold of the room opposite to my chair—so that I can see you in front of me.”

By “next time” the Mother meant the 5th December of 1956.

On the 9th December 1955, the anniversary of the day on which Sri Aurobindo’s body in a rosewood casket was put in a vault in the middle of the Ashram courtyard, the Mother came down and meditated in front of the Samadhi. Along with other people I sat in the space between the Mother and the Samadhi. The atmosphere was so entrancing, with the Mother’s own presence, the fragrant flowers and the incense and the occasional bird-warbling, that I completely lost myself in meditation.

The Mother was taking great care of me but I was not fully aware of it. I felt that it was ridiculous to ask her for any material things, even though I needed them. I had not come here for that. I had, however, received quite a number of letters from my family asking me whether I required anything. I always hesitated to ask, even from my own people. I had numerous silly conceptions such as that, since I had come here, I must lead an ascetic life in order to prove myself a true sadhika, and that if I asked for anything from my family the Mother would be displeased and I would not reach my goal, and so on. The Mother wrote:

“Certainly you can write to your mother and ask from her whatever you need; and when your brother comes you can explain to him the whole situation and ask him to give you all you require. I have absolutely no objection to it—and wish to let you be quite free in your movements.

“My love is always with you and my blessings also.”

But I still held back my feelings from my family and I did not ask for help. Another thing—I did not like staying in Golconde without paying anything. I felt I had offered everything that I had possessed to the Mother, and now what right had I to ask anything from anybody? But I still wished to offer something to her occasionally.

I must confess that I lacked an absolute faith in the Mother. Sometimes I thought about my situation and wondered what the future might hold for me. I felt very alone. I was just too stupid to be convinced—my thoughts whirled round and round and I could scarcely think straight.

The adverse forces came over and over again in both repulsive and attractive forms. It was not easy for me to call the Mother for help and to receive her answer inwardly because I became absolutely blind and deaf under the spell of the dark influences. But within my innermost heart I aspired for the perfection of the whole being and to reach my destination.

These cunning forces put strong suggestions into my head that this integral Yoga was too tough for me, I had no ability and I would be hopelessly defeated, so I should drop altogether the idea of attaining perfection.

The hostile forces never failed to show up my defects on any occasion they found suitable. I believed them and almost gave up hope and wished to go away. I even asked the Mother's permission to do so. She gave her answer:

“My dear little child,

“I cannot keep you against your will.

“I only ask you not to do anything rash, and to take a decision only when you are quiet.

“Meanwhile, you can write to your mother and tell her what you want to do.

“My love and help are always with you but as you say you cannot feel them, obviously they cannot be of much use.”

I was very much hurt and wondered how I could explain everything to her in detail. I was suffocated and suffered all the torments of hell. The Mother wrote:

“I am so sorry that again and again you have to suffer so much.

“I want you to be happy and in good health and my love never leaves you.”

Once more I became worried by people's chance remarks. Someone hinted that if I was unable to give money to the Mother, I should do some hard work. But what work could I do?

After this the Mother appeared to me as a stranger. The idea left a deep impression upon me. Yet again I wrote to her and she replied:

17. 12. 55

“I am very sorry that some people have told you so much nonsense. It is their own way of seeing things, but it is *not true* and you must not believe them or

take any decision on such silly talk.

"I have told you to ask from me whatever you need and I shall happily give it to you. I am your true Mother and you must feel free with me.

"As for the work you are doing for me, whenever you have finished something and it is ready for giving, you have only to let me know and I will call you in the morning to give it.

"With my love and blessings."

Then I wrote to the Mother that I was hers—now and forever. She was my sole refuge and I relied on her. She answered:

"You have taken the right attitude—it is quite good. You have only to keep it with perseverance and you will surely progress on the way."

I had the impression that everybody in the Ashram was a kind of demi-god. How wrong I was and how totally puzzled! I asked the Mother the reason and got the answer:

"The world is as it is—full of smallness and obscurity—the Divine alone is Light and Vastness, Truth and Compassion. So take refuge in the Divine and do not care for the smallness of the world, do not let it disturb you.

"Keep only the Divine Presence in you with its peace and quietness."

One of the problems I had was that I did not have money to buy a file for the Mother's letters, or a diary to write down all that she said to me. The Mother sent me the things along with this letter:

"I am sending you a file and a diary with quotations from Sri Aurobindo.

"Next week I shall give you another diary with quotations from me.

"Always happy when you ask for what you need."

And yet another letter:

"I have received your nice letter and am sending at once the second diary so that you can begin to write at once. I propose that in one of the diaries (Sri Aurobindo's) you should write daily a prayer, expressing your aspiration, or your gratitude, or your adoration, the progress you want to make. It does not need to be long, only a few lines; and it will help you to understand yourself. You will write as if you were speaking to him and to me directly and thus you will create an intimacy with him and myself. In the other diary you will write as you said.

"My love and blessings are always with you."

Then I started writing in the diaries seriously. In one I wrote what she had suggested and in the other I noted down her talks—whatever she had told me regarding spirituality. Perhaps this was the starting point on the Path.

The ascent to the Truth, however, was steep and there were many tumbles and tempests. By now I had realised full well that this path was not an easy one. All the time the Mother supported and encouraged me:

“Do not give up to the enemy—resist—I am with you for the fight and *we must conquer.*”

It was not at all an open fight but something occult. I was scared. I wanted to go frequently to the Mother and wished her to give me more of her time. All the same, I was afraid to go to her because some strange fear gripped me and prevented me. I was pulled first one way and then the other and I was completely perplexed. Often tears of frustration misted my eyes. I became more and more aware of an inward as well as outward loneliness, an unhappiness for which I could find no explanation. The Mother wrote on the 22nd December:

“Yesterday I had prepared an answer to your letter—but it was somewhat severe, and when I was to send it I felt pity and thought why not wait until tomorrow, things might become better.

“Now I have received your today’s letter and though I am sorry to see that this very nasty influence is still upon you, the clouds seem to lift a little, and I can write.

“One thing you must know that it is the Enemy of the Divine, the Force that is hostile to all divine realisation that gives you this fear to see me and wants to keep you away from me.

“I may not be able to give you as much time as you wish me to give you, but on your side you must not miss the opportunities given to you to meet me—one word, one contact, one glance can be deeply useful to clear your atmosphere and protect you against the adverse forces—these enemies know it and that is why they are trying to keep you away from me. Do not listen to them.”

Often I was lost and bewildered in the hostile world, full of shadows and the sinister actions of the devil. A chilling fear shook me helplessly. The Mother answered my prayer:

“With all my love I keep you on my lap. Remain always there and always my arms will be a protection around you so that nothing bad can affect you.

“My love and blessings are always with you, be steady and truthful.”

In those days I used to have many dreams, which I recorded in a notebook. The

notebook was sent up to the Mother. She would read and add a few touches and comment.

I may give an example. One day I wrote of the following dream:

"Some bad forces came and tried to take me into a dark world. They held me tightly and began to walk. But at once I felt in my heart that I could not live without the Mother. I must not go with them. And I remembered the Mother—I screamed and called her. She came and gave a good blow to these forces, and took her seat in my heart. Then I fixed my eyes on the bad forces and they ran away."

An account of five dreams including the above had been sent to the Mother. Her comment on all of them was:

"Very good dreams indeed."

She sent me white and red lotuses along with the letter. I did not know the exact meaning of them, so I asked her and she replied :

"The red lotus represents Sri Aurobindo, the white one represents me.

"In a general way the lotus is the flower of the Divine Wisdom, whatever its colour. But red it signifies the Avatar, the Divine incarnated in matter, and white it signifies the Divine Consciousness manifested upon earth.

"...Stand firm against the recurring attacks, my strength is fighting with you."

Gradually I started feeling a little better.

One day I received some things from my mother, also a letter from Laljibhai. I was amazed, because I had never mentioned anything to my family about my situation. I asked the Mother whether she had written to them and she answered :

"I received your letter and am so glad that you are feeling better.

"As for your brother, it is quite simple, if nobody wrote to him about your difficulties—and on my side at least not a single word has been written to him or to anybody else, about it—it means that he has some intuition and much goodwill. What he writes to you about *sadhana* is quite sensible. If he sends you money you can keep it as he would be sorry if you returned it to him, and put it aside with you for use if any day it is needed.

"Keep also the things your mother has sent you and use them—otherwise she would be sorry. There is surely no harm in using them as they have been sent with goodwill for you.

"On my side, I find that quite all right and if you can have the things you need I shall be glad for it.

"My love and blessings are and will always be with you."

The Mother alone was there for me—I could confide everything to her. I expressed my feeling that I should not write childish things to her and she replied promptly:

"Be freely childish with me and do not worry. It is always my love that receives your letters and if I am too busy (like yesterday) to answer your letter by writing, my love goes always to you to help and comfort you."

Slowly I began to observe my defects and their causes, but it is not easy to change the physical nature in a trice. To escape from the wheel of Universal Nature is a Herculean task. I wondered whether I had made any progress at all towards my destination. The Mother wrote:

"My child,

"Do not worry, you are progressing, little by little you will become fully conscious of yourself."

A wave of relief swept over me.

On the 30th December the Mother sent me a lovely card with a painting showing a white peacock coming out of leaping flames. These lines accompanied it:

"I hope this day will be a good one for you with my love always near you. This is the picture of the soul coming out victoriously from all the ordeals. I want this realisation for you.

"You can write to your brother that I shall be glad to see him with your father also. But if it is not convenient for them to come in February, let them come at the end of March (to be here for the 29th) and stay in April up to the 24th. It is a good moment for coming. I send them my love and blessings, and hope that all will be all right for them.

"Sweet little child, I am with you."

A prayer from my soul reached her and she answered:

"I received your nice letter with its prayer and I can assure you that your prayer will be granted and your aspiration fulfilled.

"With my love and blessings."

One year had passed—already.

(To be continued)

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LETTERS ON POETRY

2

POETIC VALUES AND POWERS

You have defined the poet as a bringer of joy—and, since the joy of the mystical consciousness is the highest, you arrive at the conclusion that the highest type of poet is the mystical. Your conclusion is valid from a certain standpoint, but not as a judgment on art. Is art to be judged by its explicit nearness to or farness from the mystical realisation? The joy which art brings us is not always explicitly the mystical *ananda*: it is mostly that *ananda* in a specific disguise and it is not required to be more: hence our judgments on art have to be within the realm of that disguise. A poet is great not by speaking solely of God in a perfect way: he is great by speaking of anything in a way that is perfect. Nothing except perfection of manner embodying a significant substance constitutes the highest poetry. And this perfection does not depend openly on one's belief in or awareness of God. The mysticity or non-mysticity of the theme makes no difference to the status of a poet as a poet. Shakespeare's

After life's fitful fever he sleeps well,

which has no definite spiritual significance is not less high poetry than a mystical phrase like Frederic Myers'

Leap from the universe and plunge in Thee.

