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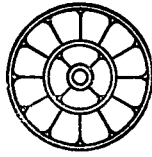
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.

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THE COUNTRY AND NATIONALISM

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF A BENGALI ARTICLE BY
SRI AUROBINDO IN *DHARMA* NO. 14, DECEMBER 1909

THE country is the support of Nationalism, not race nor religion nor anything else, the country alone. Other materials for Nationalism are secondary and helpful, the country is primary and necessary. Many antagonistic races inhabit a country, never are there fellow-feeling, unity and amity and yet there is nothing to be afraid of. When the country is one, the Mother is one, unity is bound to come, a mighty invincible race is sure to take birth. Religious creeds differ, sect ever clashes with sect, union is not there nor any hope of union—still there is nothing to fear; one day by the strong pull of the Mother incarnate in one's country, by stratagem, by conciliation, concession or coercion union must evolve, sectarian differences will sink in brotherhood, in the love of the Mother. There are many languages in one country, brother is unable to know brother, they have no entrance into each other's feelings, an impregnable wall stands against heart uniting with heart, it is difficult to surmount it, even then there is nothing to be afraid of. The country is one, life is one, the thought-current is one in all minds, by the urgency of need a common language will surely be created, either the predominance of one language will be accepted or a new language will be evolved, which all will use in the temple of the Mother. Such barriers do not last for ever, the Mother's need, the Mother's pull, the life-desire of the Mother do not go in vain, they overcome all hindrance and resistance, annul them, conquer them. Born of the same Mother's womb we live in the lap of the same Mother, we dissolve in the five elements of the same Mother; notwithstanding a thousand and one inner disputes we shall unite at the call of the Mother. This is the law of Nature, this is the teaching of the history of all countries, the country is the support of Nationalism, that relation is inviolable, if one's country exists Nationalism is bound to exist. No two races can ever live in one country, they have to be united. On the other hand, if the country is not one, there may be unity of race, religion and language, but in vain; a separate race will be born. Separate countries combine to make a huge empire but no great race is born. With the fall of the empire a separate race takes birth, often this inherent natural separativeness causes the ruin of the empire.

Even if this result be inevitable, by man's effort, by man's intelligence or lack of intelligence the inevitable natural action bears fruit sooner or later. There was never any unity in our country but the trend towards unity was always there, a current was there, an attraction in our history to unify the different parts of India. There were some major impediments to this natural effort, first provincial differences, second the Hindu-Muslim opposition, third the absence of the Mother-vision. The huge size of the country, delay and difficulty of travel, differences of language were the main promoters of provincial disunion. Except for the last all other impediments

paled into insignificance thanks to modern scientific conveniences. Akbar, in spite of the Hindu-Muslim opposition, succeeded in unifying India; had Aurangzeb not been subject to a most vile intelligence the Time-spirit, the force of habit, the fear of a foreign invasion would have brought about a permanent Hindu-Muslim unity like the unity of Catholics and Protestants in England. Owing to his depraved mind and the Machiavellian policy of a few English diplomats the communal opposition is inflamed and knows no extinction. But the main obstacle is the absence of the Mother-vision. Ranjitsingh and Guru Govind saw the Mother in the Punjab instead of in India. Shivaji and Baji Rao saw the Mother in the Hindus in place of the Mother in India. The other Maharashtrian statesmen saw the Mother in Maharashtra. We too during the Partition of Bengal had the vision of the Mother in Bengal—it was a total vision and therefore the future unity and prosperity of Bengal is a certainty, but the total image of Mother India had not revealed itself then. The Mother India we worshipped at the Congress with chants and hymns was a constructed image, that of a handmaid and slave of the English, a demonic eidolon apparelled in foreign attire, it was not our Mother, hidden behind the dense vague light the True Mother would draw our mind and life. The day we shall have the vision of the total image of the Mother and, allured by Her charm and beauty, be frantic to dedicate ourselves to Her service, this impediment will disappear, the unity, liberty and prosperity of India will be easy of accomplishment. The difference of language will no more be a bar, each one preserving his own mother-tongue will yet accept Hindi as a common language annihilating this barrier.¹ We shall then be able to find the true solution to the Hindu-Muslim dispute. In the absence of the Mother-vision the strong will to annihilate the barrier has not grown and the way is not found, so the communal opposition has been gaining in intensity. But the totality of the vision is necessary; if we cherish the hope of the Mother-vision as that of the Mother of the Hindu, as the support of the Hindu community, we shall fall into the old error and deprive ourselves of the full efflorescence of Nationalism.

Translator: PARICHAND

NOTE

Almost two years have passed since the nation received the most severe shock after independence—the assassination of Srimati Indira Gandhi, an event more fraught with peril than the Chinese invasion or the war with Pakistan, because now the peril came from within.

India beset with tendencies of secession—Assam and the North-west troubled, Punjab festering and always the threat to Kashmir—unity and integration at a dis-

¹ Editor's Note: Hindi as a possible common language was Sri Aurobindo's view in 1909, though, as the early part of the article shows, a new language to be evolved was also envisaged. Sri Aurobindo's later stand was for English to continue as the link-language at present and for a simplified Sanskrit to develop in the future.

count—regionalism taking the sacred place of nationalism, with the Indians as if afraid of the glorious past that is their heritage and trying to tie themselves to the aprons of their respective states by the strings of language or religion: such is the scene all around us.

Every patriotic soul has been in torment. There seems no way out, one does not know where to turn or look for a ray of hope. But Sri Aurobindo has left nothing untouched. There is enough prevision in his writings to guide men and nations through turbulent centuries.

An answer came from an article of Sri Aurobindo's, written in Bengali and as yet untranslated into English—but luckily for me into Hindi by Hrydayada. It proved a supreme remedy, a *mahāmantra* for a new united national life. One of the most powerful writings of Sri Aurobindo on the subject, this treasure struck me at once as worth sharing with K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran), editor of *Mother India*. So I translated the Hindi version into English and submitted my laborious script for correction to Parichand-da. Finding my translation inadequate, he re-did the whole piece directly from the original Bengali into forceful and faithful English.

SHYAM KUMARI

“BRIDE OF THE FIRE”

ONE day I asked Nolini-da:

“What does Sri Aurobindo mean by ‘Bride of the Fire’?”

“Read it several times and you will know.”

“All else in the poem is clear except who is the ‘Bride of the Fire’.”

“‘The Fire’ is Divinity and the ‘Bride’ is you—your soul. In Christianity Christ is always called the Bridegroom and the soul the bride.”

SHYAM KUMARI

THE MOTHER ON GOSSIP AND GARRULITY

Q. I think the tendency to gather information about people is not bad.

It is *bad* and harmful and lowers not only the consciousness of those who gossip, but also the general atmosphere of the place. 29.7.1967

It is certainly very bad to speak of other people's faults; everyone has his defects and to keep on thinking of them surely does not help to cure them.

June 1966

To cure a critical sense which shows itself by an incontinency of speech:

1) when you are in this state, check yourself absolutely from speaking. If need be, make it physically impossible for yourself to speak.

2) observe yourself without pity, and begin to see that you carry in yourself all the things you find so ridiculous in others.

3) discover in your nature the way of being that is its opposite (benevolence, humility, good-will) and insist on its developing at the cost of the contrary element.

11.10.1958

Naturally, all these discussions (or these exchanges of opinions) are purely mental and have no value from the viewpoint of Truth. Each mind has its manner of seeing and understanding things, and even if you could unite and bring together all these manners of seeing, you would still be very far from attaining Truth. It is only when, in the silence of the mind, you can lift yourself above thought, that you are ready to know by identity.

From the point of view of outer discipline it is indispensable, while you have an opinion and express it, to remember that it is only an opinion, a manner of seeing and feeling, and that other people's opinions, their manners of seeing and feeling are as legitimate as your own, and that instead of opposing them you should *total* them up and try to find a more comprehensive synthesis.

On the whole the discussions are always pretty futile and seem to me a waste of time. 6.6.1967

For writing, even more than for speaking, if you aspire to remain in the best attitude for advancing swiftly towards the Divine, you should make it a strict rule to speak (and still more to write) only what is *absolutely indispensable*. It is a marvelous discipline if you follow it sincerely. 27.7.1966

As long as you are *for* some and *against* others, you are necessarily *outside of the Truth*.

You should constantly keep good-will and love in your heart and let them pour out on all with tranquillity and with equality. 16.12.1966

To gossip about what somebody is doing or not doing is wrong.

To listen to such gossip is wrong.

To verify if such gossip is true is wrong.

To retaliate in words against a false gossip is wrong.

The whole affair is a very bad way of wasting one's time and lowering one's consciousness.

Unless this very nasty habit is eradicated from the atmosphere, never will the Ashram reach its goal of Divine Life.

I wish all repent like you and take the resolution of stopping this unhealthy activity. 12.10.1967

PRAYER

O LET me from Thy dream awake
Not for myself but for Thy sake.
Let me within my soul be free
Not for myself but all for Thee!
Let Thy name always be my talk,
To Thee the goal be all my walk.
Give me your vision and let me view
Everywhere nothing but glorious You.
In my small tears be Your world-sorrow —
To see You only I'll see the morrow!

VIKAS BAMBA

THE MOTHER'S COMMENTARIES ON SRI AUROBINDO'S *THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES*

COMPILED FROM HER TALKS TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN,
1956-1957, IN A NEW TRANSLATION BY SHRADDHAVAN

(Continued from the issue of December 1986)

Chapter 2: THE GOAL, Part One: Effort

When we have passed beyond willings, then we shall have Power. Effort was the helper; Effort is the bar.

THE interesting thing about the structure of this chapter is that the same reflection that Sri Aurobindo made about the mind, about the activity of the human intellect, is also applied to the activity of the vital, the power of action and realisation.

He takes mental activity as the basis of human life, for it is the activity which by nature belongs exclusively to man; and in the process of life, that is to say of human life, of human realisation, thought normally comes first. Man, as a thinking being, first has an idea, then clothes that idea with a force, a vital power, a power of action, and turns his idea into will. This will is then focussed on the object to be realised, and with the vital force and effort added to the thought, the conception, it becomes the lever of action.

But here, Sri Aurobindo does not say 'will'; he uses the word 'willings'. And he contrasts these 'willings'—all the superficial wills that are so often contradictory and clashing, and which have no lasting basis because they are not founded on Knowledge but on what he calls a 'knowing'—with Will. These willings are necessarily fragmentary, fleeting and often conflicting; this is what gives individual and even collective life its incoherent, illogical, confused character....

In general we use the word Will only for what comes from the deeper being or the higher reality and is the expression in action of the real Knowledge which Sri Aurobindo has contrasted with 'knowings'.

So, when this Will which expressed true Knowledge manifests in action, it manifests by the intervention of a deep and *direct* Power, which requires no effort. That is why Sri Aurobindo says here that the true Power of action can come only when one has gone beyond the stage of 'willings',—that is when the motive for action is no longer just the outcome of some mental activity, but comes from true Knowledge.

True Knowledge acting in the outer being gives true Power.

This seems to be one explanation, the real explanation, of the very familiar saying which people do not usually understand in its essence, but which does express a truth: "Where there's a will, there's a way." It's quite clear that this does not apply to 'willings', to the more or less incoherent expression of desires, but to the true

Will expressing a true Knowledge. For this true Will contains within it the power of the Truth, which gives strength, an invincible strength.

So when you are expressing 'willings', in order to apply them to life and make them effective, effort is needed—you progress through personal effort, and with effort you impose your willings on life to bend it to their demands; but when there are no more willings, but the true Will expressing the true Knowledge, effort is no longer required, for that Power is all-powerful. 21.11.1956

Here I have a written question connected with what we were saying about personal effort. The question goes like this:

In the inner life, why does it happen that times come when one can no longer make any conscious effort and if one insists, some elements in the nature revolt, or else the whole being seems to turn to stone: the effort becomes a mechanical repetition of old movements. What should one do at these times?

It is very accurately observed.

What is not mentioned here is the *nature* of the effort; for it is a particular kind of effort that leads to the result described here: either a revolt or a kind of... yes, a real turning to stone—something that becomes absolutely insensitive and will not respond to the effort at all any more.

This happens when the effort is almost exclusively mental in nature, and quite arbitrary, in the sense that it completely ignores the condition that the rest of the being is in. It has its own idea, its own will, and without any consideration for the rest of the being it imposes this will on the being as a whole. This is normally what causes this revolt or turning to stone.

And the only thing to be done is to quieten the mind. It is the moment to make a trustful, quiet, peaceful movement of self-giving. If you make this movement of self-giving, of surrender to the divine Will, all the tension caused by the premature or maybe ill-advised effort, all that tension gives way. The being relaxes. And the very progress that you could not achieve with that purely mental effort generally occurs almost automatically through this relaxation in trust and surrender to the divine Will.

And the letter goes on like this:

"At other moments, one has the feeling that one is making no effort at all, but just sensing the presence of a consciousness which makes many circumstances of daily life into a means of progress. So I wonder what effort is really, and what its value is. Isn't what we call effort something too mental?"

This is exactly what I have just explained, which shows that the observation is very accurate.

It is an arbitrary decision of the mind; and naturally, because it is arbitrary and not consistent with the truth of things, it causes bad reactions. This does not mean that you should never make any effort, but the effort itself should be spontaneous. In the same way, I told you once that for meditation to be effective it should be a spontaneous meditation, that it should seize hold of you, rather than you having to make an effort to achieve it; well, effort, this kind of tension of will in the being, should also be something spontaneous, not the result of a more or less ill-timed mental decision.

28.II.1956

I have another question about what I told you the other day when we made a distinction between Will and 'willings'. I told you that 'willings'—what Sri Aurobindo calls 'willings'—are movements which originate, not from a higher consciousness coming down into the being and expressing itself in action, but from impulses and influences from outside. We reserved the word 'Will' to convey that which is, in an individual consciousness, the expression of a command or an impulsion coming from the truth of the being, the truth of the individual—from his real being, his true self. That we called Will. And all the impulses, actions, movements that occur in the being which are *not* that, we called 'willings'. And I told you that, in fact, unknowingly—or occasionally even knowingly—you are moved by influences coming from outside which enter without your even noticing it, and which make something rise up in you that you call 'the will' for this thing to happen, or that one not to, and so on.

What is the nature of these outside influences? Will you explain how they work?

Of course these influences are of very different kinds. One can study them from a psychological point of view, or from an almost mechanical one; this one is usually a translation of the other—that is, the mechanical process occurs as a kind of consequence of the psychological process.

In very few people, and even in the best cases only at very rare moments in life, does the will of the being express that deeper, inner, higher Truth.

The individual consciousness extends far beyond the body; we have seen that even the subtle-physical, which is still quite material in comparison with the vital being and which is almost visible under certain conditions, extends, sometimes considerably, beyond the visible limits of the physical body. This subtle-physical consists of vibrations which are active, and which come into contact or mix with the subtle-physical vibrations of other people; and this mutual contact creates influences: the more powerful vibrations naturally dominate over the others. For example, as I have already told you several times, if you have a thought, this thought clothes itself in subtle vibrations and becomes an entity which moves around from place to place in the earth-atmosphere in order to get itself realised as far as possible, granted that it is one among millions; and naturally there is a multiple complex interaction,

which means that things do not happen in such a simple and schematic way.

What you call yourself, the individual being enclosed within the limits of your present consciousness, is constantly being penetrated by vibrations like this which come from outside, and which most often present themselves in the form of suggestions—in the sense that, apart from a few exceptions, the effect occurs first in the mental realm, then becomes vital, and then becomes physical. I must point out that this does not refer to the mind proper, but to the physical mind; for in the physical consciousness itself there is a mental activity, a vital activity and a purely material activity; and everything that happens in your physical consciousness, in your bodily consciousness and in your bodily activity, first penetrates in the form of vibrations of a mental kind—that is, in the form of suggestions. Most of the time these suggestions enter into you without you being aware of them in the least. They enter, awaken some sort of a response in you, and then rise up in your consciousness as if it were your own thought, your own will, your own impulse. But that is only because you are not aware of the penetration process.

There are so many of these suggestions; they are very numerous, very varied, of very very different kinds; but we could classify them into three main categories.

First (and this kind are rarely perceptible to an ordinary consciousness, they become perceptible only to those who have already thought a great deal about their own being, observed it and examined it a lot) there are what we could call collective suggestions. When a being is born on earth, it is necessarily born in a particular country and particular surroundings. Simply because it has physical parents, it is born into a social, cultural, sometimes religious, national setting that is made up of ways of thinking, understanding, feeling, conceiving: all sorts of constructions which are of mental origin at first, but which become vital habits and finally physical behaviour-patterns. To put it more clearly: you are born in a particular country, and that society has its own collective concepts, that nation has its own collective concepts, and that religion has its own collective *construction*, which is usually very rigid. You are born into that. Of course when you are tiny you are not aware of it at all, but it has its effect on your formation—that slow formation, hour after hour, day after day, experience after experience, which gradually builds up a consciousness. You are there underneath it, as if under a bell-glass: a kind of construction that covers you, and in a certain way protects you, but in another way limits you considerably. You absorb all that without even noticing it, and it forms the sub-conscious basis of your own construction. This subconscious basis will have its effect on you throughout your whole life *unless* you take the trouble to free yourself from it. And in order to free yourself from it, you must first become aware of it. And this first point is the most difficult; for this formation has been so subtle, it took place at a time when you were not yet a conscious being, when you had just fallen, completely stunned, out of another world into this one (*laughing*), and it all happened without the slightest participation on your part. So it never even crosses your mind that there might be something to know, even less something that you should

get rid of. It is quite remarkable that, when for some reason one becomes aware of the grip of this collective suggestion, at the same moment one realises what a very long and arduous labour is required to get rid of it.

But the problem does not end there.

You live surrounded by people. These people themselves have desires, willings, impulses that are expressed in them, which have all sorts of causes but which take on an individual form in their consciousnesses. For example, to put it in a very practical way: you have a father, a mother, brothers, sisters, friends, schoolmates; each of them has his own way of feeling, of willing; and every person you are in contact with expects something from you, just as you expect something from them. They do not always tell you what that something is, but it is more or less conscious in their being, and it creates formations. These formations, according to the thought-capacity and vital power of each person, are more or less powerful, but each of them has its own little power, which is usually proportionate to your own. So what the people around you want, desire, hope or expect from you, enters like that, in the form of suggestions which are very rarely expressed, but which you absorb unresistingly, and which suddenly awaken within you a corresponding desire, a corresponding will, a corresponding impulse....

That goes on from morning to night, and also from night to morning, for these things don't stop while you sleep—on the contrary, very often they get stronger, because your waking consciousness, which guards and protects you to a certain extent, is not there.

And this is universal; it is so universal that it is completely natural, and so natural that special circumstances and very particular occasions are needed before you notice it. And of course it goes without saying that your own responses, your own impulses, your own willings have a similar influence on other people, and it all creates an amazing mixture in which the strongest always wins!

If the problem came to an end there, one could still handle it. But there is a complication. It is that this earthly world, this human world, is constantly being invaded by the forces of the neighbouring world—that is, the vital world, the subtler region which lies beyond the fourfold earth-atmosphere. And this vital world, which is not under the influence of the psychic forces and the psychic consciousness, is essentially a world of ill-will, of disorder, of disequilibrium, in fact of all the most anti-divine things imaginable. This vital world is constantly penetrating the physical world; and since it is much subtler than the physical world, it is very often, except to a few rare people, completely imperceptible. In that world there are entities, beings, wills, individualities, who have all sorts of intentions, and who seize every opportunity of amusing themselves if they are small beings, or of doing harm and creating disorder if they are beings of greater capacity. Those beings have a very considerable power of penetration and suggestion, and wherever there is the slightest opening, the slightest affinity, they rush in, because that is a game they enjoy.

In addition, they have a great thirst or hunger for certain human vital vibrations,

which to them are like a delicious dish they love to feed on; so their game is to excite pernicious movements in human beings, so that the human will emanate those forces and they can feed on them to their hearts' content. All movements of anger, of violence, of passion, of desire, everything that makes you suddenly emit or throw out certain energies, are just what these vital entities like best, because, as I said, they enjoy them like a costly dish. So their tactics are very simple: they send you a little suggestion, a little impulse, a little vibration that enters into you; and by contagion or by affinity it awakens in you the vibration needed to make you emit the force they want to absorb.

In this case it is a little easier to recognise the influence; for if you are the slightest bit attentive you notice that something has suddenly awoken in you. For example, people who easily lose their tempers, if they have ever tried to control their anger, notice something that comes from outside or rises up from below and really gets hold of their consciousness and awakens the anger in them. I don't say that everyone is capable of this discernment—I am speaking of people who have tried to understand their own being and control it. These hostile suggestions are easier to perceive than, for example, your response to the will or desire of a being of the same kind as yourself, another human being, who can therefore affect you without your receiving the clear impression of something coming from outside: the vibrations are too similar, too alike in their nature, and one must be much more attentive and have a much keener discernment to recognise that these movements which seem to come from yourself are not really your own but come from outside. But with the hostile forces, if you have any sincerity at all, if you observe yourself closely you will notice that something in the being is responding to an influence, an impulsion, a suggestion, even sometimes to something very concrete that enters and causes corresponding vibrations in your being.

That is the problem.

The remedy? It is always the same: good will, sincerity, insight, patience—oh, an untiring patience, and a perseverance that makes you feel convinced that what you have not succeeded in doing today you will succeed on another day, and makes you go on trying until you do succeed.

12.12.1956

(To be continued)

NOTICE

Now the Video-tape of the *Savitri* paintings by Huta under the Mother's guidance, Cantos 1, 2 & 3 combined, is available at SABDA. The price is Rs. 400/-. The highlight of it is the Mother's recitation of *Savitri* and her own organ-music.

AVAILABLE AT SABDA— Pondicherry - 605 002

A TALK BY THE MOTHER

TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN ON JANUARY 11, 1956

Mother, "this craving life-force or desire-soul in us has to be accepted at first, but only in order that it may be transformed."

The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 77

But even when we understand that it is a desire and must be rejected, there are difficulties in discerning if it is a desire leading us to the Divine or if it is purely desire.

ONE deceives oneself only when one wants to deceive oneself. It is very, very different.

But within, one understands.

Good. Well, then that's enough, if one understands somewhere, that's enough. Is that all? No questions?

Mother, on January 6 you said, "Give all you are, all you have, nothing more is asked of you but also nothing less."

Yes.

What is meant by "all you have" and "all you are" ?

I am going to tell you in what circumstances I wrote this; that will make you understand:

Someone wrote to me saying that he was very unhappy, for he longed to have wonderful capacities to put at the disposal of the Divine, for the realisation, for the Work; and that he also longed to have immense riches to be able to give them, to put them at the feet of the Divine for the work. So I replied to him that he need not be unhappy, that each one is asked to give what he has, that is, all his possessions whatever they may be, and what he is, that is, all his potentialities—which corresponds to the consecration of one's life and the giving of all one's possessions—and that nothing more than this is asked. What you are, give that; what you have, give that, and your gift will be perfect; from the spiritual point of view it will be perfect. This does not depend upon the amount of wealth you have or the number of capacities in your nature; it depends upon the perfection of your gift, that is to say, on the totality of your gift. I remember having read in a book of Indian legends, a story like this. There was a very poor, very old woman who had nothing, who was quite destitute, who lived in a miserable little hut, and who had been given a fruit.

It was a mango. She had eaten half of it and kept the other half for the next day, because it was something so marvellous that she did not often happen to get it—a mango. And then, when night fell, someone knocked at the rickety door and asked for hospitality. And this someone came in and told her he wanted shelter and was hungry. So she said to him, “Well, I have no fire to warm you, I have no blanket to cover you, and have half a mango left, that is all I have, if you want it; I have eaten half of it.” And it turned out that this someone was Shiva, and that she was filled with an inner glory, for she had made a perfect gift of herself and all she had.

I read that, I found it magnificent. Well, yes, this describes it vividly. It’s exactly that.

The rich man, or even people who are quite well-off and have all sorts of things in life and give to the Divine what they have in surplus—for usually this is the gesture: one has a little more money than one needs, one has a few more things than one needs, and so, generously, one gives that to the Divine. It is better than giving nothing. But even if this “little more” than what they need represents lakhs of rupees, the gift is less perfect than the one of half the mango. For it is not by the quantity or the quality that it is measured: it is by the sincerity of the giving and the absoluteness of the giving.

But in ordinary life, when rich men want to give their wealth to the Divine, and the Divine is not in front of them, then to whom are they to give? They don’t know where to give their money?

Yes, but then the question doesn’t arise. If they haven’t met the Divine either within or without, it doesn’t come into question. They are not asked to give to someone they do not know.

If they have found the Divine within themselves, well, they have only to follow the indication given by the Divine for the use of what they have; and if they follow quite sincerely and exactly the indications they receive, this is all that can be asked of them. But until then nothing is asked of anyone.

One begins to ask only when someone says, “Here I am, I want to consecrate myself to the Divine.” Then it is all right, from that moment one asks; but not before. Before that, even if you casually pull out a coin from your pocket and put it there, it is very good; you have done what you thought you ought to do and that’s all; you are not asked for anything at all. There is a great difference between asking the Divine to adopt you, and making a gesture of good will, but without the least intention of changing anything whatever in the course of your life.

Those who live the ordinary life, well, if they make a gesture of good will, so much the better for them, this creates for them antecedents for future lives. But it is only from the moment you say, “There, now I know that there is but one thing which counts for me, it is the divine life, and I want to live the divine life”—from that moment one asks you, not before.

Mother, there are people who come here, who have money and are very devoted, who show their devotion, but when the question of money comes up, they bargain.... Then how shall we remain on friendly terms with them?

What?

They are devoted, they show devotion...

In what way? By taking from Him all they can?

... But when the question of money comes up, they bargain, they calculate.

I tell you, I have already answered, that's how it is. They come with the idea of taking from the Divine all they can: all the qualities, all the capacities, all the conveniences also, all the comforts, everything, and sometimes even powers, and all the rest. They come to take, they don't come to give. And their show of devotion is simply a cloak they have thrown over their wish to take, to receive. That covers a wide field: from saving one's soul, having spiritual experiences, obtaining powers, to leading a petty quiet life, comfortable—more or less comfortable, at least with a minimum of comfort—without cares, without botheration, far from the worries of life. That's how it is. That covers a wide range. But when they give, it is a kind of bargaining; they know that to obtain these things, it would be well to give a little something, otherwise they won't get them, so they make a show of being very devoted. But it is only a pretence, for it is not sincere.

Unfortunately for them, it deceives no one. It may be tolerated; but that doesn't mean that anybody is deceived.

The bargaining is everywhere, in all the parts of the being, it is always give and take, from the highest spiritual experiences to the tiniest little material needs. There is not one in a thousand who gives without bargaining.

And the beauty of the story I told you—moreover, there are many others like it here—is just this, that when the old woman gave, she didn't know that it was Shiva. She gave to the passing beggar, for the joy of doing good, of giving, not because he was a god and she hoped to have salvation or some knowledge in exchange.

(Looking at the disciple) There is still some mischief in his mind. Now then, what is it?

I wanted to say that these desires begin with the desire for the work, and this is also guided by the Divine. But when one has understood that now there should no longer be any desire but an absolute giving, still that does not become a giving; and this continues indefinitely. Why?

I cannot make out what he means! *(To another disciple)* Translate!

One begins by mixing up desire with one's aspiration....

Yes, that is what Sri Aurobindo has written.

Then, one realises that a desire is mixed up there, but cannot manage to reject this desire.

(To the first disciple) Is that it?

