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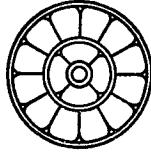
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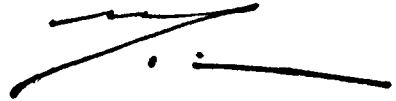


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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Vol. XXXIV

No. 2

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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

(Concluded from the issue of January 1982)

Editor's Note

THIS month's instalment, consisting of a long passage and a short piece, is the last one of the earliest version of *Savitri*. But all of it cannot be called "first fair copy". The long passage was found in the notebook from which Sri Aurobindo had transcribed what we have published so far. It is the closing speech of the Supreme and the conclusion of the narrative. It seems to have been written before the passages which were planned to connect it with our January instalment. The punctuation was very sparse. We added or subtracted many signs to suit the needs of the various changes made by the poet in the course of his revisions. Our guide in the punctuation has been the final version of 1950 (Vol. 29 of the Centenary Edition).

The short piece is part of the projected Epilogue. It is taken from the second of the two exercise books containing the first fair copy.

SÂVITHRÎ

BOOK II

(Continued)

Concluding Passage

"Because thou hast rejected my great¹ calm
I lay upon thy neck my mighty yoke
And hold thee without refuge from my will.
Now will I do by thee my glorious works
Giving thee for reward and punishment 5
Myself in thee a sweetness and a scourge.
Unsheltered by dividing walls [of mind]²,
Naked of ignorance' protecting veil
And without covert from my³ radiant gods
Thou shalt be hunted through the world by love. 10
No form shall screen thee from divine desire,
Nowhere shalt thou escape my living eyes.
A vision shall compel thy coursing breath.
Thy heart shall drive thee on the wheel of time;
Thy mind shall urge thee through the flames of thought, 15

¹ Alternative: far

² These two words cancelled without substitution.

³ Written over "the", or *vice versa*.

To meet me in the abyss and on the heights,
 To feel me in the tempest and the calm
 And love me in the noble and the vile,
 In beautiful things and terrible desire.
 My fiercest masks shall my attractions bring, 20
 Music shall find thee in the voice of swords,
 Beauty pursue thee through the core of flame.
 The pains of hell shall be to thee my kiss,
 The flowers of heaven persuade thee with my touch,
 The [myriad]¹ forces of my universe 25
 Shall cry to thee the summons of my name.
 Thou shalt know me in the rolling of the spheres,
 Thou shalt meet me in the atoms of the whirl.
 Delight shall drip down from my nectarous moon,
 My fragrance seize thee in the jasmine's snare, 30
 My eye shall look upon thee from the sun.
 Mirror of Nature's secret spirit made,
 Thou shalt not shrink from any brother soul
 But live attracted helplessly to all,
 Drawn to me on the bosom of thy friend 35
 And forced to love me in thy enemy's eyes.
 Thou shalt drink down my sweetness unalloyed
 And bear my ruthless beauty unabridged
 Amid the world's intolerable wrongs,
 Mid the long discord and the clash of search, 40
 Thou shalt discover the one and quivering note
 And be the harp of all its melodies
 And be my splendid wave in seas of love.
 Insistent, careless of thy lonely right,
 My creatures shall demand me from thy heart. 45
 All that thou hast shall be for others' bliss;
 All that thou art shall to my hands belong.
 I will pour delight from thee as from a jar
 And whirl thee as my chariot through the ways
 And use thee as my sword and as my lyre 50
 And play on thee my minstrelsies of thought.
 And when thou art vibrant with all ecstasies
 And when thou livst one spirit with all things,
 Men seeing thee shall feel my siege of joy,
 And nearer draw to me because thou art. 55
 Enamoured of thy spirit's loveliness,

¹ This word cancelled without substitution.

They shall embrace my body in thy soul,
 Hear in thy life the beauty of my laugh,
 Know the thrilled bliss with which I made the world.
 This shalt thou henceforth learn from every thought,¹ 60
 That conquering me thou art my captive made,
 And who possess me are by me possessed.
 For ever love, O beautiful slave of God.
 Cast from the summits of thy visioned spirit,
 Return to life with him thy soul desired, 65
 In whom I lay in wait for thee at first,
 Satisfied in him of oneness and convinced
 And gather to thee myriad unities
 With all my endless forms and divine souls.
 From thy beginning in earth's voiceless bosom 70
 Through life and time and will and grief and death
 I have led thee onward to the golden point,
 From which another sweeter gyre shall start."

The measure of that subtle music ceased.
 Down with a hurried swimming floating lapse 75
 Through unseen worlds and bottomless spaces forced
 Sank like a star the soul of Sâvithrî,
 [...] ² mid a laughter of unearthly lyres,
 She heard around her nameless voices cry
 Triumphant, an innumerable sound 80
 And bore the burden of infinity
 And felt the stir of all ethereal space
 Pursuing her in her fall implacably sweet.
 A face was over her which seemed a youth's
 Crowned as with peacock plumes of gorgeous hue 85
 Framing a sapphire, whose heart-disturbing smile
 Insatiably attracted to delight.
 Often it changed, though rapturously the same,
 And seemed a woman's dark and beautiful,
 Turbulent in will and terrible in love, 90
 A shadowy glory and a stormy depth,
 Like a mooned night with drifting star-gemmed clouds.
 Eyes in which Nature's deaf ecstatic life,
 Sprang from some Spirit's passionate content,
 Missioned her downwards to the whirling earth. 95

¹ Marginal alternative: thy heartbeats

² Blank in MS.

Like a bird held in a child's satisfied hands,
 Her spirit strove in an enamoured grasp
 Admitting no release till Time should end.
 Like a flower hidden in the heart of spring,
 She kept within her strong embosoming soul 100
 The soul of Sathyavân drawn down by her
 Inextricably in that mighty lapse.
 Invisible heavens in a thronging flight
 Soared upward past [her] as she fell; then near
 Came the immense attraction of the earth; 105
 Till in the giddy proneness of the speed
 Lost, overcome, sinking she disappeared
 Into unconsciousness as in a pool,
 Like one descending from a breathless height
 Into the wonder of abysmal depths. 110
 Above her closed the darkness of great wings
 And she was buried in a Mother's breast.

Fragment of Epilogue

"I am the Madran, I am Sâvithrî, 1
 Thy slave and lover, thy delight and friend,
 Thy prone possessor, sister of thy soul
 And mother of thy wants. O thou my world,
 My god, O earth and heaven my arms embrace, 5
 Whose every limb my answering limbs desire,
 Whose heart is key to all my heartbeats! This
 I am and thou to me, O Sathyavân;
 No gladness lost, but everything fulfilled
 Divinely. Let us go through this new world 10
 Which is the same, for it is given back
 And it is known, a playing ground of God
 Who hides himself in bird and beast and man
 Sweetly to find Himself again by love,
 By oneness, absolute in us for ever. 15
 Now grief is dead and serene bliss remains.
 Let us go back, for eve is in the skies.
 [Thy father waits who will not eat of food
 Unless he knows us seated at his side.]¹
 Lo, all these beings in this wonderful world! 20
 Let us give joy to all, for joy is ours!"

¹ Square brackets in the original.

THE INTEGRAL DIVINE

AN ILLUMINATION FROM SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of January 1982)

THE Transcendent, the Universal, the Individual are three powers overarching, underlying and penetrating the whole manifestation; this is the first of the Trinities. In the unfolding of consciousness also, these are the three fundamental terms and none of them can be neglected if we would have the experience of the whole Truth of existence. Out of the individual we wake into a vaster freer cosmic consciousness; but out of the universal too with its complex of forms and powers we must emerge by a still greater self-exceeding into a consciousness without limits that is founded on the Absolute. And yet in this ascension we do not really abolish but take up and transfigure what we seem to leave; for there is a height where the three live eternally in each other, on that height they are blissfully joined in a nodus of their harmonised oneness. But that summit is above the highest and largest spiritualised mentality, even if some reflection of it can be experienced there; mind, to attain to it, to live there, must exceed itself and be transformed into a supramental gnostic light, power and substance. In this lower diminished consciousness a harmony can indeed be attempted, but it must always remain imperfect; a co-ordination is possible, not a simultaneous fused fulfilment. An ascent out of the mind is, for any greater realisation, imperative. Or else, there must be, with the ascent or consequent to it, a dynamic descent of the self-existent Truth that exists always uplifted in its own light above Mind, eternal, prior to the manifestation of Life and Matter.

For Mind is Maya, *sat-asat*: there is a field of embrace of the true and the false, the existent and the non-existent, and it is in that ambiguous field that Mind seems to reign; but even in its own reign it is in truth a diminished consciousness, it is not part of the original and supremely originating power of the Eternal. Even if Mind is able to reflect some image of essential Truth in its substance, yet the dynamic force and action of Truth appears in it always broken and divided. All Mind can do is to piece together the fragments or deduce a unity; truth of Mind is only a half-truth or a portion of a puzzle. Mental knowledge is always relative, partial and inconclusive, and its outgoing action and creation come out still more confused in its steps or precise only in narrow limits and by imperfect piecings together. Even in this diminished consciousness the Divine manifests as a Spirit in Mind, just as he moves as a Spirit in Life or dwells still more obscurely as a Spirit in Matter; but not here is his full dynamic revelation, not here the perfect identities of the Eternal. Only when we cross the border into a larger luminous consciousness and self-aware substance where Divine Truth is a native and not a stranger, will there be revealed to us the Master of our existence in the imperishable integral truth of his being and his powers and his workings. Only there, too, will his works in us assume the flawless movement of his unfailing supramental purpose.

★

But that is the end of a long and difficult journey, and the Master of works does not wait till then to meet the seeker on the path of Yoga and put his secret or half-shown Hand upon him and upon his inner life and actions. Already he was there in the world as the Originator and Receiver of works behind the dense veils of the Inconscient, disguised in force of Life, visible to the Mind through symbol godheads and figures. It may well be in these disguises that he first meets the soul destined to the way of the integral Yoga. Or even, wearing still vaguer masks, he may be conceived by us as Ideal or mentalised as an abstract Power of Love, Good, Beauty or Knowledge; or, as we turn our feet towards the Way, he may come to us veiled as the call of Humanity or a Will in things that drives towards the deliverance of the world from the equal grasp of Darkness and Falsehood and Death and Suffering—the great quaternary of the Ignorance. Then, after we have entered the path, he envelops us with his wide and mighty liberating Impersonality or moves near to us with the face and form of a personal Godhead. In and around us we feel a Power that upholds and protects and cherishes; we hear a Voice that guides; a conscious Will greater than ourselves rules us; an imperative Force moves our thought and actions and our very body; an ever-widening Consciousness assimilates ours, a living Light of Knowledge lights all within, or a Beatitude invades us; a Mightiness presses from above, concrete, massive and over-powering, and penetrates and pours itself into the very stuff of our nature; a Peace sits there, a Light, a Bliss, a Strength, a Greatness. Or there are relations, personal, intimate as life itself, sweet as love, encompassing like the sky, deep like deep waters. A Friend walks at our side; a Lover is with us in our heart's secrecy; a Master of the Work and the Ordeal points our way; a Creator of things uses us as his instrument; we are in the arms of the eternal Mother. All these more seizable aspects in which the Ineffable meets us are truths and not mere helpful symbols or useful imaginations; but as we progress, their first imperfect formulations in our experience yield to a larger vision of the one Truth that is behind them. At each step their mere mental masks are shed and they acquire a larger, a profounder, a more intimate significance. At last on the supramental borders all these Godheads combine their sacred forms and, without at all ceasing to be, coalesce together. On this path the Divine Aspects have not revealed themselves only in order to be cast away; they are not temporary spiritual conveniences or compromises with an illusory Consciousness or dream-figures mysteriously cast upon us by the incommunicable superconscience of the Absolute; on the contrary, their power increases and their absoluteness reveals itself as they draw near to the Truth from which they issue.

For that now superconscient Transcendence is a Power as well as an Existence. The supramental Transcendence is not a vacant Wonder, but an inexpressible which contains for ever all essential things that have issued from it; it holds them there in supreme everlasting reality and their own characteristic absolutes. The diminution, division, degradation that create here the sense of an unsatisfactory puzzle, a mystery of Maya, themselves diminish and fall from us in our ascension, and the Divine Powers assume their real forms and appear more and more as the terms of a Truth in

process of realisation here. A soul of the Divine is here slowly awaking out of its involution and concealment in the material Inconscience. The Master of our works is not a Master of illusions, but a supreme Reality who is working out his self-expressive realities delivered slowly from the cocoons of the Ignorance in which for the purposes of an evolutionary manifestation they were allowed for a while to slumber. For the supramental Transcendence is not a thing absolutely apart and unconnected with our present existence. It is a greater Light out of which all this has come for the adventure of the Soul lapsing into the Inconscience and emerging out of it, and, while that adventure proceeds, it waits superconscious above our minds till it can become conscious in us. Hereafter it will unveil itself and by the unveiling reveal to us all the significance of our own being works; and our for it will disclose the Divine whose fuller manifestation in the world will release and accomplish that covert significance.

In that disclosure the Transcendent Divine will be more and more made known to us as the supreme Existence and the Perfect Source of all that we are; but equally we shall see him as a Master of works and creation prepared to pour out more and more of himself into the field of his manifestation. The cosmic consciousness and its action will appear no longer as a huge regulated Chance, but as a field of the manifestation; there the Divine is seen as a presiding and pervading Cosmic Spirit who receives all out of the Transcendence and develops what descends into forms that are now an opaque disguise or a baffling half-disguise, but destined to be a transparent revelation. The individual consciousness will recover its true sense and action; for it is the form of a Soul sent out from the Supreme and, in spite of all appearances, a nucleus or nebula in which the Divine Mother-Force is at work for the victorious embodiment of the timeless and formless Divine in Time and Matter. This will reveal itself slowly to our vision and experience as the will of the Master of works and as their own ultimate significance, which alone gives to world-creation and to our own action in the world a light and a meaning. To recognise that and to strive towards its effectuation is the whole burden of the Way of Divine Works in the integral Yoga.

(Concluded)

(From The Synthesis of Yoga, Part One, Chapter XI)

LIFE'S PURPOSE AND THE DIVINE'S PRESENCE

SOME GUIDELINES BY THE MOTHER

✧ THERE is a purpose in life—and it is the only true and lasting one—the Divine. Turn to Him and the emptiness will go.

✧ Never forget that you are not alone. The Divine is with you helping and guiding you. He is the companion who never fails, the friend whose love comforts and strengthens. The more you feel lonely, the more you are ready to perceive His luminous Presence. Have faith and He will do everything for you. 27 September 1951

You had the experience you describe when the force was acting chiefly in the mind, the vital and, through it, in the physical. It is long since this time has passed. The force has come farther down in its action and now it is at work not only in the material but also in the subconscious and even in the inconscient. Unless you follow this descending movement and allow the force to act in your body and these material regions of the consciousness, you find yourself stranded on the side of the road without being able to advance any further. And to allow this working of the force it is a detailed surrender of all movements, habits, tastes, preferences, sense of necessities, etc. that is urgently required. 20 November 1949

✧ It is to the sincerity of your aspiration that the Love answers spontaneously.

✧ Beyond words, above thoughts the flame of an intense aspiration must always burn, steady and bright. 5 March 1955

✧ It is only by remaining perfectly peaceful and calm with an unshakable confidence and faith in the Divine Grace that you will allow circumstances to be as good as they can be. *The very best happens always* to those who have put their entire trust in the Divine and in the Divine alone. 9 February 1930

✧ Whatever you do in life must be done as a service to the Divine and nobody else. Whatever you are, think or feel, you are responsible for it to the Divine and to nobody else.

He is the sole Master of your being and your life. If in all sincerity you surrender entirely to Him He will take charge of you and your heart will be in peace.

