

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LVI

No. 7

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

CONTENTS

Sri Aurobindo

WHEN SUPERMAN IS BORN... (Poem)	...	535
A DIVINE LIFE IN A DIVINE BODY	...	537
MAKE US THY TORCHES IN THE WORLD	...	545
SOME LETTERS	...	546
NOW I HAVE BORNE (Poem)	...	549

Arjava

FAR ACROSS THE FOAM OF CHANGE (Poem)	...	550
--------------------------------------	-----	-----

The Mother

THE ELEPHANT	...	551
THE FOUR GREAT ASURAS	...	553

Abani

THE DIVINE MOTHER ANSWERS	...	557
---------------------------	-----	-----

Peter Heehs, Amal Kiran, Lalita

INTERVIEW OF 8 SEPTEMBER 1979	...	558
-------------------------------	-----	-----

Shakuntala Manay

A RARE SIGHT (Poem)	...	560
---------------------	-----	-----

Arun Vaidya

THE YOGA OF THE BODY	...	561
----------------------	-----	-----

Richard Hartz

THE COMPOSITION OF SAVITRI	...	567
----------------------------	-----	-----

Rabindranath Tagore

EXTRACTS FROM GITANJALI	...	575
-------------------------	-----	-----

Manmohan Ghose

A LULLABY (Poem)	...	576
------------------	-----	-----

Satadal (Translation)

O HUNTER...! (Poem)	...	577
---------------------	-----	-----

Kailas Jhaveri

REMEMBRANCE OF THE MOTHER	...	582
---------------------------	-----	-----

<i>Nirodbaran</i> (A Speech)		
THE 93RD ANNIVERSARY OF SRI AUROBINDO'S		
HOLY ARRIVAL AT PONDICHERRY (1910-2003)	...	589
<i>Debashish Banerji</i>		
NIRODBARAN'S SURREALIST POEMS	...	590
<i>Narad</i> (Richard Eggenberger)		
AWASH IN LIGHT (Poem)	...	591
<i>Aniruddha Sircar</i>		
REMEMBERING DR. INDRA SEN	...	592
<i>Rankanath Hota</i>		
PRAYER OF A FATHER (Poem)	...	594
<i>Goutam Ghosal</i>		
TAGORE AND SRI AUROBINDO	...	595
<i>Borys Latsenko</i>		
"FROM PANJAB WE GO TO THE BLUE HEAVEN—SVARGA TILL NOW"	...	598
<i>R.Y. Deshpande</i>		
ISLAM'S CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENCE	...	603
<i>Nilima Das</i>		
SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA	...	611
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE		
<i>Prema Nandakumar</i>		
<i>Review of</i> THE GREAT GOLDEN SACRIFICE OF THE MAHABHARATA		
<i>by</i> MAGGI LIDCHI-GRASSI	...	615

WHEN SUPERMAN IS BORN...

WHEN superman is born as Nature's king
His presence shall transfigure Matter's world:
He shall light up Truth's fire in Nature's night,
He shall lay upon the earth Truth's greater law;
Man too shall turn towards the Spirit's call.
Awake to his hidden possibility,
Awake to all that slept within his heart
And all that Nature meant when earth was formed
And the Spirit made this ignorant world his home,
He shall aspire to Truth and God and Bliss.
Interpreter of a diviner law
And instrument of a supreme design,
The higher kind shall lean to lift up man.
Man shall desire to climb to his own heights.
The truth above shall wake a nether truth;
Even the dumb earth become a sentient force.
The Spirit's tops and Nature's base shall draw
Near to the secret of their separate truth
And know each other as one deity.
The Spirit shall look out through Matter's gaze
And Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face.
Then man and superman shall be at one
And all the earth become a single life.
Even the multitude shall hear the Voice
And turn to commune with the Spirit within
And strive to obey the high spiritual law:
This earth shall stir with impulses sublime,
Humanity awake to deepest self,
Nature the hidden godhead recognise.
Even the many shall some answer make
And bear the splendour of the Divine's rush
And his impetuous knock at unseen doors.
A heavenlier passion shall upheave men's lives,
Their mind shall share in the ineffable gleam,
Their heart shall feel the ecstasy and the fire,
Earth's bodies shall be conscious of a soul;
Mortality's bond-slaves shall unloose their bonds,
Mere men into spiritual beings grow
And see awake the dumb divinity.
Intuitive beams shall touch the nature's peaks,

A revelation stir the nature's depths:
 The Truth shall be the leader of their lives,
 Truth shall dictate their thought and speech and act,
 They shall feel themselves lifted nearer to the sky,
 As if a little lower than the gods.
 For knowledge shall pour down its radiant streams
 And even darkened mind quiver with new life
 And kindle and burn with the Ideal's fire
 And turn to escape from mortal ignorance.
 The frontiers of the Ignorance shall recede,
 More and more souls shall enter into light,
 Minds lit, inspired, the occult summoner hear
 And lives blaze with a sudden inner flame
 And hearts grow enamoured of divine delight
 And human wills tune to the divine will,
 These separate selves the Spirit's oneness feel,
 These senses of heavenly sense grow capable,
 The flesh and nerves of a strange ethereal joy
 And mortal bodies of immortality.
 A divine force shall flow through tissue and cell
 And take the charge of breath and speech and act
 And all the thoughts shall be a glow of suns
 And every feeling a celestial thrill.
 Often a lustrous inner dawn shall come
 Lighting the chambers of the slumbering mind;
 A sudden bliss shall run through every limb
 And Nature with a mightier Presence fill.
 Thus shall the earth open to divinity
 And common natures feel the wide uplift,
 Illumine common acts with the Spirit's ray
 And meet the deity in common things.
 Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
 The Spirit shall take up the human play,
 This earthly life become the life divine."

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL, Vol. 29, pp. 709-11)

A DIVINE LIFE IN A DIVINE BODY

A DIVINE life in a divine body is the formula of the ideal that we envisage. But what will be the divine body? What will be the nature of this body, its structure, the principle of its activity, the perfection that distinguishes it from the limited and imperfect physicality within which we are now bound? What will be the conditions and operations of its life, still physical in its base upon the earth, by which it can be known as divine?

If it is to be the product of an evolution, and it is so that we must envisage it, an evolution out of our human imperfection and ignorance into a greater truth of spirit and nature, by what process or stages can it grow into manifestation or rapidly arrive? The process of the evolution upon earth has been slow and tardy—what principle must intervene if there is to be a transformation, a progressive or sudden change?

It is indeed as a result of our evolution that we arrive at the possibility of this transformation. As Nature has evolved beyond Matter and manifested Life, beyond Life and manifested Mind, so she must evolve beyond Mind and manifest a consciousness and power of our existence free from the imperfection and limitation of our mental existence, a supramental or truth-consciousness, and able to develop the power and perfection of the spirit. Here a slow and tardy change need no longer be the law or manner of our evolution; it will be only so to a greater or less extent so long as a mental ignorance clings and hampers our ascent; but once we have grown into the truth-consciousness its power of spiritual truth of being will determine all. Into that truth we shall be freed and it will transform mind and life and body. Light and bliss and beauty and a perfection of the spontaneous right action of all the being are there as native powers of the supramental truth-consciousness and these will in their very nature transform mind and life and body even here upon earth into a manifestation of the truth-conscious spirit. The obscurations of earth will not prevail against the supramental truth-consciousness, for even into the earth it can bring enough of the omniscient light and omnipotent force of the spirit to conquer. All may not open to the fullness of its light and power, but whatever does open must to that extent undergo the change. That will be the principle of transformation.

It might be that a psychological change, a mastery of the nature by the soul, a transformation of the mind into a principle of light, of the life-force into power and purity would be the first approach, the first attempt to solve the problem, to escape beyond the merely human formula and establish something that could be called a divine life upon earth, a first sketch of supermanhood, of a supramental living in the circumstances of the earth-nature. But this could not be the complete and radical change needed; it would not be the total transformation, the fullness of a divine life in a divine body. There would be a body still human and indeed animal in its origin and fundamental character and this would impose its own inevitable limitations on the higher parts of the embodied being. As limitation by ignorance and error is the fundamental defect of an untransformed mind, as limitation by the imperfect impulses and strainings and wants of desire are the defects of an untransformed life-force, so also imperfection of the potentialities of the physical action, an imperfection, a limitation in the response of its half-

consciousness to the demands made upon it and the grossness and stains of its original animality would be the defects of an untransformed or an imperfectly transformed body. These could not but hamper and even pull down towards themselves the action of the higher parts of the nature. A transformation of the body must be the condition for a total transformation of the nature.

It might be also that the transformation might take place by stages; there are powers of the nature still belonging to the mental region which are yet potentialities of a growing gnosis lifted beyond our human mentality and partaking of the light and power of the Divine and an ascent through these planes, a descent of them into the mental being might seem to be the natural evolutionary course. But in practice it might be found that these intermediate levels would not be sufficient for the total transformation since, being themselves illumined potentialities of mental being not yet supramental in the full sense of the word, they could bring down to the mind only a partial divinity or raise the mind towards that but not effectuate its elevation into the complete supramentality of the truth-consciousness. Still these levels might become stages of the ascent which some would reach and pause there while others went higher and could reach and live on superior strata of a semi-divine existence. It is not to be supposed that all humanity would rise in a block into the supermind; at first those only might attain to the highest or some intermediate height of the ascent whose inner evolution has fitted them for so great a change or who are raised by the direct touch of the Divine into its perfect light and power and bliss. The large mass of human beings might still remain for long content with a normal or only a partially illumined and uplifted human nature. But this would be itself a sufficiently radical change and initial transformation of earth-life; for the way would be open to all who have the will to rise, the supramental influence of the truth-consciousness would touch the earth-life and influence even its untransformed mass and a hope would be there and a promise eventually available to all which now only the few can share in or realise.

In any case these would be beginnings only and could not constitute the fullness of the divine life upon earth; it would be a new orientation of the earthly life but not the consummation of its change. For that there must be the sovereign reign of a supramental truth-consciousness to which all other forms of life would be subordinated and depend upon it as the master principle and supreme power to which they could look up as the goal, profit by its influences, be moved and upraised by something of its illumination and penetrating force. Especially, as the human body had to come into existence with its modification of the previous animal form and its erect figure of a new power of life and its expressive movements and activities serviceable and necessary to the principle of mind and the life of a mental being, so too a body must be developed with new powers, activities or degrees of a divine action expressive of a truth-conscious being and proper to a supramental consciousness and manifesting a conscious spirit. While the capacity for taking up and sublimating all the activities of the earth-life capable of being spiritualised must be there, a transcendence of the original animality and the actions incurably tainted by it or at least some saving transformation of them, some spiritualising or psychicising

of the consciousness and motives animating them and the shedding of whatever could not be so transformed, even a change of what might be called its instrumental structure, its functioning and organisation, a complete and hitherto unprecedented control of these things must be the consequence or incidental to this total change. These things have been already to some extent illustrated in the lives of many who have become possessed of spiritual powers but as something exceptional and occasional, the casual or incomplete manifestation of an acquired capacity rather than the organisation of a new consciousness, a new life and a new nature. How far can such physical transformation be carried, what are the limits within which it must remain to be consistent with life upon earth and without carrying that life beyond the earthly sphere or pushing it towards the supra-terrestrial existence? The supramental consciousness is not a fixed quantity but a power which passes to higher and higher levels of possibility until it reaches supreme consummations of spiritual existence fulfilling supermind as supermind fulfils the ranges of spiritual consciousness that are pushing towards it from the human or mental level. In this progression the body also may reach a more perfect form and a higher range of its expressive powers, become a more and more perfect vessel of divinity.

*

This destiny of the body has rarely in the past been envisaged or else not for the body here upon earth; such forms would rather be imagined or visioned as the privilege of celestial beings and not possible as the physical residence of a soul still bound to terrestrial nature. The Vaishnavas have spoken of a spiritualised conscious body, *cinmaya deha*; there has been the conception of a radiant or luminous body, which might be the Vedic *jyotirmaya deha*. A light has been seen by some radiating from the bodies of highly developed spiritual persons, even extending to the emission of an enveloping aura and there has been recorded an initial phenomenon of this kind in the life of so great a spiritual personality as Ramakrishna. But these things have been either conceptual only or rare and occasional and for the most part the body has not been regarded as possessed of spiritual possibility or capable of transformation. It has been spoken of as the means of effectuation of the dharma and dharma here includes all high purposes, achievements and ideals of life not excluding the spiritual change: but it is an instrument that must be dropped when its work is done and though there may be and must be spiritual realisation while yet in the body, it can only come to its full fruition after the abandonment of the physical frame. More ordinarily in the spiritual tradition the body has been regarded as an obstacle, incapable of spiritualisation or transmutation and a heavy weight holding the soul to earthly nature and preventing its ascent either to spiritual fulfilment in the Supreme or to the dissolution of its individual being in the Supreme. But while this conception of the role of the body in our destiny is suitable enough for a sadhana that sees earth only as a field of the ignorance and earth-life as a preparation for a saving withdrawal from life which is the indispensable condition for spiritual liberation, it is insufficient for a sadhana which conceives of a divine life upon earth and liberation of

earth-nature itself as part of a total purpose of the embodiment of the spirit here. If a total transformation of the being is our aim, a transformation of the body must be an indispensable part of it; without that no full divine life on earth is possible. It is the past evolution of the body and especially its animal nature and animal history which seems to stand in the way of this consummation. The body, as we have seen, is an offspring and creation of the Inconscient, itself inconscient or only half-conscious; it began as a form of unconscious Matter, developed life and from a material object became a living growth, developed mind and from the subconsciousness of the plant and the initial rudimentary mind or incomplete intelligence of the animal developed the intellectual mind and more complete intelligence of man and now serves as the physical base, container and instrumental means of our total spiritual endeavour. Its animal character and its gross limitations stand indeed as an obstacle to our spiritual perfection; but the fact that it has developed a soul and is capable of serving it as a means may indicate that it is capable of further development and may become a shrine and expression of the spirit, reveal a secret spirituality of Matter, become entirely and not only half-conscious, reach a certain oneness with the spirit. This much it must do, so far at least it must transcend its original earth-nature, if it is to be the complete instrument of the divine life and no longer an obstacle.

*

Still the inconveniences of the animal body and its animal nature and impulses and the limitations of the human body at its best are there in the beginning and persist always so long as there is not the full and fundamental liberation, and its inconscience or half-conscience and its binding of the soul and mind and life-force to Matter, to materiality of all kinds, to the call of the unregenerated earth-nature are there and constantly oppose the call of the spirit and circumscribe the climb to higher things. To the physical being it brings a bondage to the material instruments, to the brain and heart and senses, wed to materiality and materialism of all kinds, to the bodily mechanism and its needs and obligations, to the imperative need of food and the preoccupation with the means of getting it and storing it as one of the besetting interests of life, to fatigue and sleep, to the satisfaction of bodily desire. The life-force in man also is tied down to these small things; it has to limit the scope of its larger ambitions and longings, its drive to rise beyond the pull of earth and follow the heavenlier intuitions of its psychic parts, the heart's ideal and the soul's yearnings. On the mind the body imposes the boundaries of the physical being and the physical life and the sense of the sole complete reality of physical things with the rest as a sort of brilliant fireworks of the imagination, of lights and glories that can only have their full play in heavens beyond, on higher planes of existence, but not here; it afflicts the idea and aspiration with the burden of doubt, the evidence of the subtle senses and the intuition with uncertainty and the vast field of supraphysical consciousness and experience with the imputation of unreality and clamps down to its earth-roots the growth of the spirit from its original limiting humanity into the supramental truth and the divine nature. These obstacles can be overcome, the denials and resistance of the body surmounted, its transformation is possible. Even the inconscient and animal part of us can be illumined

and made capable of manifesting the god-nature, even as our mental humanity can be made to manifest the superhumanity of the supramental truth-consciousness and the divinity of what is now superconscious to us, and the total transformation made a reality here. But for this the obligations and compulsions of its animality must cease to be obligatory and a purification of its materiality effected by which that very materiality can be turned into a material solidity of the manifestation of the divine nature. For nothing essential must be left out in the totality of the earth-change; Matter itself can be turned into a means of revelation of the spiritual reality, the Divine.

The difficulty is dual, psychological and corporeal: the first is the effect of the unregenerated animality upon the life, especially by the insistence of the body's gross instincts, impulses, desires; the second is the outcome of our corporeal structure and organic instrumentation imposing its restrictions on the dynamism of the higher divine nature. The first of these two difficulties is easier to deal with and conquer; for here the will can intervene and impose on the body the power of the higher nature. Certain of these impulses and instincts of the body have been found especially harmful by the spiritual aspirant and weighed considerably in favour of an ascetic rejection of the body. Sex and sexuality and all that springs from sex and testifies to its existence had to be banned and discarded from the spiritual life, and this, though difficult, is not at all impossible and can be made a cardinal condition for the spiritual seeker. This is natural and unescapable in all ascetic practice and the satisfaction of this condition, though not easy at first to fulfil, becomes after a time quite feasible; the overcoming of the sex instinct and impulse is indeed binding on all who would attain to self-mastery and lead the spiritual life. A total mastery over it is essential for all spiritual seekers, the eradication of it for the complete ascetic. This much has to be recognised and not diminished in its obligatory importance and its principle.

But all recognition of the sex principle, as apart from the gross physical indulgence of the sex impulse, could not be excluded from a divine life upon earth; it is there in life, plays a large part and has to be dealt with, it cannot simply be ignored, merely suppressed or held down or put away out of sight. In the first place, it is in one of its aspects a cosmic and even a divine principle: it takes the spiritual form of the Ishwara and the Shakti and without it there could be no world-creation or manifestation of the world-principle of Purusha and Prakriti which are both necessary for the creation, necessary too in their association and interchange for the play of its psychological working and in their manifestation as soul and Nature fundamental to the whole process of the Lila. In the divine life itself an incarnation or at least in some form a presence of the two powers or their initiating influence through their embodiments or representatives would be indispensable for making the new creation possible. In its human action on the mental and vital level sex is not altogether an undivine principle; it has its nobler aspects and idealities and it has to be seen in what way and to what extent these can be admitted into the new and larger life. All gross animal indulgence of sex desire and impulse would have to be eliminated; it could only continue among those who are not ready for the higher life or not yet ready for a complete spiritual living. In all who aspired to it but could not yet take

it up in its fullness sex will have to be refined, submit to the spiritual or psychic impulse and a control by the higher mind and the higher vital and shed all its lighter, frivolous or degraded forms and feel the touch of the purity of the ideal. Love would remain, all forms of the pure truth of love in higher and higher steps till it realised its highest nature, widened into universal love, merged into the love of the Divine. The love of man and woman would also undergo that elevation and consummation; for all that can feel a touch of the ideal and the spiritual must follow the way of ascent till it reaches the divine Reality. The body and its activities must be accepted as part of the divine life and pass under this law; but, as in the other evolutionary transitions, what cannot accept the law of the divine life cannot be accepted and must fall away from the ascending nature.

Another difficulty that the transformation of the body has to face is its dependence for its very existence upon food, and here too are involved the gross physical instincts, impulses, desires that are associated with this difficult factor, the essential cravings of the palate, the greed of food and animal gluttony of the belly, the coarsening of the mind when it grovels in the mud of sense, obeys a servitude to its mere animal part and hugs its bondage to Matter. The higher human in us seeks refuge in a temperate moderation, in abstemiousness and abstinence or in carelessness about the body and its wants and in an absorption in higher things. The spiritual seeker often, like the Jain ascetics, seeks refuge in long and frequent fasts which lift him temporarily at least out of the clutch of the body's demands and help him to feel in himself a pure vacancy of the wide rooms of the spirit. But all this is not liberation and the question may be raised whether, not only at first but always, the divine life also must submit to this necessity. But it could only deliver itself from it altogether if it could find out the way so to draw upon the universal energy that the energy would sustain not only the vital parts of our physicality but its constituent matter with no need of aid for sustenance from any outside substance of Matter. It is indeed possible even while fasting for very long periods to maintain the full energies and activities of the soul and mind and life, even those of the body, to remain wakeful but concentrated in Yoga all the time, or to think deeply and write day and night, to dispense with sleep, to walk eight hours a day, maintaining all these activities separately or together, and not feel any loss of strength, any fatigue, any kind of failure or decadence. At the end of the fast one can even resume at once taking the normal or even a greater than the normal amount of nourishment without any transition or precaution such as medical science enjoins, as if both the complete fasting and the feasting were natural conditions, alternating by an immediate and easy passage from one to the other, of a body already trained by a sort of initial transformation to be an instrument of the powers and activities of Yoga. But one thing one does not escape and that is the wasting of the material tissues of the body, its flesh and substance. Conceivably, if a practicable way and means could only be found, this last invincible obstacle too might be overcome and the body maintained by an interchange of its forces with the forces of material Nature, giving to her her need from the individual and taking from her directly the sustaining energies of her universal existence. Conceivably, one might rediscover and re-establish at the summit of the evolution of life the phenomenon we see at its base, the power to

draw from all around it the means of sustenance and self-renewal. Or else the evolved being might acquire the greater power to draw down those means from above rather than draw them up or pull them in from the environment around, all about it and below it. But until something like this is achieved or made possible we have to go back to food and the established material forces of Nature.

