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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.
"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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THE MOTHER’S LADDER OF LOVE

The last rung is love in its absolute purity. And a power—a vibration of creative and transforming power that is unimaginable. When That is lived, nothing is impossible. It is unimaginable.

First, we love only when we are loved....
That’s the way it is for most of us. We need the vibration of someone else’s love to awaken it in ourselves; otherwise we are inert.

Then, we love spontaneously....
Already a big advance for human nature. Love comes all of a sudden; a meeting with someone or something. Ah! and it comes. Only...

We want to be loved in exchange....
We set great store by being loved in exchange!

Next we love even if we are not loved in return....
Generally these are people who have reached a level of yoga that is quite advanced.

But we still insist that our love is accepted....
Yes, I know that from personal experience. There comes a time when one is quite capable of loving without any return; one is above the need to be loved, but there is still not exactly a need, but a feeling that it should be felt and have an effect. Later one can smile at that.

Finally we love purely and simply with no other need and no other joy than that of loving.
And that love, I know myself, is all-powerful.
SRI AUROBINDO AND AVATARHOOD

When you say that I could do this only in my case because I am an Avatar (!) and it is impossible in any other case, you reduce my sadhana to an absurdity and Avatarhood also to an absurdity. For my Yoga is done not for myself who need nothing and do not need salvation or anything else, but precisely for the earth-consciousness, to open a way to the earth-consciousness to change.

* *

I don’t know about Avatars. Practically what I know is that I had not all the powers necessary when I started, I had to develop them by Yoga.... My own idea of the matter is that the Avatar’s life and actions are not miracles, and if they were, his existence would be perfectly useless, a mere superfluous freak of Nature. He accepts the terrestrial conditions, he uses means, he shows the way to humanity as well as helps it. Otherwise what is the use of him and why is he here?

* *

Let me make it clear that in all I wrote I was not writing to prove that I am an Avatar! You are busy in your reasonings with the personal question, I am busy more with the general one. I am seeking to manifest something of the Divine that I am conscious of and feel—I care a damn whether that constitutes me an Avatar or something else. That is not a question which concerns me.
Ideas and Ideals

Some Passages from Sri Aurobindo

Compiler’s Note

‘Politics is the last refuge of a scoundrel’ is a definition in Samuel Johnson’s famous Dictionary. Does this mean that politics has no values, no ethics and a politician has no morals, no conscience? Sri Aurobindo writes at one place—‘I have done politics and the most violent kind of revolutionary politics, ghoram karma,... even though politics is not always or often a very clean occupation...’ But love is not an alien to politics—there is a place for love in politics. Hereunder are passages from Sri Aurobindo establishing the role of love in politics and some affirmed passages revealing the nature of the leadership.

G. P. Gupta

Love in Politics

Love is a sacred name, but it is easier to speak of love than to love. The love which drives out hate is a divine quality of which only one man in a thousand is capable. A saint full of love for all mankind possesses it, a philanthropist consumed with a desire to heal the miseries of the race possesses it, but the mass of mankind does not and cannot rise to the height. Politics is concerned with masses of mankind and not with individuals. To ask masses of mankind to act as saints, to rise to the height of divine love and practise it in relation to their adversaries or oppressors is to ignore human nature. It is to set a premium on injustice and violence by paralysing the hand of the deliverer when raised to strike. The Gita is the best answer to those who shrink from battle as a sin, and aggression as a lowering of morality.

Love has a place in politics, but it is the love of one’s country, for one’s countrymen, for the glory, greatness and happiness of the race, the divine ānanda of self-immolation for one’s fellows, the ecstasy of relieving their sufferings, the joy of seeing one’s blood flow for country and freedom, the bliss of union in death with the fathers of the race. The feeling of almost physical delight in the touch of the mother-soil, of the winds that blow from Indian seas, of the rivers that stream from Indian hills, in the hearing of Indian speech, music, poetry, in the familiar sights, sounds, habits, dress, manners of our Indian life, this is the physical root of that love. The pride in our past, the pain of our present, the passion for the future are its trunk and branches. Self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, great service, high endurance for the country are its fruit. And the sap which keeps it alive is the realisation of the Motherhood of God in the
country, the vision of the Mother, the knowledge of the Mother, the perpetual contemplation, adoration and service of the Mother.

Other love than this is foreign to the motives of political action. Between nation and nation there is justice, partiality, chivalry, duty, but not love. All love is either individual or for the self in the race or for the self in mankind. It may exist between individuals of different races, but the love of one race for another is a thing foreign to Nature. When therefore the boycott, as declared by the Indian race against the British, is stigmatised for want of love, the charge is bad psychology as well as bad morality. It is interest warring against interest, and hatred is directed not really against the race but against the adverse interest.

If hatred is demoralising, it is also stimulating. The web of life has been made a mingled strain of good and evil and God works His ends through the evil as well as through the good. Let us discharge our minds of hate, but let us not deprecate a great and necessary movement because, in the inevitable course of human nature, it has engendered feelings of hostility and hatred. If hatred came, it was necessary that it should come as a stimulus, as a means of awakening.

Justice and righteousness are the atmosphere of political morality, but the justice and righteousness of a fighter, not of the priest. Aggression is unjust only when unprovoked, violence, unjust when used wantonly or for unrighteous ends. It is a barren philosophy which applies a mechanical rule to all actions, or takes a word and tries to fit all human life into it.

The sword of the warrior is as necessary to the fulfilment of justice and righteousness as the holiness of the saint. Ramdas is not complete without Shivaji. To maintain justice and prevent the strong from despoiling, and the weak from being oppressed, is the function for which the Kshatriya was created. “Therefore,” says Sri Krishna in the Mahabharata, “God created battle and armour, the sword, the bow and the dagger.”

Man is of a less terrestrial mould than some would have him to be. He has an element of the divine which the politician ignores. The practical politician looks to the position at the moment and imagines that he has taken everything into consideration. He has, indeed, studied the surface and the immediate surroundings, but he has missed what lies beyond material vision. He has left out of account the divine, the incalculable in man, that element which upsets the calculations of the schemer and disconcerts the wisdom of the diplomat.

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, 1972, Vol 1, pp 124-128)

Leadership in Politics

Among many of those who are our leaders, there is a feeling of resentment... because there is so little recognition of their past services, so strong a disposition to find fault with their actions and question their authority. It is asked of us
whether we are going to upset all authority, disregard discipline and overthrow the natural preeminence of men who have long worked for their country. This question is the expression of an inevitable feeling of personal pique forced from them by the sense of exasperation which the loss of prestige and power cannot fail to create. If we answer this question at all, it is because it takes its stand on points of general importance instead of appearing in its native character of personal feeling.

The authority of a political leader depends on his capacity to feel and express the sentiments of the people who follow him; it does not reside in himself. He holds his position because he is a representative man, not because he is such and such an individual. To take the position that because he has led in the past therefore his word must be law so long as he lives is to ignore the root principles of political life. This past service can only give him the claim to be regarded as leader in preference to others so long as he voices the sentiments of the people and keeps pace with the tendencies of the time. The moment he tries to misuse his position in order to impose his own will upon the people, instead of making their will his own, he forfeits all claim to respect. If he has fallen behind the times, his only course is to stand aside; but to demand that because he is there and wishes to remain, the march of the world shall wait upon his fears and hesitations is to make a claim against which the reason and conscience of humanity rebels.... It is a vain and fantastic demand. This tide was not created by any human power, nor can any man impose on it a limit or a bourne. As well ask the thunderbolt to respect the tallest oaks or the avalanche to regulate the line of its descent so that ourselves may go safe, as ask this tremendous revolution to obey the will of the insignificant individuals whom chance has lifted to a momentary eminence. Nationalism is itself no creation of individuals and can have no respect for persons. It is a force which God has created, and from Him it has received only one command, to advance and advance and ever advance until He bids it stop, because its appointed mission is done. It advances, inexorably, blindly, unknowing how it advances, in obedience to a Power which it cannot gainsay, and every thing which stands in its way, man or institution, will be swept away, or ground into powder beneath its weight. Ancient sanctity, supreme authority, bygone popularity, nothing will serve as a plea.

It is not the fault of the avalanche if it sweeps away human life by its irresistible and unwilled advance; nor can it be imputed as moral obliquity to the thunderbolt that the oak of a thousand years stood precisely where its burning hand was laid. Not only the old leaders but any of the new men whom the tide has tossed up for a moment on the crest of its surges, must pay the penalty of imagining that he can control the ocean and impose on it his personal likes and desires. These are times of revolution when tomorrow casts aside the fame, popularity and pomp of today. The man whose carriage is today dragged through great cities by shouting thousands amid cries of “Bande Mataram” and showers
of garlands, will tomorrow be disregarded, perhaps hissed and forbidden to speak. So it has always been and none can prevent it. How can such and such a barrister, editor, professor whom his personal talents have brought forward for a time, say to Revolution, “Thou shalt be my servant” or to Chaos, “I will use thee as the materials of my personal aggrandisement”? As the pace of the movement is accelerated, the number of those who are left behind will increase. Men who are now acclaimed as Extremists, leaders of the forward movement, preachers of Nationalism, and embodiments of the popular feeling will tomorrow find themselves left behind, cast aside, a living monument of the vanity of personal ambition. The old leaders claim eternal leadership because they have rendered services—some few eloquent speeches or well-written petitions to wit; but because we are much older, those who are serving their country by personal suffering and self-sacrifice will find that they too must not presume on their services. Only the self-abnegation which effaces the idea of self altogether and follows the course of the revolution with a childlike belief that God is the leader and what He does is for the best, will be able to continue working for the country. Such men are not led by personal ambition and cannot therefore be deterred from following the will of God by personal loss of any kind.

Revolutions are incalculable in their goings and absolutely uncontrollable. The sea flows and who shall tell it how it is to flow? The wind blows and what human wisdom can regulate its motions? The will of Divine Wisdom is the sole law of revolutions and we have no right to consider ourselves as anything but mere agents chosen by that Wisdom. When our work is done, we should realise it and feel glad that we have been permitted to do so much. Is it not enough reward for the greatest services that we can do if our names are recorded in History among those who helped by their work or their speech or better, by the mute service of their sufferings to prepare the great... Nay, is it not enough if unnamed and unrecorded except in the Books of God, we go down to the grave with the consciousness that our finger too was laid on the great Car and may have helped, however imperceptibly, to push it forward? This talk of services is a poor thing after all. Do we serve the Mother for a reward or do God’s work for hire? The patriot lives for his country because he must; he dies for her because she demands it. That is all.

The two interlaced triangles of Sri Aurobindo’s symbol are known in other traditions as the Seal of Solomon and the Star of David. They are also a Tantric Yantra, one of the forms of the Chakra of Vishnu. The origin of this ancient symbol is lost in antiquity: in the words of one authority “it is as old as man”.

In Sri Aurobindo’s symbol the two interlocking triangles enclose a square, within which is a lotus flower with three leaves floating on water. The whole design manifests a sequence of numbers: one square; two triangles, three lotus-pads; four lotus petals in the back row; five in the middle row; six in the front and seven lines representing the water.

The present form of the symbol evolved over many years. Early drawings of the Mother dated 1909-1912 are proof of her interest in the triangles (which she called ‘Solomon’s Seal’), and the square as a symbol of a perfect fourfold realisation. These sketches date from a time prior to the Mother’s first meeting with Sri Aurobindo. She was certainly familiar with their occult meaning through her studies with Max Theon, who had used a symbol very similar to that of Sri Aurobindo as early as 1902.

At times different versions of the symbol found their way into print and the final definitive form did not appear until 1964. The Mother has explained its meaning as follows:

“The descending triangle represents Sat-Chit-Ananda. The ascending triangle represents the aspiring answer from matter under the form of light, life and love. The junction of both—the central square—is the perfect manifestation having at its centre the Avatar of the Supreme—the lotus. The water inside the square represents the multiplicity, the creation.”

Sri Aurobindo has also written about the square as a symbol of complete creation.
In the Hindu tradition the triangles represent Shiva and Shakti: “The triangle of Shiva has its point at the top and the triangle of Shakti is directed downward. The top symbolises the pole of the spirit and the bottom the pole of manifestation.... Traditionally the three points of the triangles represent Ichchha, Jnana and Kriya. Ichchha is desire or will. Kriya is activity. Jnana is Gnosis, God-realisation. They are potential on the Shiva triangle and manifest dynamically on the Shakti triangle. In the tantric tradition these triangles are called Kamakala. Kama means desire and kala means space, or limitation. These triangles are said to be the ‘mula’ or ‘root’ of all mantras or words of tradition.” (G.H. Mees, Revelation in the Wilderness, Bk. 3.)

Some scholars believe that the interlaced triangles, the Seal of Solomon, is the seal mentioned in the Book of Revelation, that most mystical and mysterious of the Christian scriptures: “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying: Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads.” This is the seal then, symbolising the perfection of consciousness, which will preserve mankind in the hour of trial and enable those who bear the “seal of the living God” on their foreheads to pass through many dangers.

There is a curious parallel to this idea in a reply given by the Mother to someone who asked what would happen to the people who aspired to Sri Aurobindo’s yoga when they passed through the gates of death—would their faith in Sri Aurobindo protect them through a difficult passage through the vital plane? The Mother said that such people would be protected, and added that she had seen many pass safely through all dangers, because they bore on their foreheads the symbol of Sri Aurobindo.

SONIA DYNE

(Acknowledgments to Sri Aurobindo Society, Singapore, Newsletter, November 1993)
THE MOTHER’S WAYS AND WORKINGS*

1

It used to happen so often—and it still happens—that many would see the Mother’s figure coming to them in hours of crisis and seeing them through. The Mother might or might not be aware of it in her external consciousness. When Sri Aurobindo was asked about this phenomenon he explained that whenever a link was formed between the Mother and an individual, an emanation of the Mother would go to that person and be with him always. It is that emanation that takes the Mother’s form and does whatever is needed. The Mother explains elsewhere that this emanation automatically communicates the situation to the central Consciousness and that report is registered there for her to summon whenever necessary.

A disciple once wrote to the Mother mentioning the difficulties with which he was surrounded and expressed his helplessness in finding a way out. When she read the letter, she observed that the being of the disciple had already come and told her of those developments. And of course she had taken steps to relieve the stress. However preoccupied she might be, an intense call or a sincere vibration would never fail to reach her and draw her attention. There was always a part of her that was kept open to these calls and needs of those who looked up to her—not only in the Ashram but outside as well.

Within the Ashram she created a special conscious atmosphere which responded helpfully to every one according to his need. That atmosphere continues to this day—ten years after her passing—and is experienced in its action by everyone in the smallest detail. Apart from this general disposition of her consciousness, she would specially concentrate and put a formation around an individual for his protection and help, in special circumstances. Once it so happened that early in the morning she saw—in her vision—a crow hovering around a sadhak in the Ashram; she placed a formation of her consciousness around him but did not speak to him of it. Later in the day it transpired that someone went to assault him but somehow the sadhak was not found in his usual place and thus he escaped the danger. These protective formations were put out for limited purposes and limited periods. They would unfailingly report to her—in various ways—the state of the person so guarded and keep up a living communication, irrespective of whether he was conscious of it or not.

On the point of whether one’s receiving the help or being aware of the action of her Force depends upon the state of the person, the Mother says that indeed much depends upon it but not exclusively. Things can impose themselves upon the consciousness of the person in keeping with the progress in the

stabilisation and organisation of the supramental influence in the collectivity. The more the progress on the higher levels, the greater the impact on the movement below.

One is never alone. In the Mother’s writings there is always a network of conscious forces making up for individual deficiencies. What is required at all times is SINCERITY.

The Mother was active throughout the day, from morning to evening. Her day would start much before dawn and was filled with work of all kinds, at all levels, and receiving people continuously. The only rest she would take was after a light lunch for less than an hour. The day would end at no fixed hour. It could be eleven or twelve at night or even later. Thereafter she would “retire”. That did not mean she went to sleep. In fact she would enter into a more intense phase of activity—in her subtle body. It was a kind of continuation of the day; only she was not then confined to the Ashram precincts.

During her out-of-body activities she would visit sadhaks in the Ashram and attend to their inner needs. She had hinted to them that it would be good if they went to bed early in the proper mood of sadhana so that they would be in a properly receptive condition when she called on them. It is not that every one of us was aware of her coming. Not all were conscious to that extent. But some would remember having met the Mother in dream and she would confirm the report with a smile the next day.

The Mother would also visit other places on earth wherever she had occult work to do. Either it would be part of her programme or a call from somewhere which could not be fully attended to during the day when she had so much else to do. She would also visit other planes and worlds and participate in the Divine’s Work there. She would occasionally describe her encounters with the beings of these worlds and what happened there was determinative of many things on earth later.

The Mother had such a vast consciousness and incredible range of action that nothing was excluded from her comprehension. It began with the sadhaks in the Ashram. Sri Aurobindo observes that the Mother would contain and hold them within herself. That is how she was aware of the slightest movement in them if she chose to take notice of it. It was our experience that the Mother grew in us, somewhat in the manner of the Vedic Agni or Indra taking birth and growing in the person of the Rishi. So often it happened that to meet her physically was a continuation of the interchange from the point that had been arrived at on the subtler plane.

The Mother explains that hers were relationships of states of being, of consciousness. The relations would be different on different levels in the being of
the same individual. She speaks of some who were wholly within her as if they were herself; some with whom she had an interchange, maybe an intimate one; some who were known and with whom relationships were less close.

Naturally it was difficult for the human mind to understand these intricacies of her workings. It was just not possible to anticipate what she would say or do; she always had a surprise. She would answer the same question from two individuals differently; she would respond to two similar situations in dissimilar ways. No wonder Sri Aurobindo wrote that even the quickest human intelligence could not follow her movements. Her measures were not the measures of the human mind.

She functioned simultaneously on so many levels of consciousness. Her physical movements were the least important of her workings; they could not be understood without some inkling of her inner dispositions. The common mind would be often baffled in the absence of the necessary background but those who were open to her, in harmony with her, would understand and in the measure of their understanding marvel at her godly ways.