All the rest belongs to the world of Ignorance and is governed by ignorance which means confusion and suffering. 1966

✧ My love is always with you; if then you do not feel it, it is because you are not capable

of receiving it. It is your receptivity that is lacking and should be increased; for this you must open yourself, and one opens oneself only if one *gives oneself*. Surely you are trying more or less consciously to draw the forces and the divine love towards you. The method is bad. Give yourself without calculating and without expecting anything in return, and then you will become capable of receiving.

THE EGO AND THE DIVINE'S WORKINGS

AN INSIGHT FROM THE MOTHER

To feel hurt by what others do or think or say is always a sign of weakness and proof that the whole being is not exclusively turned towards the Divine, not under the divine influence alone. And then, instead of bringing with oneself the divine atmosphere made of love, tolerance, understanding, patience, it is one's ego that throws itself out, in response to another's ego with stiffness and hurt feelings and the disharmony is aggravated. The ego never understands that the Divine has different workings in different people and that to judge things from one's own egoistic point of view is a great mistake bound to increase the confusion. What we do with passion and intolerance cannot be divine, because the divine works only in peace and harmony.

NIRODBARAN'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

THE COMPLETE SET

(Continued from the issue of January 1982)

December 7, 1935

We have no Nergine in the Dispensary.

No. You can take a box from Dyuman for K.

But what flattering phrases you use, Sir! "Perfective immortality", "hundreds of poems in the making, very much so" etc, etc.

Rather startled by this phrase. Can't find it, but don't believe it is a correct reading.

J stormed in like a meteor and exclaimed, "Mother has achieved a great victory to-night. Sex-energies of some people have surrendered." I asked, "All occult business, I suppose?" "Of course," he answered.

Good Lord, no! J's imaginations, that is all.

Then he said that Mother reveals to him all her workings. Must be wonderful if it is a fact.

The usual delusion! Voices, voices—the Mother in a confidential mood on the 7th storey!

A very big "if".

We have found that his knowledge is not always true: e.g. S's story I wrote to you.

Don't remember. He was writing an absurd affair of A's trying to take possession of him and substitute himself for the Mother—is it anything to do with that? I told him not to allow himself to be invaded by absurd delusions. But he seems to have only given it another form.

He says that very few vitals are free here.

That seems to be the one thing true in all that he said.

One is linked up with another: e.g. D's lower vital with N's.

Rubbish!

D wants to meet the Mother in the vital.

Bejabbus!

R wants S's stove, segri(?) and coals, kerosene, spirit, cocoa and barley to be removed from his room bodily and summarily. We don't know how to organise this raid. Mother suggests that you might undertake it, the things to be distributed afterwards to the proper quarters. Ready for the heroic deed? As for S, you can tell him "Doctor's orders!"

December 8, 1935

I have been plodding at a poem and now it is ready. So slow and laborious I am as a poet!

What of that? The result is all right. Harin used to write ten or twelve poems in a day or any number more. It takes me usually a day or two days to write and perfect one or three days even, or if very inspired I get two short ones out, and have thereafter to revise the next day. Another poet will be like Virgil writing nine lines a day and spending all the rest of his time polishing and polishing. A fourth will be like Manmohan, as I knew him, setting down half lines and fragments and taking 2 weeks or 2 months to put them into shape. The time does not matter, getting it done and the quality alone matter. So forge ahead and don't be discouraged by the prodigious rapidity of Nishikanta.

Here is a joint effort—some stanzas by myself, some by Nishikanta. Perhaps they fail as a whole?

It is certainly a little difficult to keep them together, especially as Nishikanta's stanzas are strong and fiery and yours are delicate and plaintive. It is like a strong robust fellow and a delicate slender one walking in a leash—they don't quite coalesce.

December 9, 1935

Here is N.K.'s poem. Just think of it—a fellow who never has written a single line in English and doesn't know it well, translates his own poem at a shot into a more beautiful, richer poem!

Look at his astounding mistakes in spelling but does it matter?

No, so long as there is somebody to correct it.

And on the whole the metre also seems all right.

What metre? Is it the one I indicated?

Amal has corrected the whole thing, he says some of the lines are striking. What would you say and will you kindly retouch, if necessary?

It is very beautiful. Amal has worked much upon it, so it is so surprisingly perfect. The original form is very poetic, but it is only the first two lines of it and the first two also of the second stanza that are quite successful. All the same it is a remarkable endeavour.

N.K. says that before writing or painting he bows down once before the Mother and you. If that is the magic, why, I will bow a hundred times, Sir!

It depends on how you bow.

December 10, 1935

Amal says that he wanted to make a metrical experiment by a sort of combination of iambic and anapaest. You write that after Amal's correction of N K's poem it is surprisingly perfect. Can it be called a poem with so many irregular variations? Or will it be called free verse, with some metrical arrangement?

What on earth do you mean? Iambics and anapaests can be combined in English verse at any time, provided one does not set out to write a purely iambic or a purely anapaestic metre. Mixed anapaest and iamb make a most beautifully flexible lyric rhythm. It has no more connection with free verse than the constellation of the Great Bear has to do with a cat's tail. Free verse indicates verse free from the shackles of rhyme and metre, but rhythmic (or trying to be rhythmic) in one way or another. If you put rhymes that will be considered a shackle and the "free" will kick at the chain. The rhythm and metrical arrangement is perfect on the iamb anapaest basis. I only wanted to know whether that was what Amal intended. For the rhyme scheme of the poem is that of a sonnet and in English the sonnet is always written in iambic pentameter—the combination of the lyrical metre with sonnet rhyme scheme is a novel adventure.

If Nishikanta can learn English metre, he will produce some splendid poems.

Possibly and even probably—only he must learn also what is and is not possible in English poetic style.

I hope you didn't fail to notice in Nishikanta's poem—"With profuse success, each pot of my every dot fulfils", word for word a translation by him of his

Bengali line — প্রতি বিন্দুৰ প্রতি আধাৰ. Amal and I had a hearty laugh !

Yes, it was a stroke of genius.

Amal said, "Better send it, as it is, to Sri Aurobindo and ask him whether it would not be better to write such poems in free verse."

Free verse would very likely be the death of his new possibility. His genius runs naturally into rhyme.

But don't you agree that it is a very striking piece with much original imagery ?

It is indeed a remarkable effort, full of beauty and power. You will see that by some changes (for the sake of metre and correct language and style) it becomes a poem of great original beauty.

It seems to be better than the previous one—both in force and imagery and yet it doesn't seem to be so oriental. Am I right ?

You are right; it is much more possible in English.

I believe that Nishikanta will profit immensely if he tries to learn metre.

Yes, this one I have turned into a very flexible amalgam of iambs, trochees and anapaests. It gives to my eye a very attractive and original effect.

I have grave doubts about the success of the orientals in the field of English poetry. It is very difficult for us to enter into the subtleties of the English language; and our oriental nature is also unappealing to the Westerners.

What you say is no doubt correct, but on the other hand it is possible that the mind of the future will be more understanding than it is now. In that case the expression of various temperaments in English poetry will have a chance.

Look at Harin's poetry. We're so ecstatic over it here, but outside he hardly gets a good audience, not even Krishnaprem seems to like his poetry.

I don't think I can put as much value on K's literary judgments as on his comments on Yoga etc. Some of his criticisms astonished me. For instance he found fault with Harin for using rhymes which Shelley uses freely in his best poems.

You must remember also that Harin's poetry has been appreciated by some of the finest English writers like Binyon and De la Mare. But anyway all growing writers

(unless they are very lucky) meet with depreciation and criticism at first until people get accustomed to it. Perhaps if Harin had published his poems under the name let us say of Harry Chatto, he would have succeeded by this time and no one would have talked of Oriental inaptness.

I always look with pity at our people trying poetic exercises in English, except Harin, and always think of Michael Madhusudan's failure. But I suppose you think otherwise because you have a big trump up your sleeve—the Supermind.

My aim is not personal glory, but to arrive at the expression of spiritual truth and experience of all kinds in poetry. The English tongue is the most widespread—if it can be used for the highest spiritual expression, that is worth trying.

How do you explain Nishikanta's miraculous feat? He can't speak at all correctly in English, whereas he writes wonderful poetry!

That has nothing to do with it. Speech and Poetry come from two quite different sources. Remember Goldsmith who wrote like an angel and talked like a parrot.

You can't say that it is all due to Yoga. He has been here only for a year and D for so many years, yet the difference between them as poets is striking; particularly the opening of his channel in English has staggered me. I can't decide if it is your success or his.

What do you mean by Yoga? There is a Force here in the atmosphere which will give itself to anyone open to it. Naturally it will work best when the native language is used—but it can do big things through English if the channel used is a poetic one and if that channel offers itself. Two things are necessary—no personal resistance and some willingness to take trouble about understanding the elementary technique at least so that the transcription may not meet with too many obstacles. Nishikanta has a fine channel and with a very poetic turn in it—he offers no resistance to the flow of the force, no interference of his mental ego, only the convenience of his mental individuality. Whether he takes the trouble for the technique is another matter.

I had written to you that Nishikanta bows in front of your photograph before he sits down to write, and that I am ready to bow a hundred times, if that is the trick. You answered that it depends on how one bows. Methinks it does not depend on it. Even if it did, I don't think Nishikanta knows it. Or was it in his past life that he knew it?!

Well, there is a certain faculty of effacing oneself and letting the universal Force run through you—that is the way of bowing. It can be acquired by various means, but also one may have the capacity for doing it in certain directions by nature.

December 11, 1935

After hearing what you have written regarding the learning of metre, Nishikanta approached Ramchandra for learning it. Because it was he who had given him the push to write in English. But Ramchandra wants to read with him English poetry, so that he may plunge into the spirit before teaching him metre. To develop the English poetic style, I suppose, it would be the best plan.

It is not English yet. But they can do like that if they prefer. Right rhythm however is the one thing still lacking and until he learns it, these efforts will be only a promise.

Are we taxing you too much by this occupation with our poetry? If not, Nishikanta proposes to send you one poem a day. How would you like having the dish every night?

You can send it. I will look at the dish even if I don't devour it.

Here is a lyrical dish prepared by Nishikanta all on a sudden after reading a book on metre. How do you find it?

For a first attempt remarkable—but he has not yet the necessary niceties of phrase and rhythm. The first three lines of the second stanza are very powerful, as good a thing as any English poet could have written. With some doctoring it makes a powerful lyric.

Nishikanta has got the metre all right this time.

Almost—he has the gift. But there are defects e.g. he sometimes gave 3 ft. for 2 ft. lines and vice-versa. Having made a scheme he should keep to it.

He wants to know how to get the right rhythm and the right poetic style. I said by reading English poetry.

Yes, reading and listening with the inner ear to the modulation of the lines.

About myself—as I go on writing, the lines, expressions, images seem so commonplace that I distrust the value of my work.

It is no use being too squeamish at first. By that distrust you can depreciate good as well as cheap values.

Secondly, I get tired of waiting and leave off, say after an hour. What else can one do? Where is the ego or personal resistance you speak of?

I didn't mean all that. I meant that a certain Nirod gets in the way, a too active or too blocky. Too subtle for further explanation, you have to feel.

It is not the question of 'being' open or 'knowing how to bow', but having a poetic being open or semi-open.

It has nothing to do with the poetic being.

'Personal resistance, mental ego' are phrases, for there must first be a poetic being for an ego to resist.

The poetic being is not burdened with an ego. It is the outer being which contributes that.

Nishikanta started with a desire to write after reading on metre, but without any central idea. After an hour or so he felt a power descending, then the poem began to unroll itself. But he had no sleep at night.

That is all right—except for the no sleep which I don't usually advise.

It means one need not have any preformed ideas, not even inspiration, a simple desire will do.

But that is the inspiration, when something descends.

Will sun-treatment do any good to A's eyes?

Mother does not think it is safe for A. It might help her eyes, but her system might suffer from the sun-exposure.

Something great, something big you have done, Sir. Will you kindly whisper?

I am always doing something big, but never big enough—as yet.

Really, Sir, do tell us, if no objection.

Eh, what?

(To be continued)

HYMNE D'ALLÉGRESSE

Two Avatars came and went, yet in this wide world of ours, among teeming humanity, no ripple was produced, nothing gave sign, nothing seemed to record such a tremendous happening. The coming of an Avatar is in itself a unique phenomenon, it happens after millenniums; the coming of two is quite unprecedented. The more sophisticated the mind of man becomes, the more difficult it finds it to recognise spiritual revelations. God might be staring in our faces but we would not know of it or else reject the vision as a chimera. How few have even heard their names and fewer still are the ones called to serve them. Thus declared the Supreme Mother in *Savitri*:

Speak not my secret name to hostile Time;
Man is too weak to bear the Infinite's weight,
Truth born too soon might break the imperfect earth.

No Gabriel appeared to anyone, no shepherds saw the angels nor heard their 'Hymne d'Allégresse'. Kings did not get intimations to make them come with gold and frankincense and myrrh to worship the new-born babe in a rich French family in Paris, when she took birth on February 21, 1878. But who knows if not all or some of these things may have come to pass. We live in the twentieth century and shut in our external mind we may fight shy to say anything about any unusual vision that visits us, and may discard our premonition as superstition.

But I have a presentiment that in the occult world, in the world of the angels there was a commotion to the *n*th degree. The angels sang Alleluia, their sweetest and their happiest. Their liquid voices awoke the Gods and Goddesses, the Demons and the Asuras. Some were hopefully thinking that their halcyon days would be near. Some were surprised, some apprehensive, some afraid, some foreboding that their days were numbered. "What is happening?" they must have asked each other in consternation. "The Supreme sends his Ambassadors to earth, not one but two, and what for?" Their questions and their clamour, their happiness or their uneasiness must have filled many a universe, yet we heard nothing.

Attracted by this new Messiah the Gods and the Goddesses came flaming down to this midget of a globe to see the tiny babe, a blue-eyed loveliness in a little crib. "To see Her was a summons to adore." They gathered round the baby-girl as the fairies did when Sleeping Beauty was born, and commenced to predict and wish, and pray and adore.

Said one: "Oh spirit traveller of eternity, who comest from the immortal spaces here."

Said the next: "Out of the Immortal's substance you were made."

Said the third: "One day you will touch the mighty Mother stark awake."

Said the fourth: "And meet the Omnipotent in this house of flesh."

Said the fifth: "Oh living inscription of the beauty of love."

Said the sixth: "What message of heavenly strength and bliss, is written with the Eternal's sun-white script?"

Said the seventh: "Strength shall be with her like a conqueror's sword."

Said the eighth: "She will be our leader and queen over our hearts and soul of men and gods."

Said the ninth: "She will hold our hands and choose our paths."

Said the tenth: "We will dwell in her as in a beautiful home."

Said the eleventh: "A friend and yet too great wholly to know."

Said the twelfth: "In her will descend the Supreme Mother and break the iron law, change Nature's doom by love and the Spirit's power."

Thus saying the Gods and Goddesses departed to wait till the baby would have grown into her true stature.

★

The very first photograph of the Mother, standing by her little chair, wearing a dress that resembles a ballerina's tutu is very symbolic. Her posture is not at all static, it is full of movement. One feels, looking at it, that at any time the little girl might break into an Arabesque or Ronde de Jambe. Was She preparing herself for a cosmic dance, not a destructive but a beautiful one? It fits in so admirably with the little piece the Mother wrote for Anu and me when Anu danced and I played my guitar for the annual show on the second December. She wrote

Beauty makes herself ready for life upon earth, seeing to all details. Nothing is neglected to reach perfection. I am ready.

Ready? But I am waiting for something. Waiting...Waiting...Will it come? The joy of life is coming little by little from inside. Now it is come. I am sure of victory. I have found what I was looking for. It is here in everything. I have found it below; I have found it above; I have found it here and there... everywhere.