In fact we do, however unconsciously, draw constantly upon the universal energy, the force in Matter to replenish our material existence and the mental, vital and other potencies in the body: we do it directly in the invisible processes of interchange constantly kept up by Nature and by special means devised by her; breathing is one of these, sleep also and repose. But as her basic means for maintaining and renewing the gross physical body and its workings and inner potencies Nature has selected the taking in of outside matter in the shape of food, its digestion, assimilation of what is assimilable and elimination of what cannot or ought not to be assimilated; this by itself is sufficient for mere maintenance, but for assuring health and strength in the body so maintained it has added the impulse towards physical exercise and play of many kinds, ways for the expenditure and renewal of energy, the choice or the necessity of manifold action and labour. In the new life, in its beginnings at least, it would not be necessary or advisable to make any call for an extreme or precipitate rejection of the need of food or the established natural method for the maintenance of the still imperfectly transformed body. If or when these things have to be transcended it must come as a result of the awakened will of the spirit, a will also in Matter itself, an imperative evolutionary urge, an act of the creative transmutations of Time or a descent from the transcendence. Meanwhile the drawing in of the universal energy by a conscious action of the higher powers of the being from around or from above, by a call to what is still to us a transcending consciousness or by an invasion or descent from the Transcendence itself, may well become an occasional, a frequent or a constant phenomenon and even reduce the part played by food and its need to an incidence no longer preoccupying, a necessity minor and less and less imperative.

Meanwhile food and the ordinary process of Nature can be accepted, although its use has to be liberated from attachment and desire and the grosser indiscriminating appetites and clutch at the pleasures of the flesh which is the way of the Ignorance; the physical processes have to be subtilised and the grossest may have to be eliminated and new processes found or new instrumentalities emerge. So long as it is accepted, a refined pleasure in it may be permitted and even a desireless ananda of taste take the place of the physical relish and the human selection by likings and dislikings which is our present imperfect response to what is offered to us by Nature. It must be remembered that for the divine life on earth, earth and Matter have not to be and cannot be rejected but have only to be sublimated and to reveal in themselves the possibilities of the spirit, serve the spirit's highest uses and be transformed into instruments of a greater living.

The divine life must always be actuated by the push towards perfection; a perfection of the joy of life is part and an essential part of it, the body's delight in things and the body's joy of life are not excluded from it; they too have to be made perfect. A large totality is the very nature of this new and growing way of existence, a fullness of the

possibilities of the mind transmuted into a thing of light, of the life converted into a force of spiritual power and joy, of the body transformed into an instrument of a divine action, divine knowledge, divine bliss. All can be taken into its scope that is capable of transforming itself, all that can be an instrument, a vessel, an opportunity for the expression of this totality of the self-manifesting Spirit.

(To be concluded)

SRI AUROBINDO

(Essays in Philosophy and Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 13, pp. 536-47)

A PRAYER

June 20, 1914

Thou must accomplish the work of transfiguration, Thou must teach us the path to be followed and Thou must give us the power to follow it to the very end....

O Thou source of all love and all light, Thou whom we cannot know in Thyself but can manifest ever more completely and perfectly, Thou whom we cannot conceive but can approach in profound silence, to complete Thy incommensurable boons Thou must come to our help until we have gained Thy victory....

Let that true love be born which soothes all suffering; establish that immutable peace wherein resides true power; give us the sovereign knowledge which dispels all darkness....

From the infinite depths to this most external body, in its smallest elements, Thou dost move and live and vibrate and set all in motion, and the whole being is now only a single block, infinitely multiple yet absolutely coherent, animated by one tremendous vibration: Thou.

The Mother

(Prayers and Meditations, CWM, Vol. 1, p. 176)

MAKE US THY TORCHES IN THE WORLD

Mother Divine, grant that today may bring to us a completer consecration to thy Will, a more integral gift of ourselves to thy work, a more total forgetfulness of self, a greater illumination, a purer love. Grant that in a communion growing ever deeper, more constant and entire we may be united always more and more closely to thee and become thy servitors worthy of thee. Remove from us all egoism, root out all petty vanity, greed and obscurity. May we be all ablaze with thy Divine Love; make us thy torches in the world.

Sri Aurobindo

Mother Divine, grant that today may bring to us a completer consecration to thy Will, a more integral gift of ourselves to thy work, a more total forgetfulness of self, a greater illumination, a purer love. Grant that in a communion growing ever deeper, more constant and entire we may be united always more and more closely to thee and become thy servitors worthy of thee. Remove from us all egoism, root out all petty vanity, greed and obscurity. May we be all ablaze with thy divine Love; make us thy torches in the World.

SRI AUROBINDO

(Message distributed by the Mother on 24.4.53)

SOME LETTERS

(Continued from the issue of June 2003)

Sometimes I am very thirsty, but I do not keep water with me; it is troublesome to keep a water-pot and run twice for water. I sometimes drink water from the tap, though rarely. Is it all right?

Better not.

At times I ask for water at R's house. Is it allowed?

Yes—if they are drinking filtered water.

6 April 1933

There was a half-dreariness during the day, and thoughts and images of the past came up. Thoughts of eating, politics and words used by the workmen arose in the mind. Was it the subconscious or some crude part brought out in front?

It must be some part of the being or rather some remnant of it coming up to show itself and get changed. The words seem to rise from the subconscious mechanical mind.

What is this “environmental consciousness” which each man carries about him?

Each man has his own personal consciousness entrenched in his body and gets into touch with his surroundings only through his body and senses and the mind using the senses.

Yet all the time the universal forces are pouring into him without his knowing it. He is aware only of thoughts, feelings etc. that rise to the surface and these he takes for his own. Really they come from outside in mind waves, vital waves, waves of feeling and sensation etc. which take particular forms in him and rise to the surface after they have got inside.

But they do not get into his body at once. He carries about with him an environmental consciousness (called by the Theosophists the aura) into which they first enter. If you can become conscious of this environmental self of you, then you can catch the thought, passion, suggestion or force of illness, or whatever it may be, before it enters and prevent it from entering into you. If things in you are thrown out, they often do not go altogether but take refuge in this environmental atmosphere and from there try to get in again or they go to a distance outside but on the outskirts or even perhaps far off waiting till they get an opportunity to attempt entrance.

7 April 1933

In a dream I saw that my box of books (I have none) was lost from the garret where they were placed. Does it mean all book-knowledge should be given up?

It may be that it means it is put aside (as regards sadhana) because no longer of use.

A boy related to a workman entered the Arogya House. I allowed him to talk for a minute or two and then I asked him to go out. I ought to have asked him to go out from the first, but I displayed a little weakness in action.

That does not matter if it is one or two minutes.

The workmen sometimes eat during the work. I have been allowing it occasionally for two or three minutes because it is natural that they are hungry. All do not take breakfast in the morning before they come. But what is the right way?

The right way can hardly be followed because these workmen have no well organised life—it is all haphazard. Some things have to be allowed though not ideal,—provided it does not go too far and does not interfere too much with the order of the work.

Does “universal forces” mean hostile forces or some other forces of ignorance and falsehood?

Universal forces means all forces good or bad, favourable or hostile, of light and darkness that move in the cosmos.

Is it possible to make them recede from the environmental consciousness to their proper place or even away from there?

You mean the hostile forces. Yes, certainly.

Does awareness of the environmental consciousness come by itself or by effort at concentration?

It may come either way. It means a certain widening and opening which puts one in contact with the cosmic being, the cosmic Force or the cosmic consciousness.

But does knowledge of all these forces bring one nearer to union with the Divine or transformation or victory?

It is obviously a help to transformation to know this part of oneself and be able to deal with the forces before they invade or touch you.

I saw in dream an Anglo-Indian boy come near a well, jump into it and sink. When we saw that he was not yet coming out, I asked Vandaraj, a cooly, to dive in to help him, but he smiled and did not do it. Does this indicate some part of the being plunging in for conversion and sinking for good in the Divine?

It does not look like a symbolical dream at all—it is either an association of images or an arrangement in the mind of something that happened on the vital plane.

Are pain and misery universal forces?

They are perhaps rather the result of the action of universal forces—but in a certain sense grief and pain may be said to be universal forces—for there are waves of these things that arrive and invade the being often without apparent cause.

8 April 1933

In the evolution, did the embodied beings—animals and humans—come first, or did the universal forces guide their actions?

Naturally, the universal forces are there already—the individuals are a means of manifestation.

What is the connection between the environmental consciousness and the subconscious?

They are two quite different things. What is stored in the subconscious—impressions, memories, rise up from there into the conscious parts. In the environmental things are not stored up and fixed, although they move about there. It is full of mobility, a field of vibration or passage of forces.

A deeply concentrated work seems to close a person to any attacks from hostile or dark forces. From this experience it seems that all my other effort was unnecessary groping—one can attain to purity and freedom by concentrated work alone.

I don't think it would be sufficient. It means a tremendous constant concentration—and would it change the consciousness so that the hostile forces cannot take part in it or merely be an armour of defence? This is not to say that work cannot purify and free—it can, but by the spirit in it and the offering.

All this effort at trying to live in a subtler space outside the personality, all these thoughts about work, even concentrated work, appear to be dry and stony-hard when compared to the sweeter attempt at emotional union with the Divine.

It should be a stage only for the getting of experience and knowledge and a preliminary change of the thinking and active parts. The action of the heart is more central and dynamic and must certainly be a main power of the sadhana.

9 April 1933

SRI AUROBINDO

(To be continued)

NOW I HAVE BORNE

Now I have borne Thy presence and Thy light
Eternity assumes me and I am
A vastness of tranquillity and flame,
My heart a deep Atlantic of delight.
My life is a moving moment of Thy might
Carrying Thy vision's sacred oriflamme
Inscribed with the white glory of Thy name
In the unborn silence of the Infinite.

My body is a jar of radiant peace,
The days a line across my timelessness,
My mind is made a voiceless breadth of Thee,
A lyre of muteness and a luminous sea;
Yet in each cell I feel Thy fire embrace:
A brazier of the seven ecstasies.

2 February 1938

SRI AUROBINDO

(Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research, April 1977, p. 19)

FAR ACROSS THE FOAM OF CHANGE

SWIFTLY come and swiftly pass
Through the shadows on the grass
Joyful bands and faery glee
Over the rainbow-flowered lea.
Bright their eyes and bright their hair;
Song-bright voices free from care.
Scarfed with webs of golden glow:
Sweet are the silver horns they blow.
All the summer-laden day
Bathes their birdswift meadow-play
In a more translucent ray
Than spills from cloudless noon of May;
For the fair strand through which they range
Lies far across the foam of change.

Invocation

Bright world across the foaming sea of change,
Pine-odorous peak and all the purple range
Of hills where the ever-living gay ones dwell,
To sleep-hushed ear some tale of splendour tell.

November 30, 1934

ARJAVA

Sri Aurobindo's comment: It is a very pretty lyric with much light in it.

THE ELEPHANT

As the elephant on the battlefield endures the arrow shot from the bow, so also shall I patiently bear insult, for truly there are many of evil mind in the world.

It is a tamed elephant that is led to the battlefield; one whom the Raja rides. The best among men is he who patiently bears insult.

Trained mules are excellent, as also the thoroughbreds of Sindh and the mighty tuskers. Better yet is the man who has brought himself under control.

Not by mounting one of these animals does one attain the unexplored path, but by mastering oneself. By that mastery one attains it.

In the mating season it is difficult to control the mighty elephant Dhanapalako.¹ When he is chained he refuses to eat, he yearns only to be once more a wild elephant of the forest.

When a man is slothful and gluttonous, always sleepy and rolling from side to side like a fat hog in the mud—this fool is compelled to be born over and over again.

Once this mind wandered where it would from one thing to another, according to its pleasure, but now I shall master it completely as the mahout with his goad masters the elephant in rut.

Delight in vigilance, guard carefully your mind. Lift yourself out of evil as the elephant sunk in a swamp.

If for company you find a prudent friend, who leads a good life, who is intelligent and self-controlled, overcoming all obstacles, do not hesitate to set out with him joyfully and courageously.

And if you do not meet with such a friend, who leads a good life, who is intelligent and self-controlled, then like a king renouncing a kingdom he has conquered, or like a solitary elephant in the forest follow your path alone.

It is better to live alone, for one cannot take a fool as a companion. It is better to live alone and do no evil, carefree, like the elephant in the jungle.

It is good to have friends when need arises. It is good to be satisfied with what one has. It is good, at the hour of death, to have acquired merit. It is good to leave all grief behind you.

1. One who guards the treasure.

In this world it is a joy to respect one's mother; it is a joy to respect one's father; it is a joy to honour the monks; it is a joy to revere the Brahmins.¹

It is a joy to live purely throughout one's life. It is a joy to have a steadfast faith. It is a joy to acquire wisdom. It is a joy to abstain from all evil.

The first verse gives some very wise advice: the war elephant who has been well trained does not start running away as soon as he receives an arrow. He continues to advance and bears the pain, with no change in his attitude of heroic resistance. Those who wish to follow the true path will naturally be exposed to the attacks of all forms of bad will, which not only do not understand, but generally hate what they do not understand.

If you are worried, grieved or even discouraged by the malicious stupidities that men say about you, you will not advance far on the way. And such things come to you, not because you are unlucky or because your lot is not a happy one, but because, on the contrary, the divine Consciousness and the divine Grace take your resolution seriously and allow the circumstances to become a touchstone on your way, to see whether your resolution is sincere and whether you are strong enough to face the difficulties.

Therefore, if anyone sneers at you or says something that is not very charitable, the first thing you should do is to look within yourself for whatever weakness or imperfection has allowed such a thing to happen and not to be disconsolate, indignant or aggrieved, because people do not appreciate you at what you think to be your true value; on the contrary, you must be thankful to the divine Grace for having pointed out to you the weakness or imperfection or deformation that you must correct.

Therefore, instead of being unhappy, you can be fully satisfied and derive advantage, a great advantage from the harm that was intended against you.

Besides, if you truly want to follow the path and practise yoga, you must not do it for appreciation or honour, you must do it because it is an imperative need of your being, because you cannot be happy in any other way. Whether people appreciate you or do not appreciate you, it is of absolutely no importance. You may tell yourself beforehand that the further you are from ordinary men, foreign to the ordinary mode of being, the less people will appreciate you, quite naturally, because they will not understand you. And I repeat, it has absolutely no importance.

True sincerity consists in advancing on the way because you cannot do otherwise, to consecrate yourself to the divine life because you cannot do otherwise, to seek to transform your being and come out into the light because you cannot do otherwise, because it is the purpose of your life.

When it is like that you may be sure that you are on the right path.

1 August 1958

THE MOTHER

(Questions and Answers, CWM, Vol. 3, pp. 281-84)

1. The holy men; the men of wisdom.

THE FOUR GREAT ASURAS

Would it not be better to change them [the hostile beings]?

AH! my child, certainly it would be better, much better. But then...

It is a domain of which I have a thorough experience. After forty years of sustained effort I have found out that it is absolutely impossible to change anyone unless in truth he wants it sincerely. If he does not set himself to the task with an absolute sincerity, well—I have tried for forty years, one can try it for a hundred and forty years, it will be the same thing—he won't stir. It is the very character of these beings to be perfectly satisfied with themselves, and they do not desire, they have not the least intention to change! Even now, among the beings who are concerned with the earth, the asuric beings, the greatest of the asuras who is still busy with the earth at present, who is the asura of falsehood and calls himself the "Lord of the Nations"—he has taken a beautiful name, he is Lord of the Nations—it is he, wherever there is something going wrong, you may be sure it is he or a representative of his who is there. It is also perfectly sure that very soon his hour will come and all will be over for him, that he will have to disappear. And he absolutely refuses to change. He has no intention to do it, for immediately he will lose all his power. It is impossible. And he knows that he will disappear. But he proclaims categorically that before disappearing he will destroy all he can.... At heart, he would not consent to disappear unless everything disappeared at the same time as he. Unfortunately for him, this is not possible. But he will do all that lies in his power to destroy, demolish, ruin, corrupt as many things as he can. That is certain. Afterwards it is the downfall. He accepts the downfall on this condition. It has never crossed his mind that he might be converted. It would no longer be he, don't you see, he would no longer be himself.

There is a great difference between a human being and these beings of the vital plane. I have told you this many times, I am going to repeat it:

In a human being, there is the divine Presence and the psychic being—at the beginning embryonic, but in the end a being wholly formed, conscious, independent, individualised. That does not exist in the vital world. It is a special grace given to human beings dwelling in matter and upon earth. And because of this, there is no human being who cannot be converted, if he wants it; that is, there is a possibility of his wanting it and the moment he wants it, he can do it. He is sure to succeed the moment he wants it, whereas those beings of the vital do not have a psychic being in them, they do not have the direct divine Presence (naturally, at the Origin, they descended directly from the Divine, but that was at the Origin, that is very far away). They are not in direct contact with the Divine within them, they have no psychic being. And if they were converted, there would remain nothing of them! For they are made up entirely of the opposite movement: they are entirely made up of personal self-assertion, despotic authority, separation from the Origin, and, of a great disdain for all that is pure, beautiful and noble. They do not have within them this psychic element which in man, even in the most debased, makes him respect what is beautiful and pure; even the basest man, in spite of himself,

against his own will, respects what is pure, noble and beautiful. But those beings do not have that. They are wholly on the other side, totally on the other side. It disgusts them in every way. It is for them something which should not be touched, because it destroys; it is the thing that makes them disappear. Goodwill, sincerity, purity and beauty are things which make them disappear. So they hate these things.

Now I do not know on what grounds one could convert them. What would be the point of support? I do not find it. Even in the greatest. That is, some of these beings will not disappear until hatred disappears from the earth.... One might put it the other way round. One might say that hatred will disappear from the earth when those beings disappear; but, for the reason I have just given, the power to make light spring forth in the place of darkness, beauty in the place of ugliness, goodness instead of evil, that power man possesses, the Asura does not. Therefore it is man who will do that work, it is he who will change, it is he who will transform his earth and it is he who will compel the Asura to flee into other worlds or to dissolve. After that, all will be quiet. There you are.

10 June 1953

*

If the Divine were to withdraw from the Asura, the Asura would dissolve, wouldn't he?—the Divine who is in the Asura?

I know people who have rejected their psychic being and who still continue to live; and yet, logically it would seem that a human being without a psychic being would die, still they continue to live. And perhaps it would be necessary in order finally to dissolve these asuric forces in the world—perhaps it would be necessary for the Divine to withdraw his whole creation into himself, because these are at the very origin of the creation.

Then the transformation cannot come about unless the Divine withdraws into the Divine?

That, why, that is Pralaya! It is not transformation, it is the dissolution of the earth. It is said that there were six creations, that is, six exteriorisations of the universe, and that six times the universe went back—it is recounted in the scriptures, you know—went back into the Divine. But it is said that this is the end. It is evidently one ending, but it is not the completion. It is because the creation lacked something and it was necessary to withdraw it and remake it. And it is said that our present creation is the seventh, and being the seventh it is the real one, that is, it is the final one, and it will not be withdrawn again, that it will continue being transformed and becoming more and more perfect, so as not to have to be withdrawn.

How far is what is said true?

We shall see!

But the last six times, is that what happened?

The first six, yes, it is true. Even the order is given, the order in which... Because each creation is built on certain attributes, and the order of these attributes is given. I know them, I have written them somewhere. But I don't have it with me. So I can't give it to you, I would make a mistake. But one day I could bring you the paper on which it is written. All that I know is that this time it is the creation based on equilibrium. But a special equilibrium, for it is a progressive equilibrium. It is not a static equilibrium, the attribute of the present creation. It is *equilibrium*; that is why it is said that in this creation, if each thing is exactly in its place, in a perfect balance, well, there is no more evil. What is evil?—it is things not in equilibrium! There is nothing that is bad in itself, it is only the position which is wrong, which is not the true position.

Then what is the position of the Asuras?

To be taken back into the Divine. There were four great Asuras. Out of the four, two are converted. They are taking part in the divine work. The other two are holding out well. How long will they hold out? We shall see. So, they have the choice between being converted, that is, taking their place, poised, in the whole totality or else being dissolved, that is, being re-absorbed by their origin.

There is one of them who has almost attempted conversion and not succeeded. When it had to be done, it seemed to him quite unpleasant. So he has put it off till another time.

As for the other, he refuses to try. He has taken up a very, very important position in the world, because people who don't know things call him "Lord of the Nations". In fact, I was speaking a while ago about the forces which govern the world and don't want to give up their rule at all. They are perfectly satisfied with it—it is not that he does not know that his end will come one day, but still he always postpones it as long as he can.

But as they do not have human dimensions, it can go on for quite a long time, can't it? As long as they find somewhere upon earth a human consciousness ready to respond to their influence, they will remain. So you can imagine the problem! Now it is not through individuals, it is through nations that they exert their influence.[...]

Do you know what the origin of these four Asuras is?[...]

You said there were four divine forces: Love, Light, Truth and [...] Life.[...] Then these four forces separated from the Divine and changed into falsehood...

Yes, it is something like that! It is something like that!

Light or Consciousness, Ananda or Love, Life and Truth.

Then Light or Consciousness became Darkness and Inconscience. Love and Ananda became Hatred and Suffering, and Truth became Falsehood, and Life became Death. Well, it is the first two... but not exactly in the same conditions. The first is converted and

works, but he has refused to take a human body, he says it is a limitation in his work; perhaps one day he will take one, but for the time being he refuses. The second is converted and has of his own will been dissolved. He has dissolved into his origin. And the last two are holding out well.

The one of Death tried to incarnate. But he could not get converted. He tried to incarnate, which is something very rare. But it was a partial, not a total incarnation. That is difficult for them, a total incarnation. Human bodies are quite small, human consciousnesses are too small.

As for the other, he has emanations which are very active in certain human bodies and have played a big role in the recent history of the earth!

Don't the Asuras quarrel among themselves?

Oh yes, oh yes! just like men who are under asuric influences. They are the worst enemies among themselves. We must say it is a blessing, for if they had an understanding, things would be much more difficult. Perhaps it is so just because it is a law of equilibrium that governs the world. It is in order to lessen the strength of their influence. But still[...]

But why is man a centre of attraction for the adverse forces? He is so limited!

Yes. Also they do not usually work upon one man. But they try to get hold of the earth-atmosphere, you understand, and without getting hold of men, they can't get hold of the earth-atmosphere, because it is in man that the highest terrestrial force manifests. As for taking a human body for conversion, that indeed is quite... the answer is quite simple. It is because in man there is a psychic being and there is no Asura who can eternally resist the influence of the psychic being, even were he to refuse as much as he could to surrender and bind himself closely. That's exactly the contradiction of their existence.

