

# MOTHER INDIA

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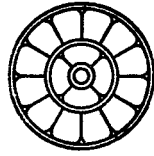
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.

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# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXXIX

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."*

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## A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON MAY 4, 1955

This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*,  
Chapter 5, "Physical Consciousness, etc."

*Sweet Mother, how can one draw on "the universal vital Force"?*

ONE can do it many ways.

First of all, you must know that it exists and that one can enter into contact with it. Secondly, you must try to make this contact, to feel it circulating everywhere, through everything, in all persons and all circumstances; to have this experience, for example, when you are in the countryside among trees, to see it circulating in the whole of Nature, in trees and things, and then commune with it, feel yourself close to it, and each time you want to deal with it, recall that impression you had and try to enter into contact.

Some people discover that with certain movements, certain gestures, certain activities, they enter into contact more closely. I knew people who gesticulated while walking... this truly gave them the impression that they were in contact—certain gestures they made while walking... But children do this spontaneously: when they give themselves completely in their games, running, playing, jumping, shouting; when they spend all their energies like that, they give themselves entirely, and in the joy of playing and moving and running they put themselves in contact with this universal vital force; they don't know it, but they spend their vital force in contact with the universal vital force and that is why they can run without really feeling very tired, except after a very long time. That is, they spend so much that if they were not in contact with the universal force, they would be absolutely exhausted, immediately. And that is why, besides, they grow up; it is also because they receive more than they spend; they know how to receive more than they spend. And this does not correspond to any knowledge. It is a natural, spontaneous movement. It is the movement... a movement of joy in what they are doing—of joyful expenditure. One can do many things with that.

I knew young people who had always lived in cities—in a city and in those little rooms one has in the big cities in which everyone is huddled. Now, they had come to spend their holidays in the countryside, in the south of France, and there the sun is hot, naturally not as here but all the same it is very hot (when we compare the sun of the Mediterranean coasts with that of Paris, for example, it truly makes a difference), and so, when they walked around the countryside the first few days they really began to get a terrible headache and to feel absolutely uneasy because of the sun; but they suddenly thought: "Why, if we make friends with the sun it won't harm us any more!" And they began to make a kind of inner effort of friendship and trust in the sun, and

when they were out in the sun, instead of trying to bend double and tell themselves, "Oh! how hot it is, how it burns!", they said, "Oh, how full of force and joy and love the sun is!" etc., they opened themselves like this (*gesture*), and not only did they not suffer any longer but they felt so strong afterwards that they went round telling everyone who said "It is hot"—telling them "Do as we do, you will see how good it is." And they could remain for hours in the full sun, bare-headed and without feeling any discomfort. It is the same principle.

It is the same principle. They linked themselves to the universal vital force which is in the sun and received this force which took away all that was unpleasant to them.

When one is in the countryside, when one walks under the trees and feels so close to Nature, to the trees, the sky, all the leaves, all the branches, all the herbs, when one feels a great friendship with these things and breathes that air which is so good, perfumed with all the plants, then one opens oneself, and by opening oneself communes with the universal forces. And for all things it is like that.

*Can one do the same thing when it is cold?*

Yes, I think so. I think one can always do the same thing in all cases.

The sun is a very powerful symbol in the organisation of Nature. So it is not altogether the same thing; it possesses in itself an extraordinary condensation of energy. Cold seems to me a more negative thing: it is an absence of something. But in any case, if one knows how to enter the rhythm of the movements of Nature, one avoids many discomforts. What makes men suffer, what disturbs the balance of the body is a narrowness, it is always a narrowness. It happens because one is shut up in limits, and so there is, as Sri Aurobindo writes here, a force which presses too strongly for these limits—it upsets everything.

*Sweet Mother, what is "the inner physical"?*

Well, the other day we had this question in connection with the subliminal. It is the same thing, you see.

The outer physical, what we see of the body, the appearance is, so to say, supported, upheld by a kind of inner existence and substance, which is expressed through the outer thing. You feel this clearly when something from outside hits you and it is not pleasant; then when you draw back from that, you recoil from that contact with circumstances or things; well, the first impression is of drawing back inside into your physical being itself, a physical being which is there, which presses, so to say, on the outer form in order to create a new form.

This is what makes children grow up, it is a kind of inner thing which pushes, pushes for action, pushes for movement, pushes for progress. But it is physical, it is not a vital or mental consciousness, it is purely physical. It is something which

pushes from within towards manifestation and is concentrated and channelled in the manifestation. It is vaster and more imprecise within. It is what Sri Aurobindo calls "the inner physical". It is more vague, more imprecise. One can dream there. For example, one dreams, one sees a room, one's own room. Well, it is one's own room but still there are little differences; it is not absolutely what one sees with his two eyes when he is completely awake. It is a physical vision but with just a little shade of differences; compared with the most material there are slight changes.

That's all?

*Sweet Mother, do the universal vital forces have any limits?*

I don't think that forces have a limit, because in comparison with us they are certainly unlimited. But it's our capacity of reception that is limited. We cannot absorb them beyond a certain measure, and then we must keep a balance between the expenditure and the capacity to receive. If one spends suddenly in a kind of impulse—for example, in an impulsive movement—if one spends much more than one has received, one needs a brief moment of concentration, calm, receptivity to absorb universal forces. You must put yourself in a certain condition to receive them; and then, they last for a certain time, and once you have spent them you must begin again to receive them. It is in this sense that there are limits. It isn't the forces that are limited, it is the receptivity.

Each person has a different receptivity. No two receptivities are the same in quality and quantity, but specially in quality. One enters into contact with very pure, very intense forces—what could be already called converted forces, that is, universal vital forces which are in contact with the Divine and not only receive the Divine but aspire to receive Him. So if you absorb these forces it gives you a great strength for progress. It is in this that the quality is much more important. And for the quality of the universal vital forces, it depends naturally a great deal on what one is, but also much on what one does.

If one uses these forces for a purely selfish action of a base kind, well, one makes it almost totally impossible for himself to receive any new ones of as fine a quality. All depends on the utilisation of the forces one receives. If, on the other hand, you use them to make progress, to perfect yourself, it gives you... it increases your capacity of receiving enormously, and the next time you can have a lot more. All depends (in any case, principally) on the use made of them. There are people, for instance, who are short-tempered by nature and haven't succeeded in controlling their anger. Well, if with an aspiration or by some method or other they have managed to receive some higher vital forces, instead of this calming their irritation or anger... because they have no self-control it increases their anger, that is, their irritability, their movement of violence is full of a greater force, a greater energy, and becomes much more violent. So it is well said that to be in contact with universal forces does not make one progress. But this is because they make a bad use of them. Yet naturally in the

long run, this bad use diminishes the capacity of receiving; but it takes time, it is not immediate. So it is very important to put yourself in a good condition to receive the higher forces and not the lower ones, and secondly, when you have received them use them for the best thing possible, in order to prepare yourself to receive those which are of a higher quality. But if you open yourself, receive the forces and afterwards, being satisfied with having received them you let yourself fall into all the ordinary movements, well, you close the door and the force no longer returns.

*One can increase the receptivity also?...*

How can we increase the receptivity? By progressing.

One must first know how to open himself and then, in a great quietude know how to assimilate the forces one has received, not to throw them out again. One must know how to assimilate them.

So the progress lies in a normal but progressive equilibrium, periods of assimilation—reception, assimilation—and periods of expenditure, and knowing how to balance the two, and alternate them in a rhythm which is your personal one. You must not go beyond your capacity, you must not remain below it, because the universal vital forces are not something which you could put into a strong box. They must circulate. So you must know how to receive and at the same time to spend, but to increase the capacity of reception so as to have more and more of the things which are to be used up, to be spent. Besides, this is what happens, as I said, this is what happens quite naturally with children. They begin, make a certain effort, receive a certain force spontaneously, assimilate it and then after a few days, two days, ten days, twenty days they can spend more. After a year they can do much more, because quite naturally they alternate the reception and the expenditure, and they progress in their stature. They of course do it unconsciously, but when one is older it becomes more difficult, one stops growing up, for example. So this means that there's a certain period of expansion which has stopped. But it can be prolonged, then, with an inner discipline, a method one finds: it has to be one's own method.

*(Questions and Answers 1955, pp. 137-42)*



## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

*(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1986)*

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

December 6, 1940

M: When the Gita says "I shall deliver you from all *pāp*," does *pāp* mean sin, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, from all evils. Sin is a religious conception, an offence against God. Arjuna's refusal to fight can't be called an offence against God; an offence against morality, you can say. Virtue and vice are moral conceptions.

M: What type of Yogi is Gandhi, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yogi? He is not a Yogi! he is an ethical man.

M: He is guided by voices.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then everybody who is guided by voices would be a Yogi. Then all Quakers are Yogis. Those who are possessed by strong vital forces, good or bad, can hear voices. Gandhi himself says that when he is so possessed he can't resist. These are voices which come from various sources. One voice says one thing, another contradicts it.

*Evening*

*(Dr. M was sitting with a warm cloth tied round his head to protect it against a cold draught.)*

SRI AUROBINDO: You have the expression of Schopenhauer on your face.  
*(Laughter)*

M: How, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: The world according to him is full of suffering and sorrow, and life an insanity.

M: It is just the contrary with me. I thought I caught an infection of hilarity from Ravindra.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then you are trying to suppress it. *(Laughter)*

M: Are German philosophers influenced by Vedanta? Vivekananda said that Max Müller was a reborn Sayanacharya.

SRI AUROBINDO: How? It is more than a compliment.

M: Sylvan Lévi is also a Sanskrit scholar. He came to Baroda. The Gaekwar used to refer to you, Sir, as "my secretary".

SRI AUROBINDO: Not a troublesome one? (*Laughter*)

M: No, Sir. Vallabhbhai once said that you were fined Rs.50 by the Gaekwar in Kashmir.

SRI AUROBINDO: In Kashmir? No, it was in Baroda. I refused to attend office on Sundays and holidays. So he fined me Rs. 50. I said: "Let him fine as much as he likes," and when he heard about it he didn't fine.

December 7, 1940

M: Is not the taking of life a sin, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: You are all the time thinking of sin. It depends on circumstances. English doctors are advocating giving injections to incurable suffering cases in order to cut short their lives.

P: Gandhi also advocated it in case of the Ashram cow and there was a row among the Jainas.

M: What about suicide?

SRI AUROBINDO: It depends on the spirit in which it is done. If it is done from a vital spirit or motive it may be sin. Would you say that the sannyasi who committed suicide in the story about Alexander did an act of sin?

M: I don't know the story.

SRI AUROBINDO: When Alexander was going back he wanted to take with him two sannyasis. One refused, the other accompanied him. But after some time the latter had a severe attack of colic. He said his body was betraying him. So he decided to give up his body and get himself burnt. In spite of pleadings he carried out his decision.

December 12, 1940

*(The talk started from the release of Mrs. Naidu from prison.)*

SRI AUROBINDO: As I remarked, the Government has not given her the chance of a rest cure in the jail. The Government refuses to take up responsibility for her.

M: Instead of having a rest cure she would rather feel restless in the jail after some time. She is a brilliant speaker. She can do more valuable work outside Congress.

SRI AUROBINDO: Much more! She has done nothing in the Congress.

M: I heard her in Baroda, she has a fine voice too.

*(The talk proceeded to B.L. Gupta, also a good speaker, a former Dewan of the late Gaekwar. Then the Gaekwar himself came into the talk and how he had been humiliated at the Durbar due to the foolishness of B.L. Gupta. It was reported that after this humiliation the Gaekwar had begun to go downhill.)*

M: Before this he was really great. A speech he made at the Industrial Exhibition was marvellous.

SRI AUROBINDO: Which Industrial Exhibition?

M: At Ahmedabad.

SRI AUROBINDO: That was the speech I prepared for him. (*Roar of laughter*)

M: I heard your lecture at Bombay after the Surat Congress. You had some paper in your hand.

SRI AUROBINDO: That was the speech I made from an entire silence of the mind and that was my first experience of the kind. You didn't hear me at Baroda?

M: Yes, Sir, once only. I was in the Matric class then. Only one sentence I remember of that speech. Dr. Mullick had come to Baroda. The meeting was held in his honour. Prof. Saha proposed you to the chair saying: "Dr. Mullick is a Bengali and Mr. Ghose is a Bengali. So I propose him to the chair." You replied: "I consent to take the chair not because Dr. Mullick is a Bengali and I am a Bengali, but because I am an Indian and Dr. Mullick is an Indian." When did you conceive of doing the Yoga, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Conceive of it? You mean when I started it?

M: All right, Sir. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: It was Deshpande who wanted me to do Yoga. But when I came to know it would mean withdrawal from the world I didn't want to do it as I wanted to do political work. Then I took to pranayama. But it didn't carry me far and I came to a point beyond which I couldn't proceed further. I gave it up and fell dangerously ill! I was on the point of death. I asked Barin if he knew anyone who could help me in Yoga. This was in Surat where I had attended the Surat Congress. Barin knew of Lele who was in Gwalior. He wired to him and asked him to meet us at Baroda. Pranayama had given me good health, a lot of poetry and various experiences. Now Lele took me to a quiet room upstairs in Khaserao Jadhav's house. I told him that I wanted Yoga to help me in my political work, for inspiration and power and capacity. I didn't want to give up my activities for the sake of Yoga. He said: "You are a poet, it will be very easy for you." Then he said: "Sit still and try to make your mind quiet and empty of thoughts. You will see that all your thoughts come from outside. As you perceive them, simply throw them away before they can enter into you." I tried and did it. In three days my mind became entirely quiet and vacant, without any thoughts at all and it was in that condition of Nirvanic Silence that I went first to Poona and then to Bombay. Everything seemed to me unreal, I was absorbed in the One Reality. In that state of mind I told Lele: "I have been asked to deliver a lecture. How am I going to speak? Not a single thought is coming to me. I cannot make a speech." He held a day of prayer, with other disciples, for me and at the end he said: "Make a pranam to Narayana in the audience before you start and with your mind completely vacant. Then you will see that everything will come down and some power speak through you." I did as he had said and found that the whole speech came down from above; not a single thought or expres-

sion was mine. It got hold of my organ of speech and expressed itself through it from beginning to end. In my tour from Bombay to Calcutta all the speeches I made were from that condition of silence.

While I was parting from Lele I asked him what I should do, how I should be guided. He said: "Surrender yourself to the Divine and be guided by Him. If you can do that, you needn't do anything else." I replied: "I can easily do that." And when I did that, everything came from above and I was guided by that. After some time when Lele came to Calcutta, he asked me how I was getting on, whether I was meditating or not according to his advice. He asked me to meditate twice a day and to be guided by the voice within. When I told him that I had given up meditation—in fact the meditation was going on all the time—he said: "Ah, the devil has got hold of you." (*Laughter*) He did not wait for me to explain to him anything. Since then we began to follow our own ways. Evidently he had something in him and it was he who opened up and gave me the silence-experience after my failure to advance further. Only, he wanted me to follow his own path. He didn't want me to have the Nirvanic experience.

### *Evening*

M: What is the reason for your failure in the riding test in the I.C.S, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: I appeared late for the test.

M: Why? Was it under any inspiration?

SRI AUROBINDO: No—(*Laughing*) it was intentional. I wasn't dealing in inspiration then. I didn't want to be in the British Government Service. I had a strong dislike for the British.

M: But then why did you appear for the I.C.S. exam at all?

SRI AUROBINDO: I had no intention to do it. It was my father who wanted me to be a civilian. I had to play this trick, otherwise my father and everybody would howl. My poet brother was horrified to see me along with my elder brother smoking and playing cards at the Liberal Club after avoiding the riding test.

M: Was your father alive at that time?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he was arranging with Sir Henry Cotton a post for me in Bihar under Sir Henry. But he died of shock soon after.

M: What shock?

SRI AUROBINDO: He asked me to return to India in a particular ship. I don't know why in that ship. The ship was wrecked off the Portugal coast. He thought I was in it. But I hadn't sailed in it at all.

M: Why?

SRI AUROBINDO: I didn't intend to.

N: Did your father know of your failure in the test?

SRI AUROBINDO: No.

M: Then he would have been shocked in any case.