I always keep this photograph of the Mother on my writing desk. One day while I was engaged in doing a little baby-talk with the picture my mother came in. I said impulsively, "Look at that naughty girl." My mother stopped and, looking at the picture intently for a while, said almost in a whisper, "No, not naughty." Suddenly the whole room was surcharged with the Mother's presence. We were overwhelmed. In this picture the Mother looks out at the world with unalloyed happiness. Not so the next one. Here She is wearing a black and white dress. That too seemed to me symbolic. Now she looks quizzically as if already She were aware that there was something wrong and needed to be set right. Her next one where She wears a veil is charming and no other lines could possibly suit it than:

Whence hast thou dawned filling my spirit's days,
Brighter than summer, brighter than my flowers,

Into the lonely borders of my life,
O Sunlight moulded like a golden maid?

★

So the little girl grew up quietly seeing God at an early age, realising God within Her when she was eighteen; one with the Supreme Mother when she was perhaps thirty-five. Wielding a golden energy she mastered everything She touched or attempted. When painting she could win a prize, when playing the piano or the organ she received inspiration from the musical plane that was native to Berlioz, the greatest French composer of the nineteenth century. When playing tennis she could outwit a cunning opponent. So by and by all the things that were promised were fulfilled. Listening souls may have sensed some change in the world-atmosphere, for I have heard from a reliable person that some people were expecting a great descent somewhere in the world perhaps preferably in California at a seaside resort. In any case it would be in America since America is today in the vanguard in the comity of nations.

But the Mother searching far and wide found Sri Aurobindo in our old, old India, at a time when India was in her nethermost state. So started a God's Labour, to take humanity to a higher rung in the evolution. The Mother was assured now that the visions She had seen would one day be a reality—visions the Vedic Rishis had seen but not known how to bring down here. It is very symbolic that the Mother's birthday should fall in the last quarter of February. It is the time when the snow starts thawing and the harsh winter recedes. In another month nature will plan another outburst of spring and all that it means. Her actual life corresponds marvellously with nature's phenomena. In this birth the Divine has plunged into matter and made ready the basis for the Supramental Life on earth. Goddess Saraswati, her helper, is at work to make the blueprint faultless. Then the Mother will come again to do the final act. We shall come again with Her and be Her radiant children of paradise. Her leaving Her body in November too promises something. It is very cold, it is winter. But when winter comes can spring be far behind?

CHAUNDONA BANERJI

AT THE FEET OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

RECOLLECTIONS BY SAHANA

(Continued from the issue of January 1982)

12

MYSELF : Mother Beloved, I am always waiting for your directions. Why are you not correcting me, Mother? Sri Aurobindo has given me permission to take the course of following implicitly the directions given by you; so kindly do not forget, Mother Gracious, that I am eagerly waiting to have your directions.

SRI AUROBINDO: You can certainly put aside the mental or vital sense of responsibility and take the course of following implicitly the directions given to you by the Mother—keeping however the need of psychic assent and a certain inner vigilance. One thing only you must be careful about that there should be nothing inert or tamasic in this self-giving to the guidance and it should not be made by a part of the vital into a plea for not rejecting the suggestions of lower impulse and desire.

There are always two ways of doing the Yoga—one by the action of a vigilant mind and vital seeing, observing, thinking and deciding what is or is not to be done. Of course it acts with the Divine Force—for otherwise nothing much can be done. But still it is the personal effort that is prominent and assumes most of the burden.

The other way is that of the psychic being, the consciousness opening to the Divine, not only opening the psychic and bringing it forward, but opening the mind, the vital and the physical, receiving the Light, perceiving what is to be done, feeling and seeing it done by the Divine Force itself and helping constantly by its own vigilant and conscious assent to and call for the Divine working.

Usually there cannot but be a mixture of these two ways until the consciousness is ready to be entirely open, entirely submitted to the Divine's origination of all its action. It is then that all responsibility disappears and there is no personal burden on the shoulders of the sadhak. 24.5.32

MYSELF: Mother, Sri Aurobindo once wrote to me: "If you wish to be free from people's expectations and the sense of obligation, it is indeed best not to take from anybody; for the sense of claim will be otherwise there. Not that it will be entirely absent even if you take nothing, but you will not be bound any longer." But when I do not accept what people want to give me, they are hurt, even offended, especially when they offer with love, affection or respect. Then it becomes difficult to refuse them. What should be done in such cases?

SRI AUROBINDO: The best thing is to keep the rule of not asking, of taking when it is given. It helps to gain mastery that is here the important thing. 27.5.32

MYSELF: My constant and ardent aspiration is that Sri Aurobindo's Light may come into my mind. Tell me, dear Mother, if it will ever happen. Shall I be able to receive his Light?

SRI AUROBINDO: It can always come in the mind if you aspire patiently. But the basic condition, if you want that Light, is to get rid of all other mental influences.

29.5.32

MYSELF: What is the meaning of "to get rid of all other mental influences"? Is it that I had better not read any other books than Sri Aurobindo's writings, or that I should not try to learn anything from hearing or by reading others?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not a question of books or learning facts. When a woman loves or admires, her mind is instinctively moulded by the one she loves or admires and this influence remains after the feeling itself has gone or appears to be gone. This does not refer to X's influence merely. It is the general rule given to keep yourself free from any other admiration or influence.

30.5.32

MYSELF: Mother, I have analysed and found one thing more, that is to say, I think I go for typing not merely to type but also to have an excuse to go to X's place. I am trying to stop all the old vital movements, it is not that I do not find it difficult, but I sincerely want to be changed. Was my analysis wrong?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it was quite right.

2.6.32

MYSELF: Sweet Mother, yesterday when I was writing to you, I saw thrice a strong blue light coming through the page as if from behind. I thought it must be Sri Aurobindo's Light—I felt so happy! Is it true that it was His Light?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

2.6.32

MYSELF: Sweet Mother, do you think what I feel about not going to X's place is a mental rule? I want to know it from you. As for myself I feel it to be a necessity, for it comes from within, that means I feel that this sort of relation must go now, I want to be sincere and true to you and true to myself and for that I want to try to take the resolution to give up all that stands in the way. So nowadays whatever I feel as a necessity, I want, at least, to try sincerely to do it seriously. Is this merely mental?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not a mental rule, but, as you say, an inner necessity, but something mental moves in your outer attitude, because in the outer being and in the subconscious vital there is still something which is not overcome. That may give your way of doing it a rigidity which they feel. That was what we wanted to say, not in the least that the resolution did not come from your inner being or that it was merely a mental rule.

6.6.32

MYSELF: Dear Mother, whatever I want to do or whatever resolution I take, comes to nothing eventually. Either an intricate problem or some obstacle appears and every-

thing becomes a jumble and the resolution is lost. I don't seem to have found the right way. I may be giving too much importance to the outer ways of doing things. Do tell me, Mother, what I should do at every step. I will not try or think even of doing anything of my own accord. This idea is coming up again and again.

SRI AUROBINDO: The difficulty about meeting your demand that the Mother should plan out and fix a routine for you in everything which you must follow is that this is quite contrary to the Mother's way of working in most matters. In the most physical things you have to fix a programme in order to deal with time, otherwise all becomes a sea of confusion and haphazard. Fixed rules have also to be made for the management of material things so long as people are not sufficiently developed to deal with them in the right way without rules. But these things of which you write are different; they are concerned with your inner development, your sadhana. In fact, even in outward things the Mother does not plan with her mind and make a mental map and rule of what is to be done; she sees what is to be done in each case and organises and develops it according to the nature of each case. In matters of inner development and the sadhana it is still more impossible to map out a plan fixed in every detail and say "every time you shall step here, there, in this way or that line and no other." Things would become so tied up and rigid that nothing could be done; there would be no true and effective movement.

If the Mother asked you to tell her everything, it was not in order that she might give you directions in every detail which you must obey. It was in order first that there might grow up the complete intimacy in which you would be entirely open to her, so that she might pour more and more and continuously and at every point the Divine Force into you which would increase the Light in you, perfect your action, deliver and develop your nature. It is this that was important; all else is secondary, important only so far as it helps this or hinders. In addition it would help her to give wherever needed the necessary touch, the necessary direction, the necessary help or warning, not always by words, more often by a silent intervention and pressure. This is her way of dealing with those who are open to her; it is not necessary to give express orders at every moment and in every detail. Especially if the psychic consciousness is open and one lives fully in that, it gets the intimation at once and sees things clearly and receives the help, the intervention, the necessary direction or warning. That was what was happening to a great extent when your psychic consciousness was very active, but there was a vital part in which you were not open and which was coming up repeatedly, and it is this that has created the confusion and the trouble.

Everything depends on the inner condition and the outward action is only useful as a means and a help for expressing or confirming the inner condition and making it dynamic and effective. If you do or say a thing with the psychic uppermost or with the right inner touch, it will be effective; if you do or say the same thing out of the mind or the vital or both, a wrong or mixed atmosphere, it may be quite ineffective. To do the right thing in the right way in each case and at each moment one must be in the right consciousness—it can't be done by following a fixed mental rule which

under some circumstances might fit in and under others might not fit in at all. A general principle can be laid down if it is in consonance with the Truth, but its application must be determined by the inner consciousness seeing at each step what is to be done or not done. If the psychic is uppermost, if the being is entirely turned towards the Mother and follows the psychic, this can be increasingly done.

All depends therefore not on a mental rule to follow in practice, but in getting the psychic consciousness back and putting its light into this vital part and making that part turn wholly to the Mother. It is not that the question of your going too much to your S is of no importance,—it is of considerable importance—but to limit the contact is effective only as a means of helping your vital part to withdraw from this servitude to old movements. It is the same everywhere.

The kind of outward obedience you lay stress on, asking for a direction in every detail, is not the essence of surrender, although obedience is the natural fruit and outward body of surrender. Surrender is from within, opening and giving mind, vital, physical all to the Mother for her to take them as her own and recreate them in their true being which is a portion of the Divine; all the rest follows as a consequence. It would not then be necessary to ask her word and order outwardly in every detail, the being would feel and act according to her will; her sanction would be sought but as the seal of that inner unity, receptiveness of her will and obedience. 11.6.32

MYSELF: Mother mine, I am feeling a little depressed for the attachments that live still in me; I know how little importance you give to these things, but I don't know why they have become so important to me. May I know? Am I giving them too much importance or is it going to be like this? Why cannot I take things in an easy way if it is so necessary? I am writing to you because I cannot forget the thought about my attachments and that thought makes me feel I am so incapable and this sense of incapacity depresses me more.

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no reason to be gloomy and it does not help but rather hinders. See these things quietly with the full confidence that they will be removed as early as possible. 1.7.32

(To be continued)

(Translated by Nirodbaran from the original Bengali)

THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

(Continued from the issue of January 1982)

The Mother's Message

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



7

I LOATHED remaining in the rut where I was. Every time I had to confront the same problem and that sent a cold shiver down my spine and brought me sharply face to face with my defects which I thought were impossible to surmount. I truly longed to get out of my old consciousness. I felt as if adrift on a sea of emotions and my nerves were in shreds.

I had a strong urge to leave the Ashram and end my life because of too much tension, both physical and psychological. I wrote to the Mother about it and she replied:

“My dear little child Huta,

“It is the devil—your worst enemy and mine—who puts in your head all these ideas of running away from here or to die. He wants to destroy you and your soul’s aspiration and that is why he is making all these nasty suggestions to you. Will you listen to him and do what he wants? It would be a very great pity; for you must know that to leave the body is not at all the way of escaping sufferings and miseries—on the contrary, once you are out of the protection of your body, you fall prey to all these adverse forces that will torment you much more than during your life in your body. Do not listen to all these nasty suggestions and after some time they will stop harassing you. While it is by allowing all these bad thoughts and feelings to enter and to possess you that you delay your cure. They come in the way of my working in you and for you; and it is that which prevents you from feeling my presence and my help in you.

“With my love and blessings.”

The Mother also explained to me that she had observed these attacks. The devil came in the form of a black snake entering from my toes and it was the passage of this enemy upward that gave me all those disturbing, inexplicable sensations.

After a time the Mother succeeded in preventing the invasion from below, but the snake came back by another route. She also told me that once while I was sitting in her French class she saw it entering my head and, before she could catch hold of it, the snake plunged in. As a result of this I suffered for months together.

One evening I went to the Mother’s room at the Playground. She looked intently into my eyes and then I saw her making a gesture with her hands as if she were pulling something out of my head and throwing it away. She said:

“I have pulled out the snake. Now you must remain in peace.”

Unfortunately I was still receptive to the cunning snake. It always returned with new mischief. Countless, huge and dark waves of Universal Nature came time and again and engulfed me. The vibrations emanating from the hostile forces spread in my being, because now it was obvious that my ego had opened the door to them. I was drowned in the gloom of unconsciousness and my vanity knew no bounds. I was opaque to the Mother’s Light. My mental state left me in sheer agony.

The snake did not finally leave me until towards the end of 1965. One night when I was in bed I saw concretely in a vision a wicked snake gliding out of my head across my pillow. It was about a foot long.

When I spoke to the Mother about this experience, she answered:

“Yes, it has gone.”

In spite of the general relief, however, some after-effects of the dire presence lingered until almost the end of 1967. The full freedom came after I had finished the illustrations of the whole of *Savitri* and had taken back from the Mother and destroyed all the letters I had written to her. Some of them had been written under the adverse influence. At that time she commented:

“It is good to make a clear cut with the past—so that only the Eternal Love remains.”

I may add here that in 1971 I had a final encounter with the snake-force. In my vision, I went to the very source of its domain and felt tangibly as if a perfect Hell opened before me and devoured my whole being.

When I related the incident to the Mother, she said:

“Yes, I know, you are saved, my child, the snake will never come again.... It has gone—and will never return. Now all these difficulties of yours are over.”

Ah! at last! I recall the verse from *Savitri*:

“None can reach heaven who has not passed through hell.”

★

In 1956 my consciousness was far from being one-pointed and straightforward and steady. I was still groping.

The remembrance of my family was so acute that at times I felt like giving up everything and dying. Above all, I was not sure whether I would reach my destination—the Divine.

A sick fear—an indefinable horror of thought and emotion—possessed me. I was caught between two forces. Mine was a paradoxical situation.

I sent a letter to the Mother on the night of the 16th in answer to hers of the same day.

That very night I wrote a letter also to my father and brother:

Respected father and brother,

Loving greetings along with the Mother's blessings to you all.

I am glad to learn that you are coming in April.

I trust all of you are well. I am quite all right and am not worried at all about anything happening at the Estate, because the Mother's Grace, help and protection are constant.

Thank you so much for remembering me.
 All of you are in my thoughts. My fond love to the children.
 Please do not worry if my letters are delayed.
 With kindest regards.

Huta

On the 17th, in reply to my letter of the previous night, the Mother wrote:

"I have received and read your letter.
 "I can say nothing more than what I told you already several times. I want you to be all right and I am doing all that can be done for it. But you must not listen to the hostile suggestions—and in your letter, on the first page in answer to my question 'Will you listen to the devil and do what he wants?' you answer *Certainly not*, which is quite good—but on the second page you write again: 'If I have to remain like this *surely I shall go and die*', which is exactly what the devil wants you to feel, to write and to do. So this means that you are listening to him and obeying him—although *you say you will not*.

"My Will is to *save you* and to save you as quickly as possible—but *you must let me do it* and not let the devil come in between you and me."

After receiving this letter my ego calmed down a little and I felt that it was the Mother alone who could save me from the continuing dreadful phase. I went on praying and writing to her and she answered:

"In one of your letters you ask me: 'Show me the *true* path.' The true path is *surrender*, complete, absolute, unconditional surrender to the Divine.

"Now that you have found out that, by yourself, you are nothing, you can do nothing and that you have failed in everything—now you are ready for the surrender of the ego to the Divine.