No ! (Laughter)

It is and it isn't!

Mother, you said that it may be tolerated, but there is a period of tolerance. But when it goes beyond the period of tolerance and does not want to stop—that's the question.

And so what, what happens?

He wants to ask what one must do, what should be done ?

Ah! at last.

What should be done?... Be sincere.

That's it; always, always, the little worm in the fruit. One tells oneself, "Oh! I can't." It is not true, if one wanted, one could.

And there are people who tell me, "I don't have the will-power." That means you are not sincere. For sincerity is an infinitely more powerful force than all the wills in the world. It can change anything whatever in the twinkling of an eye; it takes hold of it, grips it, pulls it out—and then it's over.

But you close your eyes, you find excuses for yourself.

The problem recurs all the time.

It comes back because you don't pull it out completely. What you do is, you cut the branch, so it grows again.

It takes different forms.

Yes. Well, you have to take it out every time it comes, that's all—until it doesn't come back any more.

We have spoken about it, where was it?... Oh! it was in *Lights on Yoga*, I think. You push the thing down from one part of your consciousness into another; and

you push it down again and then it goes into the subconscious, and after that, if you are not vigilant, you think it is finished, and later from there it shows its face. And next, even when you push it out from the subconscious, it goes down into the inconscient; and there too, then, you must run after it to find it.

But there comes a time when it is over.

Only, one is always in too great a hurry, one wants it to be over very quickly. When one has made an effort, "Oh! Well, I made an effort, now I should get the reward for my effort."

In fact, it is because there is not that joy of progress. The joy of progress imagines that even if you have realised the goal you have put before you—take the goal we have in view: if we realise the supramental life, the supramental consciousness—well, this joy of progress says, "Oh! but this will be only a stage in the eternity of time. After this there will be something else, and then after that another and yet another, and always one will have to go further." And that is what fills you with joy. While the idea, "Ah! now I can sit down, it is finished, I have realised my goal, I am going to enjoy what I have done," oh, how dull it is! Immediately one becomes old and stunted.

The definition of youth: we can say that youth is constant growth and perpetual progress—and the growth of capacities, possibilities, of the field of action and range of consciousness, and progress in the working out of details.

Naturally, someone told me, "So one is no longer young when one stops growing?" I said, "Of course, I don't imagine that one grows perpetually! But one can grow in another way than purely physically."

That is to say, in human life there are successive periods. As you go forward, something comes to an end in one form, and it changes its form.... naturally at present, we come to the top of the ladder and come down again; but that's really a shame, it shouldn't be like that, it's a bad habit. But when we have finished growing up, when we have reached a height we could consider as that which expresses us best, we can transform this force for growth into a force which will perfect our body, make it stronger and stronger, more and more healthy, with an ever greater power of resistance, and we shall practise physical training in order to become a model of physical beauty. And then, at the same time, we shall slowly begin and seek the perfection of character, of consciousness, knowledge, powers, and finally of the divine realisation in its fullness of the marvellously good and true, and of His perfect Love.

There you are, and this must be continuous. And when a certain level of consciousness has been reached, when this consciousness has been realised in the material world and you have transformed the material world into the image of this consciousness, well, you will climb yet one more rung and go to another consciousness—and you will begin again. *Voilà*

But this is not for lazy folk. It's for people who like progress. Not for those who come and say, "Oh! I have worked hard in my life, now I want to rest, will

you please give me a place in the Ashram?" I tell them, "Not here. This is not a place for rest because you have worked hard, this is a place for working even harder than before." So, formerly, I used to send them to Ramana Maharshi.¹ "Go there, you will enter into meditation and you will get rest." Now it is not possible, so I send them to the Himalayas; I tell them, "Go and sit before the eternal snows! That will do you good." That's all, then.

(Questions and Answers 1956, pp. 14-21)

¹ A sage of South India who left his body in April 1950. He founded a traditional ashram for meditation and contemplation.

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of December 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 Mulshanker. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests 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 27, 1940

M: My shoulder pain is still persisting Sir,

SRI AUROBINDO: It is responsive to the wind, probably.

M: Just near the insertion of the deltoid, Sir. Can't turn my arm backward.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, yes, I had also a pain in the same place. You must have passed it on to me. *(Laughter)*

M: How to get rid of it, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Don't identify with it.

M: But how?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is a sort of an inner movement or else make just those movements that bring on the pain.

M: That causes pain, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO: Doesn't matter. *(Laughter)* Or try to go up out of the body. Get rid of the old sanskaras of the body.

(At this time Manilal was sipping pādodaka¹ and applying some of it to his shoulder.)

P: The pain has already gone. *(Laughter)*

M: It is very much there.

P: No, no, I tell you it has gone.

SRI AUROBINDO: He wants to make you believe that the pain has gone but you won't believe it. Or rather you believe but your arm doesn't. You identify with the arm.

M: Last evening your knee was bending more than usual, Sir, wasn't it!

SRI AUROBINDO: Maybe.

M: Coming almost to a right angle.

SRI AUROBINDO: It would have bent more but I was afraid that if I tried Purani would fall upon me with the chair. *(Laughter)*

¹ The water in which the Guru's feet are washed.

(Sri Aurobindo used to sit on the edge of a chair and do the bending. Purani would stand behind the chair and hold the back of it lest the chair should fall forward by Sri Aurobindo's weight on its edge.)

P: No, I was prepared for all eventualities....

M: Arthur Luther, Sir, thrust his hand into the fire.

SRI AUROBINDO: Luther? You mean Archbishop Cranmer? Your knowledge of history is extraordinary. Neither was he Arthur. What about it?

M: When his hand was burning, did he not feel pain, Sir? How could he keep his hand in the fire? Did he do it stoically?

SRI AUROBINDO: How stoically?

M: I mean in spite of the pain he began to suffer. Or did he feel no pain at all?

SRI AUROBINDO: He may not have done it stoically but from a religious feeling. One can separate oneself from the body and then the pain doesn't affect one.

M: Is it possible, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Why not?...

N: Nishtha was asking again whether, if Mother doesn't know everything, she has to tell everything to Mother, every detail. She also says that everything comes from the Divine. In that case there is no need to do yoga, I said. She is thinking if it wouldn't be better for her to resume the vitamin pills she was taking before and says that the suggestion may have come from the Divine.

SRI AUROBINDO: The suggestion to stop it may have been from the Divine too.

N: I told her what you said to us the other day about Mother's knowing everything or not. She thinks that mental prayer is not sincere and so won't be heard by the Divine. The prayer must come from deeper sources.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course the deeper the source it comes from, the better it is. But why can't the Divine hear? Is he deaf to mental prayer?

N: I said any sincere prayer is heard.

SRI AUROBINDO: He may hear but whether it is answered is different.

M: Why couldn't it be answered, Sir? *(Laughter)*

SRI AUROBINDO: Not couldn't be. Anything could be but it may not be. *(Laughter)*

Evening

M: According to our Jaina Shastra, there are 3 or 4 signs, Sir, by which gods can be recognised. Their feet don't touch the ground, their eyes don't blink, the garlands around their necks don't dry up.

SRI AUROBINDO: You will find the signs in the Mahabharata also. There is one more sign: the gods have no shadows.

M: And they don't perspire. Is it true, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Ask the gods.

M: You are above the gods, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO: I am on earth.

M: Sometime ago Mother said that the gods—Shiva and Vishnu, etc.—came to the meditation she was giving.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, and then?

M: In what form did they come, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: What do you mean?

M: In an image form?

SRI AUROBINDO: What is an image? Everything is an image. You are an image, Nirod is an image.

N: I mean could they be seen as concretely as, for instance, I see Nirod?

SRI AUROBINDO: Shiva is as concrete to Vishnu as you are to Nirod (*Laughter*)

N: Were they seen with open eyes?

SRI AUROBINDO: One can see with open or closed eyes. But with what sense does one see the gods?

M: I don't know, Sir. That was not made clear by Mother.

SRI AUROBINDO: What is there to make clear? One sees them with a subtle sense, not with the material....

December 28, 1940

(In connection with the Ex-maharani's case, etc. Purani reported D as saying that he had heard from very reliable sources that the Madras Judges had now become corrupt and took bribes. It was not so during his time.)

SRI AUROBINDO: Everything going down?

M: In Bengal also there is much corruption.

SRI AUROBINDO: In the High Court?

M: Yes, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO: I suppose it is after the new government—with the advent of H and B. I am wondering what Swaraj will be like.

N: Was there no corruption before?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not so much. Bengal and Pondicherry were the only two examples.

N: The H ministry is almost openly doing these things.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, one has the impression that after this new government, Bengal has become quite corrupt. There is one good thing about England: it is still free from corruption in public life. Of course England also was at one time corrupt but it has come out of that. Victoria's time was especially admirable.

M: France and America also are said to be very corrupt.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, terrible! not a single senate member is free from bribery and corruption...

N: What about your shoulder, Dr. Manilal?

M: Same!

P: You shouldn't have asked. It is all right, isn't it? I see it is all right.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is all right without his knowing it. (*Laughter*)

M: Yes, Sir. Purani knows it without my knowing myself.

SRI AUROBINDO: Knowledge by identity! (*Laughter*)

M: That would have been all right if by my eating Purani's hunger would have been satisfied.

SRI AUROBINDO: But suppose it is by Purani's eating that your hunger would be satisfied. (*Laughter*)

M: If it did, a lot of trouble would be saved, Sir, but it does not; hunger is still as strong.

SRI AUROBINDO: Consider it an illusion. (*Laughter*)

M: I am not a Mayavadin, Sir.

N: Will knowledge by identity give one knowledge of diagnosis of a case?

SRI AUROBINDO: If it is complete. If you identify with the patient's mind, you may not know because the patient himself may not know.

P: What will you do with diagnosis if you don't know the cure?

M: Identify with Mother, not the patient, then you will know everything.

N: But one can know also the right drug.

SRI AUROBINDO: Does a right drug cure always?

N: Why not?

SRI AUROBINDO: Is every disease curable?

M: No, Sir, but why isn't it curable?

SRI AUROBINDO: There are conditions.

N: The Divine may cure unconditionally.

SRI AUROBINDO: In every case?

N: No, when he chooses.

SRI AUROBINDO: That means a condition.

M: What are the conditions? Faith, aspiration?

SRI AUROBINDO: You leave out the important element—receptivity.

M: Am I receptive, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: You may be but your shoulder may not.

M: How to make it receptive?

SRI AUROBINDO: Surgical operation. (*Laughter*)

M: With what scalpel, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Opening!

N: Do different parts have different degrees of receptivity?

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course. The mind may be receptive but the vital and physical may not, or the mind and the vital may be receptive without the body being so.

M: But Laxmi's case was a miracle, Sir, I must say. I thought she would pass away but now she is quite a different person, looks young and energetic.

P: It is a question of faith. She has faith in Mother.

M: I also have faith.

SRI AUROBINDO: You may but what about your arm? Purani wants to make you believe that you are all right but you or your arm won't believe.

M: How can it believe when the pain is there, Sir? Otherwise I have faith.

P: You are not open to the Force then.

M: All my cells are open. (*Laughter*)

N: To what?

M: To Sri Aurobindo's Force.

SRI AUROBINDO: Even your rheumatic cells? (*Laughter*)

M: Yes, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO: Open to rheumatism.

Evening

(Purani was coughing a little.)

M: You talk of Force. Why don't you apply it to your own cough?

SRI AUROBINDO: He is driving the Germans out with his air-force!

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

VIGNETTES OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

(In this new series of reminiscences the words of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo are approximations. But every effort has been made to preserve the sense faithfully. All names have been withheld unless the person concerned has no objection. Even the initials used do not correspond to those of the persons.)

MAHAKALI AND MAHALAKSHMI

BANSIDHAR, when he came to the Ashram as a young sadhak, was given some work, but he deeply aspired to serve the Mother personally. His aspiration was fulfilled and he was given the privilege to clean the Mother's room of the old days—later Sri Aurobindo's bathroom and now Champaklal's "corner". He had to do the cleaning while the Mother met people in the Darshan Hall.

One day he saw the glossy wrapper of a biscuit-packet, from which the packet had been removed, lying with some other things. He threw it in the waste-paper basket. When the Mother came to her room, she inquired about the wrapping paper. Bansidhar told her he had thrown it away. The Mother became a veritable Mahakali and with great severity of tone told him: "If something is to be thrown away we also know how to throw away and where to throw." Bansidhar says he has never again seen the Mother like that.

Some time later the person in charge of cleaning the Mother's dressing-room was once absent. Bansidhar was overjoyed that he would have the benefit of cleaning it also. Many types of toilet things were there—mirrors, bottles of scents, powders, etc. While cleaning the dressing table, he picked up a big bottle of French scent. The bottle had a loose cover without a bottom. So as he picked up the bottle the cover remained in his hand and the bottle slipped and fell to the floor. It broke into a hundred pieces, spilling all the precious scent. Bansidhar's consternation knew no bounds, especially as he remembered the episode of the biscuit-packet's wrapper. His heart sank. He collected the glass pieces. The whole room, nay, the whole first floor was filled with the smell of the wasted perfume. He tried to mop up the liquid with his handkerchief—but who can stop spilled scent from spreading?

The Mother came. But she only said: "Don't worry. During work, such things can happen." Later she asked Champaklal to tell Bansidhar not to try and replace the bottle by buying another. It was a very costly scent and yet the Mother showed no displeasure, was kindness itself and love incarnate, a true Mahalakshmi. Then Bansidhar understood that the Mother had wanted to teach him the value of things and how he should not throw away anything carelessly.¹

Compiled by S.

¹ The Mother was a great conserver of things. She had in her cupboard pieces of cloth even of her grandmother's time, which she would bring out when needed. Various drawing pads which she had bought in Japan ten years earlier had been preserved by her and given afterwards to a young sadhak whom she had asked to paint the flowers she used to distribute at Pranam.—A.

THE STORY OF A SOUL

(Continued from the issue of December 1986)

BY HUTA

The Mother's Message

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



Volume Three: 1959

3

I LOST all interest in my lessons, because I was far behind them owing to my ill-health and I could not catch up with everything easily for there was much to do and the time was running out. I remained all the time in anxiety and ambiguity.

Now Sudha also stayed at Marble Arch near my residence. East Africa House was opposite her house, where young men who had come from Africa, India and other countries were staying. They studied in different colleges for their postgraduation.

A boy whom my family and I had known came to me one day unexpectedly and said: "If you feel lonely, I have quite a number of European friends who are rich, handsome and have come from well-to-do families. I will introduce them to you. Then they will take you to clubs and other places."

My first instinct was to laugh out loud. But I smothered it, and told myself: "Eh, this chap is a bit touched in his head. What an extraordinary idea!" I replied in a level tone: "Thank you so much for your consideration and concern. But I don't feel lonely. I like to remain alone, because a solitary life suits me far more than night clubs which are noisy, frenzied. They strike a harsh note for me. Dating doesn't appeal to me. I have come here for another purpose and that's all."

He got to his feet, nodded and stalked out of the room. He never turned up again.

*

Later Sudha and I met Mr. Mohansingh Vig, Jayantibhai Patel (related to Mr. A.B. Patel who is an Ashramite) and Ramesh Pannikker. They were courteous and gentlemanly.

Mohansingh's father-in-law was at one time our Principal in Jinja (Uganda). Jayantibhai was married but had come for his post-graduation in Teaching.

Ramesh was from India and was doing very well in his Engineering studies. He was only twenty years old.

One day I requested Jayantibhai to help me buy a transistor radio. For I did not know what to do with the £18 which the Mother had given me. So we went to a well-known shop and purchased a small transistor BRAUN which cost me £7 more. It was my constant companion till the end of my stay in London. It still serves me.

*

Just to take my mind off the rut, I went with Sudha to see a stereoscopic movie—Jules Verne's *Round the World in Eighty Days*. We were given special red plastic spectacles to feel the real thrill of it. The movie was fantastic.

Afterwards we went to a restaurant, agreeing to go Dutch. We ate potato chips with tomato sauce. Then we ordered tea. Meanwhile we started eating the sugar cubes which were on the table, because we were told that sugar produced carbohydrate which would keep us warm. A big pot of tea came. We asked the waitress to bring sugar. She frowned and perhaps inwardly fumed—but she did bring another bowl of sugar lumps. We lingered over the tea and chatted. Sudha told me all about Johannesburg:

"It is a city of gold. There are skyscrapers, wide roads, industries, a remarkable Stock Exchange directly connected with London, departmental stores, magnificent gardens enhanced in beauty by fountains, lakes and ponds."

I listened to her description with increasing bewilderment. She continued:

"Pretoria is twenty miles from Johannesburg. You know, there is twenty-four-hour service at food stores-loaded with fresh vegetables, luscious fruits which we get in abundance. The chocolate ice-cream is superb, a speciality in Johannesburg.

"Everything is out of this world. But, alas! there is an acute segregation which mars the splendour."

She sighed.

*

Winter's reign still prevailed. Two or three Sundays Sudha accompanied me to tea with the Rev. Mother of the Convent where I had first stayed. There we were introduced to many girls.

I had an inflammation in my eyes due to the chill. The Rev. Mother applied a cream in my eyes and gave the tube to me for use. I thanked her. She was compassionate.

*

The Mother sent me an encouraging letter dated 10th March:

"My dear little child Huta,

I have received all your letters. Do not be discouraged because of difficulties. Whenever one wants to achieve something in life, difficulties come. Take them as a discipline (tapasya) to make you strong and you will more easily overcome them.

My love, help and blessings are always with you."

Not a single day did I forget my goal. The flame of aspiration was burning steadily, softly, in the depth of my heart.

The Mother had ways and means to develop my consciousness. So everything was shaping according to her Will. Her Force prepared me to face all kinds of experiences which were essential to make me strong and spirited.

I should like to quote Pythagoras on the vicissitudes of life:

"It is all necessary for development of the soul. Whoever fathomed that truth fathomed the very heart of the Great Mystery."

*

I received from the Mother a painted card dated 23rd March, showing white roses, together with her words:

"To my dear little child Huta,
I have received your letters and am always with you.
With all my love and blessings."

She also sent me the following message of 29th March—the anniversary of her arrival in Pondicherry. It was a quotation from Sri Aurobindo:

"It is not perhaps very useful to forecast by the mind what will be the precise results of the descent of a supramental consciousness into a world in which up to now the mental intelligence has been the highest evolutionary product and leading power. For the supermind is a consciousness which will work in a very different way from the mind and the lines laid down for it by the latter are not likely to be respected by a greater energy in its self-organisation and operation here."

*

Now it was April 1959. I along with Sudha finished the first term in the college and left it. Mrs Denson was displeased, though.

It was the Easter vacation. The festival of Easter was celebrated by English people with much gusto.

There was an artistic, eye-catching display of a variety of Easter eggs, fluffy artificial chickens and colourful other decorations in shop-windows which attracted people.

I bought chocolate in the form of an egg adorned in different designs with frosted sugar. When I broke it I found many small chocolates.

I wondered what Easter meant in England. Later I read in *Multum in Parvo* about the origin of it:

"Formerly in Great Britain the Easter Egg was solemnly blessed by the priest, and, being elaborately coloured, was often kept as an amulet. Most of the old customs and superstitions associated with this Easter Festival, however, have fallen into disuse."

Shraddhavan, an English friend of mine, gave me the following information:

"After Christmas, Easter is the biggest religious festival in Christian countries. Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ, Easter his crucifixion and resurrection. And just as Christmas has been fused with older pre-Christian festivals marking the re-birth of the Light after the Winter Solstice—the longest night of the year, very noticeable in Northern countries—so Easter, the festival of the Resurrection, has been fused with older pre-Christian festivals celebrating the reawakening of the Earth at the Spring Equinox, to fertile life after her long winter 'death'.

An Anglo-Saxon church historian, the Venerable Bede, says that even the name of the festival is that of an old pagan earth-goddess, Eostre, who was celebrated at this time of the year. And probably the association of Eggs with Easter, as a symbol of this re-awakening of life, out of seeming death, dates from long before Christian times. In several places in England there is an 'Egg Hill', where decorated eggs would be rolled downhill with great festivities on Easter Sunday morning in bygone times. These old customs died out during the Reformation, and nowadays people in England celebrate the Spring festival mainly by wearing bright new clothes—especially pretty hats for the ladies—and by presenting each other with 'Easter-eggs'."

*

The sun was out and the cold winds were replaced by the first breath of Spring. This was my happiest moment after the gloom. Moreover, the Mother sent me with her love and blessings the message of 4th April—the anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's arrival day in Pondicherry:

"Let the new birth become manifest in your heart and radiate in calm and joy and take up all the parts of your being, mind and vision and will and feeling and life and body. Let each date in your life be a date of its growth and greater completeness till all in you is the child of the Mother. Let the Light and Power and Presence envelop you and protect and cherish and foster, till all your inner and outer existence is one movement and an expression of its peace and strength and Ananda."

My soul steeped itself in these luminous blessed words of Sri Aurobindo.

(To be continued)

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SAVITRI

(With acknowledgements to *Srinvantu*, August 1986)

(A few of us have been trying to read and study *Savitri* in a group. We requested Amal Kiran (K.D. Sethna) to kindly give us a guideline, so that our understanding as well as enjoyment of *Savitri* might be enhanced and enriched. We put some specific questions which would show him the trend of our mind. Given below are the first two of them along with his answers.

—Ed. *Srinvantu*)

Q. One may approach Savitri (1) with a devotee's attitude as the spiritual autobiography of the Master, (2) as a book or store-house of spiritual wisdom comparable to the Vedas, the Upanishads or the Gita, and (3) as great poetry. Can these approaches merge? What should be the basic approach for a full and just appreciation?

A. To make the right approach we must understand what Sri Aurobindo intended *Savitri* to be. A few statements of his may be cited. "I used *Savitri* as a means of ascension. I began with it on a certain mental level, each time I could reach a higher level I rewrote from that level. Moreover I was particular—if part seemed to me to come from any lower levels I was not satisfied to leave it because it was good poetry. All had to be as far as possible of the same mint. In fact *Savitri* has not been regarded by me as a poem to be written and finished, but as a field of experimentation to see how far poetry could be written from one's own yogic consciousness and how that could be made creative."

We can gather several points here. First and foremost, *Savitri* is an adventure in poetry. But the aim is not merely to write good poetry. The poetry has to be good from the highest spiritual plane possible: this plane has to be creative in terms of poetic values. *Savitri* should express poetically the peak reached by Sri Aurobindo's progressive spiritual ascension. Therefore we cannot consider it either as sheer poetry or as sheer spirituality. It must help us at the same time to ascend to Sri Aurobindo's own peak and do so with the full awareness of the poetic way in which that peak has become communicative of its truth, its power, its delight. *Savitri* has to be taken as Sri Aurobindo's poetically spiritual autobiography which is meant to make us re-live his inner life of both poetic creativity and creative spirituality.

Further, we must attend to some details of these two creativities, keeping in view Sri Aurobindo's disclosure: "there have been made several successive revisions each trying to lift the general level higher and higher towards a possible Overmind poetry. As [*Savitri*] now stands there is a general Overmind influence, I believe, sometimes coming fully through, sometimes colouring the poetry of the other higher planes fused together, sometimes lifting any one of these higher planes to its highest

or the psychic, poetic intelligence or vital towards them." Mention of Overmind aligns *Savitri* to the top reach of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita, and the enormous mass of it, nearly 24,000 verses, renders it a super-scripture, an unparalleled store-house of spiritual wisdom. But we must remember that this wisdom comes at its best in the form of what the ancients called the Mantra, which Sri Aurobindo characterises in a line which is itself mantric as

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

Here the final emergence of the Overmind's truth-light and truth-vibration is suggested, the surging up of the supreme Word from the secret heart of things which is one with our own inmost heart and which has received that Word for manifestation from the hidden heights. What is pertinent in this connection is that the Mantra is borne to us in "sound-waves", not simply the luminous sense but also the harmonious verbal embodiment of it is important. Thus the poetry that is *Savitri* is inseparable from the spirituality of this master-work of Sri Aurobindo and the latter cannot be appreciated and assimilated in a living manner unless we are responsive to the mode of vision, the cast of word, the mould of rhythm—the Spirit's varied poetic avatar. The heart of *Savitri*—the mystery from which the poem has sprung—yields its pulsation most intimately when we approach it with sensitiveness to the art of *Savitri*.

I may add that the wisdom we have to absorb from this poem has an intellectual element too. That is why Sri Aurobindo says that in its final form *Savitri* is "a sort of poetic philosophy of the Spirit and of Life". But we have to mark the qualifying noun "sort", for the "philosophy" is no more than the mental look the eyes of Yogic vision and experience put on, and we have to note the qualifying adjective "poetic" which brings in the artistry with which that look is worn.

*

Q. If somebody is fond of poetry and would prefer to come to sadhana via the road of poetry, will the study of Savitri as poetry help him much? Would you kindly explain to us how and where poetry becomes yoga and yoga poetry in Savitri?

A. I should think that all poetry, like all of the other arts, tends at its intensest to take us not only into magic but also into mystery. An impact of flawless form is felt: an impression of the ideal, the perfect, is received through the inevitable rhythmic expression. Even a descriptive line like

Sweet water hurrying from reluctant rocks

from Sri Aurobindo's early poetry enchants us with its apt surprises—the choice of

the contrasting epithets "hurrying" and "reluctant", the easy run of the voice in the first half of the line and the retardation of it in the second half with its close consonantal conjuncts "ct", "nt" "cks", and yet the weaving together of the opposing senses by the alliterating "r" in five words out of six, and finally through all these bespelling effects the disclosure of some hidden life in things which apparently are inanimate but occultly carry on a play of their own. Not only is a surface beauty of natural events delineated: a secret design of interacting and counteracting mobility and stability is also hinted at. We are given simultaneously a satisfying sight and a felicitous insight. This is the function of all inspired poetry. We get an inner experience through an outer stimulus: our perceptions get subtilised. Without even a directly spiritual communication attempted we undergo an exquisite refinement which can prepare us for it. As a critic has intuitively said, "Poetry may not save souls but it makes souls worth saving."

When we come to poetry like *Savitri* we have this power eminently exercised. *Savitri* can serve the poetry-lover as a road to sadhana. Here, over and above an account of spiritual states and by means of it a conceptual as well as imaginative signpost to the mystical goal, we have a vibrant evocation of these states in a language that is born out of them and is no mere reflection of the profundities beyond the mind in mental terms. The process and the product of this special language are thrillingly pictured in the *Savitri* passage whose concluding line I have already quoted to illustrate the Mantra. Sri Aurobindo is describing the various orders of ascetics whom Savitri comes across in the course of her search for her destined mate. The Rishi-like occupation of one order is conveyed to us:

Intuitive knowledge leaping into speech,
Hearing the subtle voice that clothes the heavens,
Carrying the splendour that has lit the suns,
They sang Infinity's names and deathless powers
In metres that reflect the moving worlds,
Sight's sound-waves breaking from the soul's great deeps.

As *Savitri* exemplifies, by and large, this sort of spiritual composition, the reading of it is bound to induce movements of yoga. But the reader must approach it rightly. He should imagine the twofold birth of the Mantra: high above in an ether of Super-consciousness and deep within where the Rigvedic *hriday samudra*, the heart-ocean, the wondrous in-world into which opens the individual emotional-psychic experience, echoes and images the over-world. Then he should practise a dedicated silence in the mind in order to imitate something of the "hushed intense receptivity" which Sri Aurobindo, in a letter to me, stressed as the state for the Rishi to draw the Mantra into his utterance. Such a state is necessary for two reasons. One: the full impression of the Mantric speech would be missed unless the mind were made a blank sheet on which the script of the Eternal could come out absolutely clear. Second:

that speech is itself most typically, most fundamentally from a similar state. Sri Aurobindo, in *Savitri*, writes of

Silence, the nurse of the Almighty's power,
The omniscient hush, womb of the immortal Word—

and in the same context he recounts how the Goddess of Inspiration

Lent a vibrant cry to the unuttered vasts,
And through great shoreless, voiceless, starless breadths
Bore earthward fragments of revealing thought
Hewn from the silence of the Ineffable.