SRI AUROBINDO: When they came to know they all asked me to try for another

chance. But I didn't want it and I knew too that the British Government wouldn't give me another chance.

M: Why?

SRI AUROBINDO: My record was too bad.

M: How?

SRI AUROBINDO: They thought that I was a revolutionary, giving seditious speeches in the Indian Majlis. There was a man named Mehedi Hussain, an Indian Deputy Magistrate—I don't know why he went to England—who used to come to the Majlis and was supposed to be a spy. He may have reported to the Government.

M: How did you get the job in Baroda?

SRI AUROBINDO: I think I applied for it when the Gaekwar was in England. Sir Henry Cotton's brother asked me to do it and through his influence I came in contact with the Gaekwar.

M: I thought that your political career began with the Bengal partition.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh no! It began long before in Baroda. It was our men who got hold of the movement in Bengal and gave it a revolutionary character. Otherwise it would have been a Moderate movement. We were training people in our secret society started by Tilak.

M: Servants of India Society? (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: No, no. A secret society which I and some others joined along with some Rajput Thakores. While in Bengal the Revolutionary party was started by Okakura and joined by Nandy, Suren Tagore and others. The Swadeshi movement was there before the Bengal Partition. I was going and coming between Bengal and Gujerat. Gujerat was very moderate at that time. With Pherozechah Mehta it was just beginning to be revolutionary.

M: What about Dadabhai Nowroji? He was an Extremist.

SRI AUROBINDO: No. Moderate, ardent moderate. Ardent of the non-ardent type. Moderate of the middle kind like Gokhale.

*(To be continued)*

NIRODBARAN

# A MAGNIFICENT HEAVENLY DARSHAN IN MATRIMANDIR BY CHAMPAKLAL

IN JANUARY 1986

*(Translated by Sushilaben from the original Gujarati with the help of  
Kamalaben and Champaklal.)*

At the moment my right leg was not in a good condition. But that is how I feel every time; as I pass from one state of being to another, I become aware that the present plight is not good.

The car could be taken right up to the entrance of Matrimandir. From there I had to walk a little to reach Matrimandir. Though the distance was not much, I had to sit for a while midway. Five minutes' rest always refreshes me. After relaxing for five minutes, I proceeded relying solely on the gracious Mother's Force. As a matter of fact, climbing the many stairs of Matrimandir was indeed a daring act on my part. That is why I contemplated "relying solely on the gracious Mother's Force" for She alone has come to my aid on numerous occasions whenever such situations arose. Now also only the Mother made it possible for me to reach Matrimandir.

## **Darshan**

As soon as I stepped in, She saturated me. I entered an altogether different world. I had to struggle to keep my eyes open. Ultimately they got closed. The whole of Matrimandir seemed to be rolling from side to side. So I opened my eyes and saw that Matrimandir was steady, but again as I shut them, Matrimandir appeared to be tossing and turning like before. Once more I opened my eyes, and found that it was very stable. This happened three times. I don't recollect when it actually ceased tumbling. Later it started whirling slowly like a merry-go-round. Suddenly it was spinning very fast. Then its pace slowed down and it began to plunge down, deep down in the abyss. Finally when it got settled, a marvellous figure was seen. As soon as it touched Matrimandir, I do not know what happened but I felt that I was back to my original place inside the structure.

Now the walls of Matrimandir were transparent and luminous. Then gradually they were interchanging their colours many times. Eventually they appeared to be of a translucent, brilliant and resplendent golden colour. I could see very vividly far-off objects on all sides, all in one expansive gaze. It was a fantastic sight! Around Matrimandir, up to a certain distance, there were different kinds of beautiful, bright and fascinating flower plants of varied hues, never seen before. Behind them were numerous trees of diverse kinds. Many of them were adorned with lovely glistening blossoms while many were of lustrous colours. Beyond them, very very far, there was a vast open space in the midst of which shone an exquisite, radiant

and magnificent throne of superb workmanship and a golden glow. On its right side were seated children, women, men and aged persons from different countries. But on its left was an unprecedented scene of many kinds of animals and birds of land and sky. All the animals, both gentle and ferocious, were there together, many of them never seen before. There were ever so many offspring. Beyond, on one side, there was a wide serene lake in which bloomed lotuses of many colours as well as of shimmering gold and silver, which held one spellbound. On the other side, there was another similar large lake with water creatures and objects. There were beautiful fish and crocodiles of varied colours. The water was so transparent that all kinds of riches: pearls, rubies, emeralds, corals, shells, conchs, beautiful plants, herbs and many other precious things were seen vividly and distinctly, all at the same time, in one extensive glance. One cannot possibly see them with the naked eye. How to write of all this?

Beyond the lakes was a colossal tree the limits of whose top and sides could not be seen. Its branches were touching the ground. Its every leaf constantly radiated light of varying colours. The whole tree was profuse with lotus-like flowers of many shades including silver and golden ones in between. These sparkling flowers were so fascinating that one would keep on looking at them. I was allured by this enchanting sight for a pretty long time. After this were seen multicoloured mountains glowing with light. The peaks of many of them were not visible. At this place, some people were seen moving about here and there. They included children, women and aged persons. There were different types of beautiful houses of unusual and novel architecture and construction, scattered on various spots on the plains and mountains. While I write, I realise that it is not possible to see so much at the same time but the infinite Grace made possible what was impossible. Every time I reflect, 'I could never have seen this!' That is exactly how I felt then.

My eyes turned again to the throne and I saw that the golden light was continuously emanating from it. It seemed that The Mother was seated there in Her golden translucent body. Again it appeared that Sri Aurobindo was there. In between, time and again was seen an incredible vision of the two in one body. It seemed to be a transparent body but I could not comprehend how it was inside.

The meditation started. The Mother Herself was singing. Instrumental music was heard but one could not see from where the notes came or which was the musical instrument. The Mother's voice was extremely sweet and melodious and evoked spontaneous concentration. It was a peaceful, exhilarating and elevating atmosphere. I was all along aware of being in a grand new world. This continued for quite some time. Then I saw something marvellous!

The Mother and Sri Aurobindo, two together in one body, were seen in front of each and every one at the same time, in a benediction-pose, with their right hand showering grace and love. What an indescribable scene of wonder and beatitude! Everything became quiet and peaceful. Suddenly an ear-piercing resounding victory conch was heard. Simultaneously the children were seen wonder-struck as their

physical bodies were slowly and gradually undergoing change and they attained youth. The young people turned strong and well-built while the aged were transformed into the prime of youth. The animals and birds were released from their genetic lineage and were seen in different beautiful forms. Now it started drizzling and then pouring. The novelty of the phenomenon was that it rained in many different colours and finally in silver and gold! This view was also fascinating. Eventually the rain stopped and nothing but the golden light was visible everywhere.

All of a sudden, my glance fell on the upper portion of Matrimandir and I beheld a blazing, glorious, ravishing, golden sun covering the entire firmament! Instead of heat, it effused golden light and delightful coolness. My gaze went back to the throne and I saw everyone (men, women, children, birds, animals) standing in adoration in a posture of Namaskar (folded hands in obeisance). The marvel of this moment brought me a novel experience. It was a peerless spectacle. Everything appeared to be golden. Instantaneously a cascade of golden light from the sky poured into Matrimandir. At that time I sensed that a number of persons were sitting nearby but I could not see them clearly. I had a feeling that the golden light fell on all and penetrated inside. The whole hall was suffused with golden light. Now one could not see anything except the golden light. Suddenly Sri Aurobindo's and The Mother's hand of blessing was seen caressing not only my head but everyone's. Everything became peaceful. Once again a sweet melody was heard. My eyes opened. It is just impossible to formulate in words the impact of the moment on my body. As I write this, golden Lanka of the Ramayana comes to my mind.

When I came down, saturated with Peace, Ananda, Love and Joy, a Matrimandir worker put into my hands an enlarged 20" x 24" size photo of Matrimandir. This seemed to me very interesting. It was a photo of Matrimandir in golden colour. Another person also gave me a number of other photos of Matrimandir.

Victory, Victory, Victory to the Mother!

### NOTE

On 28th morning, Sushilaben saw me in connection with her work. After it was over, while going, she smiled softly, full of past happy and fond memories, and informed me, "Today is Auroville foundation day. 17 years back, i.e. on 28th February 1969, the Mother gave a very beautiful message." I asked her to bring it.

In the evening when she came for the translation work, she brought it and showed it to me. At that time Sushilaben's sister Lachmanben was also present. She saw this message for the first time and pointed out to me, "See, the words used by you while coming down from Matrimandir are similar to those written by the Mother in Her message. What a pleasant coincidence!" I too found it interesting. Why would I not feel so? The gracious Mother had taken me through a much more enchanting experience. Thereupon it occurred to me how lovely and apt it



would be to crown my vision with the perfect offering of Her Message in Her own hand. How the Mother arranged everything without my speaking a single word!

Victory, Victory, Victory! Victory again to the Mother!

Nava  
and  
Sushila  
for  
Auroville



28. 2. 69

"Let light, peace and joy  
be with all those who  
live in Auroville  
and work for its realisation."  
Blessings

# THE STORY OF A SOUL

BY HUTA

*(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1986)*

## The Mother's Message

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



Volume Two: 1958

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Now it was October 1958. Time slipped by so rapidly that I lost count of it.

The Puja days began. It was 20th October—Durga's Day. The Mother came to the Meditation Hall downstairs to distribute Sri Aurobindo's message. She looked unusually graceful in her red sari and glittering crown. I approached her. She smiled, and while giving the message her fingers closed briefly on mine.

The message which appealed to my soul was:

**“MY BLESSINGS.**

Efface the stamp of ego from the heart and let the love of the Mother take its place. Cast from the mind all insistence on your personal ideals and judgments, then you will have the wisdom to understand her. Let there be no obsession of self-will, ego-drive in the action, love of personal authority, attachment to personal preference, then the Mother’s force will be able to act clearly in you and you will get the inexhaustible energy for which you ask and your service will be perfect.”

The Mother also gave two messages of Sri Aurobindo to us with her love and blessings.

\*

My mother left for India just after I reached Pondicherry. My father and younger sister escorted her. They invited me to celebrate Diwali—the festival of light—with them in Rajkot.

After taking the Mother’s permission I requested a clerk at the office of the New Horizon Sugar Mills to arrange for my ticket. I also added that later I would settle the account. He assured me that he would do the needful.

I packed my case and went to the Madras airport where I was supposed to collect my ticket. But nothing had been done! I was put at sixes and sevens. However, Sumantra Kothari, who had taken me to Madras, arranged for the money and thus I could reach my destination. If the arrangement of the money had not been made, I would have thought of selling my Rolex watch, because I did not wish to upset the plan. I realised the working of the Divine’s Grace which never fails.

My parents and sister were pleased to see me again.

I could not enjoy the celebration of Diwali, because I was constantly worried about my future. My mind was a whirl of frightening thoughts, which formed a precarious picture of my future life. The preceding few days had been an unmitigated torment.

My parents sensed the acute sadness. Finally they asked whether anything was wrong with me. I answered: “Not really. You see, I want to study in London for some time and gain self-confidence.” My father said: “But why don’t you study in India or in Africa?” I looked at him for a moment before I replied: “No, father, I can’t do that. After I had passed the matriculation exams I wanted to study further. But unfortunately all of you disapproved of it. My wish was unfulfilled. All the time I feel as if I am a slow-witted ox among many learned and brilliant people. In short I want to be something which will enable me to participate in the Divine’s work.”

My sadness had gone beyond tears—I felt numb when I finished the last sen-

tence. They said that I should ask the Mother what was good for me. I told them that I hid nothing from her—I would not do anything without her approval.

The Mother sent me a message which she had distributed on 10th November—Mahakali Puja Day. It solaced me greatly. The message was:

“When she is allowed to intervene in her strength, then in one moment are broken like things without consistence the obstacles that immobilise or the enemies that assail the seeker.”

How is the intervention of Mahakali Force felt?

“It is felt as if something, swift, sudden, decisive and imperative. When it intervenes, it has a kind of divine or supramental sanction behind it and is like a fiat against which there is no appeal. What is done cannot be reversed or undone. The adverse forces may try, may even touch or invade, but they retire baffled and it is seen as soon as they withdraw that the present ground has remained intact—it is felt even in the attack. Also the difficulties that were strong before, if touched by this fiat, lose their power, their verisimilitude destroyed or are weak shadows that come only to flicker and fade away. I say ‘allowed’, because this supreme action of Mahakali is comparatively rare, the action of the other Powers or partial action of Mahakali is more common.”

\*

I returned to the Ashram. Countless things shuffled and reshuffled in my mind. The main problem was the money to go abroad. Such travel meant a lot of expense.

When the Mother saw me, I lightened my heart by disclosing my wish for further studies. She went into a trance for quite a long time. She awoke, leaned a little forward from her couch, held my hands and affirmed:

“It is good—good for your welfare.”

Once again the rumour spread like wildfire that Huta was going back to settle in the ordinary world. She came just to inform the Mother. I could only laugh. If I did not love the Mother and the spiritual life, there was no need to return to the Ashram even to report to the Mother. I would have jolly well settled wherever I wanted to.

\*

Days flashed by. At the end of November 1958 Laljibhai and his wife came to stay permanently in Pondicherry. My father came from Rajkot to meet them. Later they discussed my going to London. I sensed that they were not happy about it.

The Mother told Laljibhai what she had told me earlier. Then everything was arranged including the sum which I would receive from Africa for my maintenance in London. Those few days I remained in sheer agony. I could not cry. My emotions had dried up; I was merely heart-wrenchingly desolate. I did not know what to do. I went to the Mother one morning and expressed my feeling. She patted my cheeks and said firmly:

“Don’t change your mind. You will go to London.”

Then she brought from her cupboard an envelope which she must have kept ready beforehand. While giving it to me she said with concern:

“Tiens, mon petit, here is the money. You will need it in transit. Use it with my blessings.”

I took it with gratitude. She said:

“Child, don’t worry. Everything will be all right.”

Her luminous gaze and lovely smile so enfolded me that everything was suddenly right again. My world ceased tipping uncontrollably sideways. She and I knew what I aspired for.

I came home and saw “18 pounds” written on the envelope. I took out the wad and put it in my handbag.

I wanted to get a gold locket made to preserve in it the chain which the Mother had given me in 1954. It was absolutely worn out, and not wearable now. This sacred chain held a sentimental value. I wrote to the Mother about the matter. She answered on 7th December:

“My dear little child Huta,

There is no question of money. I said to Dyuman to prepare a locket for you and if you have no chain I shall give you a chain at the same time. I hope it will be ready before you leave—That is the important thing.

With love.”

For some time she was not keeping well. But she would show that she was all right. She came down on the 9th from her apartment to contemplate the Samadhi.

The same night she had an acute attack of Herpes Zoster, which was exceedingly painful.

The next morning she was in bed, not seeing anybody except her attendants. That was the day of my departure to Africa. I felt very sad.

The locket which the Mother had wanted to give me personally was made at

lightning speed. Since she could not give it to me herself, it was sent to me.

Afterwards I went to Doctor Sanyal—the Mother's doctor—and expressed my deep shock and anxiety. I gave him for the Mother a bottle of perfume, *Worth's Je Reviens*, and a flower of Victory—her victory in me. The name of the scent was also significant: *Je Reviens*—"I am coming back." As he took them from me the doctor said: "In spite of severe pain, the Mother remembered you and said to me: 'Huta is going today.' Do not worry. She will soon be all right. I wish you a happy journey and success."

I thanked him.

When I reached home the tears I had checked came flooding into my eyes.

In the evening I gave the keys of my apartment to Mona Pinto according to the Mother's wish. Udar, Mona, Maniben and my servant were there before I left with my father for Madras. Laljibhai and his wife accompanied us to the airport.

First we went to Bombay and then to Africa. But nothing was the same. The situation was entirely changed. My father's house seemed curiously cold and empty without my mother. My younger sister and her kids were now in Uganda where my brother-in-law was practising medicine.