"The solution that comes to your mind, to give up the life of your body is a very ignorant solution, because life and consciousness do not stop with physical existence and consequently to give up the body does not save you from misery and suffering—in fact the result is quite opposite, the suffering becomes worse and in the next life you will have to undergo much more suffering and trouble than in this one.

"On the contrary, if you give yourself entirely to the Divine without asking for anything in exchange, if you merge your consciousness in the Divine, it will put an end to your sufferings—but the surrender must be total, unconditional, unbargaining and absolute, including all your desires, your needs, your likings, your dislikings, your wishes, your wants, your wills—everything, everything that constitutes your small person—and then you will find peace and torments will come to an end.

“I am telling you the truth, with my love and blessings.”

The same day the Mother sent me white roses, incense sticks and a second letter saying:

“Bonjour

“to my little child

“to my sweet Huta

“I am sending you the incense sticks with my love.

“A tout à l’heure.

“I am going down at 10 o’clock this morning.

“The Divine Grace is constantly with you and my love and blessings never leave you.”

The Mother came down from her living room at 10 a.m. to the Meditation Hall on the ground floor. She wore a fine saree. Also the pin which I had offered. I was glad.

Every year, a few days before the Darshan the Mother distributed sarees to women and towels or handkerchiefs to men.

When I approached her, she gave me a saree with one of her divine smiles. She never forgot to press my hands in order to give me her force, strength and assurance.

Now my ego was arrested by the powerful hands of the Mother. Yet still I was not out of its influence. I knew that the Divine cannot be found without paying a heavy price. The nature of human beings is such that they always try to find an easy way and think that there should not be any difficulties and sufferings for them: they desire to achieve everything without making any effort. It was the same with me. I thought that I was being exhausted by the struggle and the strife and I just wanted to remain in bliss. I expressed my feeling to the Mother. Here is her reply:

“You asked for the true path—I gave you the true path. You asked for the knowledge—I give you the knowledge. You ask for the help—I give you the help. You ask for the Grace—the Grace is with you.

“But now, if you want to be the only creature in the world for whom there will be no suffering and no difficulty—that is quite impossible because sufferings and difficulties are there for everybody until one has united consciously with the Divine.

“So, the only thing to do is to be quiet and face what comes, good or bad, with patience and endurance. Because all restlessness makes difficulties more difficult.

“My help, love and blessings are always with you.”

It was too hard to swallow the truth and to practise the Integral Yoga with an

absolute sincerity and straightforwardness. Once again I fell ill and my nerves were on edge. Days dragged on and I found no relief.

On the 20th February the Mother sent me a pretty card showing two sparrows and these words followed:

“I hope you are better today and will be quite all right tomorrow for the *darshan*.

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

I still felt weak, but the black depression which had descended upon me seemed now to be lifting a little.

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From the 20th February to the 23rd there was a remarkable exhibition. Opposite the entrance door there was the Mother's flag—light blue with her symbol in pale gold. The Mother called her flag: “The Spiritual Flag of India.” The embroidered lion in gold and silver above the Mother's chair seemed to guard the whole exhibition.

The Mother's rare and priceless collections of lace—containing specimens of Valenciennes and fillet, antique Venetian point lace, pillow lace, fine needle point, many kinds of laces from different countries were shown here. Also there were exquisite fans of different types of material from simple palm-leaf to ivory, sandalwood, lace and embroidered satin. Besides, there was an unmounted fan. I was charmed by the beautiful original painting on silk by the famous Japanese artist Hiroshige.

I was really fascinated seeing an incredible set of six pieces made of heavy white satin—the enormous dragons had been embroidered in gold and silver thread by Vasudha and other sadhikas for the Mother's couch and its accessories.

I was told by Vasudha who was in charge of the exhibition that the intricate and fine embroidery had taken quite a number of years. The Mother had sat on the couch only once—for a while—on the Independence Day of India 1947. This was ultra-symbolic, for she embodied the true Soul of our country—Mother India.

There were also vast collections of embroidered sarees, the Mother's embroidered dresses, bandeaux, sandals and other enchanting articles—all prepared by Vasudha and other sadhikas in the Mother's Embroidery Department.

Moreover, there were embroideries from all over India and some from China, Japan and other countries.

Quite a number of items came from the Mother's private stores, which were familiar to me.

It was nice to see in show-cases the garbs of the Mother's grand-parents. I especially loved to see again and again the Mother's wedding dress, which was full of lace and frills. Actually it had belonged to her grandmother.

There was also the long white burnous with white cap, which had belonged to her grandfather.

The Mother's ancestors on the maternal side were originally Egyptians—connected with the Pharaohs. So the Mother had royal blood in her.

The Mother's grandmother was born in Cairo in 1830. She was called Mirra Ismaloun. Her father's name was Said Pinto.

I have seen the portrait of the grandmother, done by the Mother in 1905. She looked a dignified personality, very aristocratic and gracious.

She was a member of the Committee managing the construction of the Suez Canal, which was formally opened on November 17th, 1869.

The grandmother was officially invited to the opening ceremony.

At the age of seventy-six she disclosed glimpses of her life to her grandson, Matéo Alfassa, the Mother's brother, who wrote his grandmother's reminiscences under her direction.

She passed away in 1908.

Mattéo became governor of the French Congo and Antilles. Later he became governor-general of French Soudan. During the Second World War he was in the Ministry of Information. He died near or after the end of the Second World War.

Sri Aurobindo spoke about Mattéo in *Talks with Sri Aurobindo* by Nirodbaran, p. 360:

"... It is men like him who built up France and also made it possible for the Ashram to continue here. Otherwise I might have had to go to France, or else to America and supramentalise the Americans.

"When the Mother came here and I met her, her brother got interested. These things look like accidents but they are not. There is a guidance behind these events."

I also read in the book,—*Twelve years with Sri Aurobindo* by Nirodbaran p. 11, —what Sri Aurobindo has said :

"... We owe, by the way, a debt of gratitude to the Mother's brother, for it was his indirect intervention in the Colonial Office of the French Government at Paris that went a long way towards removing a very great threat to the Ashram's existence, brought about by the manipulation of the British India Government..."

I came across some very striking pieces of information regarding the site of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. The famous French archaeologist, Prof. J. Dubreuil, found old documents in which there were pointers to the location of a Vedic School in ancient times, which had stood exactly where the main building of the Ashram stands. The Vedic School is said in legend to have had for its ultimate original founder the great Sage Agastya who had come from the North to the South. The present name "Pondicherry" is an anglicised form of the Tamil "Puducherry" meaning "New Town". The town is also reported to have been once known as "Vedapuri"—that is, "The

School of Veda"—and there was in it a central temple of a deity named Vedapurishwara.

To revert to the Mother's connection with Egypt: she had a special liking for and inclination towards that country. For, she had been an Egyptian in several past births. One of the births was the sublime queen Hatshepsut.

The Mother at the age of ten saw a comb in the Guimet Museum in Paris and remembered to have used it when she had been a queen of Egypt.

I read a memorable and vivid description of the queen in the book, *The Splendour that was Egypt*, by M. A. Murray:

"...She was a woman of great force of character; and if her portraits speak true, she was endowed with beauty and charm as well. Her reign is characterized by the great expansion of trade, and by her passionate devotion to her religion, which showed itself in the erection of one of the finest temples that even Egypt can boast of, and by the decoration of other temples as well. Her magnificent temple at Deir el Bahri is renowned not merely for its beauty but for the interest of many of the inscriptions on its walls. The seinscriptions are illustrated by sculptures, and recount among other things the story of her divine birth....

"Hatshepsut means Chief of Noble Women....

"Queen Hatshepsut, who ruled as King, puts her position in plain language: 'I am God, the Beginning of Existence.'—(Naville, *Temple of Deir el Bahri*, Pl. IXXXVI, line 7)."

The colossal Karnak Obelisk stands even today reminding us of the monumental creation of the mighty queen.

In the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. II, Ed. 1960, p. 250, this description has been given:

"Hatshepsut or Hatasu (*fl.* 1500 B.C.), Egyptian queen, daughter of Thotmes I., sister and queen of the short-reigned Thotmes II., after whose death she secured the crown in spite of opposition from the future Thotmes III., who was the son either of Thotmes I. or of Thotmes II. She acquired fame by her magnificent terrace temple at Der-el-Bahri and by her Obelisks at Thebes, the expenses of which were partly met by the treasure-hunting expeditions which she sent to South Arabia. The long military inactivity of her reign, during which state affairs were in the hands of her partisans, shook Egyptian power in Asia. In 1841 her tomb was discovered on a cliff behind the Valley of the Kings' tombs. Her successor, Thotmes III., had her name and figure cut off from the sculptures in her temple and treated the remains of partisans in a similar manner."

I have seen a picture of Hatshepsut's sculptured bust and hers is indeed a face both majestic and ethereal, with a touch of our Mother's loveliness.

I feel that the Matrimandir in Auroville is the final temple the Mother wanted on earth to fulfil her vision of the Supreme Truth and Love in her New World.

In 1952 on our way to England, one of my brothers and his wife and I stayed in Cairo for two or three days. It was the night of the 23rd July, when King Farouk went into exile after General Mohammed Naguib seized power in Egypt.

The very night our plane touched down in Cairo the King was leaving. At the airport everyone seemed to be excited and talking about the King.

During our stay in Cairo, I found everything familiar. I did not know why. I was entranced by the gigantic Pyramids. While looking at the photographs which were taken there by us, I am reminded of one of the Mother's writings:

"O serene and immobile Consciousness, Thou watchest on the boundaries of the world like a sphinx of eternity. And yet to some Thou givest out Thy secret. They can become Thy sovereign Will which chooses without preference and executes without desire."

★

It was the 21st February 1956, the Mother's birthday. She sent me a bouquet of white roses along with a fine card with these words on it:

"Let it be a very happy day for you, a day of victory over all your difficulties.
"With my love and blessings."

I went to the Meditation Hall upstairs. As always the atmosphere was packed with the divine force and luminous vibrations. The Mother gave me a warm smile while handing the Message with a pressure on my hands. The Message was very appropriate—worthy of her glorious Spirit:

For one was there supreme behind the God.
A Mother Might brooded upon the world;
A Consciousness revealed its marvellous front
Transcending all that is, denying none:
Imperishable above our fallen heads
He felt a rapturous and unstumbling Force.
The undying Truth appeared, the enduring Power
Of all that here is made and then destroyed,
The Mother of all godheads and all strengths
Who, mediatrix, binds earth to the Supreme.

Savitri, Cent. Ed. Vol. 28, p. 313

In the evening there was a special programme organised by the children of the Ashram school. It was called: *The International Garland of Unity*. There were folk

dances, songs and so on, from different countries: India, Tibet, China, Japan, America, Egypt, Hungary, Germany, Russia, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, Greece, Holland, France and England.

The Ashram children represented the children of these countries of the world, coming to greet the Mother on her birthday.

The dances and songs were characteristic of each country.

I could never forget one humorous scene.

There was a Swiss folk dance. A big goat with jingle bells tied on a ribbon was brought and made to stand in the middle of the circle. The goat must have been scared among girls and boys who danced vigorously while waving their handkerchiefs and singing loudly. It felt so uncomfortable that it could not tolerate this clamour any longer—so it pulled the cord by which its neck had been tied to a pole pitched there. After several jerks it broke loose, ran away as fast as it could, trampling on whatever hindered its way out in the midst of the people seated on the ground.

The children finished their dance without the goat anyhow!

The Mother gave peal after peal of laughter while seeing the goat jumping. Everybody joined in the fun.

This was the first time I saw the Mother laughing so merrily.

Later in the evening Chandralekha—the renowned dancer—danced Bharatnatyam gracefully and impressively.

Then everyone went to see the floral decoration of a gorgeous dragon-design in the Mother's Playground-room after she had left for her apartment in the Ashram.

I was very much fagged out. Before going to bed, I opened the book, *Prayers and Meditations*, and read this delightful passage which the Mother had written on the 23rd September 1914:

“O Divine and adorable Mother, with Thy help what is there that is impossible? The hour of realisation is near and Thou hast assured us of Thy aid that we may accomplish integrally the supreme Will.

“Thou hast accepted us as fit intermediaries between the unthinkable reality and the relativities of the physical world, and Thy constant presence in our midst is a token of Thy active collaboration.

The Lord has willed and Thou dost execute:

A new light shall break upon the earth,

A new world shall be born,

And the things that were promised shall be fulfilled.”

Later, some time after the Supramental Manifestation in 1956, the Mother re-wrote the last four lines thus:

“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."

★

The Mother sent me a card showing a flower—a zinnia—and her words followed:

"I am sending you a flower of endurance, because it is much needed with the presence of all these visitors—but I expect they will soon go now, and I shall be a little more free.

"My love and blessings are always with you."

It was due to my over-sensitiveness that I had an oppressive feeling when I saw a crowd or was in one. Yet I could not resist seeing the Mother in the Playground.

I tried to occupy myself in sewing. I wanted to make a suit—kameez and salwar—for the Mother. But I had some difficulty in making the salwar. I was anxious to finish the suit and I got upset about my lack of knowledge as to how to make the salwar. When I informed the Mother of my state of mind, she wrote:

"I am sorry that you got again into trouble. As you ask me I shall tell you—do only my kameez and veil and the things you know so that you need not depend on others. Do not bother about the grey salwar, the others will finish it.

"You must feel free to do as you feel—because what I want most for you is peace in your heart and quietness in your mind as they are the necessary conditions for finding the Divine.

"With my love and blessings."

Yes, indeed, with all my heart and soul I longed for the Divine, but how could I achieve the wonderful peace and quietness when I was so often assaulted by the evil forces, and all the time remained in fear as though of an overhanging "sword of Damocles"? The Mother sent me a card on which she inscribed:

"Let the Divine's Light, love and force save you from the clutches of the devil.

"With my love and blessings."

Five days elapsed. Cards and white roses came from the Mother—bringing continually her love, Grace and blessings.

But my mind was torn with a thousand conflicting emotions, worries and fears owing to one thing or another and my peace was shattered completely. The Mother sent me a card with the painting of a white dove on it, accompanied by these words:

"This dove represents integral peace. Let it enter your heart."

I made the silver-grey dress and now I traced some flowers on the kameez. I used a carbon-paper. I found, to my horror, after the job was finished, that there were dark blue spots on the dress. I had ruined the Mother's dress! I washed it, which I was not supposed to do. I became upset and thought: "If I cannot even copy a simple design how can I expect to make a success of my life?" I could neither tell anybody nor seek help. After I had confessed to the Mother, she wrote:

"Do not worry and be not sad—it is nothing serious and at the end I am sure that everything will be all right. I shall say to Vasudha to wash the other piece of the cloth before doing the *salwar* and everything will be all right. In any case it would have been washed and it is better that it is washed before the embroidery than after.

"So you must not be sorry."

The Mother was extremely considerate and understanding.

I was a little relieved and once again the design was traced on the kameez and I started the work of embroidery—the simple stitches of lazy-daisy with white and pale green thread.

I received a fine card from the Mother with these lines:

"Good health also, coolness in the head, and peace in the heart and quietness with strength in the body—all that must be established in you so that nothing turns you away from your endeavour to unite with the Divine.

"My love and blessings are with you."

During the morning of the next day, I had an interview with the Mother. I went to the Meditation Hall upstairs and she received me with all her Love. I told her all about my difficulties. I also said that the union with the Divine was not easy because I was attacked relentlessly by the dark forces and faced many obstacles which made me nervous and sick. I explained, too, that one moment I felt quite cheerful and the next as if the blackest depression had descended upon me. Tears stung my eyelids when I finished telling her of my troubles and with a deep sigh I laid my hands in hers. She looked at me with her penetrating gaze and went into a trance for a few seconds and then said:

"There is nothing new in human nature. Sometimes it remains in the light and sometimes in the darkness. But truly I want something new in the life of human beings.