A final requisite for the reader to make *Savitri* his mode of sadhana is to read it not with the eye alone but also with the ear. The silence with which he approaches this poem which is born from "the omniscient hush" can be most effectively employed for "the immortal Word" to leave its mark upon it if we peruse the verse audibly. We have to hear and not just see the lines. In a slow subdued voice we have to communicate *Savitri* to our consciousness. All poetry has to be vocalised if its total magic and mystery are to go home to us. Much more is it necessary to vocalise *Savitri*. It has rhythmic properties more subtle than in any other poem, since it hails from realms of expression rarely tapped and unless we are so adept as to get inwardly the complete shape, as it were, of its "vibrant cry" we need to realise that shape by an audible transmission. Even to understand something, it is advisable to read it aloud—and *Savitri* too is best understood through the ear. But what I am asking for is meant to bear us beyond understanding. Poetry sets up a stirring within us answering to the life-throb of a vision or emotion or intuition, a life-throb which repeats itself in us and gives us a reality of the poet's substance exceeding the mere idea of it. Understanding poetry amounts to acquiring an idea of the vision, emotion, intuition concerned and reflecting upon the way they are conveyed. Such reflection is part of winning access to the art-element. It cannot be dispensed with, but even more important for the access is to catch the life-throb of those psychological faculties at work. Audible reading most fruitfully carries into us the life-throb and the basic shape of the poetry, transmitting both its aesthetic and its spiritual truth. Of course the value and efficacy of this double aspect of the poetic phenomenon—and particularly of a super-phenomenon like *Savitri*—will differ from reader to reader, depending on the inner sensitivity and on the intimacy with the English language. But all readers will receive the maximum they can by reciting *Savitri* instead of simply running the eye over the page.

As for the "how" and "where" of poetry becoming yoga and yoga poetry in *Savitri* I cannot make absolutely definite observations. I should say that the poetic and the yogic interplay throughout but there are several degrees which we may attempt

to mark off in a rough way. Let me take a single theme and distinguish the modes of its recurrence. There is the straightforward statement, fusing the mental and the ultra-mental with a fine ease:

His mind transfigured to a rapturous seer...

This seems to be what Sri Aurobindo has termed the "adequate style" at an inevitable pitch. Then there is, in my opinion, his "effective style" inevitably keyed up:

Out of our thoughts we must leap up to sight...

Next we may show an example of the "illuminated style":

In the light flooding thought's blank vacancy...

The "illuminated" merges in the "inspired" when we read:

Splendours of insight filled the blank of thought...

A mixture of all these styles—with perhaps the "adequate-effective" as an overall tone—may be found in:

His seeking mind ceased in the Truth that knows...

A keener articulation of such a mixture meets us when Sri Aurobindo speaks of sages escaping from the confines of thought

To where Mind motionless sleeps waiting Light's birth...

This verse draws near to the style which, according to Sri Aurobindo, goes out of all classification, however inevitable a line may be within its own class—the style which is the "sheer inevitable" and whose undeniable example is:

Our minds hush to a bright Omniscient....

Here poetry passes wholly into the mood of yoga and yoga becomes most intensely articulate in poetry.

An alternative scheme of distinction might take the first two instances as the "Creative Intelligence" in a couple of varying phases: quiet felicity in the one and *vivida vis* (lively force) in the other. Perhaps the second instance is half-way into the "Higher Mind". The next two seem to be the "Higher Mind" taken up into the "Illumined Mind" and verging on the "Intuition". The first of the pair of penulti-

mate instances looks like the direct penetrative simplicity of the "Intuition" under the guise, as it were, of the "Creative Intelligences" 's clear-cut drive rather than of its colourful play. The second member has a greater sign in it of the "Intuition" 's thrilled power going straight to the heart of a subject, be it a scene, an event, a state or a person. Beyond this power lies the revelation of the "Overmind" which brings us the intensest inmost of the calmest immense, a sovereign seizure of spiritual truth in all its beauty of vision, voice and vibrancy.

In the line I have quoted—

Our minds hush to a bright Omniscient—

we have the vision of the thinker in us losing his loud self-assertive limits in a spontaneous super-knowledge which lights up everything. This vision finds voice in a compact pattern, the intransitive verb "hush" acquiring an extra impact, a depth of force, by standing in an inverted foot, a trochee in a virtually iambic verse, and that too as the second unit in the scansion, a surprise suddenly interrupting the expected metrical run. At the line's end comes another surprise, a noun made out of an adjective packed with tremendous significance. I believe that it is the first time in English literature that "Omniscient" is used as a noun with an indefinite article. Apart from that singularity is the question: "Why is 'omniscience' not used?" The habitual noun would indicate a state of all-knowledge and not a being who knows all. The personal identity of the yogi is preserved in some supreme form in a realm where the basic Universal wears numerous individual faces and the One Omniscient manifests in a multiplicity of Omniscients. There is also a sound-effect to be appreciated. The *sh*-sound in "hush" is caught up in "Omniscient" which is pronounced "Omnishyent", the suggestion of the echoed sound is that the hushing of the mind deepens and widens and heightens by a natural process the mind-possessing finite being that we are into an infinite supernal self who is by contrast a knower of everything and yet mysteriously continuous with our present finitude. Finally, both for sense and for sound the epithet "bright" is the *mot juste*. "White" could have been put instead, connoting shadowless purity. But the special effect of the conjunct consonants *br* would have been absent. These consonants carry as if by the very modulation of the lips and tongue the hint of a spreading out as well as a glowing forth. The psychological impression is of a bursting into light. In addition we have to note that "bright" has a long *i* just as "minds" has. The sound-parity suggests the "minds" themselves turning "bright" through the hushing experience. Besides, "bright" is at the tail-end of a series of five monosyllables, a sort of climaxing of the process they represent. And this fivefold process thus climaxed terminates and culminates in a massive reality of transcendent transformation indicated by the single four-syllabled word "Omniscient".

To feel and recognise the spiritual afflatus of so superb a kind, borne magically home to us in a design of manifold artistry, is indeed a preparatory movement of

sadhana. Again and again we get a chance to develop the sadhana-mood. The fundamental attitude necessary for advance in spirituality is hit off to perfection in the middle verse of the three powerful inward-drawing lines which yet turn one's soul outward to master the world's "crass casualty":

A poised serenity of tranquil strength,
A wide unshaken look on time's unrest
Faced all experience with unaltered peace.

The absolute of this peace, the self-existent infinitude of it meets us in a life-changing passage when Aswapaty's aspiring consciousness breaks beyond the barrier of both individual and universal existence:

Across a void retreating sky he glimpsed
Through a last glimmer and drift of vanishing stars
The superconscient realms of motionless Peace
Where judgment ceases and the word is mute
And the Unconceived lies pathless and alone.

Everywhere, in some places more directly and in others through a transparent veil, *Savitri* which is the self-expression of a master yogi can lead us towards yoga. But its most creative function is to kindle in us a flame burning at all times so that we may build up in ourselves the living presence of that master yogi and through the illumining art of this epic of the Spirit quicken at each moment with the invocation:

O Wisdom-Splendour, Mother of the universe,
Creatrix, the Eternal's artist Bride....

AMAL KIRAN (K. D. SETHNA)

TO THE POETS OF THE VEDA

(Written on the fly-leaf of Sri Aurobindo's Secret of the Veda just after reading it.)

PILGRIM of the ancient way,
Did you see the holy fire
Burning light, burning bright
In the lands beyond desire?

Herdsmen of the radiant kine
That pasture on those fields of light,
Did you cut the threefold knot
That binds us in the caves of night?

What word of power unsheathed the sword,
The naked blade of pure intent?
What outcry urged the steeds of life
To one last perilous ascent?

Poets of old who went before,
There is no ending to your quest—
Agni burns within our hearts,
Indra will not let us rest.

SONIA DYNE

IS THE DATE OF "KUBLA KHAN" SETTLED?

COLERIDGE claims to have composed "Kubla Khan" in the summer of 1797 while in an opium dream. However, this date has been questioned by Coleridge's son Hartley, who has provided evidence that the summer of 1798 was a more probable date for the poem, since the visit to the cottage between Porlock and Linton which Coleridge claimed interrupted his writing of the poem occurred in 1798.

John Livingston Lowes, a renowned literary critic and author of *The Road to Xanadu* (which deals with Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan") gives a series of passages that Coleridge would probably have read before writing "Kubla Khan". Coleridge himself states that he was reading *Purchas' Pilgrimages* (a Victorian travel book) immediately before writing "Kubla Khan". The passage he was reading was:

"In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately palace, encompassing sixteen miles of plaine ground, with a wall, wherein are fertile medowes, pleasant springs, delightful streames, and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, and in the midst thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure which may be removed from place to place."

Livingston Lowes submits further passages that Coleridge probably read from *Purchas' Pilgrimages*. All passages have some significance to the writing of "Kubla Khan" since they contain words and phrases which might have surfaced from Coleridge's subconscious during his opium dream.

Should one look for a further explanation of the mysterious poem? Certainly there is evidence, not mentioned in Livingston Lowes' criticism, that Coleridge may have obtained many of his ideas for "Kubla Khan" from a letter written to him by Wordsworth on December 24th 1799. The date of this letter comes almost a year and a half after Coleridge is alleged to have written "Kubla Khan". However, as Coleridge himself had previously given a wrong date and as Hartley's correction was based upon one visit to his cottage, it can perhaps be surmised that "Kubla Khan" was written during another and later visit after Coleridge had received Wordsworth's letter. Also, Coleridge only published "Kubla Khan" in 1816. James Reeves writes of this delay:

"Coleridge himself does not seem to have known what to make of his own creation, for he did not publish it until 1816."

In his letter to Coleridge Wordsworth describes three waterfalls that he and his sister Dorothy had discovered during one of their "frequent" ramblings on first moving to Grasmere. There is a striking similarity of description and imagery to the scene of "Kubla Khan", and that scene markedly recalls even the vocabulary and emotions evoked by the scene Wordsworth describes. In fact, at least eleven points of comparison can be made.

First, the idea of a royal garden is prominent in both. Wordsworth writes that the scene is of a performance that might be expected "from some giant gardiner employed by one of Queen Elizabeth's Courtiers", and Coleridge writes of the Khan's

gardens "bright with sinuous rills,/ Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree". Both the gardens described are wide in extent—Wordsworth's has "something of vastness or grandeur" and Coleridge's stretches on for "twice five miles of fertile ground". Further, Wordsworth writes that the scene was "at once formal and wild" and Coleridge, after speaking of "gardens bright with sinuous rills", adds

And here were forests ancient as the hills.

In both cases the terrain combined the charms of an orderly blossoming and of untamed Nature. Also, both Wordsworth and Coleridge describe water and rock between tree-covered slopes. Wordsworth writes of "a stream dashing over various lamina of black rocks close under a bank covered with firs". In "Kubla Khan", Wordsworth's firs turn into cedars as Coleridge writes:

And oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!

Again, in Wordsworth's letter there is an association of the royal residence with the waterfall—"the water seemed to fall down a tall arch... which had shaped itself ... in the wall of an old castle". There is also this association in Coleridge's poem in which he writes of "walls and towers" as well as describing the pleasure-dome or the royal residence (Wordsworth's castle) and its nearness to the lofty waterfall. In both letter and poem there is, too, the idea of the shooting forth of the water in an arc. Wordsworth writes of the third waterfall: "It appeared to throw itself in a narrow line from a lofty wall of rock: the water which shot manifestly to some distance from the rock", and Coleridge says:

And from this chasm...
A mighty fountain momentarily was forced
Amid whose swift, half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted...
And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.

Here, again, there is an unmistakable association between water and rock. Significantly, too, Wordsworth writes: "And nearly in the middle... in the deepest valley ...the stream shot from beneath the row of icicles in irregular fits of strength and with a body of water that momentarily varied." A few lines later, Wordsworth comments: "In such a situation you have at every moment a feeling of the presence of the sky." Mark how within a short context Coleridge uses "momently" twice and how Wordsworth within a context equally brief has first "momently" and then "at every moment".

Both the writers describe the ebb of the fountain gushing up from the ground. They state also that the scene described evoked in them feelings that could not be conveyed. Wordsworth writes to Coleridge: "... what would I not give if I could convey to you the images and feelings which were then communicated to me"—and Coleridge exclaims:

Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song...

Both writers also refer to the effect of enchantment and oriental magic the scene evokes in them. Wordsworth says: "I cannot express to you the enchanted effect produced by this Arabian sense of colour", and Coleridge has

A savage place, as holy and enchanted...

as well as a "vision"-glimpse:

It was an Abyssinian maid...
Singing of Mount Abora.

In both letter and poem we find also the idea of the water sounding like thunder. In Wordsworth's description we read: "Part of the water fell... like the heaviest thunder shower", and Coleridge's sacred river

...sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean.

Further, the idea of "caves of ice" is a dominant factor throughout both. Wordsworth writes: "Stones of all colours and sizes incased in the clearest ice formed by the spray of the waterfall—we found the rock which before had seemed a perpendicular wall extending itself over us like the ceiling of a huge cave, from the summit of which water shot directly over our heads"—and he also writes of "streams and fountains of ice", while Coleridge tells us simply:

It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice.

Again, the sound of the water in the caves occurs in both. Wordsworth writes: "Bedewing the cavern with the faintest imaginable spray. And then the murmur of the water..." Coleridge writes:

Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.

Lastly, in his letter Wordsworth tells Coleridge that "the stream had retired as it were to hide itself under the shade..." Similarly in "Kubla Khan",

...Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man...

Also, throughout letter and poem there are associated words used in the descriptions by both Wordsworth and Coleridge. These are: "inner—pleasure—cavern—garden midway—enchanted—winding round (girdled round)—half-intermitted burst (irregular succession [used to describe the spray])."

All in all, it seems impossible to deny a strong link between the poem and the letter. Obviously, Coleridge was influenced by many different factors while writing the poem, but it is interesting to think that he may have composed "Kubla Khan" some time after receiving Wordsworth's letter and perhaps he delayed till 1816 to publish it because he wanted to conceal having been influenced by Wordsworth and being indebted to him; he may have believed that by that time Wordsworth would have forgotten his description of the waterfalls. Or we may credit Coleridge's avowed reason for delaying publication: "The following fragment is here published at the request of a poet of great and deserved celebrity, and, as far as the Author's own opinions are concerned, rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed *poetic* merits." Byron is said to have overcome Coleridge's diffidence and hesitation which had kept the "fragment" dark for years on end.

Could one conceive that Wordsworth wrote his letter after "Kubla Khan" had been composed? If he did, it is certain that he wrote it without having read the poem. Else he would not have failed to tell Coleridge how what he had seen resembled in general the fragment's vision, and how the language he had been led to employ resembled in several places that of the opium dream. As the letter is completely unaware of "Kubla Khan" having been written, we may well hold that it preceded the composition. But then we have to ask: "Can a letter and a poem of such relatively small content contain descriptions, ideas, images and words of such similarity by pure coincidence?" Surely the answer cannot be an easy "Yes". In that case we should not rest with adding one more mystery to those that already appear to surround the poem. The similarity is bound to throw the dating of "Kubla Khan" into the melting-pot. Hartley's 1798 cannot be the last word. Coleridge's own 1797 was recorded by him in the Note he prefixed to the poem in 1816 from which we have quoted the opening sentence. Evidently he had the sense of a long lapse of time since the poem was composed and it is quite on the cards that he erred in naming the summer of the year when "the Author, then in ill-health, had retired to a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire". The error may not have been confined to just twelve months, as commonly supposed. The memorable summer must have been later than even 1798, for it must have followed December 24th 1799, the date of Wordsworth's letter.

The likelihood of such a sequence arises from the very history of Coleridge's resort to opium.¹ In 1796 he started a magazine—*The Watchman*—"that all might know the truth, and that the truth might make them free". The public did not like it from the beginning and with the tenth issue it suspended. In despair at the failure to enlighten the world as well as to support himself in a cash-and-carry world, Coleridge began to relieve the distress of his mind with opium. But in July 1797 his association with Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy commenced. In September 1798 the two poets published the epoch-making *Lyrical Ballads*. By the end of that year their personal association ended, but their relationship continued quite warmly as we know from Wordsworth's letter to him on December 24th the next year. All biographers agree that the opium-habit had not grown dangerously on Coleridge during the period of his personal association with Wordsworth. It was a period of great exhilaration and marvellous creativity. Among his famous poems, *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel* (Part I) *Frost at Midnight*, *Fears in Solitude*, *France: An Ode* are known with certainty to belong to this time and there is nothing to connect them with opium or with any marked ill-health which might render this drug necessary. How, then, is it possible to put in the summer of 1798 the "ill-health" Coleridge speaks of in his 1816 Note? Not during his visit to the farm-house between Linton and Porlock in that summer but during a visit in some other year could there have been the ill-health that had called for opium. Only *Dejection: An Ode*, written in 1801-1803, shows the onset of the *malaise* whose desperate palliative sapped his energies and killed his poetry and made this piece and a few others the rare exceptions in a life that was still brilliant in talk but most fitful in poetic work. Here he alludes to

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear...

A little before this state—at a time when its first signs were showing—and perhaps not long after Wordsworth's letter could "Kubla Khan" have been dreamt and written. On some day—possibly in summer—of 1800 the "anodyne", as the Note terms it, which had been "prescribed" for "a slight indisposition" may have led to the birth of this incomplete masterpiece.

EIRA DYNE

¹ *English Romantic Poets*, edited by James Stephens, Edwin L. Beck and Royall H. Snow (American Book Company, New York, Cincinnati, Chicago, Boston, Atlanta 1952), pp. 142-44.

BEAUTY AND GREATNESS IN SONGS TO MYRTILLA

I

AS THE highest Himalayas are an unparalleled grandeur of snow-crowned peak after peak, so is the later poetry of Sri Aurobindo. It is superfluous to search there for the unusual, the inspired, the great or inevitable: selection proves an exercise of futility, for who can choose for brightness one amongst the sunbeams or single out for beauty one of the apsaras or favour one amongst the matched pearls of an empress?

But to gather the first glimmers of Sri Aurobindo's poetic efflorescence may not be an unrewarding exercise. Even in his earliest poems, collected in *Songs to Myrtilla*, there are scintillating flashes of keen insight and lines with a vast oceanic movement or with magic rippling cadences. Reading these poems unveils to our inner eyes the image of this poet in his teens, a little withdrawn, one who would not like strange eyes to linger on him, though later he will become the cynosure of a whole country and even the entire earth.

Let us delve in this felicitous world and seek what Sri Aurobindo stood for and strove for in his early youth. Here is an unmatched opportunity to see the early steps leading to the great Awakening and Avatarhood, not through hoary legends—as we have to in the case of Rama, Krishna and even Buddha and Christ—but through the actual words of the Master Yogi to be: to quote K. D. Sethna, “Even in his teens the muse had touched his lips and drawn from them the perfect note, at once exquisite and grand, with apt imaginative suggestion running from phrase to phrase....”¹

The very first line of the first poem *Songs to Myrtilla* limning a nightscape are like a wafting sigh of peace:

“Sweet when the flowers have fallen asleep
And only moonlit rivulets creep
Like glow-worms in the dim and whispering wood,
To commune with the quiet heart and solitude.”²

The subdued tones used in the word-painting bring an atmosphere of sweet drowse and we are projected into a hushed mystic land whose mystery is accentuated by the use of the adjectives ‘dim’ and ‘whispering’. The whole picture of slow-moving ‘moonlit rivulets’ is so vivid as to give us almost an aerial view of the dream world. With consummate artistry the poet makes us conscious of the different voices that make the faint music of night—

¹ *The Poetic Genus of Sri Aurobindo*—Prologue.

² *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. 5, p.1.

"No daily voice is heard of men,
 But higher audience brings
 The footsteps of invisible things,
 When o'er the glimmering tree-tops bowed
 The night is leaning on a luminous cloud,
 And always a melodious breeze
 Sings secret in the weird and charmed trees,
 Pleasant 'tis then heart overawed to lie
 Alone with that clear moonlight and that listening sky."¹

These lines have a quiet force which turns us inward, facing some Elysium. Then this inner night fades and is overtaken by a glorious morn, these soft steps of darkness precede a glorious dawn-burst. Sri Aurobindo is a lover of dawns. Many of his later poems, amongst them *Urvasie*, *Love and Death*, *Ihion* and *Savitri*, begin with dawn and depict it in multifarious moods. Here with bold strokes in four lines he paints a charming tableau. The lines touch us because of their simplicity, their lack of poetic pretensions and decorative touches—

"morning bright
 Has put the stars out ere the light,
 And from their dewy cushions rise
 Sweet flowers half-opening their eyes."²

Now the atmosphere is such that our subtle ear can almost catch the swish-swash of nature's festive dress—as she moves at her dawn-chores, amongst her myriad creatures and creations,

"Rustle of winds, rustle of trees,
 Birds' voices in the eaves,
 Birds' voices in the green melodious leaves;
 The herdsman's flute among his flocks,
 Sweet water hurrying from reluctant rocks."³

These lines cause a catch at the heart. The last line is a whole world of experience, a regret for all that is brief-lived, for all things that pass, that will never stop for god or man.

It is said that the sea was dear to the heart of Sri Aurobindo. At that early period he bounds the vastness of the sea in the enchantment of young life:

"The blue sea dances like a girl
 With sapphire and with pearl
 Crowning her locks..."⁴

¹ *Ibid.* ² *Ibid* ³ *Ibid* ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

For the greater part of their lives the majority of human beings live for the moment but even at the outset of youth Sri Aurobindo is a little apart and more mature. He sighs at the faith and at the ephemeral rejoicing of people in the temporal:

“For who in April shall remember
The certain end of drear November?”¹

For all will sink in the whirlpool of Time. No one can forever cling to youth. In one skilfully rhythmmed line is summed up the transience of life—

“Unwilling leaves lapse wearily one by one.”²

The songster voices go to sleep in their nests, gone their busy orchestra—

“No secret boughs prolong
A green retreat of song.”³

This note of sadness is further extended when the poet talks of the small hours that are given to delight and the fickle hearts which abandon their trysts when the spring of beauty is no more—

“The lovers of her former face,
Shapes of beauty, melody, grace,
Where are they? .”⁴

All these simple lines are full of poignant beauty. The brevity of youth haunts the poet, the ephemeral nature of delight saddens him—

“When youth has quenched its soft and magic light,
Delightful things remain but dead is their delight.”⁵

Then come some vivid brush-strokes, soft yet colourful, that make nature stand out like a three-dimensional picture on the sunny canvas of a glorious day:

“Behold in emerald fire
The spotted lizard crawl
Upon the sun-kissed wall
And coil in tangled brake
The green and sliding snake
Under the red-rose-brier.”⁶

And then a sudden poetic scintillation thrown out by a prodigal pen:

¹ *Ibid* ² *Ibid.* ³ *Ibid.* ⁴ *Ibid.* ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3. ⁶ *Ibid.*

"A leaf with whom each golden sunbeam sinned,
A dewy leaf and kissed by every wandering wind."¹

With great subtlety the poet describes the phenomenon of a smile growing and breaking into laughter. He speaks of Cymothea

"Whose laughter dances like a gleam
Of sunlight on a hidden stream
That through a wooded way
Runs suddenly into the perfect day."²

The poet piles simile upon simile to make living the image of a slim maid—things which every lover feels vaguely or vividly but cannot express—

"Snow drops are thy feet,
Thy waist a crescent moon,
And like a silver wand
Thy body slight doth stand
Or like a silver beach aspire.
Thine arms are walls for white caresses,
Thy mouth a tale of crimson kisses,
Thine eyes two amorous treasures of fire...
Art thou a goddess of the sea
Purple-tressed and laughter-lipped...?"³

The poet is an adept at creating a special photogenic atmosphere—be it the smile of warm summer, the keen laughter of spring or the frozen sigh of bleak winter. These four lines make us drift into a languid summer noon, full of the soft sounds of a flowered wood where breezes are busy with the scented heart of mango blossoms along with the bees and butterflies—

"Only the river rippled, only hummed
The languid murmuring bee, far-borne and slow,
Emparadised in odours, only used
The ring dove his divine, heart-moving speech;"⁴

Most remarkable amongst the poems of this collection are some eulogies. Sri Aurobindo lavished praises on the great of the world with a divine largesse. The supreme prodigal showered superlatives and compliments on the great, on the true, on the lion-hearted of the world. He never missed even a shade of the greatness of a person. To see and seek the noble and godly, the deep and high, the pure and bright,

¹ *Ibid.* ² *Ibid.*, p. 5. ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

the sweet and forceful and the true and exalted in others was his generous nature. This unusual and noble trait is evident even in his earliest poems. In *Songs to Myrtila* his pen paints in gold some of the great of the earth, those heroes of his youth. He leaves them glowing on the canvas of literature. His heart flows out in praise of the praiseworthy, as when he tells of Goethe—

Traveller with calm, inimitable paces,
Critic with judgment absolute to all time,
A complete strength when men were maimed and weak,
German obscured the spirit of a Greek.”¹

Yet Goethe is one of whom all the world has heard and to whom it pays homage but there are others whom humanity soon forgets—like Ferdinand Lassalle on whom Sri Aurobindo wrote a small poem—which in the first edition of *Songs to Myrtila* was called *Ferdinand Lassalle* but in the second more aptly but also more mysteriously “The Lost Deliverer”. The potential greatness of this man has hardly been recognised, and he did not get a chance to blossom fully since he was killed in a duel by the man whom his fickle-hearted beloved had married. In a few lines Sri Aurobindo draws the portrait of a might-have-been world-reshaper who strides on the human stage like the heroes of ancient Greece—

“Pythian he came; repressed beneath his heel
The hydra of the world with bruised head.
Vainly, since Fate’s immeasurable wheel
Could parley with a straw. A weakling sped
The bullet when to custom’s usual night
We fell because a woman’s faith was light.”²

According to K. D. Sethna, in this poem “...the grandeur, the irony, the tragedy of the drama are summed up in perfect language.... A rare leader, enlightened and heroic, steps forth in view, but his charisma is counteracted by petty circumstances. The poem’s style proves that the young Indian author did not confine himself to the exquisite in expression. The phrase in lines 2 and 3 about Fate’s wheel and its parleying with a straw has an absolute magnificence condensing to a revelatory figure one of life’s current anomalies—events with world-wide import arrested in their course, or deviated from it, by small unexpected turns, some rash impulse or sudden frailty either in the main actor or in other characters involved with him. If one came across the phrase out of context, one would be inclined to grope for a Shakespearean source... The closing line, too, about our falling by the lightness of a woman’s faith has a memorable finality in its semi-epigram.”³

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26. ² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

³ *Sri Aurobindo—The Poet*, pp 62-64.