I could not sleep downstairs, so I went up and was about to open the apartment in which I had stayed previously just over three months back when a thick big black lizard fell on my right shoulder. I shrieked in revulsion and tried to fling it off with a jerk. But at the same time with that the gold chain and the locket fell somewhere in the dark, broken. It was a bad omen, I thought. For a breathless second I stood there, unable to move, one hand to my mouth; a cold horror clawed at my stomach. After a little search I found the chain, and entered my rooms which had not been cleaned for months. Finally I called a native boy and went to my brother Paroobhai's house with the luggage. He and his wife welcomed me cordially. I was now at ease with them. Their children were studying in England. I missed them.

\*

Days rolled on. My passport was getting ready. The Mother had asked me to go to Africa first and get the British Passport, for that would be more helpful. I had also to sign certain papers connected with it.

The Mother sent me a card dated 22nd December. She had written on it:

"To my dear little child Huta,

With my blessings for a Happy New Year and my love for always."

Her consideration and remembrance touched my heart.

Later I was informed that all her activities in the Playground had been stopped for good.

I had attended the French translation class on 6th December—I did not know

at that time that it was the last. The next day the Mother went to play tennis and then to the Playground—that too was her final appearance.

This phase in her life ended—with that ended for people the easy approach to her.

She was ill for over a month. But even afterwards she would not go out of the Ashram Building save on rare occasions.

\*

As always, every year on Christmas day, the natives who were working in our Estate gave a grand performance—dances of different styles, a variety show, games, competitions. Native women also were active participants.

My father and brothers gave away prizes to them. Numerous gifts were distributed among guests and notables who had been invited from Kisumu and nearby places. Also there were luscious cakes, an assortment of biscuits, chocolates, toffees, sweets and many delicacies which were served generously along with delicious cold drinks and ice-creams.

These revellers danced in colourful clothes, wearing feathered head-dresses of varied shapes and hues. The sparkling beads and brass ornaments they wore gave the effect of a kaleidoscope.

Their leader appeared in a lion-skin with a tail trailing behind—a shield in one hand and in the other a spear—the crown which was composed of ostrich feathers made him look dignified. He announced his presence by shouting in a reverberating way which drew the attention of hundreds of spectators who applauded with admiration.

I was fascinated by the harmony of the dancers. Some wore grass-skirts which swirled vigorously. The beating of drums matched the rhythms of their frenzied dances. Jingle-bells round the natives' ankles added their tune to their pounding feet.

On 31st December 1958 my brother and his wife waved me goodbye at Nairobi airport. I flew to London.

## END OF VOLUME II

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### Editor's Note

Owing to Huta's heavy work of expanding as well as considerably rewriting the matter of 1955-56 for publication in book-form, "The Story of a Soul" will not appear regularly in *Mother India*. She intends to give the next instalment—starting from 1959—in August 1986. Huta begs to be excused by her appreciative readers.

## NO REGRETS

You have tarried long  
And a fool for Thy love  
I waited long.  
The candles flickered  
And burnt low.  
The revel palled,  
The hum of gay voices was heard no more.  
The violin's sweet refrains  
Slept in the strings of the bow,  
And beautiful feet after night-long dancing  
Rested in cool alcoves.  
Gone was the glitter and magic,  
Faded the jewelled face of the night.  
Dawn breaking through the mist  
Sighed at the sight  
Of broken glasses, spilled wine.  
Vanished the intense tang of joy,  
A drunkard muttered alone.

You have tarried long.  
Baffled utterly I turned to go.

O marvel behold—  
The dawn breaks  
And bright is your smile,  
Brighter than the loveliest bride's.  
Your whisper is heard in the canticles of the winds  
And in the chant of the birds.  
I drink to the brim your beauty  
And stagger inebriate  
With your passion,  
And dance enthralled  
By your splendour.  
Though you have tarried long,  
A wise fool for your love  
I waited long.

SHYAM KUMARI



# TO A POETIC SEEKER OF THE SPIRIT

## EXTRACTS FROM SOME PERSONAL LETTERS

You have sent me H. A.'s story. This American has plenty of "go" and some sort of inspiration which appeals both to the poet and the Spirit-seeker in you, but it hails from an obscurantist source. I can't think of anything more "fundamentalist" and backward than his three boasts: "I had disproved the evolutionary theory after careful study through the works of Darwin, Haeckel, Huxley and other defenders of the hypothesis. I had PROVED, and been able to prove to professed atheists, the existence and reality of the living God. Further, I had proved conclusively the veracity and divine inspiration of the Holy Bible as God's Word and message to mankind."

The fact of evolution, as apart from the determining factors of it, is no longer a hypothesis. Even the most orthodox accept it so far as the physical side of it is concerned. One of the crucial teachings of Teilhard de Chardin is the certainty of evolution and the hope it gives of a greater racial consummation in the course of Nature than the present state of man, both physical and psychological, on earth. The same certainty is part and parcel of Sri Aurobindo's message, with a still wider and higher vision of perfection in earthly existence. H. A. belongs to the Middle Ages.

As for proving God, it has long been recognised that all of Thomas Aquinas's famous five proofs have been riddled by Kant. Philosophically, only a pre-Kantian would talk as A. does. God can be proved not by directly arguing with post-Kantian atheists but by basing a larger and deeper discourse on a comprehensive look at evolutionary history with a background illumination from the immediate facts of mystical experience, as Sri Aurobindo has done in *The Life Divine*. A. does not appear to have had any spiritual realisation. If he had, he would not depend wholly on proving anything intellectually. Neither Buddha nor Jesus nor Ramakrishna nor Sri Aurobindo stands on mere argumentation: they stand as embodiments of God-consciousness and their very presence and atmosphere breathe the reality of the living God. Where in A. is any such marvellous mysticism?

Finally, we must remember that not only the Bible but also the Vedas and Upanishads and Gita are insufficient today after Sri Aurobindo has brought the light of the Supermind with its message and power of an integral transformation. Even apart from Sri Aurobindo, to go predominantly by the Old and the New Testaments is to miss a great deal of God-knowledge in the millennia after them: Chaitanya and Mirabai, Kabir and Ramdas, Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi, to name a few, have precious gifts of spirituality to enrich mankind. I know it is natural for one brought up in the midst of American evangelism to turn happily to the Biblical Word and appreciate whatever is truly fine in it, but I can perceive in your enthusiasm for and profound attraction to *Savitri* and *Prayers and Meditations* a break-out into the world of the future beyond all ancient scriptures, whether Western or Eastern. No

matter how much the environment may tell on you, I am sure that in your inmost heart you are first and foremost a child of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Else you would not want so ardently to come and settle in the Ashram.

---

The letter you have enclosed of your friend has a great appeal to me in certain parts. But the writer should be able to distinguish between the flighty-silly sort of thinking and the ether-touched winging kind. The latter goes home to me with its appreciation of what Marlowe calls "brave translunary things". For I am hardly of the earth-earthly twenty-four hours of the day. I am open again and again to all the strange influences I can imagine from the deities of the solar system. Though I am neither an astronomer nor an astrologer the planets seem to send messages to the poet and the idealist in me. There come frowns from far Pluto on the arrogance of people who believe they will get away with living all for their little immediate interests and are never "distance-haunted", rarely sensitive to the vibrations of "otherness". Huge hissings break from Neptune upon the senseless noise-makers who think they are going great guns with their momentary triumphs. Contempt wafts from Uranus for those who are crawlers and creepers for petty favours of fate and lack the *os sublime*, the uplifted face, which is the distinction of the truly human from the merely super-animal. I respond to the indifference of Saturn to the hectic enjoyers of our jangled times, with not one ache in them to recover some lost paradise or a single thrill to that vision of Vaughan—

I saw Eternity the other night  
Like a great ring of pure and endless light  
All calm as it was bright.

I echo laughters from Jupiter at the obstinate wrangles of ambitious asses—reflect smiles from Venus for the bold snatchers of fruit forbidden by smug guardians of comfortable laws and safety-first rules and for the quixotic dreamers of the Word becoming flesh—leap to the hurrahs from Mars to the fighters for lost causes and forlorn hopes that are really never lost and forlorn as long as the deep heart pulses for them—share the acute concern of Mercury over the deafness on which fall his subtle rumours of the unknown spaces within our being. In addition to these planetary influences there often heave into my life sun-surprises of truths that are always waiting to dawn upon the lonely watchers "pinnacled high in the intense innane"—and I see floating over me "love-lunar eves" in which the soul has but one cry *à la* Marlowe's Faustus though with the sense of a Beauty and Bliss symbolising in a flawless finite some radiant infinitude still to be realised:

Come, Helen, make me immortal with a kiss,  
For all is dross that is not Helena!

---

One does not need to live all the time in an inner or higher "layer" of one's being in order to receive inspiration from it. Only an open passage is required. Of course, to try to live in that layer is part of our Yoga—and the coming of inspiration from there is a help towards such living. To get more and more inspiration is part of what I have called "aesthetic yoga". I say "part" because aesthetic yoga comprises many movements and activities: *e.g.*, learning passages of Sri Aurobindo's poetry by heart so that the subtle planes of consciousness he opens up may pass their vibrations into our very pulses, as it were, and we learn to draw with our breath upon what a line in Wordsworth calls

An ampler ether, a diviner air.

Your method of writing strikes me as very good. By "the practised hand" I mean that you have a knack of writing verse and that there is a finish about most of your writing—a verbal finish, a finish of form in general.

To like "unusual and surprising sounds" is a poet's automatic act. No need to avoid it. It can be one of the modes of the creative "vital" whose involvement is the second phase of the successful poetic phenomenon before the outer mind transmits it. The first phase is, of course, the original flow from a subtle plane, whatever it may be. The creative "vital" is the life-force which has to give its outward-going impetus and its formative power to that original flow so as to let the subtlety of the inspiration come unspoilt into our world.

If your poems do not yet throb with what you consider "the planes beyond mind", they do not necessarily become "lacking" *qua* poetry. The plane of the poetic intelligence as well as any other non-"overhead" can bring forth perfection, even spiritually charged perfection in terms of sensation or thought finding wings. Most poets of ancient Greece and Rome wrote from the mental plane. So did Dante and Corneille and Milton and several other fine English poets. "The planes beyond the mind" bring greater spiritual substance and wider-toned expression, but poetry as such depends, according to Sri Aurobindo, on the authenticity with which the transcription is made from any plane. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* makes perfect poetry out of a vivid mood of the frustrated life-instinct in those famous lines:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
Who struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot full of sound and fury  
Signifying nothing...

Shelley performs the same poetic feat from a philosophical pessimism of the imaginative mind looking not only at but also beyond life's failures:

The One remains, the Many change and pass,  
 Heaven's light for ever shines, earth's shadows fly.  
 Life like a dome of many-coloured glass  
 Stains the white radiance of eternity,  
 Until death tramples it to fragments....

You may be right in feeling that just now you should not bother very much about technique in its most external sense. But some intuition of "form", which is the core of technique, has to develop with a finer intensity. Along with it there has to grow a more sensitive touch on articulating not simply "our inmost in the sweetest way", as Meredith said, but, as Sri Aurobindo says, "our inmost in the inmost way", so that, over and above the substance coming from deep within, the very word and rhythm derive from there instead of being found by the emotional-aesthetic being.

Perhaps I may best illustrate my meaning by trying to show you how a poem can be "greatened" by an inner plumbing of its potentialities. Your "A Creation" is a very attractive little thing, with a perfect second line and a bull's eye hit in the last:

The deepest and highest, the profundities of sound,  
 The movement of all the waves of a windless sea,  
 Vibrant and toned, forms all around  
 And the patient throbbing of a poem to be.

Lines 1 and 3 do not have the same quality as the other two. In the former the word "profundities", though good in itself, repeats the implication of "deepest" while leaving out those of "highest". Line 3 is surfacy in effect: it is apt in its hint at the right elements of poetic expression but it lacks in inner revelatory atmosphere. I propose, within your own rhyme-framework, a slightly rewritten version:

The deepest and highest, the secrecies of sound,  
 The movement of all the waves of a windless sea,  
 Forms yearning out of distances around,  
 And the patient throbbing of a poem to be.

---

I have heard your recitation of my poems. You have spoken them charmingly: I could feel at the same time your sensitive accord with them and your intelligent communicativeness. Thanks for passing my soul through yours.

A few points, however, I may take the liberty to comment on in a slightly corrective spirit. I marked four words whose enunciation did not tally with what I might call the technical temper of the work. One of them—"exquisite"—can't really be said to have gone against this temper, even though I stress the first syllable "ex" in

the English way while you do the second in the American style; for the change goes only to the extent of making my first foot an anapaest instead of my second as originally meant. Not at all anything to object to with knitted brows. The case is rather different with "tenebrous" and "contemplative". If you accent the former in the second syllable, as you did, the metre limps a wee bit. The true accent falls in the first syllable. I myself at one time went astray until Sri Aurobindo pulled me up. Your "contemplative" has the ictus on the second syllable—a not illegitimate practice, especially in older English poetry. Nowadays, except for deliberate poetic effects, the ictus is on the first syllable, with a minor one on the third in a line of verse. The shift again interferes with the metre. Finally, your "omniscience" has the correct prose-sound when it makes the end of it come almost as "shens"—but the "e" in "shens" is a slur-sound, it is haunted by an "i", and in poetry it may be turned into practically two syllables: "omniscience"—the full pressure of the voice on the second and a slight one on the last. The component after "omni" can be sounded in poetry just like the single word "science" with only one difference: the "i" now is short and not long. If we don't speak the two-component word in this manner in the line

Infinite circling omniscience,

the metre once more lacks its complete length: it fails to get the required four feet.

Now I come to a somewhat more subtle matter. Poetry is measured speech—it has a definite structure (of course on the whole, since internal modulations are common) and this structure is not only metrical but also linear. There are line-units in poetry and that is why it is printed in a special mode: a number of separate lines metrically of the same or of diverse lengths. Hence we must have a very small pause at the end of each line. Such a pause is indeed minute if the line is not end-stopped but enjambed—that is, if it flows over in respect of sense, as when a noun is at the close of a line and its verb begins the next or when an adjective and a noun are similarly divided. But whatever the posture of expression, some discernible halt, no matter how diminutive, has to come at the termination of a line in order to suggest its unit-character to the ear. Milton, the master of what we may term torrential enjambment, is reported to have yet insisted on such a pause. The pause becomes all the more imperative if the verse is rhymed rather than blank. The rhymes should not get submerged by the passage of the voice across the words as in prose in order to follow the meaning. In poetry the sound is as important as the sense—and this not solely for the sake of auditory beauty but also for the very communication of the sense. The logic of poetry often operates by certain sound-effects: for instance, alliteration can conjure up a common linking nature for quite disparate wide-apart objects and render their collocation natural and inevitable, as in the surprising imagery evoked by the hushed repose and far-away look of a beautiful dead body:

This lunar landscape of still limbs.

To take another example: the impression of one divine principle which is not only ultimate but is also both primal and intermediate and runs through the universal history wings home to our heart and our intuition no less than to our intellect by means of the repeating "f"'s which figure in all the phrases before the final monosyllabic word in the line

Fount of all, fire of all, fate of all—Bliss!

Rhymes, whether near or at a little distance, serve to keep the feel of a theme continuing or a thought well balanced or a whole imaginative movement knit together. If the ear loses them to any degree, the livingness of the significance is lessened.

I notice in your reading that the needed mini-halts are not always observed. On the other hand, you tend to put long pauses between the distinguishable parts of a stanza and larger ones between one stanza and another. I feel that you are somewhat overdoing this division of sentences and stanzas. Undoubtedly, poetry has to sink in and the pausing is intended to help the process. But, if the gaps are made bigger than they should be, they tend to break the sense of

The rise, the roll, the carol, the creation,

with which all true poetry is charged. The spell of the composition is disturbed and the effect of the whole diminished. You must strike the right balance between pause and motion. If you could lessen your silences a little, your speech would be more beautiful and significant. Especially as your recitation is so very appealing, I would wish you to follow my hints.

Apart from the tiny holes I have picked, I may say that I have seldom enjoyed my own poetry more than when I heard your empathic voice.