"Human nature is divided. So at one time people believe the adverse forces and at another the Divine Forces. When they are trapped by the hostile forces

they begin to think: 'This thing is good and that one is bad, this person is good and that person is bad.' And so on.... They live in likings and dislikings with various types of mortal desires and ego in them. In fact, they themselves create all false things in their consciousness—no wonder they become miserable. As a matter of fact it is nothing but putting a dense curtain between the Divine and their souls. So how can they realise anything new in their lives? But, if there is no barrier between the Divine and themselves, naturally the adverse forces do not like it, and they try constantly to drive human beings away from the Divine and His Grace. This is the nature of the devil and it is his business to perform such nasty tricks with all his skill! He always tries to take possession of the life of human beings. But at that moment people must remember the Divine and reject the false suggestions."

The Mother plunged again into a profound meditation. When she came out of it she spoke most tenderly:

"Child, the best way to get rid of all adverse forces and their suggestions is to repeat frequently the Divine's Name—while eating, moving, even speaking and in whatever you do: 'I want the Divine and nothing else.' When you fall sick, or something wrong happens, you should pray to the Divine to remove all obstacles which prevent you from reaching the goal. If the call is sincere enough, all hindrances will at once disappear. If you form a habit of praying constantly, the prayers become sincere. The Divine is always in the depths of everybody's heart and always He hears all sincere prayers and sees everything. But if you go over to the devil's side, then the Divine keeps silent and does nothing. Nevertheless He watches everything every moment. So you must not go to the devil's side—instead of that, let there be ceaseless prayer and remembrance of the Divine. These are essential.

"When the whole being turns to the Divine's Light and its influence and leaves everything to Him without reserve, that is called true surrender and sincerity.

"You should pray to the Lord: 'O Lord, kindly work in my legs, in my hands, in my whole consciousness; if I walk, walk in me, if I eat, eat in me—whatever I do, be always with me.' Thus you are constantly protected by the Lord and His Grace.

"The heart is the best place for concentration. Go deep within your heart and, while concentrating on the Lord, you must think: 'The Lord is controlling the whole universe, He is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent—my love is all for Him.'

"The Lord has created all creatures and everything out of Himself by His own Will and Power. Here one can unite with the Divine in the physical body. There is always some purpose behind His play. So there must not be any self-

will and you must not think of giving up this life.

"I want everyone to be happy. If you unite consciously with the Divine you will be happy because, without the Divine, life is useless. There is no existence without Him. The Lord is everything."

Smilingly she leaned forward to give my hand an assuring pat. After gathering up the flowers she had given me, I took my leave.

I was musing over the Mother's talk—"There is no existence without Him. The Lord is everything." The same truth is expressed in *Essays on the Gita*, Cent. Ed., Vol. 13, p. 351, where Sri Aurobindo conveys Sri Krishna's message:

"Take it thus, that I am here in this world and everywhere, I am in all and I constitute all: there is nothing else than I, nothing without Me. I support this entire universe with a single degree of My illimitable power and an infinitesimal portion of My fathomless spirit; all these worlds are only sparks, hints, glintings of the I Am eternal and immeasurable."

Next day the Mother sent me a pretty card showing red roses with these lines following them:

"As I told you the great secret to get rid of nasty things and to remove the veil between you and the Divine, is *surrender*—a total, complete and constant *surrender*. To each attack answer by *surrender*, dismiss all bad thoughts and bad movements by *surrender*—this is the *victorious* attitude and never fails.

"And to have the strength to do it, *use my force and power* that are *always* with you.

"With my love and blessings."

Being only too human I doubted whether her Force and Power were *always* with me. Even if they were, how could I use them? My consciousness was utterly obscured. I could not possibly see or feel anything. Whatever the Mother wrote or said—all seemed to be in vain.

(To be continued)

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SRI AUROBINDO—THE REVOLUTIONARY

Sri Aurobindo is a born revolutionary, not a mere revolutionary of the political sphere but a real spiritual revolutionary. Though in the political life his pragmatic ideas have been adopted and implemented, and the country's independence has been achieved, his revolutionary ideas in the spiritual world have been little appreciated and much less understood. He is a seer with a vision of the future and has laid a firm foundation for the time to come. By a large section of the people he has been neglected as a mystic and visionary; or set aside as being full of complications and complexities, or abandoned as ununderstandable or unapproachable. But none of these qualifications attributed to him are true. They are more a reflection of one's own mental make-up than a correct approach and understanding of the multi-faceted personality of Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo has the courage of his convictions to think out his idea to its logical end and face the real consequences thereof. He has a fresh and an unbiased look at every thing. He is not afraid of the deep-rooted contemporary absurdities. He criticised them downright, but rationally and logically and was ready to face any amount of adverse comment or abuse when he was intellectually and experientially convinced of the truth of his idea. The epithet सत्यपराक्रम. "Satyaparakramah", attributed to Sri Rama is equally applicable to Sri Aurobindo. He is the warrior of Truth and the intrepid champion of it just like Ramachandra. His strength lies in the Truth he holds and lives.

A revolutionary is a person who is greatly dissatisfied with the existing state of affairs and wants a new order of things to be established. He wants that change to occur in as short a time as possible. Hence his life is dangerously studded with adventures. In the year 1920, when Munje called upon him to take up the leadership of the National Congress Sri Aurobindo in his reply said "...I am no longer first and foremost a politician but have definitely commenced another kind of work with a spiritual basis, a work of spiritual, social, cultural and economic reconstruction of an almost revolutionary kind...."

When the life of the people is made difficult to an unbearable point by the rulers of the country or that class of society which wields despotic authority over the general mass, then a revolutionary arises. We have several instances of this kind in the history of the world. They wage war openly or secretly in various ways and on different fronts against the ruling Government. They sacrifice their all and their very lives, overthrow the ruling party or persons and successfully instal a new Government. This is the political revolutionary with whom the world is very familiar.

Next is the social revolutionary. When the prevailing customs and practices of society are degrading the general life as well as the individuals in it, then springs up a person full of dynamism and force who can smash the decadent structures of the community and uplift it from ignorance and depravity. He tries to evolve a new society with a new concept of social values.

The foundations of the normal mass of society are basically politico-economic. The cultural, aesthetic, ethical, religious and spiritual aspects of society are the concern of a small section of it. There will be an upheaval in each of these aspects of a degenerating society. But they are so interlinked that when the basic foundations get shaken or give way under the impact of new forces, there will be a general shake-up of the whole society. When the old norms and moulds fail to advance the well-being of the group, they have to be replaced by new ones which answer to the growing and developing needs of the people. That person is an idealist revolutionary who sees the retrogressive conditions and is unable to tolerate the deplorable pass to which the social predicament has come and is therefore impatient to force a change in the social structure.

But Sri Aurobindo is a global revolutionary. There is not one aspect of the human being, i.e., body, life, mind and spirit that was not touched by him. Everything in his hands acquired a new refinement and an invigorating freshness. He shook the lazy and lethargic human race to its roots and opened out fresh avenues of activity for the life-force.

He is not a world-shunning recluse limiting the naturally vast and immense spirit to small moulds or grooves of life. His is a wide spirit that soars high like an eagle without losing the clarity of its vision of the things on the ground. There is nothing too low or too high; nothing too far or too near; nothing too deep or too shallow for his vision. It is cool and collected yet piercing to the depths and soaring to the heights of human life and activity.

The revolutionary spirit has two functions. One is to destroy the existing norms and conditions obstructing the growth of the race and the other to build up and create new moulds for expansion and development for reaching new peaks of achievement. The revolutionary impulse leads ordinarily to the destruction of the present along with the past. It gets exhausted with the work of destruction and often leaves chaos behind. But that revolutionary is rare who could, while destroying the old fossilised and sapless frames of thought, lay firm and unshakable foundations for the future. Sri Aurobindo belongs to this class of full and total revolutionaries.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the Scripture of any country or clime, however ancient it may be, like the Veda, cannot be the last word on the Supreme and the Absolute. If the supreme divinity is beyond word and intellectual conception, he says, how can it be bound by any scripture however elastic it may be? The Infinite is unbounded and cannot be restricted to any word-formula.

Sri Aurobindo has revolutionised the whole of Man-hood and God-hood and laid wide roads for all humanity to walk or run along safely and securely towards the desired goal. In the Indian style he is a Rishi of global vision into whose sweep of synthesis fall the East and the West with their diversities and complexities.

In the field of Yoga also, he is unique as a revolutionary. There are no set rules, no initiations, no inevitable kriyas. All life is Yoga. Everything is internal and you develop the right mental attitudes. There is no particular time or place for doing

Yoga and no qualification for any individual. Anybody can commence from the point where he is in life and society. It is a harmonious and progressive living from within out. He says: "There is to me nothing secular, all human activity is for me a thing to be included in a complete spiritual life."

While all the past Acharyas say that Moksha, liberation, is the goal of all Yoga, Sri Aurobindo says that the goal of his integral Yoga is the transformation of human nature into divine nature and the transformation of human life into divine life, here and now. He says that Moksha is only an important incident in the course of the integral Yoga envisaged by him.

His *Essays on the Gita* provides a specimen of his revolutionary vision of things. His approach to the Gita is unbiased and free from any preconceived ideas. He does not want to justify with its help any creed or system of thought or philosophy, either his own or any other. He approaches it with an unconditioned mind, as a result of which his understanding and interpretation of it are wide and deep. His vision of truth in the Gita is vast, comprehensive and full of light. His concepts of Sacrifice, the Work, the two natures Para and Apra, the three Purushas Kshara, Akshara and Purushottama are absolutely new and original. The meanings put into expressions like Swabhawa-Swadharma, the Divine Birth and the Divine Work of the Lord are simply marvellous. They revolutionise the current spiritual notions and values. It is a magnificent book of synthesis of all spiritual knowledge and experience, intended to prepare humanity to strive for and jump into the next event of the Divine Manifestation in humanity and the world.

The literary field is no exception to Sri Aurobindo's revolutionary thought. He classified poetry as a form of soul expression into several categories: subtle-physical, vital, mental and beyond-mental. He visualised in his *Future Poetry* the Mantra as the highest form of poetic expression, where vision and voice merge into a hymn of light and power filled with the presence of the supreme spirit.

In his two books, *The Ideal of Human Unity* and *The Human Cycle*, he revolutionised the current notions of polity and society and laid firm foundations for a new form of Government and Society.

The free and unfettered soul of Sri Aurobindo broke all traditional barriers in all the fields of human activity. His vision is of an all-inclusive multiplicity based on the firm and immovable foundations of unity.

In his courageous adventure into consciousness he disclosed the seed of a Supramental race emerging. With a conviction fortified by his experience he announced and laid bare its outlines. May the human race turn to the new light brought down by Sri Aurobindo, absorb and assimilate it and thus be benefited by it.

M. SHRIRAMULU

LETTERS ON POETRY

5

IMAGERY AND RHYTHM

I HAVE received your reflections apropos of my essay, "The Process of Great Poetry". The point you are elaborating is George Brenan's that the work of Garcilaso de la Vega in Spanish is sufficient proof that rhythm is the essential thing in poetry and that one does not require any of what is usually called imagery. By imagery you particularly have similes and metaphors in mind. Your contention is that, except for rare cases such as the dying Gorgythion's head that sinks slowly "like a poppy heavy with rain" or as the dream-image where Achilles pursues Hector, similes in Homer add nothing essential to the subject and that accurate description (non-photographic, of course) is more vivid to you than the comparison of something to something else. Most similes and metaphors seem to you to come from a secondary kind of insight, and that is why "every simile limps".

The last tag you have cited from me. But my explanation of the limping had nothing to do with primary or secondary insight. My idea was that a thing, by itself, having its own individual and unique nature, cannot be quite measured by its interplay and even interfusion with some other things within a common cosmic vision-consciousness: hence *omne simile claudicat*. But this claudication does not, in my view, show that comparison of something to something else cannot for the most part serve as a revelatory act. All depends upon the intensity of the simile-sight, the metaphor-manifestation. I am far from asking a poet to go in for figurative language at all cost. My thesis would be: similes and metaphors are of the primary stuff of poetry because poetic sight is not only particular, precise and pointed but also many-braided, many-shaded and many-graded—it fans out to multiplicities and gathers them into unities—it catches gleams from near and far into its own self-shine, because poetry at its source is the Cosmic Being looking both concentratedly and widely into its own forms and bringing out their life-thrill and their mind-motion and, above all, their soul-tone by means of rhythmic words.

Once you admit that the Cosmic Being is fundamentally at work, the primacy or essentiality of the figurative expression should be evident. But, surely, I do not mean that always recognisable similes and metaphors should be present: imagery could very well be implicit, involved, fused. And in this subdued or latent shape it is prevalent even in lines that are apparently free of simile or metaphor; since it is simply the operation of the "seeing" which, along with "hearing", is the hallmark of the poet. Seeing simultaneously with hearing in terms basically of the soul in us which is a creative delight-centre of divine personality focusing in a certain *swabhāva* the Universal Spirit, with the Transcendent Reality behind it—there you have the ultimate definition of the poetic phenomenon. If I may use a line from Sri Aurobindo's

Savitri to illustrate the highest poetic expression as well as the very nature of the expressive mode, poetry is primarily

Sight's sound-waves breaking from the soul's great deeps.

You will observe that this line concedes the truth of your own thesis too that rhythm is the essential thing in poetry, but it suggests that rhythm is not the one and only essential. Rhythm, in a complex sense, is sufficient to music, not to poetry which has to do with articulate meaning, being a verbal rhythm, and which has to make its meaning articulate like a visible moving body so that we may have no mere abstractions of thought but thought living upon our pulses and stirring across our eyes. Even verse that appears to be the statement of a thought has the vividness of a presence passing by or standing before us: say, Dante's

E la sua volontade è nostra pace,

(which may be Englished:

His Will alone is our tranquillity)

or Shakespeare's

To be or not to be—that is the question,

or Keats's

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know,

or Wordsworth's

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears,

or Sri Aurobindo's

Force one with unimaginable rest.

No figure leaps out in any of these memorable utterances. Yet they are not just the thought of a poet—they are the poet thinking or rather the poet seeing and hearing with his soul a thought as it occurs within his mind and echoes within his heart. Perhaps you will object: "How can we speak of 'seeing a thought' when there is no concrete term in most of these lines? Some concreteness is there in Wordsworth's

vocables 'lie', 'deep' and 'tears'; the sense of the remainder cannot be visualised at all." My answer is:

"States of being, conditions of experience, phases of realisation, evocations of actuality, vivifications of verity are here. A Supreme Person is conjured up by Dante in a mighty fulfilling relationship with finite human desire. Shakespeare projects Existence and Non-existence and points to them with an inquiring and penetrating *angst*. Platonic Forms, as it were, meet us in Keats who, as intuitive poet, feels them somewhere high above or deep within and connects them with the transitory facts of seeking, yearning, exploring earth-life. Wordsworth is clearly astir with world-interpretative profundities that are beatifically free from the Virgilian 'touch of tears in mortal things'. He is stating from the hither-side of the Universal and the Transcendent what another Aurobindonian line states from the thither-side:

Our life's repose is in the Infinite.

The word 'repose'—a semi-concrete term—answers to the Wordsworthian concreteness of 'lie' and 'deep'. But there is a subtle concreteness also in the Aurobindonian.

Force one with unimaginable rest.