Then comes the burning admiration for and loving homage to the great Irish patriot Charles Stewart Parnell—

“O pale and guiding light, now star unsphered”¹—

the man who awakened a nation and was hailed as its saviour, whom mighty England feared and hated, who rose and vanished like a meteor and was later buried unhonoured and unsung. Indeed there is no limit to the ingratitude of men and nations. With great and poignant sorrow the young poet demands of a thankless nation in *Hic Jacet*—

“Where sits he? on what high, foreshadowing throne
Guarded by grateful hearts? Beneath this stone
He lies: this guerdon only Ireland gave,
A broken heart and an unhonoured grave.”²

With simple yet effectively ironic word-strokes the poet lays bare the ignominy of a humanity which very quickly and conveniently forgets its mighty saviours and continues in the rut of its diurnal petty living. The lines quoted are the sigh of a true heart, an anguished wail and accusation hurled at the cruel and unfeeling ways of men, the uncaring and neutral passage of Time. According to K. D. Sethna,

“As poetry it shows a fine command over the heroic couplet, combining flexibility of internal movement and frequent enjambment with the monumental phrase—a sort of transference of the spirit of Miltonic blank verse to the conditions of the couplet as practised by Dryden and others of his age.”³

Yet later this very nation wins from the poet high commendation indeed for the constancy and courage that face heavy and long odds without flinching and re-treating. In *Lines on Ireland* (1896) we read:

“Insurgent against Fate and numbers, strong
To inflict as to sustain; her weak estate
Could not conceal the goddess in her gait;
Goddess her mood. Therefore that light was she
In whom races of weaker destiny
Their beauteous image of rebellion saw;
Treason could not unnerve, violence o’erawe—
A mirror to enslaved nations, never
O’ercome, though in the field defeated ever.”⁴

¹ *S.A.B.C.L.* Vol. 5, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³ *Sri Aurobindo—The Poet*, p. 334.

⁴ *S.A.B.C.L.* Vol. 5, p. 12.

Here, in a rolling cadence as if a high god were reviewing the sad spectacle of bravery overwhelmed yet indomitable, what Sri Aurobindo wrote elsewhere in another context in a later poem can be quoted also for its aptness—

“The mighty perish in their might;
The slain survive the slayer.”¹

And then we come across lines which are like heralds, the forerunners of *Ilion*—

“...Men are fathers of their fate;
They dig the prison, they the crown command.”²

What we call adverse fate knocks at our doors because we have sent forth an invitation. Great adversaries, tremendous odds, treason or catastrophes cannot bring a nation to its knees unless something in the nation, through crass carelessness or abject cowardice or terrible Karma, agreed to be annihilated or vanquished. For—

“An outward weakness doing deeds of strength
Amazed the nations, but a power within
Directed, like effective spirit unseen
Behind the mask of trivial forms, a source
And fund of tranquil and collected force.”³

Diamond sharp is Sri Aurobindo's probing insight into the deeps of human nature, so also his bold evaluation of outer human nature. The pack, the crowd is always ready to judge and find fault with its superiors. It delights in toppling the great from their pedestals to its own low levels and thus finds relief from the challenge of the heights. For the faint-hearted and the mediocre find even the tension of an upward look towards hero-heights too much. They find it easier and more satisfying to mock at the great. This sad truth the young poet put forward in searing words—

“... Honest purpose, labour true,
These dwell not with the self-appointed crew
Who, having conquered by death's aid, abuse
The public ear,—for seldom men refuse
Credence, when mediocrity multiplied
Equals itself with genius—fools! whose pride
Absurd the gods permit a little space
To please their souls with laughter, then replace
In the loud limbo of futilities.”⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 569. ² *Ibid.*, p. 12. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 13. ⁴ *Ibid.*

Here with the wisdom of a sage the young poet sums up the character of animal humanity ready to be led by those who, devoid of wisdom, yet declare themselves oracular saviours and strut in their gauds and epaulettes on Time's stage and lead mankind in devious ways of dishonour and self-destruction. In the ultimate economy of things such souls, who for their own gain barter the honour and future of their country, have no value. What lofty disdain and uncaring contempt these merit from the World-Makers is superbly set down by the young Sri Aurobindo:

"Ignoble hearts, courageous to effect
Their country's ruin; such the heavens reject
For their high agencies and leave exempt
Of force, mere mouths and vessels of contempt."¹

He who was always intuitive tells us that such fools the Lord suffers only for his entertainment, as sometimes we watch the antics of a comic character, and then getting tired discard him on the dust-heap of creation. This precise summing up of the inanity of human nature would do honour to the pen of a much more mature poet.

When this young poet speaks of greatness, self-giving, endurance, constant self-abnegation and heart-breaking toil, he dips his pen in a golden ink fit for gods. When he rather reluctantly has to mark the pages of his note-book by the portrayal of the vile, selfish and lowly his touch is as sure:

"So falls it ever when a race condemned
To strict and lasting bondage, have contemned
Their great deliverer, self and ease preferring
To labour's crown, by their own vileness erring."²

Here with an austerity of words, in a few lines a whole sea of emotions is imprisoned—an example of how the great and high feel when rejected by an ungrateful nation and what the need is of such a nation. The deep sorrow is epitomised in a single line conjuring a vivid picture of the utter loneliness of one betrayed by those for whom he fought and strove and gave his all. He had to open

"His friendless lids upon an alien shore."³

This brings before our eyes a destitute heart, a barren solitude and an unknown land devoid of all inner or outer support.

Our poet ascribes to greatness an incubating power which multiplies in his fol-

¹ *S.A.B.C.L.* Vol. 5, p. 13.

² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³ *Ibid.*

lowers and later by spreading into the universal consciousness raises the collective being much higher:

“Its natural children, then, by high disdain
And brave example pushed to meet their pain,
The pupils of thy greatness shall appear,
Souls regal to the mould divine most near,
And reign, or rise on throne-intending wings,
Making thee father to a line of king.”¹

This is how the great appreciates the great and how gods must look at mortals.

(To be continued)

SHYAM KUMARI

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

SAVITRI'S INITIATION INTO YOGA

I. The Necessity

THE day when Satyavan must die is already marked in destiny's calendar. Savitri, the Princess of Madra, chooses him as her lover and husband, but apparently she has made an unfortunate choice in many ways. On returning to the Palace after meeting Satyavan she informs her father about it. He looks within and sees a heavy shadow float over the name. Narad, the heavenly sage, who happens to be present there at the time, foretells the death of Satyavan at the end of one year of their marriage.

Satyavan must die. But Savitri remains undeterred from her resolve. In vain has she been told to make another choice; there can be now no question of her going back in search of some other person as her life's partner. Instead, she asserts who she is and why she has come here and what Satyavan's death really means to her. This knowledge comes to her not from the depths of her soul but from the life-instinct and from the power of her new-born love. She even knows, through this love, how to deal with death. What is fated can, she has the conviction, become in her hands fateful.

Narad proclaims to the world the greatness of her soul and her divine nature and the mission she has come here to accomplish. Indeed, his prophecy, though dark, is made with a definite purpose: it is "to steel the will of Savitri." Her resolve was a human resolve but Narad gives to it a heavenly edge and luminosity. In the unfoldment of events a tremendous force is put by him into the decision she has arrived at, making it firm as if with a divine sanction. He declares that it is through this death that there will be the beginning of a greater life.

Savitri's task is formidable. It may even border on the dangerous. She herself may have to stand, without any help, on the brink of the world's doom and hers. But it is she who alone can save herself and save the world. She alone can triumph over all obstacles and usher in a greater life. But for this to happen she will have first to harbour the divine Force in her person. It is only then that she will be able to conquer Death. Savitri's Yoga towards this end must begin.

2. The Occasion

Only twelve swift-winged months are given to the young bride for love's union. But in the embrace of her lover all is happiness and no evil or ominous thought disturbs her. She forgets everything. The insufficiency of time, the impending doom, the figure of death haunting the woods—nothing enters into that conjugal relationship. If it is for one year, that one year shall be enough to bring to her the fulfilment of her entire life. To her, in the company of her husband, the wilderness of the in-

human forest appears to be more marvellous than all the joys of the flower-hung palace of the gods. She lives in a world of gorgeous dream. She is robed in an ethereal sweetness's silk and satin. A strange presence of colour and fragrance and joy floats across her imagination. The honeymoon hour makes all look silvery white like the unstained bliss of high heaven. But if only it could be locked in the safety of dream!

If only it were so! Savitri who came to embosom the world has first to awake herself to its harsh reality. Satyavan is the source of her joy but from that very source, rather into that source, flow the thick dark waters of her life's deepest grief. She is invaded alternately by the gusts of happiness and sombre waves of foreboding. Love hides death and Narad's date looms large with all the cruelty of a fast-approaching time. Twelve passionate months are verging on the fateful day. She is now certain that soon her gorgeous dream would be shattered and the million bits of her joy would be thrown everywhere like all that is so human and mortal. The brittleness of this life comes to her as a poignant and persistent experience. She knows now that in this transient and sorrowful world she cannot have her love's fullness. She realises the impermanence of happiness here, but at the same time she is at a loss to understand how this ignorant world can go merrily by without being concerned about it. That Savitri cannot think or accept things in the human way is itself, in a certain sense, the beginning of her yogic journey.

3. Savitri's Uniqueness

Savitri's standing apart from the common lot is indeed quite consistent with her nature. Hers is a strong far-winged spirit. If it had not been so, she would not have gone to remote distant countries and made such an unusual choice in Satyavan, the exiled prince and the doomed lover. Even if made she would have, after the first flush of love, accepted her mother's advice and taken another youth for a husband. In such a human situation Narad himself would not have come all the way from his far-off home in Paradise. These routines would not have provided anything outstanding or miraculous for the momentous events to follow. But it is Savitri's unusualness that shakes up humdrum and makes it suffer a change. With her decision the high moment of tragedy seems to have been converted into the beginning of a bright future possibility. The very instant she took Satyavan for her life's partner the tragic hour could be considered to have been changed into the eternal hour of love. We might as well say that it is really to celebrate this choice that Narad comes here from his distant blissful home; he crosses the large and lustrous air and sees the golden summer earth lying beneath him like a glowing bowl. But in order that these occult-mystic signs materialise in the earth-consciousness Savitri must first discover her soul. It is her soul-force that can conquer doom.

4. The Foreseen Road

The royal convoy leads Savitri to her chosen place in the solitude of the savage woods. The Princess, the darling of the nation, the fond child of the elders, has taken on herself the rough and harsh way of living in the wilderness. The one who was so eagerly and lovingly served by everybody has now herself become a menial in the forest hermitage. This is certainly a doom, though self-chosen, when seen in the common way. The humble life she has accepted with no attendant pomp and glory of the royal privileges is no doubt an unhappy thing, but that there is something much deeper and direr than this ordinary misfortune nobody seems to be aware of. Her own real fate and destiny as well as of those connected with her nobody seems to know. Narad's prophecy was a secret of the Palace. Even the high Minister leading the retinue to the woods was perhaps ignorant of it. Had the rumours spread around to the public, surely they would have reached the forest, and Satyavan too; but he was not aware of it at all, although in love's union he only half-understood Savitri's passionate needs as if these would remain unfulfilled for want of time. Her in-laws would not have hailed her as Heaven-sent. The conflict and psychological tussle was Savitri's lonely rendezvous with destiny. Her grief was too personal and private to be known to the indifferent world outside. Therein we again see her unique singularity which is the hall-mark of her nature and which stands out prominently at every major event that frames her life. What the small little world saw in it was only the union of a married life and the worldly doom of an unfortunate choice. But she in her dreadful knowledge was alone. Savitri, now lonely within though in the company of her loving husband, is set on her future's unknown path.

5. Love's Union

Savitri and Satyavan were a good young couple loving each other intensely. Their cohabitation was "a fusing of the joys of earth and heaven," "a burning of two bodies in one flame." In that love's union Savitri forgot all about the impending doom:

Opened were gates of unforgettable bliss:
Two lives were locked within an earthly heaven
And fate and grief fled from that fiery hour.¹

For them death did not seem to exist, although Savitri had the foreknowledge of inexorable Fate. So much was she devoted to her lover that like a sea of living fire her spirit possessed him. It seemed, none would have the power to take him away from her embrace. She clung to him; she guarded him; she surrounded him with the passion of youth. She pressed her cheeks upon his feet. She was entwined like a Vaishnavi to her Beloved and Lord. In the eroticism of that union was the high

¹ *Savitri* (SABCL, Vol, 29), p. 468.

burning flame of a red-and-white glow of love. Here was love in the poverty of time. Whatever little was given to be together reached its fullest and finest. But still it was a surf of ecstasy, a sea of love's purple passion breaking in foam on the reef of Chance and Circumstance. Not that the love was a transient thing, but its hour was what actually proved to be fugitive. Its immortality had to live in mortality, its divinity in humanity, its eternity in the swift passing moment. Not evanescence but inadequacy is what we see in the rapture of her love.

Satyavan at times got a kind of vague indistinct feeling of Savitri's timeless demand. He poured himself but she was not satisfied. She cried for more and more of his love while he could give it to her. For her he was all and yet that all was too little to fill the gulfs of her sorrow. Golden body of a youth passionate in love, his embrace strong, and yet he looked so tender to her! If only their union could last for ever! But Satyavan, who had been described to her thus—

The lyrist of thy soul's most intimate chords
Who shall give voice to what in thee is mute¹

—was in the dark and was unaware of his fate. Besides, he was a lover with a "thought-blinded heart" and could not feel the high flaming passion of his spouse. Had it been a heart without the intervention of mind, then perhaps he would have understood something of her need. It would have been a direct response to what she was really asking of him. But the lyrist did not rise to the pitch of her expectations. Savitri was alone in her love's union.

6. The Human Savitri

Savitri was a figure of love and joy but these were life-born; the young couple's human relationship was their immediate cause. Therefore, coming not from high heaven but springing up from earthly soil, her love was the infant of the hour, it was the blossoming of a rare flower only for a day's quick use. Hardly had she found it before it was already being snatched away by the cruel hand of Death. The poignancy of her pang was felt the most when she was in her lover's arms. The throngs of blue-black clouds gathered over the blaze of nuptial rapture. The burning of two flames in one was followed by the sobbing rains of the dark nights. She was alternately swayed by the sorrow and joy of a strange divided life. While she was happy in Satyavan's company, though she knew that it was going to be short-lived, she found that her solitude was filled by the deep heart's grief. In all this she felt the fragility of mortal love and consequently her daily activities also became almost a sort of cover and mask to conceal her inner state.

Neither Satyavan nor the parents-in-law, not even the sages of the woods, ever knew the anguish of the lonely Savitri. The sorrowing woman they knew not: she

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

was a simple and sweet child to everybody, but her ecstasy and agony were too fine to be felt by the crudities of the senses. She performed the household chores as if nothing was happening within. Her love was too intense to betray grief to the one who could never offer any hand of help to her. With the infinite capacity of a woman to suffer she didn't share the dark knowledge even with her husband. She was prepared to go alone and pay the full price of doom with her heart and soul if that could bring happiness.

All-love was hers. This love had many cords and it was the heavenly cord with which she had bound all to all. The knot of time, fate and circumstance she had tied with her own life. Yet that all-love was futile and meaningless when the grief of the approaching hour surged towards her. All those daily acts done with so much kindness and grace, pressing sorrow behind, looked to her to be non-essentials, incidental, consequenceless. Nothing seemed to matter. She recognised that they would be of no avail at the moment of her trial. They did not constitute the core of a worthwhile existence. The labour of broom and jar, of tending the kitchen-fire, of drawing water from the well, all appeared trivial when grief invaded her. Indeed a very strange, almost a pathetic, situation for a young girl 18 or 20 years of age and just married! And yet she had some kind of faith in the coming of help from the high quarters. She had an inner certitude that her love would finally dispel all the darkness that was around her. There was the nobility of a high-born maiden in her love; it even had all the divine qualities in it. Although born in the dust and lying in the dust, it possessed the starry splendour that no night could dim. Fed on grief and sorrow it became more and more sure of its victory. But still she was human Savitri. A war was still waging in her mind and in her heart. Obviously this was so because she was still living in the surface-consciousness. She looked around to find the spirit's peace but all remained veiled; she stared into the blindness of night and the silent Being could not be seen within. All this drama of love and suffering, it seemed to her, was witnessed by that Being with an unconcerned detached eye. In the absence of this spirit's peace she was moved constantly by her violent heart and passionate will. Her station of action was a strong vital. But even there she exercised a tremendous self-control and did not allow anything to erupt in the open. Nobody knew the dark heavy paws of the fate that were so fast approaching the woods of her ecstasy. It was only her woman's strength that could bear such an agony. She told the secret of her woe to none. None even knew that she was suffering.

Savitri tried to live in her separate self; she desired the spirit's peace; she looked within for help from the silent Being. But nothing happened; it was the human heart that was still speaking to her body's fate. She was still in the *jāgrata*, the waking or surface state of consciousness. Later, though she moved through the dream-consciousness and a portion of the mighty Mother came into her, yet she could not see much beyond the human sight. Her inferior nature was still tied to the laws of ignorance. In her self of thought she was

... a human thing on earth,
A lump of Matter, a house of close sight,
A mind compelled to think out ignorance,
A life-force pressed into a camp of works
And the material world her limiting field.¹

Daughter of infinity, she was outcast from felicity; goddess of beauty, she wore life's obscure terrestrial robe; Mother of love, she hid her face even from those she loved. Savitri was still too human and did not live deep enough in her soul. Therefore, the first condition was, this human must become quiet before she could at all enter into the inner countries.

(To be continued)

R. Y. DESHPANDE

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 488.

JUNG'S RELEVANCE FOR INDIA

SCIENCE, RATIONAL THOUGHT AND TECHNOLOGY

THE NECESSITY TO REDISCOVER THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

OUR contemporary life in thought as well as in behaviour is governed by the attitude and the equipment of science. Rational thought or reason is our standard attitude of mind and our life is organised on the basis of scientific discoveries and technological inventions. This process started in Europe in the 16th century and in the course of a few centuries a full-fledged civilization has come into being and spread over the whole world.

In Europe science arose as a revolt against religion and rejected the approach of faith and of a belief in spiritual realities, a soul in man and God in the world. But is man just the sense-organs and the reason and is existence just an apparent natural phenomenon? Surely, a deeper soul in man, joyous and unitary, has always been experienced and affirmed by men all over the world. And similarly a universal Soul or God has been affirmed as a real experience always. And faith as incipient knowledge of realities is needed for what is beyond sense-experience and rational thought and it is a great guidance for life.

A proper appreciation of the faculty of faith, i.e., an intuitive apprehension in advance of precise knowledge and similarly of the faculty of reason and then a clear assessment of their reconciliation is called for. We need both, but must use them with discrimination.

Similarly the natural phenomenon must needs have an ultimate reality. But they too must be duly appreciated and mutually reconciled.

Science is slowly moving in this direction, but a proper reconciliation has yet not been achieved. When that is done, science will cease to be antagonistic to religion. In fact, it may itself become a spiritual activity, a study of the Spirit's manifestation in nature.

The rise of science and scientific culture has, on the whole, promoted values of the body-mind man, but undermined the values of the spirit, of inner peace, good will, tranquillity and abiding joy. And a deep discontentment arises out of our present life, which asks for the values of inner life.

Jung is pre-eminently a scientist and a psychologist, who has felt this need of the present times. His insight into the present situation is really profound.

Here are a few excerpts, so illuminating, from his writings:

(1) "Technics and science have indeed conquered the world, but whether the soul has gained thereby is another matter."

(2) "It is far from my wish to undervalue the tremendous differentiation of Western intellect, because, measured by it, Eastern intellect can be described as childish. (Obviously this has nothing to do with intelligence.) If we should succeed

in bringing another, or still better a third function to the dignity-accorded intellect, then the West could expect to surpass the East by a great deal."

(3) "While our intellect has been achieving colossal things, our spiritual dwelling has fallen to pieces."

(4) "Rational truths are not the last word, there are also irrational truths. In human affairs, what appears impossible upon the way of the intellect has very often become true upon the way of the irrational. Indeed, all the greatest changes that have ever affected mankind have come not by the way of intellectual calculation, but by ways which contemporary minds either ignored or rejected as absurd, and which only long afterwards became fully recognised through their intrinsic necessity. More often than not they are never perceived at all, for the all-important laws of mental development are still to us a seven-sealed book."

(5) "A conclusive appeal to reason would be all very fine if man were by nature an *animal rationale*; but he is not; he is quite as much unreasonable as he is reasonable."

(6) "We should not pretend to understand the world only by the intellect; we apprehend it just as much by feeling. Therefore the judgement of the intellect is, at best, only the half of truth, and must, if it be honest, also come to an understanding of its inadequacy."

(7) "Besides the gifts of the head there are also gifts of the heart, which are no less important but can easily be overlooked, because in such cases the head is frequently weaker than the heart. And yet such people are often more useful and valuable for the welfare of society than those who are gifted in other ways."

(8) "We moderns are faced with the necessity of rediscovering the life of the spirit; we must experience it anew for ourselves. It is the only way in which we can break the spell that binds us to the cycle of biological events."

(9) "Those who can believe should be more patient with their fellow-men who can only think. Faith has flown over the peak, which thought hopes to reach by toilsome climbing."

(10) "I am of the opinion that the psyche is the most powerful fact in the human world. It is indeed the mother of all human facts, of culture and of murderous wars."

(11) "Our modern attitude looks back proudly upon the mists of superstition and of medieval or primitive credulity and entirely forgets that it carries the whole living past in the lower stories of the skyscraper of rational consciousness. Without the lower stories our mind is suspended in mid air. No wonder that it gets nervous. The true history of the mind is not preserved in learned volumes but in the living mental organism of everyone."

(12) "For a long time spirit and the passion of the spirit were the greatest values, the things most worth striving for."

(13) "Only after the decline of the Middle Ages, that is, in the course of the nineteenth century, when spirit began to degenerate into intellect, a reaction set in against the unbreakable domination of intellectualism which had led to the pardonable

mistake of confusing intellect with spirit."

(14) "Spirit, as we know, is always thought of as above, as a bright, fiery being of the air, a stirring pneuma, while the earth lies solid, dark, and cool below. In the principles of ancient Chinese philosophy, this eternal image is expressed as Yang and Yin. The man of the spirit is Yang; his characteristic is an attitude conditioned by ideas (which is also described as spirit). The man of the earth is yin, and his characteristic is an attitude conditioned by the earth."

(15) "The manifestations of the spirit are truly wondrous, and as varied as creation itself. The living spirit grows and even outgrows its earlier forms of expression; it freely chooses the men in whom it lives and who proclaim it. This living spirit is eternally renewed and pursues its goal in manifold and inconceivable ways throughout the history of mankind. Measured against it, the names and forms which men have given it mean little enough; they are only the changing leaves and blossoms on the stem of the eternal tree."

Jung as a scientist is perhaps the one who has seen the power of rational thought as also clearly felt the limitations of it. More important than this is his appreciation of the quality of the spirit, its essential consciousness, its self-existence, its wholeness and its varied manifestations. A scientific substantiation of the positive quality of the spirit is really unique in him.

Inadequacy of rational analytical thought is today noticeable otherwise too. Holism and Gestaltism are fairly popular trends in even Physics besides Psychology. Otherwise too the nineteenth century materialism is now out of date and Wholeness and Consciousness or Energy are much appreciated.

However, a direct and comprehensive investigation and delineation of the Spirit has been the life's work of Sri Aurobindo and there one is able to feel how real and vivid the spirit in man and the Spirit in the world are and how they are to be sought, cultivated and enjoyed in life.

INDRA SEN

A CALL FOR "A LARGER STATESMANSHIP"

SRI AUROBINDO's message given to free India on the 15th of August 1947 is very important. It was important in 1947 and it is even more important now. By 1954 the situation in free India had become very critical, and because of it a question was put to the Mother, "How to obtain cohesion and faith in the life of the country?" And the Mother replied, "By following Sri Aurobindo's teachings." She added, "His message should be read and reread and its significance explained to millions of his compatriots. India needs Sri Aurobindo's faith and conviction."

After 1954 many things have happened. The troubles that had started happening then in India have spread more and more. Over the last two or three years, we have been watching what Sri Aurobindo had deplored as happening in India along with freedom, namely, the division of India, and we see that the division has become more acute. From 1954 to 1984 more divisions have come, bitter, bloody, venomous and even what we might call vile.

Many good things also have happened. Freedom has not been barren; the average height of Indians has increased, longevity has improved, more people are literate; but as against that, the population growth has also increased the number of the illiterate. Many thousands have become very rich, but some millions have become much more poor. Relations of India with the rest of the world in 1947 were very good. Nobody had any serious ill-will against India when she became free. But as she has become stronger and richer in many ways, many countries are jealous of her progress, prosperity and strength. The influence of India has increased but, because of it, those who do not like that influence are more hostile to her development.

The rest of the world also has changed with the coming of freedom to India. Many countries of Asia and Africa have become free automatically, as a result of India's freedom. Africa is almost free; Asia is politically powerful; the countries of Europe are more alert about their position in the world and more co-operative with one another. Unity of Europe was not easy to consider or contemplate, in 1914, 1938 or even in 1954, but yesterday we heard that a great step had been taken in Europe, the security of Europe has been made more easy. The European countries have come to an understanding which had seemed impossible even a few months back. The European economic community is established. The Parliament of Europe, though not directly representing the people, represents the governments of Europe. Russia has already started talking about the security of Asia. An Asian security conference is in the offing. If the European security becomes safe, the Asian security will also come. I think it will be a natural growth: the next step can be an Asian economic community, a federal parliament of Asia.

Sri Aurobindo envisaged all this. In his message of 1947, he mentioned that upto then the 15th of August used to be celebrated by many people in India and abroad as a great occasion because it marked the date of his birth. Now, it had ac-

quired a greater significance; and as a mystic he did not consider this a mere coincidence. I believe we can also take note of another date. I refer to 1893: it is one of the years which we have not yet seriously noted as important. In 1893 Vivekananda went to America and Gandhi went to South Africa. Sri Aurobindo returned to India in the same year after his studies in Europe. And recently I came across the information that Annie Besant came to India for the first time in 1893. These four comings and goings may not have been noted as important at that time. But today, in India's history, we can see what happened in America because of Vivekananda's reaching there, what Gandhi developed into by going to South Africa and the way he trained himself and as nature trained him there and brought him back to India and what Annie Besant did in India and how she did it, and what Sri Aurobindo's life and work has wrought in India—all this does not look accidental or incidental. It seems to be really mysterious and significant.

Let us come down from 1893 to 1947 when Sri Aurobindo was asked to give a message to free India. He had a great part in the freedom movement. He said that he had cherished the idea of a revolution for India, a revolution by which India would be free, united and strong. Then he referred to India's freedom: freedom had come but unity had not come. He said, "It is a fissured freedom." He hoped that the Congress and the nation would not consider it a fact fixed and unchallengeable for ever, but as something temporary. He envisaged unity to come by mutual understanding, by our realising the necessity of cooperation, by the force of circumstances. If that did not come, freedom of India and the freedom of Pakistan would not be safe; an invasion might come from a foreign country. Civil war would always be in the offing, and we have seen in the last two years many signs of some kind of a civil war flaring up in some parts of India and Pakistan.

Sri Aurobindo asserts that this must not happen; that as long as India is not united the world cannot be united. Unity of mankind is necessary. Asia's resurgence is necessary, Asia had a great role to play in the civilization of mankind. Resurgence of Asia is his second dream. His third dream is the unity of mankind. Nation States must unite, he said. The growth of science and the development in the manufacture of arms of various kinds—chemical and nuclear, atomic long-range weapons and airforces—all this, according to him, will make any new war disastrous and that in such a disaster, culture might collapse; the culture of the whole of mankind might collapse for thousands of years.

Sri Aurobindo also says that nature's drive is towards human unity. He has some unforgettable words in this connection:

"The unification of mankind is under way, though only in an imperfect initiative, organised but struggling against tremendous odds... Here too, India has begun to play a prominent part and, if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities, but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development."