Thanks for sending me your compositions. I have enjoyed one or two of the fairy tales very much, but it is your poetry which most interests me. You are certainly a poet with a natural gift of fine word-turn and expressive rhythm, though much of it is unaccompanied by conscious knowledge of the poetic art, a knowledge which would make you more self-critical and more careful to avoid inequality in the parts. Even as it is, there are several poems that are fully successful and most of the others have suggestive or incisive beauties scattered in them. The former group I should like to publish in *Mother India* forthwith, starting from the October issue. Were these five or six hits at the bull's eye—the "third eye" of Shiva's bull, we may imagine—not there, still I would hail you as a fellow-poet on the strength of such lines as these from the remaining poems:

Running rivulets of errant blue,  
Crystalline streams of glowing water flow down  
To a depth beyond our sight...

Arrows from a conscious wideness  
Beam through the dark obscurities of form...

A silver-winged bow to arch those glimmers forward...

The morning hours with their works of daily use  
Move on like heavenly heralds of a festive noon.  
And the sun's proud pomp at its apex shining  
Prepares an eve of deepened inner yearning...

A dark house from which all light will be born...

The Word is the food and it is served by Dreams....

*(To be continued)*

K. D. SETHNA

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## O STAR

You came to me, O Star,  
When half-open was my dream.  
Time's poignancies were asleep  
And, darting like a honey-flame,  
A sweetness reached your glow.  
O happy welcome Guest,  
You fill my midnight hour  
With your felicity's surprise.  
I could feel the hues keenest  
Of your presence approaching from far.  
I could hear the quiet sounds  
Of the great paws of your might.  
You came from quasar skies,  
Undiminished by distances.  
Then, O honoured Splendour,  
Burn like a diamond fire  
In the blue cavern of the heart  
And give to its mystery your light.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

## SOME LETTERS FROM PAUL BRUNTON

*Paul Brunton became famous on the publication of his book, A Search in Secret India, which was followed by many others which also were widely read. He was instrumental in making Ramana Maharshi known all over the world. In the 30's Brunton asked permission to visit the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. He was allowed on the condition that he would write nothing on Sri Aurobindo: the Ashram did not want publicity. Knowing his own ability to make the Ashram popular in the world's eyes, he was greatly amazed at the restriction put on him, but he has stuck to the order throughout his life and confined himself in his books to making general statements of his admiration for Sri Aurobindo with no view to popularisation or propaganda.*

*During his stay in the Ashram he became very friendly with K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran) and the friendship continued beyond his stay. One of the important statements he made to Sethna was: "The pictures I had seen of Sri Aurobindo had not prepared me for the surprise I had when I stood before him at darshan. Immediately I recognised a figure I had seen in one of my visions. Sri Aurobindo had appeared to me at a time when I had to make a decision and he had helped me to take the correct course." The Mother told Sethna later that she had found Brunton a man who had an opening and a freedom on the mental plane which had made it possible for him to come into occult contact with physically unseen people. Brunton paid two visits in all to the Ashram. His secretary, Miss Margaret Oddwinkle, decided to become a member of it. She was accepted by the Mother and, on request, received a new name—"Pavita"—by which she was known ever after.*

*Sethna met Brunton a third time in Bombay and his interview was published in the Bombay weekly newspaper Blitz. This was at the time when Hitler had attacked Russia in World War II. The interview dealt with that event as well as with spiritual topics and recorded Brunton's high opinion of Sri Aurobindo's world-vision. A correspondence went on between him and Sethna at intervals over two or three years. Some letters from the former have been found in an old file and are here offered to the readers of Mother India. Four letters of Sethna's have already been published in his book, The Vision and Work of Sri Aurobindo, under the titles: "Sri Aurobindo and the Philosophers", "Aurobindonian Viewpoints" (in two parts) and "The War behind the War".*

*Brunton published a review of Sethna's book of poems The Secret Splendour in a Bangalore periodical, New Thought, edited by a brother of the well-known novelist R. K. Narayan. The last that was heard of Brunton was that he was living in Switzerland and the man who had met him described him to Sethna as a very calm and compassionate person. This was several years ago.*



## I

Vani Vilas Road, Mysore  
18th February 1943

Dear Sethna,

Your last interesting letter to me dated 27-10-41 has remained unanswered along with a pile of very many others, not because I want to break off correspondence, but simply because of my own difficulties and over-pressure of work. At last this pressure has come to an abrupt end and it is now possible for me to relax a little to keep better time with correspondence. So please pardon my silence. It did not mean that I have forgotten you at all. On the contrary I often wish we can meet again under more leisurely circumstances than before to discuss various matters which I would like to discuss with you. However, it may be that one day you will perhaps be revisiting your old Ashram at Pondicherry. If so, you will probably have to travel via Bangalore. In that case I would request you to break your journey there and go a little way farther to Mysore to spend a few days with me as my guest.

Did you ever hear from Prof. Eagleton about your book "The Secret Splendour"? He has not said anything further to me and I have hesitated to ask him. I would like to make a suggestion in connection with bringing your name to the western reading public. Please send a copy of your book "The Secret Splendour" by Registered Post to my old friend Mrs. R. W. Hutchinson, c/o English-speaking Union, Dartmouth House, Charles Street, London, and write her at the same time saying that I have asked you to do so with a view to her recommending the publication of one or more individual poems in the American magazine "Tomorrow" for which she is British Representative. She will, I know, be delighted with your work as she has written much mystical poetry of the same kind under her maiden name Hesper Le Gallienne, and is the daughter of the late Richard Le Gallienne who was famous 30/40 years ago as poet, playwright and essayist. You will probably have to point out that the book is privately published by yourself. Otherwise the magazine might hesitate to reproduce any of the poems. You will also have to take the risk of the book failing to reach its destination owing to enemy action causing the loss of so many ships. In any case she will be glad to make your acquaintance, is a much more satisfactory correspondent than I, and you might be able to give each other useful suggestions in your work.

I wonder also whether you have been doing any work for "Blitz" weekly. If so, please let me know which articles have been from your pen, because as a one-time editor I might be able to give you useful suggestions. I have been getting it on order through a local news agent ever since you introduced me into it. I see they appear to have dropped the astrological articles by "Astro" which would be a pity. I have a feeling that the writer is a Sadhu whom I once met whilst he was journeying to Lake Manasarovar.

One of the higher officials of the Mysore Government at Bangalore is a devotee

of Sri Aurobindo and on his last visit to Mysore a few months ago he let me read a report of an address which Nolini Kanta Gupta was to give from All India Radio, Delhi, upon the 'world war and its inner bearings'. I was delighted to find so many of my own thoughts expressed in this talk and also admire the boldness of the Ashram in coming forward and saying what so much needs saying during these dark days.

Here are the two phrases which were used by Gupta in his talk and which recur in Sri Aurobindo's writings. I am rather doubtful whether I interpret the meaning in a different sense from which they are used by the Ashram and would be grateful if you could give me a precise interpretation of these phrases from the Ashram's standpoint. The phrases are: (1) adverse or dark forces and (2) the asuras.

How are you getting on generally? It is undecided whether I should go north this year to Delhi on a visit for a week or not. But if I do, I shall certainly include Bombay in my programme and thus have the pleasure of meeting you again.

With kind regards  
Paul Brunton

2

Until mid-July: The Rosery, COONOR  
Nilgiris, June 4.43

My dear Sethna,

Your letters of 1-3-43 & 2-5-43 were received with pleasure and once again I have to send the usual apology for my silence. I must be the world's worst correspondent! But I did not gain the expected freedom and have had a lot of extra work to tackle, besides being lately ill from severe fever, from which I have now to recuperate in the hills. I shall not be back in Mysore until the third or fourth week of next month, as I was badly knocked.

I like the remark in your letter about 'the superb amplitude of Sri Aurobindo's realisation' and heartily agree with it. The few metaphysical and practical points on which I do not see eye to eye with his teaching do not detract from the respect and admiration which I do feel for it; and for your Master too.

It was with regret that I found myself unable to go West and North this year but I believe it will be likely next year. I shall then look forward to discuss with you personally many things which I haven't the time to write about.

About Prof. E and your book: I am sorry he never wrote. I don't know why and cannot easily ask him as the reason may be, I suspect, a religious one. I can't say more.

Yes I read your article in the symposium and congratulate you on it; it states the essence of the matter in a charming way.... Thank you for explaining the term 'adverse forces' as used in your teaching. I have worked out a more or less similar definition except that I have not yet been able to accept the Indian view of Avatar as a special descent of the highest Divine, but that does not matter. I take it from what

you say that the time is almost ripe—or will be when peace returns—for the appearance of such an Avatar.

As I am having an enforced rest I am able to devote much time to contemplation, which is most satisfying as you know. Mystical experiences of different kinds keep on coming daily, but the terrible contrast of external world conditions keeps on intruding into my after-thoughts. What can we do, when this holocaust ends, to relate the two?

Please accept my kind regards and peace,

Paul Brunton

3

Government House Road, Mysore  
December 29, 1943

My dear Sethna,

I take this opportunity of sending you my seasonal greetings and good wishes for your spiritual and physical welfare during the coming year.

It is six months since I last wrote you and the better part of a year since I last heard from you. I hope your work goes on. You may like to know that when Beverly Nichols was here I recommended your book 'The Secret Splendour' to him and he told me that he had already seen it whilst in Bombay and admired it very much.

I am going to be less pressed for time during 1944 and will be free to discuss with you some of the points in Sri A's philosophy which still seem debatable to me. So I hope to hear from you.

With my peace  
Paul Brunton

4

21, Government House Road, Mysore  
12th January, 1944

My dear Sethna,

Thank you for your welcome letter. I am sorry to hear that you do not feel your period of inner storm and stress to be over yet. However it is perhaps enough with our human limitations to be moving in the right direction and that I am sure you are doing whatever the rises and falls. The path is tremendously difficult and Gita reminds us how few succeed in finishing it successfully. It is enough therefore perhaps to have found it and to be making valiant efforts to overcome the adverse influences which surround mankind and seem so determined to keep us from the goal. It is my belief too that every sincere seeker finds a certain compensation in a beautiful and ethereal world after death for the failures, disappointments and miseries which make up so much of the stuff of the human story.

The mystical experience which you had one night last April is interesting. You may take it as a hopeful augury of future developments. I have had very much the

same experience on occasions in the past and it was usually the prelude to favourable phases of inner development.

You ask to mention the points in Sri Aurobindo's teaching which still seem to be debatable to me. Well, some of them are his rejection of idealism in the Berkeleyan sense, his advocacy of the Avatara doctrine and his acceptance of the mystical possibility of union with God. On these points in the first case I find it impossible to escape from the truth that mind is the only reality we have ever known and can ever know so that there is no place for matter in my scheme of things. In the second case I cannot conceive how the infinite mind can become confined in the finite flesh of no matter how divine an incarnation may be. In the third case God, as the ultimate reality, is incomprehensible, intangible, absolute and unthinkable. No human capacity however stretched out it may become can so transcend its finite limitations as to achieve direct union with it. It is my belief, therefore, what we mystics do achieve is union with our own individual divine soul which is quite another matter. If you can dissipate these difficulties in the way of my agreement with Sri Aurobindo's complete teaching I would be grateful. There are some other points of difference also but I must leave them for a later letter. As you already know I feel no disagreement with the major portions of his teaching and in addition admire him personally as being the most outstanding of contemporary Indian yogis.

In answer to your question about Beverly Nichols I am not in correspondence with him at present as he is tremendously busy and dashing about from place to place when I last heard. In any case he was due to leave India this month and for all I know may have left already. So I am sorry there is nothing that I could do with him at present on behalf of your book.

With my peace and kindest thoughts.

Sincerely yours,  
Paul Brunton

5

"Hasmine Villa", Hyderali Road  
Mysore, 14th July 1944

My dear Sethna,

Your letter of January 31 has been lying all this time in my desk simply because I have had a series of illnesses which deprived me of the necessary energy for tackling correspondence or carrying on my usual work. Now I am very much better and you are amongst the first to be written to now that convalescence is over. Thank you for sending three book packets containing "All-India Weekly". Naturally I read your articles in them with much delight. And satisfaction too, because of the implied recognition and appreciation of your fine talents.

The piece of work which I liked best was the creative translation from Dante.

Since when have you been writing for this journal and are you going to write every week for it?

With reference to the four principal points raised in your letter:

(1) The absence of a universal consensus of opinion amongst philosophers certainly does indicate the inability of intellect to arrive at indisputable truth. But the alternative which you propose, of an integral satisfaction of all sides of our nature, is superior but still not enough. For the other sides which complement intellect, viz. feeling, mystical intuition and mystical experience will also suffer from the same deficiencies. There is the same possibility of endless contradiction here. I therefore arrive at the conclusion that a new faculty is really needed wherewith to ascertain ultimate truth, one which, if its possession is gained, will function in precisely the same manner in all persons. Such a faculty was I believe used by sages like Krishna and Buddha, I give it the name of 'insight'. The purity of this insight must necessarily be a consequence of the purity of the entire character and mentality of the man who has it. This applies not only in the moral realm but also in the intellectual and emotional realms of his being. For the very *sanskaras* of a virtuous nature which helped his progress in earlier stages must now be discarded as much as those of a vicious nature. The very tendencies of the intellect which brought him to his spiritual standpoint, must also be discarded. Only by this ruthless self-pruning can he respond utterly impersonally to reality and not falsify it. It is, I presume, the same as the divinisation of the human mind of which you write.

(2) Metaphysical idealism could certainly be interminably argued about, as you say, especially with the neo-realists. It is however as worthy of consideration by the spiritually minded as other doctrines because it has been held by a number of leaders in the mystical field and that not merely through intellectual activity but also through mystical experience. It is difficult for me to get over this hurdle of anti-mentalism in my appreciation of the Aurobindonian world-view, with which otherwise I am largely in close accord. But here of course we are up against the same difficulty of the equally contradictory character of such experience. You are however incorrect in stating that the drift of science is away from Berkeley. It is true that Berkeley's view of mentalism was a limited and imperfect one, only a beginning in fact. But it was a beginning in the right direction. The lately published book of Sir James Jeans entitled "Physics and Philosophy" shows that the contrary to your belief is the actual case. He concludes, "As we pass from this phenomenal world of space and time to this substratum we seem, in some way we do not understand, to be passing from materialism to mentalism and so possibly from matter to mind.... Modern physics has moved in the direction of mentalism."

(3) The thirst for perfection is certainly present within us. I believe with you that the thirst is a pointer to its eventual slaking. But there is no necessary implication that this will be attained whilst we are in the flesh and on a level of existence where everything is doomed, as Buddha points out, to decay and death. It is more likely to be done on a higher level where such limitations could not exist. The perfection we seek and the immortality we hope for are more likely to be mental rather than physical achievements. For all mystics including yourself are at least agreed that

there is such a level of untainted purely spiritual being.

(4) I could very easily put myself in the receptive mood which would see Sri Aurobindo's teaching in the light that you see it. I understand and sympathise greatly with such a standpoint. But I would have to emerge from it again, for the critical intellect would come back to renewed activity and ask insistent questions. I have however tried to keep a proper relation between the critical intellect and the mystical intuition, despite appearances which may have misled you to believe otherwise.

I must say that you are the best advocate of Sri Aurobindo's teaching amongst all his disciples whom I know of. And this is true not only because you have a most convincing pen but also because you have a human personality which reflects that splendid integrality which is rightly the outstanding characteristic of the Sage of Pondicherry's teaching. I should be delighted to hear from you again and hope you will pardon the delay in writing you, a delay which will not be repeated again.

How are things with you in Bombay? I have the idea at the back of my head of paying a visit to your city at the end of this year but whether it would be possible to do so will depend upon my state of health.

With my peace and all good wishes,

Paul Brunton

6

"Jasmine Villa", Hyderali Road, Mysore

23rd August, 1944

My dear Sethna,

Thank you for sending me the copy of "All-India Weekly" containing your article on "The Birthday of Sri Aurobindo". I found it particularly interesting because it includes a topic we discussed a couple of years ago and I must say the views you express therein seem more acceptable now to me than they did then, although still not completely so.

I wrote you a long letter on July the 14th. So will now conclude with my best wishes for your literary career, and with my peace.