Madhav Pandit
TO THE MOTHER

Mother of Worlds, who rulest supreme
   Above the mystic’s dream;
Who turnest thy Being to myriad forms:
   Mother of quakes and storms,
Mother of tense tranquillity;
   Mother enslaved and free:
The fetters are fallen from thy sweet
   Immaculate feet!

Mother of peace, Mother of strife,
   Mother of death and life,
Of rivers that flow and rivers that dry,
   Of a kind or unkind sky;
Mother of pastures and fields that bless,
   Mother of the wilderness:
The fetters are fallen from thy feet,
   Mother most sweet!

Yet why no answer?... Here, I bring
   All my wealth for offering.
The garlands are woven, the flames go up;
   Lo, I have filled the cup
With sacred waters from thy well;
   I have rung the holy bell.
Mother, why still on this solemn day
   Are thine eyes turned away?

What more wouldst thou have? What is thy will?
   What wouldst thou bid us still?
Lo, I have swept the temple floor,
   Anointed the fretted door;
The drums have rattled, and the temple priest
   Has been paid for the feast;
The ancienest hymns thy glory are exalting:
   Mother, why art thou halting?

Mother, did I see a fire in thine eyes?
   Lo, I have been almost wise:
I have hated with reason; I have stretched my greed
   Not much beyond my need:
TO THE MOTHER

Long have I known each man my brother,
   Except just one or another ..
Thine eyes are stern and alien still:
   Mother, what is thy will?

Long years ago, by my mother’s hand,
   Before I could understand,
I toddled to church to kneel and pray
   On just this Day,
To see God’s angels thy Body assume
For the Child of thy womb.
Mother, thine eyes then were heavenly mild,
   And turned upon thy child!

Mother of the seven-sworded breast,
   Mother of peace and rest,
In thy hand the seven swords flash and flame,
   Thine eyes are lashed in shame!
What gods are stirring in the gloom
   Of thy restless womb?
What golden worlds wouldst thou create,
   Mother immaculate?

Behold, I am casting all sins away
   Upon this Day:
All darkness and all pride surrender
   Unto thy Splendour,
Mother of Worlds, Mother of God,
   Crowned with the heavens and shod,
Great Mother India, Mother divine,
   O Mother mine!

Dharwar, 14-8-47

Editor’s Note

The author of this poem, a Roman Catholic, was at college with me and later used to visit the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. The poem seems to combine devotion to the Ashram’s Mother with that to the Virgin Mother of Roman Catholicism, whose traditional day of assumption to heaven in her physical body is August 15,
the birthday of Sri Aurobindo. The assumption, according to our Mother, symbolises the transformation of Matter, the aim of Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga. The symbolism is in the reverse direction: Matter rising into divinity rather than divinity descending into Matter to completely change it in every way into a godlike substance

MEDHANANANDA

Medhananda left his body on May 26th, 1994, just under 3 months after his 86th birthday. Born in Germany on February 28, 1908, he was educated as a lawyer, but left his country during the Nazi ascendance in the 1930s. He settled in Tahiti, spending many months in solitude on a remote island where he had many profound experiences. After he joined the Ashram in 1952 the Mother gave him his name, meaning “Bliss in the Mind”, and put him in charge of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Library. His wide and profound culture, originality of vision and trenchant humour of expression have been a source of delight and illumination to many, perhaps reaching their widest audience through his many-sided contributions to the journal “= 1”. In recent years he was exploring the psychological symbolism of Egyptian hieroglyphs in the light of Sri Aurobindo’s vision.
Apropos of the topic of people doing pranams to sadhaks and receiving their blessings, a number of points have been raised for consideration. The most significant of them is "A sadhak may not desire pranams, but if somebody on his own wants to do them, the sadhak does not interfere he allows them. There is no desire or wish involved. Is there anything here to find fault with?"

The situation presented in the question is not quite as simple as it looks. The person who allows pranams on the terms mentioned may be perfectly honest and unassuming and have a genuine consideration for the psychological needs of those who want to do pranams to him. But what may start as a harmless and even benevolent affair may develop certain kinks and complexities. These may not always come to the surface in the consciousness of the sadhak concerned but may gradually go to the making of a particular constant attitude in him which may not be to his own good or other people's.

First of all, pranams repeated day after day are bound to set up a mechanism of expectation. They become a part of the sadhak's habitual relationship with others and there lies the danger of a desire or wish germinating. Here is a very natural psychological process. From this desire or wish a slowly and subtly gathering sense is likely to arise of what is due to one. And from that sense the step to a feeling of one's implicit superiority to others and of a general guruship is easy. The urge of benevolence and helpfulness to people could still be authentically there. But the movement of doing good may not now be from the same level as at the beginning; it may be from a slight self-elevation and this new poise may keep on increasing until one comes to have the established impression of an acknowledged guru's gadi under one.

Secondly, although one does not ask anybody to do pranams, one sets by accepting them an example to those who have not done them yet. These people may be wondering what they should do. They come with admiration and even reverence to whoever has been long in Yoga and is really in a position to give help both by his words and by his presence. They do not know what their approach as seekers should be and what outward relationship they should have with the object of their admiration and reverence. Especially in India, where a variety of approaches and relationships on the outer plane is possible, the question becomes more pointed. The point becomes still more keen when Westerners come here and sincerely want to be Indianised in order to make the spiritual life more concrete and quick-moving. Seeing others easily go down on their knees and marking no reluctance at all in the one to whom this gesture is made, all these people get encouraged to respond with the same gesture. This effect on them amounts to their being tacitly invited to do pranams.
All the circumstances involved would tend to turn pranam-making into what, if we rightly interpret certain statements of Sri Aurobindo, would be disapproved by him—namely, a kind of cult and a shadow of the Mother’s role vis-à-vis the sadhaks. Such a result cannot but be a hindrance to the Motherward development in both the sides concerned in this particular spiritual exchange. The receiver of the pranams would interfere in the continuity he has inwardly to maintain of surrender to the Mother and self-effacement before her. He may sincerely try to invoke her presence and offer up to her the gesture addressed to him; but if the latter has become part of a habitual, repeating, cultic process, such an attitude of consciousness is practically impossible and the element of personal self mostly replaces the sense of being a medium. As for the pranam-makers, the frequent recurrence of the gesture is bound to focus the consciousness on the pranam-receiver rather than on the Mother whose disciple they know him to be. As the physical act of going down on their knees concentrates and culminates the movement of devotion, the inner sidetracking and substitution run the risk of being firmly established. Not that they will derive no spiritual benefit from what they do, but they will not, on the whole, put themselves into the full direct contact with that unique creative fountain of the infinite supramental light that is the Mother.

Finally, there are certain dangers or at least challenges for the pranam-receiver, attendant on his getting into a cultic stream. By the momentum of this stream many movements in the beings of the pranam-makers begin naturally to flow out into him. Of course, something of him will flow out into them. This may mean their getting a strong touch of his qualities and his getting a strong touch of their defects. More probably what would happen is that a sort of mixture is created of the two consciousnesses and there will be again and again an activation of this ever-present pull in two directions with a little yet not very significant variation. After a while a stagnancy, merely surface-stirred, of spiritual life comes about—unless the pranam-receiver is able to make a great deal of inner progress by a supernormal self-purification in the intervals between the pranam-periods. Such a refreshing of one’s being at the secret sources of light is not very likely because the cultic rhythm usually becomes dominant, and the mélange produced by it will not allow an easy break-away towards those deeper springs. In order to remain unaffected by the haunting influence of that rhythm, one has to be very powerfully above the general psychological level of the people one accepts into one’s consciousness.

All these, of course, are general observations. There is bound to be exceptional circumstances in certain respects and some modification may have to be made of my line of thought. But, by and large, the picture presented here is likely to stand and may serve as a broad guide to both the receiver and the maker of pranams.

(1976)

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Your bringing up an old though very important spiritual issue for fresh discussion is welcome, for I have chanced upon a statement by Sri Aurobindo which clearly and conclusively reinforces the stand I have taken along with Nolini that bodily transformation is postponed, though not cancelled.

Before I exhibit my trouvaille let me touch on the old bones of contention you have dug up. There are four points here from my side:

1) Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were to be the first to achieve bodily supramentalisation. Here Sri Aurobindo’s declaration to me to the effect that if supramentalisation is not done in him it cannot be done in others is the central truth. Of course, we could substitute the Mother when Sri Aurobindo for reasons of his own pulled his body out of the transformative process.

2) If the Mother also withdrew from her body the immediate individual process of transformation of the body came to a halt. No doubt, a lot of Yogic progress was still possible, but the final leap to the transformation of the gross-physical substance, ensuring freedom from disease, ageing and death, was rendered impossible at the present stage of mankind.

3) Since the Supermind began to manifest on a universal scale on 29 February 1956 in the subtle-physical layer of the earth, the ultimate evolution of a new race at a future time when the Supermind would emerge into the earth’s gross-physical stuff is a certainty. This future evolutionary certainty coupled with the present individual impossibility is what I mean when I support Nolini’s dictum.

4) The postponement is in force not only because Sri Aurobindo and the Mother left the transformative process uncompleted in their own bodies. It is in force also because of the fact driven home in several pronouncements to the effect that without the Guru’s physical presence the advanced stages, the crucial and even dangerous turning-points in this process, cannot be achieved.

Against all this you trump up one phrase of the Mother’s in a talk with Manoj Dasgupta, where on being asked whether bodily transformation could be done by oneself she does not deny the possibility but at once adds that in her experience the Guru’s working has always been necessary for spiritual turning-points. You try to make out that such working where people other than the Mother are concerned has not been needed and you add that the silent mind came to the Mother from Sri Aurobindo whereas others have had it on their own. You are right in the one example you give—Sri Aurobindo’s silent mind, though it followed his carrying out of Lele’s instruction to feel thoughts as coming from outside and to repulse them, was not transmitted by Lele, unlike the Mother’s complete silence of mind which was gifted at one sitting by Sri Aurobindo. From this you seem to conclude that, whatever be the Mother’s outlook on gifts from the Guru, spiritual results like the silent mind can come without the Guru’s direct agency. Ergo, Guruless bodily transformation must be possible.
This is a *non-sequitur*. First of all, silence of the mind cannot be put on a par with transformation of the body. What Sri Aurobindo calls in *Savitri*

The breathless might and calm of silent mind

is nothing supremely exceptional. Techniques to obtain it have existed in India and elsewhere from ancient times. The very first sutra of Patanjali’s Raja Yoga asks for it: *chitta-vruti-nirodha* (“subdue the quiverings of the consciousness”). The transformation of the body which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were after has never yet been done. The Mother said that hers was the first human body to undertake on Sri Aurobindo’s command this radical experiment. May I request you to consider the implications of what the Mother’s body was meant to be and to do? Let me remind you of my report of a half-whispered semi-soliloquy by the Mother as once she passed by me in the afternoon on her way to her brief postprandial siesta. Its gist was the supreme importance of keeping one body somehow going. Surely the implication was that everything hinged on what her body alone could or would do in the matter of physical supramentalisation. If everything depended on only her body, how could anyone else’s be meant in the quote you offer of the Mother’s declaration to Champaklal soon after the supramental manifestation on February 29, 1956, that “she was now free to go and to make way for another body to complete the transformation”? You argue that she meant someone else’s body; I that she had in view a future body of her own on earth to complete the individual body’s transformation within the context of the universal manifestation which was evidently a further step in the general history of earthly evolution. My argument is. “If everything hung on the unique body that was hers, the body that was to be kept going, ‘another body’ could only mean a body she would have to take up in the future by rebirth to replace the present one which might not prove adequate.”

Perhaps we could validly ask here why the Mother suggested that she had done what had been necessary and her present body was no longer needed. Undoubtedly, both she and Sri Aurobindo had been working for the supramentalisation of their individual bodies and not just for the manifestation of a general supramental consciousness, light, force, etc. and that too in the earth’s subtle-physical layer. Could she have felt or intuited that the full individual work would not be accomplished by her in this life of hers? Your reply, in spite of all that I have already urged, will be that, for whatever reason, she was ready to give up her body and had in mind the body of Nolini or Champaklal or Dyuman or Pavitra or Amrita or Satprem to fulfil the work Sri Aurobindo had assigned to her: namely, “our Yoga of supramental descent and transformation.”

Now is the moment for me to set forth my discovery to drive home my long-held conviction that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother insisted that their bodily presence—or at least the presence of one of the two bodies—was a *sine qua non*
for the ultimate transformation of any disciple of theirs.

On p. 505 of *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* (1953 edition), I found the following:

Q.—Is there any special effect of physical nearness to the Mother?
A.—It is indispensable for the fullness of the sadhana on the physical plane. Transformation of the physical material being is not possible otherwise.

Sri Aurobindo’s answer should put a *finis* to all talk of anyone undergoing the physical and material being’s transformation on his own. Even by itself the talk appears to be no more than “sounding brass or tinkling cymbal” without the necessary background being perceived—in the person you refer to—of a supramentalised mind and vital force led by the inmost soul permeated by the supramental divinity. Is there any sign of such a background in this person whose claim for his body’s progress you are inclined not to brush aside even in spite of your saying: “Normally I have little sympathy for him and his often aggressive self-assertion”? I don’t think there is any other claimant in the field. What you write seems to want a rival to him. You have a strangely prophetic paragraph, beginning:

“... there is a surprising further possibility. It is that of the extraordinary prediction concerning your own body...”

I may mention that neither Sri Aurobindo nor the Mother made “the extraordinary prediction” as an unconditional bonus, though the Mother always said it would anyhow be fulfilled. However, her departure renders its ultimate terms unfulfillable, while leaving the future open about the intermediate ones. Even the latter have to be set in the context of the extreme locomotive disabilities obtaining at present. 

(29 4.1994)

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I am glad we have reached agreement about the impossibility of physical transformation without the Guru’s embodied presence guiding and guarding the process. In a tit for my tat of convicting you of a *non-sequitur* you have brought up my speaking in the same breath of the silent mind experienced by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and “the mind from thought released” achieved by several spiritual aspirants. Though my comparison was mistaken it was in the same universe of discourse: your lumping together an almost initial thing like mental silence with a supreme and ultimate, hitherto-unaccomplished thing like bodily supramentalisation was like comparing “a Hyperion to a satyr”, as your favourite store of quotations would say. However, I have no mind particularly to decide who should be chosen to wear the crown of a dunce’s cap in the realm of irrelevance. There are more important matters to dwell upon.
The impression I get from your letter is that, according to you, the most important matter is the prolongation of life at will. Since the final transformation cannot be done unless the Mother is again on the earth, the power of life-prolongation in a spiritually developing sadhak would enable him to wait, “perhaps for centuries, for the Mother’s return to make possible the ultimate step”. Here, I think, we have to distinguish between some sort of ability to carry on for a long time in a state of tolerable health and the confident mastery over the body’s functions on the way to a change into a physical condition immune to disease, degeneration and death. I am afraid the latter is beyond any attainment short of physical supramentalisation. Sri Aurobindo has summed up the attainment in question: “Naturally, the release from subconscious ignorance and from disease, duration of life at will, and a change in the functionings of the body must be among the ultimate elements of a supramental change...” (Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother, 1953 ed., p 382). It seems that nothing short of the process of supramentalisation of the body can lead to “duration of life at will”.

Since such duration hinges on immunity in the body, let me cite another passage: “As for the question about the illness, perfection in the physical plane is indeed part of the ideal of the Yoga, but it is the last item and, so long as the fundamental change has not been made in the material consciousness to which the body belongs, one may have a certain perfection on other planes without having immunity in the body. We have not sought perfection for our own separate sake, but as part of a general change—creating a possibility of perfection for others. That could not have been done without our accepting and facing the difficulties of the realisation and transformation and overcoming them for ourselves. It has been done to a sufficient degree on the other planes—but not yet on the most material part of the physical plane Till it is done the fight continues and, though there may be and is a force of Yogic action and defence, there cannot be immunity The Mother’s difficulties are not her own; she bears the difficulties of others and those that are inherent in the general action and working for the transformation. If it had been otherwise, it would be a very different matter.” (Ibid., pp 390-91).

Here we have more than one issue involved. It is suggested that if the Mother were not loaded with others’ impedimenta she could compass complete immunity—that is, easily acquire supramentalisation of the body. It is also suggested that none of her disciples has been or will be capable of going on in the transformative Yoga without her aid. The further suggestion is that, unlike the situation on the subtle planes, immunity to the full on the most material plane is still lacking. The overall suggestion we catch is that bodily supramentalisation alone can confer total immunity. So your idea that one may spiritually continue immune for centuries until such supramentalisation is bestowed by the physical return of the Mother in a far future is Utopian: it is self-contradictory.
Evolutionary supramentalisation in the course of thousands of years, with the help of the supramental manifestation that has already laid its base in the earth’s history through the earth’s subtle-physical layer on 29 February 1956, seems now to be the only thing possible.

I say “now”, meaning a point of time with an extensive vista ahead, in a distant part of which the Mother will make her presence physical again. You are sceptical of her come-back because you can’t think of her starting life again under all the petty circumstances of childhood and school-life due to ignorant parents and silly tutors. According to me, rebirth need not be a degrading process. The Mother’s own childhood and girlhood as well as her womanhood were fairly radiant. But for her to return to earth-life she need not go through all these stages. She has posed as a possibility her merger with a finely developed body already existing. A great, even radical change would then take place in the life of that body, along with its consciousness, and the Mother who has worked in Sri Aurobindo’s Ashram in our day would stand before the world to carry on her mission of physical supramentalisation using fully the general influence of the universal Supermind that has already manifested as a background power. Because of this supporting light mankind would be more receptive and her toil towards total transformation of not only her own new embodiment but also, along with it, that of her followers’ bodies would be like sun and rain bringing about the opening of flowers instead of the hard labour it has been during her recent life-span in our Ashram—our “blooming” Ashram as a sour critic might say, keeping up the floral imagery.