However, Sri Aurobindo adds that the drive towards human unity cannot come as long as India herself remains disunited. Now we see that what he predicted about India's fissured freedom has come very true and very dangerously so. Asia is not yet united: but Europe is getting united. It is a good sign: with its unity, Asia's unity is bound to come, quite naturally. And then he states his fourth dream which is the gift of spirituality by India to the rest of the world. He writes in his other works that modern Europe has contributed something very important to the collective life of mankind. In his books *The Ideal of Human Unity* and *The Human Cycle* he has referred to the three ideals of the French Revolution—liberty, equality and fraternity. Liberty for the masses was almost achieved in France. Equality has been tried by socialist and communist countries. The idea has spread to the rest of the world. So, capitalism has not remained purely capitalistic: control of armaments and private firms and private industries are very much there in America. Sri Aurobindo has predicted that sooner or later capitalism and communism will meet by necessity of development, fuse into each other, and create something new. India is a mixed economy; they say China tried communism and now it is softening on it.

Spirituality is necessary for fraternity, the third ideal of the French Revolution. That is what Sri Aurobindo has referred to in his *Human Cycle*. As long as fraternity is merely human brotherhood as we know it, there is no guarantee of peace. Brothers quarrel very vigorously when they do; I am told that sisters quarrel quickly but they make up quickly too. When brothers quarrel, their quarrels last very much longer. But Sri Aurobindo says that in human brotherhood or fraternity there is no guarantee for peace, or of the absence of jealousy and hostility. In India we had brotherhood for quite a long time and our kings and zamindars quarrelled more than anybody else had done on the earth for centuries, perhaps a few millenniums. The Kauravas and Pandavas were cousins and Arjuna was very reluctant to kill his cousins and elders, and Krishna had to persuade him; it took a long persuasion—the whole of the Bhagvad Gita. Ultimately he agreed to do what Krishna had asked for the sake of demolishing unrighteousness.

Sri Aurobindo has said that unity will come; before it comes, the League of Nations has been tried; the United Nations Organisation is much better but it has still many defects. These defects must go; there may be troubles, there may be catastrophes. Difficulties are there but they are made to be overcome. This is the knowledge and faith Sri Aurobindo had. In the spread of spirituality the difficulty is greater. The last ideal and dream which he mentions, the fifth one, is that the evolution of man should take a new step further, into a higher consciousness. The problems that have haunted mankind over thousands of years can only be solved by this further evolution of man. And, in the spread of spirituality, not only preaching and shastra and knowledge of yoga, but the yogic and psychic practices of India must be made free for the rest of the world. That now is becoming easy. People are coming to India to learn yoga, some of them do so much better than many Indians. He says that all the dreams which he cherished through his life-time and for whose fulfilment

he worked are partially fulfilled or are already initiated towards fulfilment and will sooner or later be attained.

The Mother said in 1954 that this message should be explained to millions of his compatriots. I am afraid we must make a serious note of the fact that the message has not reached even one million of his compatriots and that its explanation is much more distant. Those who explain should themselves understand the message. Without reading and re-reading it, one cannot appreciate the significance of it.

I happened to read the words of the Mother, referring to the message, last year at about the time the Prime Minister of India had begun talking about preparing India for the 21st century. When our Prime Minister went to Paris, the President of France, M. Mitterand also joined in, and spoke the same language. He then went to America and the American President also agreed. Very recently the Finance Minister of Japan has begun talking about preparing mankind for peace and prosperity for the 21st century. When leaders of important nations like these talk about the same thing and in almost the same language, it is, I believe, safe to take it as a decisive change for the better.

But how do we prepare for the 21st century and for what kind of 21st century? What should be the programme for India? Nobody has talked about it as yet. Some patchwork is done here and there and the idea of the unity of Europe is one such patching-up. The European Security Agreement of the immediate past is also this kind of patchwork. The leaders of the two super-powers have been meeting. Nuclear-warfare, manufacture of weapons, limitation of armaments are the problems these two mighty leaders have to tackle. If they don't solve them, the third world war is not far off, but many people hope and pray that it may not come. We are promised by the Mother that humanity will be saved.

As the Mother has asked us, we must read and reread Sri Aurobindo's message in order to understand it. I have been reading it and rereading it over the last one year and a half and every time I read it, I find some more significance in it. Sri Aurobindo has stated that the imbecility and stupidity of mankind can alone delay world unity. Against the imbecility and stupidity of man, even the Gods strive in vain. But Sri Aurobindo says—nature's drive and the Divine Will always ultimately succeed and they will succeed even in this matter. How far and how speedily the problems of India and the world are solved depends on Free India.

If the preparation of the world for the 21st century depends on a clear goal and a clean programme, Sri Aurobindo's message provides it in a comprehensive manner. Those who have accepted His teachings and the Mother's have to understand and explain the message to the millions. It cannot be done only by our individual or institutional efforts. It requires the cooperation of all men of goodwill in India, all newspapers, magazines and periodicals. If and when we mobilise this support the message will reach the millions. Then it will be for the authors, writers, poets and speakers to explain.

When we were preparing for the celebrations of Sri Aurobindo's birth centenary,

the Mother said she was interested in this celebration only if we could make the centenary an occasion to spread Sri Aurobindo's teachings throughout India. And she added something very significant—she wanted this to be done in the language the people understood. We did some work in 1972-73. We are doing some work even now, but we need to do more work in the languages that people understand. From that point of view, since March and April two years back some of us have begun to get this message translated into the various languages of India.

The message was translated into Marathi, Hindi, Bengali and Gujarati. There had been some translations done in Kannada and Tamil but they were not easily available. We had them redone and reprinted and they are now available in a more attractive form, with Sri Aurobindo's photo on top, so that when a person reads it he does not want to put it away in the waste-paper-basket afterwards. He keeps it and reads it in his spare time. We are having it prepared in Telugu now. The Malayalam translation is being pursued. The Sindhi translation has been done. The Urdu translation is done and is going to be printed very soon, we have not yet done it in Kashmiri or in Punjabi or Assamese. But these are very important languages. We know Assam, we know Mizoram, we know Punjab. They are problem places. I repeat that as yet no more than a few thousand or perhaps a hundred thousand Indians have heard of this message of Sri Aurobindo. We approached five to ten lakhs through some newspapers. In a population of 700 million, even if we reach 10% of them, 70 million (7 crores) of the people will then have read the message. It looks almost an impossible task, perhaps not a necessary task, but I do not believe that it is unnecessary. We must realise that the Mother has used words which are very meaningful. She refers to us as "Sri Aurobindo's compatriots." She has said that Sri Aurobindo had a great love for the Motherland—India. He never neglected India's future, even in his highest yogic practices. Compatriots are those who believe they are of India and those who believe in Indian culture and feel it is their heritage. These are his compatriots that we cannot neglect.

Sri Aurobindo's work has at least five aspects which he has mentioned in that message. These aspects he has dealt with in several of his books. He loved India, and so he loved the Vedas. He loved the Vedic hymns and loved the Upanishads. He loved the Puranas, he loved the Acharyas and what they had done. He loved the history of India, he loved the heroes of India, he loved the people who sacrificed their lives for India's culture and defence and strength. In this message he speaks of prosperity, of strength, of eminence, of influence and power of leadership for India, to lead the world in the fields in which only India can lead. So it is all this that the Mother seems to emphasise when she refers to the need for awakening the spirit of millions of Sri Aurobindo's compatriots. I wonder if a new movement is not necessary—a new movement which can awaken the spirit, the spirit that brought freedom to India. Here men, women, children, should all be involved. Masses of people should be involved and have something that they can catch on to. I believe Sri Aurobindo's message can give the needed inspiration. Everything we do in our

self-purification, in the strengthening of our nerves is useful. It is in the spirit, Sri Aurobindo says, that all impossibles are solved. We need to make not only a technical development or technological development but a spiritual development, a moral development, an ethical strengthening of our nerves and a refusal to be cowed down by evil influences. It is this that is required.

We are at present somewhat in the condition which the Gita emphasises: "Dharmasya glani", "abhyutthanam, adharmasya." If we look at India as a whole we can see that dharma is in glani (disrepute). People of purity, strength, cleanliness, moral, social and spiritual, are not in control. Look around and you will see adharma (lawlessness) is at the top. Rules are not observed, laws are not obeyed. Those who can break the laws are in the lead. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Sri Aurobindo's great biographer, has described the present conditions in India in this way: "We are after power, everybody is after power; to get power by any means, to keep power by any means and keep away everybody who wants to share your power." It seems to be true and another eminent writer said that millions are watching with anxiety at what is happening. He said a new party is necessary and a new leadership. But, as I have said, a new spirit, a new movement is called for. Many things have been tried, many of them are exhausted in their resources, many of them failed or are failing, but Sri Aurobindo's message has not been fully tried and it needs to be taken up in right earnest.

SHIVABHAI

THE SONG OF THE LORD

THE GITA WITHOUT COMMENT

(Continued from the issue of November 24, 1986)

Chapter XIV

1. The Lord said:
"I will speak again of the Supreme Knowledge, the ultimate Knowledge of all Knowledge which, knowing, sages have gone to perfection.
2. Taking refuge in this Knowledge, they arrive at My Nature. They are not born at the time of birth, nor troubled in death.
3. My womb is the High Brahman. In That I cast My seed. From that the birth of all existence comes.
4. Of the forms produced in all wombs, O Kaunteya, for which the Great Brahman is the womb, I am the Father who casts the seed.
5. Sattva, Rajas, Tamas are the three Gunas born of Prakriti, O Mighty-armed. They hold in the body the incarnate, the Imperishable.
6. Of these, Sattva—pure, luminous, health—holds by the attachment to happiness and knowledge, O Sinless One.
7. Know Rajas as the attraction to passion, the source of thirst and attachment. It binds the embodied, O Kaunteya, through attachment to action.
8. But Tamas know as born of ignorance; confusing to everyone in a body, it binds through negligence, laziness and sleep, O Bharata.
9. Sattva links us to happiness, Rajas to action, O Bharata. But Tamas, veiling Knowledge, links us to negligence.
10. Sattva arises by dominating Rajas and Tamas, O Bharata. Rajas by dominating Sattva and Tamas, and Tamas by dominating Sattva and Rajas.
11. When the light of Knowledge shines through all the gates of the body, then it can be known that Sattva dominates.
12. Greed, movement, the impulse to act, agitation, longing: these arise from the dominance of Rajas, O Bull of the Bharatas.
13. Obscurity, inertness, negligence, confusion: these arise from the dominance of Tamas, O Joy of the Kurus.
14. If the incarnate soul meets death when Sattva dominates, then he goes to the stainless worlds of the knowers of the Highest.
15. Meeting death in Rajas, he is born among those attached to action. So also, dying in Tamas, he is born from the womb of one deluded.
16. The result of acts well-done is Sattvic and pure, they say, of Rajas the result is pain and of Tamas the result is ignorance.
17. From Sattva Knowledge is born, from Rajas greed, from Tamas negligence, confusion and ignorance arise.

18. Upwards go those stationed in Sattva. Those of Rajas remain in the middle. The Tamasic ones, in movements of lowest quality, go downwards.
19. When the Seer views the Gunas as the only doer and knows that which is higher than the Gunas, he knows My Nature.
20. Crossing beyond these three Gunas from which the body is created, the incarnate ones are freed from birth, death, decay, pain and reach deathlessness.
21. Arjuna said:
 "What are the signs, O Lord, of one who has passed beyond these three Gunas? What is his conduct and how does he get beyond them?"
22. The Lord said:
 "Who is not repulsed by light, activity or confusion when present, O Pandava, nor yearns for them when absent,
23. one who is as seated high above, who is not moved by the Gunas, who knows that the Gunas move, he is firm and not shaken.
24. Equal in pain and pleasure, firm in the Self, for whom a clod, a stone and gold are the same, equal in the pleasant and unpleasant,
25. the same whether respected or disrespected, the same to friend and enemy, offering all activity, he is said to be beyond the Gunas.
26. One who serves Me through the Yoga of unwavering devotion, going beyond the Gunas, he is ready to become the Brahman.
27. I am indeed the Home of Brahman, of deathlessness, of the unchanging, of the Eternal, of Dharma, and of the only happiness."

OM TAT SAT

Here ends the fourteenth chapter called 'The Yoga of the Division of the Three Gunas' in the dialogue of Sri Krishna and Arjuna, in Brahman-Knowledge, in Yoga-Discipline, in the Divine Songs of the Upanishads.

Chapter XV

1. The Lord said:
 "With roots above and branches below, thus they speak of the undying Aswattha tree, the leaves of which are the hymns of the Veda. Who knows that knows the Veda.
2. With its branches above and below fed by the Gunas and with senses as buds, its roots reach out below instigating action in the world of men.
3. Its form is not here perceived, nor its end, its beginning or foundation. Cutting this firm-rooted Aswattha tree with the strong axe of detachment
4. seek that highest Goal from which there is no return: 'I seek the original

Purusha from which the Ancient Movement streams.”

5. Without pride or delusion, victorious over the flaw of attachment, ever-dwelling in the Self, desires stilled, free from the duality of happiness and sorrow, they go undeluded to that Imperishable State.
6. That the Sun illumines not, nor the Moon, nor Fire. That is My Supreme Home going to which there is never a return.
7. Indeed it is an eternal portion of Myself become alive in the world of the living which attracts the senses, with mind as the sixth.
8. The Lord takes and leaves a body—holding, departing—as a breeze a scent from its source.
9. One who governs the ear, the eye, the organs of touch, taste and smell, and the mind, he uses sense objects.
10. One who departs or stays, who enjoys, the one who enjoys or is merged in the Gunas, the deluded do not perceive. They see who have the eye of Knowledge.
11. Abiding in the Self, the striving Yogis see this. Those who also strive, but are unaccomplished and not aware, they do not see this.
12. The brilliance of the Sun which illumines the whole world, the brightness of the Moon and Fire, know that as Mine.
13. Permeating the Earth, I sustain all beings with My illumined Force. Becoming the liquid Moon, I nourish the herbs.
14. Becoming the Fire of Life in living beings, abiding in the body blended with Prana and Apana, I digest the four-fold foods.
15. And I am seated in the heart of all. From Me are memory and knowledge and their absence. I am all to be known from the Vedas, the author of Vedanta and the knower of Veda.
16. In the world there are two Purushas: the perishable and the imperishable. All beings are perishable. The Immutable is called the Imperishable.
17. But other is the highest Purusha called ‘The Supreme Self’. It is the indestructible Lord who pervades and sustains the three worlds.
18. As I am beyond the perishable, so also I am beyond the imperishable. Therefore in the Veda and in the world I am called ‘The Supreme Person’.
19. One who undeluded knows Me as the Supreme Person, he knows the All and adores Me with his whole being.
20. Thus has this most mysterious science been declared by Me, O Sinless One. Knowing this one can be wise and fully accomplished, O Bharata.”

OM TAT SAT

Here ends the fifteenth chapter called ‘The Yoga of the Supreme Person’ in the Dialogue of Sri Krishna and Arjuna, in Brahman-Knowledge, in Yoga-Discipline, in the Divine Songs of the Upanishads.

Translated by DHRUVA

OFFERING

OFFERING is fun, when it ceases to be an effort. To offer a thought or a feeling before it can become a bother, to offer a worry before it can crease the forehead, to offer a desire before it becomes an ache is a game one learns and enjoys.

Sometimes it is a little tiring to find that an offered thought or event, feeling or emotion has several relatives wanting to replace it, eager as if to be offered. These kith and kin rush up from nether planes, from depths of the subconscious through dreams in early dawn, through streams of unsought thoughts and even sometimes in stray words of prose or verse. They come up as impulses when I am awake, as dreams within dreams when I am in the dream state, as hankerings and disturbances in sleep and then that sleep does not refresh but asks for more sleep. They often try to catch unawares my imagination so as to find time enough to throw down their anchor. But eager that I am to be ever near Her feet I offer and reoffer as often as they surge up, often I wonder how many they are and when did I repress or suppress, how many there are awaiting to manifest, how deep are the valleys and how high the peaks in the world of my subconscious. Before the question can bother I offer that too at Her feet. Often as these thoughts and half-formed desires and half-satisfied wants come up to the surface there is a teasing thrill in the vital—as if a few hairs somewhere in the subtle physical have decided to stand up—but a greater joy suffuses my being when I offer and reoffer. Those leaves and flowers and fruits and tubers, all from my garden, sometimes get mixed with those from others—maybe the subconscious widens earlier than the surface consciousness! I follow the magic process—offer, offer everything that comes up—indiscriminately.

Offering is a pleasure. Guilt loses its sting being offered before it can bite, before it can become a complex. No need to go down memory lane to when you were two years old to vacuum-clean all complexes, just offer whatever you have—be it of today or yesterday or the day before. Before a thought or a need or a hunger becomes a deed, before it can graduate to guilt, offer it at Her feet. Each offering is a pleasure as it takes me ever nearer and nearer to them.

Offering is love, love teaching how to love more. I love my fears and faults and desires of various hues—green as fresh paddy, yellow as autumn leaves—with which I had filled caves and caverns within. Now these treasures of a long childhood come up to be offered as my consciousness widens and deepens and heightens. Somehow lamps light up dark chambers and someone with a broom on a long pole cleans dust and cobwebs from roofs that once more shine with paintings of old scenes.

While offering yesterday's treasures, beautiful encounters, intense happenings there is a twinge of regret, a faint suspicion of guilt, a little unease that I have placed my feet on—used as a step—someone or something that not long ago I had clasped to my heart. Then the thought comes, when Rama stepped on the stone slab that awoke Ahalya, were not both blessed? I smile and offer the regret and the faint

feeling of guilt and that little unease together with the explanation that does not really explain as a fresh offering at Her feet.

It is not nice when I fail to offer. It is worse when I forget to offer after 'to offer' becomes a habit. Then, for example, when I forget to offer what I eat, the food becomes as if uncooked and stale and I get indigestion. Of course I offer the discomfort but it would be much better if I did not have any discomfort to offer.

Her feet are ever clean and dew-fresh. I often wonder what happens to the big heaps of my offerings, what do they get transformed into at that golden touch?

I should start soon to prepare and offer, not only what I do and think and feel but also the would-have-beens. Maybe tomorrow I will learn to offer what I do not do but would like to. And one day, I hope not too far away, whatever I will have to offer will be only roses—roses of love and roses of power and roses of beauty, ever fragrant, ever fresh, all half-bud half-flower about to bloom; for with this ever increasing practice of offering everything at Her feet, one day She will transform my whole being into a garden of roses.

DINKAR PALANDE

HOW CAN I....

How can I be satisfied
By saying only once
That She is lovely,
That She is bright?

How can I be satisfied
By only saying once
That the stars are luminous,
The morns majestic,
The sun a marvel of golden light?

How can I be satisfied
By repeating the magic of Her name
But once?

Like the eternal refrain
Of the winds and seas
All things sweet and true
And high and profound
Pulse forever through life.

Don't be annoyed, O friend,
If I repeat myself.
Forever the Lord
Multiplies Himself
In creation's cadences
Of eternal days and eternal nights.

SHYAM KUMARI

FOR YOUR EARS ONLY

I. IN MY STUDY

SITTING in my snug study, almost entirely walled with books I embolden myself to write about my library the only one thing I can boast of as an achievement in the past three decades and three years of my life.

In the middle of the room stands a writing desk big enough to hold piles of books, a table-lamp, a writing-pad and a porcelain pen-holder. Beside the desk, sits an uncushioned chair to give me comfort and support while I am at work. Behind me, high on the wall hangs the large bust-size portrait of Sri Aurobindo to inspire me. In front of me dangles the photograph of the Mother to bless me. On one side my study looks towards the roofs of nearby houses and distant coconut trees and bamboo plants; on the other to the noisy road and the mad crowd. I prefer nature to men and that is the reason why the window on my left most of the time remains shut except during the dark hours.

At the back of me stand three stalwarts—rosewood bookcases—uniform in size and shape, which my father (not to be mistaken for my father-in-law) gave me as a wedding present, ten years ago. The first one is a proud possessor of Tamil classics that range from Ancient Sangam literature to modern times. *Kurunthokai* and *Kalithokai*, the anthologies that speak so much about the physical charms of women stand without any grudge by the side of the Siddha poets who abhorred the very sight of women. Poet Jayakondar who wrote so much about war rubs shoulders with Vallalar who preached peace through his poems. The great trio—Appar, Sundarar and Manickavasakar—who instilled Divine Love through their songs shake hands with Mahakavi Subramania Bharati who instilled patriotism into the minds of the Tamils through his revolutionary songs. Modern poets like Mu. Mehta, Meera, Sundara Ramasamy and Vairamuthu, to mention only a few, who write new poetry look askance at M.L. Thangappa who still sticks on to traditional verse writing. The shorter fiction of Jayakanthan, Ki. Rajanarayanan, Puthimaipithan and Prapanjan add value. Literary histories by different writers and various commentaries on the ancient book of Tamil wisdom popularly known as *Thirukkural* stand hand in hand and the entire case remains to this day the envy of Tamil pundits.

The second book-case houses poetical works, plays and fictional writings by British authors. My favourite poets being the Romantics, I have here all their complete works. The Metaphysical Poets in 'Laurel Poetry' series, De la Mare, Eliot and Pound in Faber & Faber, Penguin Modern Poets are friendly with Sir Walter Raleigh, Spenser and Chaucer. *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and all the twelve books of Milton's great epic in separate annotated volumes envy the beauty and elegance of *Palgrave's Golden Treasury*, *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* and *Ten Twentieth Century Poets*. Different editions of Shakespeare's plays, A.C. Ward's annotated Bernard Shaw, selected plays of Webster and Ford in Every-

man's Library, Medieval and Tudor drama in Bantam classics and Galsworthy and Synge in handy Indian reprints huddle close together. Forster of course is no equal to Aldous Huxley. Neither is Wilkie Collins to Swift. Nor is *Ulysses* to *Pamela*. Yet they stand together for they are arranged according to their size. The obesity of the works of Hardy and Dickens quite often frighten me. Yet D. H. Lawrence and John Cleland lure me.

American Literature, Critical Studies, Essays, Grammar and Journalism are imprisoned in the third book-case. Emerson, Thurber, Frost, etc., cummings, Mark Twain and Hemingway feel at home here. Much coveted series like English Men of Letters and American Men of Letters, though none of these sets is complete, enable me to prepare my classroom lectures. Harry Blamiers, Boris Ford, Ifor Evans, W.H. Hudson, Hardin Craig and Gilbert Phelps whose histories of English literature and the critical writings of T.S. Eliot, Arnold, Percy Lubbock and Marjory Boulton develop in me the critical insight. The essays of Lamb, Hazlitt, R.L. Stevenson, Dr Johnson and Bacon inspire me.

These three book-cases and a chest of drawers, made of rosewood, hide the wall at my back from view. A fabulous cheque offered by the international weekly *Asia-week*, Hongkong, for one of my articles has gone into its making. Four big drawers on one side and eleven comparatively smaller ones on the other hold my published works in newspapers and magazines arranged according to their subjects.

In front of me stands an open book-case that displays works by Indian writers writing in English. Sri Aurobindo and his disciples occupy two shelves; the great trio—R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao—one, and the others like Kushwant Singh, Sasthi Brata, Pritish Nandi and Kamala Das, poets from Vanity Publishers, Nehru and Vivekananda the remaining five.

Just face to face stands a broad-shouldered warrior. He is eight feet tall and five feet broad. He betrays European, Asian, French and Russian Literatures that he has gulped down. Thanks to the English language, for all these works are only in English translation. Homer and Kazantzakis, Kafka and Horace, Moravia and Thomas Mann, Sophocles and Euripides, Aristotle and Aristophanes, Plato and Aesop in two shelves; *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* and *Bhagavadgita*, *Katha Sarit Sagara* and *Golden Lotus*, *Tales of Genji* and *Panchatantra*, forbidden classics of China, unexpurgated erotic classics of India in another two shelves; Sartre, Genet, Balzac, Molière, Dumas, Zola, Flaubert, Camus, Ronsard, Racine, Proust and Gide in another two shelves; *War and Peace*, *Cancer Ward*, *And Quiet Flows the Don*, *The Mother*, *Dr. Zhivago*, *Lolita*, *Fathers and Sons*, *The Idiot* and *The Queen of Spades* to mention only the works that represent their authors in the next shelf plus four shelves of biographies, psychology, sex, history, folklore, mythology and what not give a grand look. Above this warrior sits like the old man on Sindbad's back a dwarf rack that must be proud to hold nearly fifty books on Indian history and culture.

Next to this gargantuan book-case stands an Alibaba's cave. It treasures the autographed volumes presented to me by their authors. The works of Manoj Das,

K. D. Sethna, Maggi Lidchi, M. P. Pandit K. R. Ramachandran Nair, Iftikhar Husain Rizvi, M.P. John and poets from various states of India are given their place of honour here. A book I treasure most—though it was not presented to me—is *Eight Upanishads* by Sri Aurobindo autographed by the Mother on Nov. 17, 1953. Readers may well be aware of how significant the date is. Do not ask me to whom it was offered. I resist answering, for the man is still alive. And I do not want to part with it. Ask me how I got it. I have a story to tell, maybe at a later date.

Not beyond my grasp from my chair stands a reference rack facing me. It contains Dictionaries, one-volume encyclopaedias of literature both in Tamil and in English, music, art, natural science and Medicine. Brewer, Fowler, Daniel Jones, C.T. Onions, and Robert Graves quite often come to my rescue whenever I am in difficulty. Diaries which I use as notebooks to jot down the ideas as and when they come occupy the bottom-most shelf of this reference rack.

Unless you know it is there, the square book-case three by three is difficult to spot. Made of costly wood it was a gift to my father from his boss when he sailed from India once for all to England. My father passed it on to me. It carries rows of modern fiction. Arthur Hailey, Irving Wallace, James A. Michener, Leon Uris, Jacqueline Susan, Ken Follet, Harold Robbins, Mario Puzo, Graham Greene, Alistair Maclean, Frederick Forsyth, Ian Fleming, Lloyd C. Douglas, J.R.R. Tolkien and Agatha Christie are honoured here.

And this is the place I call my study—a happy asylum. It is here I entrench myself in my books—night or day, shine or rain, joy or sorrow. Books do not disappoint me as men do and it is my sincere and humble wish to die in my study while at work.

(To be continued)

P. RAJA

RAJAT'S INHERITANCE

A SHORT STORY

NOT too big but beautiful, a town in Central India amidst a green overgrowth of trees and shrubs criss-crossed by canals. It embodied both rural and urban beauties in such a proportion that no single aspect could claim supremacy.

There, Rajat, a school boy, was roaming at random through lanes and bylanes in search of the road towards his grandfather's house in the suburb from where he had come out in the afternoon. By now it was quite dark. Worried, anxious and baffled, Rajat returned to the main street while brooding over his own folly.

He had recently come here for the first time to spend his holidays with his grandfather. The old man had none to call his own in his magnificent house excepting the servants, the cook and the driver. Rajat's coming made him happy, very happy indeed. Rajat himself also was no less delighted to meet his Dadu who was old in years but at heart fresh and young. Moreover, he had such a sweetness and elevating spirit about him that Rajat never liked to be parted from him. But the old man would insist on his going out at least once in the afternoon for fresh air, exercise and sight-seeing. He had to obey.