Paul Brunton

7

"Jasmine Villa", Hyderali Road  
MYSORE CITY June 12, 1945

My dear Sethna,

Your letter of November 26th was read with pleasure. I dislike having to apologise to you each time for the belated character of my replies but there is no help for it. I fell ill again last December and was in bed for some weeks. I have recovered fairly good health but owing to the nature of the fever there has been an aftermath of physical and nervous weakness. My physician ordered me to cut down

all desk work 75% so I simply let all correspondence slide.

I read your arguments and appreciate their force. You put up an excellent case. But I am sure I can answer it in a personal discussion. It would demand an effort of which I am not now capable to put my answer into writing. So we must postpone this for a personal meeting, which will surely occur eventually somewhere.

I get "All-India Weekly" and must compliment you on your articles. I particularly liked "The Fetish of Theory" about six weeks ago and I hope you will include it in the preface to your next book of poems.

Sri Aurobindo's fame and work is getting a wider and wider notice in the West, to judge from my mailbag. This pleases me greatly.

Did you ever hear from Mrs Hutchinson? Now that the European war has ceased it is safe to send a copy of your book to her, if she did not receive the other one. Her latest Address is: Hesper Hutchinson, Ambassador Club, Bournemouth, Hants, England.

With all good wishes and my peace,

Paul Brunton

8

Box 34, Station D, New York 3, U.S.A.

September 19, 1946

My dear Sethna,

I left India several months ago on such short notice that I had no time to say farewell; otherwise I would certainly have informed you. It took me some months to reach America, as I was ship-wrecked on the way and had to spend two months in Egypt, waiting for another vessel.

However, the change of climate has greatly benefited my health, which was becoming very urgent.

The news from India is tragic—and now that there is an Interim Government, the internal peace which we had all hoped would follow that event, has not so far shown itself. And yet, given the cooperative spirit, the problems could surely have been ironed out.

You wrote me last year asking about the interest which Westerners are taking in the teaching of your Guru Sri Aurobindo. I know only from occasional book reviews in library journals, and from letters which I get from people I know, that more and more of his writings are being read and studied and appreciated every year. He is coming to be recognized as the authentic spokesman of modern Indian mysticism, as apart from the medieval type represented by the missionary swamis.

I was sorry to note that "All-India Weekly" had become more of a competition journal than a literary one, so that your own articles disappeared, in the three issues which have reached me since April. Please let me know if you are likely to write for them again; otherwise I shall not renew my subscription. If you are not likely to do so, there are no doubt several other high class journals who would be glad to print

your work—so please advise me should you change over to one of them, in order that I might subscribe to it.

I think of my peaceful life in Mysore against the vivid contrast of the frenzied existence here, and have to smile at all these millions of people running hither and thither when they are not engaged in going on strike. I shall soon have cleared up the business which keeps me here, and then retreat to California for the colder months. However, the above will be my permanent mail address.

With kindest regards,  
Paul Brunton

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## NOW

I HAVE stopped being curious.  
Once the when and how and why  
Bothered, like a thorn under the sole.  
Now the skin seems thicker and calloused.

One day, recently  
I saw at the Samadhi  
A squirrel burying its face in a marigold  
And dart up the tree in a trice.  
My response was a tender smile.  
What did the squirrel do with the flower  
Up in the tree? and why? and what did it mean?  
Were questions that never arose.

I have stopped remembering O so many things,  
But I do see now and again  
The squirrel with the marigold;  
It must be a part of myself, my scattered self  
That I have been gathering to put together  
One day.

DINKAR PALANDE



## BAJI PRABHOU AS A SYMBOL IN THE NARRATIVE POEM *BAJI PRABHOU*

SYMBOLIC potentialities in mythic or legendary figures seem to have most fascinated Sri Aurobindo's poetic genius. His narrative poems of the Baroda period and the epics of the Pondicherry period bear eloquent testimony to his symbol-making urge and craftsmanship. For instance in *Baji Prabhou*<sup>1</sup> dealing with one of the most thrilling episodes of the Seventeenth Century Maratha history, the symbolic thrust, representing the poet's patriotic and spiritual aspirations simultaneously, is certainly remarkable. His turning of history to myth or to legend undoubtedly distinguishes him as a maker of symbols.

By an alchemic touch of yogic consciousness Sri Aurobindo seems to have entirely spiritualised the central theme of Baji's heroic self-sacrifice at the Rangana Pass to cover the retreat of Shivaji. The poet converts the bare episode to a tale holding a symbolic meaning. Baji's soul evokes the God who dwells in all souls, the heroic stalwart is thus turned into a living spiritual symbol. The courageous feat of Baji in history represents the Goddess Bhavani's will. Shivaji himself was a devotee of Bhavani who, he felt, actually inspired and guided him. Following the messages of the Gita, the Upanishads and the Veda Sri Aurobindo strove to justify the existence of divinity in man's soul, which is immortal. Baji's soul expresses this immortality. It was Sri Aurobindo's belief based on the experience of yoga that the divine life is possible on the earth if man succeeds in attaining the supramental consciousness, and this attainment would be helped in the general life of the nation by political freedom. Therefore he lifts the human hero in Baji to the divine being of a myth to set an illustrious example before the political activists seeking India's freedom. The poet harnesses images of multitude, solidity, valour and devotion which are symbolic of nationalistic aspirations as well as the spiritual transformation.

The inculcation of the spirit of Bhavani into the being of Baji possibly acts in the hero as a symbol. To Sri Aurobindo Bhavani is '...the infinite energy which streams forth the eternal in the world and the eternal in yourselves.... I am Bhavani Bharati, Mother of India.'<sup>2</sup> So Baji as a symbol represents both the eternity of the soul and the Mother of India: they stand for the aspiration for the spiritual transformation of the world and patriotic zeal respectively. Bhavani in Baji uniquely represents the blending of these two poetic strands of Sri Aurobindo. Fatally wounded, Baji, therefore, sees the vision of Bhavani that 'watches over India' eternally; the goddess passes out of him and stands visible beside him,

...a mighty form  
Stood visible, Titanic, scarlet-clad,  
Dark as a thunder-cloud, with streaming hair  
Obscuring heaven, and in her sovran grasp

The sword, the flower, the boon, the bleeding head,—  
Bhavani.<sup>3</sup>

And Shivaji on his return beholds with his intuitive eye the mighty goddess beside  
the dead stalwart,

A dim and mighty cloud that held a sword  
And in its other hand, where once the head  
Depended bleeding, raised the turban bright  
From Baji's brows, still glittering with its gems,  
And placed it on the chief's. But as it rose  
Blood-stained with the heroic sacrifice,  
Round the aigrette he saw a golden crown.<sup>4</sup>

Sri Aurobindo has beautifully projected the magnificent imposing image of the mythic goddess Bhavani, which is thoroughly symbolic. The sword in her hand symbolizes her role as the protector of mankind as also of India, the flower her inherent tenderness of heart, the boon her spiritual potentiality to bless the devotees, and the bleeding head symbolizes her tremendous might to punish the evil. And the end-lines quoted above certainly crown the symbol of Baji as the eternal spirit, championing the cause of freedom, serving Mother Bhavani's cause; they make the very natural body of the inner truth a part of the experience of its maker.

Even Baji is aware of this divine presence within his self which he most modestly acknowledges in his fiery speeches,

...Baji  
Or Malsure is but a name, a robe,  
And covers One alone.<sup>5</sup>

and,

...Me thou shalt not burn.  
For this five feet or more of bone and flesh,  
Whether pure flame or jackals of the hills  
Be fattened with its rags, may well concern  
Others, not Baji Prabhou.<sup>6</sup>

The symbolic image of a robe seems to be the central one in this narrative poem. The holy Gita's message is eloquent of the similitude between robe and human body which Sri Aurobindo has used earlier in the image of changing wedding garments at the Eternal's gate in a short poem 'The Fear of Death'.<sup>7</sup> Here, however, he uses the image of a robe in a more subtle way and certainly from a higher plane. As against the Western idea involved in the earlier usage, here it is typically the Hindu idea that underlies the image of a robe. Robe symbolizes human body. The one that it 'covers' is important for He makes the soul immortal. Thus the image of a

robe conveys to the nationalists and the spiritual seekers that death is an inevitable occurrence which does no harm to the soul. The immortal soul in a way represents the noble deeds of man that remain long in the memory of the race, provides a theme to poetry and continues to inspire generation after generation. Myths and legends, therefore, seem to be real, the actual events of the past. One can easily discern Sri Aurobindo's purpose in turning history to myth here, why the poet projects Baji as a mythic or legendary hero rather than as a mere historic personage. And the second quotation cited above instantaneously recalls what Sri Aurobindo writes about the liberation of the individual soul in his philosophical treatise *The Life Divine*,

The liberation of the individual soul is therefore the keynote of the definite divine action; it is the primary divine necessity and the pivot on which all else turns. It is the point of Light at which the intended complete self-manifestation in the Many begins to emerge. But the liberated soul extends its perception of unity horizontally as well as vertically.<sup>8</sup>

The assertion 'Me thou shalt not burn' befittingly substantiates the liberation of the individual soul in Baji to mark the beginning of divinity. 'Pure flame' or the 'jackals of the hills' would unfailingly liberate his immortal soul to march towards the divine Light 'at which the intended complete self-manifestation in the Many begins to emerge.' However, the last part of this quotation is of the utmost importance, for Baji's liberated soul would not only seek individual salvation but also undoubtedly 'extend its perception of unity horizontally as well as vertically.' The symbol of Baji seems to represent the poet's individual aspiration for the divine transformation and the divine uplift of the whole race of mankind.

Lastly, in a couple more of Baji's exhortations to his companions it is worthwhile to note the poet's call to his countrymen to sacrifice their lives to realise a widespread general consummation:

We die indeed,  
But let us die with the high-voiced assent  
Of Heaven to our country's claim enforced  
To freedom...<sup>9</sup>

and,

Make iron of your souls.  
Yet if Bhavani wills, strength and the sword  
Can stay our nation's future from o'erthrow  
Till victory with Shivaji return.<sup>10</sup>

Baji clearly voices the poet's nationalistic aspirations here, but 'the high-voiced assent/Of Heaven' and 'Yet if Bhavani wills' undoubtedly lift the narration towards the poetry of the Mantra of the Real. These phrases certainly add a touch of the Divine to the nationalistic aspiration and vigour. Baji, therefore, is seen exhorting his countrymen

not only to the country's political freedom but also to the definite divine action by liberating their individual souls. The symbol of Baji as such foresees Sri Aurobindo, the Liberator of mankind.

G. S. PAKLE

#### REFERENCES

1. 'Baji Prabhou' first appeared in the *Karmayogin* between February 19 and March 5, 1910, as mentioned in Volume XXX of *Index and Glossary of Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*. However, the actual composition of the poem seems to have taken place earlier during the most hectic period of political activities in Baroda and Calcutta.

2. Sri Aurobindo, *Bande Mataram* (Pondicherry: SABCL, 1972), I, p. 70.
3. Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Poems* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972), p. 291.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 293.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
8. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (Pondicherry: SABCL, 1972), XVIII, p. 40.
9. Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Poems*, op. cit., p. 285.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 289.

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### A BURNING DESIRE

HAPPENSTANCE the clouds would lend me their thunder,  
 Or the typhoon its whirling centre of torsion  
 To break open the blocked and bolted  
 Doors of the dark and dusty  
 Cellar of my unresponsive heart.  
 A renegade from light, shorn of love,  
 A ruthless ascetic of morbid penances,  
 A victim of escapist disharmony,  
 Little does it know of the thirsty fertility  
 Embedded in the layers of moribund lull,  
 Eager to spurt up in glorious green  
 Drenched by the embalmed rains of divine distillation—  
 This ultimate fruition, this grand justification  
 Of my taking a human form  
 With adjuncts of mind, consciousness and soul.

DEBANSHU

## HALLEY—1986 !

*"...imagination's comet trail of dream..."* (Savitri, BK 2, C. 3)

*"Thought trails behind it its long comet tail..."* (Savitri, BK 10, C. 4)

### Introduction

HALLEY is back! Last seen in 1910 it returns to us now as it does once in every 76 years. The earliest observation of this phenomenon can be traced to a reference found in a Chinese book compiled in the first century B.C. The 'broom-star'—hui-sing, star with a tail—is said to have appeared for several weeks in the 7th year of Emperor Chi'n Shihhuang (240 B.C.).

Its next return in 164 B.C., however, went unnoticed perhaps because the relative positions of the earth, the sun, and the comet rendered its sighting impossible.

### When Kings Die

In the common minds the appearance of comets is often associated with catastrophes and Halley's is no exception. Its return in 86 B.C. terrified the citizens of Rome. Julius Caesar was then just a boy of 14 years.

The arrival of comets is taken as a divine warning of the upheavals of kingdoms, of the deaths of rulers, of approaching wars and natural calamities and disasters. A classic example is to be found in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* when Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, forbids him, though in vain, to go to the Senate on the Ides of March because she had seen a comet. She warns him:

"When beggars die there are no comets seen.

The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes."

Halley has been blamed for many disasters throughout the ages. The fall of Jerusalem—into the hands of the Romans—in 70 A.D. is attributed to the advent of the comet four years earlier. Again, the conquest of England by the Normans in 1066 A.D. coincided with Halley's appearance. Its last return, in 1910, is believed to have brought about the death of King Edward VII.

### The Mother's Experience

But there is no necessary equation between upheavals or disasters and the appearance of comets in our skies. When the comet Ikeya-Seki appeared in 1965, the Mother had a very interesting experience to recount.

"Something amusing has happened. You know that there is a new comet. This morning at about 4 o'clock, I saw the comet, and all of a sudden I found myself in a

state above the earth and I saw a being that seemed to be associated with this comet. He had red hair (but it wasn't an aggressive red), a white body, but not pure white: golden white, as if he were naked. But the impression was that he was neither naked nor dressed (I have noticed that several times before), neither man nor woman. And this being was young, charming, full of a kind of joy rather like the joy that came with the music just now. He was spreading a kind of substance in the earth atmosphere, a substance heavier than matter—not heavier but denser—like jelly. It was as if he had taken advantage of the fact that the comet was passing close to the earth to spread that substance. At the same time I was told that it was 'to help the transformation of the earth'. And he showed me how to circulate this substance in the atmosphere.

"It was charming: a young being, full of joy, as if he were dancing, who spread this substance everywhere. It lasted a long time. I remained in that state for several hours."

### **Dhumketu**

'Coma', in Latin, means hair. There seems to be a connection between the tail of a comet and the long hair of a woman: hence the name 'comet'.

In Sanskrit we call it 'dhumketu' where 'dhum' means vapour, smoke, flame or mist and 'ketu' banner. Thus 'dhumketu' is a banner of smoke or flame. Its earliest reference in India is seen in the Atharva Veda. By the 6th century A.D. a lot of research seems to have been done on this subject. In his book entitled *Brhatsamhitā* the well-known astronomer Varahamihira devotes one full chapter to comets and the course they take in the skies.

In Vishnu-Dharmottara Purana there is a story recounting how a dhumketu is formed.

The population of the earth had increased to such an extent that Brahma got worried. He created a woman whom he named Mrityu. She was ordered to spread death on earth. When poor Mrityu heard of this she broke down and began arguing. From these tears originated diseases, seeing which she plunged in deeper grief. She could not control herself and took to penance. When Brahma saw this, he blessed her and said, "You will not be the cause of death. None will die because of you." Hearing these words, Mrityu heaved a sigh of relief and from this sigh dhumketu was born.

The ancients believed that different types of comets brought different atmospheres and messages for us. As Varahamihira himself states:

"A comet which is short, glossy, serene, white and not crooked and which is perceived when it is just rising, brings abundance and happiness.

"If a comet shows the opposite characteristics to these, it is taken to be inauspicious, especially when it resembles a rainbow."

## Early Science of Comets

Among the first to offer a scientific explanation for comets was the Greek philosopher-scientist Aristotle who thought that they were produced high up in the atmosphere by masses of a slow-burning gas.

This view was held until 1577 when the great Danish astronomer Tycho de Brahe measured the positions of a comet relative to the stars at different hours in the night. He used the method of parallax and reasoned out from his data that the comet was farther away from the moon and was not in the earth's atmosphere.