In such a role she would prepare our own reborn selves as well as others for the time when, according to the promise given to her during the days Sri Aurobindo’s body was lying in state, he would come back in a supramental body built in a supramental way. That hour would mark the two greatest victories of terrestrial history: the Mother sitting as the pioneer of the human supramentalised side by side with Sri Aurobindo as the initiator of the supramental humanised.

(28 5.1994)

Your vision of me is essentially the vision of the god hidden in man and waiting to be brought forth from behind the veil. It goes far beyond the day-to-day Amal with all his deficiencies. Somehow you have seen the luminous secrecy already in the midst of things mortal. No doubt, I aspire at all hours to manifest the divine truth which is the supreme ideal behind the evolving real. As a result, these all-too-fallible eyes reflect on occasion some lustre of the Impeccable. But oh so far still is the reflection from the actual splendour-source!

Yours is a peep into the future—and so forceful is the peep that I feel the future hastened. The dreamer in me is activated beyond his usual capacity and
stirred to wake into the daylight of divinity as soon as possible. Thanks for your deep faith in my endeavour to draw within our hazy human formula the sheer purple of the Sovereign and the Perfect.

One must guard against getting puffed up with a dear friend’s high estimate, but if humbly received, with an awareness of the Infinite which can never be compassed, no matter how lofty our climb, such an estimate can serve to pull one nearer

“The joy that beckons from the impossible.”  (18 5.1994)

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I am sure you have a mind of a really good quality, with a capacity to enhance its natural talent with a golden touch from the Mother. Don’t waste the gift the Divine has graced you with. With a calm, poised, inwardly dedicated attitude go ahead with your studies, so that your MD may mean at the same time Medicinae Doctor and “Mother’s Devotee”. If you neglect your talent, you won’t be serving the Divine as the Divine wishes you to do. You’ll finally stultify the light that has been placed in your brain: then you will achieve another sort of MD, standing for “Mentally Deficient”.

It is an error to believe that true sadhana can’t go on side by side with solid work—intellectual or physical Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga is a dynamic one, not one whose object is omphaloskepsis, “navel-gazing”. Channelling your mental energy into useful learning, with a consecrated temper which keeps Yoga running alongside one’s studies: that seems to me the career marked out for you. Then even the hostile attacks will diminish. They find easy entry into your mind at present because it is not fruitfully directed and occupied.

Thanks for occasionally praying for me. I am certain I’ll benefit by every sincere and affectionate prayer on my behalf. I shall on my side make it a point to offer you to the Mother at the Samadhi.  

(1989) 

AMAL KIRAN  
(K.D. SETHNA)
Experiences on the Way

A Dream-Vision

Recently, I had a very interesting dream. It may even be called a vision. I was sleeping in the afternoon when I saw a picture etched in the sky. Two huge elephants, their trunks upraised, were lifting their front feet in a desperate effort to touch the chariot of Lord Krishna. Sri Krishna stood in the chariot, the reins gathered in his hands, his eyes brilliant with light as he gazed straight ahead. Meanwhile, every time the elephants tried to put their feet on the chariot they failed, which made them try all the more violently only to fail repeatedly. Behind the elephants a cyclone raged.

Suddenly I woke up, astonished at what I had seen, and immediately asked the Guru if the vision had any meaning.

Sri Aurobindo explained as follows: "The elephants represented your Chatya Purusha. They wanted to do pranam to Sri Krishna, but could not touch his chariot. The storm behind was the symbol of your vital urges to do the pranam."

I asked what Chatya Purusha meant, and he said, "Ask Nirod." (Nirod-da later explained to me that it is the Psychic Being)

"Then what does it all mean?" I asked. "Won't I be able to do pranam? Is it due to some fault on my part?"

"Not exactly. Sri Krishna is not so easily available; it is always difficult to approach him. Perhaps you need to do more sadhana. You have been inclined to him from your childhood and have always wanted to see him, but you must pay for the privilege."

"But you said Sri Krishna and yourself are one," I interjected.

"That's true, but you wanted especially to see him; if it had been me you had wanted to see, it would have been easier."

"Then why can't you fulfil my aspiration by your Grace?"

"That I can't. I can only give you my blessings."

"Then what should I do?"

"You must aspire strongly. Aspiration alone can get your wish granted."

For some time afterwards I thought of my intense desire to see Lord Krishna—not in a dream or a vision, but as tangibly as I could see Nirod-da or other people. And I don't want to die without seeing him.

(To be continued)
There was a quick spread of nameless terror, and the situation grew every hour more and more ominous and menacing. As the Bande Mataram said “The grim forces that have been moving under the surface will now find the field open to them by the shattering of the keystone of the old political edifice... The fair hopes of an orderly and peaceful evolution of self-government, which the first energies of the new movement had fostered, are gone for ever. Revolution, bare and grim, is preparing her battle-field, mowing down the centres of order which were evolving a new cosmos and building up the materials of a gigantic downfall and a mighty new-creation. We could have wished it otherwise but God’s will be done.”

Sri Aurobindo was passively consenting to the bomb-making scheme, terrorism and the plan for killing Tardivel, the Mayor of Chandernagore, and Kingsford. It seemed typical of his attitude. At that time he was deeply engrossed in writing Bande Mataram. “Besides contributing most of the paper’s editorials he had to struggle against its mounting deficit. He sometimes spent the morning trying to sell some company shares so that the paper could survive another day... If he had any free time he devoted it to his yogic practice. When there was a lull at work he often passed into meditation. If someone came to see him he at once began to speak or write a needed article; but as soon as the visitor departed he went back to his meditation.”

“On 5 April a particularly important meeting took place at Scott’s Lane. Barin and Upen wanted to talk over the situation in Chandernagore with Aurobindo. The town’s mayor, L. Tardivel, had recently taken steps to control the arms traffic between French and British India. He had also begun to interfere with the activities of local Extremists. On 3 April he banned a meeting that was to be addressed by Bāpin Chandra Pal. For these reasons Charu Chandra Roy, the leader of the Chandernagore secret society, decided that Tardivel must be eliminated. Misri Babu, a zamindar of neighbouring Uttarpara, put up the money for the job. Upen, a former member of the Chandernagore group, wanted the Garden society to take part. Barin also thought it would make a good ‘action’. The two came to Scott’s Lane to get Aurobindo’s approval. According to Abinash, who was present, the conversation ran something like this:

Barın: Sejda [older brother], I want to kill the mayor of Chandernagore.
Aurobindo: Why?
Barın: He broke up a swadeshi meeting and oppressed the local people.
Aurobindo: So he ought to be killed? How many people will you kill in this way? I cannot give my consent. Nothing will come of it.
Barın: No, Sejda, if this isn’t done, these oppressors will never learn the
lesson we have to teach them.

Aurobindo: Very well. If that's what you think, do it.”

Sri Aurobindo came with his wife on 28th April 1908, from Scott’s Lane to the Nabashakti office at 48 Grey Street and was preparing the plan of Nabashakti. Abinash and Sailen who were working at the Jugantar office were shifted to the Nabashakti office along with Sri Aurobindo.

“.... Detectives took note of the removal and also of the visits that various members of the society, among them Narendra Nath Goswami, paid to the office.”

On settling at Grey Street Sri Aurobindo began a new routine of life. Mostly he was busy with the editorials which were concerned with the conflict between the Extremists and the Moderates.

At a meeting at Allahabad on 19 April 1908 the Moderate leaders excluded the Extremists and adopted the four tenets which had been drafted at Surat as the ‘Official Congress creed’. On observing the situation Sri Aurobindo found that the Extremists had been excluded. He commented in ‘apocalyptic’ terms. on 29th April:

“The times are thickening already with the shadow of a great darkness. The destruction of the Congress, begun at Surat and accomplished at Allahabad, is the prelude for the outburst of the storm that has long been brewing. Great issues were involved in that historic struggle at Surat of which none of the actors were aware. Only posterity looking back with awe on the sequel, will date the commencement of the real world-shaking earthquake from that slight ruffling of the untroubled surface of the soil. The forces that sent that slight quiver of the earth to the surface are hidden as yet from the eye of contemporary politics or only dimly guessed by a few, but within a brief period they will have declared themselves to the amazement of those who thought that they were only playing a clever tactical game with the lifeless figures of a puppet show.”

Barn selected Prafulla and Khudiram to kill Kingsford. The day Sri Aurobindo’s article appeared in Bande Mataram Khudiram and Prafulla went to the maidan (when a football game was played opposite to the Muzaffar club) and observed the movements of Kingsford and the whole situation. That evening they came back to the maidan carrying a small tin box.

Peter Heehs writes:

“They walked twenty yards down the road, then turned into the maidan. Nobody was playing football, as they went near the goalpost and took out the bomb. Leaving the box behind, they walked to a place across from Kingsford’s house where the road was bordered with trees. Here they hid; took off their shoes, and waited. It grew very dark, for it was Amavasya, the night of the new moon.”

“Kingsford was playing bridge in the club with his wife and the wife and daughter of his friend Pringle-Kennedy. A pleader at the Muzaffarpur Bar,
Pringle Kennedy was a graduate of Calcutta University. No typical Anglo-Indian, he had taken part in several sessions of the Indian National Congress. His wife and daughter Grace, a ‘tall, good-looking young lady’, were popular with the local English society. Around eight-thirty the foursome finished their last rubber. Bidding the Kingsfords good-night, Mrs and Miss Kennedy got into their carriage and started for home. The Kingsfords followed in an almost identical carriage, drawn like the Kennedys’ by a single bay horse.

“As the first carriage passed Kingsford’s driveway, Khudiram and Prafulla ran out from under the trees. The coachman and the syce saw them coming. The syce cried out ‘ae ae’, but it was too late. Khudiram ran up to the carriage and threw the musket inside. There was a ‘terrific report and blinding flash’. Young Miss Kennedy, who absorbed most of the blast, suffered terrible injuries. Her mother’s wounds were almost as severe. The syce was hurled across the road as the back of the carriage was blown away. The horse bolted. Miss Kennedy fell backwards and was dragged behind the carriage, her long hair trailing in the dust. When the horse stopped, a man named Wilson ran up and extinguished the fire that was burning the upholstery and the ladies’ clothing. Then he had some men drag the carriage to Kingsford’s bungalow where he and the judge, who had reached home without realizing what had happened, carried the ladies into the house. Grace Kennedy died within the hour, her mother two days later.”

The attempt was made to kill Kingsford but he escaped. Instead two innocent ladies were killed. Nalinikanta reported:

“...we directed our efforts to shooting at the Lieutenant Governor, derailing his train, and assassinating tyrants in the official ranks, Governor Andrew Fraser, the District Magistrates Allen and Kingsford... there is one thing to be noticed about these attempts that at least in the earlier stages, almost all of them failed, with only one or two exceptions.”

“The moment the bomb exploded Khudiram and Prafulla started to run. The constables standing near the Club gave chase but soon lost the fugitives in the darkness. Another constable passed them on the road and called out but they ran on. When they reached the dharmasala they decided to split up. Khudiram covered twenty-four miles during the night, reaching the small town of Wani, eight miles from Samastipur Junction, the next morning. Entering a grocer’s shop near the station he asked for parched rice and water. While he was eating two men approached him and started asking questions. Flustered, he mixed up his story. Noticing that one of the men was wearing boots, he guessed the worst and fled. One of the constables tackled him from behind. In the tussle that followed a revolver fell from the bundle under Khudiram’s arm. He drew another but before he could fire he was overpowered. That afternoon he was taken to Muzaffarpur where he made a statement mentioning ‘Dinesh’ but taking full responsibility for the attack. He had done it himself, he said, because he had ‘the greater zeal (beshi iccha) for the work’. He regretted that he had
killed two memsahibs instead of Kingsford but otherwise showed no repentance.”9

Prafulla fled away from Muzaffarpur and reached Samastipur station. He bought a ticket for Mokameh. On the platform for the evening train he found a Bengali passenger named Nandalal. They came to know each other on the platform. When Prafulla talked to him, he learnt that Nandalal was travelling to the same place. Nandalal suspected Prafulla after talking with him. Both decided to get into the same compartment. “Prafulla had chosen bad company... Nandalal Banerjee, an off-duty Sub-Inspector who had just passed his leave in Muzaffarpur. Before leaving the town he had heard about the bombing and about the five-thousand-rupee reward. His suspicions about Prafulla grew stronger when he recognised the accent as that of East Bengal. Excusing himself Nandalal went to the station and sent a telegram to his grandfather, a government pleader in Muzaffarpur. He told him to go to the Police Superintendent or Magistrate to ask ‘whether I shall arrest [on] suspicion. The reply should be sent to Mokameh.’ ”10

Again Nandalal and Prafulla got into the same compartment for Mokameh. When the train reached Mokameh station and as they stepped down from the train, a policeman in plainclothes gave Nandalal a telegram. “It read ‘Arrest and bring the man here’. Nandalal turned to Prafulla and told him he was placing him under arrest. Prafulla broke away and dashed down the platform, pursued by a constable and the plainclothesman. They called to a local constable to cut him off. Prafulla drew his pistol and fired at his pursuers. Then, seeing that he was trapped, he raised the barrel to his throat and, just as he always said he would, pulled the trigger twice.”11

This reminds us of what Nolni Kanta Gupta has reported about Prafulla Chaki: “He used to say, taking a revolver in his hand, ‘I for one am not going to live on if they get hold of me. I shall neither be tortured by the police nor will I let their baits to confess tempt me. Look, this is the way I am going to finish myself.’ He would then open wide his mouth, push in the revolver muzzle and press the trigger with his fingers, adding, ‘This is the one sure way. In the other methods, one merely wounds oneself, very often with no serious danger to life. But it is much more risky to live on after getting wounded, isn’t it?’ Prafulla committed suicide after the Muzaffarpur bomb affair in exactly the way he had rehearsed. I should not say ‘suicide’, for it was really an act of martyrdom.”12

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS
References

1  Smt. Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Vol I, p 891
2  The Bomb in Bengal, By Peter Heehs, p 139
3  Ibid, p 138
4  Ibid, p 147
5  Smt. Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Vol I, pp 890-891
6  The Bomb in Bengal, By Peter Heehs, p 149
7  Ibid, pp 149, 150
8  Reminiscences, By Nolmi Kanta Gupta & K Amrita, p 13
9  The Bomb in Bengal, By Peter Heehs, p 150
10  Ibid, p 151
11  Ibid, p 152
12  Reminiscences, By Nolmi Kanta Gupta & K Amrita, pp 13, 14

MASTER OF THE SUN

O Master of the Sun,
Our luminous Guide!
A fleeting glimpse
Of the golden pennant,
Flying atop Thy chariot’s mast
As it passes afar,
Through the rare silence
That leaves the inner doors ajar,
And brings an enchanting ecstasy,
A fragrant Presence soothing and calm,
Penetrates the cruel desert, the sad mirage.
Like a new beginning after a deluge
A glorious dawn suffuses the spent forces of the Dark,
And the Eternal lotus in its infinite Radiance
Blooms anew in countless hearts.

SHYAM KUMARI
AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

BY HUTA

It is high time that certain matters were made clear as to whether I shall be the guardian of the Matrimandir or not. People have taken my guardianship for granted, however delayed it may be in achievement. But I have not yet made clear the final word: the word of my release from it by the Mother. Now I proceed to do so, sketching first the long background of its inception and then its relinquishment. Some other significant matters will also be brought out in the light of the Mother's views.

* *

In Golconde the room just after the one next to mine was occupied by an American lady. She kept opening and shutting the sliding doors with a loud noise. It was awfully irritating. I would wake up with a start. I would dig my two fingers into my ears waiting for a thunder clap! I could not sleep or read or do anything. All the time I was alert, anticipating this explosion I was not habituated to any such type of noise. I endured it for long. This alarming bang got on my over-wrought nerves. Eventually I reported it to the Mother. Her answer came:

My dear little child,
You did quite well in informing me of your difficulty—you must always tell me everything, knowing that I can understand you.
I heard, indeed, that Golconde is a rather noisy place and that is why I had thought of removing you to another house. But I have not seen myself this new house of which I was thinking, and I sent Dyuman to see it. He tells me that he does not think it is a suitable house for you. Therefore, I am trying to lessen the noise in Golconde, and you can, perhaps, remain there for some time more, until I can make the proper arrangements for you.
Hoping that things will become better.
With my love and blessings.

I was amazed, because I had never given the slightest thought to the subject—never mentioned to the Mother about any house. However, I left the matter to her.

* *

A big house—formerly called the Gospel House—was finally purchased by my whole family. The Mother's Will was fulfilled.
On 17-10-1956 I received a card showing a branch of flowers—*Nasturtium*. Underneath the picture were the Mother’s words: “Promise of realisation”, and these lines:

It is on Monday the 22nd that I shall go to your new house a little before 4 o’clock—I shall ask Udar to come also—and we shall see how to arrange it nicely.

All my love and blessings along with the constant Presence of the Grace never leave you even for a moment

Once again the Mother wrote on 22-10-56.

This afternoon at \( \frac{1}{4} \) to 4 (3.45) I shall come to “Huta’s House” because such will be its name henceforth.

With my love, and blessings along with the constant Presence of the Grace.

The Mother came and arranged everything according to her Will. She wrote to me in connection with my apartment:

My child, I always felt that your people are very nice and this is one more proof of it.

Repair and renovation of the house started. During that time the Mother wrote:

I have sent word to Laljibhai through Udar that you cannot be asked to move to Huta House until your quarters upstairs are ready. First the work there must be finished and then you can go.

At that time Laljibhai, my eldest brother, was in Pondicherry. He had come from East Africa for a short visit.

*  

On 10-2-1958 the Mother declared “Huta House” open and filled my apartment with her Force, Grace and Love

Owing to some circumstances in the environment, I wished to leave my house. The Mother wrote on 3-12-58.

My dear little child Huta,

You say that you want to leave your house and be lodged elsewhere. But to leave a house where everything has been made to meet your
requirements and is one of the very best houses in Pondicherry would be a most unreasonable and meaningless action, so I cannot, in any way, help you to do that.