16 June 1954

THE MOTHER

(*Questions and Answers*, CWM, Vol. 5, pp. 98-100; Vol. 6, pp. 170-74; see also: A compilation by Georges van Vrekhem *The Mother's Vision*, pp. 201-06.)

THE DIVINE MOTHER ANSWERS

(4)

Mother Divine,

Sometime back I wrote to You about my going to Bengal for the completion of my work there. I shall certainly be glad, however, if I have not to go there just now. If necessary, I can go there next after the February Darshan.

What I feel now, is a strong urge in me to undergo a systematic physical training. After coming from Bengal, I had an attack of eczematic eruptions. At present I feel much better.

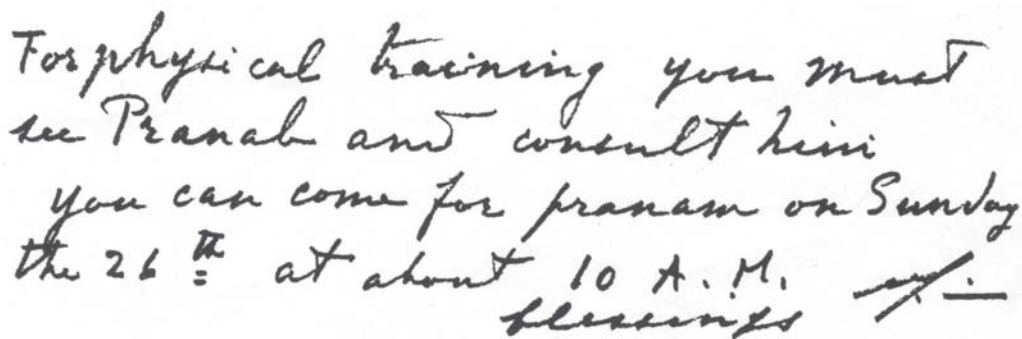
If You approve of it, I would like to join the groups immediately. Also I would like to come to You for pranam, if possible.

With pranams,

20-12-65

Your child

ABANI



For physical training you must
see Pranab and consult him
you can come for pranam on Sunday
the 26th at about 10 A.M. ~~my~~
blessings

For physical training you must see Pranab and consult him.

You can come for pranam on Sunday the 26th at about 10 A.M.
blessings

THE MOTHER

(To be continued)

INTERVIEW OF 8 SEPTEMBER 1979

Participants: Amal Kiran (A), Lalita (L) and Peter Heehs (P)

(Continued from the issue of June 2003)

P: Where did she go?

A: To the Lake, to other places. And then she started the practice of having a car accompany her with some of the sadhaks and sadhikas. I remember once I went, maybe more than once. Once I distinctly remember I was put in the centre with Lalita and Vasudha on either side of me. And Mother asked me, "Is it all right for you to be between two women?" I said, "Yes, Mother." I was supposed to be very susceptible, or something. So she was very careful about that. And then we went for a drive and Mother would walk in front and...

P: Just a pleasure drive?

L: Yes, pleasure drive.

A: Yes, yes. You see, she used to give us a little privilege like that by turns.

P: And in her car there was only her and Pavitra?

A: She used to sit alone in the back and Pavitra drove her car. Whereas in this car there was a chap named Joseph, a very arrogant chauffeur. We used to be all huddled there behind.

P: So what else did you do? You were sewing sarees?

L: I sewed her blouses, her underwear, her crowns, her sandals, all of them, and prepared boxes. About the boxes I had never even seen them covered anywhere. So one day I asked the Mother, "How did you give me this work of covering the boxes with satin and with velvet and putting a picture inside?" So Mother said, "It's a Japanese art and you were a Japanese in your recent past." So she knew it would come out if she put the real force behind it.

P: She put her handkerchiefs and whatnot in these boxes?

L: No, no, no, there were small boxes, of perfume bottles and many things. Even now they are there. Dyuman has kept them all wrapped, he showed them to me in Mother's store—where Abhaysingh is staying, under that there is a store—it is still kept like that and so many of my boxes were sent to France and were much appreciated there. Because, you see, in Paris every year they used to hold a sort of exhibition and the money that they got they used to give in charity. So that appealed to Mother to send things and, apart from my boxes, she had sent many other things, like paintings and many other things from the Ashram. But, as she told me about my boxes, they were much appreciated there.

P: How did you feel doing something for the Mother? What was the...?

L: How did I feel...?

P: Was there a special feeling in making something for the Mother?

L: Naturally and I was surprised...

P: In what way, could you...?

L: I didn't, I mean to say, even at night I could barely sleep for two or three hours. At that time the electricity in Pondicherry was cut off at nine o'clock so I had to have a hurricane lantern and when I was staying in Huta House next to Sahana I used to put a hurricane lantern like that and stitch her crowns, because I couldn't sleep. I was not feeling sleepy at all.

A: The entrance to her room was through the bathroom, and when Mother used to visit that place I used to be there. Mother had to come through what is now Huta's bathroom. Sahana was staying in the front room and Lalita's room was tucked in the back, Huta's bedroom now.

L: But the Mother never minded anything. So, you see, she used to come... What was I saying...

A: No, you were talking about something else. What I want to say is that Amrita once told me, "Lalita is almost like a part of the Mother." She had become so sort of assimilated with Mother's own life that to think of her was to think of her as if a part of the Mother. So devoted she was.

L: And then, you see, one day Mother saw a light in my room at about 11 o'clock—she may have been closing some window in Sri Aurobindo's room—then next day she asked me, "Lalita, what were you doing at 11 o'clock at night, I saw a light in your room." I said, "Mother, I was embroidering your crown." "What," she said, "at that time of night? My child, you will spoil your eyes." I said, "Mother, I don't feel sleepy." "It doesn't matter if you don't feel sleepy, you just go to bed, put out the light, close your eyes and lie down, that's all."

A: I don't think the town light was switched off at night. It can't be because I used to read until late at night.

L: But that was at another period.

A: No, no, the same period because Mother once saw my light at 3 o'clock at night and she said the next day, "You forgot to switch the light off" and I said, "Not at all, I was reading in bed." "Oh, you read in bed like that so late?" I said, "It's an old habit of mine." I used to sleep with two or three books in the bed and get up again and read. I had a table lamp. And for one and a half years I never slept on a mattress, do you know that? I slept on a bare board. The ascetic something in me trying to get rid of all my luxurious habits. One and a half years and my back used to ache. When I felt that I was still falling asleep, I used to lift my deck-chair onto the bed and lie in that and sleep. So I could never be very comfortable. Just lie like that, just turn my head this way or that way. For a year and a half this sort of thing went on. Then my mother paid me a visit and she found that there was no mattress on my bed and "What's this?" she said. I said, "I sleep like that." "The Ashram doesn't give you a mattress?" I said, "If I ask the Ashram it will certainly give it to me but I don't want it." Then she said, "No, I will give you a mattress, you sleep henceforth on a mattress." And I said, "All right." So you can have an idea of the spirit in us, that we had to concentrate, concentrate, concentrate all the time. And Mother used to be very strict about many things. She never encouraged social meetings. And once I remember Sahana and some of her sisters gave us all a feast in the Ashram—puris and

other things. Some festival was there. And we ate and ate and ate and then at the stores Mother asked, "How much did you eat?" She asked me, "How many puris did you eat?" I said, "Eleven." "What, eleven puris, don't tell me if you're ill after that." It was child's play for us to eat all those small little things, you know, but she was so particular—no greed, nothing.

L: So you see me so thin in those photographs, because we were very, very ascetic in those days.

P: If there was all this concentration, what was it directed towards?

A: Just to live in their consciousness, in their atmosphere all the time, completely excluding the outside world. Of course some people like Amrita had to go out and do some work.

(To be concluded)

A RARE SIGHT

A BOAT on the shimmering ocean
 With men and a night's catch
 Seesawed on a single wave.
 In a moment of stillness
 To the surface sight it seemed to sink.
 Did the gross weigh too much on the brink?
 But the heart's insight saw
 Another strange law.
 In a mysterious way
 The real was light,—
 Illusion's weight was a wrong sight.
 The subtle weighed more
 And carried the load
 Gathered as the moonlit night
 And the boat surged in the breeze.

SHAKUNTALA MANAY

THE YOGA OF THE BODY

The Mother's Work of Physical Transformation between 1958-1973

THE popular notion of yoga outside of India pertains to Hathayoga, which is an ancient discipline of vigorous body control with postures and breathing exercises. It does not deal with 'lower and higher hemispheric minds' or the transformation of the being. Hathayoga enables the practitioner to perform many amazing body feats but it by itself does not lead to the spiritualization of consciousness of the individual. Its only focus is on dexterity of the body and it does not deal with the transformation of the body.

The ancient Egyptian priests knew the occult laws to preserve the "spirit of the form"¹ and had excelled in mummification to preserve the body for thousands of years. However, their focus was to preserve the dead body, not to transform a live human body.

The Western civilization's consideration of body-focus can be traced to ancient Greece where the Olympics began. Their interest was to become the best athletes in the world in each category of the competition and to promote the spirit of sportsmanship. Transformation of the body was never ever their interest.

The present global civilization has adopted the ancient ideal of the 'Olympics' but the practice is marred by the ugliness of human nature. For instance, during the time of the Nazi ascendancy it manifested in shameful racial and religious bias. The most pervasive manifestation is in the form of the degraded vital causing behind-the-scene practice of corruption for money and personal gains, plus misguided national pride leading to unfair judgments and occasionally becoming a forum for terrorist violence. It has increasingly become evident and imperative that the current management practice of the Olympics be changed to reflect the letter and spirit of its charter with lofty ideals. However, overcoming the temptations for a large magnitude of material gains and misplaced subversive national pride with ethical proclamations and publicized management controls are tantamount to lip service to get by to fabricate an acceptable public image so as to continue with the main purpose of deriving homogeneous financial gains by the vested interests. The desired change to seek, pursue, and practice the Truth can only truly come about with the change in consciousness where the focus is global-value as an expression of cosmic harmony aspiring for the Divine Bliss.

Yes, change in deceptive practice of principles and dubious money-focused value-systems are required for the Olympics to be truly the glorious symbolization of cherished principles of mankind and its sincerity of commitment to practice them. What is fundamentally required is the transformation of consciousness for the True Olympics of Human Existence where Truth, Beauty, Bliss and Harmony are the goals to be attained. Such an undertaking seems Utopian—an idealist's dream at best or a fantasy otherwise. The human race is beseeched with pervasive ignorance, indifference, inertia and violent opposition to change. It is a Grace of the Divine that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother pioneered the Integral Yoga where principles and practice are integrated at all levels to pave the path for the required transformation to address these fundamental issues. The Mother was one of

the pioneers to undertake the mission of transformation of the body, life and mind. One might say she came to make the unexpressed or hidden dreams of our soul a reality.

The Mother's Yoga of the Body freed the body from the clutches of vital and mental governance for the first time and enabled the body to be conscious and consciously aspire for the Divine directly without the intermediaries of the vital and the mind. The integral transformation of the human body commenced for the first time in the annals of human existence with the Mother and a new chapter is unfolded in the Creation. What a progress!

In the Integral Yoga, the transformation of consciousness is essential for man to evolve to Overman and then progress to the Supramental Being. As a result, it fundamentally deals with the body, life and mind integrally. According to the Mother:

"The body has a wonderful capacity of adaptation and endurance. It is able to do so many more things than one usually imagines. If, instead of the ignorant and despotic masters that now govern it, it is ruled by the central truth of the being, you will be amazed at what it is capable of doing. Calm and quiet, strong and poised, at every minute it will be able to put forth the effort that is demanded of it, for it will have learnt to find rest in action and to recuperate, through contact with the universal forces, the energies it expends consciously and usefully. In this sound and balanced life a new harmony will manifest in the body, reflecting the harmony of the higher regions, which will give it perfect proportions and ideal beauty of form. And this harmony will be progressive, for the truth of the being is never static; it is a perpetual unfolding of a growing perfection that is more and more total and comprehensive. As soon as the body has learnt to follow this movement of progressive harmony, it will be possible for it to escape, through a continuous process of transformation, from the necessity of disintegration and destruction. Thus the irrevocable law of death will no longer have any reason to exist.

"When we reach this degree of perfection which is our goal, we shall perceive that the truth we seek is made up of four major aspects: Love, Knowledge, Power and Beauty. These four attributes of the Truth will express themselves spontaneously in our being. The psychic will be the vehicle of true and pure love, the mind will be the vehicle of infallible knowledge, the vital will manifest an invincible power and strength and the body will be the expression of a perfect beauty and harmony."²

Since 1957 the primary benefit of the Mother's undertaking to the human race is for it to progress fast in its evolutionary process with the collaboration of Nature. What could have taken eons for Nature to do at her pace and in her typical mechanical manner, will now become a reality within centuries: for the human race to first be transformed into Overman and ultimately be transformed into the Supramental Being. Her pioneering processes of physical transformation were full of unknowns and uncertainties and caused prolonged physical agony due to fierce opposition from the body's cells to transform. During her Yoga of the Body, she found that the body's cells were confined to the age-old repetitive, limited-in-scope, functional practice and under the dominance of the mind and vital. She sought to change this fundamentally. She endured all that came along the way in the process of body transformation with compassion for us and remained committed

to the Will of the Supreme to fulfill her mission on earth in the body she incarnated.

The Mother dealt with various strata of Mind (Physical Mind, Material Mind or Cellular Mind, and Mind of Matter) in the transformation of the body. She unraveled their mystery and deciphered the intricacies of their functional relationships. She brought to the surface their existence, interrelation, designated roles and shifting governance. The challenge she faced was that the physical transformation of the human body also required the transformation of these “minds” as physical and mental are intertwined with governance as the primal issue. This enlargement of the scope of undertaking is the very pattern of the Integral Yoga: As new discoveries are made and the truth of their existence is recognized they are incorporated into the transformational process, which is holistic, all encompassing and integral. Without the integral change of matter-physical-body and the associated consciousness, no real and permanent transformation of the body was possible to create a new race (species).

A new race [*and not limited to isolated individuals*] with a divinised human body (Supramental Being) or infused with the golden light’s descent into the deepest level of existence, right down to matter, subconscious and inconscient (Overman) was the goal of her integral transformation. It was a pioneering undertaking with dire perils and almost continuous experience of unimaginable physical agony due to the precipitative and inevitable change. She experienced that the process of transformation triggered the violent resistance by the nerve cells, which are the most sensitive and by nature quick and acute in response. The body’s cells initially resisted to opening to the consciousness and the impending change in the governance mode and level. The change initiated by the Mother required a paradigm shift in the age-old control system, which was mechanical and mental-vital. She opened the door to cellular consciousness and made it possible for it to become self propelled, supple, aspirational and in adoration of the Divine. This paradigm shift made the cellular consciousness align directly with the Supreme Consciousness and to by-pass the traditional and age-old mental-vital barrier. It required discovering and unlocking the inborn mechanism of the human cellular body, changing the mode of operation at the cellular level and consequently transforming the cell’s physical constitution. The arduous undertakings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo cannot be replicated by human beings with success and to attain the progress desired in evolutionary transformation in one’s lifetime without the aid of the participative Divine. Following the Sunlit Path is indispensable to undertake the Yoga of the Body for the transformation towards Overman and the Supramental Being.

The following narration of the Mother provides the clue to their decisive course of action:

“It was what Sri Aurobindo told me when I asked if I could leave (we both knew that one of us had to go); I immediately said to him, ‘It is I who will go.’ And he told me no, he told me, ‘Your body is much more capable than mine of bearing the work of transformation.’ Sri Aurobindo told me that. And so it accepted.”³

Thus, the stage was set for her to undertake the yoga of the body transformation. The Mother provided some glimpses of her pioneering yoga of the body transformation.

The following key revelations illustrate her journey, challenges, and milestones achieved and her legacy:

Integral Equanimity and Incremental Progress

The Mother discovered that integral equanimity was essential. In order to transform the earth, Matter to become divine and all Falsehood to disappear equanimity of the soul was not sufficient. Equanimity in the cells of the body was also required.

Sri Aurobindo had portrayed the reality that the earth was not ready for the integral transformation at one stroke but the transformation would come in stages, that there would be at first a small creation that would receive the Light and be transformed, and that would work as a leaven for the general transformation. During her Yoga of the Body, the Mother had several experiences that validated this incremental progress approach. These experiences set the stage for her to pursue.

The Only Way of the Physical Yoga of Transformation

The Mother recognized that for the cells to continue to ‘live’ through the transitional phase of change in the governance paradigm, they had a singular recourse:

“...at every second all the cells must be in an adoration, in an aspiration—an adoration, an aspiration, an adoration, ... and nothing else. Then after a time there is also delight, then that ends in blissful trust. When this trust is established all will be well. But... it is easy to say, it is much more difficult to do.”⁴

This realisation became the foundation of her Physical Yoga of Transformation.

Aspiration of Human Matter-Body-Mind for the Supreme

The Mother experienced that the body-mind, on behalf of the body (it was the body beginning to be mentalized) and with the sense of the oneness of Matter was expressing a prayer that reflected the sense of the totality of Matter—terrestrial, human Matter—and it said:

“I am tired of our infirmity. But it is not to rest that this body aspires, it aspires to the plenitude of Your Consciousness, it aspires to the splendor of Your Light, it aspires to the magnificence of Your Power; above all, it aspires to the glory of Your all-powerful and eternal Love.” (July 1965)

The Mother felt that all these words had such concrete meaning! Her experience continued further and it was no longer a prayer, but the observation of a fact. The body-mind spoke with a power and a sort of dignity with the sense of nobility:

“The other states of being, the vital, the mind, may enjoy the intermediate contacts...

(In other words, all the intermediate states of being, also the gods, the entities and all those things.) “...The supreme Lord alone can satisfy me.” (*Ibid.*)

This was the categorical realization that the Supreme alone can give this body plenitude. It was the revelation of the longing of Matter for the Supreme. It was a startling discovery that once the cellular mind (body-mind) got organized; it, on behalf of the body-matter, aspired to have no intermediate distractions but had the singular intent to relate with the Supreme alone and directly! This became the fundamental realisation in fashioning the transition from creature-man to the Overman with a receptivity for the Divine and the Overman to lead the integral transformation to become a Supramental Being. She recognized that besides being desirable and feasible, it was the most expeditious approach for humanity to be transformed into the Supramental Being. The estimated time required was around three centuries with her pioneering work which, if left to Nature alone, would require millions of years.

Historic Affinity of Material Mind for Catastrophes

The Mother experienced that the material mind loves catastrophes and attracts them, and even creates them, because it needs the shock of emotion to awaken its unconsciousness. In addition, She also came to recognize that this material mind in its historic native mode is defeatist, always pessimistic, meddlesome, grumbling, disgruntled, lacking in faith, and lacking in trust.

This means that the ceaseless commitment and inner aspiration are indispensable as the transformative power for the body to seek the Supreme. Devoid of such an aspiration, the cellular mind would revert to or remain indefinitely in its historic native mode of unconsciousness, becoming the conduit of chaos and catastrophe. Furthermore, without the constant aspiration to sustain its transition to the God-loving, God-wanting entity, the body-mind would remain the chasm of negativity sapping away the positive attitude and preventing the essential state of equanimity to progress spiritually.

She had identified the pitfalls, determined their consequences and established the process to overcome the potential problems: be in the constant state of divine aspiration.

Yoga of Physical Transformation Comes to Center Stage

The Mother differentiated the old practice of spirituality from the new spirituality of the Integral Yoga. The old spirituality denied Matter and tried to escape from it completely, whereas the Integral Yoga—the new spirituality, accepts Matter and transforms it.

This paradigm shift in the spiritual pursuit was essential to escape from the age-old clutches of the pursuit of Nirvana, which negated life and focused on life after death and beyond the earth. The new spiritual practice under the Integral Yoga with the focus on physical transformation of the body was required to make it feasible to experience the Divine and become the divine in body form on earth while alive and live indefinitely at will. Her Yoga of Physical Transformation supported the principle of terrestrial existence, imparted spiritual significance to life, and facilitated the evolutionary transformation of

the human race towards the divinised body. Integral Yoga followed to its fullest in the physical transformation by the Mother demonstrated its practicability—divinity in the physical. All through her Yoga of Physical Transformation, this distinction from the traditional quest for Nirvana, which was a futile goal, was revealed to her repeatedly with greater emphasis: The “salvation” is on earth and in the divinised body.

Distinction between the Thinking Mind and the Material Mind

The Mother experienced the true attitude and true role of the material mind—lived, not thought.

This was a very concrete experience. This fact makes the success of the material mind enduring, permanent, unlike the fleeting success of the mental mind that gets affected by the whirlpool of emotions from the vital mind and the flood of ideas of its own. With the material mind, the changing of thousands of years of habit may be difficult and time consuming. However, once successful one can move on to the next spiritual challenge without having to go back to reinforce or to salvage the gain made. This makes the spiritual endeavours in the Yoga of the Body economically effective. Economy of spiritual time and resources are quite essential to get the mission of Supramentalization of the Body concluded within 300 years as envisioned by Sri Aurobindo.

(To be concluded)

ARUN VAIDYA

Notes and References

1. The Mother's Playground talk dated 10 March 1951: “In the physical form there is the ‘spirit of the form’ and that spirit of the form persists for a time, even when outwardly the person is said to be dead. And as long as the spirit of the form persists the body isn't destroyed. In ancient Egypt they had that knowledge; they knew that if they prepared the body in a certain way, the spirit of the form wouldn't go away and the body wouldn't be dissolved.”

2. *On Education*, CWM, Vol. 12, pp. 7-8.