Johannes Kepler, who was Tycho's student, believed that comets glow because they reflect sunlight. Their tail is formed when the surface material of the nucleus is swept away from the comet by sunlight. But his belief that the comets travel in straight lines, slowing down and speeding up at irregular intervals, is not true.

## Halley's Comet

It was Isaac Newton, the famous English physicist who was working on the law of gravitation, who next saw the comet. He thought that comets revolved round the sun like planets but in more eccentric orbits.

In 1695 Halley, Newton's young friend, began to collect the observations of orbits of the several well-studied comets. He concluded that the comets which are observed with a regular periodicity ought to follow elliptical orbits. There are roughly 1000 comets recorded in history of which 100 are classed as 'periodic'.

Halley predicted that the comet that had appeared in 1531, 1607 and 1682 was the same and would reappear in 1758. He writes:

"Many considerations incline me to believe the comet of 1531 observed by Apianus to have been the same as that described by Kepler in 1607 and which I again observed when it returned in 1682. Whence I would venture confidently to predict its return, namely in the year 1758. And if this occurs, there will be no further cause for doubt that the other comets ought to return also."

He noted that if his prediction should come true, "candid posterity will not refuse to acknowledge that this was first discovered by an Englishman."

The comet did reappear in 1758 and was very fittingly named after him. The notion that celestial objects move in circular orbits because of their divine nature was disposed of by Kepler's laws. Similarly Halley's application of Newton's laws to comets meant that comets too were only astronomical bodies which obeyed the laws of physics.

## The Modern Era

During the 19th century the comet Encke seemed to be spiralling towards the sun. Its orbit shrunk by 17000 kms in each cycle. This is roughly 1 part in 12000. In 1910 the comet reached its perihelion (closest point of approach to the sun) four

days later than predicted. That this was not a minor error in calculations but that there was something hidden behind the laws, ushered in the modern era of cometary research. For example, the view that the comet is nothing but a diffused mass of dust and gas could not account for its complete nature. How then could a comet like Halley live for more than 2000 years?

The answer was in the 'dirty snowball' model proposed by Fred Whipple in the 1950s. The main cometary body, called the nucleus, is roughly 10 kms in diameter and is formed of ices mixed with dust. The ices are mixtures of gases such as methane, ammonia, carbon dioxide, hydrogen cyanide and water. When the comet is very far from the sun it is nothing but a ball of frozen gases. But when it is close to the sun the ice evaporates.

*(To be continued)*

DATTA AND SWADESH

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## GOD

EVERY flower, every thorn,  
Every smile, every tear  
Is the living behaviour of God.  
So near, so familiar, so within!  
One needs not to search for God  
Beyond his world of experience.  
Each direction points to Him.  
Where life is, there is God.  
God has no frontier, no religion,  
God has no signboard,  
But His presence shines everywhere.  
Every man is His temple.

KAMAL MITRA



## FURTHER STUDIES IN INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1986)

### A STUDY IN JUNGIAN ANALYSTS

ALL suffering is considered bad, though evolutionally considered, it is an incentive for progress, for fuller adjustment and integration making good in some degree the inadequacy of the situation of suffering. Physical suffering is more easily recognised and looked after. However, the inner suffering is more serious, since it is not easily recognised and not duly looked after even by the individual himself. Its consequences also are deeper and much more harmful.

Religions have offered a healing touch to the ailing souls, but recently Psychology has evolved techniques for the difficulties of the human psyche, the inner conscious and unconscious life. Freud and Jung are the two foremost psychologists, whose methods are at the present most prevalent and they offer a welcome approach and solution to the problems of mental health. Freudians seek to restore to the mentally disturbed the normal working condition. Jungians do that on their orientation of personality and by their techniques, but they also open up a vision of 'wholeness' in personality, if the patients care to pursue the path of self-integration. The Jungian path is for the mentally disturbed as well as for the mentally healthy.

*Jungian Analysis*, edited by Murray Stein (published by Shambhala, Boulder and London, 1984), is a fine joint venture by leading Jungian Analysts and seems to present a wide co-ordinated picture of Jungian Analysis today. The essays deal with the history and practice, the aims and goal, the structure and dynamics, and the varied methods of Jungian Analysis. There are also chapters dealing with children and the aged and the role of the gender, the sex. Two chapters deal with the training of the Analysts. All the essays are fine studies and together they present a comprehensive picture of the progress that Jungian Analysis has made and the greater success it looks forward to.

Jung's psychology has a wide span. It takes man comprehensively, what he is in his present ego-formation, what he has been and is carried forward in the unconscious, individual and racial, and what he is tending towards, *i.e.*, a 'wholeness' of personality. All these factors have been elaborately dealt with in the extensive writings of Jung, availing themselves of personal observation of the inner dynamics and the expression of these dynamics in dreams, mythology, alchemy, mystic practices of the East and West and the general religious life.

The most important discovery in all this extensive work is that there is in man a 'self' besides the ego and the polarities of the conscious and the unconscious, the male and female and the others that the ego involves. This self is an integrating unique

centre and a wholeness of life is the objective. Such an overall framework of personality is very good. Evidently in it the 'self' and the 'wholeness' visioned are the most important factors, on which inner healing and inner perfection depend, but they are the factors that have yet to be investigated. Jung discovered them and did so effectively. But their nature, character and working need to be known as best we can. They are most important for the process of individuation or transformation of life. We should know them well and should be able to mobilise them for mental health as well as for the perfection of life. Jung's emphasis remained on the ego up to the last. Should our emphasis not shift to 'self' if self is to be given its full chance of integration and if 'wholeness' is to have its full play? If we persist in our insistence on the ego then we refuse full play to self and wholeness, which can really overcome all unconsciousness and its fragmentation of archetypes. Such wholeness, oneness, unity is what the best traditions of Chinese and Indian Yoga aim at. The Samadhi state is, in fact, not the aim of spiritual life. 'Integrated living and action' is the aim. This is what the Gita substantiates in its teachings. However, there are systems of yoga, which aim at Samadhi, which however is a highly conscious state. The unconscious Samadhi is an aberration. The egoistic state of exclusiveness and discrimination is not essential to consciousness. Consciousness is illumination and the higher unitary states are states of oneness, and indefinite extension and increasing brightness. The history of mysticism, Eastern and Western, amply bear this out.

The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as practised at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, of which the writer has personal experiences, bears out happy parallelisms with Jungian psychology and its practice, in many respects. The soul is here too the unitary and the unique centre in man, which commands body, life and mind and their dualities or divided opposing reactions and seekings. This soul is the evolving soul, which they call the psychic being to distinguish it from the soul, which is the abiding individual spiritual reality as held by religions and philosophical systems. The psychic being is a spiritual principle, a representative of the metaphysical soul, involved in man's evolutionary history. Physiologically it is associated with the region of the heart. Ordinarily it stands apart acting from behind whereas body, life and mind constitute the apparent personality of man.

The yogic pursuit consists in seeking a contact with the psychic being and making it the dynamic and dominant principle of life. This one does by progressively dissociating oneself from the activities of body, life and mind, by dedicating them to a disinterested purpose as service. That loosens the egoistic knot of life and a contact with the psychic being becomes possible. This contact, in the beginning, is occasional and fleeting. In course of time, it becomes steady and abiding. Then it begins to act in full power on the dualities, divisions and incongruities of outer life and harmonises them. A sense of wholeness in the normal working of life, in eating and drinking and all things, becomes a vivid experience. Of course, this needs an entire dedication of life to the yogic pursuit. But in the process all complexities of life get bit by bit simplified. Ego then gets merged in the psychic being or else the latter

overwhelms the former and gives a new form of unity and wholeness and spontaneity to life.

The psychic being in due time becomes aware of a corresponding spiritual reality in the universe as the all-commanding fact of existence. The individual's life then acquires a wide universal dimension.

This growth is facilitated by a contact of deep inner rapport with a teacher, a Guru, who has gone through the length of the yogic pursuit previously.

The parallelisms between the practice of Integral Yoga and that of Jungian psychology are evident. Jung's approach is that of an empirical scientist and, as such, he went the farthest one could go. And indeed he achieved the highest truths in his field.

The yogic method is essentially that of inner exploration without the limitations of the assumptions or postulates of empirical science. The yoga is thus able to achieve ultimate certitudes as facts of experience. However, the ultimate spiritual reality is infinite and the yogic perceptions of it too can be much varied, but they all carry a degree of certitude, which inferential knowledge cannot possess.

The writer confidently hopes that Jungian psychology will in the future elaborate its concepts of Self and Wholeness, in fact discover the existential facts behind them and then mobilise the same in practice. At that stage Integral Yoga and Jungian psychology will get much closer. Integral Yoga has a wide literature, so has Jungian psychology and a comparative study of the two is highly rewarding. It brings in a greater clarity and certitude regarding the profundities of life. The concept of the unconscious is a vast and rich concept in Jung. At one time he characterised it as chaotic. Later he attributed to it even the higher possibilities of life. His position was that all that is not known to the ego-consciousness is unconscious. Here are his own words in this connection.

(1) "In talking about the unconscious we have always to talk in paradoxes... We know just as well, and can rely on the fact, that the unconscious is not only chaos but also order"...<sup>1</sup>

(2) "...the ever deeper descent into the unconscious suddenly becomes illumination from above..."<sup>2</sup>

(3) "Is there anything more fundamental than the realisation 'This is what I am'? It reveals a unity which nevertheless is—or was—a diversity. No longer the earlier ego with its make-believes and artificial contrivances, but another 'objective' ego, which for this reason is better called the 'Self'..."<sup>3</sup>

Now should we not distinguish between what is carried over from the past and represents partial integrations and what constitutes future possibilities and represents higher integration? Integral Yoga prefers to call the one the unconscious, the other the superconscious. The one is essentially chaotic and obscure, the other essentially organised and luminous, though to the ego both are not known.

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, pp.6-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

A clarity was emerging in Jung progressively. However, a full clarity on this point seems to be called for.

In the end, it is a pleasure to cite, from the thoughtful inquiring open-minded studies of the Jungian Analysts, a few statements as representative of the entire book. These statements give the important ideas of Jungian Analytical thought and practice:

(1) "A significant aspect of Jungian treatment, however, is not described so well by the term analysis. This is the experience of the Self that often occurs in, or as a result of, Jungian therapy. Jungian analysis results not only in Self-knowledge but also in a new kind of Self-experience. People who enter Jungian analysis may do so because they wish to know more about themselves, but if the analysis actually works, they come to experience themselves in a way that was previously not possible. This new kind of Self-experience takes place as the rigidities of ego-consciousness dissolve, and as the unconscious responds and is acknowledged within the security and understanding of the analytical framework. What actually creates the therapeutic effect in Jungian analysis is the increasing amplitude of a person's experience of the Self. This experience, moreover, usually brings with it an influx of energy and vitality, so that one common result of analysis is more creativity in one's responses to life and its challenges."<sup>1</sup>

(2) "Jungian analysis takes place within a dialectical relationship between two persons, analyst and analysand, and has for its goal the analysand's coming to terms with the unconscious: the analysand is meant to gain insight into the specific unconscious structures and dynamics that emerge during analysis, and the structures underlying ego-consciousness are meant to change in their dynamic relation to other, more unconscious structures and dynamics."<sup>2</sup>

(3) "Jungian analysts, unlike their Freudian colleagues, do not generally engage in a meticulous reconstruction of childhood. Nevertheless, as the statement quoted above indicates, a certain amount of remembering childhood and adolescence does commonly occur in Jungian analysis. It is typical for considerable time to be spent tracing the history of various personal complexes from infancy to the present and becoming aware of how they have affected ego-consciousness in the past and continue to do so in the present."<sup>3</sup>

(4) "Coming to terms with the unconscious, then, means gaining insight in both of these areas: mastering the personal complexes to some extent on the one hand, while grasping the symbolic meaning of emerging archetypal contents on the other. Analysis creates an ongoing dialogue between the ego and the unconscious, which produces a dialectical tension of opposites within ego-consciousness, between ego strivings on the one hand and unconscious disturbances and archetypally based demands on the other. This dialogue is mirrored in the dialectical structure of analysis itself. This dialectic, in turn, reflects the Self, which actually consists of a dialectical play of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

the opposites. For-ego-consciousness to come to mirror the Self more completely is another way of expressing the goal of analysis."<sup>1</sup>

### THE EDUCATION OF AN ANALYST

(5) "The education of the analyst extends beyond anything that can be verbally expressed. It is, more than anything, an experience of transformation in which one comes to know one's own soul and to befriend it. In the process, it is hoped that one may become what one really is."<sup>2</sup>

(6) "There is, inevitably, the sense of vocation. Something in the person of the applicant is profoundly attracted to the mystery of the human soul, is fascinated by its complexity, and finds nothing more entrancing than to explore its labyrinthine paths."<sup>3</sup>

(7) "One senses: here is a person who can take strain and stress, suffer disappointment and loss, endure embarrassment and shame, yet not crumble. Analysts will feel that this is a person they can trust, one to whom they can be fully open, who will not take advantage of them, and who will not break down under the burdens that they may bring. Analysts want to feel that the analyst can stand the dirt and stench of another's life and not turn away."<sup>4</sup>

(8) "Jung never meant his writings to be regarded as sacred dogma. He often expressed his awareness that theories are workable for a while, then pass away or are superseded. I believe he intended that his writings would inspire those who came after him to revise and reinterpret his ideas in ways consonant with other times, other situations. People who are training to become analysts are encouraged to see how Jung's ideas apply to their own times, their own analytic cases, and, of course, themselves. While Jungian analysts tend to be individual in their approach, it is necessary that Jung's original perspectives and thoughts be mastered in the process of finding one's own way."<sup>5</sup>

(9) "The individuation process is a lifelong journey and the analyst is at first a pilgrim, then a guide: but analysts never stop being pilgrims either. For it is well known that people cannot lead others further than they have travelled themselves.

"...To find a creative balance between the personal and the collective aspects of the psyche and the world is the essence of individuation. To become an analyst means to take on the struggle against the lack of that balance, when it is observed, and to hold firm to the conviction that one can work towards its restoration."<sup>6</sup>

(10) "The study of religion is part of the education of the Jungian analyst. Foremost in Jung's psychology is the acknowledgment of the archetype of the Self as the principle of wholeness, the universal principle. The Self functions as an ordering principle, but since it is all inclusive, it also embodies the opposite of order—that is, chaos. The Self, as overarching archetypal power, is eternally engaged in making

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 369.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 371.    <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 376.    <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 377-378.

order out of chaos, only to watch the order dissolve again into chaos, and to reorder it, again and again. Religions, whatever else they may be, are expressions of the human need to relate to the ultimate source of being, the guiding power of the universe.”<sup>1</sup>

These are inspiring words. The Jungian Analysts are not only bringing relief to the mentally suffering humanity, restoring a better composition of personality, but much more than that they are opening up a way of perfection. Indeed a prospect!

We wish them all joy in the pursuit.

*(To be continued)*

INDRA SEN

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 379-80.

# THE SONG OF THE LORD

## THE GITA WITHOUT COMMENT

*(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1986)*

### Chapter VII

1. The Lord said:  
"Here how, O Partha, with the mind clinging to Me, joined in Yoga, with Me as your home, without uncertainty, you shall entirely know Me.
2. "I shall speak to you fully of this knowledge and highest knowing, which comprehending, there is nothing left in this world to be known.
3. "Among thousands of men, one strives for perfection; among those striving for perfection, hardly anyone knows Me truly.
4. "Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether, Mind, the Buddhi, the Ego-sense: this is my divided nature, eightfold.
5. "This is my lower nature, but know also my higher, O Mighty-armed, the life-source by which this universe is sustained.
6. "Know this as the womb of all beings. I am the Source of all the universe and of its dissolution.
7. "There is no one supreme beyond Me, O Dhananjaya. Like jewels on a thread all this is strung upon Me.
8. "I am the taste in Water, O Kaunteya. I am the light of the Sun and Moon, AUM in all the Vedas, sound in the Ether, the virility of men,
9. "sweet fragrance in Earth, the brilliance of Fire, life in all creatures and severity in the austere.
10. "Know Me as the seed eternal of all that is, O Partha, Knowledge in the knowing, splendour in the glorious am I.
11. "I am the strength of the strong when emptied of desire, of passion, and desire in all creatures when not against Dharma.
12. "Those natures poised and pure, those forceful, those inert, know as Mine. But I am not in them; they are in Me.
13. "All this universe is bewildered by the threefold illusion of the modes of nature; it knows Me not from them—higher, immutable.
14. "Indeed, it is hard to surmount, this appearance of the modes, my magic. Only those who resort to Me cross beyond it.
15. "The wicked, foolish and vile men do not come to Me. Deprived of knowledge, they have taken a demoniac nature.
16. "Four kinds of virtuous men adore Me, Arjuna: the distressed, the seeker of Knowledge, the seeker of gain and those who know, O Lord of the Bharatas.
17. "Of them he excels who knows, who is always united, devoted to oneness. Truly, I am most dear to one who knows and he is dear to Me.