Nor is the poetry of either of these lines less high than Sri Aurobindo's

Life that meets the Eternal with close breast,

a line which derives in manner as well as matter from a plane of inspiration beyond the mind—an "overhead plane", to use an Aurobindonian label—and comes suffused with a fathomlessness of suggestion and harmony absent in the mystical snatch from Myers, the vigour and wideness of which derive from a mental plane, imaginatively and not abstractly so, yet mental all the same. The manner, the form, of the "overhead" line may be described as directly mystical, while that of the non-"overhead" is indirect in its mysticism. Such a difference counts in a mystical consideration: it does not count in the least in the artistic—and the artistic is all that is of moment when a poet's rank is in question. Neither the theme nor the plane of consciousness from which the perfect manner is born introduces any difference in poetic merit.

Even an atheist can be as high a poet as a mystic if there is active in him an inspired fashioner of perfect form. Of course the ultimate source and support of all

poetry is the activity by which the Eternal shapes Himself into the archetypal world of perfect truth-forms that are being evolutionarily manifested here in the world of phenomena. But we need have no conscious acknowledgment of that source and support in order to be poets (though I dare say that for a sustained poetic flight over a lifetime some sense of hidden superhuman presences inspiring us is necessary). Nor will conscious acceptance of God make us poets if the fashioner of perfect form is not somehow active in us. Without that fashioner coming into play, "a mystical idea pouring down from above" will not produce poetry. Unless that fashioner receives and embodies it, no poetry will crystallise. God is joy and art too is joy, but God's joy becomes art's only when that fashioner is the medium. Mystical ideas pour down from above into many people, but all don't write a *Rose of God*, that poem of Sri Aurobindo's which both of us regard as a *ne plus ultra* of spiritual incantation. I don't aver that a man who has so far given no sign of being a poet will not blossom into one under the impact of a down-pouring mystical idea: some inmates of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram have become poets almost overnight—but that is because the poet, the artist, in them has been awakened. Since the Divine, the fashioner of the archetypal world of perfect truth-forms, is Himself a supreme artist, the chances are frequent that an intense impact of a mystical idea will awaken the artist in us—and the chances are increased a hundredfold in our Ashram because of Sri Aurobindo's being a master-artist—but it may so happen that the artist in us does not awaken and only the philosopher does or the man of action: then we have a different type of divine manifestation. The mystical idea by itself is not sufficient for poetry to take birth, though it may bring with it, as you say, emotion and vision and rhythm; the artistic or aesthetic transmitting faculty in us has to be at work, the faculty of fashioning flawless form has to be the medium in us of that idea.

A natural corollary to this is that in our appreciation of poetry the perception of flawless form is essential. Without flawless form, no poetry. By "flawless" I don't mean outward technical perfection alone. I mean an outward technical perfection that is an embodiment of the living thrill of the inward afflatus. Without that living thrill we shall have the mechanism of form instead of the organism. The organic form is the *sine qua non* of poetry and if we don't respond to it we may get out of poetry a lot of pleasure or profit but not the whole *poetic* profit or pleasure. I believe your failure to rate properly the organic form is responsible for your statement that a spiritual truth expressed in prose can be as successful as in poetry. Successful in what? In giving the intellect a notion easy for it to hold and turn to practical ends? For such success, prose is as good as poetry, perhaps even better. Not, however, for giving us a vivid concrete intimacy with the being of that truth, an enrapturing concrete vision of the body of that truth. Spiritual truths are not abstractions or bare ideas: they are presences and entities, they are faces and forms of the Divine and the intellect can by itself take hold of them as little as it can of human faces and forms, presences and entities. The intellect is a valuable faculty; it is always there, I suppose, in some mode or other in all self-aware experience, a human mode on our plane

and a divine mode on higher planes, but its function is not successful in giving us the being and the body of anything: it has to join with other faculties, other modes of consciousness. To these modes prose cannot make as successful an appeal as does poetry and for the simple reason that the poetic expression is intenser in rhythm no less than in word; it appeals more keenly than prose to our senses and our imagination, to our heart and our intuitive self: it carries home to us better, therefore, a spiritual truth's stuff of body and stuff of being. Prose succeeds in communicating these stuffs as it approaches more and more the form of poetry. Yet inasmuch as it stops short of the full form it misses the last degree of the intensity with which they can be communicated.

In fact, prose is not meant for that extreme communication, and if it forgets this by interspersing its harmony with a marked poetic element like metre it achieves an objectionable hybrid. Leave aside spiritual truths, even non-spiritual communication in prose is spoiled by the intrusion of metre in a regular poetic way. Dickens is notoriously guilty of metrising his prose when aiming at pathos: sentence after sentence in the description of Little Nell's death is iambic blank verse not cut up in lines, and to the true artist ear the passages are jarring. Ruskin also indulges in the same device now and again: he jars less because his vision is poetic and his words too have a poetic turn. Still, his metricised prose in the midst of genuine prose writing is not very pleasant and seems somewhat cheap, as if he were avoiding the true discipline of prose art. Poetic prose should keep regular marked metre at arm's length: what it should have is a subtle subdued play of certain recurrences of beat, a play even more subtle and subdued than a skilful poet's who desires to eschew a monotonous base. After all, the base in poetry has to assert itself, on the whole, in spite of the various modulations: in prose there must be no such assertion, only a general euphony emerging from many bases briefly appearing and changing before their appearance can be distinctly noticed. Metre in the strictly poetic sense must be taboo if prose is to be good. A few typically poetic motions of the mind may also be said to be out of place—a certain super-audacity or super-picturesqueness or super-ornamentation or super-compactness. The spell-binding power of metre lends these motions a naturalness and an easy effectivity which are hard to produce in the looser and more pedestrian pace of prose. Prose, therefore, by its very *svabhava* is debarred from the highest expressive office—the top note of revelation, spiritual or secular. Its excellence, its integrity, depends on its being true to its *svabhava* and on its not trying to ape in patches the last and crowning perfections of speech belonging to the *svabhava* of poetry.

It is because form is bound up with those last and crowning perfections that as sensitive a knowledge as possible of the sound-values and the metrical laws of the tongue in which a poem is written is most helpful. Those values and laws go to constitute a good deal of form. Not to be able to distinguish between the long vowels and the short, or to pronounce correctly the combinations of vowels and consonants, or to know where exactly words are accented is to miss the musical significance of English

poetry. I say "significance" on purpose, for sounds and beats have not just a quality of fineness and crudeness, concord and discord. More than through anything else, the thrill of the poetic afflatus is transmitted through the rhythm they combine to build. This rhythm bears both the nature of the emotion behind a burst of poetry and the nature of the plane on which the emotion finds tongue. Each emotion has its own vibration, and this vibration is within a larger vibration which characterises the living stuff of a plane of consciousness. For an example take the compactly emotioned descriptive line about wintry boughs in Shakespeare:

Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang,

and put it beside Wordsworth's less compact but equally keen-emotioned

.. more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's-nest filled with snow,
'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine

They have a kindred heart-thrill which communicates itself to the language, but the language shapes itself on dissimilar planes in them, and the dissimilarity is felt even more in the movement and sonance of the words than in their turn and order. In the Shakespeare it is as if our bowels of pity were exquisitely stirred together with our heart, whereas in the Wordsworth the heart seems to set up with delicate piercingness a mournful tremor in our grey cells. To the one the life-force in us, where sensation throws up thought, directly answers; to the other the mind-force in which thought throws up sensation gives a direct echo: the emotion finds voice in the two lines on two different planes because the two poets do not draw their inspiration through the same plane. Nor is the emotional stir within the larger vibration of the predominant plane the only thrill in rhythm: there is a vibration too of the consciousness-stuff becoming a vision, becoming an idea, becoming an intuition of realities that cannot wholly be caught in idea or vision. To hold and communicate all these thrills with all their deep and far-reaching suggestions, sounds and beats are prime factors in poetry. (I mean, English poetry, where beats are concerned; other languages have other metrical determinants.) Poetry, and to a lesser degree all imaginative writing, is wholly appreciated, wholly absorbed, wholly lived with and lived in, when the musical significance is felt side by side with the verbal, the former reinforcing and filling out the latter.

As we go poetically to higher and higher levels of spiritual consciousness—or rather, as higher and higher levels of spiritual consciousness get expressed in poetry—the musical significance keeps increasing and gets more and more important. The *mantra*, as the Rig Veda and the Upanishads understand it, is characterised chiefly by the unfathomable hints borne on the rhythm. Alter the rhythm, however slightly, and the mantric potency is diluted: the words may remain the same and the alteration

of rhythm caused by altering their order may let the sense be also the same, and yet the sheer Godhead will depart because, though the verbal sense is the same, the musical sense is different and has not the suggestion of a profoundly penetrating massive infinity and endlessness. If, for instance, that superb line of Dilip Kumar Roy's—

His sentinal love broods o'er the universe—

is slightly rewritten—

Broods o'er the universe His sentinal love—

the meaning is unmodified by the inversion, the poetic quality too is as perfect and yet the two lines do not hold the identical vibrancy of the watchful enfolding vastness they connote. I believe the rhythm of the one creates mantric waves in the hidden layers of our consciousness, that of the other somehow falls short of this extreme mystical effect. A mystically-minded reader may not lose the sense of the sheer Godhead despite the rhythm being altered; but then it is he and not the line that supplies the sense. People have drawn that sense from the most unlikely poetic phrases because their own sensitivity to the Eternal could contact a spiritual magnitude looming behind secular symbols and rhythms. Since the magnitude was looming behind instead of emerging to the front, it would be wrong to trace their experience directly to the quality of the phrases. Judged in themselves, the phrases could not be credited with mantric might.