The noun 'rest' is not unrelated to 'repose'—but even apart from it we get paradoxically through the very adjective 'unimaginable' which should cut us off from all imagery the suggestion of the living basis of the 'thoughts' which Wordsworth speaks of—an everlasting Reality that is a Being or the Being of beings, a Super-Person objective to our little selves though subjective to the ultimate truth of our existence. And this Super-Person, support and goal and consummation of all our personalities, is presented to us by Sri Aurobindo as not only a repose of the Infinite but also a dynamism of the Eternal, the very Will of the Dantesque conception that has the power to give us peace because it is itself a limitless Tranquillity, within which abide the archetypes of the universe, the omnipotent perfections that can fulfil all our aspirations towards the true, the good, the beautiful, and can respond with a beatific Essence to all such queries as Hamlet hangs between Existence and Non-existence, and can convert the 'tears' of Wordsworth's line into a preparation, so to speak, of Tennyson's

Tears from the depth of some divine despair

and an anticipation of that exquisite mystical poignancy which Amal Kiran has named

The longing of ecstatic tears
From infinite to infinite.

In all the lines ostensibly offering us a thought we have a visionary posture and gesture, an ethereal or metaphysical concreteness, a secret action of 'the poet's eye in a fine

frenzy rolling' from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven."

If I were to assert that there could be no fine poetry without an open simile or metaphor I should be misstating my case. A visionary posture and gesture of some kind or other—overt or covert, direct or indirect—is the "imagery" I claim as of primary nature in poetry. I would likewise consider one to be in error if on the strength of Garcilaso de la Vega one declared that rhythm alone makes the poetic effect. Just as Shakespearean verse teems with metaphor producing some of the greatest lines in world-poetry—

In cradle of the rude imperious surge....

And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh....

After life's fitful fever he sleeps well...

In the dark backward and abysm of Time...

and just as this verse brings best into prominence the figurative nature of poetry, which reaches its acme in the metaphysical mode, so too perhaps Garcilasoan verse streams with music at every turn producing line on marvellous line that is world-poetry's rare treasure and such verse throws most into relief the rhythmic nature of poetry, which attains its climax openly in the musical mode. But poetry need not be Garcilasoanly rhythmic, even as it need not be Shakespeareanly figurative, in order to be authentic inspiration. Answering to the visionary posture and gesture of some kind or other that I have stipulated as of the essence, there is a patterned flux and reflux of this or that sort which has to be considered as of the essence. Fundamentally, rhythm is a movement of harmonic recurrences conveying the inner life-beat, as it were, of a phenomenon, whether an object, a situation, a character or a mood. It can indeed be most musical, as in

Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang...

Infandum, regina, jubes renovare dolorem...
(Words cannot utter, O queen, the grief you bid me remember)

The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea...

To save the Athenian wall from ruin bare...

O no man knows
Through what wild centuries
Roves back the rose...

O my sweet flower,
Art thou too whelmed in this fierce wailing flood?

But rhythm can be unforgettably poetic also by a subtle power which transforms even prose-like diction. The verse already quoted,

To be or not to be—that is the question,

has apparently a prose-order but an intensity is there in metrical pattern, exactly expressive of the psychological state concerned, which gives us one of the most famous articulations of puzzlement in poetry. Or take that query of Lear to the dead Cordelia:

Why should a horse, a dog, a rat have life
And thou no breath at all?

Can pathos be more poetic? Yet where is any spell-binding sound in it? And what about Donne's impatient, almost colloquial, protest to his girl-friend?—

For God's sake hold your tongue and let me love.

Or listen to Beddoes in what again seems a moment of ordinary speech:

I shall see him
No more. All hell is made of these two words.

Poignant poetry is here, with the rhythm cunningly communicative in spite of its artless-looking natural-ordered monosyllables. No marked music is present, but a world of sorrow comes through the initial position of those "two words" that are said to constitute "all hell"—namely, "No more". And the dominant internal scheme of metrical weight—the thrice-occurring spondee ("No more—All hell—two words")—creates a psychological heaviness, a sense of the burden of inexorable fate, a stamping of the seal of doom. The sound of all these lines is as far as possible from Garcilaso's word-melodies or, to fall back on English verse, Swinburne's swirl and sweep and magical mellifluence:

All the bells of heaven may ring,
All the birds of heaven may sing,
All the wells of earth may spring,
All the winds of earth may bring
All sweet sounds together;

Sweeter far than all things heard,
 Hand of harper, tone of bird,
 Sound of woods at sundawn stirred,
 Welling water's winsome word,
 Wind in warm wan weather,

One thing yet there is that none
 Hearing ere its chime be done
 Knows not well the sweetest one
 Heard of man beneath the sun,
 Hoped in heaven hereafter;
 Soft and strong and loud and light,
 Very sound of very light
 Heard from morning's rosiest height,
 When the soul of all delight
 Fills a child's clear laughter.

Golden bells of welcome rolled
 Never forth such notes, nor told
 Hours so blithe in tones so bold,
 As the radiant mouth of gold
 Here that rings forth heaven.
 If the golden-crested wren
 Were a nightingale—why, then,
 Something seen and heard of men
 Might be half as sweet as when
 Laughs a child of seven.

A rhapsodical exaggeration with yet a truth-touch of the "psyche" in it, this is superb achievement, though perhaps more figurative in parts than Garcilaso appears to have been from your description. But what makes it such is essentially the same quality that renders Drayton's hardly mellifluous, rather matter-of-fact and bare-toned plea,

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part,

or Wordsworth's absolutely simple and straightforward metrical assertion of a finality,

And never lifted up a single stone,

a little masterpiece of poetic effect. The quality in question is the measured seizing of the inner pulse of an intuitive response to some aspect of existence. The seizing could develop into elaborate and distinctive rhythm or come out in a quiet controlled

unobtrusive accent. The former is not necessarily more fundamentally poetic. To pass from the sublime to the ludicrous, I may illustrate this point by taking that inspired epigram of Wordsworth—

The Child is father of the Man—

and show how its softly spoken mixture of piquancy and profundity could lose all its intuitiveness in what Sidgwick has imagined Swinburne as making of the same paradoxical sentiment:

The manner of man by the boy begotten
Is son to the child that his sire begets
And sire to the child of his father's son.

I shall leave you with this rapturously ridiculous riddle.

K. D. SETHNA

P.S. Perhaps my letter goes on as if you were incapable, by and large, of enjoying “imagery” in poetry. But I do not mean to imply this. I know that you can enjoy it and even accept it as legitimate. What I have been carried away to do is just to set right a seeming bias in regard to the ultimate values of the *ars poetica*.

NIGHT'S DEPTH

THROUGH the silent hours
Of deepest night,
I see Her approaching—
A diamond Light.

Radiantly smiling
At souls that dream
She wades in Beauty
Through slumber's stream.

She kisses my cheeks,
Caresses my brow,
I feel Her warmth,
Her loving glow.

I drink thirstily
All the Love and Light,
Devour hungrily
The luminous sight.

She gathers all prayers
That mount to Her
From sleeping bodies
But hearts astir;

Then kindles again
A living fire,
That will burn for the morrow
Through life's hard mire.

In the silent hours,
In the godlike hush,
I feel my being
Towards Her rush.

Then it dives into
Her Love's vast sea,
It splashes about,
And swims in glee.

My soul is happy
In the flood of Light
To find life's secret
In the depth of night.

SUDHA

THE PARIJAT AND I

SEEING the Parijat blossom in late evening
I think the stars have descended
To share earth's life; thus refreshed
They would return to their lonely vigil.

Or are they souls awaiting birth
Having a preview of earthly life?
A sojourn full of fragrant peace
Before entering a womb's night?

The buds if plucked gently
Bloom at leisure, like faith
Which grows with each act
That is surrendered to the Divine Flame.

In early dawn I gather
Flowers that rained at night,
Bowing and surrendering all pride
I start my day with worship and light.

I and the Parijat begin anew
To evoke with each beat of life
Aspirations that would blossom
And be ready after a day's strife
For offering the next morning.

DINKAR

'THE BLESSED FÉMININE'

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

(Continued from the issue of January 1982)

AMEENA, the wife of Ibn Sawy and mother of Nureddene, in *The Viziers of Bassora*, is a sensible woman who can advise her husband in his hour of need; but she loves her son not wisely but too well. She cannot think of her son being bad:

He is not bad, but wild, a trifle wild:
And the one little fault's like a stray curl
Among his clustering golden qualities,
That graces more than it disfigures him.
Bad coin! Oh, Doonya, even the purest gold
Has some alloy, so do not call him bad.³⁷

For her Nureddene is 'the dearest', 'the beautifullest and kindest'. Both Ibn Sawy and Doonya describe her as spoiling her son. The Vizier tells his wife: '... Whenever I would turn/ Wholesomely harsh to him, you come between/ And coax my anger. Therefore he is spoilt.' Her proposed stiffness melts away in the presence of her son.

On the other hand, Khatoon, sister of Ameena and wife of the wicked Almune loves her son not only well but also wisely. She is very much concerned about the evil ways of her son and wants to reform him. But she is as unfortunate in her son as in her husband. She repeatedly warns her husband:

You have indulged the boy till he has lost
The likeness even of manhood. God's great stamp
And heavenly image on his mint's defaced,
Rubbed out, and only the brute metal left
Which never shall find currency again
Among his angels.³⁸

But for this wholesome advice, she gets only abuse from him: 'Termagant,/ Some day I'll have you stripped and soundly caned/ By your own women, if you grow not gentler.' Her son too has equal contempt for his mother: 'Do, father, break her teeth! She's always scolding./ Sometimes she beats me when you're out. Do break them,/ I shall so laugh.' Her position wins our pity and sympathy when she is suspected by her husband even when she tries to save his life from his son: 'Unnatural mother,/ What is this hatred that thou hast, to slander/ The issue of thy womb?'

Ungarica, the mother of Vasavadutta, resembles Cassiopea in many respects. Ungarica is a woman of great insight into men and things. About the capture of Vuthsa, her remark to her husband is significant:

Thou holdst the sun
Under the armpit as the tailed god did.
What wilt thou do with it?

She tells her husband that she can see that 'Vuthsa is too great/ For thy greatness, too cunning for thy cunning; he/ Will bend not to thy pressure.' When King Mahasegn is confident of his daughter who has 'dignity, pride, wisdom, noble hopes' not acting as 'common natures do', pat comes the answer of Ungarica who has a better understanding of a woman's heart: 'Love will unseat them all and put them down/ Under his flower-soft feet.' She makes a correct assessment of her daughter's emotions:

Why? though I know.
Thou wilt not speak? I'll speak then for thee.
Off!
It is because thou canst not here control
What thy immortal part with rapture wills
And the mortal longingly desires; for yet
Thy proud heart cannot find the way to yield.³⁹

She is not unduly perturbed about her husband's anger because she knows 'If we give his rage its hour/ 'T will sink'. She as a typical Indian woman advises her daughter that the honour of the husband's family should be supreme in her mind:

My child, let him who clasps thee be thy god
That thou mayst be his goddess; let your wedded arms
Be heaven; let his will be thine and thine
Be his, his happiness thy regal pomp.⁴⁰

She can very tactfully handle difficult situations. For instance, when the King wants to kill Umba for her collaboration in the elopement of Vasavadutta, the Queen saves the life of the girl by cleverly asking him: 'Thou'lt stain thy soul with a woman's murder, King?' When Mahasegn frets and fumes that Vuthsa has humiliated him and his race, by carrying away his daughter, it is Ungarica who puts the matter in the proper perspective:

Cowsambie's king has kept the Aryan law.
Nor is thy daughter shamed at all in this,
But taken with noblest honour.

There is a mystery about her parents: '... but the pale young queen, Ungarica/ Was to a strange inhuman father born/ And from dim shades her victor dragged her forth,' says Yougundharayan. This is also confirmed by Mahasegn's words:

Since out of thy dim world I dragged thee alarmed
Into the sun and breeze and azure skies
By force, my fortune?

Even in a fragment of a play—*Prince of Edur*—we get Menadevi, wife of Curran, who is proud of her clan and wants her daughter to wed only the Rao of Ichalgurh because 'He's a warrior and a Chauhan', and later repeats this idea in the words: 'My blood shall never mingle with the Scythian.' She is respectful and dutiful to her husband but at the same time plans a counter-stratagem to get a good husband for her daughter.

While almost all the women characters of Sri Aurobindo appear noble in word and deed, the lone exception seems to be Cleone, sister of Phayllus and companion of Cleopatra. For her, pitying a man who is to be killed is 'a foolish thought'. She is jealous of Rodogune who, according to her,

... is a twilight soul, not Frank, not Greek,
Some Magian's daughter full of midnight's spells.
I think she is a changeling from the dead.
I hate the sorceress!

She shows herself a sadist when she describes how she would punish Rodogune if she were the queen:

I would have many perfect tortures made
To hurt the Parthian with, for every nerve
A torture. I would lie in flowers the while
Drinking sweet Cyprian wine and hear her moan.

That she is sensuous can be gathered from her words:

I am glad
This gloomy, grand Antiochus is dead.
O now for pastime, dances, youth and flowers!
Youth, Youth! for we shall have upon the throne
No greybeard longer, but some glorious boy
Made for delight with whom we shall be young
For ever.⁴¹

She is a wicked soul whose help is sought by the villain Phayllus: ‘Wilt thou assist,—/ For you have courage, falsehood, brains,—my growth?/ Your own assisted,— that is understood.’ But even Phayllus decides to give her up because he feels: ‘She is too violent for my calmer ends/ Lust drives her, not ambition, I wait on you,/ You gods who choose. If Fate intends my rise,/ She will provide the instruments and cause.’ The other women characters are simply servant maids and other inferior characters who are tailored according to the needs of the plots. Hence they are necessarily sketchy.

Sri Aurobindo’s creations show the positive as well as the negative side of his dramatic ability. On the positive side, we find that these characters are conceived powerfully and portrayed effectively. Again they embody the noble qualities of human nature and represent the dramatist’s conception of the high ideals of womanliness. Thirdly, in spite of their overlapping traits, the characters are sufficiently individualized so as to remain distinctly in the minds of the readers. The characters are consistent in their nature and behaviour and hence are dramatically effective. On the other hand, we do not find the sweep of humanity that we find in Shakespeare. But here we should not forget that quantitatively the dramatic output of the bard of Pondicherry is very limited when compared to that of the bard of Stratford-on-Avon. Moreover, for Shakespeare the writing of plays was a question of bread and butter, whereas for Sri Aurobindo it was only one of the outlets for his creative genius. The fact that Sri Aurobindo gave up writing plays after a certain stage shows that he did not find the dramatic medium as effective as poetry to convey his weighty thoughts. Secondly, except for the minor characters, all the characters in the complete plays belong to royalty and this confines Sri Aurobindo’s creations to one particular stratum of society and does not reveal his creative talent fully. In addition, most of the characters appear somewhat flat and do not show much growth in the course of the plays. But S. S. Kulkarni tries to present a different view:

Except the early fragments, and, to an extent, *The Viziers of Bassora*, all the plays employ concentration as a method of dramatic characterization. Each feature of a character is elaborated in strict relevance to the whole; every character is so presented as to appear adequate to the demands which the plot makes upon it. Especially in the case of the hero, the heroine and other principal characters, only those characteristics are made prominent which really influence the course of action. This principle of dramatic economy is evident for the first time in *Perseus* in the case of Andromeda and Cydone. It becomes more pronounced in *Rodogune*, *Eric* and *Vasavadutta*. The development of character for its own sake is confined to the fragments.⁴²

However, no deficiency in characterization in any way lessens the charm of the characters as they are. Moreover, there seems to be a purpose behind the presentation of these women as has been pointed out by Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar:

And the role of the blessed Feminine is another recurrent motif in these plays. Andromeda, Anice-Aljalice, Rodogune, Aslaug, Vasavadutta, Comol Coomary form a zig-zag series of the eternal feminine, comprising all the womanly virtues, and in the fullness of time beyonding them in the terrible and beautiful Penthesilea (in *Ilion*) and culminating at last in Savitri, the woman-Divine.⁴³

(Concluded)

M. N. SUNDARARAMAN

NOTES

37. "The Viziers of Bassora", p. 586.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 569.

39. "Vasavadutta", pp. 279-280

40. *Ibid*, p. 255.