* 

A movement for a new town began in 1964. The original idea was to build a small town near Pondicherry. It was meant to be an extension of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Gradually people gave money to the Sri Aurobindo Society to buy lands to build their houses in the new town.

I came to know of this and asked the Mother whether I could have there a small house also. She answered on 16-11-64:

My dear little child Huta,

You will have your house in the new town. But it may not be so soon as you believe.

With love.

Once again I prayed to the Mother that I wished to leave "Huta House". She wrote to me a letter dated 19-3-1965:

My dear little child Huta,

Now it has become necessary to reveal to you an important fact concerning your spiritual life and especially your work for Savitri. For some obvious reason, there is an adverse force which is interested in preventing you to carry on your work of painting. It tried first to stop it by suggesting that you ought to commit suicide. Seeing that it could not succeed, now it has possessed your brain with a mental formation of disgust for your house and the suggestion that you cannot do your work there. This is an utter falsehood. This adverse being knows quite well that your power of painting Savitri's pictures is closely connected with your studio where a special formation has been created and kept for it, and that if you move elsewhere, it will be almost impossible for you to do the work, or at best that the inspiration will not come so easily and so fully.

I have told you the truth to give you the power to reject the hostile suggestion.

Have faith in the Lord and He will pull you through.

* 

In the beginning of 1965 a name was given to the new town by the Mother: AUROVILLE. But there was yet no Matrimandir in the plan.
Once more I asked the Mother about my house. She answered on 10-6-65:

My dear little child,
Quite willing to give you your house in Auroville, but it must be built first.
You must keep the amount of which you spoke, for that purpose.
LOVE.

* *

Days flashed by. On the night of 19th June 1965 I had a vision. The next morning I expressed to the Mother in detail what I had seen and felt. The intense inspiration was that the Mother should have her house in Auroville, because without the Spirit of Auroville the whole town would be lifeless. She replied on the same day:

Huta, my dear little child,
You have indeed a very sweet soul who makes very sweet projects and beautiful dreams—all that is passed on directly to the Lord who will show us clearly what is His decision.
But I must warn you to be patient because all that may take more time than you expect.
However, there is also a joy in waiting, the joy of expectation.
With all my love.

On 21-6-65 the Mother wrote

My dearest little child Huta,
With your Rs 500 of today, I have started a purse on which is written “Huta-Auroville”
So little by little the money will collect
In your yesterday’s letter you spoke of a dream of your childhood “the most beautiful spot of the world” This was also a dream of my own childhood So our dreams have met for realisation.
Now it is only to be worked out—when we know how to wait, we put Time on our side.
LOVE

On 23-6-65 the Mother wrote to me:

My dearest little child Huta,
Your letter is very nice.
On 25th I shall show you my plan of Auroville.
LOVE.

I went to the Mother on 25 6.65. After our Savitri work she opened her diary in which she kept all my letters. There were also a few blank sheets of paper. She drew several sketches in front of me (I have with me two of those sketches).

Then suddenly she lifted my chin and looked deeply into my eyes and said sweetly:

And you will be the guardian of the Mother’s shrine. Your tiny house in the shape of a lotus-bud will be on the island very close to my house.

The Mother wrote to me on 7-9-65

My dear little child Huta,

Roger has just arrived yesterday; I am seeing him this morning to explain to him the plans of Auroville. The central park will be the Park of Unity—containing the Pavilion and its ‘annexe’ as formerly decided

LOVE.

The following beautiful message was given by the Mother to people on 8-9-65:

Auroville wants to be a universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony, above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities.

The purpose of Auroville is to realise human unity.

The Mother wrote this letter to me on 10-3-1966:

I have said nothing about Auroville this morning, because I had not yet had a talk with Roger. Yesterday I saw only the plans and models of the town that are simply wonderful, just as I wanted them to be. They will be exhibited in the Auroville office in front of the Ashram. You can see them there and I am sure that you will be happy as the Truth Pavilion is in a kind of island in the centre of an artificial round lake and looks like an immense lotus open towards heaven.

I talked to Roger only this afternoon and he told me all his plans of action and work which are excellent. He says that the foundation stone must be laid only when the work of construction will start; and naturally things are not yet ready for that. It will take some time more which is quite right and wise
You see, that is why the Lord did not give his answer to your prayer, because the time is not yet come for it!

With all my love.

*

I wrote to the Mother that I aspired sincerely to serve the Supreme Truth, but some interested people might not like the idea of my being the guardian of the Truth Pavilion. She answered on 12-3-1966:

My very dear little child Huta,

Fear not. The Lord is not influenced by what people say or desire. You will be the guardian of the Pavilion as decided.

*

On 13 March 1966, late at night I was strongly inspired to do a painting. I felt that the Mother had sent her inspiration and vision to me, and I must do something. I got up from my bed and did the painting. But I did not know what it represented, so the next morning I sent it to the Mother, and she wrote:

My very dear little child Huta,

The painting is pretty and the inspiration good. Is it the spirit of Auroville that you wanted to express? When looking at the painting I had this feeling.

With all my love.

She wrote on a separate piece of paper:

The Spirit of Auroville

I was surprised, because I did not know anything except that I had followed the inspiration.

On 19 March 1966 the exhibition of Auroville was declared open. I framed the picture and sent it to the Mother. She wrote:

The picture looks quite nice in the frame. It is already at the exhibition.

For almost one and a half years the painting remained where it had been put in the Auroville office in front of the Ashram, along with the plans of Auroville. Then, unhappily, it was removed from there by someone who did not know what he was doing.
When I took the painting to the Mother she was very sad.

*

On 16-2-1968 I got the receipt from Navajata, the General Secretary of the Sri Aurobindo Society running thus:

Received from Huta the sum of Rs. 14,877/- (Fourteen Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy-Seven) for the construction of her pavilion at the Matrimandir of Auroville.

On 26-12-1969 I wrote this letter to the Mother:

My dearest Mother,

Last year on 16 February you gave me the receipt signed by Nava for Rs. 14,877/- for the construction of my pavilion at the Matrimandir of Auroville

I have now only a little money left, of what you had given me a few years back to spend on Savitri paintings.

Now I have to publish a number of books, as you know. So I would like to have the Rs 14,877/- back from Nava. I spoke to him about it. He replied that he had used it up for other purposes. While in the receipt it is clearly written that the money was only for one specific purpose. He also told me that he would be able to return the money only in January—next year. At the next meeting he was hesitant. I shall be thankful if you will kindly request him to hand over the sum at his earliest convenience.

I don’t wish to cause any trouble, but I cannot help asking for this money since it is needed for important work. Such as material to be bought for the book About Savitri. Next year the book Salutations has to come out and then the preparation of many volumes of The Story of a Soul. I also wish to publish White Roses, three volumes collected in one.

Please consider all these things, I pray to you to help me.

Love.

Yours,

Huta

The Mother replied on the same day—on the same letter:

I told you myself that this money was used for the first day ceremony of Auroville; and at the time of building Auroville, your pavilion would be built without asking you anything more. When I gave you the receipt, you did not want to take it, but I told you to keep it as a proof that you had
already paid for your pavilion so that no more money should be asked from you.

There has never been any mention of the possibility of returning the money to you. This is quite out of the question.

Blessings.

*

The following message which the Mother gave on 15-11-1970 was indeed inspiring:

The Matrimandir will be the soul of Auroville. The sooner the soul is there, the better it will be for everybody, and especially for Aurovilians.

Towards the end of 1970 the Mother said to me after our Savitri work:

Child, your tiny house will be very close to the Matrimandir. I will arrange everything for you. Leave everything to me. I will see to everything.

The foundation stone for the Matrimandir was laid at dawn on 21 February 1971 with the following message given by the Mother:

Let the Matrimandir be the living symbol of Auroville's aspiration for the Divine.

*

In the beginning of November 1972, Shyamsundar Jhunjhunwala asked me whether the Mother had written to me or told me anything about the Matrimandir. I said that she had done so, but I could not give anything until and unless she approved.

On 3-11-72 I asked the Mother and instantly she approved fully—not only that but she advised me that I should make copies of her original letters and talks and put them in a file, and after showing it to her give it to Shyamsundar.

I did so on 6-11-72.

*

Months passed by.

Alain and Ruud of Auroville came to me and then they wrote to the Mother the following letter dated 15-2-1973:
Divine Mother,

Roger asked us to see Huta to discuss certain things regarding her house near the MatriMandir as to how she wishes to have it built.

Huta said that everything should be done according to The Mother’s wish. We asked her what was The Mother’s wish. So she said that The Mother wished her to be a guardian of the MatriMandir and her house would be built between the MatriMandir and the banyan tree—in the island—very close to the MatriMandir and it would be a simple tiny house. The rest she said that everything including the copies of The Mother’s letters are in the file which is given to Shyamsundar according to The Mother’s wish and approval. And now Shyamsundar has given that file to Roger to study.

In the present plans of MatriMandir we can easily include Huta’s house in one of the 12 huge petals which are surrounding the MatriMandir over one of the meditation rooms, so that she can enter the MatriMandir whenever she wants to check one thing or another in the Shrine. And this will be exactly between the MatriMandir and the banyan tree as You had wished. Now shall we proceed with this plan of Huta’s house? If You will approve then we shall do according to Your own ideas.

Finally, Huta spoke firmly and insisted to have two “secret chambers” inside the MatriMandir itself—one for You and one for The Lord. Also the carved marble seats in the rooms with velvet and satin cushions. Now in present drawings these chambers are not shown because we had no idea. But now while looking at the present plans of the MatriMandir, we can say with full confidence that there is definitely enough place for two rooms which can surely be built facing each other on the upper sphere in perfect harmony. And this will look wonderful. When we spoke to Huta about this possibility, she was extremely happy and satisfied. We pray to You to guide us as how You wish us to build the secret chambers and how You wish us to arrange the marble seats in the rooms. So that Roger and we shall do accordingly.

Also, Huta says that The Mother is very practical. Once The Mother did the sketch of the MatriMandir and She did not forget to draw a small box-room to keep dusters and things like that to clean the MatriMandir. So Huta says that these minor things are to be considered.

Now we await Your kind blessings and Force in order to materialise this project exactly according to Your Vision and Will. And we all pray for Your Victory in all Truth and Love.

Your children,
Alam Ruud
I wrote as follows to Roger:

Dear Roger,

It is very nice of you to have asked Alain and Ruud to come to me yesterday evening to discuss my house near the Matrimandir.

I have explained to them all that The Mother wished and decided. Moreover, everything is stated in the file which Shyamsundar has given to you.

Alain and Ruud wrote a letter to The Mother which I hope you read to Her.

Frankly speaking, I have no will of my own—whatever She has decided for me and whatever She wants me to be I will be. She has appointed me the guardian of the Matrimandir and repeatedly told me about my having a house very close to the Matrimandir so that I can look after the Matrimandir according to Her wish and command. She told me that She had already explained the plan of my house to you in July last year. She also spoke three times to Shyamsundar about the same thing. So I have nothing more to say regarding the matter except that I leave it to The Mother and to you to do the best.

But I am very particular and feeling strongly all that The Mother told me about Her rooms in the Matrimandir itself on the top floor, which I may call the “secret chambers”. She must have Her rooms. For, She will surely go there one day.

I trust you and I feel sure that you will organise and plan out everything wonderfully exactly according to The Mother’s Will—in an occult and mysterious way. And we all pray for the Victory of the Truth.

Thank you ever so much.

With kindest regards.

Yours sincerely,

Huta

The following note was sent to me by Roger.

March 26, 1973

Further to the letter of Huta and the different questions asked by a few Aurovilians concerning the Matrimandir, particularly on the subject of the secret chambers, The Mother has said that those were envisaged at one time but are not to be retained in the actual project.

The Mother has confirmed that the sole important thing is the lodging foreseen for the guardian within the framework of the gardens around Matrimandir.

Roger
I wrote to the Mother at once:

My dearest Mother,

I have received this note from Roger through Shyamsundar.

First point: Whatever You have decided for the Matrimandir is absolutely right because You know much more about the matter than anybody else does.

Second point: You appointed me the guardian of the Matrimandir in 1965—and I am grateful to You for that—but now I truly pray to You to release me from this appointment because I do not really deserve anything, and I do not know what work I have to do there, also there are many reasons and complications which prevent me from going there.

For some time I had been feeling to write to You all this before I received this note.

I am really sorry that I shall not be able to be the guardian—I am helpless and hopeless. Please do forgive me. There are many capable people who can carry out this wonderful mission according to Your Will.

Finally, I pray to You to get arranged and restored my present apartment by Udar or Phony There are white ants and it needs repairs and whitewash which has not been done for quite a number of years.

I will do Your work, which is quite a lot, in my apartment, and my temple is my heart where the Divine can be realised by His Grace.

Mother, I love You and I trust You, knowing that You will surely lead me to my goal by fulfilling my soul’s aspiration.

Ever Yours,

Huta

Vasudha, the Mother’s personal attendant read out my letter dated 28-3-73 to the Mother. Vasudha came to me with the Mother’s blessing packet and said:

Mother does not feel quite well. I read out your letter to her. She was mostly in a trance. But She did say: ‘Tell her it is better like that.’

*

In May 1973 I was asked by Shyamsundar to meet Roger and him on the Mother’s terrace (near the Mother’s apartments) in the morning. For Roger wanted to talk to me about my house near the Matrimandir. Shyamsundar served as interpreter as Roger could not speak English properly and I could not speak French properly.

After the discussion I wrote to the Mother on 6-5-73. The letter was read by Vasudha on 10-5-73 before Roger saw the Mother.
My dearest Mother,

I had a talk with Roger regarding my house and the Matrimandir. Shyamsundar also was present. Roger is willing to give a location to my residence in the Matrimandir area—nearest the Matrimandir. But Roger is anxious and would like to know clearly and precisely the work I am expected to do by The Divine Mother as the guardian of the Matrimandir. Then and then only Roger can proceed further and can plan out everything accordingly.

Roger said that there are many things which are to be done in the Matrimandir as it is a very huge thing.

1. Control of visitors—(as The Mother has said that the admission will be restricted).
2. Information of the work in the Matrimandir itself when it is ready.
3. Cleaning and maintenance.
4. Priestess of Matrimandir—That is just to watch and see!

Finally, Roger said that everything would be possible for him to arrange once my work as guardian would be decided by the Divine Mother, and he is ready to do exactly according to The Mother’s Will.

Roger is going to Paris on Saturday, so it is very important that he should know as soon as possible regarding the matter so that he could do the needful by working out everything according to Your instructions.

Indeed, I too am wondering what work I shall have to do over there. Nevertheless, whatever You have Willed for my soul and its aspiration, let it be done. And I will with all my heart carry out Your command in all Truth and Love.

With love and kisses.

Ever Yours,

Huta

Vasudha came to me and informed me:

The Mother said to Roger when I was with her:

“She will keep the keys of the Matrimandir. She will open and close the Matrimandir, and she will also see whether everything is all right in the Matrimandir.”

Roger never approached me or conveyed the Mother’s message.

The next day I went to the Mother and expressed my profound gratitude and prayed to her to make me worthy of the Supreme Truth in her Light and Love. She went into a trance for a brief while, then pressed my hands.

I took my leave with mixed feelings.

After reaching my apartment, I read all the Mother’s letters and the letters
sent by other people. I also reviewed all my letters to the Mother and other people. Still my mind was not clear or at rest. I sat in my meditation room for quite a long time and felt strongly that what I had stated in my previous letter to the Mother, dated 28-3-73, was in tune with my soul's aspiration. I was inspired and rushed to Vasudha in the evening with a copy of the letter and requested her to re-read it to the Mother, because it was a question of life and death—I must know the Mother's final wish.

The letter was read early in the morning when Vasudha went to comb the Mother's hair.

Later Vasudha came to my house with the Mother's blessing packet and said:

Huta, you know, the Mother cannot see properly and cannot possibly write to you, because she is too weak. She listened attentively to your letter which I read to her loudly. Then she went into a trance for a long time. After that she asked me to give you her blessing packet and convey this message to you:

“I know this. Tell her that it is better like that. My love and blessings are always with her.”

So, Huta, the Mother has granted your prayer.

My eyes were filled with tears of relief and gratitude. I felt that my whole being was free.

Later my apartment got repaired and renovated.

Once again I plunged into the ocean of elevating work the Mother had entrusted to me for the whole of humanity.

As a matter of fact, the Mother never wanted me to be a public figure.

I never uttered a word of my release to people concerned or to my own people.

I kept absolutely quiet and silent. I watched and waited for the proper time to act.

*

Now my guardianship holds only for the spiritual treasures the Mother has given me in abundance. The paintings of Savitri guided by the Mother, her six hundred sketches, my tape-recording of the Mother's recitations of selected passages from the whole of Savitri which correspond with the Savitri-paintings, the Mother's reading of Savitri in unbroken sequence and her comments tape-recorded by me under the title About Savitri given by the Mother, the paintings of Sri Aurobindo's poems, and other numerous visionary paintings, thousands of the Mother's letters to me, her talks corrected by her, the slides of my paintings,
the video-tapes of *Savitri*-paintings made in Germany, also so many things published and unpublished of which I have lost the count! Sunil Bhattacharya composes the *Savitri*-music—inspired by the Mother’s recitations recorded by me. It is much appreciated.

The mystery of the Mother’s working is profound, incalculable.

These spiritual riches, new and unknown, belong to the whole world. For we are all equal. One of the Mother’s letters to me. dated 25-9-65 is apt:

> Among the souls there are no small and no big, no important and no ordinary. They are all equal and all divine in their Origin.

Finally I announce that I stand released by the Mother’s own consent from the part she once asked me to play as the guardian of the Matrimandir. *This is final.*

On 10-2-55 the Mother accepted me as an Ashramite. The Sri Aurobindo Ashram is my real home and will remain so for ever. Also it will be the scene of the manifold work I have to do by the Mother’s order. I am very proud to be an Ashramite.