18. "All these are noble indeed, but who knows the Self, in my view, is established. Truly he is joined to the Self, to Me as the supreme goal.
19. "After many births he who knows all this as Vasudeva resorts to Me. Very rare is that great soul.
20. "But whose knowledge has been captured by this or that desire, who resorts to other Gods, establishing this or that ritual, he is carried away by his own nature.
21. "Whichever devotee faithfully wants to worship Me in whatever way, for him I make his faith secure.
22. "Joined to that faith he worships that form and obtains therefrom those desires in fact ordained by Me.
23. "But the fruit of those with small minds is finite. Those who worship the Gods go to the Gods. My devotees go to Me.
24. "Those who have no understanding think of Me the Unmanifest as coming into being, not realising My highest nature—immutable and supreme.
25. "Veiled by the diversity of my Yoga I am not disclosed to all. This bewildered world knows Me not—unborn, unchanging.
26. "O Arjuna, I know all existences, the past, the present, the future, but no one knows Me.
27. "Born from desire and dislike through the delusion of duality, O Bharata, all beings go by birth into bewilderment, O Parantapa.
28. "But those for whom evil has ended, men of pure acts, freed from the delusion of dualities, firm in their vows, they adore Me.
29. "Those who strive to be free from age and death, who resort to Me, know fully the Brahman, the real Self and the whole of Karma.
30. "Those who know Me in Material Reality, in the Divine Reality, in the Power of Sacrifice, they of united consciousness know Me even at the time of death."

### OM TAT SAT

Here ends the seventh chapter called 'The Yoga of Knowledge and the Highest Knowing' in the dialogue of Sri Krishna and Arjuna, in the Brahman-Knowledge, in Yoga-Discipline, in the Divine Songs of the Upanishads.

*Translated by DHRUVA*



## ANDRÉ

OUR very first visit to Pondicherry coincided with the coming of the Mother's son André Morisset to the Ashram for the first time. The Mother had left André in Paris when he was a mere schoolboy. Since then the Mother and her child had never met. She, I believe, wrote to him regularly. What advice or suggestions She sent him is not known but, whatever they were, the result was wonderful. He was not brought up to be an artist like his father but to be an industrialist. He was with his father's people and not his mother's, he knew Pavitra (Philippe B. St. Hilaire) for they were at the Polytechnique, Paris, together. What André thought of his life could be read from the piece he wrote for the Mother in Her drama *The Great Secret*. This was staged at the Playground some time in the early fifties. And he actually took part in the play. So did Pavitra, and Hriday stood for Pranab, and Debu was there too.

André at least found one friendly face in Pavitra amongst so many foreign brown-skinned people. The Mother, they say, received him standing at a door just as She used to do when he would return home from school. I am sure he was delighted to find his mother still his dear mamma and not someone nun-like given up to renunciation. We wondered then, and still, why the Mother did not allow him to come to Pondicherry earlier. André was called just in time, for in another year or so Sri Aurobindo was to withdraw from his body.

As soon as I heard of his coming, I wondered what sort of a person he would be, for we were sure to meet him, as Pavitra was already a close friend of ours. Sanat, sattwic to the core, found Pavitra just the person he could confide in. Their intellects were very akin: cool and observant yet kind and gentle and very undemonstrative. We had met a lot of Frenchmen in the French Embassy in Delhi. We had met Stanislaus Ostrorog the French Ambassador, a worthy son of a famous father. My people were very much westernised; so naturally we saw a lot of Europeans come and go. There are nice people and not so nice people everywhere, there is no exception, it is a matter of degree. But in all, no matter how educated or cultured they were, there hovered something that seemed to say, "Ah, you all are very cultured and advanced yet we are the *Avant-Garde* and you are the Third World."

In such a frame of mind I met André, and I found him perfect. He was polite without cloying, and gentle without being weak. Soon after the first introduction came an opportunity for closer contact. The Mother had chosen some of the oldest families living in the Ashram to be André's hosts. He was to lunch with them by turns. Nolini Sen's family was one of the fortunate ones. I like to elucidate my word "fortunate". Some people came with such phrases as "Oh to the Mother everyone is the same." This is very very true, no doubt, otherwise we would not hail Her as the embodiment of the Supreme Mother. Yet, and to me it is a big yet, one who has come out of Her body, his blood Her blood, his bones one with Her, must be someone of much account in the occult mathematics of

the world. He was the Mother's child. She called us all Her children but he was Her first child, in this embodiment. Ila-di did the cooking but she was very much harassed with the fact that the food should be typically Indian but far less spicy, otherwise it would be a torture for poor André and unpalatable to an European tongue that had never tasted Indian food. Ila-di told me, "Chaundona, receive them and keep up a bright conversation. I won't be able to come till all is ready." Her daughters were too young to play the part of hostess. We sat on her veranda chatting away: André, Pavitra, Nolini Sen, Sanat and myself. For a Frenchman André spoke good English. His pronunciation was far better than of many Frenchmen we had met in Delhi. We found him delightful. He was no longer young, but when he smiled his face lit up in such a way that one felt as if he was already pledged to be our friend. And it was true, for later he did act in several circumstances as a true friend. One day, long after this incident, Sanat came home smiling. He had met André somewhere in company with some other people. One of them who did not know André but knew Sanat, said, "This is Sanat Banerji, he is in the Diplomatic Service, a very polite person." Sanat said, "I was utterly surprised when André's face lit up and smilingly he said, 'You have not met his wife, she is even more polite'." Sanat was very happy, no doubt, and one can imagine my joy on receiving such a compliment from a high-class and cultured Frenchman.

After a long lapse of time we met again on our way to Europe at the Meenambakam airport. He was coming to Pondicherry for a holiday. Françoise, his daughter, was there, a very beautiful girl who walked like a ballerina, which I found charming, for I myself was once a bit of a ballerina. "After how many years will you be going to Europe?" asked André. When Sanat answered, "After forty years," he gave him many pieces of information and advice. Sanat was delighted. Anyone else would have bluntly asked, "Are you going there for the first time?" But not André. He knew how to frame his question, and not to make people uncomfortable. Sanat hated blunt uncultured phrases. To make people feel at ease is the first definition of a gentleman. André would not be in Paris when we would be there. We had his address and were contemplating visiting Madame Morisset and his eldest daughter Janine. We also wanted to see a typical French high-class home. But later we changed our minds. Would they, who had seen very little of the people of other continents, take our visit as a friendly call or as an intrusion? We dropped the idea.

When Auroville was declared open, André's grandson and granddaughter dropped French soil into the great lotus urn which was the receptacle of earth from some 100 countries. Both were beautiful children and made a pretty picture.

When I heard of André's death a few years back I felt a lump in my throat and could only think, "A very great soul has joined his mother again."

CHAUNDONA BANERJI

## NISHIKANTA AS I KNEW HIM

ONCE a young admirer of "Kavi", the poet Nishikanta, who was generally called by that name, asked me, "How did you get acquainted with the poet first?" I answered lightly, "The tongue, the tongue, was the medium through which I became acquainted with him."

"Quite obvious, we use the tongue to talk and talking is the medium to arrive at acquaintance. So..."

"No, I don't mean the tongue which talks but that which tastes." "Should I presume then that you appreciated his poems by your palate?" "Oh no, how is that possible? I did not know him as a poet then. It seems that to clarify my statement I have to tell you the details."

"Please do tell. I know very little about Nishikanta as a man. It's unfortunate that I could not see him alive."

"But I can tell you only a special aspect of his personality, nothing more."

"Doesn't matter, half a loaf is better than none. Please continue."

"I came to the Ashram for the first time more than three and half decades ago to have the Darshan of the Master and the Mother. The Darshan overwhelmed me. I became absolutely quiet. The profound inner peace and Ananda made me lose interest in the external aspects of life. The only person whom I knew, a Sadhak who had been in the Ashram from the late 'twenties, was sick and bedridden. So I moved about alone seeing the activities of the Ashram as an automaton, asking no one anything."

"One morning while breakfasting in the Dining Room the gentleman sitting beside me abruptly asked, 'I think you are here for the first time and have come from Bengal.' 'Quite right,' was my brief answer. He hesitated for a while and then asked me again, 'Would you like to come with me to see a particular man? He will be happy to see you and I hope you will also like him.' 'Why not? Let's go.' 'I mean, have you time enough to spare?' 'Endless leisure.' 'Good, then your time will be well utilised.'

"The gentleman led me into the outer room of an old building situated at the centre of a spacious garden encircled by walls. We heard the tinkling sound of crockery coming from an inner room. My friend announced his presence saying, 'What are you doing inside? Come and see the young man I have brought to introduce to you.' 'Ask him to take his seat, I am just coming,' came the reply in a heavy, indifferent but affectionate voice."

Within minutes arrived a middle-aged flabby man with a big belly. He had put on a dhoti in the fashion of a Baul (minstrel of Bengal) and his long and carefully combed curly hair hung over his shoulders and back after covering his ears. He stretched out his hands without a word to offer us two plates of curds. My friend instantly took one of them while I hesitated, thinking of the extremely sour taste of the curd I had taken in the Dining Room just a while before. I looked at him refusingly

and was at once startled to see his two deep and large eyes emitting heavenly light and love, touched with a tinge of humour. Immediately I felt that he was not unknown to me, I knew him from ages past, as it were. Refusal became out of the question. I took the plate eagerly from his hand.

"Meanwhile my friend had already started eating and his half-closed, skyward satisfied eyes revealed how much he relished the thing. His example inspired me. I also placed a bit of the curd on my tongue. Good heavens, it was not only sweet but also delicious beyond words. In fact I did not remember to have taken such tasty curd before. The gentleman noticed my mood and disappeared into the inner room.

"I whispered to my companion, 'Was he a sweetmeat-dealer before coming to the Ashram?' 'Ho...ho...ho...', he burst into laughter, 'I expected some such remark from you and that's why I had not disclosed his identity till now. He is the poet Nishikanta. Haven't you heard his name before?' I felt very embarrassed. I looked around and saw some beautiful paintings hanging on the walls. 'Is he a poet or a painter?' I asked.

"'Both, he spent years in Tagore's Shantiniketan and was a student of Nandalal as well.' By then the poet had returned and he enquired with his eyes, 'What's the matter, why such laughter?' I winked to my companion requesting him not to disclose my stupidity. But he paid no heed to my hint and divulged the fact with joy and enthusiasm. At this, to my astonishment, the poet's face brightened, as if I had given him a compliment. He said, 'Yes, I prepared the curd myself. An artist's business is to create Rasa (savour) and it matters little if it is through the medium of milk, curd, sweetmeat or pen, paper, colour and canvas.' But I could not help opining, 'Perhaps you are right. However, so far as I remember, according to Rabindranath the things which water the tongue and excite greed or craving in the stomach bring about death to true art, poetry and literature.'

"'Yes, they bring death to art and poetry but not to artists and poets. The great poet Rabindranath himself was no less fond of good food and delicious dishes.' Thus we entered into a discussion about various aspects of Rabindranath's life and work. In fact he was the main speaker, I simply added a word or two here and there. From then on we gradually grew closer and closer to each other."

"Interesting. Won't you tell something more about him?" requested the young admirer.

"More? It's difficult, because that will involve my own affair also."

"Doesn't matter, it's natural, one cannot help it."

"All right, as you wish. I shall try to be as short as possible. After that time, I came to the Ashram as a visitor more than once and very often frequented Kavi every time in his house alone or along with others. Finally on one occasion with the Mother's kind and gracious permission I decided to settle down in the Ashram. I took up Ashram work and joined group in the Physical Education Department as a part of my sadhana. Consequently being burdened with work and physical acti-

vities I could hardly find time to go to Kavi. One afternoon as I was heading towards the Playground I came across him at one corner of the Ashram's main building.

"Self-absorbed, and with half-closed eyes he was proceeding very slowly, muttering something to himself, perhaps the lines of his would-be poem. Seeing me in front he stopped and asked calmly, 'Hallo Chuni, how do you do? I haven't seen you for many days. Are you all right?' 'No, Kavi, not quite well. For the last few days I have been feeling a burning sensation here.' I pointed to a part of my stomach.' 'I see, it is not desirable at all. Come with me, I shall give you a medicine.' 'Medicine? Do you also practise Homoeopathy like Rabindranath?' He muttered something which I could not follow. However, I quietly accompanied him and reached his house in no time. Asking me to sit down he went into the inner room and returned forthwith with a bowl in hand. 'Oh it's not Homoeopathy, must be an Ayurvedic potion,' I thought.

"He handed me the bowl, saying, 'Eat it,' just as a physician says to his patient. But the flavour of the contents confused me. 'Is it medicine?' I enquired. 'Hum, eat it and let me know about its action.' In fact it was a bowl of masterly prepared porridge, very tasty indeed. I finished the whole thing ravenously. 'How do you feel? The sensation is still there?' 'No, it has gone.'

"Very good, now listen, this is the king medicine, the medicine *par excellence*. But to prescribe your regular medicine I should like to know a few things from you. Please tell me how many bowls of rice you take at lunch?' 'Why, only one.' 'What's the size of the bowl, big, medium or small?' 'Medium.' 'Is that all?' 'No, I take two slices of bread also.'

"Henceforth instead of the medium you will take rice of the big bowl and also the two slices of bread. But the slices are not to be taken in the Dining Room. You will carry them home for use in the afternoon before going to the Playground.'

"Carry home? The idea perplexed me. I have seen people leaving food uneaten in their dishes showing a kind of greedlessness and indifference to food. But to bundle up food from the dish and take it home...O no, it's out of etiquette, it's impossible."

"What's there to brood so much over the matter, eh? It is not out of etiquette here. Many people do that, including our revered Nolini-da and Amrita-da. Have you not noticed that yet?' (Light refreshment is never served in the Dining Room. Only the children used to get it from the Playground, now they get it from Corner House.) Suddenly he changed the topic and asked me, 'What is most needed to be a Sannyasin?' I was taken aback at this unusual question. But the reply came to me automatically. 'Why, faith, surrender, aspiration, renunciation, devotion, etc...'

"SURRENDER! YES,' his exceptionally deep and grave words startled me. I looked at him and saw that through the window his eyes were fixed on the distant sky as if his attention had gone to the heights of the Himalayas. Presently turning towards me he stated humorously, 'You have omitted to mention the most essential articles necessary for a Sannyasin'. 'Articles! what are they?' I became inquisitive.

"Why, does he not require a bag, a blanket, a kamandalu (water-pot), firewood

and a pair of tongs? So before surrender procure these things from the market as soon as possible.' 'Procure them myself? Am I going to be a Sannyasin?'

" 'Ho...ho...ho... Oh no, don't be perturbed, please. In a way we are also Sannyasins, modern Sannyasins, so to say. Instead of bag and kamandalu we buy a tiffin-carrier and a milk-can, in place of firewood we buy a stove and a mat for a blanket, etc. These are very necessary here as well. Adverse circumstances taught us their importance.' (In those days there were medical facilities in the Ashram but no Nursing Home.)

"Next day Kavi himself accompanied me to the market and helped me select and buy the articles stated above.

"Even today to entertain friends and guests when I light the stove, and the vapour from the boiling water rises high I seem to hear Kavi whispering from above, 'An artist's business is to create Rasa...'"