3. Talk of 18 December, 1971.

4. *Notes on the Way*, CWM, Vol. 11, p. 15.

THE COMPOSITION OF SAVITRI

(Continued from the issue of June 2003)

Savitri and the Record of Yoga

11

IN “The Kingdoms and Godheads of the Greater Mind” and “The Heavens of the Ideal”, Cantos Eleven and Twelve of Book Two of *Savitri*, we have found a poetic revelation of the planes of consciousness to which, in the 1930s and ’40s, Sri Aurobindo usually gave the names Higher Mind and Illumined Mind. If this is correct, we might expect these two cantos to be followed by one or more dealing with the next level in the hierarchy, Intuition. In view of Sri Aurobindo’s insistence on the importance of the Intuition, in the special sense in which he used the word, this plane could hardly be bypassed in Aswapati’s ascent towards the Overmind, explicitly mentioned in “The Kingdoms of the Greater Knowledge” (Book Two, Canto Fifteen).¹ Sri Aurobindo explained in a letter:

The Intuition is the first plane in which there is a real opening to the full possibility of realisation—it is through it that one goes farther—first to overmind and then to supermind.²

But Cantos Thirteen and Fourteen of Book Two, “In the Self of Mind” and “The World-Soul”, seem to depart somewhat from a straightforward presentation of the higher planes in logical sequence. For *Savitri* is not a philosophical treatise, it is an epic of the spirit. Aswapati, the “traveller of the worlds”, does not strictly follow at every step the “map” to which Sri Aurobindo compared his systematic description in *The Life Divine* of the progression from Higher Mind through Illumined Mind and Intuition to Overmind and Supermind. After completing his treatment of this subject in the chapter “The Ascent towards Supermind”, he added:

This or something more largely planned on these lines might be regarded as the schematic, logical or ideal account of the spiritual transformation, a structural map of the ascent to the supramental summit, looked at as a succession of separate steps, each accomplished before the passage to the next commences. It would be as if the soul, putting forth an organised natural individuality, were a traveller mounting the degrees of consciousness cut out in universal Nature, each ascent carrying it totally as a definite integer, as a separate body of conscious being, from one state of its existence to the next in order.... But evolutionary Nature is not a logical series of separate segments....³

When we read the *Record of Yoga* we discover that even for Sri Aurobindo, the

actual process of sadhana was much more complex than a schematic account of its steps would suggest. The presentation of his experiences in *Savitri* shares this complexity to some extent, although in “The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds” the image of the soul as “a traveller mounting the degrees of consciousness cut out in universal Nature” has been adopted. The two cantos following “The Heavens of the Ideal” exemplify the difference between the logical organisation of a book like *The Life Divine* and the more experiential structure of *Savitri*. The working of the Intuition is represented, as we will see, by two contrasting experiences: the “luminous finger” in Canto Thirteen and, at the end of the next canto, the vision of the “Two-in-One” with the “sole omnipotent Goddess” standing behind them. The relation of these experiences to the passages about the Self of Mind and the World-Soul, from which the cantos derive their titles, calls for some explanation.

As Aswapati moves through the heavenly realms whose emblems are the Rose and the Flame (Book Two, Canto Twelve), he does not find any supreme epiphany of knowledge, power or bliss such as would induce him to stay for long “beneath their splendour’s rule”.⁴ Each of these kingdoms, whatever claim might be made for the absoluteness of its particular truth, is evidently the “perfect home”⁵ of only a single ideal. Continuing his search, he passes on until he becomes aware of and grows one with “an enormous Self of Mind”

Which held all life in a corner of its vasts.⁶

The liberating experience of this limitless Self which contains all beings (*sarvāṇi bhūtāni ātmani*, in the phrase of the Isha Upanishad),⁷ yet whose “mighty calm” is undisturbed by all it holds, gives the compelling sense of a definitive realisation:

There he could stay, the Self, the Silence won:
His soul had peace, it knew the cosmic Whole.⁸

According to the tradition of centuries of quietistic and ascetic spirituality in India, the silence of the Atman or Brahman is the door of exit from the world and its insoluble problems. But the discovery of the Self can also have a different outcome, as is suggested in this passage. Aswapati not only finds peace; he comes to know the “cosmic Whole”. He becomes not only free, but powerful:

In the still self he lived and it in him;
Its mute immemorable listening depths,
Its vastness and its stillness were his own;
One being with it he grew wide, powerful, free.
Apart, unbound, he looked on all things done.⁹

The emphasis here is on the peace and freedom this realisation brings, but the knowledge

and power that could result from such an immense expansion of the consciousness are also evident. There is nothing in this description that contradicts the dynamic aim of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga as formulated in his diary as early as 1912:

It has been seen that in repose, in nivritti [inactivity], in udasinata [indifference], perfect peace and ananda are possible; but the thing the Yoga has set out to establish is the perfect harmony of Nivritti & Pravritti [activity],... complete Ananda, Tapas, Knowledge, Love, Power & Infinite Ego-less Being, consummating in the full and vehement flow of the Pravritti. By the fulfilment or failure of this harmony the Yoga stands or falls.¹⁰

The positive and negative elements of this harmony are equally necessary, for it is neither a contemplative withdrawal nor a restless slavery to the compulsion to act that is envisaged as the ideal. The silence of the Atman, Nirguna Brahman or witness Purusha is the indispensable basis and provides an unshakable foundation of Nivritti or inner immobility with which the Pravritti, the unrestricted flow of activity, has to be perfectly harmonised. This fundamental realisation is described at the beginning of Book Two, Canto Thirteen of *Savitri*. Here the Divine is realised not as the supreme Ishwara, but as the “witness Lord”.¹¹ This expression, puzzling at first sight—since a witness simply watches and seems to exercise no lordship—can be understood in terms of the *prabhu* and *vibhu* or “presiding and all-pervading Impersonality”¹² of the Gita, the *prabhu* aspect “by its presence authorising the works of Nature”, the *vibhu* “by its all-pervading existence supporting and consenting to them”.¹³ In his *Essays on the Gita*, Sri Aurobindo explained this status of the Lord:

As the one silent self of all he is the non-doer, and Nature alone is the doer. He leaves all these works to be done by her according to the law of our being, *svabhāvas tu pravartate*, and yet he is still the lord, *prabhu vibhu*, because he views and upholds our action and enables Nature to work by his silent sanction. He by his immobility transmits the power of the supreme Godhead through the compulsion of his pervading motionless Presence and supports its workings by the equal regard of his witness Self in all things.¹⁴

Delivered from the delusions of the ignorant mind and identified inwardly with this immutable Self or Akshara Brahman, aware of the world's forces and its “motive thoughts”¹⁵ as movements in his own being, Aswapati has reached a state of consciousness where he is a silent channel for the action of the Almighty. This is described in terms reminiscent of the Gita's *kṛtsnavid* or “knower of the whole”, about whom Sri Aurobindo wrote:

The liberated man has the complete and total knowledge, *kṛtsnavid*, and does all works without any of the restrictions made by the mind, *kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*, according

to the force and freedom and infinite power of the divine will within him.¹⁶

But what appears on one plane of consciousness to be an integral knowledge may turn out to be incomplete when it is regarded from a higher plane. Aswapati's sense of knowing the "cosmic Whole" is shattered, not by an upsurge of darkness from below, but by the touch of a more penetrating light from above:

Then suddenly a luminous finger fell
On all things seen or touched or heard or felt
And showed his mind that nothing could be known;
That must be reached from which all knowledge comes.
The sceptic Ray disrupted all that seems
And smote at the very roots of thought and sense.¹⁷

Not only his perception of the phenomenal universe, but even his experience of the Self is thrown into doubt:

A shadow seemed the wide and witness Self,
Its liberation and immobile calm
A void recoil of being from Time-made things,
Not the self-vision of Eternity.¹⁸

The earliest version of this passage, written in the late 1930s, provides some clues to Sri Aurobindo's intention in introducing the "luminous finger" or "sceptic Ray" to disturb the apparent finality of a great and necessary realisation. As first written in that manuscript, before it was revised, the passage began:

Then suddenly a new liberation came.
A deeper Ray its luminous finger put
On all things known and seen and sensed and felt,
And in its light the Self of Mind became
An idol, not the living body of God.

The phrases "new liberation" and "deeper Ray" in the first two lines of this draft of the passage show that this "finger" is the projection of a consciousness that is pointing Aswapati towards a yet unreached height or depth of being. Yet its first effect is to break down the harmony of the state he has already attained and lead him paradoxically to a sense not of liberation, but of imprisonment, as we see at the end of this paragraph of the draft:

Being was a prison, extinction the escape.¹⁹

In later revision the “deeper Ray” became a “sceptic Ray” and the phrase about a “new liberation” was dropped. Along with many newly added lines, these changes emphasised the aspect of crisis, of relapse from the *siddhi* (spiritual perfection or realisation) that had been achieved by identification with the Self into a state perceived as one of *asiddhi* (imperfection) and *aśraddhā* (doubt). But the crisis remains in the final version what it had clearly been from the beginning, a means of passing on towards a higher *siddhi* and a more perfect knowledge:

That must be reached from which all knowledge comes.²⁰

In Sri Aurobindo’s *Record of Yoga*, we see repeatedly that this was in his experience the underlying nature of all attacks of what he called “Asiddhi”—as, for example, when he wrote: “The Asiddhi has once again shown itself a means of siddhi.”²¹ And again, “overt Asiddhi is always veiled Siddhi” and “the larger Siddhi prepares by means of the Asiddhi”.²²

What Aswapati had realised as the Self was evidently not the supreme Self or Paramatman in its ultimate reality as it is known by the “self-vision of Eternity”, but a reflection of it on some mental plane. Sri Aurobindo has called this reflected experience the “Self of Mind”. But we have seen that Aswapati had already gone far beyond the range of the ordinary human intelligence, passing through various regions of the planes Sri Aurobindo elsewhere termed Higher Mind and Illumined Mind. Since he reaches the “Self of Mind” after a further ascent, the plane of Mind on which he has this experience of the Self can hardly be anything lower than the Illumined Mind at the summit of at least its intermediate level (perhaps the “middle hermesis” of the *Record of Yoga*),²³ before it begins to be raised beyond itself by flashes of a higher Intuition.

This interpretation of the “Self of Mind” is consistent with Sri Aurobindo’s terminology, where the expressions Higher Mind and Illumined Mind themselves show that these planes—though they are above mind in the normal sense—still have an essentially mental character when compared with planes that have a more direct contact with the supramental Truth. The Intuition is the first of those higher planes and therefore the line between Illumined Mind and Intuition marks a crucial transition. In a passage in *The Synthesis of Yoga* written in the 1930s, Sri Aurobindo observed that the mind “in the process of spiritualisation”

...will mount successively into the pure broad reaches of a higher mind, and next into the gleaming belts of a still greater free Intelligence illumined with a Light from above. At this point it will begin to feel more freely, admit with a less mixed response the radiant beginnings of an Intuition, not illumined, but luminous in itself, true in itself, no longer entirely mental.... Here too is not an end, for it must rise beyond into the very domain of that untruncated Intuition, the first direct light from the self-awareness of essential Being....²⁴

The “radiant beginnings of an Intuition, not illumined, but luminous in itself” seem to be represented in Book Two, Canto Thirteen of *Savitri* by the falling of the “luminous finger” which exposes the fundamental defect of all mental consciousness, its separative basis and its consequent inability to know by identity. That this finger is an apt symbol of Intuition touching the plane below it will become apparent from a glance at Sri Aurobindo’s explanation of exactly what he meant by Intuition. He wrote in *The Life Divine*, comparing this faculty with the Higher and Illumined Mind:

Intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity; for it is always something that leaps out direct from a concealed identity.... This close perception is more than sight, more than conception: it is the result of a penetrating and revealing touch which carries in it sight and conception as part of itself or as its natural consequence.²⁵

In *Savitri*, this “penetrating and revealing touch” is concretised as a finger not only in Book Two, Canto Thirteen, where it falls on the constructions of the mind with devastating effect, but in Book One, Canto Three, where it is lifted towards the heights in an equally abrupt and dramatic gesture:

A great nude arm of splendour suddenly rose;
It rent the gauze opaque of Nescience:
Her lifted finger’s keen unthinkable tip
Bared with a stab of flame the closed Beyond.²⁶

The “luminous finger” in the canto about the Self of Mind becomes in the next sentence the “sceptic Ray” which disrupts “all that seems”.²⁷ A little later, the “builder Reason” is said to be

Assailed by the edge of the convicting beam....²⁸

“Ray” and “edge” are words that occur elsewhere in Sri Aurobindo’s writings to evoke the nature of Intuition. They come together in a sentence in *The Life Divine*:

Intuition is always an edge or ray or outleap of a superior light; it is in us a projecting blade, edge or point of a far-off supermind light....²⁹

The association of “edge” and “point” with Intuition is likewise seen in one of Sri Aurobindo’s letters:

In the Intuition the nature of Knowledge is Truth not global or whole, but coming out in so many points, edges, flashes of a Truth that is behind it and supplies it with its direct perceptions.³⁰

In *Savitri* itself—in the passage in Book Ten, Canto Four where Sri Aurobindo explicitly speaks of “Intuition” as the highest of the planes below the Overmind and Supermind—he uses, besides the expression “intuitive Ray”,³¹ exactly the same words “edge” and “point”:

Its fiery edge of seeing absolute
Cleaves into locked unknown retreats of self,...
Its spear-point ictus of discovery
Pressed on the cover of name, the screen of form,
Strips bare the secret soul of all that is.³²

The “luminous finger” or “sceptic Ray” acts in much the same manner as this “spear-point ictus”, probing beneath appearances to uncover the “secret soul” of things, which Aswapati finds in the fourteenth canto of Book Two. Most of the thirteenth canto is concerned not with that positive discovery, however, but with the preliminary work of demolition of all mental constructions. This work is done by the “edge of the convicting beam”, assailing the façade of the universe as it is presented to us by the mind even at its most illumined. For the liberating separation of Purusha from Prakriti, of conscious being from the mechanism of Nature, leaves the instruments of our knowledge of the world and our means of acting on it, however heightened and enlarged, still subject to the law of the original Ignorance, the cosmic Avidya that arose when all-dividing Mind divided itself from Supermind. A radical transformation of our faculties is needed, without which

knowledge would still remain a working of the mind, liberated, universalised, spiritualised, but still, as all mind must be, comparatively restricted, relative, imperfect in the very essence of its dynamism; it would reflect luminously great constructions of Truth, but not move in the domain where Truth is authentic, direct, sovereign and native.³³

(To be continued)

RICHARD HARTZ

Notes and References

1. *Savitri* (1993), p. 302.
2. *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 22, p. 264.
3. *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol. 19, p. 955.
4. *Savitri*, p. 281.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
7. Verse 6. A similar phrase occurs in the Gita (6.29).
8. *Savitri*, p. 284.
9. *Ibid.* The last line was overlooked when Sri Aurobindo’s final manuscript was copied in the 1940s. It did not appear in the printed text of *Savitri* until 1993.

10. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, pp. 173-74.
11. *Savitri*, p. 283.
12. *Essays on the Gita*, CWSA, Vol. 19, p. 230. See Gita 5.14-15.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 317.
15. *Savitri*, p. 284.
16. *Essays on the Gita*, CWSA, Vol. 19, p. 460. The expressions *kṛtsnavid* and *kṛtsna-karma-kṛt* occur in Gita 3.29 and 4.18, in the context of passages that speak of the possibility of inner actionlessness in the midst of all outward activities.
17. *Savitri*, p. 284.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 286.
19. Cf. the last line of Book Two, Canto Thirteen in the printed text, *ibid.*, p. 288.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
21. *Record of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 10, p. 569.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 694, 770.
23. See note 11 in the previous instalment of this series.
24. *The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 23, p. 148. The illumined mind admitting “the radiant beginnings” of Intuition seems to form a distinct level which may correspond to the “seer hermesis” mentioned in the *Record of Yoga* on 24 September 1919.
25. *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 946-47.
26. *Savitri*, pp. 38-39.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 286.
29. *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Vol. 19, p. 948.
30. *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 24, p. 1159.
31. *Savitri*, p. 659.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 660. This passage was written in 1947.
33. *The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 23, pp. 147-48.

EXTRACTS FROM *GITANJALI*

I DIVE down into the depth of the ocean of forms, hoping to gain the perfect pearl of the formless.

No more sailing from harbour to harbour with this my weather-beaten boat. The days are long passed when my sport was to be tossed on waves.

And now I am eager to die into the deathless.

Into the audience hall by the fathomless abyss where swells up the music of toneless strings I shall take this harp of my life.

I shall tune it to the notes of forever, and when it has sobbed out its last utterance, lay down my silent harp at the feet of the silent.

*

Ever in my life have I sought thee with my songs. It was they who led me from door to door, and with them have I felt about me, searching and touching my world.

It was my songs that taught me all the lessons I ever learnt; they showed me secret paths, they brought before my sight many a star on the horizon of my heart.

They guided me all the day long to the mysteries of the country of pleasure and pain, and, at last, to what palace gate have they brought me in the evening at the end of my journey?

*

I boasted among men that I had known you. They see your pictures in all works of mine. They come and ask me, 'Who is he ?' I know not how to answer them. I say, 'Indeed, I cannot tell.' They blame me and they go away in scorn. And you sit there smiling.

I put my tales of you into lasting songs. The secret gushes out from my heart. They come and ask me, 'Tell me all your meanings.' I know not how to answer them. I say, 'Ah, who knows what they mean!' They smile and go away in utter scorn. And you sit there smiling.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

A LULLABY

HUSH, my darling, sleep again!
Sleep, there's nothing here,
Nothing is my babe can fear; —
Moonbeams, the still sleep, and I.
All things hushing now refrain;
Not a cricket, not a mouse,
Not a sound in all the house.
What disturbs thee thus to cry?
It is but a dream's unrest,
Little blossom,
Hush thee, hush on mother's breast,
Mother's bosom.

Hark, the screech-owl, hooting near,
Hark, his charm supply
To my sleepy lullaby.
All things woo to his soft nest,
Baby, all themselves endear,
Darkness waiting to beguile,
Moonbeams seeking for his smile.
Rest thee on thy cradle, rest,
Heaving softly, sweet and oft,
Sunset locking
This way, that way, goes the soft
Cradle rocking.

MANMOHAN GHOSE

(Songs of Love and Death, 1926)

O HUNTER...!

(Translated by Satadal from the original in Bengali “মা নিষাদ...” by Joy Goswami)

A WHIRLPOOL of dust blasts the calm
The column of dust touches the clouds
The lightning-flash growls over the spinning globe
The sun is hidden from the eyes!

It is not the sun but the moon of an ominous night
A dark vulture takes a flight with the moon caught in its beak
Lo! the madness strikes that very moon
Though I address it as the hunter.

In the days of yore this very hunter
Took the bracing lives with his arrows and spears
That curse lures him till today
The moon grows, the moon diminishes.

The primitive weapon of muscle-power
Snatches food from other mouths to survive
Barks and rags to cover their bodies
Baking pan of a scorching sun overhead.

Dead and injured bodies bake in the sand, float in the sea
Broken chariots, horses dead
Weapon in hand they lie in the field—their faces buried in grass
Two humans who were neighbours.

I must grab that plot of my neighbour
Let the neighbouring village be my subject
Let my neighbour-king pay tribute to me alone
Let my neighbour be afraid of my arms.

Do these neighbours live on this earth?
If I ask you to poison their air,
Their water, their environment
You will do it by hook or by crook.

That conspiracy, contrivance and juggling
Develop in a strongly guarded room
Intellect, intuition and science secretly
Crouch and dig deep inside the earth.

In that deep pit a furnace is ablaze
Rocketed missiles go forth
The sky is umbrellaed with burning ashes and dust
No way to escape.

Flocks of birds fall down dead
Poisoned waters rush ashore
Effervescent particles fire a thousand miles
A thousand miles of forest afire.

Burnt houses, broken skulls and bricks and timbers
Pile heap after heap, the earth cracked with crevices and craters
Burnt are the crops and the pastures
Men lay dead at home, in offices, on the streets.

Many died, born were many more
Crippled limbs, horrid bodies without spines
Tongueless mouths, others with legs without bones
Who is there moving on all fours like an animal?

The seed of the male is polluted with radiation
Back to back suffer the female and the crops
Yet the helicopter goes round and round and roars:
Not even a taint of radioactivity is there.

When were you born, O Scientist?
When were you born, O Ruler?
Do you have any children at home?
Do they have all the limbs in order?

What more are we yet to produce? you ask.
We are to produce paddy and take out the weeds
We are to pick up the fallen birds onto the branches
We have Nanak and Tulsidas to compose songs.

Saint Tulsiji treads through the burnt village
Saint Kabir, the weaver, floats the boat of songs sitting on the steps
Sri Ramcharit is torn to pieces on the roads
Sadhus with red eyes brandish open swords.

Who cares to listen to your songs, O Kabir?
Who is the crazy one who seeks to understand?

Who are they who lie on the footpath for the whole stretch of night?
Whose is that child who cries for food?

Who is that boy who labours the whole day in the tea-stall
And receives slaps from the owner?
Who is that mother who lulls her child to sleep
And invites customers for the rest of the night?

Let their condition be like this, as it is
Let their lives flow in the same moat
Who cares whether they get two square meals or starve?
At last we have the weapons in our hands.

The weapons of destruction cover the land, rocket the sky
The horizon is tinged with their glory
Their rays sparkle on the waters
Lo, the Granthasaheb is drifting away in the river.

The raft of Behula is afloat on that water
Lakshminder is asleep inside the mosquito-net
He is crippled with radioactive poison
The raft stops at each ghat leading to the river.

In each of these ghats stands still an era
The shadow of a huge bridge looms over the waters of the river and the sea.
The cripple has bitten your breast!
Is he a husband or a carnivore, an illusion of a child?