I have genuine sympathy with Auroville, because I have quite a number of friends there who are full of good will.

Here are three of the Mother’s writings which appeal to me very much:

Matrimandir wants to be the symbol of the Divine’s answer to man’s aspiration for perfection.

* 

The Ashram is the central Consciousness—Auroville is one of the outward expressions. In both places equally the work is done for the Divine.

* 

The Ashram will retain its true role of pioneer, inspirer and guide. Auroville is the attempt towards collective realisation.

© *Huta D. Hindocha*
Bildad’s First Discourse

If Job’s lament impelled Eliphaz to lift him from his state of dark ignorance with his visionary gleam, his questioning of God’s justice provoked Bildad to put him right with his stock of time-honoured traditional “wisdom”.

Scofield describes Bildad, Job’s second friend, in the following words:

A religious dogmatist of a superficial kind, whose dogmatism rests on tradition and upon proverbial wisdom and approved pious phrases... His platitudes are true enough but everyone knows them. (Job, 9.1-2; 13.2.) Nor do they shed any light on such a problem as Job’s.

Like Eliphaz and Zophar later, he thought himself a Champion of God! God Himself would reveal at the end what He thought of these “Champions”.

More impatient and less courteous than Eliphaz at the start, he concluded more mildly and graciously than he.

Verses 1 to 4.

Bildad’s anger was particularly roused by Job’s questioning God’s justice.

Verse 1.

Then answered...

Then: No sooner did Job stop talking than..., immediately. Bildad was just waiting for the opportunity to burst out to answer all the blasphemy Job was uttering, as he thought. Bildad, the Shuite: the epithet indicating the tribe of the Nation of the speaker, going along with the name of the speaker every time, he is introduced for the first time in a section by a stylistic device. Bildad’s belonging to the tribe of Shuah does not particularly signify anything as, for example, Teman suggesting “wisdom”. All the three speakers, though, revealed the same “wisdom” of retributive justice of God, which is farthest from the truth the Book presents.

Verse 2.

With great impatience Bildad asked Job if there was no end to his words which blew like a strong wind.

Francis Anderson explains the reference to the strong wind most imagina-
tively. Job was to his friend no more than a “windbag”, vehement but empty. He also quotes Moffat’s rendering of the passage; Job spoke “wild and whirling words”. (Job, with a greater reason, would later pay his friend a similar compliment.)

**Verse 3.**

Bildad could not bear Job’s feeling that God could pervert judgment or justice. The AV reads,

> Doth God pervert judgment? or doth Almighty pervert justice?

RJV, as well as most other versions, reads justice in the place of judgment and right in the place of justice. Hartley says that the original for the first word means strict adherence to a standard and the second means correct behaviour. The modern Commentators provide their own translations in order to be precise in rendering. Precision is a laudable aim. But an experience is communicated not to the intellect alone. The AV rendering with its balance and rhythm makes us get Bildad’s meaning clearly enough. When Anderson tells us that the original terms for God and Almighty form together a single name even as the words referring to justice as a single term the genius of the AV translators comes home to us with all its force.

**Verse 4.**

But Bildad’s purpose in speaking of God not perverting justice is to strike at Job with blatant cruelty, to tell him plainly that if his sons had died it was because of their sins. Eliphaz had said as much in “a veiled allusion” (supra: 4 11). We cannot be sure if Terrien is right when he says that Eliphaz had true sympathy for Job and did not mean to insult him but when he speaks of “God’s darling” (that, as we saw, is what the name Bildad means) posing as God’s champion, sharpening

> his dagger to wound Job precisely where he would hurt him most, at the heart of the father whose children are dead

there cannot be two opinions.

Marvin Pope sees in Bildad’s reference to the death of Job’s children a direct link with the Prologue. He cites it as a proof to show that the Prologue, the discussion and what follows are “bound each to each” by the revealed word. There are many other links besides.

**Verses 5 to 7.**

There is a sudden change of tone in Bildad’s speech. Perhaps the outburst of
anger gave him a release and he was able to express himself in a softer tone. That does not mean any change in his superficial adherence to the dogma of retributive justice. He asked Job to appeal to God's mercy if he was really innocent and regain his happy state.

Verses 5 and 6.

Bildad says that if Job would seek God in time and make supplication to the Almighty, then in response to Job's being pure and upright, God would surely awake (rouse himself—RSV) (bestir himself—Hartley) for him and make the habitation of righteousness prosperous.

Bildad cannot know that God has described Job to Satan as being perfect and upright. How could he know that God did not think the moral qualities enough for Job? Job had them and was fully conscious that he had them. Bildad with his dogmatic approach related the moral qualities with prosperity.

In the previous statement Bildad accounted for the death of Job's sons by their sins. It is possible he thought that if Job had not died it was because he was not a very bad sinner. Supplication would awake God's commiseration and win back his former condition.

Verse 7.

Bildad does not stop there: he assures Job of a great increase from his small beginnings. We know that Job was very prosperous before his fall. The meaning is brought out very well by Terrien:

Thy former state will appear insignificant before thy future greatness.

Verses 8 to 10. Bildad's reference to the Past.

Terrien rightly notes,

The source of his enlightenment is not a personal contact with a present God, but scholarly learning and archaeological hoarding. He is a "paleo-orthodox" type of theologian appealing to the past without realizing that the present requires the rethinking of formulas which are no longer adequate.

Perhaps one could say that any kind of mental formula is always inadequate, nay, quite unhelpful, to understand what God does. The formulation has to be directly based on a deeper or higher awareness.

Verse 8.

Like Eliphaz (supra 4:7) Bildad says, "I pray thee" revealing his earnest desire that Job should rise to the state of his own "wisdom", and wants him to
inquire of the former age, people of the earlier days—it is curious, isn’t it, that from the earliest times men have seen days before them as being more perfect than their own?—and prepare himself for the understanding of what the forefathers sought and discovered.

Verse 9.

Bildad refers to the wisdom of the forefathers because he and Job (we) were of “yesterday” and therefore incapable of maturity. They knew nothing because their days were no more than a shadow lacking the substance of the seeking and understanding of the ancients

Verse 10.

If only Job turned to them, would not they teach and tell him what was right speaking out of their heart?

Verses 11 to 13

Bildad brought before Job in the verses a concrete example of the ancient wisdom as embodied in what Habel calls the “Parable of the Two Plants”, though it is not much of a parable. Terrien’s reference to “The Proverbs” is most appropriate.

The “wisdom” taught with the example of plants is that the paths (AV & RSV) (fate: same commentators) of those who forget God leads but to destruction. Rush (AV) (papyrus: other versions) cannot grow up without marsh; flag (AV) (reeds: other versions) needs water for its growth. (Without marsh or water) it withers before any other herb even while it is green or uncut. Those who live without God are destroyed likewise and the hope of the hypocrite (godless man, RSV, Habel and others) perishes. (The original Hebrew word means “a profane person”.) AV translates it as a hypocrite because it visualises a person who pretends to be godly without being so.

Verses 14 to 19.

Bildad played variations on the same idea with different images. Whatever the apparent prosperity of the Godless, they will ultimately perish. Commentators differ in explaining individual words and expressions but the general import of the passage is clear enough.

The hope of the Godless man would be cut off, his trust would be as undependable as the web of a spider. If he leaned upon his fragile house it would not stand. It would not endure in spite of his attempt to hold it firmly.

Changing the image Bildad spoke of the Godless man as a plant shining green in the sun with its branch shooting forth in his garden. Soon its roots would be wrapped about the heap and would crumble into stones. The very place that destroyed him would deny his having him there.
The speaker drawing Job's attention to the extraordinary situation he is conjuring up with the word "behold" pointed out that such was the "joy" of treading the path without God. Out of the earth others would grow in his place.

**Verses 20 to 22.**
In the last three verses of his discourse, Bildad assured Job that God would bless him with all happiness, reiterating God's retributive justice.

**Verse 20.**
Once again drawing the special attention of Job with the word "Behold", Bildad repeated his concept of God's retributive justice. He would not cast away a perfect man nor would he help the evil-doers.

**Verse 21.**
In spite of all the suffering Job had undergone God would yet fill his mouth with laughter, his lips with rejoicing (shouts of joy as at festivals). Verse 21 in AV, 

Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, thy lips with rejoicing

implies that God would not be satisfied *till* He made him happy.

**Verse 22.**
In the last verse we see again the idea of the evil-doers suffering. Those that hated Job would be covered with shame, the dwelling place of the wicked would be reduced to nothing.

**Chapters 9 and 10. Job's Reply to Bildad.**
Francis Anderson speaks of the several difficulties that the reader of this speech of Job's has to face. Though each of the difficulties will be dealt with in the course of the Commentary the focus of our attention will be on the state of consciousness of Job at each stage. As in the earlier reply to Eliphaz, he alternated between the *sattwa* and the *rajo guna*, between a tone of challenge and one of despair. In the midst of this alternation he developed a desire, a will, for whatever conscious reason, to see God face to face. It is that will that took root and enabled him to leap beyond all the gunas at the end.

**Verse 1.**
*Then:* Immediately after Bildad stopped talking,

*Job answered and said:* The question is raised as to whom Job answered. Many believe that he did not answer Bildad at all. Perhaps all the time Bildad was talking Job was brooding over the words of Eliphaz. A little brooding by us
will make it clear that he was answering both together because the main problem raised by both was the question of God's justice and judgment.

Verse 2.

One cannot be too sure that Job was actually thinking of Bildad's last statement that the dwelling place of the wicked should come to nothing when he declared that he knew it to be true. We will see that Job's thesis was that the wicked did prosper. It is possible that he was tentatively agreeing with the statement because he was bothered about the real problem raised by both—the question of God's justice.

His question:

But how should a man be just with God?

directly echoes the Voice heard by Eliphaz in his vision, as he claimed,

Can mortal man be righteous before God?

Echoing one's words need not mean agreeing with the speaker's intention. Eliphaz (or the Voice he believed he heard) was concerned with man's propensity to perpetrate evil; Job thought of proving his innocence before God. All the more recent commentators agree in seeing a forensic language in the words of Job. N.C. Habel sees litigation as the central image of the whole work. The image, as he works it out in detail, reveals one great truth:

God is above any such law and the design of the cosmos reveals this higher order of God's ways. To demand that God conduct a trial based on reward and retribution to which he is not bound is pointless. God's ways reflect a different order of things, which leaves Job without a legal basis for pursuing his case.

Job's insistence on proving his innocence is, from one point of view, the other side of the same coin of the concept of retributive justice put forward by his "wise" friends.

Verses 3 and 4.

In any attempt of Job's to prove his innocence God could easily silence him with His superior wisdom and strength.

Verse 3.

The word contend is explained legally, that is in a law suit. Hartley had a very interesting explanation to offer:
In an ancient court the winner was often the one who argued his position so convincingly and refuted his opponent so persuasively that he reduced him to silence. A second way of deciding a dispute was for the contestants to wage a wrestling match.

Hartley remarks that the reference to God's strength and God's cosmic victory (infra: verse 13) shows that the second kind of contest is also implied. Not one in a thousand could answer Him either way.

**Verse 4**

The KJV of the verse reads:

> He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength. who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered?

Terrien explains the passage as follows:

> Even among the best of human beings, the wise in heart and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and remained whole?

He comments,

> Against the versions—he means the KJV and RJV he prints as parallel texts—one may perhaps consider the words wise in heart and mighty in strength not as attributes of God but characteristics of men who dare to oppose the Deity.

(He does not, however, deny the possibility of taking the words without irony.) That explains Hartley's rendering.

> Wise in thought and mighty in strength—
> who could defy him and win?

Many see an irony in the words which they see as applicable to God. Anderson finds no reason to see any irony in Job's words.

Job and his friends are in basic agreement about the character of God... Their disagreement concerns the why's and wherefores of God's dealings with Job ... But Job's faith is stronger than theirs, more imaginative and adventurous, and in consequence more exacting and painful.

Anderson has a point to make though one cannot agree with the way in which he
puts it. Job as well as his friends lived in their surface minds and the whole purpose of this Commentary is to emphasise the fact that the human finite mind cannot see the reality about God. Faith, in fact, is by no means a mere mental belief. Job’s very assertion of his innocence and questioning of God’s justice has a depth and therefore a truth that the assertions of his friends totally lack.

Perhaps the best way to interpret the word "wisdom" in the context is "cleverness". Habeb, who refers to Eliphaz’s use of the word "wise" in 5:13 (He taketh the wise in their own craftiness), explains the word as "shrewd".

Verses 5 to 13.

The verses describe God’s Power or, as Terrien puts it, “omnipotence”. He speaks of its “amorality” Anderson sees in Job’s lines

a soaring lyric in the same tradition as the great liturgical celebrations of the works of God in the Psalms.

Hartley speaks of “these lines of praise” which bring before us God’s deeds of power, acts of wisdom and victory over his foes. It is Habeb who gives us the right perspective for what Job could say in the context. One could not contend against God and be declared just. The examples from the cosmic creation reveal God’s omnipotence but not justice.

We may note en passant that Job was not inferior to any of his friends either in his intellectual equipment or in his understanding of Man, God or Nature.

Verses 5 and 6.

God, who expected to maintain an order and harmony in His creation, actually brought about chaos and disharmony. He overthrew mountains and shook earth’s foundations. According to the ancient Jewish cosmology, the earth was believed to rest on solid pillars as its foundations. The mountains did not know why they were toppled and the pillars just trembled in fear.

Verse 7.

From earth Job passed on to God’s acts of injustice in the heavens.

By making the sun not to rise and the stars not to shine He was going against His responsibility to rule the heavenly bodies. Job was not referring to the obscuration of heavenly bodies by astronomical and meteorological phenomena as the older interpreters thought but actually to a wilful act of God in preventing the sun and the stars in doing their normal and proper work.

Verses 8 and 9.

Reference has been made to Habeb’s perspective for Job’s remarks in the context. Referring to God’s creation of the constellations, he says,
Eliphaz (5:9) hailed these wonders as marks of righteous acts of divine governance. For Job they are God's destructive ways of his potential adversary at court. (Vide Comment on verse 2 above with reference to the same critic.)

Before creating the constellations God spread out the heavens and trod upon the waves of the sea. Some read "back" in the place of "waves" and refer to the Near Eastern myth of the taming of the sea-god which preceded the creation of heavens and earth and the various constellations.

It is possible that Job, in that mood, thought that the simultaneous acts of creation of the heavens and the earth and the constellations and the destruction of the sea-god were an exhibition on the part of God of a power to make and mar together.

Commentators differ in the details about the constellations. It is enough we know that Arcturus (or the Bear as RSV calls it: GK. aiktos=bear, ouras =guardian) is a star of the Ursa Major. Orion (the Hebrew word for which means a fool) represents the hunter who defied the goddess of the chase only to be done to death. The Pleiades are a cluster of stars in Taurus.

Verse 10.

By speaking of God's "great" and "innumerable" wonders Job was not really admiring Him but thinking of his own difficulty in winning his "case" against God.

Verses 11 and 12.

Job's difficulty in dealing with God was intensified by His elusiveness. He could not confront Him, see Him when He passed by and discern His presence when He passed on.

Rendering the original in Hebrew for "passed on" as "glided past" Habel sees in the words an ironic allusion to the eerie wind that glided over Eliphaz's face in his "visionary experience". (4.15-6).]

Job's regret that he could not see God or even discern his presence has a greater significance than suggested by the immediate context. His immediate problem was his "litigation" with God, his eagerness to prove his innocence. But, as mentioned earlier, a desire sprouted in his consciousness to see the Lord, which gradually grew without his awareness till it bore the fruit in God directly appearing before him out of the whirlwind. How could the desire sprout if it was not sown by the very Lord who sought to "educate" him? In the course of Job's answers to his friends we have to observe the gradual growth of the desire and the various forms it takes. In the very midst of many things he spoke with or without meaning.

Habel links the words "passed on" to the next verse where Job drew the
attention of his listeners by "behold" to the situation in which none can hinder God when he takes away one's belongings (like a thief), a situation in which none could ask him what He is doing. The learned Commentator refers to Exodus: 12 in which God became a destroyer when He "passed over."

The Commentator tells us that Job experienced God's robbery when he lost his children. (We could add perhaps, all else. The explanation is of what Job thought and said at the moment. It is needless to say that the words or thoughts have nothing to do with the facts or the reality.)

**Verse 13.**

The nature of God as a Person to contend against was not unknown to Job. From the primordial times His anger could not be resisted. Job's point was: if higher forces than man could not resist His anger what could a poor mortal like him do?

The KJV reads,

> If God will not withdraw his anger the proud helpers do stoop under him

RSV and others speak of "the helpers of Rahab."

Rahab was the dragon of Chaos whom God defeated in primordial times. His proud helpers were his monstrous allies. Terrien compares the helpers of Rahab to Leviathan (3:8) and Lenun (7:?) as monsters of the sea whom God tamed.

*(To be continued)*

**K.B Sitaramayya**

**Notes**

55 Scofield Reference Bible Ed Rev C, I Scofield, OVP, New York, pp 574-5 fn

On the advice of learned friends, references will be made to a number of other commentaries etc besides Terrien's. But the basic approach of the present commentary remains unaffected.


58 Anderson, op cit, 140

59 Terrien, p 97

60 Job The Anchor Bible, Garden City, New York, p 64

61 Terrien, p 972

62 Ibid, p 973

63 Habel, p 168

64 Terrien, p 973

65 Anderson, p 143

66 N C Habel, pp 56-57

67 Hartley, p 167
A SURER COMMUNICATION

You speak;
I simply listen,
You do not speak;
I listen keener.

Your unuttered words
Leap faster
To shatter
The sealed door
Of my heart.

My heart, open ajar,
Lends me
An unerring eye
To see you
As you are
In your real self.