To feel the mantric might we must allow the rhythm to get realised by us and this is most satisfactorily done when poetry is read aloud. If we do not read aloud we are prone to pay attention to the verbal sense rather than the musical. Loud reading presses the latter into us more easily; by keeping the outer ear engaged we stop the sound-values from escaping—a concrete holding of them is accomplished by the air-undulations we start. Our sensational being is put in action, our very body commences to respond, the nerves grow attentive, the heart follows the rise and fall of the air-undulations, the blood begins singing the poem within our veins. All this stirs the mind that is using the body as its medium and that has become by too much identification with it dependant on bodily means for getting impressed and influenced. I am convinced that if a poem is never read aloud it will not ever yield its finest magic. Only by repeated loud reading the subtle overtones and undertones spring to life within us. But I do not imply that a poem is always to be read loudly. Once we have gathered its "soul of secret sound" there is no need to hear it each time with the outer ear. In fact, for turning a poem into a meditation we should slowly dispense with the outer ear's ministry. But we must not jump into an utterly soundless commerce with the poem: though not employing that ear we should still hear the sounds, an inner ear giving us service and bearing to us the full rhythmico-metrical significance. With mouth shut we should yet carry on articulation: the eye, or the visual memory when

the book is not with us, must be accompanied by the ear in a subtle form: the auditory phenomenon, however inner, must be there. So the distinction between loud reading and silent is not radical: it boils down really to articulating sounds in an outward way or an inward. The inward way may be the goal of effective reading, especially for purposes of meditation, but the outward has to precede it sufficiently and make the inward seizing of the "soul of secret sound" possible before that soul can be borne to deeper and deeper levels of our consciousness.

From what you write, I infer that you believe the process of going deeper and deeper in the consciousness ends with a Great Silence which is the ultimate depth. No doubt, there is a Great Silence—all mystics testify to it. Yet I wonder if in the integral Divine any Great Silence drowns and annuls all speech. A divine silence incompatible with even divine speech strikes me as a partial experience—an experience due to our inability to reconcile or hold together seeming opposites of the divine Existence. The Personal and the Impersonal, the Multiple and the Unitary, the Active and the Passive, the Voiceful and the Silent—these are some of the contraries in which God has been conceived and realised—and the tendency is to regard the second term of each pair as the more truly Godlike, as having more of the essence of the Ultimate. The cause of this tendency lies in the lagging of our Nature-parts behind our pure self. The self soars up to the Eternal, but our nature of mind, life and matter remains untransformed. As long as no key to their absolute transformation is found, it is logical to conclude that they labour under a basic undivinity and hence must be finally dropped and escaped from: one step further is to look on them as some incomprehensible illusion that has got attached to the sheer self: all that is personal, multiple, active and voiceful is deemed of less and less worth—secondary, subsidiary, superfluous, phantasmal. Sri Aurobindo, however, has found the key of Nature's transformation: past masters had sometimes dimly glimpsed it and groped for it in a hazy manner, none had clearly seen it and sought for it in the right way and grasped it for good: Sri Aurobindo alone has, and now at last the cry of travailing ages for the plenary Godhead here below and not only there above will be answered: our matter itself will live in the light and the law of the Immortal. Our Nature-parts have their archetypes of truth in a Divine Nature that is inalienable from the Divine Self and, by the descent of that truth without which indeed everything in Nature would be a supportless *Maya*, our mind and life and body will put on divinity. That is the Aurobindonian revelation. Its bearing on the point we began with is that the final depth of our consciousness is no solitary Great Silence but a Great Silence for ever accompanied with a Great Voice.

Though there is in God a positive ever-present hush which no amount of utterance will abrogate, He is no annulment of all utterance nor is the being of Him such that it can never be uttered. He is not exclusively a hush, and His being is beyond utterance in only this respect that no speech falling short of the Voicefulness proper to the plane of the supreme Divine is entirely adequate to the Existence, Consciousness, Beatitude and Archetypal Creativity of that plane. In brief, God cannot be truly spo-

ken except by God Himself! To fasten on God an incapacity to utter Himself would be to cast a slur on His Godhead. It is speech taking shape on the level of the human consciousness or even on any level below the highest divine, that to a greater or lesser extent may be said to come a cropper. On the highest divine level an everlasting Song that is God goes on simultaneously with God the everlasting Quiet. No inadequacy to capture the very secrets of the Eternal in language mars that interminable Harmony.

Can poetry give us this celestial music? The ancient Indian rishis held that it could, and it is precisely the type of poetry possessing the power to do so that they termed the *Mantra*. The *Mantra*, they said, is not anything born of the human consciousness or, rather, anything garbed in the shape and colour of the consciousness that is human. The values and figures of it come from the divine Consciousness straight and sheer: the life-throb and rhythm of it spring from the very heart of the Eternal and the Infinite. It is the direct epiphany in words, the sovereign scripture. Apart from the fact that God's song-aspect is not the one and only He has, there is no Unutterable for it in the essential sense: the sole sense in which it faces the Unutterable is in relation to us, for we can derive in our poetry not His whole Harmony at once but snatches and portions and masses of it. The conditions of the time-state under which alone we are obliged to manifest His Song and Harmony preclude the endless *totum simul*, the boundless Totality all in an *ensemble* and in one miraculous illimitable Now. Inasmuch as the *totum simul* is beyond poetry as we know it, even the *Mantra* as manifested by us labours always under an impotence and is dogged by the Unutterable. But in itself it is "the Word that was in the Beginning", the *Logos*, the *Shabda-Brahman*, and when it manifests under our time-conditions it still brings us in essence the flame-tongue of the original Fire that, in the Upanishadic phrase, has gone forth everywhere and become all things.

In view of the *Mantra's* divine nature I am inclined to make a few remarks as to how exactly your beautiful statement about poetry's shortcoming as well as service should be interpreted. You write *apropos* of spiritual art of the Aurobindonian character: "the inner journey that one makes with the poet acting as the charioteer becomes a pilgrimage to the spaces beyond in the mystical wideness, but the poet stops at a point and, as if with a finger, points out something far away and seems to say, 'Now the rest of the journey has to be made all alone. The chariot will not go any further. I have been there and I have tried to tell you what it all is. You have to develop your own wings to reach the foot of the Himalaya of the Unknown.' " What happens has been finely and correctly described here—it is true that we have to pass beyond poetry, acknowledging its high aid, yet also recognising its insufficiency for us. Personal sadhana, personal Yoga is needed—a profound meditative passage to the in-world and the over-world, a passage of stillness in which poetry is left behind. Yes, we have to still everything that we know in our ordinary waking life, the to-and-fro of the consciousness has to end. One-pointed, we have to shoot ourselves into the Eternal as into a target—arrows of silence speeding to the Unseen. But two queries

arise: first, have we to do this because the Unseen is the opposite of all speech? and, second, is our procedure due to the defect of poetry or to our inability to get from poetry its full substance of heavenward help? Without depreciating the need of silencing our ordinary consciousness and leaving poetry behind, we can affirm that the Unseen is not incompatible with speech of every kind: it is speech that is not mantric that has to be abandoned as helpless after a particular stage. Even mantric utterance has to be abandoned—but that is because we cannot get out of it what is really inside it. Do not blame the *Mantra* for this. The blame should fall on us, obscured mortals, who cannot get God-realisation even through God's own word. The *Mantra* is indeed God's own word, a wide door opened into His magnificence and His mystery. That door is the Divine Himself in one aspect, drawing us. And if we were apt to mystical experience, we would fuse with the Divine as soon as the *Mantra* swept across our being. Mantric poetry chariots us only to a certain distance not because poetry cannot carry us right into the Divine but because we are incapable of being charioted by it to the very end. Lack of direct power can be charged to poetry if shape and colour have been given it by the poet on a human level. A varying approximately direct power can be attributed to poetry that is above that level yet still below the sheer divine plane—a power not enough to take us to the grand goal though it may make us neighbour it. But how can we accuse the *Mantra* of any defect? The inspiration of lines like Sri Aurobindo's *Rose of God* in which the mantric breath plays all over in different tones fails by *our* defect, and not by any fault of its own, to lift us clean across the boundaries of Beatitude: its chariot is not compelled by any internal limitation of power to roll up to a certain mark and there stand still: if no rolling further is possible it can change its luminous locomotion and fly instead of rolling: it has wings as well as wheels and on its pinions it can bear us, if only we let it, to "the foot of the Himalaya of the Unknown"—nay, even to the crest of the Sacred Mountain!

K. D. SETHNA

POEMS BEFORE AND AFTER 1973

OFFERING: XII

WHAT ARE THE SEEDS?—AUGUST 1980

What are the seeds, my friend, that you are sowing
Into the accepting air? Sweet wind of love or holocaust of hate?
Once scattered, once sent forth, there is no recall. Too late
To be undone, for they have moved beyond the limits of our knowing,

Beyond the limit of the personal self. Vibrations of thoughts, our
speaking move
In ever-widening circles as a stone cast into the sea
Makes little waves that seek for other waves to join... to be
Itself in others, more than itself in some great other self and prove

The power of vibrations joined, the great identity: to become
No more a simple ripple but a great tidal wave
To engulf the world! In what? *What shall it be?* We have
This choice. To send vibrations from

The planes of Sun... Good-will and Peace and Light
Or the dark plane of Death and Hate and Violence.
We have this choice knowing the consequence
Of choice: eternal Day of Love or brooding and brutal Night.

This is our work. Are we not then committed *here*
To make some action in the world? Committed at the level
Of our love to seek and overwhelm the dark vibrations? This is a revel-
Ation of our Truth: Violence gathers violence and violence dies en-
gulfed by love and where

There is encounter, as waves from opposite passing vessels meet
In a great wall of water and fall back harmless to the sea;
As two opposing colors interlock and cancel out to purity,
To white. Hate lives on violence and so cannot retreat

From confrontation with love's powers. The dark vibrations cease
In aftermath of confrontation. Impotent,
Deprived of nourishment, the violent
Must disappear. *Only love can live in peace.*

Sow, then, the seeds only of an accepting love, good-will,
Knowing the consequence. Let them flower to gentle and embracing winds,
 a balm

For the sad and troubled heart of man until
 In sweet vibrations, hatred is doomed and love alone lives in the benign
 and radiant Calm.