Bearing the burden of children and crops
Thou liest still, O Earth!
Stillness breaks with the raising of the dire head of Time
Touching the sky—clutching the sceptre.

The sceptre pierces the depleted moon
The sea growls under the feet
The shoulders range with the high hills
Night is almost over now.

In the morning, that formidable form is no more there,
The Sun-worshipper hankers for warmth
And opens the Zend-Avesta in sunshine.
Lo, signs of radioactivity are there even on its pages.

The globe spins with the rivers and hills
At each turn thunder mortars and machine-guns
The Jews turn into manure enriching the earth
And the ears of paddy sway over the tomb of massacre.

The sun travels over one country to another
The poor Muslim kneels for his prayer
His white fez is the dove of peace
God drinks water only after he finishes his drinking.

Who is a Hindu? Who asks this question?
Before this question falls a star
The hungry sadhu takes his bath
And sits before his food with a lamp beside.

We all come to take our food
The bell rings in the village-church
The fishermen of Kerala return to their boats
Mother Mary protects their lives.

It is no protection but channel of defence
Through which flows the vanity of war
All alone you become dark in the caves of Ajanta
O Avalokiteshwar, lotus in hand.

The lotus falls from your hand
On earth full of pits and holes
The desert-sand hisses out like a spring
After the Little Buddha smiled.

The dark vulture takes a flight with the moon caught in its beak
It is not the moon in reality but a deadly weapon
The hunter is ready with the arrow to strike across the ages
The earth will be destroyed if the button is pressed.

Come, O Poet, come and arrest the act
Let your cry go forth: "O hunter!" and let the anthill be broken
Let the sun and the moon stand on either side of the day
And the ancient paintings shine inside the cave.

Lo, the night flows on the bank of the Ganges!
Lo, the boatman plying the oar on the Padma!

Listen how the words we utter
Become the boatman's song.

Lo, the sandstorm yonder has subsided!
The dove of peace swims over the flood of moonlight
To return to the thatched roof, eats the grains strewn over the courtyard
We labour in the fields to produce wheat and corn.

Lo! the night descends over the banks of Yamuna
And our beloved pair Krishna-Radha have come
Don't you hear in the dilapidated temple
Mirabai sings the Love-songs!

Is it so easy to kill us?
At our feet the wheel of night revolves
We are the descendants of the Mahabharata
We have crossed the limits of time and space.

O hunter! even when your missiles
Reduce our villages into heaps of ashes and dust
From the core of those heaps arise
Disarmament—we can visualise.

Behind it the sea swells up
Before it the clouds thunder
It has twisted your hand
To throw down the weapon into the water.

Lo, the sun sets in that water!
Centuries revolve—the sun sets...

REMEMBRANCE OF THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of June 2003)

AFTER this I made cards for her, painted with flowers of my aspiration and a prayer selected from her Prayers or from the writings of Sri Aurobindo, which she could use as she liked. Then, I started to make blessing packets of *Divine Love* for her. Vasudha-ben told me that the Mother used only the rose flowers and never those of the *Divine Love*. I wrote to the Mother: "I am told that you do not use the packets of the *Divine Love* any more, but since I have made these packets for you, I am sending them to you."

The Mother wrote: "Make more packets of the *Divine Love* freely. I will now use them freely too. But paint the flower of the Divine Love on the envelope so that I can distinguish them from the others."

Another thing I used to do for the Mother was the gowns for her birthday, Sri Aurobindo's birthday, my birthday and the Lord's Day on the 29th February and once for the New Year. She would unfailingly use the gowns or the things like a foot-stool or a chair cover or a bed-cover I made for her for the day I had intended it for. Once I had made a gown for Sri Aurobindo's birthday. It was a golden gown painted with the flowers of the *Power of the Supramental Consciousness*. It was the 13th August and Vasudha-ben told me that the Mother had already selected the gowns for the darshan day.

I wrote a note to the Mother while sending the gown: "Mother, I am told that you have already selected the gowns for the 15th August. But since I have made this gown for Sri Aurobindo's birthday, I am sending it to you. You may wear it any day you like. That day also will be for me Sri Aurobindo's birthday."

The Mother wrote back: "No, you are not late in sending the gown for Sri Aurobindo's birthday. I will wear your gown in the morning for the 15th morning for my meditation."

Also, I would like to tell you about the bed-cover I made for the Mother. I painted it with the flower of *Truth* in the centre since that was my aspiration. Around it I painted the flower of *Supramental Consciousness*, then the flower of *Power of supramental consciousness*. Around it was the flower of *Supramental action*. All this was within the flower of the Mother's white lotus enveloped by Sri Aurobindo's lotus. This made a huge design in the centre. Now, in the four corners I painted four golden peacocks with their full-blown train. The Mother liked the design so much, or rather what it conveyed, that she used it continuously for four years. I shall end this subject with an interesting story.

Once, in the leap year I wanted to make a gown for the Mother for her birthday and for the Lord's Day. I asked the Mother if I could go to Madras to buy some material for it. She agreed and I went with someone who was going by car. I purchased a pinkish golden jari material for the gown and an embroidered silk jari brocade material for the cape. A sum of Rs.500 was given by Dr. Adiseshiah. And some other gentleman had given me some money also. I used all this to buy the material for the gown, the cape and to make the gold buttons with the university symbol which is an expression of Ishwara and Ishwari in union. Then, I had made a white silk gown, painting it with some flowers

of the *Supramental Bird* and peacock feathers.

Richard prepared a box with two layers, all covered with gold satin. I painted the box with a golden peacock in its full-blown train. Now, I put the cape with golden buttons at the bottom and covered it with the golden lid, which was supported by golden wedges in the four corners. On this lid I placed the gown and again covered it with another golden lid, supported by wedges. On the top, I put the white silk gown and covered the box. I sent it with Vasudha-ben who commented that I was quite late and the Mother had selected the gowns. I did not say a word, feeling quite confident that my labour would not go waste. I met her when she came back from the Mother; she told me that the Mother would use my white silk gown for meditation on her birthday. I then asked her if the Mother said anything about the other gown and the cape. She was surprised. She asked: "Where were they?"

I said: "In the same box, below." She said that she had given the box to Champaklal. I said: "You better get it back, because the cape has gold buttons." She took the box back to the Mother. The Mother laughed: "There are some hidden treasures?" Vasudha-ben showed both the gown and the cape and drew her attention to the gold buttons. The Mother said: "Well, these are for the Lord's Day for the balcony darshan."

This has been my delight—that for all the three Lord's Days in 1964, 1968 and 1972, she has graciously granted me the privilege and the honour of using the things I made for her for the balcony darshans. I ended my offerings with the last one in 1976, when I painted a canopy with the supramental symbol in the centre. I took Joshi-bhai's help in giving the correct dimensions of the symbol. I painted the flowers of *Supramental Sun* all over the canopy with the help of Richard and Dipti and Kusum-ben put the white rays in the golden balls I made. The twelve petals painted in gold and orange also had the white rays. The central square I painted with three lotuses in white, deep pink and gold. And the four corners were adorned with the twin birds: 'The Heralds of the Supramental World.' The cloth for this was given by Pulaka-ben.

We took it to Sri Aurobindo's room and offered it. It was put over the Samadhi on 29 February 1976.

All this meant a constant communion with the Divine which firmly established me on the path of the Integral Yoga. Every event, every conversation, every action, even each movement was perceived in the light of her consciousness. I could never complain about anything any more. For example, I was put in charge of the UNESCO section of the Society, but practically, I had no office, no table, no almirah, no secretary, no typewriter, no money. I managed without anything. I carried out my correspondence, using the Society typewriter after office hours, sometimes working till midnight, and filing my papers at home in my Ashram almirahs. Sometimes, I gave my papers for typing to Navajata's excellent secretary Doreen. She was faultless and superb in her execution. I learned to use any means available.

It seemed I was given responsibilities, but I had to find my own means to carry them out. Even to go to Bombay, Madras or Delhi or even to Paris, I had to find financial help. And the Divine provided me all that I needed from unexpected sources. And I

learned to depend on nothing and nobody except the Divine. This taught me never to worry or get agitated but to keep my cool with complete trust in the Divine Grace under all circumstances, knowing that the Divine knew every aspect of my need, what was to be done and how it was to be done. I watched the unerring Divine Play as it was being played out!

One day, I was informed that a patient was coming and I must prepare the room. Abdul knew how to do this. So, it was done. It was someone staying in Golconde who had dysentery. I was a bit apprehensive, but inwardly, surrendered to the Mother's will. I was informed in the afternoon that the patient did not feel the need to come. So, the first test was, in a way, passed.

After a few days, I was informed again to prepare a room for a patient. But this time I had to go to Bombay to clear my luggage. So, no patient came. Soon after I returned, I was asked again to prepare a room. It was for Bula-da who was being operated on by Dr. Sanyal at his theatre on the ground floor of his house. And the doctor felt it more convenient to keep him there.

The fourth time, I was asked to prepare a room for Satprem who was to be operated on for appendicitis. He preferred to be looked after by Dr. Sanyal at his own home.

Interestingly, four times I was asked to keep a room ready for a patient, but somehow none of the four patients could come. How could they? The Divine knows beyond our knowings what work to assign to whom. When I was asked the fifth time to keep the room ready for an elderly patient since they could not find a room for him in the hospital, I thought I should write to the Mother what I felt within.

I wrote: "Mother Divine, I have been told that you have given me the work of a nurse in place of Janina. But I have neither training nor any inclination for it. Four times I have been asked to prepare a room for a patient, but no patient has yet arrived. And I believe that it cannot be the Divine's intention to make a nurse out of me. However, since I consider you to be the Divine Mother, I put this before you so that you can correct my understanding. Pray guide me and give me the strength and the capacity to do what you intend me to do. I await your answer in all humility." I left the letter at the place from where Vasudha-ben would pick it up to read to the Mother. I went to the Samadhi and offered my pranams. When I returned home, I was told that the patient had come and gone since a room was found for him in the hospital. Mind you, I had not even seen the patient and this happened even before my letter reached the Mother. This is to say that the Divine knows each and every detail and works out everything perfectly even before our telling him anything.

Anyway, I received the Mother's reply in the evening. She wrote: "Nobody ever thought of making you a nurse and you have been lodged in the Nursing Home, because it was no more used as a Nursing Home. And it was the most decent place available for you at the time of your arrival. I suppose it is by mistake that a patient came there and it is most probable that the mistake will not happen again. If ever the Nursing Home is used as such again, another quiet lodging will be given you." And that settled the problem for me.

Now, about my work for Auroville with the Sri Aurobindo Society, I told the Mother that since Auroville is an international township, we could work for this project through UNESCO, for which I proposed that the Society should be affiliated with UNESCO as a non-governmental organization. She appreciated the idea.

When Navajata was going to Delhi, I asked him to meet the President of the Indian National Council for UNESCO for this purpose. He came back and said that it was not possible since UNESCO did not accept affiliation with religious organisations. I said: "We are not a religious organisation but a spiritual one. We should explain to them the difference between the two." He said: "I give you the charge. You do it."

I prepared a paper on Religion and Spirituality, pointing out the difference between the two in the light of Sri Aurobindo and stated that our aim covered the whole of life, its relationships and activities on the spiritual basis. I proposed the project of Auroville for the realisation of Human Unity. To begin with we were admitted in the 'C' category of relationship, which meant an exchange of information of our activities. This was in 1966. Then, I got the Society promoted to the 'B' category of the consultative status. We offered the project of Auroville as a token of our collaboration with the aims of UNESCO for its 20th anniversary celebration. And they unanimously passed the resolution presented to them by us. It extolled the project and its aims and invited the member nations to help in its realisation.

I was left with the work of the Sri Aurobindo Society for Auroville through UNESCO and whatever I wished to do for the Mother. I had asked her if as an Ashramite, I should do some work with an Ashram department, or work on compilation work for subjects like education, culture, etc... from the writings of Sri Aurobindo. For the work of the Ashram departments she wrote "Not necessary." For the work of the compilations she wrote: "This is quite all right." So, I did some compilations particularly for UNESCO and also for the Madras Institute of Development Studies, where Dr. Adiseshiah, as its founder and chairman, had invited me to attend the monthly seminars of which the Mother had approved, saying it was very good.

This gave me an opportunity to offer Sri Aurobindo's light on the subjects discussed. And I continued to go there for about six years during which I was once asked by Dr. Adiseshiah to write a comment on his Report as the chairman of the Task Force on Education in Tamil Nadu.

His report emphasized the importance of Science and Technology in Education. I commented on his Report and complemented it by giving spirituality its equal importance. It was a very long comprehensive paper, commenting also on other aspects of education, such as social, economic, cultural, monetary, etc. The Mother liked it very much and congratulated me on my comments.

On the first visit of Dr. Adiseshiah to chair a seminar on Education in Pondicherry, André-da, the Mother's son and Pavitra-da had spoken to the Mother about his views on Education. The Mother told them: "He is very open to my Force. Many good things will come out of his visit."

I had taken him to the Mother a few times when he came to see me. Once, I had

made an appointment for him to see the Mother at 10 in the morning. But he was late by almost an hour. However, I took him to see the Mother. Champaklal told me: "The Mother has retired to her room. She cannot see you." I insisted, saying: "There was some trouble with his car. So, he could not be on time. Would you kindly inform the Mother that he has come." Champaklal went and reported this to the Mother. She decided to see him and came back to the interview room. This shows that the Mother's vision and ways are indeed different from our mental thinking. There is an interesting episode concerning Dr. Adiseshiah's interview on All India Radio in Delhi to which I will come later.

In 1968, we were preparing for the Foundation of Auroville. It was decided that a boy and a girl below twenty-five years of age would come from each country, carrying the soil and the ribbons bearing the colours of the flag of their country. I was asked to go to Delhi in order to contact the foreign embassies there, inviting them to send their representative youth to participate in the Foundation ceremony of Auroville. Frankly, I did not feel the impulse to go since I was deeply concentrated in my sadhana, and I thought that writing to them from here would be enough. I wrote to the Mother asking her if this was all right. She did not reply. The Mother's silence always churned me from within.

And lo! The answer came when I was browsing in the Ashram bookshop. There was a card with the Mother's message printed on it. It read: "It is in life that the true victory is won. You must know how to be alone with the Eternal and the Infinite in the midst of all circumstances. You must know how to be free with the Supreme for companion in the midst of all occupations." I sent this card to the Mother, asking her if that was the answer to my question. She responded affirmatively, signing the card with her love and blessings and sent it back to me.

I went to Delhi to do my appointed work and I also invited Mr. Salah-El-Din Tewfik, the UNESCO representative for India. This inauguration function would be marked as decisive for the advent of a new consciousness, uniting the whole of humanity as the soil from the different countries was poured into the urn shaped like a lotus bud, which was prepared with the marble chips by an Italian artist with the help of the students of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

Everything was well organized. There was pin-drop silence among the thousands of people sitting in the amphitheatre around the ramp leading to the urn. The atmosphere was solemn,—awaiting the propitious moment. As the Auroville charter was read out in French by the Mother in her strong voice from her room and relayed by the All India Radio, the soil of the Ashram was carried up the ramp by Vijay and put in the urn while the Mother's flag was carried on high by Kiran. The charter was then read in English, Sanskrit, Tamil and other international languages like Russian, Chinese, Arabic and regional Indian languages while the soil from other countries and other states of India was put in the urn in an alphabetical order, mingling their aspiration for human unity. The last soil to be placed in the urn was the soil of Auroville. Thus it symbolized the coming together of all peoples of the world to achieve the aims and objectives of Auroville as defined in its charter. At the end Nolani-da put this charter of Auroville in the urn and

it was sealed. This celebration marked a golden page in the history of the world. It was the memorable and unique beginning of Auroville.

Once the All India Radio, Pondicherry arranged a symposium on Auroville to be chaired by Dr. Adiseshiah, who was the Deputy Director-General of Unesco. It was held in the Ashram theatre. Navajata gave an overall picture of Auroville. Kireet Joshi spoke on Education in Auroville, Mrs. Dayananda on Administration, Gilbert on the international aspect and I spoke on the cultural aspect and human unity in Auroville on the spiritual basis. Dr. Adiseshiah summed up the presentations with inspired comments. He hailed Auroville in all its aspects and commended it to everyone for an effective realization of peace and unity.

It was a significant and memorable occasion. The Mother was very happy about this event.

Dr. Adiseshiah helped in promoting the project of Auroville in many ways, proving the Mother's comment about him that many good things would come out of his visit. The Mother was very particular about my relation with Dr. Adiseshiah. For me, it was a relationship from which I had to learn a lot on the material and spiritual planes. And the Mother was informed of every detail. She never wanted me to shrink from any problem but to raise myself to a higher level of understanding and consciousness, bearing all difficulties on the way. Once the Mother even asked me: "Who has stopped seeing, you or Sat? (the name by which the Mother and I called him) Who has stopped writing, you or Sat? I must know." Nobody understood the truth of this relationship, but for me it was not just a personal relationship, but meant for the Mother's work. I asked the Mother once: "Mother what is the truth of this relationship?" She replied: "The truth is what it is, for the moment." I asked her: "If it is the truth then why for the moment?" She gave me a cryptic answer: "As your Consciousness progresses, you will know." I was made to understand that there is the Truth, eternal and infinite, which works itself out through the truth of the moment. It is quite a long story.

The United Nations once proposed to establish an international university for world unity and they gave the task of accomplishing it to UNESCO. UNESCO sent a circular to all its affiliated members requesting them to put forward a project for its realization. This came to Navajata and sat on his desk for a long time. Then, one day, they discussed it in their committee meeting. Nobody had any clear idea. However, some people sent their views to the Mother.

Now, as the deadline for submitting the project was approaching, Navajata called me to prepare a project report on the basis of the views put forward to the Mother. I felt reluctant, but Navajata insisted that since the Mother had approved these ideas, it would not be difficult to put it all together. I learned a great deal of the Mother's way of working from this incident.

I prepared a report on the basis of the various suggestions shown to her. I sent this report to the Mother to know her will as I always did before sending anything to UNESCO. On reading it, she was very angry and threw my papers onto her desk and said: "Who has asked her to prepare this report?" When I came to know this, I felt shattered to pieces. I

felt absolutely broken as if I was nothing and nobody and could do nothing. I could not eat nor sleep for two days. I only went to the Samadhi and prayed to Sri Aurobindo for his help. And he responded. My hands touched the book required and opened it on the page where I found the material I needed for presentation. Ideas came pouring down and a vision was given to me. I worked without a break and extracts were found to suit my presentation.

I prepared the whole project as guided by Sri Aurobindo and sent it with a synopsis with Poornaprema to the Mother. This time the Mother, having heard the synopsis, wanted to listen to the whole paper, keeping her usual Ashram visitors like Counouma, Amrita and Navajata waiting outside. She listened with rapt attention to the whole report on Auroville and Education, which later came out in the Mother India issue of July 1970. The Mother was pleased and thrice repeated: "Très bien!" She wrote: "Kailas, this can be sent." You can imagine the peace that descended into me, and the joy that filled my heart. I learned my lesson, to listen to no other voice than to that of Sri Aurobindo.

(To be concluded)

KAILAS JHAVERI

COLLECTED WORKS OF THE MOTHER

A second edition of the Collected Works of the Mother in a uniform library set of 17 volumes is currently under publication. The format will be as follows:

Number of pages: 420 pages per volume on the average

Size: 9.5" × 6.5" (24 cm × 16 cm)

Typeface: Sabon, 11 point

Paper: acid-free

Cover: cloth-bound in hard cover, with hand made paper jacket wrapped in PVC plastic

The set will be available some time in 2004.

Contact Address: SABDA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India

THE 93rd ANNIVERSARY OF SRI AUROBINDO'S HOLY ARRIVAL AT PONDICHERRY (1910-2003)

FOUR p.m. of the 4th April, 1910 was indeed a glorious and momentous occasion in the history of the Earth. It was in that golden Hour of God that Sri Aurobindo arrived at Pondicherry for carving out the new destiny of the World through his Integral Yoga. The Special Task Committee of World Union celebrated this significant landmark in the history of mankind, for the second year in succession, on the 4th April, 2003 near Gandhi Thidal, on the seashore of Pondicherry town. This year's anniversary celebration was a truly sparkling and highly consecrated event, especially because Nirodbaran (Nirod-da, as he is affectionately called), the 100-year-young sadhak, writer, poet and above all, the scribe who took down Sri Aurobindo's dictations of *Savitri*, delivered his presidential address with a crystal-clear and majestic voice. During the memorable meeting which was attended by hundreds of devotees, Sri K. Lakshminarayanan, hon'ble Minister of Education, Art, Culture and Tourism of the Govt. of Pondicherry and Sri Shivakumar, M.L.A. and the former Minister of Education also addressed the gathering of devotees. Amal Kiran, the 99-year-young celebrated poet, writer and critic also graced the occasion by his outstanding presence.

Suresh Dey

Nirodbaran's Speech

Friends,

Ninety-three years have passed since Sri Aurobindo landed in Pondicherry from the ship named Dupleix. The house to which he was taken was that of Shankar Chettiar. Swami Vivekananda had stayed in the same house when he was on a tour of South India. Thirty years before Sri Aurobindo's arrival, a Tamil yogi, Nagai Japta by name, had predicted to his disciple the coming of a yogi from the North to Pondicherry. Subramania Bharati, the great Tamil poet, was among his first associates after he arrived in Pondicherry.

Many years have passed since the great event of the arrival of Sri Aurobindo. Pondicherry is no longer a desolate town but a bustling city. Pondicherry has accepted Sri Aurobindo as one of her own. Today Sri Aurobindo is widely regarded as a great mystic and yogi. What is the nature of the influence of Sri Aurobindo on Pondicherry? Outwardly we cannot fail to see the cultural influence of the Ashram on the life of Pondicherry. Pondicherry attracts thousands of tourists every year who come to see the Ashram and enrich the economic life of the city. This year also marks the inauguration of the Aravind Eye Hospital which endeavours to eradicate curable blindness in and around Pondicherry. Yet this is not the influence I am talking about. Any sensitive visitor to the city can feel a deep aura of peace which envelops Pondicherry. It is a subtle vibration, a kind of protective ring around the whole city. The nucleus of this peace is Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's Samadhi.