ASHALATA DASH
A LETTER BY KATHLEEN RAINE

Dear Dr. Sitaramayya,

Thank you for your letter and the accompanying copies of the four instalments of your commentary on the Book of Job. I am asking my publisher to send you a copy of my book *The Human Face of God* (Thames and Hudson) which I hope will prove illuminating, not from my own views on the Book of Job (I have none nor am I competent to have any such judgment on this great Jewish work) but Blake had his own very clear understanding of the Book of Job which I have set out, as I believe, faithfully. It coincides, you will surely be glad to hear, very largely with your own. I am not at all surprised that as an Indian you have gone straight to the point—that perfect man Job was perfect only in outward observance, he was a moral man but not a spiritually enlightened man. For Blake as for yourself the enlightenment of Job comes not from any ‘answer’ to his arguments with the Friends, but from an epiphanic revelation of the divine Being. Those commentators, both Christian and Jewish, who see the young man Elihu as an interpolation, an impertinent young man speaking out of turn, Blake totally dismisses—or disregards—for him Elihu—whose depiction in the plate in which he appears to Job and his friends shows him in all his inspired beauty. For Blake Elihu is central, reminding Job of the ‘inner light’—‘But there is a Spirit in men: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding’. This for Blake is that ‘God within’, the ‘Divine Humanity’ or Imagination, whom Blake identifies with Jesus, the Self of the Indian scriptures. There follows the tremendous epiphany of the works of God, comparable surely to the passage in the *Bhagavad Gita* where the Lord Sri Krishna shows himself to Arjuna in his universal form. Blake is throughout his works the protagonist of the prophetic or poetic genius who ‘speaks for God’.

I was especially impressed by your comparison with Abraham, whose obedience to God was of a higher and different character from that of Job.

Blake is rather more severe on Job than you are, for he accuses him of self-righteousness, the virtuous ego that credits itself with virtue which belongs only to the divine Being; and sees Satan as the human ego he calls the ‘selfhood’ under whose power Job endures his sufferings, passing on his children moral judgments thereby banishing them from his humanity. He also sees Job in terms of Christianity, and his vision as an anticipation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the divine humanity. He uses always the term ‘Jesus the Imagination’ for the true Self, as he does ‘Satan the Selfhood’ for the human ego separate from the true Self, the Divine Humanity. But I will send the book and you shall judge.

I would be very happy if you would pass the book on—or leave it—to the library at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram—or to Auroville if that is where they have their library. I suggest this because you say you are a spiritual son of Dr. K.D. Sethna, my old friend whom I have never seen or met.
Arabinda Basu was in England many years ago as Spalding Reader in Indian philosophy at the University of Durham, and has since been in this country and has already lectured for us at the Temenos Academy. We are expecting him for five weeks, from the beginning of May, when he will give lectures on Soul and Atman, and seminars on the Isha Upanishad. I look forward to seeing him again. It is my conviction that only from India can a renaissance come to the West and the Westernized world, since India, deeply wounded as she is, retains the knowledge the West has long lost, and without which Western civilization is destroying itself and the world. We can do very little, but that little we must do.

To Blake, I need scarcely say, C.G. Jung’s perverse interpretation in his much publicized and, in Jungian circles, greatly admired, Answer to Job would be totally unacceptable, Jung being unaware of the nature of God, who does not answer the kind of questions we ask otherwise than in revealing himself in his true nature, which answers all questions, and removes the relevance of any question that, on the level of the selfhood or ego, may seem to have validity which in the light of eternal reality it does not possess.

With warm regards

Kathleen Raine

INTO THY JOYFUL MOULD

Reveal, O Life, Thy concealed treasure,  
Make me Thy lyre and play the supernal note, 
Beat Thy immortal wings unused so long,  
Sprinkle Thy splendid hues on my way.  
I have no name for Thy opulence,  
Only a vague sense of Thy boundless fire  
Impelling a constant upward soar.  
O let me not be a helpless drag, 
A glum labourer, in Thy grandiose work, 
Pour me, instead, into Thy joyful mould 
Releasing from Ignorance’s ruinous hold.

Seikh Abdul Kasam
THE MATERIAL BASIS FOR THE PHENOMENON OF MAN

“The true physics is that which will, one day, achieve the inclusion of man in his wholeness in a coherent picture of the world.” Such is the prospectus of physics held for us by Teilhard de Chardin in an attempt “to see and to make others see what happens to man.” If man is indeed the key to the universe, assuredly then he becomes a perfect object of knowledge for any scientific investigation. But the present-day science itself is fettered by its own thought and by its own procedural methodology. The pure objectivity of the classical age has disappeared and the physical object seems to appear only as a mental construction of the observer himself. Teilhard is aware of this dilemma and wonders whether the subjective viewpoint itself could light up the object and bring out its reality to our sense of perception. That would put man in a double focus as the viewer of the universe and as its enriching builder. That would also mean opening out bright and broad doors of the “true physics” to step into the realms of organised complexity, even consciousness, culminating in the integration of a fully developed and progressive personality. In fact, if “evolution is an ascent towards consciousness” it must eventually arrive at Teilhard’s Omega Point gathering the personal and the universal in the hyper-personal.

But before we come to this “true physics” let us briefly consider the view of Teilhard about the stuff of the universe in terms of its irreducibles, making up the Alpha Point of the evolutionary process. He posits three elemental states of matter that we recognise in its insistent tangibility: atomicity, relational unity, and ceaseless activity. The particularity of the sand and the raindrop is, on a speculative level, the immediate prompter of the idea of the atomic nature of matter, but the infinitesimal at the deeper level is a tenuous entity. Indeed our sensory experience turns out to be a floating condensation on a swarm of the indefinable.” Radioactivity in this microscopic region only goes to show the state of constant disintegration in which matter seems to perceptually exist. But that is not the whole truth and there are enduring entities that support solidity of the universe; call them molecules, atoms, electrons, or by any other name, we have the inalienable unity of the objective world based on them. But it is not by simply aggregating these entities that we get the substance of the object; there is a collective unity shared by them, organising their togetherness. For this to happen there has to be a unifying power, energy. Material particles are therefore nothing but the “transient reservoirs of this concentrated power.” From this point of view, the “universe would find its stability and final unity at the end of its decomposition. It would be held together from below.”

Teilhard de Chardin thus sees, in the current physics, energy to be the last support for the material universe, it is that that holds it together as seen from below. But in his view “it is only by reason of complexity, from above” that things are held and held together. In other words, the totality of matter lies in its
being an ‘atom’ (etymologically, that which is uncuttable) at every stage of its organisation; the universe itself is an atom as much as the solar system or the water molecule or the uranium nucleus. Thus a system cannot be broken up into bits and then synthesised by aggregating them; it always holds itself as a complete whole. The parts of the whole are necessary to make a whole, but it is not by the addition of properties of these that the character of the whole can be arrived at. “The order and the design do not appear except in the whole. The mesh of the universe is the universe itself.” But such a whole or universe without the quantum of activity, without the element of dynamism, is meaningless. If space is nothing but co-extension of the ‘atom’ itself, then it must be a field of activity too. The quantum of energy would then imply duration as well.

The stage is now set for the evolutionary drama of matter to begin. But this is a strange drama in which the participants themselves evolve as if under the influence of events that are yet to occur. What is to be is not simply something standing afar but seems as if to direct what is. Naturally, therefore, “true physics” will be significantly concerned with this active participation of the effect in the cause, given such a perspective the “world appears like a mass in process of transformation.” Cosmogenesis is hence inherently present in the wholeness and the quantum of activity witnessed in matter. From the simplest elements of matter we see a growing complexity in the material organisation till it is sufficiently large to pass on to life. Even in the distant formulation, “matter reveals itself to us in a state of genesis”, in a state of becoming. But such a becoming demands energy and, if it is in a closed system, has to overcome the declining probability of its happening. If the scientific world is a closed world then increasing complexification should mean the final dissipation of the process which is not really observed.

However, this is a conventional view of physics and is a view about the outside of matter—asserts Teilhard. In order to advance in the direction of man, “we must extend the bases of our future edifices into the within of that same matter.” The compulsion for accepting the within-dimension becomes more and more imperative as we rise to a higher and higher degree of organisational complexity.

But can the within be made a subject of scientific investigation? No, it cannot be. That would make the within an object of the without. Will it at least belong to the domain of what Teilhard calls “true physics”? Even this may be doubtful if we are to retain the otherwise most fruitful methodology of physics. Whatever be its shortcomings, that methodology has certainly given a solidity to our understanding of the physical universe. It has even made an entry into the occult depths of matter when it begins to tap it for undiminishing supply of energy. No physicist would easily like to abdicate its gains.

Teilhard de Chardin has a compulsion to make the stuff of the universe his starting point while delineating the evolutionary phenomenon of man. Pre-life
emerging from the atom is the foundation for the future appearance of thought or consciousness as is generally understood. Awareness cannot arrive unless there is an organised material structure. In fact, “To think, we must eat.” This may give the impression that awareness is a property of, to extend Teilhard’s coinage, complexified matter in the process of ‘convergent integration’. But it is not so; for example, thought is not a property of the brain though it cannot manifest here without such a cerebral apparatus. There is some content in the physicist’s view that it is a certain functioning of the biologically organised matter that we designate as thought; to think the other way round is no scientific thought. The hiatus between the true physics which will one day include man in its description and the professional physics as practised is therefore very bewildering and there is no immediate scope for it being filled. Teilhardian cerebration is far from scientific.

The current professional physics has no doubt moved quite a distance from classical physics. The Laplacian determinism, and with it the materialist’s arrogance, have certainly weakened today. But there is nowhere the sense of abandonment of such a fruitful methodology that has been the shining logo of its very presence. There is nothing uncertain about the Uncertainty Principle which is one of the pillars of its structural edifice. Probabilistic interpretation of Quantum Mechanics has really no scope in it for free-will. There is no free-will for the electron to behave like a wave or like a particle and the conflict is basically due to the limitations of mathematical formulations. What is necessary is to remove these limitations instead of seeming mystagogical aspects in the material universe at this stage. Anthropic deductions of multiple worlds is in a way a kind of haste towards such mystifying happinesses. There is a Quantum Mechanical process involved, for instance, in radioactive decay; but there is no observer present there to make the wave-function collapse one way or the other, as he is believed to be in the multiple-worlds view. The stars burn in a perfectly systematic manner and the machine particles have a very predictable character. That must therefore remove any possibility of introducing extraneous considerations in the description of a physical world. The laws of physics are quite valid and to talk of “genesis” or becoming in matter will lie outside the domain of our immediate understanding. If these extraneous considerations or factors, what Teilhard calls the within of the object, are to enter at all into any discussion they can be reckoned with only when they lend themselves to the methods of science, but there doesn’t seem to be any chance for that to happen, at least at the present juncture. In effect, there is nothing like “true physics” as we have been asked to believe. Physics is physics although it may have its severe limitations.

Teilhard de Chardin is aware that he is not a physicist; he is also aware of the risk involved in proposing a theory or a model based on “hypotheses which are only expected to last for a day, even in the minds of those who originate them”. That is an abundant precaution; but in proportion it also makes his study,
presenting the universe in evolution, less scientific. The provisional character of the empirical sciences is well known and no enduring ontological proposals can be based on them. And yet their prestige is very often invoked, summoning them to support speculative notions. Gearing up of evolutionary argument with the machinery of scientific thought is one such perilous undertaking. In fact, to consider evolution as an "ascent towards consciousness" could be philosophically challengeable, certainly, from a spiritual point of view, it would be tantamount to non-recognition of consciousness which indeed is everywhere. Thus if we concede that thought, for example, intervenes in the preparation of the brain, then we have to understand that which would make the brain move towards thought. Any essay purporting to be scientific is obliged to give us a satisfying basis for this process to happen. The urge of the without, assuming it to be present in it, towards complexification has not been integrated to arrive convincingly at the phenomenon of man.

But is such a thing possible at all? Science has no access to this urge as an object of investigation in a physical process. If this urge is some deep creative faculty or some driving power in material energy, then it must first come in the purview of competent observability to be meaningful to it. That is a very fair demand of science, sincere to its creed. If we accept this demand, then we have to enlarge the scope of this urge in the encompassment of the very Omega Point itself, the grand Urge driving the whole evolution. But Omega Point is not an object of scientific study, not at all amenable to Cartesian analysis. It is a kind of Within-Without as at once the originator and the culminator of the becoming that we are; it is trans-descriptive and trans-analytical, yet holding and flooding all that we are and shall be. If transcendence is one of the attributes of this emerging and immersing Urge, then it escapes all scaling and quantification. It cannot be described in terms of scientific measurements that are relative in an Einsteinian sense. Then, even on a lesser level, to make man an object of measurement and knowledge becomes fallacious. The notion of "true physics" projecting itself in the phenomenon of man eventually turns out to be non-scientific if we have to retain the full connotation and content of physics proper.

R.Y. DESHPANDE
The Game is Played

The Game of Dice itself and the subsequent developments are the most humiliating and embarrassing experience in the life of Yudhishthira. He is seen here as if sucked into a whirlpool which rapidly and irresistibly pulls him down into the deepest abyss. We observe in Yudhishthira a weakness often found in sāttvik natures, namely, that they refuse to resist evil and thus play into the hands of the devil. And yet Yudhishthira is following certain principles as we have pointed out earlier. What happens now is a tragedy unfolding itself for the very reason that he is stubbornly sticking to those principles, which become his cross. Actually, we may say that Yudhishthira has a ‘Christian’ nature. After having been slapped on the right cheek by Duryodhana (we remember the attempt of assassination in the lacquer palace), he is now offering his left one. There are several other scenes and episodes where we see him guided in his action by similar deliberations. His talk with Sakuni at the beginning of the game is of a weak and meek nature, it has no force in it:

Yudhisthira said: Gaming is trickery, an evil; there is no baronial prowess in it, nor steady policy, prince. Why do you praise dicing? For no one praises as proud a gambler’s trickery: Sakuni, don’t defeat us by crooked means and cruelly!13

No need to say that this naive appeal fails to evoke a compassionate response from the cunning Sakuni who takes Yudhisthira back to the reality of the game:

Sakuni said: He who follows the numbers and spies the deceptions and is tireless in moving the dice about and is cunning enough to see through a gambit is a gambler who manages all in a game.

Yudhisthira yet continues with his appeal to Sakuni to play a fair game. He is pointing out to him that the Pāṇḍavas use their wealth to help the Brahmins, and therefore he should not win too much! Sakuni retorts that Yudhisthira need not play if he is afraid of the game, but the latter reminds him of his vow to accept any challenge. He is then informed that Sakuni will play on behalf of Duryodhana. Again Yudhisthira launches a half-hearted protest: “For one man to play in another’s stead does not seem fair to me: you know this, so accept it! Now by all means, let the game begin!” Of course, Sakuni wins the first game.
We see Yudhīsthīra crying out in helpless protest for a last time—he then kept silent up to the end of this episode defeated by Fate and his own sense of dharma

Yudhīsthīra said: You have won this play from me by confusing me with a trick! All right, Śakuni! Let us now play and grasp the dice a thousand times¹

Yudhīsthīra is now seized by a negative force which makes him stake and lose rapidly all his wealth. His rational mind is no more active from this moment onwards, he seems only to be in a haste to be devoured by the spider in whose net he has been caught. Even while he is thus gambling away all his possessions, the embarrassed Kuru elders look on impassively and nobody comes to his rescue—except Vidura. Iravati Karve has pointed out in Yuganta¹ that Dhṛtarāśtra’s half-brother may well be Yudhīsthīra’s physical father—a thesis which is well supported by the text material at hand. It was Vidura who warned Yudhīsthīra about the plot of burning the lacquer palace at Bāranāvata and sent an expert miner to dig a tunnel. He always argued on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas and openly took their part. And he gave shelter to Kuntī during the thirteen years’ exile of the Pāṇḍavas. Indeed, a close reading of various passages describing meetings between Vidura and Yudhīsthīra reveals their intimate relationship. In the same way during the dice game it was Vidura alone who tried to intervene on Yudhīsthīra’s behalf.¹ But his efforts to influence Dhṛtarāśtra against Duryodhana are—as always—fruitless. He reminds the assembly of the evil omens which manifested at Duryodhana’s birth and quotes that famous guide-line for safeguarding the harmony and survival of a small or big unit: “To save the family, abandon a man; to save the village, abandon a family; to save the country, abandon a village, to save the soul, abandon the earth.” Duryodhana is quick to reject Vidura’s suggestions and to secure his hold over his father’s mind:

> You always boast, Steward, of the fame of the foe,
> And in secret revile Dhṛtarāśtra’s sons
> We know whose friend you are, Vidura,
> You despise us all, as though we were fools

No need to say that Dhṛtarāśtra does not heed Vidura’s warning. The game goes on. Yudhīsthīra stakes and loses all his brothers. Then nothing is left and he stakes himself. His words reveal that he has entirely stopped being his real self: “I myself am left, dearly loved by all my brothers. When won, we shall slave for you to our perdition.” Yudhīsthīra loses himself in the game, only to be reminded by Śakuni that Draupadī has been forgotten. The beautiful Kṛṣṇā is still there to be put as a stake. We may stop at this place and ask whether
Yudhīṣṭhīra was really obliged to go to the very end and lose not only all his wealth, but also his brothers and even Draupādi. In the text itself there is no evidence of any such agreement or general rule of playing for all or nothing. It is interesting to compare the situation under discussion with a similar one which came up in the game of dice between Nala and Puṣkara. The latter story was told to Yudhīṣṭhīra by the seer Brhadāśva at a time when the dharmarāja fell into a deep depression during Arjuna's journey to Indra's heaven:

(Yudhīṣṭhīra said to Brhadāśva:) Reverend Sir... my treasure and my kingdom have been stolen from me in a game of dice, when I was challenged by gamblers who knew how to cheat and were experts at dice. I did not know the dice, and evil-intentioned persons cheated me and dragged my wife, who is dearer to me than my life, into the hall. Now is there a king on earth more unlucky than I, barring one you may have seen or heard of? There is no man, I think, unhappier than I am.¹⁰

Brhadāśva then consoles Yudhīṣṭhīra and tells him the story of Nala who in his opinion was even unhappier than Yudhīṣṭhīra. We are here only concerned with the game of dice between Puṣkara and Nala. Puṣkara challenged Nala who had been taken possession of by the evil spirit of Kali at a moment of ritual impurity. Kali himself had wished to win Damayantī at her svayamvara, but he came too late. He then became unreasonably angry with Nala for having snatched away the desired bride. After a period of waiting of no less than twelve years he finally found an opening in Nala to enter him and control his mind. In the game of dice which was secretly inspired by Kali, Nala lost his kingdom and all his possessions. Then Puṣkara made the same proposal to him as Śakuni to Yudhīṣṭhīra in our present story.