ELIZABETH STILLER

THE SUPRAMENTAL

*(This enthusiastic strangely imaged poem was written by a boy of ten on 12
 February 1968 in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram after he had gone to the Mother
 for his sacred thread.)*

THE supramental climbs his towers of gold,
 Stepping on the steps, and at each step he takes
 The mountain and valley echoes and awakes
 While thunder rolls in the sky.
 The supramental bulls rock and roll. The evil on earth
 Staggers and shatters. On his heels follow his subjects—
 One after another follow, follow their master.
 On each step you see a city of all gold,
 The everlasting towers of gold and silver,
 Gleaming beyond the reach of sun. On each step
 The scents of wild roses refresh us all
 As all of us follow our way up.
 One by one, step by step, facing hope grows bigger,
 Suddenly a lightning crackles, and the evil topples;
 On the next step of the supramental the evil is found crushed
 Under the foot of the supramental. The supramental has won glory!
 The golden glory guiding us into his towers,
 The everlasting towers. Each step he takes
 The valley and mountain thunders and quakes,
 Echoes and rumbles, while the all-powerful supramental
 Leads us to glory and the world of happiness.
 Up above the skies on the lofty towers, beyond the farthest star:
 The victorious towers, from bottom to top.

SANJAY SHUKLA

‘THE BLESSED FEMININE’

A STUDY OF THE WOMEN CHARACTERS IN SRI AUROBINDO’S PLAYS

INDIAN literature has always accorded a high place to woman. Woman has been represented as a symbol of chastity in Sita, as an image of innocence and simplicity in Sakuntala, as a figure of determination in Draupadi, but essentially as a mother in most other cases. Another important presentation of woman has been as Power (Shakti), the Universal Force which animates all living things. We have a few aberrations of womanliness as in Kaikeyi, but the general Indian concept of woman is that she is the embodiment of noble love, purity of heart and body, selflessness and innocence. Hers are the most reliable roles in life, whether as a mother, a wife, a sister or a daughter. Therefore it is natural that we should find Sri Aurobindo portraying woman along these lines in his plays. The peculiarity in Sri Aurobindo’s plays (by ‘plays’ here is meant his complete plays) is that except in *Vasavadutta* he is dealing with themes and characters of climes other than those of India. However, we do not feel that these women belong to Persia, Arabia or Norway since all of them have a ring of genuine Indianness about them.

There are different ways in which we can classify the women characters in Sri Aurobindo’s plays. We can divide them into major and minor characters; tragic and comic characters; romantic young women and mature matrons. The last classification is adopted in this study. Sri Aurobindo has created different varieties of women even within one type. There is a Shakespearean clarity about each of them. While we have Andromeda, Rodogune, Aslaug, Vasavadutta and Anice-Aljalice among the romantic heroines, there are Ungarica, Ameena, Khatoon, Cleopatra and Cassiopea among the elderly women, who in some respects create a deeper impression than the younger ones.

The romantic heroines, as can be expected, share some common features like physical beauty, steadfast love for their men, their grim determination and readiness to face opposition and even death for the sake of their heart’s law, besides their general womanly sympathy and kindness. In the tradition of the Sanskrit poets, Sri Aurobindo uses the images of flowers, sunshine, birds, etc., to bring out their physical charm. Iolaus proudly speaks of his sister when he tells her admirer to let “Our Andromeda’s delightful smile/Persuade thee of a world more full of beauty/Than thou hadst dreamed of.”¹ Diomedes says:

Here comes my little queen of love, stepping
As daintily as a young bird in spring
When he would take the hearts of all the forest.²

As for Rodogune, ‘She has roses in her pallor, but they are/ The memory of a blush

in ivory.’³ Dr. Srinivasa Iyengar rightly calls her ‘the haunting creature of beauty and romance and tragedy’. We get a series of images with reference to Aslaug:

Love! If it were this girl with antelope eyes
And the high head so proudly lifted up
Upon a neck as white as any swan’s!
But how to sway men’s hearts, rugged and hard
As Norway’s mountains, as her glaciers cold
To all but interest and power and pride?
Perhaps this stag-eyed woman comes for that,—
To teach me.⁴

Muazzim praises the beauty of Anice-Aljalice thus: ‘look at her! Allah be good to me!/you shall not find her equal from China to Frangistan’ and calls her a ‘non-pareil’. To Ibn Sawy, she is a wonder of creation:

’Tis marvellous,
And if her mind be equal to her body,
She is an emperor’s portion.⁵

And later he asks her:

What, is your mould indeed a thing of earth?
Peri, have you not come disguised from heaven
To snare us with your lovely smiles, you marvel?⁶

To quote the words of Professor M. V. Seetaraman on the women in this play :

To inspire love by their beauty of form and character in those who are capable of it is the greatest privilege of the women in the play who are all of them made in God’s image and grow increasingly in that image. The love they bestow on men and on each other draws out the best in all and acts for harmony, sweetness and light. But this passive radiation of love is not all their part in the comedy. They are gifted with an unfailing insight into the characters of men and the disposition and probable turn of events and those who could trust them are happy indeed, while those who flout them do come to ruin.⁷

Coming to Vasavadutta, we find Mahasegn quite sure of her conquest over Vuthsa Udayan with her beauty:

Invent some strong device and bring him to us

A captive in Ujjayinie's golden groves.
 Shall he not find there a jailer for his heart
 To take the miracle of its keys and wear them
 Swung on her raiment's border? Then he lives
 Shut up by her close in a prison of joy,
 Her and our vassal.⁸

Before meeting Vasavadutta, Vuthsa exclaims: 'A name of leaping sweetness I have heard! / One day I shall behold a marvellous face / And heaven's harps defeated by a voice.' After seeing her he confesses: 'All that I dreamed or heard of her, her charm/Exceeds.'

The love of these women for their respective lovers is born, in the typical romantic style, at first sight; but this love which is born instantaneously is firm through thick and thin, and there is again something Indian about their steadfast devotion to their lovers. In the case of Andromeda, it is even strange. It is a case of love even before the lovers meet each other. According to Diomedes, Andromeda has had a supernatural intimation about her lover:

Some power
 Divine sent her a dream of the bright strength
 Which shone by you on the sea-beach today,
 And him she calls her sungod.⁹

Andromeda's eagerness to see Perseus is very well brought out in her words to her brother:

...I want my sungod
 Whose face is like the grand Olympian Zeus'
 And wings are on his feet. Where did you leave him
 After you took him from our rough sea-beaches?¹⁰

Her strange love for Perseus is so great that there is a touch of jealousy in her remark to Diomedes when the latter says that she has seen the Divine messenger:

No, you have not.
 I'll not have any eyes see him but mine:
 He is my own, my very own.¹¹

On seeing Antiochus for the first time, Rodogune loses herself completely to him: 'He is all high and beautiful like heaven/ From which he came. I have not seen before/ A thing so mighty.' When Antiochus refuses to pander to the ego of Cleopatra, Rodogune is proud of him and says: 'Should he debase his godhead with a lie? / She is to blame and her unjust demand.' This reminds us of Kent's comment in *King Lear* (I. 1):

The youngest daughter does not love thee least:
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.

When Antiochus takes the fateful and fatal decision to go back to Alexandria, he asks Rodogune: 'Wouldst thou go back to Parthia, to thy country?' She spiritedly replies: 'I have no country, I have only thee./ I shall be where thou art; it is all I know./ And all I wish for.' Later when Antiochus is arrested, she tells Eunice: 'There is only one joy left:/ To be with him whether we live or die.' Professor Seetaraman effectively describes this progression in the love of Rodogune:

The progress of Rodogune consists in a change from her earlier philosophy and attitude of passive acceptance to a dynamic identification in psychic love with the personality of Antiochus. She has been a quiet and smooth-flowing stream before she met Antiochus and her contact with him is the union of the stream with the mighty river of his consciousness. The separate identity and the individuality of the tributary is lost from this great moment and its waters flow... The river has chosen to merge into the sea of the other world. Antiochus waits for his beloved 'behind Death's barrier'. No wonder that waters of life in Rodogune are drawn up to the other world. She falls dead at the feet of Antiochus.¹²

Aslaug also is charmed immediately by Eric's personality:

...How strange that look and tone
That things of a corporeal potency
Not only travel coursing through the nerves
But seem to touch the seated soul within!¹³—

and later: 'I cannot think. I have lost myself! My heart/ Desires eternity in an embrace.' The very interest of the play lies in the conflict between her love for Eric and her aim to kill him. Anice-Aljalice does not lag behind others in this respect. She is ready to share her Lord's sufferings as a devoted wife:

...Is my love then strong
Only for joy, only to share his heaven?
Can it not enter Hell for his dear sake?
How shall I follow him then after death,
If Heaven reject him? For the path's so narrow
Footing that judgement blade, to slip's so easy.
Avert the need, O Heaven.¹⁴

Vasavadutta's surrender to Vuthsa is more poetically described by Munjoolica:

Vuthsa, she loves thee as the half-closed bud
Thrills to the advent of a wonderful dawn
And like a dreamer half-awake perceives
The faint beginnings of a sunlit world.
Doubt not success more than that dawn must break;
For she is thine.¹⁵

Once she has become a rebel to her father's house her husband's honour is all important for her: 'I would not stain thy fame in arms, though over/ My house's head its wheels go trampling.'

Normally, Sri Aurobindo's young women are affectionate and obedient children, but in a crisis they do exhibit a will of their own and show an extraordinary firmness of mind. Andromeda has to fight for her love for Perseus, but she is the enlightened soul which prefers the new religion based on love to the old blood-thirsty one. She is a great figure of courage and independence of mind when she argues with her father:

Why, father, if you gave me a toy, you'd ask
What toy I liked! If you gave me a robe
Or vase, you would consult my taste in these!
Must I marry any cold-eyed crafty husband
I do not like?¹⁶

Later she comes with a more plain and firm declaration: '...If I must marry, then/ I'll marry my bright sungod! and none else/ In this wide world.' Later she shows the same determination in her efforts to release the prisoners from Polydaon. Her transformation from an innocent soft girl to a bold mature woman surprises one of the characters so much that she remarks: 'This was Andromeda and not Andromeda/ I never saw her woman till this hour.' Her revulsion for the old religion is made clear in many places in the play. For instance, in one context, she says: 'Is he a god who eats the flesh of men?' In another, she makes her view quite clear:

Then this I ask that thy great deeds may leave
Their golden trace on Syria. Let the dire cult
For ever cease and victims bleed no more
On its dark altar. Instead Athene's name
Spread over all the land and in men's hearts.
Then shall a calm and mighty Will prevail
And broader minds and kindlier manners reign
And men grow human, mild and merciful.¹⁷

Dr. Prema Nandakumar finds several layers of allegory in the character of Andromeda:

Andromeda is the symbol of total self-sacrifice and Perseus is the ideal hero-saviour of a nation in travail. An individual or nation striving against odds to rise to newer heights, and being helped by the answering Grace delegating its representative to the earth, is given a dramatic rendering in Perseus descending upon the coast of Syria to rescue Andromeda.¹⁸

Perseus the Deliverer was originally written for serialization in *Bande Mataram* and as such we have to read it in the context of the political situation of the early decade of this century. Hence, the character of Andromeda lends itself to a political interpretation as well:

The political atmosphere was such that Andromeda could be interpreted as Mother India in shackles crying out in distress for divine intervention. There were also those countless political prisoners who had welcomed imprisonment and suffering as the price they had to pay for their patriotism. These sacrifices of India's political prisoners demanded an epic. The hundreds who had wrecked their hearths and homes and had jumped into the fire of patriotic self-sacrifice could only be symbolized in the solitary figure chained to the rocks of the Syrian coast.¹⁹

Prema Nandakumar also observes: 'Andromeda, then, is the symbol of pity and love; she is, indeed, Sri Aurobindo's triumphant characterization of the Indian concept of Karuna.'