Every year sees an increase in the number of Tamil people who are turning to the

message of Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo's influence is still a living influence and not a dead creed. The tremendous force of Tapasya which he accumulated by his intense sadhana is still intact.

Today humanity stands at a crossroads. Even as we talk, a war is going on in Iraq. Modern life and prosperity have satiated humanity but are yet to satisfy it. In these times the relevance of the message of Sri Aurobindo cannot be overstated.

NIRODBARAN'S SURREALIST POEMS

(Continued from the issue of June 2003)

Ring of Creative Power

BELOW the lost city the ever-dormant
 Fire's stone-idol—why stays it awake?
 Meteoric, with lightning-speed that form transcendence-sunk
 Within Darkness's Memory kindles nectar-parched
 Desert thirst; Liberty's trembling eyes
 Decorated with Life's blood-flame sign;
 Blood-red dawn-petal¹ in the golden fire
 Paints Samadhi's self-begotten
 Image's blissful auspicious sweetness.
 Breaking the soundless abode, the ring of creative-power
 Scatters its fire-rhythmed undulating trumpet-cry.
 The Time-Spirit in sleep-worlds sunk
 Parts dream-rent eyelids; His radiant face
 Pours its Creation-nectar of Completeness in universal Dark².

(To be continued)

DEBASHISH BANERJI

1. rays

2. Abyss

AWASH IN LIGHT

I SAW visions and I knew eternity,
The hidden words I glimpsed and in my sleep
Escaped the body's laws and flew to Him
Above the reach of earth, above our skies.

I met the unknown leaders of our lives,
Greater than the saints these yogi kings
And watched my heart and saw my breast aflame
In a rapture-moment silent by Her feet.

These occult spaces yield no more their joys
And hidden is the face that welcomed me,
The smile that kindled suns and lit the stars
Whose feet I kissed in those supernal days.

Now all is sealed and veiled though earthly eyes
Seek no more the outward and unreal
Who held Her glance must find the secret soul
And deeper go to touch the brightening stream.

There is a spotless place wherein is kept
The vision and the wonder of Her Grace.
And there I dwell ennobled by my prayers
I kneel in gratitude, awash in light.

NARAD (RICHARD EGGENBERGER)

REMEMBERING DR. INDRA SEN

A homage from a grateful student

IN my distant boyhood I had read a story in which the hero, a psychologist, performed miracles with his mental powers. The story had made a deep impression on me, so much so that when our Higher Course commenced in the year 1952 or thereabouts and Integral Psychology was offered as a subject, I jumped at it, hoping so to clutch the vast domain of the human psyche into my grasp. But although the next three years of hobnobbing with William James, Freud, Jung, Adler, the Gestalt Psychology and even Pavlov's dog could not provide me with a clear-cut map of the labyrinthine ways of the human mind, I do not for a moment regret my decision to study psychology, for this subject had brought me in contact with one of the most wonderful teachers under whom I have had the good fortune to study. Dr. Indra Sen was at once an excellent teacher with a unique way of imparting knowledge and a very understanding and sweet natured person. It was a joy to watch him smile, and he smiled often, when the corners of his eyes creased in merriment and not only his lips and his face, but his very soul appeared to participate in it.

When he became our professor I knew very little about him, although I had known the younger members of his family, namely, his son, daughter, niece and nephew for many years, and quite closely too. But once he started taking our class, I learnt from various sources about his many achievements—that he was a brilliant scholar, had taught philosophy and psychology at the Delhi University at a very young age, was a Ph.D. of the University of Freiburg in Germany, had authored many books and was considered to be a great intellectual. Rather awe-inspiring! But the tallish, fair gentleman, clad in spotless dhoti and kurta, who came to take our class was the personification of spontaneous humility. I still remember one of the first things that he told us: he was not going to teach us anything, for nothing could be taught; he was merely going to act as our guide on a new journey that we were about to undertake, and that too, only because he had traversed the same route before us and was just a little more familiar with it.

Next he dropped a few hints about taking notes. To understand fully the point I am going to make, we must keep in mind that in those days our Institution could not afford to buy enough copies of the expensive textbooks of Psychology and Philosophy for free distribution among the students, so we had to depend almost entirely on the notes dictated by the professors. But to our surprise, Dr. Indra Sen did not come to the class carrying impressive volumes and thick-bound notebooks, nor did he dictate any notes. He began talking quite informally and in a very casual tone suggested that we keep our notebooks open and our pens poised and note down whatever we thought to be important. Soon we discovered that he repeated certain ideas in the course of his talk but each time presenting them in a new manner and from a novel point of view. Later he told us that this he did on purpose in order to familiarize us with these new concepts in an easy, spontaneous way, as well as to make our minds alive to their various possibilities. Then he suggested that while all the ideas were still fresh in our minds we should arrange all the notes in a systematic manner and copy them out in a fair notebook under appropriate titles and with

a marginal resume, so that we could locate the various topics at a glance. Dr. Indra Sen always maintained that it was not possible for anybody to store up all the information in his head. A knowledgeable person was one who knew where to find a piece of information at a moment's notice.

We followed every one of his suggestions diligently, not merely to pass the exams but because it was all so novel and such fun. And by the time the third year came to an end, each student was the proud possessor of his or her own original textbook of Integral Psychology, all ready for the press! The only thing lacking was a publisher!

At this stage I think it will not be inappropriate to say a few words about Integral Psychology, a brainchild of Dr. Indra Sen. His plan was to make a synthesis of the Western Schools of Psychology and the Indian System of Psychology as propounded in our Darshan Shastras, in the light of Sri Aurobindo's teachings.

Talking of exams, and we had to go the whole hog in those early years of our Institution, we had a surprise waiting for us in our Psychology class. A little more than a fortnight before the commencement of the annual exams, Dr. Indra Sen broached the subject, still a veritable bugbear to all of us. However, with a mischievous smile twinkling in his eyes, he reassured us saying that there was nothing to fear, for he was going to leak out all the questions! Secondly, he told us that all the relevant books where we would find the answers to all those questions, had been kept aside exclusively for our use in the Ashram Library. Any time during the Library hours we were free to consult them. And finally, instead of the three hours on a single day, we would be given a whole fortnight to answer all the questions, with only one proviso, that the answers would have to be entirely in our own language! And then in his usual mild manner he suggested that it would be a good thing if we went to the Library that very day and did a bit of preliminary scouting.

Greatly cheered by his words we made a beeline for the Library. But soon our elation waned, when we discovered that to answer each question properly we would have to study all those heavy volumes quite thoroughly and take copious notes.

The rest is history! Although the books by themselves did not pose any problem—we had had sufficient grounding in our class to understand them—the amount we had to read and retain was stupendous. Believe me, we had never worked so hard nor learnt so much as we did during that fateful fortnight. But it was a labour of love and every moment was a challenge. And on his part, with that sweet, subtle subterfuge, Dr. Indra Sen had taught us two very important things: firstly, the rudiments of doing research—how to glean bits and pieces of information from various sources and knit them together into a cohesive whole, and secondly, the true *raison d'être* of exams. Exams do not merely serve to indicate how much we know, they can be judiciously used as a springboard for attaining further knowledge.

Almost fifty years have passed since I have completed my studies in the Higher Course, but Dr. Indra Sen's classes are still fresh in my memory. I myself have been teaching in our school and "Knowledge" for the last forty-seven years, not Psychology but English Literature, yet not a single year goes by without my telling my students something about Dr. Indra Sen and his unique teaching methods.

ANIRUDDHA SIRCAR

PRAYER OF A FATHER

THE father in Bistraba was scared
By the disaster lurking in fate,—
His tears mingling with the sighs of waves,
Pent up feelings at their worst.
Such progeny bringing disgrace to the house:
The ten-headed with a huge chest but no heart,
And a dinosaur in human form,
And a flower with dazzling colours sans fragrance.

Sitting in the moonlit silence
Bistraba discovered a deep contemplation's cave
And like the sound of pilgrim feet
A quiet voice echoed in him;
His only ache was an urge to express
The first and the last in a lifelong course.
Like a fountain in a lap of hills
A full-throated prayer flowed from him,
A supplication to draw grace
And conclude his soul's pilgrimage.
To dissolve his heavy agonies
Bistraba asked for a child at last,
A bud of Paradise to adorn his home,
That in him be a high point
Of human service to the Incarnate.

RANKANATH HOTA

TAGORE AND SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of June 2003)

The Hungry Stones and The Phantom Hour: Idylls Of The Occult

SRI AUROBINDO handled the narrative masterfully, not just in his epics and the poetic tales like *Urvasie*, *Love and Death* and *Baji Prabhou*. He also made casual experiments with the short story, showing his class in those leisurely exercises. It is a misfortune for us that just a single story entitled *The Phantom Hour* has been found in its complete form, from the inventio down to the peroration. Three others—*The Door at Abelard*, *The Devil's Mastiff* and *The Golden Bird*—could not survive the onslaught of white ants.

There is a distant memory of Poe's tales in *The Phantom Hour*, although it is quite Aurobindonian in its substance and attitude to life. Tagore was a regular short story writer and he was also fond of the occult and the supernatural. A study of *The Phantom Hour* and Tagore's *The Hungry Stones* will show the interest of the two authors in things supernatural.

The Hungry Stones uses double narrative. The authorial narrator meets a man in the waiting room of a railway station and makes him tell the story of a strange palace. The romantic in Tagore is in love with the past, the scintillating past when 'jets of rose water spurted from its fountains' and young Persian women sat on the marble floors of the spray-cooled rooms. Tagore imagines their dishevelled hair before their bath and the splashing sound of their mellow feet in the fresh water of the reservoirs. There is a delicate touch of pain as the second narrator speaks of the lost fountains and the songs and the white feet, which had once pressed the snowy marbles. The author listens without interrupting and the man goes on with his weird story. The descriptions of the river Susta sinking low, its sandy bed and glistening water and the sun sinking behind the hills pull us to the place of action. Unlike the mystic suggestions in *The Phantom Hour*, Tagore's story concentrates on a thrilling flashback:

As I sat down again, thinking it to be an illusion, I heard many footfalls, as if a large number of persons were rushing down the steps. A strange thrill of delight, slightly tinged with fear, passed through my frame, and though there was not a figure before my eyes, I thought I saw a levy of joyous maidens coming down the steps to bathe in the Susta in that summer evening. Not a sound was in the valley, in the river, or in the palace, to break the silence, but I distinctly heard the maidens' gay and mirthful laugh, like the gurgle of a spring gushing forth in a hundred cascades, as they ran past me, in quick playful pursuit of each other, towards the river, without noticing me at all. As they were invisible to me, so was I, as it were, invisible to them. The river was perfectly calm, but I felt that its still, shallow, and clear waters were stirred suddenly by the splash of many an arm jingling with bracelets, that the girls laughed and dashed and splattered water at one another, that the feet of the fair shimmers tossed the tiny waves up in showers of pearl.¹

Such are the lovely descriptions of Tagore in a tale of mystery. The story is not frightening except for some brief moments and the other world is presented in terms of beauty. The second narrator is drawn to the palace again and again, mentally and physically, because of its mysterious beauty. The crazy Meher Ali's cry, "Stand apart! Everything is false," goes on mystifying the scenes from the past. As the train comes in, there is no more time for the conclusion. It is time now for the author to conclude with his remarks on the story.

Sri Aurobindo's story creates the willing suspension of disbelief. There is more of action and drama in a Victorian setting. He gives shape to a modern story in London and links the occult and the real like a masterful story writer. There is no scope inside this action-narrative for detailed leisurely descriptions of nature, which we see in Tagore's famous story. The plot unfolds naturally through the eyes of the omniscient narrator.

Sturge Maynard, while reading a mystic text describing occult happenings, sees the apparition of a clock indicating the time when his girlfriend Renée will be facing danger. He reaches her place just at eight—following the indication from the ghost clock—and kills her ex-boyfriend just when the man is going to kill Renée. The night is extremely foggy in London and they remove the corpse easily with the help of Renée's maid, Rachel. Sri Aurobindo stresses the idea of fate, which was on their side this time, unlike the case of the previous life, when it had gone wrong for Sturge. It is curious that the writer is dealing with very vital things in the story. Just a piece of dialogue will reveal how the trekker of the supermind still knows the vital aspects of life, as much as Shakespeare knows them. It is the speech of Renée Idalie's ex-boyfriend :

I give you still a chance, Idalie—always, always a chance. Will you go with me? You have been false to me, false with your body, false with your heart. But, I'll forgive. I forgive your desertion, I'll forgive this too. Come with me, Idalie. And if not,—Renée Idalie Marviranne, it is going to strike eight, and when the hour has done striking, I strike.²

Sturge's indifference to Renée's past speaks of the awakened psychic being in him. Through his interior monologue, Sri Aurobindo establishes his theory of rebirth in fiction. There is also that famous apothegm from the Master's world-view, "There is no such thing in this creation as chance,"³ which we see in the interior monologue of Sturge just before the end of the story. This story alone will prove Sri Aurobindo's mastery of weaving the dialogue and the narrative. While the dialogues are both real and symbolic, the key word "fog" hinting at God's favour to Sturge and Renée, comes back repeatedly both in the narrative and the speeches and monologues. Inside this action-packed story, there are moments of wonder, which are quite usual in the writer of *The Hungry Stones*:

Sturge Maynard rose and waited for some more definite sign. For he divined now that some extraordinary mental state, some unforgettable experience was upon him. His expectation was not deceived. Once more the chimes rang out, but this time it

seemed to him as if a woman's voice were crying to him passionately under cover of that perfectly familiar melody.⁴

As in *The Hungry Stones*, it is a voice floating back to Sturge from a past life.

That day again at dead of night I heard the stifled heart-breaking sobs of someone—as if below the bed, below the floor, below the stony foundation of that gigantic palace, from the depths of a dark damp grave, a voice piteously cried and implored me: “Oh, rescue me!”⁵

Unlike Tagore, Sri Aurobindo asserts the authenticity of occult visions and happenings. While Sri Aurobindo's excellence lies in the slow unfolding of a dramatic plot, Tagore's wonderful lyricism seizes us throughout his story.

(To be continued)

GOUTAM GHOSAL

References

1. *Hungry Stones and other Stories*, Rupa & Co., New Delhi, 2002, pp. 5-6.
2. SABCL, Vol. 7, p. 1021, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1972.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 1024.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 1016.
5. *Hungry Stones and other Stories*, p. 18.

STORIES TOLD BY THE MOTHER

Part 1, 131 pp., Rs. 60.00, ISBN 81-7058-645-3

Part 2, 123 pp., Rs. 60.00, ISBN 81-7058-646-1

Almost all of these stories have been culled from the Mother's “Questions and Answers”, the English translation of her “Entretiens” in French. The anecdotes were published in French in 1994 under the title “La Mère Raconte”, and are now brought out in English, in two volumes. The compiler's note states “These stories are not just stories; they are revelations of living truths conveyed to us by the Mother.” “If they bring the reader closer to the Mother, their purpose will be well served.”

Available at SABDA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry 605 002

Please see “New Publications” for ordering information.

‘FROM PANJAB WE GO TO THE BLUE HEAVEN—SVARGA TILL NOW’

(About the discovery of Veles’s Book)

If somebody calls it a real wonder, it will be true, because this manuscript on wooden plates was kept safe under the fire of the Civil War in Ukraina in 1919. It was found by Ali Izenbeck, an officer of the White Army, in the library of a land owner’s estate, which was destroyed by peasants during the rebellion. Later Izenbeck emigrated to Belgium and there together with his friend Myrolyubov, emigrant from Ukraina, deciphered the whole text until 1940.

During World War II Izenbeck died and the wooden plates disappeared. But the transliterated text was published by Myrolyubov in the fifties in the USA. In the sixties it was called the book of Veles, after a slavonic god, Veles, who is mentioned in the text many times.

Veles’s Book (VB) is an old Ukrainian monument, a relic of the past, dated probably from the 9th century A.D. It is a collection of 74 speeches of Slavonic princes and pre-christian priests, who appealed to return to the laws and outlook of ancestors, to defend the native land Ukraina-Rus’ from enemies. Copied in the middle ages, to my mind, in the 15th and the 17th centuries, this text kept some characteristics of the Czech language of the 9th and the 17th centuries, the Polish language of the 15th century.

VB was written with letters which differed a bit from Greek ones and were put under horizontal lines like in Devanagari script of Sanskrit.

The rows were unbroken, not divided into words which sometimes became undistinguished. So Izenbeck and Myrolyubov while rewriting made a lot of mistakes. Unfortunately misreadings were not taken into account during all publications in the USA (1957-59), Canada (1966,1970), Holland (1968), Great Britain (1972, 1975), Ukraina (1991) and Russia (1991). The first translations done on the basis of distorted text were not understandable. Of course, it was necessary to restore the text first and then to interpret it. I have done this work in the Eighties and early Nineties. In 1994-1995, 2001 I published in Kyiv the whole (already restored) original text with my commentaries and translation into modern Ukrainian. The Russian translation was done by my (now late) brother Victor and published in 2001.

The title of this article—“From Panjab we go to the blue Heaven—Svarga till now”—was taken from VB written on the northern coast of the Black Sea. It indicates the connection between Ukraina and India. VB also tells us about old towns of our ancestors in the region of five rivers, and about “our holy Seven Rivers,” as in the Vedas. But what then compelled them to leave those holy places? According to VB it was a wicked and cruel tribe *dasuvo*, which appeared from the darkness, and many people were killed and captured. The Vedas also tell about Dasyus, sons of Darkness, savages, men of the night, who were the main enemies of the Aryans.

Our ancestors went from Panjab to the Persian land, over the Caucasus and came to

the Dnieper and the Carpathian mountains—to the land “where honey and milk flow and where nobody dies”, as VB says.

The Dnieper (or Dniipro in Ukrainian)—the main river of the country—was called *Danapris* in the middle ages. It seems to me, this name is similar to *Danapara*, which means “generous” in the Sanskrit language. The river was indeed generous to the inhabitants of both its banks. VB states that those people returned to their homeland, because they always lived there. So we may suppose that the Aryans came to Panjab not only from Central Asia and Asia Minor, but from the northern coast of the Black Sea too.

We don’t know the ethnic name of that people. But in Kyivan annals I have come across such a phrase: “*Uktrians* who called themselves *brahmans*, islanders...” According to the chronicles, uktrians were of very high morality, not like their neighbors—*vindies* (indies) or *venedies*, who lived on the Vistula (Poland), and uktrians lived farther to the west, from the left bank of the Oder to the Elb. In the Middle Ages chronicles fixed on this territory Ukrans who had their power under the name of *Ruscia*. We can admit that they were uktrians-brahmans of Kyivan annals, including the island of *Rugen* on the Baltic Sea. The same people lived on the Dniiper and on the Danube.

From the viewpoint of the Sanskrit, *uktrian* could mean: *uk-* (weak form from root *vac*, to speak) + *tri-* (suffix of the doer)—which is a maker of words, priest, brahman. In Ukrainian there are many words with this root. So *uk-(vak, vac)* means in Ukrainian *slovo*, word, (*shravas* in Sanskrit) and it gives the ethnic name of people *slovyane*, those who speak words.

In the Veda *brahman* sometimes means not only a priest who does sacrifices, but every worshipper of the Aryan religion. Thus uktrians-brahmans became the ethnic name of the people. Later it sounded like *ukrans*, *ukrs*, *ukrainians*. This ethnic name descended from Sanskrit and it is the name of my country—*Ukrania*, as Greeks and Turks call it, or *Ukraina* from the same root. From the 9th till the 17th century this country was called *Kyivan Rus’*, or simply *Rus’*, but later returned to its former name—Ukraina.

According to VB our ancestors, after sacrificing a white horse, went from Panjab to the Dnieper and the Carpathians in the 7th century B.C. They brought with them the sacred Law of Rita and the Vedas, led the true life sowing grains and keeping cattle in the steppe. But bloodthirsty enemies envied their peaceful and well-arranged life, and very often robbers from all sides attacked our forefathers. VB tells about everyday life and struggle of our people from ancient times till the 9th century A.D.

In spite of the hostile attitude of neighbours the *jnana* (Ukr. *znannya*), which was brought from India, spread from the Dnieper all over the vast territories of Europe, especially on the Oder-Elb and the Danube. But this process, I suppose, began much earlier. One of the main ideas of the Aryan people, as VB notes, was the Unity of *Patare Dyaus*—Heaven (Father) and the Earth (Mother), their wedding. *Dyaus* or *Dyu-piter* as the solar God was adopted in the Slavonic (*Diy*), Greek (*Zeus*) and Roman (*Jupiter*) mythology.

The earliest record of *Dyaus* was found in Rome on a stone board which was discovered by archaeologists in 1846. The inscription was dated from the 12th century B.C. It was the Epitaph to Aeneas, a trojan prince, a son of Anchises and Aphrodite. In

1184 B.C. when Troya was ruined he went to Italy and founded a new kingdom. This inscription had been investigated by scholars from 1850. I deciphered it as written in the ancient Slavonic language (here I give the beginning of it in Latin letters): “*Desku mi skrpi ve silie virie ve svenyu Dzyue v siilye kyarvi...*” and so on. It means: “The board I fastened by the force of the faith in my *Dzyue* (*Dyaus*) by the force of the blood...” The Slavonic letters of this inscription precede the Greek and Latin alphabets by more than 300 years. We can admit that *Dyaus* was common for the Aryans of Asia Minor (*Troada*), Panjab and the Slavs of ancient Europe—from the Dnieper in Ukraina to the Padus with the Padua, rivers in northern Italy. VB tells us that we all must think about “both sides of the dwelling”—on Earth and in Heaven, that our terrestrial life is nothing in comparison with Eternal Life and Immortality near the Gods.