41. "Rodogune", p. 343.

42. S.S. Kulkarni, "The Plays of Sri Aurobindo" in *Perspectives on Indian Drama in English*, ed. M K. Naik and S. Mokashi-Punekar (Madras. Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 9.

43. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo: a biography and a history*, pp. 256-259.

SRI AUROBINDO ON EDUCATION

(Continued from the issue of December 1981)

So far we have discussed the three lines of education—physical, vital and mental which are concerned with purely human faculties. But education must not stop there, it must prepare the basal foundation of a higher life, so it must move beyond mental faculties for bringing about a radical transformation of human nature. Here lies the relevance of ‘psychic’ and ‘spiritual’ education. With psychic education, we come to the problem of the true motive of life, the reason of our existence upon earth. ‘Psychic’ means ‘belonging to the soul or psyche’. “The psychic being is a conscious form of the Divine growing in the evolution.” In some rare moments in the ordinary life, there is “a glimmering of the realisation that each human being is a self-developing soul.” In addition to helping “the child to educate himself, to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities and to grow freely as one organic being”, it is also essential “to find his deeper self, the real psychic entity within,”¹⁶ of which he might have a vague perception in some extraordinary moments. Hence, according to Sri Aurobindo, “the right object of education and indeed of all human life is to discover that man is inwardly a soul and a conscious power of the Divine.”¹⁷ Admittedly, each individual must take the initiative in this discovery and a great resolution, an unfettered conviction, a strong determination and an untiring perseverance are all indispensable to achieve this end. Normally, psychic education is not included in the scheme of general education and reasons for the exclusion seem to be obvious. Nevertheless the truth which Sri Aurobindo likes to drive at is that educative refinement should continue till the goal is reached.

And the ultimate goal of human life, from the religious point of view, is identification with Supreme Spiritual Reality or Transcendent God, whom every devout soul approaches in a spirit of absolute self-giving. This merging into the Absolute or God is what is known as Liberation, Moksha or Nirvana, for which a total and absolute self-surrender is the *sine qua non*. But individual liberation in Sri Aurobindo’s creative vision, does not fit well with the cosmic evolution. It is his profound realisation that a Divine Reality is seeking to be manifested in earth-consciousness—there will be an out-flowering of the Divine in the collective life of humanity. Man by attaining supermanhood should actively co-operate with the Supreme Divine Consciousness to manifest it in the physical life. As the divine life is the highest fulfilment of our life in this very world, education as an effective method of human development should assist man to fulfil his spiritual destiny. Thus the Mother suggests that the future education will be supramental education and this “will result not merely in a progressively developing formation of the human nature, an increasing growth of its latent faculties, but a transformation of the nature itself, transformation of the being in its entirety, a new ascent of the species above and beyond man towards superman, leading in the end to the appearance of the divine race upon earth.”¹⁸ Keep-

ing this in view, Sri Aurobindo remarks, 'the future is our aim and summit.'

The scheme of education, according to Sri Aurobindo, is neither complete nor perfect without Yoga. It is undoubtedly Yoga which leads man to realise the ultimate aim of education, namely, self-education and divine perfection of man, society and the universe. By Yoga, Sri Aurobindo always means Integral Yoga, which is essentially a technique of man's conscious union and active co-operation with the Dynamic Divine Force operative in the world-process so as to bring about a radical transformation of the entire embodied existence. No doubt, mere school or collegiate education is insufficient to achieve this end, for which sincere and constant practice of the discipline of Integral Yoga is indispensable. To sum up: "The growth of consciousness, its culture and transformation is the end and purpose of all true education: its highest consummation, its supreme perfection is what is intended by yoga, the mystic's system of inner discipline."¹⁹

Education as it is generally understood in the academic circle has no psychic and spiritual moorings. Acknowledging the supreme importance especially of the three fundamental principles of education as enunciated by Sri Aurobindo and their relevance to any system of education, let us put together some of the practical implications of his educational philosophy. He lays great stress on the harmonious development of every aspect of human life—physical, vital, mental, moral and religious. As we have seen, he advocates spontaneous development, normal growth of the latent individual powers, capacities and virtues along with social qualities. Sri Aurobindo is pronouncedly against all sorts of imposition of views and opinions on the passive acceptance of the receptive mind. Further, theoretical knowledge and applied knowledge, physical education and social education must be evenly balanced in any comprehensive system of education, thereby enabling the growth of an integrated personality. Above all, we must accord utmost priority to the needs of education and "organise the whole life of the nation as a perpetual process of education", for it is meaningful education alone which can foster national integration, mould national character and also determine the destiny of the nation. Another very important feature of Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy is that the teacher is the soul of the educational system and no scheme of education can succeed without a body of competent teachers well-trained for this task. The teacher must be a man of moral integrity who will set an example before the pupils by living a life according to certain ideals. At present when most of the teachers are promotionists and careerists, we badly need some dedicated teachers for the successful implementation of the educational scheme.

Sri Aurobindo also urges that education should be national, suggesting thereby that it must be based upon the traditions and cultural heritage of the nation concerned. In his third principle of education, he has cogently argued that for the natural growth of the individual, it is essential that he should be nurtured on his native soil. This is why he calls his system of education national. It might be objected that a purely national system of education runs the risk of encouraging narrowness of outlook and

consequently leading to the compartmentalisation of knowledge. *Prima facie*, such a possibility cannot be ruled out. But if we closely follow Sri Aurobindo's educational thought in its totality, we find little scope for any such misapprehension. His vision is to build the superstructure of internationalism on the foundation of National Education. Incidentally, in the contemporary world, there is a lot of loud talk about internationalism, but it must be frankly admitted that the cry for internationalism up till now has been nothing more than a catchy slogan, at least for the politicians. It is a dream still to be realised.

Most of the recent writers on the philosophy of education may criticise Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy and characterise it as idealistic, suggesting by such a label that this system of education, in view of its utopian nature, cannot be applied in practice. It goes without saying that ideal inspires action, theory guides practice. Sri Aurobindo has given us a luminous ideal and some very important guidelines which can be profitably utilised while giving a concrete shape to our plans and programmes of education. India is confronted with numerous serious problems in the field of education and it can be reasonably hoped that the philosophy of education put forth by Sri Aurobindo will provide immense help in finding some sound solutions. Instead of taking a piecemeal view of education from one or another point of view, he has given a comprehensive picture of it in the light of his integral approach to life and to man's ultimate destiny upon earth. He attaches, as we have seen, great importance to education as a dependable means of human development, both individual and collective. If education is planned and directed only for material embellishment and for the attainment of excellence in any particular craft or trade, leaving the human mind blind and recalcitrant and the consciousness underdeveloped, then education is of very marginal value so far as man's civilized existence is concerned. A modern mechanized society groaning under the heels of legislation, bureaucracy, brain-washing, propaganda and hypocrisy is seeking to usher in an era of peace and plenty free from all sorts of exploitation and injustice by effecting changes in the social, political and economic institutions. But all these attempts have not produced the anticipated results. We are gradually going to realise that the world cannot be renovated without renovating ourselves. Sri Aurobindo's integral education shows an unerring way to self-renovation.

P. Spratt characterises the Hindu mind as narcissistic. The narcissistic type, he holds, is inward-looking, more prone to withdrawing into oneself.²⁰ We are, however, not inclined to regard Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of education as narcissistic in the sense stated above. His educational scheme emphasises the cultivation of scientific and rational faculties to a high degree of perfection, he is also inclined to incorporate in the educational programme all those ideas and practices which have been found to be worthy and useful in the present. Further, he is not a traditionalist just as he is not a narcissist. To maintain a link with the past in the hope of utilising the ancient wisdom is not traditionalism. All that is past is not necessarily unworthy and devoid of contemporary relevance.

It is often said that Sri Aurobindo has tried to give a theoretical philosophy of education, but has not offered practical schemes embodying his principles. This is not a correct appraisal of his educational philosophy and, as a matter of fact, in certain issues he has given a fairly detailed account. Indeed, he has not elaborately examined all the practical problems of education, such as teaching methods, framing the curriculum, proportion of various subjects to be learnt, social studies, methods of examination, administration of academic institutions, function of the University and so on. But Sri Aurobindo is essentially a Yogi, a poet, a patriot and a metaphysician of the highest order and we should not find fault with him if we do not see him play the role of a full-fledged educationist. To work out the details of the scheme has been left to the educationalists and its execution entrusted to expert teachers without whom even the best conceived plan would fail. In India no serious experiment with any philosophy of education has been made whole-heartedly. Here we have many complex problems in the field of education and, actually, up till now we have not been able to strike upon a clear-cut and well-defined educational policy. We have not yet set before ourselves any definite and meaningful ideal which we would want to realise through our educational scheme. It is often remarked and perhaps not unreasonably that 'education' is the greatest casualty in the post-independence India. Indeed there has been some patchwork here and there, but the entire system requires thorough overhauling, if not replacement. We need direction in both our individual and national life, and a sound and comprehensive system of education can go a long way in meeting this directional function. Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy can very well be the basis of our future scheme of education.

(Concluded)

RANJIT KUMAR ACHARJEE

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- ¹⁶ Sri Aurobindo: *The Human Cycle*, p. 36.
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- ¹⁸ *The Mother on Education*, p. 62.
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- ²⁰ *Hindu Culture and Personality* (Manaktala Publishers, Bombay).

A CALL AND THE ANSWER

DURING the early part of the year 1980, I passed through very difficult days or rather evenings.

I am in the habit of going for a walk on the beach every evening. But this routine was hampered by a difficulty in breathing. The suffocation that I experienced used to be so intense at times that I found it impossible to move even a few steps further. But the funniest part of this phenomenon was that this occurred only on my walks on the beach. Even as I entered the lane leading to the beach the trouble would appear! I avoided all medicines and kept faith only in what Sri Aurobindo had written: "The spirit within us is the only all-efficient Doctor and submission of the body to it the one true panacea."

This went on for quite some time and I suffered silently all along. Then one evening at about 5 p.m. I prayed to the Mother regarding my trouble. I asked Her fervently and desperately whether She wanted me to continue my routine walk or drop it. And further in great anguish I said to Her that I wanted Her answer to my prayer here and now! I waited for a second for a sign from Her!

Just then to my surprise my wife who was in the kitchen informed me that the gas stove had been lighted. This was in reference to one of the gas stoves that had not been serviceable for a long time due to some blockage.

I accepted with joy and gratitude this sign of flame as an approbation of my prayer. Since that day till today, I have taken my evening stroll on the beach regularly without any difficulty in breathing.

D. S. PATHRE

THE ENTRY TEXT IN THE TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

AN INTERPRETATION IN THE LIGHT OF SRI AUROBINDO

1. Taittiriya Upanishad and the Entry Text

THE *Taittirīya* is one of the ancient Upanishads. It forms part of the *Taittirīya āraṇyaka* and consists of three chapters, *Śikṣā valli*, *Brahmānanda valli*, and *Bhṛgu valli*. Shankara has written a commentary on this Upanishad. This is the earliest available commentary on it. His disciple Sureshvara has written a verse commentary elaborating the original commentary of his master, known as *Taittirīya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya Vārtika*.

We shall confine ourselves to an important text which occurs in the second chapter of the Upanishad viz. the entry text, *praveśa śruti*, and try to interpret it in the light of Sri Aurobindo. Already the text has acquired considerable importance in view of the fact that it happens to be one of the few texts in the Upanishad on which Shankara has introduced lengthy discussions. Apart from this, we have chosen it for a fresh study because it declares that even material forms are substantively identical with Brahman.

To interpret the above text in the light of Sri Aurobindo is by no means an easy task. For nowhere has Sri Aurobindo referred to this particular text in his writings on the Upanishads or on other subjects. The one work in which it appears as an epigraph is his metaphysical treatise, *The Life Divine*.¹ However, it is not an impossible task because we can work out an interpretation based on the clues and suggestions that are scattered in his writings, especially his writings on the Upanishads, yoga, and metaphysics.

2. Background of the Entry Text: Shankara's View

The second chapter opens with the declaration that the knower of Brahman attains the highest, *brahmavid āpnoti param* (2-1-1). Shankara points out that the highest (*param*) is nothing but Brahman. The knower of Brahman is one who has attained Brahman; and the phrase '*āpnoti param*', which is read as 'attains Brahman' simply explicates what is already implied in the subject of the statement. To indicate that the knowledge of the non-difference between the self and Brahman is gained through the faculty of discrimination which is the intellect, the Upanishad says that Brahman is located in the intellect, *nṛitam guhāyām* (2-1-1). The definition of Brahman as *satyam jñānam anantam* supplies the principles of discrimination. While *jñāna* and *ananta* suggest that Brahman must be distinguished from the sentient and the finite, *satya* indicates that unlike other things Brahman never changes its nature which is ascertained to be its own.² He who thus realises Brahman by discrimination

¹ See Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (1972), p. 566.

² See Shankara's Com. on the Taitt., 2-1-1.

is in a unique position where all his desires are fulfilled simultaneously.

Though the aspirant is provided with the principles of discrimination, it remains to be shown how discrimination is to be practised. It is in this context that the teaching about the fivefold sheath becomes significant. The Upanishad says that there are five sheaths in a person—the *annamaya*, the *prāṇamaya*, the *manomaya*, the *viññānamaya*, and the *ānandamaya*—and that they are arranged one within another. The outermost sheath is the *annamaya*, while the innermost is the *ānandamaya*. The aspirant is required to move from one sheath to another sheath till he goes beyond the bliss sheath. At the end of the process he realises that Brahman is the ultimate reality or the true self. In point of fact, as soon as he emerges into the *viññānamaya* he gets a direct perception of the non-difference between the self and Brahman to which the *ānandamaya* is a pointer (2-6-1).

The words *anna*, *antara*, and *ātmā* occurring in the texts referring to the different sheaths indicate a method of gradual withdrawal into the deepest part in oneself so that one can realise Brahman. Shankara explains that in the process of moving from the outermost to the innermost sheath the end is attained not by simply *going beyond* the sheaths but by *rejecting* them as unreal. In support of his interpretation he quotes the Upanishad which says that the different parts of man's formal existence are the effects of Brahman (2-1-1), and further adds that it (2-1-1) should be read along with the *vācārambhaṇa* text of the *Chāndogya* (6-1-4) which says that while the cause is real, the effect is only a name arising out of speech i.e. the effect is only a word which does not represent any reality. It is therefore clear that in order to realise Brahman the aspirant has to withdraw from the sheaths and then discard them as unreal effects which are devoid of the reality of Brahman.

3. The Entry of Brahman: Shankara's Interpretation

The entry text occurs in the sixth section of the second chapter. It says: Having created the world, Brahman entered into the very world, *tat sṛṣṭvā tat eva anuprāviśat* (2-6-1). Shankara's interpretation of this text may be divided into two parts, the part presenting the argument that the entry is not physical and the part putting forward the theory that the entry is merely a figure of speech.

If the entry is a physical act, there are at least four ways of interpreting it. It may mean that Brahman entered into the world (1) either in the original form of the creator of the world (2) or in a form different from the original i.e. in the form of the individual self; (3) that one effect of Brahman entered into another effect; (4) that Brahman entered into the world by reflection i.e. by throwing its reflection on a transparent medium in the world.

Shankara has dismissed all these interpretations as impossible. (1) As for the first, it should be noted that creation is a process of becoming where a cause enters into an effect. So when Brahman created the world, it must have entered into the world. Now to speak of Brahman's entry after the creation of the world does not make sense.