Rodogune is equally firm and bold in her determination to marry Antiochus. When Cleopatra says that she has to marry whom she is ordered to, Rodogune asks: 'Shall I be given to him as slave, not wife?' This makes Cleopatra exclaim: 'You rise, I think, too quickly with your fate./ Or art thou other than I saw or thou/ Feignedst to be? Hadst thou been all this while/ Only a mask of smooth servility,/ Thou subtle barbarian?'²⁰

Later, after the court scene, Rodogune expresses her determination in the words:

God gave me heart and mind; They are not hers
To force into this vile adultery.
I am a Parthian princess, of a race
Who choose one lord and cleave to him for ever
Through death, through fire, through swords, in hell, in heaven.²¹

Anice-Aljalice exhibits her mettle in her heated arguments with Almuene in Act III Scene 5. Vasavadutta, though a very obedient girl in the beginning to her parents,

proves her capacity for independent action when she goes away with Vuthsa.

Though all these characters share a number of common characteristics, each of them has an individuality of her own. For instance, there is a supernatural touch about Andromeda. As we have hinted, she sees Perseus in her dream even before she has a direct look at him. Her words run:

I dreamed my sun had risen
He had a face like the Olympian Zeus
And wings upon his feet. He smiled upon me,
Diomede.²²

In Andromeda's case there is also the direct intervention of Athene. Diomede, after this event, exclaims: 'What is this princess?/ What is this light around you? How are you altered, Andromeda?' Rodogune is a tragic figure who is haunted by a kind of premonition of doom. She declares:

I hope not to reign
Nor ever have desired ambitious joys,
Only the love that I have lacked so long
Since I left Parthia.²³

In another context, she remarks:

I trust the stars,
And mountains better. They were kind to me.
My blood within me chills when I look forward
And think of Antioch.²⁴

There is a ring of irony in her words: 'I shall behold him once again at dawn.' She does behold Antiochus, not as a man but as a corpse. Earlier she had warned him:

Touch me not, touch me not, Antiochus!
Son of Nicanor, spare me, spare thyself.
O me! I know the gods prepare some death;
I am a living misfortune.²⁵

Finally she falls dead at the feet of her lord crying: 'My king! My king! Leave me not, leave me not! I am behind thee.' Aslaug, the heroine of *Eric* is a kind of fatalist. When Eric asks by whom her lips were used to sing, she replies:

By Fate.
For she alone is prompter on our stage,
Things seen and unforeseen move by a doom,
Not freely. Eric's sword and Aslaug's song,

Music and thunder are but petty chords
Of one majestic harp. She builds, she breaks,
She thrones, she slays, as needed for her harmony.²⁶

When Eric asks her to dance in his chambers, she says: 'Thou art my Fate and I am in thy grasp.' On the other hand, Anice-Aljalice has a rich sense of humour. This humour, given a mischievously playful twist, makes the scene with Shaik Ibrahim very enjoyable and memorable. Vasavadutta not only combines beauty with grace of character, but is blessed by Fortune. Repeatedly she is called 'Luxmie' and her companion Munjoolica says:

What shall I say,
Except that thou art always fortunate,
Since first thy soft feet moved upon the earth,
O living Luxmie, beauty, wealth and joy
Run overpacked into thy days, and grandeurs
Unmeasured. Now the greatest king on earth
Is given thy servant.²⁷

We thus find that Sri Aurobindo with his dramatic instinct sees to it that his heroines do not lose their individuality and become indistinguishable from one another.

(To be continued)

M. N. SUNDARARAMAN

NOTES AND REFERENCES

Note: All the quotations from the Plays given in this paper are taken from Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Plays and Short Stories, Part One and Part Two*. (Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971) Vols. 6 and 7.

1. Sri Aurobindo, "Perseus the Deliverer", 6, 25.
2. *Ibid.*, 29.
3. Sri Aurobindo, "Rodogune", 6, 337.
4. Sri Aurobindo, "Eric," 6, 482.
5. Sri Aurobindo, "The Viziers of Bassora", 7, 584.
6. *Ibid.*, 584-585.
7. M. V. Seetaraman, *Studies in Sri Aurobindo's Dramatic Poems*, (Annamalaiagar, Annamalai University, 1964) pp. 26-27.
8. Sri Aurobindo, "Vasavadutta", 6, 213-214.
9. "Perseus the Deliverer", 39.
10. *Ibid.*, 39.
11. *Ibid.*, 30.
12. M. V. Seetaraman, *Op cit.*, pp. 11-12
13. "Eric", 502.
14. "The Viziers of Bassora", 653.

15. "Vasavadutta", 271.
16. "Perseus the Deliverer", 62.
17. *Ibid.*, 199.
18. Prema Nandakumar, "Perseus the Deliverer", in *Perspectives on Indian Drama in English*, ed. M. K. Naik and S. Mekashi-Punekar (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 17.
19. *Ibid.*, 17.
20. "Rodogune", 355.
21. *Ibid.*, 408.
22. "Perseus the Deliverer", 30.
23. "Rodogune", 356.
24. *Ibid.*, 428.
25. *Ibid.*, 381.
26. "Eric", 479.
27. "Vasavadutta", 261.

TOWARDS SUNRISE

A DREAM-VISION

Letter to Nolini

THE night before last I saw myself and many others on board a very large steamer. The steamer was sailing very fast and it was East-bound. The ocean water was light blue and very transparent. A boy jumped into the sea and I was told that he could not be rescued because of the very high speed of the vessel. Kindly throw some light.

19.8.81

Ravindra Khanna

’

Nolini's Comment

It was a voyage through the blue waves of the spirit—once you are in it, you are bound to it. Even if you want to jump out of it you fall in the same blue expanse. The steamer was sailing towards the rising sun.

THE SECRET OF THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

AN AUROBINDONIAN APPROACH

(Continued from the issue of October 1981)

Kacha and the Sanjivani Mantra

THE question which arises is: Where does Sukra figure in this remaking of the Vedic Aṅgīrasa myth? The full name of this great ṛṣi is *Kāvya Uśanā-Śukra*, each word of which carries a symbolic meaning. *Uśanā* has been used in the Ṛgveda in the sense of “aspiring” (X.70.9), “desiring” (VI.4.1) and “yearning” (VI.10.6)¹². These meanings would certainly be applicable to the name *Uśanā*.¹³ *Kāvya* is derived from *Kavi*, “seer of truth”, and means “inspired wisdom”¹⁴. *Śukra* is consistently used in the Ṛgveda in the sense of “brilliant flame” (V.21.4), “illuminated” (VIII.60.3) or “brilliant one” (I.127.2).¹⁵ This sage is, like Kacha, the son or grandson of Bṛhgu, the seer credited with the Promethean feat of bringing the Divine Flame to the world of mortals and diffusing it throughout the triple world of mind, life and body. *Śukra*, therefore, is also linked to the Divine Flame like Bṛhaspati or Aṅgīrasa. Indeed, while in V.11.6 the Aṅgīrasa Ṛṣis are said to have discovered Agni, this discovery is ascribed to the Bṛhgu in X.46.9. Sri Aurobindo suggests, “Very possibly the Aṅgīrasa Ṛṣis are the flame-powers of Agni and the Bṛhgu the solar powers of Surya.”¹⁶ Thus, we can conclude that *Śukra*, standing for the brilliant solar truth, represents the Vedic goal of the world of the Sun-Truth towards which Kacha, the Aṅgīrasa-flame, strides through the mystic path helped by the *devas*.¹⁷ It is also in keeping with the theme of the recovery of the Sun from within the nether darkness, which is the Aṅgīrasa-myth, that *Śukra* should dwell among the Asuras. The Asura king *Vṛṣaparva* is the Vyāsan equivalent of the Vedic Vala, just as Kacha is the counterpart of the Vedic Bṛhaspati in mastering the Word of Creation of Knowledge.

The repeated killing of Kacha and his ritualistic resurrection culminating in the gift of the knowledge of immortality at the mystic third instance, is also pregnant with symbolism. This is linked to the central Vedic concept of the *yajña* being a self-sacrifice, an inner offering of all that one is, which turns the sacrifice into a journey towards the gods fraught with struggle against the obstructing powers of darkness. This is close to the ordeal of Odin in the *Elder Edda*¹⁸ for obtaining occult wisdom:

I know that I hung, on a wind-rocked tree, nine whole nights, with a spear wounded, and to Odin offered, myself to myself; on that tree, of which no one knows from what root it springs.

Bread no one gave me, nor a horn of drink, downward I peered, to runes applied myself, wailing learnt them, then fell down thence—and a draught obtained of the precious mead, drawn from Odhraerir.

Then I began to bear fruit, and to know many things, to grow and well thrive;
word by word I sought out words, fact by fact I sought out facts.