It describes the Slavonic Paradise with herds of cattle and fields of millet and barley. There were no slaves, no enemies there. And every warrior who fell in the battle joined his ancestors and took a new body. Even the grass whispered about the bliss of those people. But in order to get there everyone had to lead a true life, glorify the gods and drink “*sura*” (Soma in Vedas) in their honour. The authors of VB underline the Oneness and Multitude of God. Uktrians deified the Sun (Surya) which “shines on our houses and the faces of home fires pale in front of its face.” The Sun is either on the golden boat, or on the “cart with gentle bullocks which await it on the Milky Way”; “*venedies* went to the land where the Sun sleeps in the golden bed”; all plants “stretch to the Sun to see it, and the Sun feeds them and fills them with force”; and so on.

Sri Aurobindo wrote: “The light of Surya is the form, the body of that divine vision.” (*The Secret of the Veda*, Pondicherry, 1990, p. 427)

Sura or *suryana* in VB is a common drink of gods and worshippers, “our sacrifice to true gods who are our ancestors”. That was the drink of Immortality for those who fell in the battle. Worshippers also sacrificed vegetables, honey, grain, oil, but not meat. They were proud not to have men’s sacrifice which was the custom of *varungs* (in Kyivan annals—*varyahy*), known in the West as Vikings.

People of VB believed in the reincarnation of their leaders who were born from time to time and returned to teach and defend them from enemies.

In VB the Sacred Mother-Bird was for the contact between gods and worshippers. But sometimes it was *Vyshen’* (maybe Vishnu) or *Kupalo* (similar to Apollo). I suppose that this Bird is a symbol for our people—a stork which (as people believed) brought fire (and children!) to our houses.

Intra (or *Indra*) is one of the most popular Gods in VB. He came to Aryan land, to India, when he was a child, says VB. He knows the Vedas, and Slavs glorify him, sing songs to him. “From him we have herds of cattle which keep us from evil.”

Sri Aurobindo wrote that “the Gods in the Veda represent universal powers descended from the Truth-Consciousness which build up the harmony of the worlds and in man his progressive perfection...” (*ibid.*, p. 71) This conclusion can explain the functional role of the Gods in VB too. Here I give two texts which I translated from Old Ukrainian—the first and the last ones in VB.

Veles Book translated from Old Ukrainian by Borys Iatsenko.

Text 1

In vain we recollect of our old heroic times,
 because where we go—it's unknown.
 So we look back and say
 that we are ashamed to recognize *Nava*, *Prava* and *Yava*
 and on the both sides of dwelling to know and think.
 It was *Dazh-boh* who made the Egg for us—
 the Dawn which shines to us.
 And in that Abyss *Dazh-boh* hung our Earth.
 In order to hold it—
 so for that spirits of ancestors are.
 And they gleam to us from Paradise like stars.
 ... But Greeks attacked *Rus'*
 committing evil in the name of Gods.
 And we knew not where to run and what to do...
Prava was secretly founded by *Dazh-boh*.
 And on it *Yava* is running like yarn,
 creating our life.
Yava is flowing and being born in *Prava*.
Nava is after them—
 It is both before and after them.
 And in *Prava* there is *Yava*.
 Having learnt of the ancient wisdom,
 let's dip our souls into it,
 because it is ours.
 And it is already returning to us.
 Creative Force of Gods we feel in ourselves
 because it is the gift of Gods
 and we have not to waste it.
 So the spirits of ancestors from Paradise watch on us
 and they are crying and saying in grief
 that we don't care of *Prava*, *Nava* and *Yava*,
 didn't do that and even mocked at them.
 Really, we aren't worth to be *Dazh-boh's* grandsons.
 So praying to Gods we'll have clean souls and bodies
 and the life with our ancestors
 who merged with Gods in one life.
 But it is true that we are *Dazh-boh's* grandsons in mind,
 and the God's Great Mind is united with us.
 So we work and speak with Gods in unity...

ISLAM'S CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENCE

(Continued from the issue of June 2003)

Al-Biruni and Mahmud of Ghazni

WONDER at the strange workings or perhaps more appropriately the quirks of history, that al-Biruni and Mahmud Ghaznavi with diametrically opposite characters should have been together! If one had produced 146 works in 13,000 folios, the other acquired the fame of plundering the wealth of India 17 times during 1100 -1130.

Mohammad Habib in the preface to the first edition of his book *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni* (1927) writes as follows: "...Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni will always attract the attention of posterity, which has been so profoundly influenced by his work... I am not aware that I have been inspired by any sympathy or antipathy towards the great conqueror. But there has recently grown up a tendency among some Musalmans of India to adore Mahmud as a saint, and to such a scientific evaluation of his work and his policy will appear very painful. There is only one thing I need say in my defence. Islam as a creed stands by the principles of the Quran and the 'Life' of the Apostle. If Sultan Mahmud and his followers strayed from the 'straight path', so much the worse for them. We want no idols."

After the innumerable looting sprees of northern India Mahmud set out from Ghazni on 18 October 1025 towards Somnath in the prosperous province of Gujarat. He drove his thirty thousand horsemen to register yet another victory. Here is an account about Somnath temple from the historian Ferishta: "...a hundred thousand people used to collect together in the temple at the time of the solar and lunar eclipses... The princes of Hindustan had endowed it with about ten thousand villages. A thousand Brahmans worshipped the idol continuously... After a fierce and close battle, Mahmud entered the temple and struck the idol with his mace and his piety was instantly rewarded by the precious stones that came out of its belly. This is an impossible story. Apart from the fact that it lacks all contemporary confirmation, the Somnath idol was a solid unsculptured Linga, not a statue, and stones could not have come out of its belly. That the idol was broken is unfortunately true enough, but the offer of the Brahmans, and Mahmud's rejection of the offer, is a fable of later days... It is a situation to make one pause. 'The evil that men do lives after them; the good is often buried with their bones!' Mahmud's work, whatever it might have been was swept off fifteen years after his death by the Hindu revival... East of Lahore no trace of the Musalmans remained; and Mahmud's victories, while they failed to shake the moral confidence of Hinduism, won an everlasting infamy for his faith." He carried stone pieces of the broken Shiva Linga for use in the construction of doorsteps of a mosque in the capital of his kingdom.

Mahmud's father Sabuktigin was a Turkish slave who became ruler of Ghazni in 977. Soon he controlled the Khyber Pass which was the gateway to the Indian subcontinent. Mahmud was just 27 at the time of his accession in 998 and his Ghazni a small

kingdom. But the young and ambitious ruler aspired to be a great monarch and in some twenty successful expeditions amassed enormous wealth. With it he laid the foundation of a vast empire that eventually included Kashmir, the Punjab, and a large part of Iran. It is even claimed that Mahmud transformed his capital into a cultural centre rivalling the Abbasid Baghdad. Or, as Will Durant quotes, here were commanding palaces of "tall towers that amazed the moon." Mahmud himself was illiterate but set up a university and promoted art and poetry. At the same time he is said to have vowed to invade India every year and, in fact, led 17 such expeditions. He had heard of the fabled wealth of India and was in dire need of capital to maintain his considerable armed forces and entourage. Apparently his operation would start with a religious mission but end with large caravans of bounty moving back to Ghazni. There would be indiscriminate looting and murdering. This happened year after year at the close of every monsoon. Pillaging of the cities was invariably followed by rape and slaughter. The first assault was on 27 November 1001. Mahmud marched on India at the head of 15,000 horsemen when near Peshawar he met Jaipal with 12,000 horse troops, 30,000 foot soldiers and 300 elephants. In spite of their superior numbers and better equipment the Indians fell back in the battle under the Muslim onslaught. The death toll was 15,000. Again in 1008 Anandpal was ready with a force of 30,000 Khokars belonging to a fierce primitive tribe. They charged both flanks of the Sultan's army with such ferocity that he was about to call a retreat. But at this critical moment panic-stricken elephants changed the whole scene. The army, thinking that the king was fleeing, drew back from the battlefield leaving behind the dead and dying. Nothing could now halt Mahmud's advance into the heart of India. When he razed the temple of Lord Krishna in Mathura, he simply marvelled at the beauty of the architecture and wondered if he could build a mosque in similar magnificence even if he were given two hundred years. Tons of gold, silver and precious stones became a part of his swag. "The taste of blood and booty had practically blinded him so much so that even the Muslim sympathetic sycophant historians felt uncomfortable writing about his ruthless murderous rampage. The marauders looted twenty million dirhams worth of gold and silver." This was the Terror that had come from Afghanistan to disorganized mediaeval India. His acts of hostility continued until 1026.

R. C. Majumdar writes about Mahmud Ghaznavi as follows: "From the political point of view, the conquest of the Punjab... was of far greater importance than the establishment of Arab principalities in the lower Indus valley. Sultan Mahmud was undoubtedly one of the greatest military leaders the world has ever seen. His cool courage, prudence, resourcefulness and other qualities make him one of the most interesting personalities in Asian history. In addition to his victorious expeditions in India he had to his credit two memorable campaigns against hostile Turks in the course of which he routed the hosts of Ilak Khan and the Seljuqs. Great as a warrior, the Sultan was no less eminent as a patron of arts and letters... He was neither a missionary for the propagation of religion in this country nor an architect of empire. The main object of his eastern expeditions seems to have been the acquisition of the 'wealth of Ind' and the destruction of the morale of its custodians... He drained the wealth of the country and despoiled it of its

military resources to an appalling extent.” (*An Advanced History of India*)

This is the demoralizing picture that remains in the mind of India, of the devastating spell of “the great and terrible Mahmud,” as Will Durant describes him. A storm came and swept off a people. Decay and disintegration are the natural consequences of a dying spirit when its vitality founded on enduring values wanes. It seems at that time there was no national life which could bring kingly princes together, that they might serve the creed of the warrior to defend the order of the society. Following Mahmud's annual invasions there was an incessant rush of dark forces that made the existing darkness yet worse. Not too long afterwards came Muhammad Ghouri and the story was repeated on another nightmarish scale. Fast-moving and battle-efficient horsemen of the invaders routed the slow-paced elephant-mounted Indian soldiers. Not that there was no *kshātra-teja* or valour of the soldier, but in the tradition-bound society what was missing was the contact with the inner spirit of the country. Illusionist philosophies of the previous centuries had denied the value of life and created havoc; the living dynamism that gives meaning to this world had disappeared. Perhaps it was a necessary experience in its spiritual growth even if it meant paying a heavy price. Now there is a double debt to be paid, the Debt of Man and the Debt of God. Unless this is done there does not seem to be any real hope. But let us get back to the theme of the positive Muslim contributions which could be of worth to us and to civilizations in diverse ways.

Al-Biruni is certainly the pride of a world that could look upward in nobility of the spirit of man. He is said to be the “Leonardo of Islam” and there is considerable value in it. For Professor Ziauddin Sardar al-Biruni was a natural-born futurist. “If I have a hero,” says he, “it is al-Biruni. Here is a man who could transcend disciplinary boundaries without even the remotest concern for C. P. Snow's ‘two cultures’. He could measure the specific gravity of base metals correct to three decimal places or the coordinates of famous cities just as accurately while providing one of the best accounts of the Hindu religion and the customs and sciences of India. He could write the text on astronomy for the Middle Ages, *Canon of al-Masudi*, while studying Yoga, while writing a mammoth history of the world, the *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, while taking an active part in philosophical and theological debates of his time, while travelling to and meeting people from numerous other cultures. He may have lived in the eleventh century, but mediaeval al-Biruni is not. What could be more modern, indeed postmodern, than the suggestion that reality cannot be divided into isolated segments, that everything is connected to everything else, that ideas, visions and scholarship shape the future?” For al-Biruni there were no disciplinary boundaries. But that did not mean that he did not recommend mastering the fundamentals of a particular subject one would take up for study. Inquiry and method have to go together. Yet “al-Biruni was a multi-culturalist before multi-culturalism was invented. (This guy is too good to be true: not only did he write some 180 books, most of which have survived, he even had an inkling of relativity!)” The lesson that we can learn from al-Biruni is the possibility of a synthesis giving rise to a “multi-civilizational world that need not lead to a ‘clash of civilizations’ as Samuel Huntington predicts.” (*BIC News*, 11 July 1997)

Abu Arrayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni was born on 15 September 973 in Kath, Uzbekistan, and lived a rich and rewarding life of 75 years when he died on 13 December 1048 in Ghazni, Afghanistan. He was fortunate to have come at an early age under the guidance of the famous astronomer and mathematician Abu Nasr Mansur. In 990, at the age of seventeen, he computed the latitude of Kath by observing the maximum altitude of the sun. Another of his early works was *Cartography* dealing with map projections. But soon al-Biruni started feeling the effect of the unrest in the Islamic world of the early 11th century. About these years of turmoil he writes: "After I had barely settled down for a few years, I was permitted by the Lord of Time to go back home, but I was compelled to participate in worldly affairs, which excited the envy of fools, but which made the wise pity me." Scholarship outside the House of Wisdom can tend to flow in a dry stream and that is exactly what happened in the absence of cultural milieu in Ghazni. Ghazni in spite of Mahmud's riches and its magnificent mosques and the newly founded university to advance art and learning never became the Baghdad of the Abbasids. One can never build a civilization on unearned or borrowed or plundered cash and that perhaps has been the tragedy of Muslims the world over. Wealth has to be generated in the active dynamics of life. Mahmud himself was illiterate and had gathered around him poets and scholars, yet nothing enduring happened in terms of civilizational values. There was al-Biruni with him, and the historian Utbi and the philosopher Farabi and the chronicler Baihaki. There were also poets like Faruqi and Unsuri and Firdausi. Mahmud was lavish in spending when it came to such matters but, at the same time, he did not keep his word to give sixty thousand mishkals of gold to the poet who wrote the majestic epic describing the laurels of the king. Firdausi the poet of *Shāhnāmā* was instead rewarded with just sixty thousand silver dirhams. Firdausi was infuriated and wrote a satirical retort. He spoke of Mahmud being by birth not a prince but just a boor. Eventually, Mahmud relented and sent a camel-load of the promised gift but the dead body of Firdausi being carried to the burial ground greeted that. *Shāhnāmā* is a mighty and dignified epic but would that make Firdausi rank among the top dozen poets of the world if we are to take into account the quality and quantity of their poetic creations? Sri Aurobindo had reservations and declined to offer any comment on the ground that he had not read *Shāhnāmā*. Perhaps the glorification, in whatever a sublime poetic form it be, of an impetuous predator and an iconoclast does not merit that kind of a consideration.

Wars disrupted the scientific work of al-Biruni and Abu Nasr Mansur and in about 1017 both left Khwarazm. "Mahmud was extending his influence over the region from his base in Ghazni and made a demand of Abu al-Abbas Mamun in 1014 to have his name inserted into the Friday prayers. This was a signal that he wanted an end to Mamun's rule and he was making a bid for the region to come under his control. After Mamun had at least partially agreed to Mahmud's demands, he was killed by his own army for what they considered to be an act of treachery. Following this Mahmud marched his army into the region and gained control of Kath on 3 July 1017. Both al-Biruni and Abu Nasr Mansur left with the victorious Mahmud, perhaps as his prisoners."

Al-Biruni was not only an accomplished scholar; he was also well versed in math-

ematics, physics, metaphysics, geography and history. He was a contemporary of the well-known man of medicine, ibn Sina. Mahmud during his campaigns would take him along with him to India, a favour the physician had declined. But the gain for al-Biruni was the opportunity he got to travel in the country of wisdom for 20 years. He learnt Hindu philosophy, religion, mathematics, and geography from the Pundits and in return taught them Greek and Arabic science and philosophy. But it is likely that al-Biruni was practically a prisoner of the Sultan, perhaps with not much freedom to move. But his scientific work certainly benefited from the patronage. Observations he made in the northern parts of the country enabled him to determine the latitudes of eleven towns around the Punjab and the borders of Kashmir. His history of India, massive in proportion, is a classic work that covers many different aspects of the country. Al-Biruni described the religion and philosophy of India, its caste system and marriage customs. He then studied the Indian systems of writing and numbers before going on to research its geography. The book also examined Indian astronomy, astrology and the calendar. About the social conditions prevailing in India during that era, al-Biruni writes: "The country was parcelled out among petty chiefs, all independent of one another and often fighting amongst themselves. Child-marriage was routine; widows were not permitted to marry again; sati was in vogue. Idol-worship was common throughout the land, and vast riches were accumulated in temples which fired the lust of Muslim conquerors. The administration of justice, though crude and primitive in many ways, was liberal and humane. Written complaints were filed and cases were decided on the testimony of witnesses. Criminal law was mild. Brahmins were exempt from capital punishment. Theft was punished according to the value of the property stolen, and mutilation of limbs was recognized as an appropriate penalty for certain offences. Taxation was mild. The state took only one-sixth of the produce of the soil, and Brahmins were exempt from taxation. Politically India was disunited and rival states fought against one another in complete disregard of national interests. Probably the word 'national' had no meaning for them. Religion was encumbered by superstition and society was held in the grip of a rigid cast system which rendered the unification of various groups impossible." (*A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, Ishwari Prasad)

Mahmud died in 1030 and a difficult political situation arose. His two sons fought for the throne. Al-Biruni was unsure who would succeed and chose not to give a dedication in his *Tarikh al-Hind*. Better not to have it than to choose the wrong one! Eventually the eldest son Masud succeeded him who treated the scholar more kindly than his father had done. Now al-Biruni seems to have become free to travel as he pleased. But Masud was murdered in 1040 and succeeded by his son Mawdud who ruled for eight years. By this time al-Biruni was an old man; nevertheless he continued his enormous output of scientific works right up to the time of his death.

Certain dates in al-Biruni's life have connection with the astronomical events that occurred at the time and hence can be considered to be authentic. "His description of an eclipse of the moon on 24 May 997 which he observed at Kath means that he had returned to his native country by that time. The eclipse was an event that was also visible in

Baghdad and al-Biruni had arranged with Abu al-Wafa to observe it there. Comparison of their timings enabled them to calculate the difference in longitude between the cities.” At Lamghan, north of Kabul, al-Biruni observed an eclipse of the sun on 8 April 1019. Of it he writes: “...at sunrise we saw that approximately one-third of the sun was eclipsed and that the eclipse was waning.”

Here is an assessment about the personality of al-Biruni as can be discerned from his surviving works: “We see a man who was not a great innovator of original theories, mathematical or otherwise, but rather a careful observer who was a leading exponent of the experimental method. He was a great linguist who was able to read first hand an amazing number of the treatises that existed and he clearly saw the development of science as part of a historical process which he is always careful to put in proper context. His writings are therefore of great interest to historians of science.” It is quite understandable that al-Biruni should have been considered as a great figure amongst the scientists of Islam. “His critical spirit, love of truth, and scientific approach were combined with a sense of toleration. His enthusiasm for knowledge may be judged from his claim that the phrase *Allah is Omniscient* does not justify ignorance.”

Though a devout Muslim al-Biruni had no prejudice against different religious sects or races. About the Christian doctrine of forgiveness al-Biruni writes: “Upon my life, this is a noble philosophy, but the people of this world are not all philosophers... And, indeed, ever since Constantine the Victorious became a Christian, both sword and whip have been ever employed.”

Al-Biruni was amazingly well read, having knowledge of Sanskrit literature on topics such as astrology, astronomy, chronology, geography, grammar, mathematics, medicine, philosophy, religion and weights and measures. He had read the Gita and the Upanishads in the original and translated several Sanskrit texts into Arabic. He also wrote several treatises devoted to certain aspects of Indian astronomy and mathematics. In his account of India, “the first Arabic compendium on Hindu civilization, he mentions having translated from Sanskrit the *Sāṅkhya*, a book which deals with the creation of things and their types, and the *Patanjali* which deals with what happens to the soul after it leaves the body. The *Patanjali* was found by French Orientalist Massignon early in this century in Istanbul.”

Shadows written around 1021 is an important text of al-Biruni. “It includes the Arabic nomenclature of shade and shadows, strange phenomena involving shadows, gnomonics, the history of the tangent and secant functions, applications of the shadow functions to the astrolabe and to other instruments, shadow observations for the solution of various astronomical problems, and the shadow-determined times of Muslim prayers. It also contains important ideas such as the idea that acceleration is connected with non-uniform motion, using three rectangular coordinates to define a point in 3-space, and ideas that some see as anticipating the introduction of polar coordinates. Theoretical and practical arithmetic, summation of series, combinatorial analysis, the rule of three, irrational numbers, ratio theory, algebraic definitions, method of solving algebraic equations, geometry, Archimedes’s theorems, trisection of the angle and other problems which

cannot be solved with ruler and compass alone, conic sections, stereometry, stereographic projection, trigonometry, the sine theorem in the plane, and solving spherical triangles are many of the topics found in his works. Important contributions to geodesy and geography were also made by al-Biruni. He introduced techniques to measure the earth and distances on it using triangulation. He found the radius of the earth to be 6339.6 km, a value not obtained in the West until the 16th century. His *Masudic Canon* contains a table giving the coordinates of six hundred places, almost all of which he had direct knowledge.” (J. J. O'Connor and E. F. Robertson)

In the context of astronomical observations it is worth noting that al-Biruni had a better feel for errors and treated these more scientifically than did Ptolemy. Ptolemy's attitude was to select observations that often fitted his theory. It is significant to remember that al-Biruni thought of light having a finite velocity though it could be immense compared with that of sound. This is interesting, when for centuries and centuries the propagation of light was taken to be instantaneous. Al-Biruni describes the Milky Way as “a collection of countless fragments of the nature of nebulous stars.” Many of his ideas were worked out in discussions and arguments with other scholars. “Topics in physics that were studied by al-Biruni included hydrostatics and made very accurate measurements of specific weights of 18 different stones. He described the ratios between the densities of gold, mercury, lead, silver, bronze, copper, brass, iron, and tin. He displayed the results as combinations of integers and numbers of the form $1/n$, $n = 2, 3, 4, 10$. In the Book of the Pearls he applied the method of Archimedes to find the specific gravity of 9 metals based on the weight of gold, and 9 gems based on the weight of ‘oriental sapphire’. For example, al-Biruni gives the values of 19.05-19.26 for gold (actual 19.29), 8.72-8.83 for copper (actual 8.85), 12.74-13.59 for mercury (actual 13.56) and 8.55-8.67 for brass (actual 8.40). The book is considered the ‘most complete mediaeval text on mineralogy.’ He had also studied the properties of various precious stones. Al-Biruni is reported to have invented a clock machine based on the Roman calendar for the mosque of Ghazni; but the Imam refused to use it, holding that it was based on a non-Islamic calendar. He also wrote an extensive materia medica that combined the then existing Arabic knowledge on the subject with Indian medicine. Al-Biruni gave a clear account of Hindu numerals, elaborating the principle of position. Summation of a geometric progression apropos of the chess game led to the number:

$$16^{16} - 1 = 18,446,744,073,709,551,619.$$

Centuries before the rest of the world, al-Biruni discussed the question whether the earth rotates around its axis or not. He explained the working of natural springs and artesian wells by the hydrostatic principle of communicating vessels. His investigations included description of various monstrosities, including that known as ‘Siamese’ twins. He observed that flowers have 3, 4, 5, 6, or 18 petals, but never 7 or 9.”