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

# LASSIE

## IN REMEMBRANCE OF A REMARKABLE COMPANION

I GOT Lassie from Allan of the Lake Estate through Manindra (Gloria Farm) when she was two months old. She was born on May 5, 1965. The Mother gave her the name "Lassie" when I asked for one through Udar. After a few months, as she was not keeping in good health, I took her to the Lake Estate for some time. When Allan saw her and realised she was an extraordinary dog he sent a message for me: "Mahendra can take any number of other dogs but I want Lassie back if he agrees. I have kept many dogs but Lassie is special—exceptional." I did not agree to give her back. Who would agree? Many people asked for her but I had only one reply: "I won't sell baby. She is my only child. She will not live without me. Moreover she has the Mother's Blessings with special remarks—'She is nice, she is beautiful, she is intelligent.'"

Lassie never gave birth to puppies. There was a lot of demand for her pups. Even unknown people came to me with money in advance for them. So I tried three times in different places to mate her, but without success. Once she came back on the next day from Nandanam and nothing happened to her on the way. How cleverly she must have managed to escape from the street-dogs when she was on heat is left for the reader to imagine.

She was friendly to all—from children to old people. Everyone liked her. If they didn't see her with me, at once they would ask, "Where is Lassie? Why have you not brought her? How is she?" Nobody would ask about me but about her everyone did and I had to satisfy each one according to their question.

I did not like dogs but she conquered me by love. And after that I knew many things about dogs. A large number of people come to me for advice about their dogs.

Mostly Lassie did not mix with dogs on the street. If any dog followed her, instead of quarreling with them she would come to me and by pushing me show me that the dog had been following her and that she did not like it.

She was not greedy for food as other dogs are said to be. Generally when a dog takes food he becomes angry if someone goes near him but Lassie was quite different. If someone came from outside she would leave her food at once and go to receive him. When some known dog came she would not mind sharing her food with him or her. She used to eat anything—whatever we ate. So she ate meat, fish, bread, rice, milk. She has even fed on idli, dosai, puri, upma, grapes, plantains, guavas, and other fruit. Also nimkie, chivada, bhaji, tea, coca went into her stomach. In fact she insisted on at least tasting all our food.

It was a delight to see her when Radha used to bathe her. She would sit and give a front leg to apply soap to and then get washed. Then she would give the other leg. After that she would turn herself and give the back part. She was a good swimmer. If some known people would go boating in the Oosutari lake, at once she

would start swimming with it. Other dogs did not dare to go but in spite of "No" she would not listen. So the people had to stop the boat to take her in with them. In the sea also she used to play and have a bathe with me.

On the Volley Ball ground she used to play ball with the Green Group children. Children liked her very much and she also liked children to play with her.

Once when she was only four months old, in the evening she started shouting at a heap of bricks and ran here and there. I thought that she was playing but Radha told me that I must remove the bricks and see if there was something. When I removed the bricks, to my surprise we saw a big black poisonous scorpion.

Another time I was alone in my garden at night as I was not well and had not gone to the cinema with others. After some time I came out to see where Lassie was. Lassie came to me and pushed me. Slowly, slowly she went on smelling up to the corner of a room and then stopped and looked at me. She did this twice or thrice. So I joked with her, "Lassie, come back, no rat is hiding there for you," but she kept staring at something and did not move from there. So I went near her to see what she was staring at. To my astonishment I saw a black venomous snake, quite big. At once I took away Lassie and called some people from outside and killed the snake.

In the beginning Lassie was ferocious like her mother—Shairai—who was in our Lake Estate and had killed two cobras there. One day Lassie caught a hen from the road and brought it inside. The hen was alive so we returned it to the owner. He quarrelled with us. After some days a little pig entered the garden. Lassie became very excited and in spite of my trying to stop her she managed to kill it. The surrounding people became very angry and wanted to kill her. So we decided that she should be trained to stop all these killings. Afterwards she learnt how to behave and remain in refined society with us. Then she never bit anyone. She would only come and inform us by pushing us that someone had come. We learnt this sign from her. She was kind even to other dogs and only played with squirrels and parrots.

She would always like to sleep with me under a mosquito net. If I was late in the morning she would push me and show the door, meaning it was time to go out.

She used to drink only tap-water. Sometimes she would go to the tap, sit there waiting for someone to come and open it but she would not drink any other water. Gradually she learnt how to open the tap but she did not learn how to close it. So we had to be careful about it so that water might not be wasted.

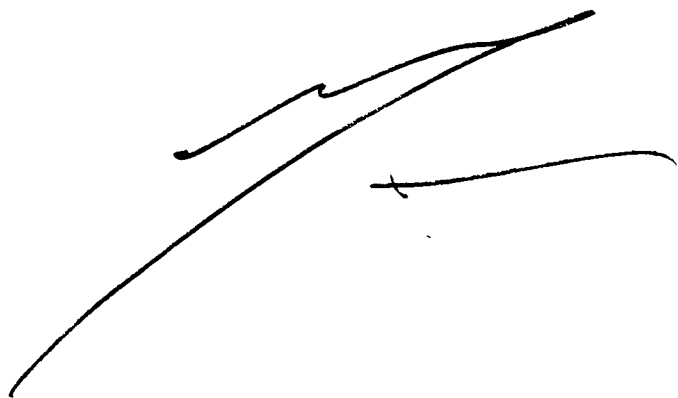
When we were in Garden House there was a lot of open place for her to do her "toilet" but when we changed to a rented house we used to stay upstairs. The first night Lassie had a problem. She wanted to urinate. She came to me and pushed me and went to the door showing she wanted to go down. I took her down then and she relieved herself. Next day we kept some sand on the terrace and trained her to go there whenever she felt the need. Afterwards we had no problem. Even on the road she would always go to a corner at the side. She never urinated even once in the middle of the road.





Kassie

Blessings



5.5.65.

Early in the morning on the day she was to leave her body she was only waiting for me because as soon as I put my hand on her and started saying, "You have remained with us enough. We all are satisfied with you. Mother has blessed you. So you can go peacefully," she at once passed away. This was on December 23, 1974. I brought some Samadhi Flowers as last Blessings from the Mother for her and buried her in the garden where she had enjoyed her young days.

After her death I felt completely vacant for a week and understood what attachment and love in life were. It is easy to say, "Don't be attached to anything." But how difficult it is to come out of it one can know only after concrete experience in one's life such as I had.

A month after her death, she came to me in a dream. Many people were standing on the terrace and watching some programme. Suddenly I looked behind and down and saw Lassie sleeping there. I called her and at once she got up and started looking for me. Again I called her and she rose and came to me. I put my hand on her head. That is all. The dream vanished. I got up and felt happy to have seen her coming out of her grave. Who knows by now she may have taken a new birth, a new life! And surely it will be a better one as she had the Mother's Blessings and as she had progressed a lot in the company of Ashram people.

When I for the first time took Lassie to the Veterinary Hospital for an injection, the doctor asked me to tie her mouth and legs and make her lie on the table. As I never tied Lassi any time, I requested the doctor not to ask me to do that. I said I would remain with her and do everything. She would behave like a human and would not act like other dogs. Then I put a stool and asked Lassie to climb the stool and lie on the table. I caught her mouth and others caught her legs. She remained quiet and, though the doctor was afraid, he gave the injection quickly. After that I asked Lassie to shake hands with the doctor and thereafter the doctor became a friend to Lassie and an admirer of hers. When he had to give medicine he himself would give it with his own hand. He would tell others how to train and keep dogs. If he met me anywhere, he would ask about Lassie and wanted her pups. Once there was a dog-show and he wanted Lassie to come there, but as she was not well I could not take her and he felt her absence very much. When he heard about her death tears streamed from his eyes and these words came out of his mouth, "Only lucky people can have such dogs!" He had wanted to give a first prize to Lassie at the dog-show but he could not.

Lassie's photos were sent to the Mother many times. Once she was in a very serious condition. That time the Mother sent a Blessing Packet of flowers and a star biscuit. After that Lassie kept in good health.

Udar used to take her photos to the Mother. Once he said, "I don't understand what is in her that whenever I take her photo to Mother, Mother goes on looking at it this way and that way. She has enough time to see Lassie's photo but when we go to ask something She says that She has no time and she keeps quiet."

"It is a shame to call Lassie a dog," said Leena. "She is more intelligent than

many humans.” Leena added: “She will come back in the Green Group in her next life.” A German lady remarked, “You have kept her like a child, rather more than like a child. She is very lucky to have a master like you. Otherwise dogs have no place in India.”

I used to keep Lassie out in front of the Ashram and the Playground. So people often said, “How quietly she sits for hours together without being tied, and without going away anywhere!” Indeed she was a very good dog.

When she died Tejenda told a friend, “Really she was one of us. She was an Ashramite like us.”

MAHENDRA KUMAR

## SECOND THOUGHTS

### 1. My Flowers and My Bees

SOMEONE gave me a seed and told me to plant it in my garden. I did.

I expected a shoot. There it was. I was proud to call it my shoot.

I watered the shoot and nurtured it. I expected a plant. And there it was.

My plant! *My plant in my garden.*

I fenced it. Took greater care. Prevented every bird and animal... I expected buds. And there they were. *My buds on my plant in my garden.*

Like an expectant mother I awaited my buds to bloom.

One fine morning a strange fragrance that married the wind entered my bedroom and I awoke.

I was in my garden. And there was a strange sound.

Oh, the bees! What tune do they hum in their Dutch courage? I know not. Nature sings secretly.

My flowers! Are they mine?

And these bees! Whose bees?

Are they mine since they are found in my garden breaking the maiden-head of the virgin blooms?

Must be. *My flowers and my bees!* Oh, how nice!

I should uproot all the crotons and ferns that cannot ferry insects. They are nothing more than weeds. My garden should have only flowers and of course bees.

This strange smell and the best orchestra. My bees and my flowers. How nice!

Some of my flowers should adorn my desk. They add to the beauty of my study.

I plucked them. One and two and three and four and fi... Oh...!

One bee was bold.

"Wisdom is the child of pain and sorrow." Whoever said it is right, right to the core.

The flowers belong to the bees. And the bees to the flowers. What a great fool I am to call them *my flowers and my bees!*

### 2. Who is the Beggar?

"Who is it?" I asked, answering a knock.

"I'm a beggar at your door," came the reply.

"A beggar!" I opened and looked.

A bony hand stretched before me and shivered. Its joint stood bent, burdened with wrinkles completed by seven decades.

Fishing in my pocket I found a few coins of high denominations. Fishing again I brought out an insignificant coin. Yet to the beggar it must be something. "Beggars cannot be choosers."

The coin sat on his palm and I smiled as if I were his saviour.  
His face tawny and expressionless stared at the coin that shivered on his palm.  
He tilted his palm and I caught my coin before it reached the ground.  
It was my turn to stare and his turn to smile.  
I felt clumsy and unwanted. Gritting my teeth, I stood speechless and the  
harsh words got arrested in my throat.  
Something in me asked: "Now who is the beggar?"

### 3. Oh, Miser!

Oh, miser! Why do you save?

The money that you hoard will bury you alive. Agony awaits you. Sleep will  
forget you. You do not know how to live.

The coins are meant to roll and the currency notes to fly. That is why the coins  
are round, Oh, miser! and the currency is made of paper. Don't they seem to tell  
you life must roll and the soul must fly?

P. RAJA

## STORIES FROM TAMIL LITERATURE

### 27. SHAPED BY FATE

ONE evening, the young Chola prince Nedumudikilli went for a walk in a grove near the seashore. There he met a beautiful damsel who was a complete stranger to the city. The two young people stared at each other and fell in love immediately. The girl refused to tell who she was, but welcomed the attention of the prince.

From that day onwards, they started meeting there after dark and spent many happy nights together. A month passed like this, but one evening the girl failed to turn up. The prince was greatly disappointed and he returned to the grove the next evening, only to meet with the same disappointment again. After a few days like this, the prince had the whole kingdom searched for his beloved, but there was not a trace of the girl.

The maiden was a princess from the distant Naga country, who had been visiting the Chola kingdom incognito. Owing to exigencies in her kingdom she had to depart suddenly without taking leave of her lover.

Returning home, she told everything to her father, the Naga king. The king already knew that something like this would befall his daughter, for years back when she was but a child, a soothsayer had predicted her future. He was not therefore angry, but was in a great predicament as to what he should do. Since she was the only heir to the throne she couldn't be sent back to the Chola prince to marry him and live with him.

In due course a child was born to the princess. It was a boy and the princess felt that the right thing for her to do was to take care of the baby for a few months and then send him to his father.

So after a few months of intensive love and caring of the infant, the princess went in search of a merchant ship bound for the Chola country. She met a noble ship-owner and took him into confidence. Telling him her sad story she placed the child in a fine casket of wood and entrusted him to the merchant to be handed over to his father as soon as the ship reached the Chola port. The merchant accepted the responsibility with magnanimity and the princess returned home in peace.

Unfortunately, the ship carrying the child wrecked off the Chola coast. In the confusion and havoc that ensued, the child was lost. The merchant tried his best to find the child but couldn't. He himself had great difficulty swimming to the shore clinging to a splintered board.

He went straight to the king—the prince had now become king—and reported everything with much remorse. The king received the news in great sorrow and ordered a thorough search of the seas, but the child could not be found. Heart-broken, the king neglected the affairs of the state and slowly the kingdom fell into disrepute.

The casket in which the child was kept was designed in such a manner as to float in perfect safety on the waves should anything happen to the ship. Thus the

casket travelled far and was washed ashore in another kingdom. It was taken to the king who was overjoyed to find the child in it. Himself being childless he adopted the child and named him Ilanthiraiyan meaning "young one who was born on the waves." Ilanthiraiyan later became a very famous king and founded one of the great empires of the south.

## 28. THE VOW OF VISAKAI

In the city of Puhar there was a young man called Tharumathathan. He lost his parents at a very early age and was brought up by his maternal uncle. The uncle had a daughter called Visakai. Both the young ones grew up together and became very fond of each other. It is still a custom among the Tamil people to marry cousins from the maternal uncle's family. Tharumathathan and Visakai grew up with the knowledge that they would eventually marry each other and this intensified their love. However, they behaved with great modesty and dignity. Never did they cross the bounds of decorum in their relationship.

Nevertheless neighbours, who could not bear to see such beautiful love blossoming, started spreading tales about the lovers, sullyng their purity of character. It was a heavy blow to the gentle girl who set much store by the ideal of purity in love. So in order to vindicate her character and to prove to the neighbours that her love was without any physical passion, she made a vow not to marry at all, but to remain a virgin all her life, even though devoted at heart to Tharumathathan.

Tharumathathan and the parents of Visakai were shocked and tried to dissuade her from keeping this foolish vow. But a vow was a vow and the girl stuck to it. She said to Tharumathathan, "I do love you from the bottom of my heart and I will keep loving you all my life. But genuine love is a union of hearts and not of bodies. When this genuineness of our love is questioned, we have to prove it to the world by not seeking a physical union while still remaining loyal at heart. God willing, we will be born again and become husband and wife at least in the next birth." So saying she took leave of him and her parents and went to live in a convent.

Tharumathathan had to bear his loss bravely. He tried to forget his sorrow by throwing himself heart and soul into the family business which was trading. This soon made him a rich merchant. He went and lived in a different city and gave away much of his wealth in charity. Many beautiful girls were ready to marry him, but he never so much as looked at them. His love for Visakai was so strong and loyal.

Years passed. Tharumathathan reached the age of sixty. Still his love for Visakai was fresh in his heart and he was prepared to marry her if she came round. Further, people kept advising him to marry saying that all his charity would profit him nothing if he had no wife to share the outcome. He thought that since the physical aspect of love was now out of the question, Visakai might relent at last and marry him at least to take part in his charitable activities. So he returned to his native city and met Visakai. She was overjoyed to see him, but when she listened to his proposal she did not show any enthusiasm.



“What are we going to achieve by living together? We still live in each other’s heart. And we have proved to this world that true love can fulfil itself without any physical union. Let us not now go back on this and make our life an anti-climax.” Tharumathathan couldn’t answer her. Tears rolled down his cheeks. And with answering tears in her eyes Visakai put her palms together in final farewell. And thus the lovers parted never to meet again.

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