But today something different happened. As he was stepping out Dadu came and led him by the hand to a beautiful marble-room in a remote corner of the big house. The place was exceptionally quiet, clean and charged with a heavenly scent, as it were. In answer to Rajat's questioning look Dadu removed a corner of the screen across the room and took out a piece of costly cloth and pressed the same into his hand, saying, "Buy three metres of cloth like this for our Laxmi Narayana. Go by car, the driver knows the shop. Come back, I shall show you the Images."

Rajat preferred to go on foot and thus made the blunder. He expected to get the cloth in any of the known shops at the outskirts of the town but did not get it. So, directed by one of the shopkeepers, he had to walk a long way to reach the Laxmi Vastralaya in the central locality. As roads from different directions met here the area was overcrowded. He marked a towering statue of Venus, the Greek Goddess installed in front of Venus Cinema Hall. A little ahead, on the opposite footpath was Laxmi Vastralaya. The magnificence of the statue of Venus impressed him very much. With dreamy eyes he headed towards Laxmi Vastralaya. There, an image of Goddess Laxmi, a specimen of perfect art, kept in a showcase attracted his attention. The gesture of its elegant and expressive limbs spoke of heavenly ease and Ananda. Divine benediction beamed from its beautiful eyes and flawless face. It aroused in him a sacred feeling hitherto unknown to him. With a solemn emotion and a docile attitude he elbowed his way through the waiting customers and presented the sample to one of the workers. "Oh, you are from Swarnababu, our proprietor!" He treated Rajat with reverence and humility and the packet of cloth was delivered to him in no time.

With a happy heart he came down onto the street and hurried to return when a shabby-looking young man caught hold of his hand politely and led him towards Venus Hall saying, "Come, let us go to see the film now..."

"Film! O no, no, I must return forthwith." Jerking himself free, Rajat hurried on, paying no heed to the intruder's call and his giggle from behind. That this was nothing but a trick to mislead him grew clear only when Rajat found himself in a labyrinth and could not make out the right road. Now back to the main street, he thought of asking someone for the direction. He found in front of a jewellery shop two elderly men deeply absorbed in playing chess. He neared and asked one of them, "Sir, which way is the Post Office near the traffic police stand?" The man simply moved his hand in pointing in the direction of Venus Hall. Had he only meant by the gesture to get rid of him or answered his question? He hesitated and thought, "Perhaps while coming in a hurry I failed to notice the police stand." He retraced his steps, with a keen observant eye so as not to miss the spot this time, but without any success. Now he grew nervous and asked the first man he met about the way to his destination.

"Post Office? Which one do you mean? There are a number of them in the town." "I mean the one behind the traffic police stand." "Yes, but which of the traffic police stands?" Rajat was taken aback, "I mean, I mean... the nearest one from here."

"Well, if you want to take a short cut, follow the lane on the right. A bamboo bridge will help you cross the canal." Following the course he reached a dark and lonely place surrounded by trees and bushes. He heard the sound of water nearby. "Oh, the canal! But which side will be the bridge?" Meanwhile he found a man appearing from behind the bushes and asked him, "Sir, which way is the bridge over the canal? You crossed the canal by it, didn't you?" "No, I came by boat." The man observed him from head to foot and then said, "You seem to be a stranger and a simple boy. It's already night and the locality is not good. Better hire a rikshaw and go straight to wherever you want to go." The man went away.

Rikshaw, but how to get one here? He moved on again towards the main street while looking for one. Suddenly he heard the sound 'tung...tung...' coming from a bylane and shouted, "Rikshaw, hai rikshaw, come this side." It came but there was already a passenger in it. "Where would you like to go, my boy?" asked the middle-aged man.

"To Anantapur, Swarnababu's house." "Is that so? Then come up, I am also going that side. So you are his grandson, the only heir." Heir! It was something new to him. But he thought it better not to comment on the topic. The rikshaw ran many a zigzag course and finally stopped in front of a big old building with a jungle around. The man almost forced reluctant Rajat to get down, saying, "Don't worry, get into the house, you will find your Dadu there."

Yes, he was there sitting in the drawing room. Rajat called from the doorway, "Dadu, Dadu... what makes you..." he stopped abruptly as his eyes met his grand-

father's. No, he was not his Dadu. His Dadu's eyes were soft, soothing and full of tender affection, whereas this man's were cunning, shrewd and sharp like those of a hunting hawk. But the overall appearance of both was just the same. Quickly putting on a pair of coloured goggles the man called, "Come, please come inside and take your seat. Why do you hesitate?" O what a voice! No better than the sound of a broken gong, whereas his Dadu's was the lucid sweetness of a sitar. Softening the voice as far as possible he called again, "Why do you fear? I am your Dadu, come, and sit down on this sofa."

"No, you are not my Dadu," a sharp retort from Rajat. The man's face glowed with anger. "All right, I am not your Dadu, but you are in my grip now. I order, come and sit down here." Rajat thought of fleeing but just then a huge dog growled from behind. He had no other choice than to go and sit on the sofa. "That's very fine of you, brave boy. Now let me ask you something. Have you seen the Images of Laxmi and Narayan in your Dadu's marble-room?" "No!" "Why not? Didn't you want to see them?" Rajat felt the tender touch of the cloth-pocket under his armpit and made no reply. The man waited for a while and then whispered in a peculiar voice, "Well, don't reply if you don't want to. Simply listen to what I have to say. In the marble-room behind the screen you will find the exquisite Images of Laxmi and Narayan, adorned with costly clothes and precious stones and jewellery. Now, from amongst the stones I would like you to bring for me only two—one the emerald from Laxmi's head-dress and the other the sapphire from Narayan's necklace. Won't you do this for me who love you so dearly? For, you and you only can perform the job."

Rajat's fingers clenched, the muscles tightened to punch the face of the imposter, a cheat and a burglar, but he had to restrain himself.

"Why don't you speak? Say something, my little one."

"No," Rajat refused firmly.

"No, why no? It's very easy for you to do. Let me suggest..." Rajat closed his eyes and pressed his ears with both hands. At this the man got furious, he shouted angrily, "Bishu..." Bishu appeared, none but the young man who had misled Rajat from Venus Hall. "Bishu, take this scorpion boy into the dark prison-room and lock the door from outside." The order was carried out at once.

The room according to its name was really dark. Rajat could not see even his own hands at first. Then the eyes being accustomed he saw rays of very dim light coming through a ventilator from a bit of star-lit sky. This revealed that the room was completely empty and had no windows at all. Thirsty, hungry and tired, Rajat sat down on the floor in despair. He looked on at the distant blue through the ventilator not knowing what to do. Suddenly his eyes fell on a bulb-holder without a bulb jutting out from the wall just below the ventilator.

At once he jerked up on his feet electrified with an idea. He simply needed a strong rope now, but where to get it? He cast his searching look around the room and instantly grew aware of the packet under his armpit. He unpacked it hurriedly

and tied a knot at one of its ends and then threw it up aiming at the bulb-holder. But it rebounded and fell down on the floor in front. He threw it again but without success. He did the same over and over again but could not hook the knot with the bulb-holder. He was surprised at his pathetic failure, for he was really a very good scorer in basketball. What had happened with his aim today? He blamed the darkness for his defective aim and sat down again helpless and nervous.

Suddenly a few lines of a poem he had read in his early boyhood came floating to his memory—"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again, if need be even a hundred times." Well, he had not tried even ten times. He regained his energy and vigour and stood up. He went on throwing the knot non-stop at random. Lo! once it got hooked up with the holder without his expecting it. Panting, Rajat took a little rest and then climbed up the cloth till he could sit with bent head in the opening.

The sky was clear but below the ground was quite dark due to plants and bushes. Jumping down was out of the question in the darkness as there might be thorns and broken glasses below.

Suddenly a shadow fell on his face. Startled, Rajat looked around and saw that a branch of a tree nearby was tossing to and fro. He collected the cloth and wrapped it across his shoulder and waist. Then as the branch came closer he with will and courage dived in the air with outstretched hands. Luckily he could manage to catch hold of the branch. Within minutes he got down onto the ground.

It was a thick jungle area. He groped and desperately tried to make his way out of this tangle. Abruptly he stood like a statue seeing a ghost-like dark figure in front showing him two rows of white teeth. He was terribly frightened and was about to fall down senseless when the figure caught him and gave a good jerk. "Why have you come here in our domain?" asked a clear human voice. Tottering, Rajat muttered, "I...I...have lost my way."

"Ha...ha...ha... lost your way? Well done, my boy, now give me all you have with you." "Oh, a burglar, not a ghost!" Rajat placed his purse on his extended hand. "Nothing more?" "No, sir," "Sir! hi..hi..hi.., cheat, don't you have your wrist watch, your pen?"

'Cheat!' Rajat was shocked and annoyed beyond words but gently handed over his pen and watch requesting at the same time, "Please show me the way out of this jungle." "Why, you can return by the same way you have come in..." Just then a chaotic noise issued from the house behind. The robber vanished within the twinkling of an eye. Rajat also forced his way aimlessly through the jungle and found himself shortly beside a vast field.

He started running across it but after a while was obstructed by a flowing canal bordered by plants and trees. By then the moon had peeped from behind the horizon opening before him an exquisite view of nature which made his artist mind absorbed and oblivious of everything else. He recovered himself and looked for means to cross the canal but found none, no bridge, no boat, nothing. For the first time he

felt a deep longing for his Dadu, his sweet voice and loving touch. He dropped himself down on the ground and burst into sobs.

"What's the matter, why do you weep?" It was a compassionate female voice from a few yards ahead of him. "How to cross the canal and go to Anantapur?" Rajat uttered in a broken voice. "Don't bother yourself, follow me. I have been sent to fetch you home." He did not move, he was afraid of being imprisoned again. "Don't fear, follow me, please." The sweet, sincere and assuring voice moved his heart. He could not but follow the slim yet shapely figure of the lady. She had put on an ordinary sari but her steps were elegant and rhythmic, her hair long and curly, but her face he could not see clearly.

After a while they found themselves crossing the canal on one end of it which was obscured by some plants and a big banyan tree. Just then he heard the harsh sound of a motor horn. He rushed forward following the sound, leaving the lady behind. He saw in front a stream of running cars, rikshaws and lorries, etc. Reaching the main road he was face to face with the long coveted police stand and the Post Office on the opposite side. He waited to thank the lady who approached him with a hearty and tender smile. "Hope you can go now by yourself, I have got to do a little shopping here. No, no, you need not wait, your Dadu is very anxious for you."

"Dadu, Dadu, did you ask someone to...?" He halted at the doorway and saw inside the back of a stranger talking with his Dadu. He heard him say, "Bishu went into the prison-room with food and drink and found no one inside. We searched for him throughout the house without avail; the jungle behind it is the hiding resort of thieves, burglars and murderers. I am afraid he has fallen a victim to them. O..ho..ho.. such a nice boy... O ho..ho..", the man started sobbing...

"What's this? Why are you so depressed? If necessary we can take the help of the Police..." Dadu's voice was calm and full of confidence. Rajat stepped in silently. "Here he is, he has come back," Dadu exclaimed. "Come back!" The man turned round and embraced Rajat with deep affection, "Naughty boy, where did you hide yourself, eh?" His tearful face sparkled with a smile. Rajat fidgetted to be released, he could not but think that this must be another trick to grab the precious stones... Dadu interfered, "What makes you act like that? He is your Dadu, bow down to him." Rajat was stupefied and speechless.

Dadu continued, "We are twins, our appearance is more or less the same but by nature we are quite different. I am a follower of religion and spirituality. He is a materialist and atheist. My Goddess is Mahalaxmi, whereas he is devoted to the beauty of Venus. But we both have the same claim on you. You are the living heir of us both, the grandson of our late sister."

"But he is after robbing the precious stones from..." Rajat's voice choked.

"Yes, I know. That is why we have been at loggerheads with each other. In fact our father entrusted Laxmi and Narayana to me only and asked me to protect them from the touch and presence of non-believers..." "No. Swarna, no more enmity. I no more hanker after precious stones. I got a glimpse in Rajat of a far more

precious thing than the material stones." "You are quite right, brother, I have also marked it. So let both of us catch his hands and enter into a novel path and a new life."

"Dadu, you promised that you would show me your Laxmi Narayana."

"Yes, of course, but first of all have a nice bath and come back here. We shall be waiting for you."

After a refreshing bath Rajat returned. Both the Dadus stood up and each holding a hand on either side led him towards the marble-room. While going he thought: "Strange is the caprice of fate. It fetters with one hand and frees with the other. If it wishes perhaps it can make the opposite poles meet together..." They reached the room. All the three entered, one Dadu switched on the light, the other moved aside the curtain. O what a revelation! Instantly Rajat remembered the lines of a sonnet he had read recently in his book of selected poems:

"A living Presence deathless and divine,
A Form that harboured all infinity."¹

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Last Poems*, p. 16.

A WEEK IN COURTALLAM

I

As our train continued south and west through the morning, suddenly to the north we could see hills the colour of rain-clouds, with soft leathery shawls of pale cloud draped along their ridges and drifting down their sides, beneath a cloud-covered sky. Most of the fields that lay between were bare, the red soil freshly ploughed and waiting for the rain; only a few bright green patches of irrigated cultivation showed here and there. But as we continued westward, skirting the storm-blue mountains, the landscape grew greener and richer; suddenly we had crossed a little river into a new kind of scenery—the scenery of the hills, with charming, feminine lines, and surprising little sunlit nooks and corners, a pleasing graceful smallness beneath the impressive hillsides disappearing up into blue mist.

2

The air was different here, and there was something exceptionally invigorating about even the tap-water at the guest-house. Showered and changed, by noon we felt ready—despite the long journey—to climb mountains. But first we set off into the little town for lunch, window-shopped through the winding bazaar, and inspected the main waterfall. We had been warned that there would be no water in it at all; and indeed it was much reduced from the splendour we remembered from four years before; nevertheless it was enough to provide simultaneous showers to about a hundred people; more thronged gaily around, dripping with water or gleaming with bath-oil, while here and there in the pools below the falls others scrubbed vigorously away, washing their clothes. We enjoyed the happy atmosphere awhile, then bought some oil at one of the many stalls, and promised ourselves a shower at some less public spot.

On our way back through the bazaar we bought a comb, a pot of nutmeg pickle, and some jaggery sweets, charmingly packed into a little plaited-leaf box. We walked out of the town and up into the forested hillside—amazingly fragrant and silent—up to a nameless waterfall we remembered for its privacy. There we spent a couple of hours bathing and sunning ourselves on warm rocks, and trying to sketch the delicate veils of falling water, in a marvellous shifting light of sun and shadow. On our way down-hill again through the thickets we met two women who had been gathering wood. One of them responded to my smile. “Did you go all the way up?” she asked. “Did you find the waterfall? Did you bathe?”—as if she were glad to share with us some special treasure of her own.

*

At Tiger Falls there seemed plenty of water, and I thought it would be nice to come there very early one morning—since it is the nearest to our guesthouse—and stand under the torrent when no-one else was around. There are curious Japanese and Art Nouveau touches at the temple here—perhaps from some time when it was connected with that big house opposite—the one with the caryatid lamp-posts in the garden, and all the little pavilions?

When it is full of people during the High Season (is it ever, really?), what are they like, the crowds who throng those gracious grounds? Impossible to imagine then—but *someone* keeps up those sumptuous houses and their gardens, presumably for the pleasure of spending a few weeks there each year with family and guests. Are there torchlit garden parties at night, and beautiful music? Champagne?

*

Whole plantations of beautiful teak trees in full bloom... The ones we see at home always look so pathetically moth-eaten, but these are handsome, healthy trees, happy to be where they are, sprouting by themselves from the undergrowth. The tiny fragrant white flowers grow in huge clusters like delicate branching coral, so that the tree is crowned with clouds of lacy bloom: each tree lovely, and many together breathtaking.

3

We go up from the bustling little town, up above the main falls into the valley above—it is loud with the cries of a bus-party of schoolchildren, revelling in the water and greenery. To avoid them, we leave the main path and find a little cove by the stream. On a sunny rock in mid-stream sit two monkeys, one grooming the other.

It is so delightful here, so extremely beautiful—why go further up? The play of sunlight and shadow, the grey and green of rocks and trees, the babble of the water, the lovely lines of the stones and twisting trunks and foliage ... high up above clouds come and go, so that the light here continually shifts and flickers—so various and yet so harmonious: an ideal beauty—the beauty every gardener aims for.

And this is the life, I suppose, we long for: carefree and unhurried. We can linger here all day, if we will, enjoying the gurgling water, the coming-going light. This is Eden, full of fruit and promise.

But the sense of the source impels us upwards. Because we know it is there—and attainable—we cannot linger long in this lower valley. We move on, and soon reach another waterfall: a deep churning pool and a thundering overflow. A strong swimmer dives and tumbles and battles with the falls' strength—this young man is making himself strong with the water; his muscles gleam with oil and ripple proudly in the sunlight. Here an old sadhu shelters in a cave, and we watch couples coming to worship the images and share in his puja. Agastya is supposed to have lived here—perhaps these two pot-like figures, draped in bright cloth and tinsel represent him

and his wife. When we came here four years ago, this place was deserted; now there are too many people for us—even another foreigner! We move on. To reach the uppermost falls, the head of the gorge and a veil-like curtain of dropping water, we must scramble and struggle. It is cold and damp and windy here—no shelter from the falling spray. We crouch behind a rock to eat, a brief picnic, and bathe in the last pool with a sense of bold achievement.

As we go back down the lovely valley, its charm looks almost vulgar, like a starlet too much admired, or a public park in a big city: its pools are for working-men on holiday, not for apsaras.

*

We knew our goal: the easternmost and furthest of the falls—and set off to find a footpath to reach it, that would avoid the longer road we had followed on a previous visit.

Branching off into rice-fields beyond the quarry, we came across a little shrine beneath a tree. The god sat like a king, looking out across his fields, a wife on either side of him, while his mount, an elephant, knelt respectfully facing him. A fine spreading banyan sheltered the sacred platform, three steps up from the paddy fields. We did *pranām* and asked for a blessing from the Rain King before going on our way.

The path we were following ended with the paddy-fields; we crossed over a dried-out watercourse into a coconut-grove, and then struck out in what we felt was the right direction, crossing mango orchards and fallow fields until we came to the boundary of the cultivated land. There, as we had hoped, we found a clear path which skirted the edge of the 'forest'—here impenetrable thickets of thorny scrub. As we went eastward, other paths would occasionally cross ours, striking up the dry gorges to the higher hillsides. But we had decided not to follow any of them—we would keep on skirting the thickets until we sighted the metalled road which we remembered running right up to the falls. The way was much longer than we had anticipated; after rounding each bluff we listened expectantly for the music of falling water, but in vain. Only after the fourth or fifth spur rounded, there was the road: our walk seemed suddenly a short one—were we really there so soon? Still there was a little further to go: round the bluff and up into the valley until we came face to face with a huge wall of sheer rock. On the very lip of it, where the water slid over, someone had placed a plaster image of a sage; lifesize, pink and shiny like a garden gnome, he sat cross-legged in his ochre dhoti and calmly surveyed the scene below.

Once again we had to wonder what the place would look like in the 'season': a huge parking area, a kitchen, picnic spots, changing rooms, sluices and artificial pools beneath the actual falls, as well as the usual iron rails to hold onto seemed to anticipate large crowds. Today it is all tranquil and deserted: a couple of priests chat with some local boys under the banyan tree at the parking-place, but no-one bothers to follow us up the steps to the falls. The doors have been removed from the 'Chang-

ing Rooms to Let'—so we choose a clean one and use it for free. The falls are very gentle, with hardly more force than the shower in a Pondi bathroom; but the quality of the water is quite different, and very refreshing after our prickly walk. As we are drying off, a little shower of rain comes down to give added refreshment. But apart from the water there is nothing specially attractive about the spot... we would like to be surrounded by more natural beauty for our picnic. So we decide to follow another path we have noticed on our way up the valley. It takes an unexpected turn, and most surprisingly leads us up above the falls into an enchantingly pretty valley where a big family party is cooking a huge meal in front of a little Shiva shrine, and bathing in the stream. We are all rather astonished to see each other, but we are soon past them, and continue up the rocky stream-bed until we find a place that is shady, pretty and comfortable enough for us. There is a pool deep enough to swim in, and as the water pours in and out it gurgles musically through the rocks. Huge beautiful butterflies of black and bright blue, or black and yellow or orange flutter through the bushes, and birds pipe unseen all around us, or come down to the stream to sip and bathe.

A whole long lazy afternoon we can enjoy this idyllic spot. There are even little sandy beaches where one could camp. I remember how when I was a child, whenever we went out of the city for a picnic in some natural beauty spot, I would long to get left behind, and try to get lost so that I could stay among the trees and the birds. Some of the trees here are carved with names and dates, so probably in the summer even this hidden spot is on the beaten track; it is hard to believe it today, it feels so remote and still. The whole afternoon we do not see another soul.

When we turn to go back downwards, the picnickers have finished their meal and are lazing around the banks of the stream on the warm flat rocks. "Hallo, hallo" they cry, and are very surprised when I answer "Vanakkam". But that gives one of the boys an idea: he runs after us to say that we must share some of their food—it is *prasād*, we *must* take some, just a little bit. So we stop at the shrine, where their cooking pots are presided over by an impressive-looking lady with two long plaits of matted grey hair hanging stiff out from her head and almost down to her knees. Again we do *pranam* to the idols on their little platform: Nandi faces a Shiva lingam, flanked by two goddesses. The boy brings us sacred ash to put on our foreheads, then we turn to go—it is late, we should start back, we don't want to get into any big social eating scene, already they are getting the banana leaves ready to offer us a whole meal! But something we *must* take—bananas at least! So two consecrated bananas are respectfully accepted; we eat them going down the hill—they are a special variety and taste delicious. We think how nice it is that when a family goes into the country for a picnic, they go to a shrine and offer their food to the gods so that it becomes *prasād*; they bathe in the purifying waters and eat consecrated food... and how fine to share the blessings with a stranger!

It takes an hour or more to walk back; as we arrive on the outskirts of the town it is already turning to twilight. Because it is the weekend, some of the big villas

are lit up: people are staying there. We see a 'gurkha' in uniform and a manservant escorting a very small young lady—maybe she is $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3—on an evening stroll down to the copra factory. She kept her little hands clasped firmly behind her frilly pink back, so that neither of them should presume to hold one, and looked curiously at us as we passed, but would not smile.

(To be continued)

SHRADDHAVAN

THE PLOVER

He had been just a song
Circling over the lake,
Or a pair of sickle-wings
Harvesting the air.

How I had longed
For a closer view!
Today he burst upon my sight
From amid the casuarina saplings.

Black-necked, white-bellied,
He wore a red crest like a petal.
His wings were a greenish grey
Lined with silver.

Revelling in his solitude
He held his head high
And chimed out his notes.

I watched from cover
Till he flew away.
One more richness
Was added to my day.

M. L. THANGAPPA

A TRAVELOGUE

WE were in the Vatican art gallery in 1974. A very charming Italian Father approached us wanting to help us understand Michelangelo's art. The next year, that is 1975, would be the 500th birth-anniversary of the great Italian sculptor-painter during the Renaissance period. Michelangelo Buonarroti was born in 1475, the year of the birth also of Copernicus. In the year Michelangelo died, that is 1564, Shakespeare was born. In 1975 the lovers and admirers of Michelangelo desired to celebrate his 500th anniversary befitting the unique and versatile genius. For very few know that besides painting and sculpturing he wrote poems; and his letters, some 500 of them that still exist, are masterpieces in prose. He had a beautiful hand and read a lot, knew sections of Dante by heart. To many, Michelangelo was the greatest artist with unmatched power. And so many have written about him that their names would make a volume.

In a tiny village called Caprese near Florence, Michelangelo was born on the 6th March 1475 and was given the name of Michelangelo di Lodovico Simoni. His father, though not particularly a rich man, was the Podesto, that is Mayor, of his native place. Later the family moved to Florence. The little Buonarroti was provided with a wet nurse. This bit of information appears most amusing. For later in life Buonarroti joked, "I have taken hammer and chisel along with her milk." She was the daughter and wife of stone-cutters.

He was the son of a proud Florentine. It must be remembered that Rome at this time had become a provincial town with the fall of the Great Empire. Florence, a powerful city of fifty thousand souls, was the city of Dante, of Petrarch, of Boccaccio. Here was practised art in the line of Cimabue, Giotto and Brunelleschi, Donatello, Masaccio and their style was known as the Quattrocento. Here lived the great Medicis with their world-famous Banking system. They were also lovers of art and knowledge. It was they who gave shelter to the harassed old man, the unique Calliope, who out of gratitude named the system Stella Medicis. The Medicis experimented in democracy and tried a system in industry that was the prototype of modern industry. Lorenzo the Magnificent had a garden where he collected ancient art-objects. Artists of those days went to his garden to learn and work.

Our main source of information even today is Giorgio Vasari. It was an age when the ancient Platonic ideas tried to reconcile themselves to Christian belief. It was a hedonistic humanist world into which Michelangelo was born. On one side were the religious themes, on the other the Neoplatonic allegories. The best names in this effort to reconcile the two were Plotinus and Marsilio Ficino. It was the age when liberal humanism gave to man himself a new and important place in the universe.

Contrary to his father's wishes Michelangelo started as an apprentice to the then renowned painter Domenico Ghirlandaio. Even at this early age he had the temerity to correct his master. He visited churches and studied Masaccio and Giotto. He went to hospitals to dissect corpses to learn about human bodies. He also went to Lorenzo's garden to work and learn. His first attempt was a faun which, it seems, the connoisseur Lorenzo praised lavishly. His next major attempt was the

Battle of the Centaurs: this was admired widely. Powerful and packed with figures, it was said to express the struggle of mind against the base instincts of man's nature. His next was Madonna of the Steps, a religious theme.

By now he was comparatively famous and got a commission for Bacchus from a rich gentleman who desired to adorn his garden. We are amazed to see this work of so young an artist. A slightly tipsy god with his eyes rolling and grapes and vines around his head, a satyr tugging at his fruits is just the figure the real god may have cut in a garden. In 1497 Cardinal Villers da Ferensed ordered a special block and commissioned Michelangelo to do the Pieta. For this he extended to Michelangelo 450 ducats. Michelangelo's Pieta is classed with the Venus de Milo. One must remember that the idea of Virgin Mary cradling her dead son is not purely Italian. It came from the northern countries. But none of the earlier statues reached perfection as the artists did not know how to solve the problem of fitting a man's body on the lap of a slender woman. Michelangelo solved the problem by providing for Mary a voluptuous drapery, sufficient to contain her son's body. His technical virtuosity here he himself never surpassed. His Pieta reached a magnificence and beauty that has amazed and will amaze forever onlookers and connoisseurs all the world over. The last canto of Dante's *Paradise* begins:

Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo figlio...
(O Virgin Mother, daughter of thy son...)

Mary is Christ's creation and also his fosterer. Lamentation is not the only expression. Here is the Corpus Domini of the Christian communion in God made human and Mary symbolises the Church. Mary looks extremely sweet and young. Said the sculptor: "Chaste and good women remain fresh and young." Both the bodies express super-human beauty. Mary's delicate face is so amazed that it has forgotten to cry: she is stunned to see what has happened, so the expression of grief is of another nature and not at all like any other grief-stricken face. The male body dangling from the soft lap is dead yet still warm and astonishingly handsome. Every muscle and vein and nerve is clearly seen in the framework of bones; no one has ever sculptured a more deathly corpse.