It will be seen that there is the same emphasis on the mystic knowledge hidden in the mantra or runes in the Veda and the Edda, which can be obtained only through a process of self-sacrifice. The material consciousness (the body and the tree) has to be pierced by the dart of divine knowledge first, which releases the precious mead or nectar (Soma) to be drunk by the entire being, then reaches the heights of the supreme plane Truth, Light and Bliss, and fructifies each of the seven-fold levels of consciousness and being in the aspirant to the fullness of its potentialities. The very close connection between Odin and Indra/Agni is revealed through the very name of the cosmic tree on which Odin hangs: Yggdrasill. This is compounded of *Yggr*, Odin's appellative as "Awe-inspirer" or "Terrifier", and *Drasill*, the horse¹⁹, which recalls the Vedic *aśva* and *vāji*, symbols of Agni as the steed of Indra, the awesome thunderer of the realm of Pure Mind with his thunderbolt of the Word of Truth. There are several more such similarities in the Norse and Vedic concepts. For instance, Odin's eight-legged horse Sleipnir and Indra's Uccaiṣravas; the immortalising mead prepared from the blood of the wise giant Kvasir mixed with honey, recalling the link between *madhu* and *Soma* and Kacha being mixed in wine; the myth of the giant Sultung spiriting away the mead and hiding it within a mountain which Odin enters in the form of a snake through a hole and escapes as an eagle after drinking up the mead in three draughts to spit it out in Asgard, recalling the Vedic symbol of Soma hidden within the mountain by the titan powers; Uttāṅka's entering the nether world through a hole dug with Indra's help, and Garuḍa's and Gāyatri's bringing of Soma/amṛita in three pressings. Again, the Spring of Mimir, which gives the gift of foresight and inspiration, and for a drink from which Odin gives an eye, lies beneath the root of Yggdrasill just as the Sun-Truth is hidden at the base of the hill of being within the case of inconscience and is found there by Indra. Toynbee (in his abridgement of *A Study of History*, p. 371) provides a remarkable confirmation of Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the Vedic myths in the context of Occidental mythology. He points out that the ubiquitous master-myth of the barbarians describes the hero's victorious fight with a monster for rescuing a treasure which the unearthly enemy is withholding from mankind in order to devour it or to hoard it for his own bestial satisfaction, e.g. Beowulf and Grendel—Siegfried and the dragon—Perseus, Medusa, Andromeda and the sea-monster—Jason, the Golden Fleece and the dragon—Herakles and the kidnapping of Cerberus. It is obvious how akin this is to the Vedic symbol of Vala, Vṛitra and the Paṇis and the Aryan striver's fight with them for recovering the herds of the Sun and the waters of heaven, etc. Toynbee goes on to remark that this barbarian myth looks like a projection, on to the outer world, of a psychological struggle in the soul of rescuing man's rational will or his power of self-determination from the abyss of non-volitional unconscious forces (what Sri Aurobindo describes as the powers of Inconscience or the Subconscient which Vṛitra *et al.* symbolise).

Toynbee, of course, applies this to the historical phenomenon of the barbarian's passage from the relative security of life beyond the 'limes' to the world of uncharted experience which is the crumbling civilisation, and this passage is a shattering experience for the barbarian which brings into the open the inner struggle portrayed in his myths.

It is worth while examining the role played by Uśanā Kāvya in the Ṛgveda. In I.51.10, 121.12 and V.34.2 he is credited with giving Indra the mighty thousand-pointed weapon to slay Vṛitra. In V.29.9, 31.8 and X.22.6 he comes to men along with Indra and the gods to assail the dark powers and overthrow them. It is in I.52.45, VIII.23.17 and IX.87.3 that the precise nature of Uśāña's functioning is brought out:²⁰

First the Angirasas won themselves vital power whose/ fires were kindled through good deeds and sacrifice/. The men together found the Pani's hoarded wealth, the/ cattle, the wealth in horses and in kine./ Atharvan first by sacrifices laid the paths; then,/ guardian of the Law, sprang up the loving Sun./ Uśanā Kāvya straightway hither drove the kine. Let us/ with offerings honour Yama's deathless birth.

*

Uśanā Kāvya stablished thee, O Agni, as Invoking Priest:
Thee, Jātavedas, Sacrificing Priest for man.

*

Rishi and Sage, the Champion of the people, deft and sagacious,
Uśanā in wisdom,
He hath discovered even their hidden nature, the Cows'
concealed and most mysterious name.

In Vvāsa, also, it is Kacha—Aṅgīrasa who first prepared the divine pathway through his long and devoted selfless service, the very nature of which is a total selflessness in the service of Devayānī. This is succeeded by Śukra guiding the herds of supernal knowledge, along with his disciple, to their Solar home. This is the "deathless birth" of the Sun of Truth in Kacha, the discovery of the secret and esoteric "name" of the ray-cows. Sukra is very akin to Bṛihaspati in his establishing of Agni as *jātavedah*, the knower of all births i.e. of all the worlds or planes of consciousness and being (matter-*bhūr*, Life-energy-*bhuvar*, Mind-*sva*, Truth-consciousness-*maha*s and Beatitude-*ṛjāna*), possessing all forms and activities of divine wisdom.²¹ It is by the establishing of this Agni within the sacrificer by uttering the inspired Word that the crucial transition can be made from the sphere of the three lower Vyāhritis (Sva, Bhuvar and Bhūr or Dyau, Antarikṣa and Pṛithivī) to the world of Truth (Ma-

har), where the mind is transformed into a divine Light as the supermind (I.77).²²

An extremely significant adjunct to the Kacha-Śukra myth has been referred to by Dange²³ as occurring in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (I.125-127). Seeing that the gods are unable to beat the asuras, Indra approaches the gandharva Trisirṣa who knows the secret of the asuras' success. He obtains the secret by overhearing the gandharva's wife putting the question to her husband, and his reply that the victor will be the one who approaches the other for aid. Indra then approaches Uśanā Kāvya and proffers the cows of Virochana as the incentive for changing sides. Uśanā agrees, and flees with Indra pursued by the asuras. At Indra's behest, Uśanā intones a ṛik which protects them and enables them to go up to the gods. This ṛik lauds Indu or Soma and urges him to stream forth and destroy the wicked, protect the gods, and function as the supporter of heaven and the prop of the earth, all Vedic echoes.

Indra's role here is that of Kacha, and we have a hint of Devayāni in the gandharva's wife who is motivated by Indra to find out the secret from her husband. Uśanā, like Vyāsa's Śukra, uses a mantra against the Asuras to nullify their acts and achieves "the immortal world of the Gandharvas among the gods",²⁴ instead of gifting the secret of the immortalising mantra to another. What Vyāsa seems to have done—since the Brāhmaṇa account would preserve more of the original Vedic myth—is to replace Indra or Bṛihaspati by his favourite brahmachārī hero (in the tradition on Uttanka, Upamanyu and Āruṇi), create a romantic sub-plot to capture the audience's attention, and remodel the original symbolic structure into one portraying the climactic type of preceptor-disciple relationship which he has been delineating in the Pausya Parva episodes.

(To be continued)

PRADIP BHATTACHARYA

NOTES

12. Purani: Vedic Glossary, *op. cit.*, p. 169
13. That is why Sri Aurobindo glosses the name as "Soul of desire".
14. *The Secret of the Veda* p. 181.
15. Purani, *ibid.*, p. 374.
16. *The Secret of the Veda*, *op. cit.*
17. "Rishis like Ushanas Kavya have become types and symbols of certain spiritual experiences and victories" (*ibid.*, p. 154).
18. J. W. Perry. *Lord of the Four Quarters* (Collier Books, 1970), p. 187
19. *Op. cit.*, p. 186.
20. Griffith, *op. cit.*, pp. 52, 414, 510.
21. *The Secret of the Veda*, *op. cit.*, p. 271
22. *ibid.*, p. 265.
23. *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.
24. Dange, *op. cit.*, p. 166

THE WORLD "OUT THERE" AND QUANTUM MECHANICS

I

In the *Scientific American* (New York) of November 1979, an absorbing article both detailed and wide-sweeping, "The Quantum Theory and Reality", by Bernard d'Espagnat, clarifies the import of some recent developments in Quantum Mechanics. It tends to bear rather decisively on an old controversy between Einstein and Bohr over the ultimate concept of Reality called for by scientific experiment and interpretation. The summing-up is in favour of Bohr: "...the recent work under discussion here has shown that in these matters he was closer to the truth than Einstein was."¹

The Copenhagen physicist's refutation of Einstein is said to be "founded on a strange indivisibility of the system of particles and the instruments of observation".² We are further told that "it was possible until a few years ago to believe in an independent, external reality" but that now "most particles or aggregates of particles that are ordinarily regarded as separate objects... in some sense... constitute an indivisible whole".³ The conclusion drawn is: "Perhaps in such a world the concept of an independently existing reality can retain some meaning, but it will be an altered meaning and one remote from everyday experience."⁴ What, in Bernard d'Espagnat's eyes, is likely to be seriously modified "is the intuitive notion that the world outside the self is real and has at least some properties that exist independently of human consciousness."⁵

A generalisation of the article's drift is sought to be framed in the short editorial introduction: "The doctrine that the world is made up of objects whose existence is independent of human consciousness turns out to be in conflict with quantum mechanics and with facts established by experiment."⁶

A bit of undue sensationalism is here at work and a number of basic issues mixed up by an encroachment of scientific speculation on philosophic thought. We may briefly attempt to disentangle the discussion and render unto the Caesar of quantum theory and unto the God of philosophy the things that are properly theirs.

2

What are "the instruments of observation" from which "the system of particles" is said to be "indivisible"—according to Bohr?

The instruments are a combination of two kinds: (1) the physical ones which "give the position of a pointer on a dial"⁷ providing what Eddington has called

¹ Pp. 177-78, cols. 3. ² P. 180, col. 3. ³ P. 181, col. 1. ⁴ *Ibid*
⁵ P. 177, col. 1. ⁶ P. 158. ⁷ P. 165, col. 2.

“pointer-readings”; (2) the physiologico-psychological instrument that is the physicist observing these data with his conscious senses.

If Bohr is right, the former cannot be divided from the subatomic world which they may be said to observe by recording on their dial the interaction between them and that world. But the physicist, the human observer, is always divided from his physical instruments. Without the assumption of such a division, there can be no physics at all, either Einsteinian relativity theory or Bohrian quantum mechanics. The ordinary world of realism, involving this division, is indispensable for the world of physics to be extraordinary—“one remote from everyday experience”. For, Bohr as much as Einstein has to proceed by “pointer-readings”.

Hence, ultimately, the question of determining whether there is or there is not “an independently existing reality” is beyond the inquiry of physics. It is a problem belonging to philosophy and hinging on the relation we ascertain between the sensing consciousness and “matter”. The only valid question for physics is: “Can the physical instruments which give ‘pointer-readings’ of ‘the system of particles’ yield results which can be regarded as pertaining to this system independently of whatever action the physical instruments have on the measured system?”