It can make sense only if Brahman had not entered into the world at the time of creation. (2) As regards the second, Brahman cannot enter the world in the form of the individual self because there is no space which is not already pervaded by Brahman. (3) Regarding the third, we shall take the following two effects of Brahman, the self and the ego. If the self enters into the ego, the former will lose its distinctive character and become indistinguishable from the latter. But such an entry is inconceivable in view of the fact that the liberation of the self is a recurring experience and a proof that there was never a merger of the two. (4) Concerning the last and fourth, the entry of Brahman by reflection is not acceptable, because Brahman is not a formed entity whose image could be reflected in an appropriate medium. Another reason is that since Brahman is infinite, there is nothing in the world which could serve as a medium for holding its reflection. All these arguments abundantly prove that a physical entry of Brahman is not intended by the Upanishad.

Now Shankara proceeds to give an alternative interpretation. He says that if the entry text is analysed in its proper context, it is not difficult to grasp its meaning. The aim of the second chapter is to teach the non-difference between the self and Brahman. The idea of non-difference is indirectly mentioned when the Upanishad says that Brahman is lodged or manifested in the intellect. There are two places where the Upanishad mentions the idea: (1) when it says that Brahman is lodged in the cave of the intellect,¹ *nhutam guhāyām* (2-1-1); (2) when it states that the *ānanda-maya*, which is a pointer to Brahman, is manifested in the intellect, the *vijñānamaya* (2-5-1). Intellect is the faculty through which the truth of non-difference is perceived. Hence, to say that Brahman is lodged in the intellect is to say that Brahman and the self are non-different. If we view the entry text (2-6-1) in this light, it may be understood that the Upanishad uses the word 'entry' in the same sense in which the word 'lodgement' is used. So when the Upanishad says that Brahman entered into the world it had created, its aim is to teach that Brahman and the self in all beings of the world are non-different. It may be objected that since the Upanishad speaks of the entry into the world rather than the entry into the intellect, the text in question viz. (2-6-1) cannot be regarded as conveying the same sense as the other texts (2-1-1 and 2-5-1). The objection can be set aside on the ground that the entry into the world implies an entry into the intellectual part of the beings of the world. It is therefore evident that the same idea of 2-1-1 and 2-5-1 is repeated in 2-6-1.

4. Background of the Entry Text: Sri Aurobindo's View

Before we proceed further, we shall examine Shankara's account of the background of the entry text and note if it agrees with the actual teachings of the Upanishad.

A. (1) Shankara takes '*brahmavid*' to be one who has not only known but at-

¹ See Shankara's Com. on the Taitt. As Brahman is concealed in the intellect the word *guha* is taken to mean the intellect.

tained Brahman. According to him the phrase '*āpnoti param*' means 'attains Brahman'. If the phrase is understood in this sense, the statement becomes a tautology. If we strictly follow the literal sense of the words, there is little to suggest that '*brahmavid āpnoti param*' is a tautological statement. It is therefore appropriate to take the phrase '*āpnoti param*' (attains the highest) to mean the attainment of something superior in consequence of the knowledge of Brahman, otherwise we miss the true significance of the word *param*. (2) Shankara says that the definition of Brahman as *satyam*, etc. is offered with a view to distinguish Brahman from the world which is *not* Brahman. But the Upanishad does not seem to support the view that Brahman is basically other than the world. On the contrary, the Upanishad, subsequent to the above definition, says that Brahman is the material cause of the world. That the world is not undivine is further indicated by the Upanishad when it says that the desires are realised along with Brahman. Desires imply the existence of the world and their fulfilment the possession of the same for enjoyment. If the enjoyment of the world with the support of Brahman is possible, then the world cannot be basically undivine or opposed to Brahman. It is therefore incorrect to say that the definition of Brahman as *satyam*, etc. is given with a view to discriminate between Brahman and the world which is non-Brahman. (3) Shankara takes '*saḥ aśnute sarvān kāmān saha brahmaṇā vipāściteti*' (2-1-1) to mean 'he enjoys all his desires simultaneously as identified with the all-knowing Brahman'. According to this interpretation, neither the existence of desires nor their fulfilment is conceivable *after* the attainment of Brahman because on attainment of Brahman all desires are said to be simultaneously fulfilled. This is a negative interpretation of a positive statement. It is with a view to put a negative interpretation on the above statement that Shankara takes the word '*saha*' in the sense of 'simultaneous' also after bringing out the other sense of 'along with'. (4) Shankara's argument for the rejection of the sheaths depends upon the support he draws from the *Chāndogya* text (6-1-4) which says that the cause is real while the effect is only a name arising out of speech i.e. the effect is only a word which does not represent anything real. If we take the context of the above text into account, its meaning becomes quite clear. Having stated that by one clod of clay all that is made of clay becomes known, the Upanishad says that the clay is real while its product is unreal. As is evident from the context, the aim of the Upanishad is to emphasise that by knowing the source the consequence is known. Its aim is not to dismiss the consequence or the products of clay as unreal. But then why is the cause said to be real? or why is the effect said to be unreal? If we take the context into account, this is what the text means: the clay is said to be real because knowledge of clay is essential to a real knowledge of its products; its products are said to be unreal because knowledge of products without reference to the knowledge of clay is unreal. It is therefore wrong to take, as Shankara has taken, the reality of the clay or the unreality of its products in an unqualified sense. If we know that the *Chāndogya* text (6-4-1) does not make an unqualified statement about either the cause or the effect, Shankara's argument for the rejection of the sheaths loses its force.

B. Sri Aurobindo says that as a rule the opening lines or passages of the Vedānta are always of great importance as they suggest the essential and pervading idea of the Upanishad.¹ The opening statement of the *Taittirīya*, *brahmavid āpnoti param*, is no exception to this rule. It contains the central teaching of the second chapter, *Brahmānanda valli*. Explaining the statement, Sri Aurobindo says that to know Brahman is to know the highest. In order to understand the true significance of the statement we need to know two things: (1) the meaning of *the highest*, and (2) the difference between knowing Brahman and knowing the highest. (1) Sri Aurobindo points out that *the highest* means the all. The all means all that has come out of, depends upon, and is controlled by, Brahman. So to know the highest is to know all that exists in the world in relation to Brahman or as the very modification of the substance of Brahman.² The *Śāṇḍilya* Upanishad (2-2) mentions the same formula when it speaks of Brahman as that which being known all else is known. (2) To know Brahman is to know the essential identity of the individual self and Brahman, whereas to know the highest is to know comprehensively how everything in the world is related to or derived from Brahman. In the words of the Gita, while the former is *jñāna*, the latter is *viñāna* (9-2). Sri Aurobindo explains that whereas *jñāna* is the 'direct spiritual awareness of the supreme Being', *viñāna* is 'the right intimate knowledge of the principles... by which all that is can be known in its divine origin and in its supreme truth of nature'.³ He calls *jñāna* and *viñāna* respectively essential and comprehensive knowledge. We shall therefore say that *brahmavid āpnoti param* means 'he who has the essential knowledge of Brahman knows all that exists, in its divine origin and in its supreme truth of nature'. The definition of Brahman as *satyam jñānam anantam*, which occurs immediately after the opening statement of the second chapter, is given with a view to supply the principles in relation to which the origin and truth of all things could be determined. After giving the definition, the Upanishad proceeds to point out that all desires are fulfilled along with the wise Brahman. Since it says 'along with the wise Brahman', it is implied that both the desires and their fulfilment are based not upon egoistic considerations but upon the wisdom of Brahman. A further significance of the statement is that since desires and their fulfilment through Brahman imply the existence of the world and the possession of the same for spiritual enjoyment, the Upanishad is offering a psychological proof that Brahman and the world are not materially different.⁴ When the Upanishad says that all the desires are fulfilled on attainment of Brahman it means that the enjoyment is progressive and unhindered, no matter what the desire is or under what circumstance the desire appears.

Commenting on the series of sheaths mentioned in the subsections of the second chapter (2 to 6), Sri Aurobindo says that it 'reveals the way (to the attainment of Brah-

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Upanishads* (1972), p. 393.

² *Ibid.*, p. 348.

³ Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita* (1972), p. 254.

⁴ When a subsequent verse in the Upanishad describes the world as *sukrtam* (2-7-1), it clearly indicates that the world is divine. See Sri Aurobindo, *Supplement* (1972), p. 332.

man) and the result of its attainment'.¹ In order to attain Brahman the aspirant has to withdraw from one sheath to another sheath till he enters into the bliss sheath and realises that Brahman is the foundation of his existence. Gradual withdrawal does not however mean that the sheaths should be rejected as though they could not be truly related to Brahman. It is only a means and not an end in itself; it is achieved so that the sheaths could be possessed by what Sri Aurobindo calls 'a sort of inclusive process of self-enlargement and transformation'.² Speaking of the relation between sheaths the Upanishad says that the outer sheath is filled by the inner sheath, *tena eṣaḥ pūrṇaḥ*. Filling is a significant word which indicates that the inner sheath is extended in such a way that it possesses the outer sheath by permeation. If the aspirant rises into the sheath of bliss and realises Brahman, his next step is to possess the other sheaths by successively extending one into another. Thus gradual withdrawal from the sheaths is the way to attain Brahman, and successive integration of the sheaths with Brahman is the result of that attainment.

(*To be continued*)

N. JAYASHANMUKHAM

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Supplement* (1972), p. 308

² Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga* (1972), p. 384. Note that this is a comment on the *Taittiriya* Upanishad.

A JAR FULL OF WISDOM

A PLAYLET FOR CHILDREN

Scene I

An elderly man in royal Mogul dress paces up and down the stage. He is King Akbar, deep in thought. His son Jehangir enters from one side, looks at his father for a while and then starts speaking.

JEHANGIR My noble father seems troubled with something.

AKBAR *(The king looks at his son for a while and then speaks):* Indeed I am troubled. Read this note which has just arrived from a subjugated Rajput prince, and tell me what I should do.

(Jehangir reads the note slowly, while the King keeps on pacing up and down.)

JEHANGIR *(reads loudly):* "I humbly request Your Majesty to send me a jar full of wisdom at an early date."

AKBAR A jar full of wisdom? Is the fellow mad? Or is he trying to test me?

JEHANGIR Let it not worry you, my esteemed father. Surely our clever Birbal will find the correct answer. I will go and fetch him.

(Jehangir goes out and Akbar keeps on pacing. Jehangir appears once again, followed by Birbal.)

BIRBAL I salute my noble King and master, and place myself at His Majesty's service. *(He bows with folded hands, and Akbar slowly hands the note over to him. Birbal reads it and laughs. The king looks at him in surprise and Jehangir smiles.)*

BIRBAL Leave this to me, Your Majesty. Give me the prettiest jar in Your collection, and I shall fill it with wisdom as desired.

AKBAR I am much relieved. *(He turns to Jehangir)* Take Birbal to our museum and let him choose the jar.

(They both go out and Jehangir returns in a short time.)

JEHANGIR Sire, he has chosen our blue and gold jar and taken it to his private garden.

AKBAR I wonder what he is going to do with it.

(Both of them walk out slowly, smiling at each other, and the curtain falls.)

Scene II

There is a small garden with a few pots of flowers

BIRBAL I shall slip into this jar a pumpkin which is just large enough to pass through the opening.

(He calls his gardener)

BIRBAL Take this jar to our vegetable garden, and tell me if we have a pumpkin just big enough to pass through its mouth.

ABDUL Very well, sir. (*The gardener goes out with the jar. Birbal paces up and down shaking his head and smiling.*)

ABDUL Sir, I have found the pumpkin. If you will kindly come with me, I shall show it to you.

(*They both go out. The scene changes. There is a vegetable garden in which pumpkins and other vegetables are growing. The gardener bends down and slips one pumpkin inside the jar.*)

BIRBAL Do not cut it from the creeper, but leave it to grow bigger and bigger inside the jar. (*The gardener looks surprised but does not ask any questions.*) Look after it every day and when it has become large enough to fill the whole jar, cut it away from the creeper and bring the jar to me.

ABDUL Very well, sir. (*The gardener bows, and Birbal walks away slowly.*)

Scene III

Akbar, Jehangir and one or two others are seated in a hall full of beautiful furniture. Birbal enters with the jar which is covered with a silk cloth, and places it at the feet of the king.

BIRBAL Lo! Your Majesty, the jar is full of wisdom which the Rajput king asked of you. Please send it to him with a letter asking him to take out and keep with him the wisdom he badly needs without breaking the jar. And to return the jar to you with the same bearer.

Please make it quite clear to him that if the jar is broken or the contents mutilated in any way, he shall be thrown into prison for the rest of his life.

(*Akbar, Jehangir and all others present laugh heartily.*)

AKBAR I shall certainly send the jar as quickly as possible.

(*He gives the jar to one of his courtiers present.*)

Have this sent immediately through a careful rider, and take Birbal's turban from his head, fill it with gold coins and give it to him.

(*Birbal removes his turban, gives it to the courtier and they all laugh heartily, and bow to the king.*)

The curtain falls.

LALITA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

What Must Humanity Do? By *Javed Hussain*. Publishers: Dorrance & Co. Ardmore, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. Pp. XI+39. Hd.Bd. Price: \$ 3.95.

THERE was a time, our history books tell us, when man was filled with awe the moment he confronted the creations of the wonderful Wizard of Heaven. The heavy down-pour of rain, the scorching sun, hooded poisonous serpents, wild animals and deep waters always remained a threat and man did obeisance to all that put his heart go pit-a-pat. But when he began to use the power to think and civilization dawned, he attempted to unravel everything that had remained mysterious so far. His attempts proved fruitful to a certain extent. The awe-inspiring creations were put to use and the creatures of the wild were tamed and domesticated. As ages passed, man progressed both in mind and body. The overuse of his brain, with the intention of out-doing the creations of the great world-Wizard, brought into the world awe-inspiring inanimate things like the hydrogen-bomb. But before man could puff his chest out and boast of his inventions, he found himself caught in the tangle of his own creations and at present he is struggling to relieve himself from their abominable clutches. Now the wheel has turned full circle. Man after all his achievements realizes that he is once again in the Dark Ages with only a little change: he is clothed and is no more afraid of the Creator's creations but terribly frightened of his own. Doubtless we are living in very exciting times as well as in very dangerous times.

Prof. Javed Hussain in his timely book warns us that we are at a crossroads. Forces of destruction are threatening humanity. We have weapons potent enough to annihilate mankind. With a sense of reasoned urgency he points out: "War is not the only calamity. Another is pollution. Another is shortage of resources." He makes a strong plea for immediate action, and makes it clear to his readers that what he has written stems from his anguish and enormous desire for progressive change and reform.

Dr Javed Hussain points out that many of the challenging problems of our times are defying solution because the solution is not known to us. He probes into the social and scientific problems and then examines the fascinating problems in the fields of energy, ecology, biology, communications, transportation and space. Finally he opines: "We may be able to solve our social problems in approximately fifty years, solving the scientific problems will take much more."

Well then! What are the hopeful paths offered by Javed Hussain towards their solution?

The Greek philosopher Socrates, when he was asked of what country he called himself, said, "Of the world", for he considered himself an inhabitant and a citizen of the whole world. Dr Javed Hussain stresses the need to develop in ourselves the broad-mindedness that Socrates had. He suggests that if a World Government could be formulated, it would put an end to all world wars. Hence he urges people

all over the earth to come forward and help in making the dream of so many of us come true. Suggesting a people-to-people approach as an alternative to World Government the author describes such movements that have started in several parts of the world now. Furnishing the addresses of three important World Unions (Associations of people in contradistinction to the U.N. which is an association of countries), he emphasises the importance of democracy, international justice and hopes for a world language which Javed Hussain believes would be possible with the increasing use of computers.

"Will all the dreams come true?" The reader scratches the back of his head in search of an answer.

Now listen. This is Javed Hussain speaking: "We must either make a serious attempt to solve the problems pointed out here or be willing to face famine, disease, pollution and possibly even nuclear catastrophe."

This is a frightening book, for it tells us where we are. This is a thought-provoking book, for it gives us clues for progressive change and reform. This book calls us to action, for we are living in times that try men's souls. Let us act.

P. RAJA