This work of Michelangelo is also considered to be in Quattrocento style. Observed Jacopo Galli: "The most beautiful work of marble in Rome, one that no living artist could better." The Pieta was a revelation of all the potentialities and forces of the art of sculpture. Looking at it, a pair of figures wrought in rock, one wonders if nature herself will ever create such in flesh and bone. Michelangelo must have risen very high and experienced the magnitude of his undertaking to have done what he has done in the Pieta.

In May 1501 he got a unique commission in Florence: a giant David, for which a rock of 14ft high was offered to him. Authorities at this time were bent upon adorning Florence. This was a work of a very different nature. Looking at this giant figure, what strikes us most, apart from its beauty and perfection, is the fact that it is neither

stationary nor moving. This idea Michelangelo took from the ancient Greco-Roman style called *Contraposto*, meaning a certain asymmetrical arrangement of limbs which gives the impression that the statue is not standing still. This was a favourite posture in the 5th century B. C. Its effect is achieved by sculpturing one leg different from the other. David looks like a Hellenistic dynamic athlete. Michelangelo's art is a commingling of the antique and the Florentine ideas of Man. Like the ancient Greeks he was passionately stirred by the human figure and its poignant and compelling charm. The outsized right hand, head looking away, a thick strained neck, leonine hair all indicate an apprehensive defiance. It is a picture of glorious manhood and harmonious beauty. It was an idea highly prized in Humanist Florence. Comments Vasari: "It is a symbol of liberty and freshness gained by Europe during the Renaissance", and he goes on to say that David puts all such statues into the shade, Greek or Roman. Michelangelo chose for his David a psychologically charged pause of apprehension before David met in battle the huge Goliath. He is changing from a brave boy to a victorious man.

Michelangelo's next masterpiece is Moses. The statue is found in the church of St. Peter's in Chain, a smaller church, not in the great St. Peter's. In it they would show you a marble hand of St. Peter and other sacramentos. It sits in front of the wall tomb of Pope Julius II. In later years wall tombs were created for many a famous man. In Florence Dante, Galilio, in Rome Raphael have wall tombs. In 1515 Michelangelo was given the final contract and he would take 7 years to complete the work. Many drawings were brought forward and his workshop was where now the monument of Victor Emanuel stands. He conceived a stupendous Moses, not stupendous in size but in idea. He must have pondered over the idea as to what the Great Hebrew leader stood for. It was his inner spiritual status, his experience that attracted Michelangelo most: thought and action petrified. Michelangelo produced a statue evocative of an unsurpassed power. Power and greatness were his chief concern, not the spirit and not the beauty of the body. Yet that too he did not neglect. Power, wisdom, greatness of thought, terror are the main things that draw our attention, yet love too could not be ruled out, love of another kind. We are awed on seeing Moses and one has to bow down in veneration. Part of his body is bare yet the parts covered with drapery are sculptured in such a way that one can see the powerful sinews that radiate superhuman strength. Then we are amazed by the two horns on his head. Why are these there? They refer (as in ancient times) to the light and spiritual wisdom of his unusual personality. He is not a common man. Monumentally equiposed, Moses is another perfect statue wrought by Michelangelo with superhuman insight in the Quattrocento style.

Michelangelo has wrought innumerable statues of surpassing beauty, each different from another. I think I have given my readers enough information, by discussing three of his masterpieces, as to how to look at a Michelangelo piece.

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA S. BANERJI

REPORT FROM THE WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY

WHAT is 'the true role of Woman'? A lot of heart-searching and reflection in the Mother's light in November 1985—the Silver Jubilee year of the Society—led to the 'Growth of Consciousness' and on the same dates (21, 22 and 23 November) this year as before, in the serene atmosphere of the Mother's presence, Woman's journey continued: to become aware of herself in her different roles, in many phases, domains and planes of consciousness, to gauge her growth as it has been, will be and should be; as an individual, a child, a girl, a wife and mother; in her own distinct personality, by the hearth of her home, in the interchange with the society, as a patriotic national of her country, as a worthy citizen of the world; on the physical plane of body and matter, in the emotional and psychological domains of aspiration, effort and achievement, in the logical and mental sphere of discrimination and organisation, and in the silent and most important field of the psychic and spiritual contact with the Truth of her being, which alone can bring the crowning victory, the fulfilment of the very purpose of her life on earth.

Even before the Seminar, when the members of the Women's Council got together at their regular Wednesday meetings, invoking the Mother's presence, each one felt inspired and directed in her joyous participation in the service of the Light, to work for the Seminar. It was not in the mode of a lecture or advice but in the sincere expression of what the Mother had taught each one in her day-to-day life, to share with all, in an expression of gratitude to Her.

For three full surcharged days, all who were called, most of them women, several men and a few children were aware of the Higher Guidance, while they spoke or listened or reflected, while exercising consciously for their physical fitness and strength, agility and plasticity, whether working with their hands creating something beautiful out of cast-away material or while joining together in an ardent invocation of peace in themselves, in their family and the society, in their dear motherland and on the whole earth. The entire process was vibrant and the delegates were eager not to miss any session. They were equally enriched by the inspiring incidents from the lives of great historic women, and gladdened by the men-delegates who sincerely expressed the importance of woman in their lives.

And as the moment of parting neared, all were drawn together in the culminating crowning climax of a deep and sublime prayer for the happiness, health, welfare and progress of all on earth, and then in gratitude, the resonant chant of adoration of the Divine Mother—who is all Bliss, Consciousness and Truth.

They felt reluctant to leave the pure spiritual atmosphere but knew that She had charged them beautifully. They looked forward to continue the growth of their consciousness and come back next year not just to share their thoughts or ideas or feelings but their actual work. They would participate in 'Presenting Skills' and be happy

to impart their little spark of accomplishment to any who needed it. So 1987 invites all interested women and men to the workshop of 'Presentation of Skills' from 18th to 25th November 1987, to express themselves not in words, but in conscious acts.

Note

The Women's Council has released the first issue of its monthly bulletin: "Awakening to the Beauty of the Future." It is sent free to all its members. All correspondence in this connection may be addressed to: the Co-ordinator, Women's Council, Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry 605 002.

DAWN FOR EVER

I LIVED in wait for you, oh bountiful dawn
Fresh with the warmth of the celestial womb,
The light that cools and never burns,
Pervasive presence of the Divine efflorescence.
I stretch my hands to gather the brilliant blaze
And embalm my body and soul with the nectarous bliss.
Release my inner being to merge and be lost.
Dawn, my own, heritage of life's prime daybreak,
God's first self-portrait with His own brush,
Heavenly receptacle of universal love—
Churned out of the ocean of endless space.
I look up skyward from the depth of darkness,
The horizon lights up revealing the harbinger-glow
Of the luminous downpour in a vibrating deluge.
Drops seep into me and I feel
The faintest response from my soul within.
Thrilled and thawed I know that I exist
Along with the creation, the all.

DEBANSHU

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sri Aurobindo Circle, Forty-Second Number, Sri Aurobindo Society Annual 1986. Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry.

It was Ezra Pound who defined literature as "news that stays news". Sri Aurobindo Circle appears annually and is annually awaited by those who have been drawing nourishment from this rare blend of sumptuousness and amplitude. The editor sees to it that his readers get well-balanced and wholesome diet for not only one year but several years. Take out any old issue from your book-shelf and you will get the same thrill of exultation and exaltation as you got when you first received your copy. Copious excerpts and extracts from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and articles on the different aspects of his gospel of a radiant future have been coming as news and still stay as news. This fact needs to be highlighted because we are living in apocalyptic times when ideologies mushroom and drop out of currency before they develop their resonances.

The very first extracts culled from Sri Aurobindo's earlier writings, "The Hour of God's Movement" and "Great Consequences" show that the editor is fully alive to the historical juncture at which we are living and how the apocalyptic sense of dreadful things that threaten to overwhelm the human race hangs over our thinking like a thunder-cloud and yet there stand Sri Aurobindo and the Mother not only stemming the tide of nihilistic despair but affirming, "These are the times when we say God is in the movement. He is its leader and it must fulfil itself however impossible it may be for man to see the means by which it will succeed." The very titles of the passages selected as "Thoughts from Sri Aurobindo" such as "Significance of Earth-Life," "Role of Humanity in the Attainment of the Supreme Purpose of Life" give us the total perspective in which to assess and appraise events. "It is the pressure of the supramental and spiritual worlds which is preparing to develop here the manifest power of the Spirit and by it to open our being on the physical plane into the freedom and infinity of the superconscient Divine; that contact, that pressure can alone liberate from the apparent Inconscience, which was our starting-point, the all-conscient Godhead concealed in us."

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have been fighting relentlessly on two fronts—the Materialist's Denial and the Refusal of the Ascetic. Indeed, if a divine life has to be established and made to flourish on earth then we have to turn away not only from all single-vision approaches to the complex riddle of life but open ourselves to the plenary supramental consciousness so that all the parts and planes of our being, from the most material to the highest spiritual, may achieve their fullness. All the passages included in this section reinforce this human aspiration. "Fear, desire and sorrow are diseases of the mind; born of its sense of division and limitation, they cease with the falsehood that begot them. The Ananda is free from these maladies; it is not the monopoly of the ascetic, it is not born from the disgust of existence":

thus ends the extract from *The Life Divine* on page 3 of the Annual.

But we cannot rest content with a metaphysical system however lofty and inspiring. We need some light to get out of the thousand ills that beset our life. Clear and positive guidelines are given in the letter, "The Right Way to Deal with Wrong Movements."

Then there are three beautiful selections from the Mother's writings, "The Mysteries of the Ascent towards God", "Two Meditations of the Mother" and a full critique of "Charity". In her view the supreme charity "is integral self-giving to the great work of terrestrial regeneration", and this sublime charity "rises from a happy heart, from a serene soul." And she goes on, "One who has won inner peace is a herald of deliverance wherever he goes, a bearer of hope and joy. Is not this what poor suffering humanity needs above all things? Yes, there are certain men whose thoughts are all love, who radiate love, and the mere presence of these individuals is a charity more active, more real than any other." And we know her radiant Presence has been showering a largesse of beneficent forces.

In the essay, "The Entire Purpose of Yoga", Sri Aurobindo writes, "Our life on this earth is a divine poem that we are translating into earthly language or a strain of music which we are rendering into words." And now listen to these melodious words of the Mother, "Silence comes and the flame of aspiration is lit, the body is suffused with warmth, and in this warmth there is a blissful impulse towards transformation; the song of divine harmony is heard, calm and smiling: it is a sweet symphony, almost perceptible and yet full of power. Then silence returns deeper and vaster, yes, vast into infinity, and the being exists beyond all bounds of time or space." We are as if transported into "Sun-realms of supernal seeing, /Crimson-white mooned oceans of pauseless bliss..."

Sri Aurobindo is a large pylon and many cables can be strung upon it, and like the previous numbers the 42nd number has very illuminating articles on the different aspects of his creative genius. Kishor Gandhi's "Introducing the Human Cycle" deals with "The Materialistic Interpretation of History by Karl Marx" (4), brings out forcefully some of the inherent contradictions in the philosophical theory of dialectical materialism and moves on to Sri Aurobindo's cyclic view of the psychology of social development. K. D. Sethna's "Sri Aurobindo and Greece" lures us "To the Glory that was Greece" but the prospect of having to wait for a whole year for the next instalment reminds me of what Napoleon was told by his next-in-command when he launched his disastrous invasion of Russia. Napoleon asked how many miles was Smolensk from where they stood. His general reeling under the severity of the Russian winter faltered, "Sire, too many." So twelve months may not be a long span of time for the editor but far too long for those who have been regaling themselves on the Annual from the first issue. There are many beautiful poems besides significant articles by Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Prema Nandakumar, Sisir Kumar Ghose and A. S. Dalal.

RAVINDRA KHANNA

Indian Literature: Points of View. Edited and Published by Dr. Goutam Ghosal, 41/2, N. N. Ganguly Road, Howrah-4. Pages: 118.
Price: Rs. 25/-.

This collection of 24 essays is a festschrift volume to Professor Sisir Kumar Ghose, a writer and a thinker. All the essays are short, though there are two exceptions, and they invariably deal with Indian life, thought and literature. Among the contributors a few are well known names in literary circles while the others have yet to make themselves known.

The anthology begins with a nutshell introduction to Indian Literature in about one and a half pages, giving a long list of Indian writers. The rest of the essays are at greater length.

Srirambriksha Benipuri in whose eyes the most ordinary character becomes a unique personality, Buddhadeva Bose who experimented in all branches of literature and whose poetry can give us his best biography, the saint poet Kabir, Film Director Satyajit Ray who also wrote stories for grown-up children and Atulprosad Sen who wrote love songs are admirably introduced in the essays devoted to each one of them. The unhealthy state of mind revealed in Bengali novels, the major aspects which have forced critics to recognize Premchand as one of the leading short story writers in the country and two Punjabi short stories (Sant Singh Sekhon's "Whirlwind" and Kulvant Singh Virk's "Bull Beneath the Earth") are analysed. There is a long detailed discussion on Human Rights in Indian literature. Unfortunately even the top class writers from the South are not introduced nor are their works discussed, although their share in making Indian literature unique in many respects is laudable. Is it due to want of contributors?

Coming to essays that deal with Indian writing in English we are introduced to K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Father of Indo-Anglian Literature and criticism, P. Lal and his Writers Workshop, fascinating similes in Kishore Bhimani's writing and to the poetic genius of K. D. Sethna, the Captain of the Aurobindonian School of Poets. Jayanta Mahapatra in his short piece talks about the importance of language in poetry and confesses that he is very tentative in admitting himself that he is a poet. Prema Nandakumar discusses one of the poems from *Fifty Poems of Nirodbaran*. From K. D. Sethna some notes have been excerpted on Sri Aurobindo's poems like 'The Rishi', 'The Bird of Fire' and 'Musa Spiritus'. Tagore's play *Red Oleanders*, Nizzim Ezekiel's poem 'Night of the Scorpion', V. K. Gokak's novel *Narhari: Prophet of New India* and the short stories of Anita Desai are examined. While Professor Madhusudan Reddy attempts to understand the opening line of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, Manik Mitra reviews Sisir Kumar Ghose's *Lost Dimensions*, a collection of twenty-one essays that try to point up some of the basic deficiencies of an anxious and ambivalent age, and the need for a more creative choice. A bibliography of works by Sisir Kumar Ghose ends the book.

Since close attention is paid to Indian writing in English, the book will be of

interest to professors and students, as well as to every educated person interested in the subject. Dr. Goutam Ghosal is to be thanked.

P. RAJA

Artistic Form and Yoga in the Sacred Images of India by Heinrich Zimmer. Translated by Gerald Chapple and James B. Lawson (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984, pp. xxx+289, 55 plates, general index, Sanskrit index, and bibliography)

Exactly sixty years ago, in 1926, the Franfurter Verlags-Anstalt published *Kunstform* and *Yoga im Indischen Kultbild* in Berlin, in which Zimmer opened up before the western world an approach to understanding Hindu art radically opposed to the traditionally accepted Classical canons. This was the first work to point out that Hindu idols held a significance which lay far beyond what was perceptible through iconography; that they revealed their secrets to one who sought to see them holistically in conjunction with lamaist painting, Buddhist sculpture and architecture, and tantric yantras.

The book is unique in more ways than one. Carl Jung found it opening up for him new insights into the human psyche which have become fascinating territory for the explorations of depth psychologists since the 1930s. To archaeologists like the French art historian Paul Mus, Zimmer's remarkable intuitive vision of Borobudur as a monumental mandala in stone led to the adoption of a wholly new approach to eastern art. To Indologists it demonstrated how Arthur Avalon's discovery of the Agama texts, the left-handed way, provided insights into mysticism distinct from the ritualism of the Dharmasastras and the philosophy of the Upanishads which had, till then, formed for the West the picture of Hindu ethos. Zimmer's work was a clear break from the vast majority of Indological scholarship. His entire approach was permeated with what can best be described as *śraddhā*: a complete faith in the validity of the aspect of truth contained in the classic Sanskrit scriptures which he looked upon as his "guru". He puts it simply and succinctly in his autobiographical notes:

This is the meaning, and what is more it is the truth. I believe it to be a most significant aspect of truth, even though I am not capable, as yet, of merging it into the context of western accepted aspects of reality or truth .. I fully believe in the intrinsic validity of this secret script.

The word "secret" is significant, for what Zimmer proceeds to do in his first major work is to unravel the multi-layered significance of the *pratimā*, the lamaist mandala containing figures, the architectural mandala which is Borobudur and finally the purely linear tantric Shri Yantra.

Zimmer begins his work by painstakingly showing his western audience the

vast difference between Classical art and Indian sacred icons. This is a chapter to which he returns in the Conclusion where he presents a brilliant impressionistic analysis of Titian's *Venus with the Organ Player*. On one level—that of an author rounding up the arguments proving his thesis—this is unexceptionable and even a resounding climax to the almost symphonic structure of the work. Yet, on another level, the subjective one, there is a nagging sense of something not quite right, which is reinforced when one studies plate 53 which is being analyzed by Zimmer. The key to the uneasiness one experiences can be found in the last sentence:

Perfect beauty is an ultimate; but on the other side of all perfection, we find death; and the joy of a perfection that knows of itself... a sublime moment of transfigured life... finds its purest resolution solely in the sweet pain of unending melancholy, in the crêpe-veiled, indifferent knowledge of its own transitoriness.

This is precisely what Classical art is not but Romanticism is. Zimmer's entire response to Titian is redolent of Keats and borders on the Pre-Raphaelite languorous sensuousness. That is another reason for which this book is unique: for the remarkable glimpses it provides into the personal life, the psyche, of the author. We find in the autobiographical note appended ("Some biographical remarks about Henry R. Zimmer by Heinrich Zimmer") that he jumps abruptly from beginning in the third person, impersonally, to the intensely subjective first person, describing how he led a double life: a scholarly philologist who was addicted passionately to Nietzsche, Baudelaire, Wagner and Stendhal. Surely, here we have the archetypal romantic Teuton. See how he describes his fascination for Sanskrit classics:

...burn the ship and set forth on the quest for the East, on the track of Alexander, the path of Alexander, the path of Julian *the Apostate* (emphasis mine).

And the reason: disgust of the stale pseudo-Romanticism of western medievalism:

This rotten and degenerated mixture of Old and New Testament, classic Humanism, German folklore.

No wonder he plunged into the unknown India, thrilled with the romance of the civilization yet unexplored,

its dense deep fragrance in my nostrils, the jungle before me, unknown, perhaps unknowable... none familiar to us... it was worthwhile embarking for this other ocean.

Zimmer's approach, in keeping with the intrinsic romanticism of his nature, is intuitive, through the heart, and whole-hearted. He immerses himself totally in his subject, entirely in an empathatic union best symbolized in his favourite Yab-Yum, or

Vajradhara-Shakti icon. Yet, throughout the process, his sound Teutonic intellectual bias keeps him from going the way of the Rosicrucians or the Theosophists in their "rediscovery" of the mystic East. The India Zimmer was searching for was Schopenhauer's India. But what he has immortalized for the world is the sublime truth of all Being secreted in the mystic images of Indian sacred art.

In the first chapter Zimmer draws the distinction between the beholder-dependent western Classical art and the autonomy of the sacred eastern image. The one is a moment made eternity: the other is essentially beyond time. The former demands and richly responds to the analytic approach, attracting the beholder's attention to each detail and leading him on to a perception of their perfect fusion. The latter radiates a tranquillity as much in the dynamism of Nataraja's *nṛtya* as in the stillness of Buddha's all-embracing *karuṇā*, sufficient unto themselves, regardless of the beholder, and timeless. The Indian sacred image does not yield its secret to the analytical gaze, which will succeed only in listing the obvious. It is a condition of Being which just IS—holistically, inalienably, integrally.

What then is the path to apprehending the significance of these images? In the second chapter Zimmer shares with us his remarkable discovery that the *pratimā* is actually a type of "representational sacred devices" called *yantras*. Hence, to comprehend it one will have to understand the figurative mandala and the purely linear *yantra*. The sacred image is a "counter-measuring" of the Absolute Essence in three dimensions, just as the lamaist mandala and the Shri Yantra seek to do the same in two-dimensional pictorial or linear terms. Yet, till the *prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā* takes place, it has no spiritual significance, and that is why it poses such a puzzle to the western mind. The worshipper, the adept, first evokes within himself the vision of the Divine and then, through the means of the mantra, projects it upon and installs it within the sacred image. In so doing he establishes in physical terms the duality of the *jīva* and the *paramātmān* which corresponds to the state of his own consciousness internally. The purpose is to take the worshipper through this spell of *māyā*, where the indivisible Consciousness splits in order to see itself. That is the goal of the sacred ritual: to experience oneself as the Divine, to know *tat tvam asi*. The concentration on the image takes place through use of the mantras which again, are not intelligible to the discursive reasoning, but acquire their significance in the act of meditation. Only as long as the meditation, *dhyāna*, lasts does worship truly continue, since the validity of adoring the icon lies in the evocation of the image of the Divine within the *dhyānī*. Purely internal contemplation is undoubtedly superior to external worship, but few are those who can proceed without such props.

Zimmer amplifies this further by pointing out that ordinary art is a product of the outward vision, whereas Indian sacred art is based on the inward vision. His explanation of the subtle difference is brilliantly thought out. He compares the outward vision to a large lens with a small focal point, seizing upon one point after another of artistic appeal in a particular work "like the type of woman who flirts with many

men, following only her whims and what charms her". The inner eye, on the other hand, is like an opaque screen on which the image gradually comes into focus, no one part standing out more sharply than another. The inner eye has no focus: all that appears before it is equally clear. The moment any part is fixed upon, the image dissipates. Hence the prerequisite of arduous discipline prescribed in *sādhana*. Here lies the paradox of the inner sight which is so incomprehensible to the West: the equal focusing means that every single point of the image can be focused upon inwardly, yet the image's multifaceted nature remains simultaneously present. The concentration is on the structure as a whole, not on the parts structuring it; on what Zimmer calls "the 'pose' the image strikes" as opposed to the "material of which that overall 'appearance' is made."

The difference of the three-dimensional icon from the linear yantra is that in the latter case the yogi does not face the problem of freeing himself from it. The resistance offered by an image to the attempt to dissolve it for completing the yogic process of enfolding the unfolded vision is absent. The linear yantra actually invites deconstruction: from the central *bindu*, which is the divine essence with which the devotee identifies himself, it spreads out as, in waves, the Divine unfolds itself in *māyā* up to the outermost edge of the yantra; here the devotee views his self in its entirety of manifestation in the *māyic* world. The reverse process then can take place, a reduction from the outer layers to that Oneness at the centre (ultimately even that disappears), and the distinction between the perceiver and his perceived vision vanishes. He has become what he was worshipping, *ekam advitīyam*, "One-without-a-Second", a formless state into which the lotus-like phenomenal world dissolves.

Zimmer makes a critically important point when he points out where Buddhism failed, namely, in answering the question as to why Ignorance exists and why Truth and Nirvana have to be experienced through a painstaking askesis. The yogi achieving unity with the Divine realizes the emptiness of this world. Yet those who are on this side of the mirror remain slaves of form and name. It is the Brahmanic concept of *līlā* which spanned this gap, conceived as the play of divine energy, Shakti. The most eloquent symbol of this paradox of the Essence and its Energy which unfolds itself, yet is not separated from the Essence, is coitus, as iconed in Mahashukha and his beloved in the Yab-Yum posture which Zimmer explains at length, showing how the devotee proceeds to identify himself with the image.

In dealing with the mandala Zimmer provides that intuitive insight which would prove to be the key for depth psychologists to probe into the human psyche. He shows that they are

The crystallization of the inner life's activity based upon visions. Themselves transformations, they transform in turn the adept.... In them there can be no free play of an active imaginative fantasy; they are designed like maps.

Most important of all is his marvellous insight into the truth that such things

cannot be comprehended through mere study—which would be like trying to familiarize oneself with an exotic fruit by painting it, instead of biting into it and digesting it. That is precisely what Carl Jung proceeded to do in his *Symbols of Transformation*.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the book, after the explication of the use of the icon, lies in the breathtaking unfolding of Borobudur as an architectural mandala intended

to release a spiritual process in the pilgrim during his ascent through sculpture-embellished terraces to the unadorned summit, to bring about a complete transformation of his sense of being.

There is a keen insight into the radical difference between the path trod by the pilgrim at Bharhut and that at Borobudur. In the former the pilgrim undertakes a virtual imitation of Buddha. In the latter he spirally rises above the sensual phenomenal world replete with ornamentation, through the reliefs devoted to the as-yet-unseen Maitreya Buddha (visible only to the inner eye) to fretted cupolas representing form-free contemplation, and ultimately reaching the massive central dome. Here is a Buddha, which is completely hidden from view, at the centre of the whole mandala: this is the nameless, formless state where the Buddha is extinguished in Emptiness; that same Emptiness which is the essence of all phenomena and the pilgrim's own essence: the *vajrakāyā*,

Aum: my essence is diamond. I am the pure diamond of all pure adamantine Essence.

Zimmer thereafter launches into a detailed exposition of the purely linear yantra as a symbolic geometry of ideas, of Shakti in the symbol of the inverted triangle, unfolding herself in a variety of ways. In the process he brings in a comparison with science which has been carried much further today by Fritj of Capra and Gary Zukav. If formulae of physics and chemistry provide to the scientist insights into natural relationships, then yantras are mystic formulae providing openings into the divine cosmic mystery. Both use enigmatic symbols and are useless for one who does not know their inner meaning.

"The Place of the Sacred image in the World of the Believer" is the penultimate chapter in which Zimmer draws together the different strands he has been weaving into forming the tapestry of the true significance of Indian art. He introduces here an important element: the role of the guru and why he is deified. The *Kulārnavā Tantra* clarifies that initiation is not something akin to magic. Through this rite, the preceptor confers his internal transformation upon, and transmits it into, a disciple who has prepared himself for receiving this transformation. An interesting interpretation of the concept of "two-in-oneness" is provided by

Zimmer when he finds its ultimate and most visible expression in *satī*—a rite affirming the Shiva-Shakti union, symbolized in marital coitus, as immortal. The vicious social abuse to which this and the similarly sublime *vāmāchārī* rites were subjected take us back to the warning in the *Kālivilāsa Tantra* which condemns as inappropriate to the Kali Yuga the use of the “five M’s” (*madya, māṃsa, matsya, maithuna, mudrā*) and the linear yantra by inserting a virgin into it. Zimmer does an excellent job of explaining why things forbidden in daily life are prescribed as part of the *kālāchāra*: through the sacred ritual, they move the initiate beyond the limits of worldly order and ethical limits. The essence of Tantra lies not in moving to the Divine on the wings of fancy but through an actual transformation of the individual within his human existence. This was, for Zimmer, a personal conviction.

In the conclusion Zimmer brings to a complete circle the exposition of sacred Indian art, once more clarifying the polar opposites that are Classical art and the Indian sacred image. Perhaps here we find the happiest of all expressions of this differentiation: one is a celebration of beauty of *māyā*; the other displays *māyā*’s veil in many forms through which there is the constant felt presence of that which is beyond the beautiful and non-beautiful, beyond Being and Non-being. If the celebration of beauty is the goal of Classical art, it is only a gateway for the Indian sacred image whose very reason for existing is that it points beyond itself. And it is here that Zimmer leaves us, at a point where words and reason have reached their limits. Now it is for the believer, the devotee, to breathe life into the icon, lift the veil of *māyā* and experience the Truth which is himself.