Puṣkara laughed... and said to Nala when he had lost his kingdom, 'Let the game go on. What do you have left to stake? Only Damayantī remains to you, I have taken everything else. Well, stake Damayantī if you want to!' At those words of Puṣkara, Punyaśloka's heart was riven with rage and he made no reply. Gripped by fury, Nala glanced at Puṣkara, then the famous king threw down all the jewelry on his body. And in a single robe, unclad, feeding the grief of his friends, the king strode out, relinquishing his ample fortune; Damayantī, clad in one skirt, followed behind him. The Nisadhan camped outside the city with her for three nights.¹⁷

We can note here a remarkable difference in the reaction of Yudhīṣṭhīra and Nala, respectively. Nala has the warrior blood in him and has power to resist Puṣkara's devilish suggestion, even though he himself is possessed by Kali. Thus he can break the game and rush away with Damayantī. There is no doubt that
neither he nor his wife are spared considerable suffering: Nala even leaves Damayanti at a later stage, and yet she is not exposed to the ultimate humiliation of becoming her husband’s stake in a game and being lost to his enemy. For this reason we consider Nala’s standard of action higher than Yudhishthira’s. The principle of protecting one’s wife from utter humiliation is certainly greater than the principle of protecting a principle (such as accepting any challenge from one’s adversary). The kind of anger which Nala got at a right moment is something which is completely absent in Yudhishthira. Even Mother Kunti got angry with her son at one time for this very reason, as we shall see in another chapter (“Since you have mere rote learning of the Veda without understanding or insight, your mind is possessed by mere recitation and looks but to a single Law Come, heed the Law that was created by the self-existent: the baron was created from his chest, to live by the strength of his arms, to act always mercilessly for the protection of his subjects.”)

In any case, Yudhishthira accepted Sakuntla’s suggestion, offering Draupadi as a stake. At this moment there was an uproar in the hall and the assembled elders were deeply shaken by his decision. “Bhishma, Drona, Krupa and others broke out in sweat.” While Vidura buries his face in his hand, Dhrtrarashtra keeps asking excitedly whether Sakuntla has won. A superfluous question....

After the Game of Dice—Draupadi’s Trial

Yudhishthira managed to lose in a few hours whatever was his own: his wife, his brothers, his wealth and kingdom. Quite independent of whether this is a story invented by a gifted poet or a real event expressed in epic poetry, we feel it worthwhile enquiring why Yudhishthira had to act as he did. Because there have been indeed incidents of a similar kind in life, in history, and this whole story as it is presented to us by Vyasa has something convincing about it, as if we are face to face with real life.

To provide an answer to our question we may first go back to the previous chapter and remember that Yudhishthira had offered considerable resistance against Krsna’s suggestion to become samrāt by attacking and defeating Jarāsandha. We remember his words: samameva param manye—“I deem tranquility highest.” Here we have a clue to Yudhishthira’s psychology. He was more or less unwillingly pushed into the role of an emperor. His brothers and Krsna did everything for him. His only merit was to be the eldest brother and thus reap the fruits of their works. This unwanted role may have caused a deep depression in him and a subconscious inclination to let go everything in order to regain sama which is dearer to him than everything else. Did he not even win Draupadi through Arjuna? Kunti once told a story of a King Mucukunda which is relevant in this context.
Hear this parable I have heard from the elders. In olden times Vaiśravaṇa once offered the earth to the royal seer Mucukunda, for he was pleased with him, but the other declined to accept: ‘I wish to enjoy such kingship as is earned by the strength of my arms.’ Later King Mucukunda did rule the earth, having obtained it by the prowess of his arms, while he stuck fully to the vow of the baronage.

The psychological principle at work here is very clear: for certain natures it is simply impossible to enjoy unasked-for honours or gifts. We once read in a carefully researched report on winners in the German lottery that a great majority of those millionaires or half-millionaires inexplicably became poor again within no time as if they were unable to hold the unexpected wealth that had come to them. No fact of life could be more significant in this context for explaining Yudhīṣṭhīra’s disastrous losses at the game. In comparing Draupadi’s and Damayanti’s fate we observe the decisive difference that Nala had to struggle a good deal and face tough competition from even the gods before he could win his bride, while Yudhīṣṭhīra on the other hand just shared Arjuna’s bride. As the main cause for his total defeat we perceive therefore an inner predisposition for losing all those things that had come to him not by his own will and effort, but just by fate. This is only one aspect of the story (the other being his sense of dharma), the perspective of an interpretation in the line of depth-psychology, which should not be overlooked. King Yudhīṣṭhīra did fight for his kingdom afterwards—as Mucukunda in Kuntī’s story—in the Great War and was a successful ruler for three decades.

The Mahābhārata is known to be full of contradictions and textual inconsistencies. Any discussion of the game of dice would be incomplete without a passage from Book III, which directly contradicts whatever we have pointed out above. Once during the exile when Bhīma was blaming Yudhīṣṭhīra for all the misery they were suffering, the dharmarāja said to him:

They are doubtless true, O Bhārata—
Your biting words that hurt and destroy me.
I do not blame you for your bitterness,
For my wrong course brought this misery on you.

_For I took the dice desirous to take_
_Duryodhana’s kingship and kingdom away:_
But Subala’s son, the rogush gamester,
Thereupon played against me in Suyodhana’s cause.

This statement of Yudhīṣṭhīra’s does not fit at all into our argumentation. He appears here as a man who does not want at all to lose anything but rather
gain more. What are we to make out of this quotation? I would not hesitate to reject it as an interpolation because what Dharma says here is entirely incompatible with his meek and passive character. It would be against his nature to take away the kingdom from his close relative and thus make Dhṛtarāśtra unhappy. We saw how considerate he was with Duryodhana long after the game and the humiliation of Draupādī, when he had him released from the Gandharva during the exile of the Pāṇḍavas.

*

The incredible had happened: Yudhīṣṭhira had staked and lost Draupādī. Duryodhana hastily summoned Vidura to bring her into the assembly hall. Vidura refused to obey the passionate prince and opened a long legal argument with a key point:

Krṣṇā is not a slave yet, Bhārata! I think she was staked when the king was no longer his own master.

Thereupon Duryodhana asked an usher to bring Draupādī. The usher informs Draupādī that her husband has lost her in the game and that he has to take her to the assembly hall. Draupādī retorts with angry questions which are nothing less than revolutionary for a devoted Hindu wife:

How dare you speak so, an usher to me?
What son of a king would hazard his wife?
The king is befooled and crazed by the game—
Was there nothing left for him to stake?

The usher informs Draupādī that Yudhīṣṭhira first lost his brothers, then himself, then his wife. Draupādī is in a mood of revolt. Unlike all others (except Vidura) she is determined to fight for justice and not accept this fateful situation as ‘dātvam’. She sends the usher back to the assembly hall with a challenging question: “Bhārata, whom did you lose first, yourself or me?” Only after this question had been answered, would she go with the usher. The nature of this query again is revolutionary in the context of Hindu dharma. Draupādī knew that Yudhīṣṭhira had lost himself first. Therefore, her question to the assembly was meant to be nothing else but an eye-opener to him, to make him aware that he had no right to stake her after having lost his own freedom. In other words, she is challenging the righteousness of the dharmanāya’s action and asserts her independent status as a free individual. Indeed, her intelligent question is full of the most intricate implications as we shall see.

We may compare Draupādī’s revolt against her husband with Damayanti’s
reaction towards Nala when he left her alone in the forest. Nala had fallen into a deep depression when some birds carried away his robe and left him without clothes. He then suggested to Damayanti to go her own way since ill-luck stuck to him so obviously Damayanti however protested vehemently: “Physicians know of no medicine in all sorrows that equals a wife—this I tell is the truth!”

Nala then promised her not to abandon her, rather would he abandon himself. He confirmed what she had said: “It is right what you say ..., there is no friend or a cure for a sick man like a wife. But I do not want to abandon you: why do you fear, timid woman? I’d abandon myself before abandoning you, innocent wife!”

In spite of this assurance Nala then made up his mind to leave Damayanti since in his company she would not have any chance of finding happiness “Lost of soul, touched by Kali, not reckoning this or that, the prince went in grief, abandoning his wife in the empty jungle.”

For Damayanti it is a cruel awakening after sleep In her reaction she is drawn between angry revolt and humble submission. She is accusing her husband and yet not able to get angry with him—rather her words speak of her concern for him, how he would fare alone in the forest. Then finally she directs her anger towards the “miscreant who has done such evil to the innocent-minded Nala”. All in all we feel that in contrast to Draupadi’s angry vital revolt (“the king is befooled and crazed by the game ”) Damayanti’s reaction is on a higher level, more of a psychic nature. Even though there is that shock of having been deceived, she is able to hold the bastion of her soul and extend psychic love towards Nala realizing that it is not his real self that is acting but a part possessed by some evil spirit due to a curse. We will quote a few passages to substantiate our point. Incidentally, Sri Aurobindo, who was himself a master poet, held that the story of Nala and Damayanti, though an episode not directly related to the main story, was nonetheless a creation of Vyāsa himself when young.

In the following passage we have Damayanti’s reaction after waking up: her fear and surprise, her despair, her disappointment that Nala has broken his word, he who always spoke the truth; but then also her concern for him, how he could manage to live without her:

Mahārāja! Ah my protector, ah Mahārāja! Ah master, why did you desert me? Ah I am lost and dead; I am afraid in the empty forest! Haven’t you always been true to your word, and wise in the Law, great king? Then how could you speak such a lie and go and desert me while I was asleep? How shall you fare after deserting your submissive and obedient wife?

Note the more dramatic echo of her wailing in the original Sanskrit, with a staccato of long ā in the first two lines:
hā nātha hā mahārāja hā svāmin kīṁ ṇahāsi mām / 
hā hatasmī vinastāsmaṁ bhītasmi vijanvane //

Damayanti cannot believe that Nala is no more with her; she hopes that everything is but a dream, that he is hiding behind the bushes—but why does he not reply to her? As if he is listening to her, she assures him that she is not having self-pity, that she is lamenting about his misery of wandering lonely about in the forest without his wife attending to him:

I do not lament over myself or anything else but you—how will you fare by yourself? That is why I am weeping, my king! How will you be when evening falls, king, thirsty, hungry, gaunt with exhaustion, lying at the root of a tree, and not seeing me?

As Damayanti keeps wailing loudly and searching for her lost husband, another trial comes up, plunging her into yet deeper despair. A huge boa attacks the helpless woman who is now facing death. And yet, says the poet, “it was not herself she mourned as much as the Nisadhan”.

* * *

After this comparison with Damayanti we return to Draupadī and the developments after the game of dice. Yudhiṣṭhīra refuses to answer Draupadī’s question, keeping complete silence. Duryodhana sends the unwilling usher once more to bring Draupadī, while Yudhiṣṭhīra sends one of his own men to her rooms who would be more acceptable to her. This is a clear message to her that he does want her to come and surrender herself. At this place it is mentioned that Draupadī was in her period and wearing only one garment. Draupadī enters the hall, but the usher refuses to bring her close to Duryodhana at his command. Therefore, Duryodhana summons his brother Duḥṣāsana to fetch Pāṇcālī who runs in despair to the ladies’ corner. Duḥṣāsana rushes towards her and drags her with him. Draupadī’s acute trial begins. The following verses are all of great importance for our further discussion, especially the lines I have printed in italics.

Duḥṣāsana, stroking her, led her and brought her, 
That Krṣnā of deep black hair, to the hall, 
As though unprotected amidst her protectors, 
And tossed her as wind tosses a plantain tree. (24)

And as she was dragged, she bent her body 
And whispered softly, "It is now my month!"
This is my sole garment, man of slow wit,  
You cannot take me to the hall, you churl!” (25)  

But using his strength and holding her down,  
By her deep black locks, he said to Krṣṇā,  
“To Krṣna and Jīṣṇu, to Hari and Nara,  
Cry out for help! I shall take you yet!” (26)  

“Sure, you be in your month, Yajñasena’s daughter,  
Or wear a lone cloth, or go without one!  
You have been won at the game and been made a slave,  
And one lechers with slaves as the fancy befalls!” (27)  

Her hair dishevelled, her half skirt drooping,  
Shaken about by Duḥśāsana,  
Ashamed and burning with indignation,  
She whispered again, and Krṣṇā said, (28)  

“In the hall are men who have studied the books,  
All follow the rites and are like unto Indras  
They are all my gurus or act for them.  
Before their eyes I cannot stand thus! (29)  

“You ignoble fool of cruel feats,  
Don’t render me nude, do not debase me!  
These sons of kings will not condone you,  
Were Indra and Gods to be your helpmates! (30)  

“The king, son of Dharma, abides by the Law,  
And the Law is subtle, for the wise to find out:  
But even at his behest I would not  
Give the least offense and abandon my virtue. (31)  

“It is base that amidst the Kaurava heroes  
You drag me inside while I am in my month  
There is no one here to honour you for it,  
Though surely they do not mind your plan” (32)  

“Damnation! Lost to the Bhāratas  
Is their Law and the ways of the sagacious barons,  
When all these Kauravas in their hall  
Watch the Kuru Law’s limits overstridden! (33)
"There is no mettle in Drona and Bhīṣma
Nor to be sure in this good man;
The chiefs of the elders among the Kurus
Ignore this dread Unlaw of this king." (34)

As she piteously spoke the slim-waisted queen
Threw a scornful glance at her furious husbands
And inflamed with the fall of her sidelong glances,
The Pāndavas, w—pped with wrath in their limbs. (35)

Not the kingdom lost, nor the riches looted,
Nor the precious jewels plundered did hurt
As hurt that sidelong glance of Krṣṇā,
That glance of Krṣṇā sent in fury. (36)

Duhśāsana, though, watched only Krṣṇā
Who was looking down on her wretched lords,
And shaking her wildly—she was close to fainting—
Cried cruelly “Slave!” and laughed aloud. (37)

And Karna applauded his word to the full
And heartily laughing acknowledged it,
And Subala’s son, king of Gāndhāra,
Likewise cheered on Duhśāsana. (38)

Apart from these two and Duryodhana,
All other men who sat in the hall,
On seeing Krṣṇā dragged into the hall,
Were filled with misery beyond measure. (39)

This is the text according to the Critical Edition. In contrast to popular versions we find Draupadi clad not in a sari, but one cloth, due to her period—a fact which makes her plight all the worse. In verse 24 the poet states her miserable condition significantly with the words ‘nāthavatīmanāthavat’, she who had powerful husbands to protect her was yet entirely left alone without help. She tries to appeal to Duhśāsana’s sense of respect for woman, drawing attention to her condition, but to no avail. In verse 26 we find him cynically advising her to cry for help to Krṣṇa. This is an important verse in view of the fact that the Critical Edition later does not mention Draupadi’s call to Krṣṇa. In verse 27 Duhśāsana speaks out his cruel philosophy in undisguised language. Again Draupadi appeals to his sense of decency: how can she stand like that before the Kuru elders! Then Yudhisṭhira gets another blow: he may be law-abiding, and
yet Draupadi reserves for herself her own right of discrimination (“even at his behest I would not give the least offence and abandon my virtue”). In verses 32-34 Draupadi directs her anger towards the Kuru elders. She assumes (wrongly, see verse 38) that no one present in the assembly will approve of Duhsasana’s act, but also no one would intervene. This is a sign of the degeneration of the Bhāratas if they look on impassively as the dharma is ruined by one of them. Droṇa and Bhīṣma particularly should be expected to intervene since they have not only authority but also power, sufficient power to face Duryodhana. Even then they keep silent. In the same way Dhrtarāṣṭra does not come to her rescue.

As Draupadi is thus molested by Duhsasana, she looks furiously at her husbands who are as if dead figures to her now. These verses (35, 36) are of key importance for the whole Mahābhārata, they stand in the very centre of the story. This pain of Draupadi’s angry katāksa, the inner convulsion in the minds of the Pāṇḍavas, the impotent recognition of not being able to protect her as is a husband’s dharma—all this becomes a powerful force for the future, an instigation to build greater strength, a motivation for fighting a merciless war. Incidentally, as a psychological truth we can accept that something was wrong with the Pāṇḍavas since these ‘sidelong glances’ hurt them so much. A man who really follows the Truth in every respect will not feel uncomfortable with any reproach, since he has done what he had to do. But here something stirs in the conscience of the Pāṇḍavas. As a teacher’s reproachful look hits the conscience of a distracted student, so Draupadi’s glance hits the Pāṇḍavas: they are not ‘up to the mark’.

Two persons are named who openly applaud Duhsasana’s action. Karna and Śakuni Karna who is held in the greatest esteem by a large number of Indians has here one of his darkest hours. One can forgive him his siding with Duryodhana for many reasons, even noble reasons, but where is his nobility at this moment? Śakuni on the other hand contributes to his image of being an incarnation of evil. All others are said to have witnessed this scene with the greatest pain—without acting, though.

In the next passage Bhīṣma takes up Draupadi’s question to the assembly (whether Yudhīṣṭhira lost himself before her) and discusses it from the legal point of view. His statements make clear how intricate the question is. To come to Draupadi’s rescue would mean in effect to declare Yudhīṣṭhira wrong in his assumption that he could stake Draupadi. And it would mean breaking a taboo in ancient Hindu society by declaring that a wife has a status independent of her husband. Bhīṣma does not state the contrary, but hints at it:

As the Law is subtle, my dear, I fail
To resolve your riddle the proper way:
A man without property cannot stake another’s—
But given that wives are the husband’s chattels?
Yudhīṣṭhira may give up all earth
With her riches, before he’d give up the truth.
The Pāndava said, “I have been won,”
Therefore I cannot resolve this doubt.