As the article¹ informs us, the answer by Einstein no less than by Bohr is that no such results are possible: where Einstein differed from Bohr is simply in postulating “hidden parameters” in the microscopic domain for the sake of what he considered the logical completeness of the scientific picture which, in his view, demands finally a description in causal or deterministic terms rather than in terms of probability as in present-day quantum mechanics. But, even to arrive at the above unanimous answer, physics has to proceed on the divisibility of the human observer from the measuring instruments. The measuring instruments with their “position of a pointer on a dial” have to be taken as existing “out there” and as being—for the purposes of physics—what they are observed to be in an independent world.

The common-sense world is inevitably the basis for arriving at the uncommon-sense concept which microphysics *à la* Bohr finds inevitable.

This concept has no bearing in the least on “the doctrine that the world is made up of objects whose existence is independent of human consciousness”. It has a bearing solely on the relation between the measuring instruments and the subatomic system.

AMAL KIRAN

¹ P. 158, col. 1.

THE SPACE SHUTTLE*

THE recent sending of a Space Shuttle into outer space by NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) in the U.S.A. has been hailed the world over as a further landmark in man's exploration of the universe. So you may all be eager to know what this Space Shuttle is and in what way it signifies an advancement on the earlier achievements of Science in space exploration. I shall endeavour to explain this briefly.

But before we look at the Space Shuttle in detail, let us ask why man is exploring space.

Every payload (scientific, research and industrial material) sent into orbit in the first two decades of the space era rode on the nose of a rocket which was discarded after a working lifetime measured in minutes. These ventures into space were costly no doubt, but they sent back startling news of the universe and brought countless changes in the ways of our lives. The first was a revolution in communication.

Development in this field led to the use of satellites for exchange of telephone calls, business data, and also TV signals, between two distant places. Research satellites transmitted educational programs and medical instructions *via* low cost receiving stations to isolated villages. They also showed the usefulness of space in searching for lost aircraft and disabled ships.

The second important use of space is that of weather observation. Satellites have been taking photos of the earth daily since 1966. No tropical storm has escaped detection, nor has any flood been missed. This has helped in saving thousands of dollars and millions of lives. Satellites have also helped in updating maps and navigational charts. There are, of course, many other uses of space.

Between the 1960's and the 1970's, NASA spent a lot of money on space programs which consisted of scientific explorations of the solar system and of demonstrations that man could live and work in space. Increasingly complex labs, from the early explorers to the almost human Vikings, were used for observing Venus, Jupiter and even for testing Martian soil for past or present life.

If so much was done using the conventional rockets, which were expendable and the results obtained satisfactory, why was a different kind of vehicle necessary?

The Space Shuttle is an absolutely different kind of vehicle compared to the usual conventional rockets. It can be used over and over again and thus reduce the cost of putting payloads into orbit. Since it has a large capacity of carrying more load than the conventional rockets, the cost of launching is reduced further.

The shuttle has another unique use—that of checking satellites in the orbit itself and repairing them in space or if necessary bringing them back to earth for overhauling. Example : Apple, India's satellite, could have its solar cell panel repaired by the astronauts in the shuttle, while they are in space to do other jobs.

* A speech delivered on 26 June 1981 on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Science Laboratory of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

Satellites could also be updated in space as technology advances, increasing their performance and prolonging their usefulness or else, if necessary, they could be brought back to earth for refurbishment and re-use, with the help of the shuttle.

Another major advantage of using the shuttle is that of sending scientists and engineers into space to get first-hand results of experiments conducted in space. This could have been possible with conventional spacecrafts but the advantage of the shuttle is that the scientists could work in what is known as the "shirt-sleeves" condition, that is, under atmospheric pressure in space; this eliminates their undergoing rigorous training which an astronaut has to undergo.

The shuttle has other unique virtues. It can be prepared for launch on relatively short notice and thus could carry out a rescue mission—one orbiter bringing back the crew of another orbiter stranded in space. It does not require any elaborate or costly procedure at sea to recover the crew after a mission as in past manned flights.

Although the payload bay has a large volume and is open for anybody to send payloads into orbit, it is reserved for research purposes only. Some persons approached NASA for sending, into space, chunks of metal or postal stamps which could later sell as souvenirs and bring good profits, but such commercial gimmicks were not and will not be allowed.

One more question that arises is: what can we expect in the growth of the abilities and the extensions of the shuttle? We can expect a lot.

One of the immediate plans is to put into orbit a remote controlled telescope which weighs 22500 lbs. and which will enable astronomers to see 14 billion light years (7 times farther than the biggest earth-bound reflector) and help them solve some riddles of the universe. Another immediate plan is to put into orbit what is known as the "Spacelab", which unlike the Skylab will be re-usable. It is also known as the "Space Train", because of the fact that it looks like a train when other labs or "pallets" are attached to one another, like wagons to an engine. A pallet is an instrument-carrying platform that exposes materials to the space environment. The Spacelab is a pressurized cylinder 4 metres in diameter and 7 meters in length. It is fully equipped and wholly air-conditioned. It can be attached to the orbiter by means of a pressurized tunnel so that the payload specialists—scientists conducting experiments aboard the lab—can live in the orbiter when off-duty. Astronauts can go out of the lab, of course in space-suits, by means of an airlock and service the equipment on the pallets or else—this may sound like science fiction—go into space, that is, fly out into space, using propelling rockets attached to their backs to reach nearby satellites which may be sensitive to perturbation or contamination by the orbiter's or the lab's thrusters.

What will be the uses of the Spacelab? The Spacelab will be used to study the sun, solar winds, comets, novae, high energy radiation from distant regions in the universe and also to conduct experiments in space concerning the processing of biological and industrial products, the effects that space has on human beings, plants, animals and cells.

Other dreams that the NASA planners have are: a multibeam communications satellite serving thousands of small receivers on the earth known as wrist telephones; an electronic mail system—instantaneous facsimile transmissions of letters, documents, etc. through satellites. There are plans to build in space a 5gigawatts power generator using solar energy with dimensions in 100's of meters. These structures could be rather flimsy but they will not collapse due to the weightlessness of space. The power generated could be beamed to the earth in the form of microwaves which could be collected by large antennas and be converted into AC for distribution.

NASA wants to introduce into space what it calls a "teleoperator", a robot tractor for moving large objects around in space. Scientists also want to try growing in space crystals for manufacturing electronic "chips"—tiny electronic semi-conductor wafers, which are the heart of modern-day electronics. Space-made chips will be bigger and more uniform than the ones made on the earth because the crystals grown in space will not be affected by their weight as they form and thus they would be large and flawless. There is also a feeling that high purity glass, new alloys and higher-yield vaccines could be produced in the orbit. Liquids could be mixed and solidified without the heavier ones separating from the lighter ones, as on earth due to gravity. Space could be used for military purposes also: devices planted in the heavens could guide missiles to a bull's-eye on earth.

One of the most fantastic dreams, typically American, is that of a NASA consultant who sees a 100-room hotel in space by the year 2000 for a family wanting to spend a vacation in space. A group of engineers, architects, physical and social scientists have, it seems, already designed a city in space for 1 lakh inhabitants.

Are these all dreams? Time alone will tell. Decades from now, some of these ideas may seem innocently unrealistic. But it is also possible that some will be astonishingly timid forays limited by imagination. There may be as much chance of under-shooting as of over-shooting in the prediction of the topography of the future. What we are interested in are not measurements. Equally important, if not more, is another kind of thrust—the questing human spirit.

But perhaps the greatest gift from the pioneers of space to men, women and children of all nations was a new view of their home planet. As President Carter expressed it:

"We went to the moon, in part as a national pride. But when we got there, we discovered something very interesting. Through the eyes of the cameras of the astronauts, we looked back at the earth, above the strange horizon of the moon in a pitch black sky we saw our own world as a single delicate globe of swirling blue and white, green, brown. From the perspective of space our planet has no national boundaries. It is very beautiful, but it is also very fragile. It is our special responsibility to the human race to preserve it. Of all the things we have learnt from our explorations of space, none has been more important than this perception of the essential unity of our world."

Man has done so much and will be doing so much more to conquer physical

space and the physical universe. But are these ventures into space the essential gains that mankind is striving for? No. There is something else which is more needful to us. As Sri Aurobindo says:

“The utmost widening of a physical objective knowledge, even if it embrace the most distant solar systems and the deepest layers of the earth and sea and the most subtle powers of material substance and energy, is not the essential gain for us, not the one thing which is most needful for us to acquire. That is why the gospel of materialism, in spite of the dazzling triumphs of physical Science, proves itself always in the end a vain and helpless creed, and that too is why physical Science itself with all its achievements, though it may accomplish comfort, can never achieve happiness and fullness of being for the human race.”¹

RAMESH AMIN

¹ *The Life Divine* Centenary Edition, Vol. 18, p. 720

THE FAIRIES' QUARREL

A TALE FOR CHILDREN

IN the days when the earth was just made and still young there were fairies who looked after the countryside. There was a Fairy of the Plains who cared for the plants and animals who lived in the plains and a Fairy of the Hills who cared for all the living things in the hills.

One day they met.

"Good day, Fairy of the Hills," said the Fairy of the Plains.

"Good day," replied the Hills Fairy. "What are you doing?"

"I'm mending the broken wing of a kingfisher," said the Fairy of the Plains. "What are you doing?"

"I'm planting rhododendrons," replied the Hills Fairy. "How beautiful my hills will look when all the rhododendrons are in flower!"

"My plains look beautiful always," said the Plains Fairy. "I have banana trees and big lazy rivers."

"No, no," said the Fairy of the Hills. "My hills are always more beautiful than your plains."

"What are you talking about?" asked the Plains Fairy angrily. "My plains are always more lovely than your hills."

So they argued until the Great Wizard heard them and came to see what the trouble was.

"She says her hills are more beautiful than my plains," said the Plains Fairy.

"And she says her plains are lovelier than my hills," said the Hills Fairy.

"Now, now," said the Great Wizard soothingly, "You waste so much time quarrelling when you should be working, my children. So many trees must be planted and so many animals must be fed. Both the hills and the plains are very pretty. Does that satisfy you?"

"No," said both fairies together. "We must know which is prettier."

"All right," said the Great Wizard, "To stop you from quarrelling I will stay one year in the Plains and one year in the Hills."

"Thank you," said the fairies.

So the Great Wizard spent one year in the plains. During the winter the plains were carpeted with roses, carnations and dahlias, but during the summer all the plants went brown and died. The Great Wizard had four baths a day and stayed inside the house as it was too hot to go out.