And yet Zimmer has not really done with us. In the notes he wrote to the 55 plates, he provides an amazing insight into the spiritual kinship and difference between Dante’s Rose of Heaven and the Japanese Garbhadhātu Mandala. Both have saints/*bodhisattvas* and aspects of the Divine, which the initiate is to contemplate, placed on rings of petals of the rose and the yantra. The Trinity at the rose’s centre may be paralleled by the three-headed figure at the centre of the mandala. But the most important difference is: for Dante it is just a rose, not a symbol of the Divine and its unfolding, unlike the Indian mystic lotus which was transformed into the Persian rose as it moved up there through Central Asia and then, probably through Manichaeism, into the West as Christendom’s sacred symbol in the Middle Ages. Similarly the Mahasukha icon, the Yab-Yum symbol, manifested itself in diverse forms around the same time in the Provençal courts of love, in Japan’s *Cloud Gallants* and *Flower Maidens* and in Persia’s Sufis, all singing the same refrain voiced by Hafiz: *Love’s slave am I and from both worlds free*. Zimmer writes in his *Philosophies of India* (Bollingen Series 1951, p. 559):

From the castles of Portugal to those of Japan, the civilized world, for some five centuries, resounded to this song (of)... the basic Indian doctrine—the doctrine of transcendental monism, which merges opposite principles in timeless union.

This book is much more than a pathfinder seeking out an approach to the heart of Indian sacred art, eschewing the purely aesthetic and the classicistic criticism. It is very much a voyage in self-discovery for Zimmer himself. He wrote it against the background of having returned unscarred from the trenches of the First World War. Seeing himself as a revenant, he decided that this "second life" was not at the disposal of the community, but for him to do what he wanted with it: to find himself, to come into his own. What is unique about his approach is that he was convinced that for understanding the Indian ethos one required "an archimedic point of support outside on which to base his other leg" and that this was to be obtained "not by books, research and libraries, but by living", which is precisely what he proceeded to do. But always it was with the consciousness that to swallow the East whole was not the solution: it had to be so assimilated as to fit the esoteric message into an appropriate context in the western tradition and nature, much as the Roman Catholic church sought to do in India. Like Jung, Zimmer realized that it has to be a process of mutual transmutation for "the spiritual food, when assimilated, assimilates him who has swallowed it". All of Zimmer's works are milestones in this journey of assimilation and transmutation and being transmuted. And through the agony of Nazi Germany's deadening atmosphere it was the knowledge of the existence of Jung which kept Zimmer going at his life's work, providing him with the inspiration he so intensely needed. As he wrote in January 1943:

You cannot just talk to the stars or to the silence of the night. You have to fancy some listener, or, better yet, to know of somebody whose mere existence stimulates you.

To read Zimmer is to be surprised by joy. Not only because of the spontaneity with which he takes you by the hand and leads you into the secret recesses of our own sacred images to open our eyes to their hidden mystic meanings, but also because of the sheer verve, richness and sweep of his style. In this book it is almost dithyrambic; the rolling almost Miltonic periods are a delight to read aloud. It is as if he were deliberately using the Classical style at its best to expound the recalcitrant Oriental material which Goethe described as "temples full of elephants and gargoyle faces, a gloomy welter of troglodytes and a mad concoction of curlicues" (p. 6), and while doing so, showing how well the two can enrich each other.

Perhaps the sense of joy comes from a yet deeper level. Zimmer was searching in the Indian experience for a means of evolving for western civilization "a kind of synthetic dietetics of the psyche", that is, a system for the growth of the soul. His hope was that as the use of the *yantra* transforms the potentially dangerous forces of unconscious levels and harnesses them for the transformation of the being of the devotee for realizing unity with the object of worship, so the West might be able to avert disasters like war by taking an inner journey to the East and learning how to transmute man's nature. It is because of this deep concern of Zimmer with the

imperative need to transform the dark forces of man's unconscious that his work is so current and most relevant today. It is, perhaps, the tragedy of our times that the likes of Jung and Zimmer are no longer with us. We lost Mircea Eliade recently.

Our gratitude goes out to Gerald Chaple and James Lawson, who have made available to the English-speaking world this remarkable testament of a genius. Theirs has been a labour of love and the most painstaking care. For instance, where Zimmer mentions only one meaning of *mudrā* (hands and finger postures, p. 216), they cross-reference it also as "dried grain" in the index, referring to *Philosophies of India* (p. 591) which Zimmer wrote nearly two decades later with a more profound knowledge of the subject. (Indeed, its chapters on Buddhism and Tantra form a splendid supplement to the present work.) One lacuna, perhaps, remains in not annotating Zimmer's statement (on p. 226) that the idea of logos typifies the western comprehension of the Absolute as Word and is "therefore diametrically opposed to the Indian notion of the pure Divine." But the *Vāk* of the Vedas, the voice of the roaring bull, *vrishabho roraviti*, is the Supreme Truth which in the Tantra is called the *ādyā spanda*, the primordial throb which created the universe. This *nādabrahman* or Vedic *Vāk* is not opposed to logos, but analogous to it.

Leaving aside such minor exceptions, what we have before us is a work that cannot be termed a translation. The book reads as if Zimmer had written it originally in English—so inevitable is the flow of language, so consistent the style. It is, indeed, a superb instance of *transcreation*, at its best, of a work about which A. K. Coomaraswamy wrote:

No more valuable book for the understanding of Indian art, the answering of the fundamental problem 'Why is it what it is?' has yet been published.

PRADIP BHATTACHARYA

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Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

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WHAT IS THE SECRET OF SUCCESS IN SADHANA?*

SPEECH BY MOHINIRANJAN MISHRA

MAN is a tireless seeker after perfection and never rests satisfied until he achieves the highest goal of his life. It is because of this persistent urge in him that human life remains a continuously progressive movement, a ceaseless search for the discovery of some ultimate law of truth and harmony. Ancient spirituality and modern science, in spite of their fundamental differences of approach and method, are both impelled by the same perennial urge which through millenniums of human history has goaded the human heart and mind towards the realisation of this dream of a perfect life on earth.

But, in spite of all the innumerable attempts that he has so far made, man has not yet been able to discover the secret of his perfection. Not only materialistic science, on which modern man laid so much hope, has proved vain and even brought modern civilisation to the brink of an ominous crisis, but traditional spirituality also has failed him and, what is worse, has even discouraged his endeavour to perfect his life by preaching that life itself is a vanity or a delusion. The reason for this failure is that science has sought perfection of life by denying the spirit, while traditional spirituality has placed perfection in some heaven beyond earth or in some supracosmic transcendence, rejecting for ever any possibility of perfection of life here upon earth. Both these exclusive attitudes leave the perennial urge of man unquenched and frustrated.

The great importance of Sri Aurobindo lies in the fact that he reconciles these exclusive attitudes of materialistic modern science and ascetic traditional spirituality by his integral philosophy which unites the falsely sundered poles of spirit and matter by affirming that spirit is the essence of matter and matter the form of spirit, and though the spirit has veiled itself in matter by self-conscious involution, it is only in order to unveil itself by the reverse process of evolution. At the human stage this unveiling has arrived at its penultimate stage, but it is destined to relentlessly press further till the full revelation of spirit in matter is accomplished and human life is transfigured and glorified into the divine life, bringing the complete and everlasting fulfilment of man's irrepressible urge and dream of perfect life on earth.

* Revised and enlarged.

But we have to remember that Sri Aurobindo was not merely an intellectual philosopher or an idealistic visionary building utopian dreams of perfection. More than any other person in human history, he was a dynamic realiser and creator. So, not satisfied with merely enunciating his philosophic vision of divine life, he opened up a new path of yogic practice for the concrete realisation of that vision in the actual life of humanity. This new path which he has opened up after a prolonged and assiduous personal endeavour is the Integral Yoga of supramental transformation.

But this path is exceedingly arduous, for it requires a radical change of the most deep-seated tendencies of human nature. Therefore those who enter upon it cannot succeed in reaching their goal unless they fulfil certain basic conditions.

So the important question arises: What are these basic or indispensable conditions for success in the sadhana of Sri Aurobindo's yoga? To put it more briefly: What is the secret of success in sadhana? This question forms the subject of the present seminar.

The answer may vary from individual to individual. For some it may be sincerity, for others surrender, for still others it may be aspiration or devotion, etc. But to me it seems that faith is the most essential condition because all the other conditions will not lead to success unless they are supported by faith. For example, you may begin the sadhana with sincere aspiration but when acute difficulties arise and obstinately persist, as they are bound to do in this sadhana, you are very likely to lose your aspiration if it is not sustained by faith. Similarly, you may begin with a resolution to surrender, but unless it is accompanied by an unflinching trust or faith in the Divine, you will not be able to continue long on the way. So with all the other conditions. Each needs the support of faith to be effective, and so we can say that of all the conditions needed for success in sadhana faith is the most essential or that it is the secret.

Faith, according to Sri Aurobindo, "is the soul's witness to something not yet manifested, achieved or realised, but which yet the Knower within us, even in the absence of all indications, feels to be true or supremely worth following or achieving"¹ In reality it is "an influence from the supreme Spirit and its light a message from our supramental being which is calling the lower nature to rise out of its petty present to a great self-becoming and self-exceeding. And that which receives the influence and answers to the call is not so much the intellect, the heart or the life mind, but the inner soul which better knows the truth of its destiny and mission."²

In all systems of yoga faith is necessary to reach the goal, but it is especially so in Integral Yoga because its path is far more difficult than that of the others. The sadhak of this path has relentlessly to fight a prolonged and obstinate battle not only against the resistances of his own nature but also against the more formidable and seeming interminable opposition of the lower universal Nature and the hostile forces of Falsehood and Evil arrayed against him in his journey towards the Light

¹ *Letters on Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 23), p. 573.

² *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 21), p. 746.

and the Truth. As Sri Aurobindo so pointedly remarks, "Certainly, this is no short cut or easy Sadhana. It requires a colossal faith, an absolute courage and above all an unflinching patience."¹ But because of these immense difficulties one cannot stop half-way on the path, content with a partial result, because one might almost say that on this path nothing is accomplished unless all is accomplished. If the aim of Integral Yoga were to be the same as that of other yogas, then it would no longer bring to us the great fulfilment of divinising our life and changing the world. For this reason, the necessity of an absolute and unfaltering faith is more indispensable in Integral Yoga than in the others.

The rationalistic mind scoffs at faith by saying that it is blind because it is not based on proof and evidence. But, according to Sri Aurobindo, this insistence on having proof before faith is itself irrational and meaningless. As he says, "the conclusion formed after proof is not faith, it is knowledge or it is a mental opinion. Faith is something which one has before proof or knowledge and helps you to arrive at knowledge or experience. There is no proof that God exists, but if I have faith in God, then I can arrive at the experience of the Divine."² Sri Aurobindo further says that "even a blind and ignorant faith is a better possession than the sceptical doubt which turns its back on our spiritual possibilities or the constant carping of the narrow pettily critical uncreative intellect, *asūyā*, which pursues our endeavour with a paralysing incertitude."³ But really speaking the rationalist's accusation that faith in spiritual matters is a blind and ignorant superstition is utterly wrong because, as Sri Aurobindo puts it, "The faith in spiritual things that is asked of the sadhak is not an ignorant but a luminous faith, a faith in light and not in darkness. It is called blind by the sceptical intellect because it refuses to be guided by outer appearances or seeming facts,—for it looks for the truth behind,—and because it does not walk on the crutches of proof and evidence. It is an intuition, an intuition not only waiting for experience to justify it, but leading towards experience.... But if I begin with doubt and go on with more doubt, how far am I likely to go on the journey?"⁴

The power of true faith is so invincible that its victory over all resisting and adverse circumstances is absolutely certain. This is true not only in the endeavour of yoga but also in any high or great endeavour in life. As Sri Aurobindo says, "In the Yoga as in life it is the man who persists unwearied to the last in the face of every defeat and disillusionment and of all confronting, hostile and contradictory events and powers who conquers in the end and finds his faith justified because to the soul and Shakti in man nothing is impossible."⁵ And in still more reassuring words he says, "Anything else one may doubt but that he who desires only the Divine shall reach the Divine is a certitude and more certain than two and two make four. That is the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

² *Letters on Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 23), p. 572.

³ *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 21), p. 745.

⁴ *Letters on Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 22), p. 166.

⁵ *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 21), p. 745.

faith every sadhak must have at the bottom of his heart, supporting him through every stumble and blow and ordeal. It is only false ideas still casting their shadows on your mind that prevent you from having it. Push them aside and the back of the difficulty will be broken.”¹

Sri Aurobindo speaks of two kinds of faith, both of which are necessary in yoga. The first is the central or fundamental faith which he explains as “faith in God and the Shakti, faith in the presence and power of the Divine in us and the world, a faith that all in the world is the working of one divine Shakti, that all the steps of the Yoga, its strivings and sufferings and failures as well as its successes and satisfactions and victories are utilities and necessities of her workings and that by a firm and strong dependence on and a total self-surrender to the Divine and to his Shakti in us we can attain to oneness and freedom and victory and perfection”² And he adds, “The faith in the Shakti, as long as we are not aware of and filled with her presence, must necessarily be preceded or at least accompanied by a firm and virile faith in our own spiritual will and energy and our power to move successfully towards unity and freedom and perfection. Man is given faith in himself, his ideas and his powers that he may work and create and rise to greater things and in the end bring his strength as a worthy offering to the altar of the Spirit.”³

The second kind of faith necessary in yoga is, according to Sri Aurobindo, “a day to day working faith in the power in us to achieve, in the steps we have taken on the way, in the spiritual experiences that come to us, in the intuitions, the guiding movements of will and impulsion, the moved intensities of the heart and aspirations and fulfilments of the life that are the aids, the circumstances and the stages of the enlarging of the nature and the stimuli or the steps of the soul’s evolution.”⁴ But Sri Aurobindo also warns that this working faith in the transitional realisations that come to us on the way should be free from all attachment to them and we must not make the mistake of taking them as final and getting trapped in them as that would prevent our further progress to yet greater realisations. As he says, “experiences, states of thought and feeling, forms of realisation that are helpful and have to be accepted on the way and may seem to us for the time to be spiritual finalities, are found afterwards to be steps of transition, have to be exceeded and the working faith that supported them withdrawn in favour of other and greater things or of more full and comprehensive realisations and experiences, which replace them or into which they are taken up in a completing transformation. There can be for the seeker of the integral Yoga no clinging to resting-places on the road or to half-way houses; he cannot be satisfied till he has laid down all the great enduring bases of his perfection and broken out into its large and free infinities, and even there he has to be constantly filling himself with more experiences of the Infinite.”⁵

¹ *Letters on Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 23), 585.

² *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 21), p. 743.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 751.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 747 ⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 747-48.

Friends, I have tried to explain as best I can why I consider faith to be the most essential requirement or the secret of success in sadhana. Sri Aurobindo himself says, "Faith is the strongest staff for the journey."¹ Let us all renew our faith in the Divine and, sustained by it, proceed unflinchingly in our sadhana, for then success is sure.

I conclude my speech with a few words of Sri Aurobindo on faith which carry in them the potent vibrations of a mantra. They are so marvellously effective that we would do well to keep them engraved in golden letters on the tablet of our heart and keep on repeating them for ever:

"FAITH, MORE FAITH!
FAITH IN YOUR POSSIBILITIES,
FAITH IN THE POWER THAT IS AT WORK BEHIND THE VEIL,
FAITH IN THE WORK THAT IS TO BE DONE AND THE OFFERED GUIDANCE."²

¹ *The Mother* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 25), p. 347.

² *Letters on Yoga* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 24), p. 1686.

THE THREE-STAGE ASCENSION OF MAN'S MULTIPLE BEING

(Continued from the issue of November 24, 1986)

THE SUPRARATIONAL STAGE IN ART: ANCIENT INDIAN ART

WE HAVE already seen the predominantly infrarational and rational stages in art. Now we come to the third and final stage in evolution—the suprarational.

An ideal illustration of this stage will be the ancient art of India. Its aim, perfectly conscious and recognised even in its canons, was largely a seeking for God through artistic expression. According to Sri Aurobindo, its highest business was “directly spiritual and intuitive”.

In his book *The Dance of Shiva*, Ananda Coomaraswamy discusses the Indian concept of art as Yoga. The aim of Yoga is mental concentration carried to a degree at which all distinction between the beholder and the beheld, or the subject and the object of contemplation, ceases. They become united in consciousness. Similarly, the Indian artist of old tried to merge his consciousness with that of his creation. Hence we find such texts as Sukracharya's: “Let the imager establish images in temples by meditation on the deities who are the objects of devotion.... In no other way, not even by direct and immediate vision of an actual object, is it possible to be so absorbed in contemplation, as thus in the making of images...”

Hence the imager needed to be not only an artist but also a Yogi and had a hieratic role to play. Other names for the artist were “sadhaka”, “mantrin” and “Yogin”. The artist did not judge his own and others' creation merely by its aesthetic value, but saw how far and how well it expressed its high spiritual motive.

This does not imply that the motive is all-important and the execution can be neglected. The latter has assuredly its importance. A faulty execution reduces the greatness of a creation, however sublime in aim; it is only the perfect marriage of motive and execution that engenders the masterpiece. Yet the latter cannot be given an equal importance with the former. As Sri Aurobindo beautifully puts it: “The means matter, but less than the significance and the thing done and the power and beauty with which it expresses the dreams and truths of the human spirit.” Criticism is a vain thing if it neglects the spirit and motive that inspired a creation.

The Indian artist considered technique to be of secondary importance and subordinated it to his high spiritual aim. So, in order to understand and appreciate Indian art, one must not compare it with intellectually formed aesthetic standards and norms. Most Indian art surpasses mind and to view it with a rational eye looking for technical perfection is to miss its true essence and the higher vision inspiring it.

To illustrate the spiritual greatness that is attributed to Indian art, let us consider a masterpiece of the South Indian bronzes: the statues of the dancing Shiva, Nataraja. He is encircled by a halo of flames; he shakes his rattle-drum with the right

hand while supporting the fire with the left. Another right hand is held in *abhaya Mudra*, the "fear-not" gesture, and the remaining left hand is thrown across the chest as the symbol of energy. His right foot tramples the demon of ignorance and the left is poised in the air as a sign of deliverance. Explaining the threefold significance of the symbolic dance of Shiva, Dr. Coomarswamy says: "First, it is the image of his rhythmic play as the source of all movement within the Cosmos which is represented by the arch; secondly, the purpose of his dance is to release the countless souls of men from the snare of illusion; thirdly, the place of the dance, *Chidambaram*, the centre of the Universe, is within the heart." In order to create an image so full of spiritual symbolism, the sculptor must have gone through the necessary inner preparation. As Sri Aurobindo says, "The religious or hieratic side of Indian sculpture is intimately connected with the spiritual experiences of Indian meditation and adoration..."

We have seen illustrations of the three stages, the infrarational, the rational and the suprarational, in the domain of art. We find that in the first stage, the artist gives unbridled expression to his vital instincts and impulses. He does this either because he is not yet aware of the powers of reason, as in *much* of primitive art, or because, as in modern art, he disbelieves in them and throws off the yoke of the intellect, only to sink back to the infrarational level of crude instincts and impulses. Yet even at this level we find that art is, in its essence, aspiring towards some absolute of beauty, although it often expresses itself in a distorted, crude and even ugly form. In order to correct and exalt this crude instinctive urge for beauty, art must, in its evolution, pass through the rational stage. Here we find that the periods of Neo-classicism and Realism came in as necessary phases to put an end to the exuberance and voluptuousness of the preceding ages, but both over-stressed the importance of reason and ended by creating perfect forms devoid of vision or imagination. Finally, as reason is not the highest faculty in man, nor technical perfection the sole criterion, art must surpass reason and step into the domain of the suprarational, as it has done in ancient Indian art. Here reason, taste, technique, all subordinate themselves to a higher spiritual aim, that of seeking the Divine through beauty, that is to say, through the medium of artistic creation.

Hence, art evolves through the three stages in its seeking for Beauty or Delight.

(Concluded)

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THE EPIC OF THE UNIVERSE

(Continued from the issue of November 24, 1986)

5. Some Aspects of Physics

WE have seen how the ancients looked upon their world, the solar system, the stars and beyond, and how the known extent of their Universe kept on extending with the advent of more efficient and increasingly sophisticated instruments. But to look at physics and the processes that are going on inside the Universe, we have to first make acquaintance with the four basic forces of Nature that physical science has discovered so far. It is necessary to know, also, how these colossal amounts of energy are produced in a star, how the balance of internal forces governs its lifetime, or how the galaxies move; we have to know how the black holes are formed, how much of the calculated or estimated mass is missing from the observed Universe, and whether there are anti-material Universes beyond our ken of observation. These questions can be discussed in the light of the present-day concepts and ideas. In these developments we see the fruitful marriage of astronomy with particle-physics.

The four fundamental forces, or interactions as they are now called, that govern the physical world are, in order of increasing strength, gravity, the weak force, the electromagnetic force, and the strong force. The force of gravity is the most familiar and the weakest; it explains the stability of the planetary system. The weak nuclear force is responsible for certain types of radioactive decay, as for example, the B-decay or the processes going on in the Sun. The electromagnetic force—also familiar for more than two centuries—deals with the interactions between charges in electric and magnetic fields. Finally, the strong nuclear force holds the nucleus intact.

We could very well say that, in the domain of submicroscopic physics, the influence of gravity in interactions involving elementary particles is so small that it could be considered to be negligible. But we will be concerning ourselves now with stars and galaxies and groups of galaxies called clusters, and in all such cases the quantity of matter involved is astronomical. Gravity therefore, though the weakest, is a dominant active force in cosmic phenomena.

We know that the matter we are familiar with produces a gravitational field that exerts an attractive force on all other material objects. But is that all? Could not there exist another type of matter that would create an anti-gravitational field? Such a field would mean repulsion instead of attraction between material objects. We have no answer to this as yet, but we do see the existence of anti-matter. Anti-matter is made up of anti-particles. The concept first emerged from theoretical grounds but soon, early in the 1930's, within a few years of its prediction, the antiparticle of the electron, *viz*, the positron, was observed. We are now familiar with a large number of natural and machine-produced anti-particles, confirming theoretical predictions and calculations. The anti-particle of a particle has the same mass, spin, and life-

time, but its charge (if any) has the opposite sign and the alignment or anti-alignment between its spin and magnetic moment is also opposite to that of the particle. If a particle and an anti-particle meet, there is mutual annihilation and their rest-masses are converted into energy.

Actually, the world of physics has been asking questions ever since the discovery of the positron, whether there also exist anti-particles of all the known fundamental particles. Perhaps the reasoning used is something like this: if the anti-electron exists, then why not the anti-proton, and the anti-neutron? And indeed when between 1955 and 1958 these were produced in an accelerator, a sequel to this question was a new one: if the three most basic particles which make up all matter have their anti-particles, can evidence be found for the aggregate anti-matter itself?

Let us first note that no anti-matter can exist on the Earth, because matter and anti-matter would annihilate each other instantaneously. If anti-matter at all exists in space, it is not possible to observe it directly through optical telescopes. Only some indirect evidence can suggest its presence. We may safely say that, as yet, anti-matter in bulk has not been detected.

Matter, whether made up of particles or anti-particles, has three forms of existence that are familiar to us: solid, liquid, and gaseous states. But it has also a fourth state; plasma. Plasma is the basic stuff of the Universe; almost every entity in it is made of this. An ideal plasma state consists of equal number of positive and negative charges, generally electrons and positive ions. Take the sun for an example. We may seek to know how the main body of the sun is made up of such a plasma, essentially of electrons and protons. Indeed, the inquiry can be more general: how is a star formed? Related to this question we may also ask: does a star, such as the sun, have a finite lifetime? We propose to take up these questions in the following.

6. The Life of a Star

A star has a birth, a lifetime, and undergoes a stellar death. The stages of its evolution are fascinating. How is a star born? Let us take our own sun for such a study. A huge distended ball of gas and dust fell inward on itself about 5 billion years ago—a process called gravitational collapse. The gravitational energy was used in kindling the sun, making it a sphere of glowing mass, the gravitational force is always there trying to squeeze the huge mass into a smaller volume; but balancing the inward-pulling force of gravity are now the outward-pushing forces of gas and radiation. The pressure at the core of the sun is about 1.3 billion atmospheres and the temperature 15 million K, hot enough to maintain thermonuclear reactions. In this process hydrogen is converted into helium and energy released. This adds to the outward pressure of the gas.

For nearly 5 billion years the outward and the inward forces have been neatly balanced. But in another 5 to 10 billion years, when the sun's supply of hydrogen will run low, its core will be denser and hotter. But at an advanced stage helium it-

self will undergo fusion reaction forming carbon, oxygen, and neon.

Gravity will yield somewhat to the increased gas and radiation pressures and the sun's outer layers will expand. The shining surface of the sun will become distended, cooler, and redder in colour. It will become a red giant. Its bloated envelope will engulf the inner planets including the Earth. (Consequently all life on Earth will cease.) The fusion processes in the sun's core will constantly produce heavier elements and the core temperature will continue to rise; this in turn will help more fusion reactions, and so on. Gravity will constantly be outfought. Ultimately, the fusion reactions will produce iron. After this stage, fusion reactions with iron will not release energy; they will rather require it.

The tables will now be turned. The temperature of the core will slow its upward spiral, energy production at the core will stop, and radiation will die away. Gravity will win. The sun will now begin to collapse under the gravitational force.

But will it collapse into a black hole? Apparently not. The sun is too small a star for that to happen. Instead, it will become a white dwarf.

Let us see how a star goes from its red giant phase to become a white dwarf. As gravity will begin to compress the sun, after its red giant phase has ended, the density and the temperature will rise and any unused materials—from hydrogen to iron—will eventually reach their ignition temperatures. There will be a sudden burst of energy, an explosion like that of a cosmic fire-cracker. As the density of the plasma will rise, the ions and free electrons will collide more and more frequently. When the density of about 155 tons/cm³ will be reached, electrons will resist further compression. This will produce a counterforce outweighing gravity. The sun will stop collapsing any further.

At this stage it will be a white dwarf, just about the size of the Earth but with 330,000 times the mass. Henceforth it will cool off for billions of years as the heat will slowly dissipate into space. Finally it will be only a frozen cinder circled by frozen planets.

So much for the sun, a fairly ordinary star. It has been shown that stars that have 1.4 times the sun's mass or more reach the white dwarf stage and do not stop collapsing there. The star's outer shell may contain enough unburned fusible material after both its red giant and pulsating phases. Under gravitational collapse these elements will reach their ignition temperatures and explode. The rising heat of the core will then trigger superficial explosions called novae. With these explosions some of the star's outer shell of plasma itself may get blown off. But the core of the star will survive. The star will keep on shrinking, passing quickly through the white dwarf stage. The electron pressure will not be able to counteract the pull of gravity. In the plasma the electrons will be squeezed into protons becoming neutrons. Ultimately the tremendous repulsive forces that the neutrons exert on each other will stop the crunch when the sphere will be between 10 to 10 Km wide. If at this stage the mass of the star does not exceed three solar masses, we shall have a neutron star.

A neutron star is extremely energetic. Most astronomers now believe that pulsars are actually neutron stars that are emitting sharply-timed bursts of radio-energy. The first pulsar was discovered in 1967.

In the beginning many thought that these signals were sent by intelligent beings of other civilizations. For a few weeks they were called LGM signals for "Little Green Men." However, this idea was discarded; the pulsars were explained without resorting to interstellar civilizations.

According to theorists, a star under right circumstances can go straight out of the Universe—turn into a black hole! A neutron star may have suffered a gravitational collapse. If its mass is not more than three solar masses, then the collapse stops and the star may live as long as 100 million years. But if it is otherwise, it will simply disappear into a black hole.

(To be concluded)

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