No man is Śakuni’s peer at the dice,
And he left Yudhīṣṭhira his own choice.
The great-spirited man does not think he was cheating,
Therefore I cannot speak to the riddle.26

Bhīṣma’s response to Draupādi is rather cool and negative. He does not say anything which could encourage her to pursue her battle. Even Śakuni appears to be whitewashed of his sins—did he not leave Yudhīṣṭhira his own choice? Draupādi’s own rebuttal is without force, it is more an emotional protest. All she says is that Yudhīṣṭhira was inexperienced in the game and unscrupulously cheated by Śakuni. This argument contributes little to the legal issue as such, but is a very legitimate protest against Bhīṣma’s backing of Śakuni. While Draupādi is succumbing to tears and further reviled by Duḥśāsana, Bhīma comes to her rescue and then—an unexpected development—also a noble soul from the other side: Vikarna, one of the brothers of Duryodhana.

Bhīma’s arguments are of a highly emotional nature. He has so far been able to restrain himself out of loyalty to his elder brother. But now something bursts in him and he takes Draupādi’s part, attacking Yudhīṣṭhira in the worst terms: while other gamblers do not even stake whores, Yudhīṣṭhira staked and lost the daughter of king Drupada, quite apart from the vast wealth that many kings had brought to the Pāndavas. In any case he should never have staked Draupādi. “After she had won Pāndavas as a girl, she is now because of you plagued by Kauravas, mean and cruel tricksters. It is because of her that I hurl my fury at you! I shall burn off your arms! Sahadeva! Bring the fire!”

This is the worst moment in the family history of the Pāndavas. What greater triumph could their enemies have than this internal feud carried out between two sections of the family? Draupādi had opened fire on Yudhīṣṭhira and now suddenly Bhīma joins her side with another attack. The family unit is on the point of breaking up when Arjuna comes to Yudhīṣṭhira’s rescue, restoring the unity with well-chosen arguments.

Surely your respect for the Law has been destroyed by our harsh enemies! Don’t fall in with the enemy’s plans, obey your highest Law no one may overreach his eldest brother by Law. The king was challenged by his foes, and remembering the baronial Law, he played at the enemy’s wish. That is our great glory!
Could it be true that Yudhīṣṭhīra really protected the dharma if we take into consideration that Draupādi suffered such humiliation at the hands of her husbands’ enemies, in their own presence? Draupādi and Bhīma have expressed their doubts, challenging Yudhīṣṭhīra’s authority. Arjuna retorts with a double argument. 1) Yudhīṣṭhīra’s authority cannot be challenged, because he is the eldest brother and the family dharma prescribes absolute submission to him. Therefore, Bhīma is wrong. Secondly, Yudhīṣṭhīra did act according to the ksatriya code by accepting a challenge. Bhīma is appeased by this doubtful latter argument: “If I’d thought he’d done it for his own glorification, I’d have torched his arms together and burned them in the blazing fire, Dhananjaya!”

Bhīma’s doubt was obviously whether Yudhīṣṭhīra was not pharsically sticking to his sense of dharma for its own sake, for his own reputation, rather than doing what had to be done for the good of his family. Arjuna manages to assure Bhīma that Yudhīṣṭhīra was really acting according to the ksatriya dharma. We may doubt, though, whether accepting a challenge for a game of dice was part of it. We remember Yudhīṣṭhīra’s own arguments at the beginning that such a game is always disreputable. Arjuna however has averted a major family catastrophe by silencing Bhīma. The five brothers are one again after this brief dangerous interlude.

(To be continued)

Wilfried Huchzermeier

Notes

13 Mahabharat 2 53 2-3
14 Yuganta—The End of an Epoch (Poona 1969), pp 100-103
15 Mahabharat 2 55 1-56 10
16 Mahabharat 3 49 32-34
17 Mahabharat 3 58 2-7
18 Mahabharat 5 30 6-7
19 Mahabharat 5 130 8-10
20 Mahabharat 3 35 1-2
21 Mahabharat 3 58 27
22 Mahabharat 3 58 28-29
23 See Vyasa and Valmiki, pp 22-23
24 Mahabharat 3 60 2-4
25 Mahabharat 3 60 10-11
26 Mahabharat 3 60 40-42
35. THE DUTIFUL DWARF

He had forgotten his name, for everyone called him *Kullan* (male dwarf). Not even three feet in height, he was an ugly-looking creature with an upturned nose. Everyone in Parambu Hills had an aversion for him, except its chief Paari. “Be with me,” Paari told him, when the dwarf sought for a job.

*Kullan* obeyed every syllable of what the king had uttered. Everyone was surprised to find the fellow in the company of king Paari. Envy brewed in the hearts of courtiers and ministers, for the dwarf easily gained entry into certain places that they had no access to. They wanted to do away with him by hook or by crook.

Once the king wanted to go round his fort to inspect if everything was maintained properly. Since it would take more than two weeks to do so for his fort had in its ambit several villages and townships, he was accompanied by his intimate friends and poets to make him happy, good cooks to serve him delicious dinners, select ministers to enlighten him, a group of bodyguards and an army of soldiers to protect him from his enemies. But while everybody kept his distance from the king, the dwarf walked hand in hand with the king.

One evening when the king took rest, his Chief Minister asked him: “Your Majesty! What has this ugly little being to do with you? Why do you allow him to be by your side night and day? His very presence is a taboo to many of us.”

“Well! Well!” said the king. “He may be an ugly-looking dwarf. But I love him. He too loves me... loves me more than does any of you here.”

The Chief Minister was shocked to hear the king say so. “Are you sure, your Majesty?” he asked.

A smile flashed across the king’s face as he nodded his head.

A few days later, one evening Poet Kapilar began to sing the songs he had composed. Everyone listened to him with rapt attention. The king too enjoyed the songs with his eyes closed, all the time shaking and nodding his head rhythmically. As the song gained momentum, the king shook his head so vigorously that the garland of priceless pearls that adorned his torso frittered and fell to the ground, and the pearls jumped in different directions.

All those who sat around the king jumped as if they had been touched with a red-hot iron. And they wrangled to catch the pearls. But the dwarf didn’t budge from his seat.

The Chief Minister came with a picked-up pearl in his hand. “Hey! You! Ugly little monster! What the hell are you doing here when all others are picking up the royal pearls?”
“I am obeying the words of the king,” replied the Dwarf.

“Did he ask you to stand by his side?” asked the courtier angrily.

“No! But he told me to be with him.”

The king giggled and said to his Chief Minister: “Now you know why I like the Dwarf. When everyone including my bodyguards ran to fetch the pearls purely to be in my good books, this little fellow was with me as if nothing had happened. When I appointed him I told him: ‘Be with me.’ And he has not disobeyed me. I love people who are duty-conscious and not impostors.”

As the king patted the dwarf on his back, the bodyguards and courtiers bent their heads in shame.

36. THE KING WITH A GOLDEN ARM

King Maran of Madurai was on his usual rounds. This he did for an hour or so every night to know about the plight of people and tone up his administration. He chose a street a night and walked up and down in a disguise of his choice, sat on the pyals of houses that were still awake and eavesdropped.

That night, disguised as an aged brahmin, King Maran entered the lane occupied without any exception by brahmins.

The soft sobbing sound of a woman called a halt to the king’s steps. Cocking his ears, he looked here and there. He saw the light from a small lantern filtering through a window of a nearby house.

King Maran rushed towards the house and peeped through the half-open window. He saw a young woman shedding tears, sobbing all the while and blowing her nose now and again into the hem of her sari.

Beside the young woman stood a young brahmin packing his clothes. Quick-witted King Maran was about to make a guess, when he heard the brahmin speak:

“I don’t know how to console you, my dear! Should a wife weep like this when her husband is preparing for a journey? You know very well that I am going only as a pilgrim to have a holy dip in the sacred river. And the separation is after all for two weeks.”

“But who will care for me in your absence?” sobbed out the brahmin’s wife.

“King Maran,” swift came the answer from the brahmin.

Delighted stood King Maran.

“There is nothing to worry about as long as King Maran rules our land,” continued the brahmin. “He being the best of administrators no crime goes undetected and no culprit goes unpunished. He is really a Heaven-sent ruler.”

King Maran became deliciously joyful at the words of the brahmin. Deciding to take extra care of the brahmin’s wife during her husband’s absence he strutted towards the palace.
From that night King Maran took special care of the lonely lady and every night before winding up his rounds he went to the brahmins' lane to find out for himself if the day had passed on smoothly for the lonely one.

A few days elapsed.

One night the king on his usual rounds went into the brahmins' lane and sat on the pyal of the lady's house. To his surprise, he found that the lady was still awake and involved in a conversation with a man. Since the windows were all tightly shut and no lamp burned, suspicion rose in the mind of the king.

"Who in the name of heaven is he?" King Maran asked himself. "Her paramour?... Well! Her husband has a lot of faith in me. And I should not let him down."

To find out what was going on, the king knocked on the door of the house. "Who is it at this hour?" It was a stern male voice.

The king was sure that he was no paramour, for no paramour would open his mouth for fear of getting caught. It must be her husband then. So thinking, the king took to his heels.

"My God!" exclaimed the king and beat his forehead as a gesture of helplessness. "What a foolish thing I have done! The husband will grow suspicious now. Suspicion is a silent killer. A suspicious fellow would turn into a murderer..." The king stopped running.

An idea dawned upon him. He knocked on almost every door in the brahmins' lane before he left for his palace.

On the morning of the next day the king was not at all surprised to see a group of brahmins enter his court and in a fit of fury shout:

"Your Majesty! Last night someone knocked on all our doors and didn't show up when we opened our doors. He not only disturbed our sleep but also terrorized us. And so we are here seeking justice."

The king smiled. "I've already caught the culprit. How would you like him to be punished?"

"Cut the arm that knocked on our doors," came the verdict from the brahmins.

King Maran had no second thoughts. He drew out his sword with his left hand, raised it above his head and brought it down with such a great force on his right arm that it fell a few yards away from the throne splattering blood on the bare torsos of the brahmins.

Shocked stood the brahmins.

A little later King Maran told them why he had knocked on all their doors. Tears welled up in their eyes and they felt their hearts go heavy.

In order to wash the sin they had accumulated by passing a wrong verdict on the duty-conscious man, they had a golden arm made for him.

King Maran came to be known as *Porkai* (Golden-armed) Pandyan.
37. A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE VICTORY DRUM

Perumcheral Irumpora, a Chera king, was relaxing with his queen in the royal garden. The sun was about to take rest, when news reached the king that someone had been found sleeping on the cot meant for the Victory Drum.

The king stood up and yelled: “What rogue is here?” Drawing out his sword, he rushed to his palace as if a thousand wasps had been chasing him.

The Victory Drum was the biggest of the many sorts of drums used by the Tamil kings. It was sounded to promulgate that their king had emerged victorious in a war. Every beat on the giant drum was meant to dispel fear from the hearts of the people. It made them jump for joy. Since the Victory Drum held pride of place in the life of every king, it was honoured with a cot made of teak. Special designs were carved on it. It bore a silken mattress stuffed with the softest silk-cotton. The Victory Drum rested majestically on it. Once in a week it was removed from its place to get a good cleaning. No one was permitted to go near the cot except its caretakers. One could sit or sleep on it only at the risk of losing one’s head.

King Perumcheral Irumpora’s eyes were bloodshot with an upsurge of fury. His lips quivered as he entered the chamber of the Victory Drum. The hairs on his arms stood on their ends at the sight of a bony fellow sleeping on the cot meant for the Victory Drum, while the Victory Drum itself was held by a dozen sturdy men standing beside the cot. Gnashing his teeth, the king raised his sword above his head. But the next minute he pushed the sword back into his scabbard, which slid in with a screeching noise.

Undisturbed slept the sleeper on the cot.

The king took a samaram (a fan formed of the hair from the bushy tails of animals used for fanning idols at temple festivals and kings in their courts) and to everyone’s surprise began to fan the sleeper.

“He is poet Mosikiran. He has honoured us by his visit,” said the king in a joyful mood and thereby cleared their doubts.

As he continued to fan the poet, the latter woke up with a start. For a minute he blinked and then squeezed his eyelids to make sure he was awake. He saw the king fanning him. He saw a dozen sturdy men holding the Victory Drum, while the ministers and the courtiers stood looking at him.

Poet Mosikiran stood up. He had realized his mistake. “Your Majesty! You must by all means pardon this sinner. I have polluted the sanctity of this cot by sleeping on it. When I entered this chamber, I found the cot empty. Dog-tired of my continuous journey for three days and nights, I slumped on the cot and slept. Please pardon me for the sin I’ve committed out of pure ignorance.”

The king smiled as he continued to fan the poet.

“It is indeed a real honour to be fanned by the king. But I don’t deserve it,” the poet said holding the hands of the king.
"The pleasure is mine You have sanctified this cot by resting on it. Is not a poet who sings of the glory of a king a Victory Drum? I fanned you because you are a Victory Drum in flesh and blood."

(More legends on the way)

P. RAJA

GRACE

O EMBRACING Hands,
Hands of joy and calm!
Halt never, never
In Your gesture:
Enliven this dying life
With Your divine drive

Faltering,
This benumbed body
Needs Your peace;
This dull mind
Seeks Your pinch
To invigorate it
With blissful blessing,
Greenness ever renewing

ASHALATA DASH
THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

Speech by Sunayana Shukla

In this year of the Golden Jubilee of our Centre of Education the most appropriate subject to speak about would be “Education”; more precisely, “The Unique Quality of Mother’s Vision of Education”.

Two things Mother emphasized in the field of education. One is that a comprehensive or integral education which includes the physical, the mental, the vital and the psychic and spiritual is more valuable than only the mental education. The other point is that one should learn for the joy of learning without having the incentive of a degree before one’s eyes.

I will take up only one aspect of integral education which is the most important: the psychic and spiritual education, because it seems to me that this is the most neglected aspect. People imagine that it is unnecessary in order to make one’s life successful and happy.

It is true that the pursuit of happiness is the aim of life, if we take happiness to be the spiritual Ananda which is at the source of creation. But most of us confuse ‘happiness’ with ‘pleasure’ and this is where we take a wrong turning. Most people follow education so that they can eventually earn better and make life more comfortable. What most educational institutions now give is a lot of information but that is not education. Children are pressurized to such an extent to do better at their studies that all joy disappears from learning. Only one goal is put before them: material success. Adults speak so much to their children about making life comfortable but hardly anyone explains to them what life really is, its true significance and its true purpose.

Most parents, while thinking of spiritual education, if at all they do think of it, think of a religious education. But Mother makes it clear that the two are different things, even though sometimes they may lead to the same result. Parents and adults in general do not even realize that a spiritual education has a value for life also. Without this a human being is without support. Nothing in schools and colleges prepares a human being for the difficult patches in life. People prepare themselves for success, no one thinks of preparing for facing defeat. But the defeat comes in some form or other.
to face danger, hardship and hostile environment as much as a solid base in things spiritual. Only this shows us the depth and height of our being. Only this assures us of something greater and nobler that can be a source of inner strength.

I am sure that there comes a time in every man’s life when he becomes aware that he is something more than a body, that there are other dimensions to life than the physical and the visible. How much simpler it becomes when someone teaches you in childhood that you are a part of something eternal and immortal, that one lives more than one life, that death is not the end of everything. If one knows about it from childhood one moulds one’s life around it. It gives a larger perspective to life. One does not stop any more at the surface appearance of situations.

That part of human life in which the importance of a spiritual and a vital education is most evident is human relationships. If one wants to cultivate harmonious relationships with others a great deal of calm and self-control is required. A spiritually prepared person can handle much better the difficulties that arise in personal relationships than those who are not spiritually prepared. And this is specially true of people who guide and govern others. For these people, being totally free from personal attachment is a “must”.

In the past, all ancient civilisations laid importance on a spiritual education. Perhaps it was because man lived closer to Nature and knew his limits, knew the joys of simple things and understood the value of the happiness that comes from the exchange of sincere love and affection between people. In today’s world man assumes that he is all-powerful and does not need any external help. He has reduced happiness to material comfort alone. And he imagines that the only power he needs is the power of wealth. Our modern society encourages a person to be selfish and ambitious, an attitude that Mother calls “aggressive egoism”. It wants that a person should be in a perpetual state of vital hunger. When a child grows up he imbibes this restlessness from his elders. After passing on this madness people only think of “usefulness” before they teach anything to a child.

Before spiritual education, and as a preparation to it, comes psychic education. This is the path that leads to the great realisation that comes afterwards Mother says: “It is like the explorer’s trek through virgin forest, in quest of an unknown land, of some great discovery.” She says this because the psychic education can be given only by someone who has a psychic realization. That is why most people who try to tread the path without a guide have to struggle against great difficulties.

This psychic education, although it is a first step and a preparation, is by itself a beautiful experience. Through this a child is taught to seek that which is universal and eternal. He is to be aware of the life which exists in everything, be it animal or plant or stone and to live this along with them. In this way, by

1 Collected Works of the Mother (Cent Ed.), Vol. 12, p. 33
realising that one’s life is interlinked with everyone’s life, one can feel and think another’s feeling and thought, one enlarges one’s consciousness. This is one of the psychic realisations and it is only the beginning of the widening of the consciousness, which leads to the spiritual path.

Only when a child understands this, is he truly educated. Only when he knows that there is something more important than merely having and doing, and that is being, that he is prepared to face life. When he knows that one should not waste one’s energy in looking at the petty details of life, then he will turn to the greater purpose for which life is given to us.

Here is how Mother puts it poetically: “The will for the great discovery should be always there above you, above what you do and what you are, like a huge bird of light dominating all the movements of your being.”

1 Collected Works of the Mother (Cent Ed.), Vol 12, p 35