After a year the Great Wizard went to the hills. During the summer the hills were a mass of blossoms and birds sang in the trees, but when winter came snow fell, the birds flew away and leaves fell from the trees. The Great Wizard's hands went blue with cold and he wore his warmest gown.

After that year he called the fairies to him.

"Now," he said smiling, "I find that the plains are more beautiful in winter because the hills are too cold then."

"There you are," said the Plains Fairy triumphantly.

"But," said the Great Wizard, "I find that during the summer the hills are more beautiful than the plains as the plains are too hot then. You must apologise to each other."

"I'm sorry," said each fairy and they all shook hands.

"I shall spend my winter in the plains," said the Plains Fairy. "But during the summer I shall visit you, Fairy of the Hills."

"Please come," said the Hills Fairy. "And I shall visit you in the winter as the hills will be too cold then."

JANET SINHA

THE LORD OF HORSES

A NOVELLA

(Continued from the issue of October 1981)

9 (Contd.)

I LOOKED up. Just above us a strange iron bumble-bee was desperately flying. And it was flying very low. There was a man sitting inside the iron bumble-bee who seemed to be its guide. He wore a large hat and a chequered shirt. I could see neither his legs nor his boots nor the spurs with the big rowels. But I guessed at once that he was a cow-boy and that the cow-boy was Fat Rock. Because I saw his cheeks. Rather his two mounds of fat. And a kind of cruel joy puffed them up. And Fat Rock was laughing inside his iron bumble-bee. His mouth revealed two rows of shining cruel teeth.

Beaten, broken down and bruised, I looked at this fat man in a daze. I saw him fly a few metres away from me and laugh with all his teeth. And I saw the mustangs disperse, flee, gallop away at full speed towards the rocks, towards the pepper-coloured canyons. And behind the rocks, the setting sun smeared the sky into a lake of blood.

And I knew that my robe was as besmeared with blood. I smelt the blood, I breathed in its faint smell, I felt my wounds throb like numberless little raving hearts in flames.

Goldie had decamped with the others. For her I had fought. Fought like a wolf, like a wild tiger. And Goldie had left me alone to battle with this fat flying cow-boy.

And I remained immobile and bleeding, waiting for Fat Rock's swoop, waiting for him to crush me with his cantankerous iron bumble-bee. I knew despair for the first time in my life.

And then, all of a sudden, the noise of the iron bumble-bee redoubled. And I saw a yellow truck emerge in the desert. It was moving across the pepper-coloured landscape and moving very fast, rumbling over bumps and hollows. And on the truck there were about half a dozen men with big hats, wearing chequered shirts and boots that had rowels fixed onto them.

And I said to myself that Fat Rock had thrown a hunting party for his friends. Mustang-hunting. And that they did not have to look far to find mustangs. Our own feud, our neighs of wrath and of pain had quickly put them on the right track.

All said and done, I was their principal victim. I who had fought against my own brothers to uphold the honour of a mare. Everyone had betrayed me, abandoned me. Child of Drinker of Air and Daughter of the Wind I was condemned to become a domesticated horse, a horse tormented, goaded by a fat cow-boy who weighed 226 pounds.

I started. No, it was not possible. No, I will not let myself be captured by Fat Rock and his friends. And gathering up all my energies, I began to gallop in a zigzag. The yellow truck now had lights that stared at me. The iron bumble-bee became

uglier in the darkened sky.

Forgetting my wounds, forgetting my despair, I galloped. I fled, I swirled, I dodged my pursuers.

And the iron bumble-bee rumbled just above my head. I felt my mane fly in the wind roused by the propeller. The truck rushed towards me. But I slipped out of its way. Once again it pitched and now I could see the cow-boys floundering and tumbling down. But I kept galloping.

And on the yellow truck the invited guests of Fat Rock fretted and moved desperately in all directions. They decided then to capture me with the help of a lasso. And each one got his lasso out and flung it at me. None of the lassos came near me. The noose went whizzing past me. But sometimes the lassos did hit my flanks or my croupe and sometimes even the head. But they could never engirdle my legs or my neck. I was unseizable. The cow-boys got more and more exasperated. Their lassos would fly haphazardly. And from his iron bumble-bee Fat Rock screamed and encouraged his invitees. His voice resounded in the desert and in the night. He was screaming:

"C'mon fellas. Git dat 'un, yeah git dat grey 'un."

But I was now heading for the rocks that bordered the canyon. And the yellow truck kept after me. I could hear its motor roar, the cow-boys stumble and fall and curse one another, and I could hear Fat Rock still shouting:

"C'mon fellas, git dat grey'un. C'mon fellas."

And then suddenly the truck collided against a rock. It upturned in a shattering noise. The cow-boys were brutally thrown out onto the ground. And they started to yell and to swear even louder. The iron bumble-bee flew over the catastrophe. And Fat Rock's voice still resounded. But then the noise of a huge explosion muffled his voice altogether. And I saw flames shoot up from the yellow truck. And the iron bumble-bee came down onto the ground. And the cow-boys were still yelling, they were still cursing one another. And Fat Rock's voice echoed through the canyons:

"Now QUIET, QUIET."

And meanwhile I scuttled towards the rocks and the canyon. I wanted to find the mustangs, make peace with Copper and Silver. I wanted to tell them:

"I forgive you for having struck me. And I forgive you for having abandoned me."

And I wanted to tell Goldie:

"I forgive your deserting me. Because you are a mare. And you are weak. And because one must forgive mares for their weakness."

But the mustangs did not think like me. They wanted neither peace nor forgiveness. When I finally found them across three barriers of rocks, I was standing in front of a fourth barrier and this was a living barrier, it was a barrier of horses. Copper and Silver declared:

"Go away, Said. You're the horse of misfortune. We don't want you around."

And they told me that Goldie had been captured. She had been captured at the very outset of the attack. A cow-boy had climbed onto her back. And they had disappeared, whip and spur, in the direction of Fat Rock's ranch.

"Well," I said, "I will go and deliver Goldie."

And without waiting for the mustangs' answer, I left in the direction of Fat Rock's ranch. I crossed once again the three barriers of rocks. The yellow truck meanwhile still flickered like a fading torch. Then suddenly another truck came into my view. It was a blue truck. And the cow-boys had climbed onto it. But there was no sign of the iron bumble-bee hovering above the scene of the catastrophe. Fat Rock had certainly returned to his ranch, and was most probably organising a feast to celebrate the capture of Goldie.

For two hours I stood in the night alone to watch the yellow truck burn. I did not wish to risk meeting cow-boys on Fat Rock's land. I wanted to wait till Fat Rock's feast had made them all drunk. And when they would all be drunk, then I would be able to go and deliver Goldie.

My wounds were painful. But I didn't care. I wanted to find Goldie and free her. And also because I had something else in mind. I wanted to run away with Goldie out of Nevada and, with her, found a family. This family would become an altogether new race. And I started dreaming. I imagined Goldie caracoling with her natural grace, in another country, perhaps in the pampas of Paraguay about which the mustangs of Nevada had spoken to me. And Goldie and I, we would have foals and fillies. Some of them would have silver-grey coats, like the blade of a dagger. And some would have coats the colour of red pepper.

The moment then came to start looking for Goldie. I was on my way to Fat Rock's ranch. And I had to be most cautious. As soon as I heard a noise, I stopped. I would find a boulder or a tree to hide behind. Otherwise I lay down on the grass.

I crossed Fat Rock's territory without any difficulty. The cows did not notice me on the way. And the cow-boys did not notice me either. Because they still drank at Fat Rock's ranch.

From afar I saw the lights shine in the house. The cow-boys were singing and shouting in the porch. Some were talking about me. One was saying:

"Now, where do you figger this fantastic grey horse comes from?"

"I've never seen the like of 'im before," remarked another.

"You know something, buddies, he ain't a horse. It's the Devil," said still another.

I did not listen any further. I had something else to do. I approached the stables. From close I saw through the half-open door several boxes. And these boxes were all occupied by horses. The cow-boys' horses, I presumed. A little further down was a grange. And the grange's door was closed. But still I could hear very funny music coming from that direction. I approached the grange and with my muzzle opened the door slightly.

Goldie lay there more beautiful than ever in that strange argent light that filled part of the grange. I saw her stretched on a big stable-litter listening intently to the same music that I had heard from outside. And this music was emanating from a little box. Her attention was as passionately caught by a bigger box in front of her on which pictures of men and horses moved and changed, appeared and disappeared,

talked and danced and fought. Beside her was placed a large trough full of oats, a huge bucket full of water and a heap of carrots and maize. And then I noticed on the saddle-stand a saddle in yellow leather studded with silver nails. And from this silver saddle hung silver stirrups. A little away there hung a bridle and a bit. The reins of the bridle were in yellow leather too. The bit was of silver.

On the stable-litter Goldie stretched voluptuously to the sound of that strange music, her eyes fixed on the bigger box. Her mane was paler than the straw and her peanut-coloured eyes shone sprightly and happy.

"Goldie," I said. "It's me Saïd."

Goldie's eyes glistened even more now.

"Saïd, oh what good luck," she answered. "So you too let yourself be captured by the cow-boys?"

"Are you mad, Goldie? I did no such thing. I am free and I have come to free you too."

"Saïd, you can just forget about that," Goldie answered petulantly.

Then she rose. And her nostrils quivered. And her peanut-coloured eyes became black.

"I'll never return to the mustangs. 'Cause I'm fed up with the mustangs of Nevada. I prefer the company of cow-boys."

"But you shan't have to go back to the mustangs, Goldie. Neither will I. We will both run away. I will take you to the pampas of Paraguay. We will live there in freedom and in happiness. We will have many foals and fillies. And it will be our family."

"No," Goldie retorted.

She had retreated to the end of the grange. The music was becoming more and more violent. But more violent than that was the music in my heart.

"Goldie, please come with me," I beseeched. "We will be so very happy in the pampas of Paraguay."

"Go away, Saïd. I don't want to go to the pampas of Paraguay."

"But I love you, Goldie."

"Saïd, go away. I don't want to go. I don't love you. I will never love you. I want to live with the cow-boys."

Saying this she shook her mane, her blond mane.

And the music was becoming unbearably loud now.

I started moving back. And then I closed the door of the grange. I closed the door on the most cruel and insensible mare in the world. And I ran away, my heart filled with shame.

(To be continued)

CHRISTINE & ARCHAKA

(Translated by Maurice from the original French)