Al-Biruni was not only an outstanding astronomer; he was also a competent astrologer who seems to have astonished people by the accuracy of his predictions. “The

comprehension of the structure of the Universe, and of the nature of the form of the Heavens and the Earth and all that is between them, attained by rehearsing the information received,” says al-Biruni “is extremely advantageous in the Art of Astrology... I have begun with Geometry and proceeded to Arithmetic and the Science of Numbers, then to the structure of the Universe and finally to Judicial Astrology, for no one who is worthy of the style and title of Astrologer who is not thoroughly conversant with these four sciences.” The work had a far-reaching impact. With the fall of Rome when much of ancient European learning had vanished, the Islamic civilization preserved the knowledge in many fields. There were made new contributions also. Al-Biruni’s astrological work, for instance, remained a significant source during the Renaissance studies as is upheld by the Italian astrologer Guido Bonatti in his *Liber Astronomiae*.

It may also be observed that al-Biruni was well versed in the anti-Aristotelian approach and had condemned various aspects of Greek philosophy. But more important to notice is that he had a particular love for Arabic: “The sciences of the world have been rendered,” he wrote, “to the language of the Arabs. They were embellished. They penetrated the hearts. The beauty of the language circulated in the veins and the arteries.” To see the flowering of such a genius in the desert world was surely a miracle of Time. When the patron Sultan Mahmud sent to al-Biruni three camel-loads of silver coins in appreciation of his encyclopedic work, he politely returned the royal gift, saying, “I serve knowledge for the sake of knowledge and not for money.”

(To be continued)

R. Y. DESHPANDE

SRI AUROBINDO—THE SOUL OF INDIA

(Continued from the issue of April 2003)

WE whose souls are drying up in the hard and parched age of utilitarian and scientific thought when men value little beyond what gives them exact and useful knowledge or leads them to some outward increase of power and pleasure, we who are beginning to neglect and ignore poetry and can no longer write it greatly and well,—just as we have forgotten how to sculpture like the Greeks, paint like the mediaeval Italians or build like the Buddhists—are apt to forget this grand utility of the poets, one noble faculty among their many divine and unusual powers. The poets and seers are not the logical thinkers, scientific analysers or metaphysical reasoners; their knowledge is not with their thoughts, but with their being; they have not arrived at it but have it in themselves by virtue of their powers to become one with all that is around them by some form of spiritual, vital, emotional oneness with what they see; they are the heroes thundering in the forefront of the battle, the mothers weeping over their dead, the tree trembling violently in the storm, the flower warmly penetrated with the sunshine—and because they are in these things, therefore they know them; because they know thus, spiritually and not rationally, they can write of them. They feel their delight and pain, they share their virtue and sin, they enjoy their reward and bear their punishment. It is for these reasons that poetry written out of the intellect is so inferior to poetry written out of the soul.

For this reason, too, the poets of otherwise great faculty have failed to give us living men and women or really to show to our inner vision even the thing which they write eloquently or sweetly—because they are content to write about them after having seen them with their mind only and have not been able or have not taken care first to be the things of which they would write and then not so much write about them as let them pour out in speech that is an image of the soul.

In the words of Sri Aurobindo: “We meet here two common enough errors, to one of which the ordinary uninstructed mind is most liable, to the other the too instructed critic or the too intellectually conscientious artist or craftsman. To the ordinary mind, judging poetry without really entering into it, it looks as if it were nothing more than an aesthetic pleasure of the imagination, the intellect and the ear, a sort of elevated pastime. If that were all, we need not have wasted time in seeking for its spirit, its inner aim, its deeper law. Anything pretty, pleasant and melodious with a beautiful idea in it would serve our turn; a song of Anacreon or a plaint of Mimnermus would be as good as the Oedipus, Agamemnon or Odyssey, for from this point of view they might well strike us as equally and even, one might contend, more perfect in their light, but exquisite unity and brevity. Pleasure, certainly, we expect from poetry as from all art; but the external sensible and even the inner imaginative pleasure are only first elements; refined in order to meet the highest requirements of the intelligence, the imagination and the ear, they have to be still farther heightened and in their nature raised beyond even their own noblest levels.

“For neither the intelligence, the imagination nor the ear are the true recipients of the poetic delight, even as they are not its true creators; they are only its channels and instruments: the true creator, the true hearer is the soul. The more rapidly and transparently the rest do their work of transmission, the less they make of their separate claim to satisfaction, the more directly the word reaches and sinks deep into the soul, the greater the poetry. Therefore poetry has not really done its work, at least its highest work, until it has raised the pleasure of the instrument and transmuted it into the deeper delight of the soul. A divine Ananda, a delight interpretative, creative, revealing, formative,—one might almost say, an inverse reflection of the joy which the universal Soul has felt in its great release of energy when it rang out into the rhythmic forms of the universe the spiritual truth, the large interpretative idea, the life, the power, the emotion of things packed into its original creative vision—such spiritual joy is that which the soul of the poet feels and which, when he can conquer the human difficulties of his task, he succeeds in pouring also into all those who are prepared to receive it. And this delight is not merely a godlike pastime; it is a great formative and illuminative power.”¹

“An intuitive revealing poetry of the kind which we have in view would voice a supreme harmony of five eternal powers, Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life and the Spirit. These are indeed the five greater ideal lamps or rather the five suns of poetry.”²

Sri Aurobindo brings luminous vision into English poetry, brilliantly surveys the broad spans and the luminous crests in the course of English poetry from the Anglo Saxons and Chaucer to Whitman and Yeats. Sri Aurobindo turns to the possibilities of the future. “We can see where we stand today,” he says, “but we cannot tell where we shall stand a quarter of a century hence.”³ Sri Aurobindo nevertheless believed that the day was not far off when the rending of the veil that obscures the mental vision would be accomplished at last, and the new poet would hymn his songs in the voice of the innermost spirit and truth of things.

K.D. Sethna in his book *Sri Aurobindo—The Poet* writes: “Born in India on August 15, 1872, but educated from his early boyhood in England and speaking the English language as if it were his mother-tongue, he was already at nineteen an unmistakable poet, writing in a vein which is little short of remarkable, considering that only a few even among English singers have distilled such pure nectar at so early an age. No one with an ear for sound-values, an eye for apt images and a little ability to look below the surface can fail to observe that his juvenilia hold just the right sort of promise. For, provided there is always an aspiration towards something ‘translunary’, however vaguely perceived, an abundant felicity of phrase and fancy is altogether the best starting-point for a poet. The ecstasy of insight which is the acme of metrical utterance and lays bare the very heart and meaning of the world in one shade or another can hardly be reached if a poet has not in his early life brooded with intent joy and devotion on rhythms and figures. He must be a true artist in those formative years which precede his ultimate message to mankind; unless his medium has already been made sufficiently musical and imaginative he can never in his hour of maturity reveal in an authentic poetic accent an aspect of ‘divine philosophy’. And who can deny either music or imaginative subtlety to

Sri Aurobindo when in his *Songs to Myrtilla*, written largely in his late teens under the influence of a close contact with the Greek Muse, he gives us piece after finely-wrought piece of natural magic? Whether we listen to him telling us how the earth is full of whispers after twilight and the daily voice of men is not heard,

But higher audience brings
The footsteps of invisible things,
When o'er the glimmering tree-tops bowed
The night is leaning on a luminous cloud,

or expressing the delicate exhilaration imparted by the grace of Eros and constantly enjoyed as an ever-new surprise

Since in the silver mist
Bright Cymothœa's lips I kissed,
Whose laughter dances like a gleam
Of sunlight on a hidden stream
That through a wooded way
Runs suddenly into the perfect day."⁴

K.D. Sethna further gives an illuminating exposition of Sri Aurobindo's poetry in the following lines: "...the true significance of the magnificent stanzas with which the *Envoi* opens:

Pale poems, weak and few, who vainly use
Your wings towards the unattainable spheres,
Offspring of the divine Hellenic Muse,
Poor maimed children born of six disastrous years!

Not as your mother's is your wounded grace,
Since not to me with equal love returned
The hope which drew me to that serene face
Wherein no unrepentful light of effort burned.

...the reason of his discontent and sense of frustration was that he missed a practical method to realise, to incarnate, the high serenity which the mind of Greece had in its theoretic flights conceived. Greek Art and Philosophy, in spite of the transcendental ideal they envisaged, were directed more towards moral and aesthetic ends than towards strictly spiritual fulfillment: a certain indispensable inwardness was lacking, which only India could give to the Indian in Sri Aurobindo, with her agelong yogas, sadhanas and soaring tapasyas, her incessant cry to what the Vedas had called the Dawn of God, the everlasting flush of divine self-revelation to all who look up in appeal from the strife and trouble of the mortal world:

Vision delightful who standest crowned on the hills far above me
 Vision of bliss, stoop down to mortality. Lean down and love me!
 Dawn on me over the edge of the world, across twilight's margin
 Heal my unease with thyself, O heaven-born delicate virgin!
 Thou hast the stars to sport with, the winds are the friends of thy sweetness;
 Marred am I, earth-bound, troubled with longing,—thrust down from completeness.
 [passage from an early version of Sri Aurobindo's long piece *Ahana*]

Unlike, however, the conventional mystic, Sri Aurobindo did not yearn to escape into some ineffable Nirvana leaving the earth to its bitter failures and privations. He had the unshakable conviction that mere tranquillity of trance-absorption is not our end and what the inner heart seeks is fulfilment, in the universe, of all that makes the universe so passionate and full of colour. To call down into this very life whatever Transcendent there might be was the guiding principle of his mysticism: it was soon to become his master passion and lead him away from the political field into which he had launched some years after his return from England. Thus, in 1910, induced by five years of growing inner illumination through the practice of Yoga side by side with public activity, he withdrew to Pondicherry to be free from political pulls and to perfect an integral method of spiritual askesis by which those supramental ranges of consciousness of which the seers of the Upanishads had spoken would be rendered accessible to the waking state and brought down to transfigure earth-existence. But before he retired from public life, he had already written, besides a large number of shorter poems and some translations from Kalidasa and Bhartrihari, two perfectly admirable narratives in blank verse which were published several years later in book-form.”⁵

(To be continued)

NILIMA DAS

References

1. *The Future Poetry*, SABCL, Vol. 9. pp. 9-10.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 203-204.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
4. *Sri Aurobindo—The Poet* by K. D. Sethna, pp. 1-3.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8.

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

The Great Golden Sacrifice of the Mahabharata by Maggi Lidchi-Grassi. Writers Workshop, 162/92, Lake Gardens, Kolkata - 45, 2002. 299 pages. Flexiback: Rs. 300.

ON 11th April, 2003, I spent sometime with the Mahabharatan wizard of our times, Professor Purushottama Lal. It was already a crowded experience going up the steps to his Lake Gardens study, with a variety of artefacts that silently bubble with excitement along with the huge Ganesa who sports a mischievous smile. Prof. Lal was perched on his high-backed chair poring over a heavy volume of Hindi essays on the Mahabharata, while a huge, ancient English encyclopaedia occupied the nearby sofa's comfortable handrest with nonchalant ease. It was books, books everywhere. Just one or two words of greetings and then our no-nonsense transcreator kept me enchanted with what he was trying to discover right then:

"Now Prema, who was the father of Adharma? You know Adharma is a character in the epic. Three different fathers are mentioned, Prajapati, Brahma, Varuna..."

The rest of the world along with the Iraq war and the protest marches in Kolkata that made our cars hop, step and jump before we reached this House of Books vanished. Even Prof. Lal's lean, tall frame seemed to have hidden itself. Only his voice was audible as the study became Hastinapura and Indraprastha, and one saw Panchali with the Five Brothers and yet she was also seen with only one. The voice went on: "There is this scholar who has written an essay with plentiful verses which he quotes authoritatively to prove that Panchali had only one husband. These ancient Sanskrit texts can be so challenging. And so fascinating..."

Whereas for Prof. Lal this fascination seems to be a birthright, for Maggi Lidchi-Grassi the fascination with ancient India seems to be a direct gift of Krishna's grace. Transcending the barrier of the birth-place, Maggi has lived in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram for more than three decades and was for several years the Mother's private secretary. These years have brought her in contact with the imperishable eternal in Indian culture. Otherwise, I cannot explain how she has been able to master the Mahabharatan world with such accuracy. Maggi had done hard work, certainly, but it must be admitted that grace has made the years fruitful. Her trilogy on Vyasa's epic is a revelatory work for Indian youth who have lost the continuity of their tradition because of English education. The very same language which divorced them from their past has now become the golden passageway to get back to their roots. You cannot easily get as fascinating a companion for the journey as Maggi Lidchi-Grassi. It is also appropriate that we have Prof. Lal as the publisher and his sketch of India at the time of the Mahabharata to use as a map for the journey.

The earlier parts, *The Battle of Kurukshetra* (1987) and *The Legs of the Tortoise* (1990) had breezed through the main-line of the epic, avoiding the branch stories with care though echoes could be heard in the narrative. *The Great Golden Sacrifice* is only the aftercourses. For, the nerve-tingling moment of Draupadi's disrobement and the

scriptural scenario of Gita-discourse (the legs of the tortoise is a major simile in the *Gita*) have already passed us by in the earlier books. The final book of the trilogy begins with the Aswamedha sacrifice conducted by Yudhishthira and how Arjuna was in charge of the sacrificial horse during its pilgrim-travel. The passions of all the yesterdays have been laid by and now all Arjuna can be passionate about is the possibility of this Aswamedha horse's ceremonial end, this divine beast Durgadasa who has grown close to him as a son to his father. So had the hostage Ikemefuna in the care of the Ibo chief Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe's classic, *Things Fall Apart* (1958).

In effect, we now have a psychological Kurukshetra on hand. Arjuna's conscience will not allow him to be indifferent:

"Krishna had said that the lowest man was the one who killed his faithful dog. What would I be then if I failed to save Durgadasa? Durgadasa was no faithful dog but my guru who had led me through the kingdoms. My heart stood firm in its resolve."

So Maggi opens her magic casements to allow us to have a glimpse of the legendary Aswamedha sacrifice but with the proper modification desired by Arjuna. Somehow, Maggi's "rebellion" does not convince the artist in her who is immersed in Vedic-Puranic sacrificial lore. So, we have Durgadasa offering himself at the sacrificial ground, an event that is connected to Parikshita's miraculous recovery from a serious illness. The marvel about India's sacred past is that it absorbs everything, subsumes the feverish new imagination of Maggi with calm acceptance and presents a new thesis which is nevertheless very much the golden original.

It is time for the various streams to reach out to the sea so the clans get dissolved. Maggi's description of the field where Arjuna searches for familiar faces among the dead Yadavas is one of those terrifying scenes that recur on earth every now and then, thanks to the enormous stupidity of mankind. For the *Mahabharata* has had no real beginning nor will it ever have an end. The epic depicts an eternal present. Without, it is the man-kill-man struggle; within, it is the eternal question of existence posed by Arjuna: "whose fault was it?"

Maggi has seen such action without and has cogitated within; so her image relates well with the Mahabharatan world. Krishna's charioteer Daruka answers Arjuna:

"It was Kala himself.... Even by day he was seen wandering through the streets. He was Time and Death himself. You cannot kill Lord Kala, Prince Arjuna. He was terrible to look at, fierce and bold. His skin was black and tawny. He would peer into the houses. Some of the Vrishni bowmen shot their arrows at him. All in vain."

Does it mean Maggi has written a trilogy that sights no light at the end of the tunnel? Well, who is Kala? Krishna himself, for he had said that He is Time the Destroyer. This destruction is part of the work of the Lord for getting the creation to higher levels of being. It would be a meaningless, stunted creation if everything froze into permanence! One must needs strengthen oneself with such a sunshine on the horizon, however vague. With a firm grip Maggi turns one of these situations into a veiled version of the tragedy of women during the Indian Partition when Daruka speaks of the Aryan ladies rescued by Krishna from Narakasura:

“When Lord Krishna told them that they had nothing more to fear and would be escorted home they refused, saying that they would no longer be accepted. Lord Krishna brought them all back to Dwaraka. Who else would have given refuge to so many who were as good as widows or worse, and of so little use to the community?”

We who have followed what has been reported and written about these tragedies know how the Hindu community (against all that was Vedic and humane) rejected the hapless women. The reality was too deep for tears. Yet it is balm to the wounded-minded to read, albeit in fiction (or something close to a social truth) that “Krishna brought them all back to Dwaraka.”

Indeed one of the charms of Maggi’s style is the way in which she can act as the catalytic agent to reopen many doors leading to the past of the great community. Also echoes of many great passages from classics. Here is a Biblical passage as from Yudhisthira to the populace after Parikshita’s coronation when the citizens are dismayed about the Pandavas going away to the forests for good:

“No, no, my children, rejoice with us. One must not outlive his purpose. There is a time for discipleship, there is a time for kingship, there is a time for moving on, a time for preparation for the final journey. Man in his arrogance forgets the seasons that belong to him. Give us your blessings.”

Now the time has come for the hooks holding the curtain to be loosened, and to hear the gentle swish as the curtain moves majestically from the sides to close the greatest drama that ever was conceived by man’s experience of earth-life. It is Mahaprasthan. The five brothers and Draupadi and the dog move on the Himalayan arena, cold, jagged, unpopulated. The Gandiva is returned to its originating space in the ocean. Arjuna’s mind is a swirl of memories, like the fast moving swing of the curtain. So many happenings, each with a purpose in the long run. And now the partings. Draupadi is the first to go, and her words uttered with a crystalline calm of mind we must cherish: “Everything is grace. All our lives have been grace. One sees it at the end. Not only rain is grace, the snow is grace, the winds are grace.” This is Vedic Madhu vidya!

The curtains close in *The Great Golden Sacrifice* leaving Yudhisthira, Bhima and the dog still continuing their climb upwards. Arjuna has been the story teller in the volume and with him the voice must cease. He has an advaitic experience and then the Light catches him in its net of Light. The *archiraadhi marga* claimed by the Vaishnavites is opened for the Ideal devotee of Krishna even as his last breath goes out:

“I go consenting into the light of Love and look down at the form to which for one whole life I was affixed.

“My heart is silent in the sweetness of the music of great chains of Ohms that carry me towards the shapes that come to meet me. The Ohms tell everything there is to know, and that cannot be told.

“Out of the misty shapes One comes towards me shedding light and holding out a hand of light. My own hand also made of light melts into the hand of Krishna. He leads me into Greater Light that is Pushan waiting for Nara and Narayana.”

Written in a special style that is gently inlaid with Sanskrit terms as well as

translations from the Sanskrit (for instance, Dvaipayana: Island-born), there is a majesty about Maggi's narrative that holds us in thrall. Since she handles even the terrifying scenes boldly and does not give way anywhere to sentimental claptrap, *The Great Golden Sacrifice* is a fitting child of what is according to Sri Aurobindo a "heaven of golden clearness" indited by Vyasa, the "unmixed Olympian". It is logical and moving that Maggi Lidchi-Grassi has dedicated the book with love to the Golden Lights of the New Age, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

PREMA NANDAKUMAR

SELECTED WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO

CD-ROM EDITION

Price — Rs. 600.00

The CD contains the following writings of Sri Aurobindo:

The Life Divine; The Synthesis of Yoga; Essays on the Gita; Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol; Letters on Yoga; The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, War & Self-Determination; Essays on Philosophy and Yoga; Essays Divine and Human; The Renaissance in India (includes Foundations of Indian Culture); The Secret of the Veda; Upanishads.

The CD also contains a life-sketch of Sri Aurobindo.

Specially designed programs for Windows and Macintosh allow you to read the texts on your computer screen and to conduct searches on phrases or combination of words. Searching is possible in a single volume or across multiple volumes at the same time. The search capabilities are powerful and fast. The bookmark system allows you to create and control multiple bookmark files and to develop thematic compilations. Bookmarks can be annotated and saved, exported or printed. Page number references are incorporated for the printed volumes of The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo and for the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. There are context sensitive tips and help files.

The CD also includes PDF files of those books that have come out as part of The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo. When read with Adobe Acrobat Reader, these files show the exact screen-image of the printed books. Adobe Acrobat Reader is included in the CD.

Available at SABDA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry 605 002

Please see "New Publications" for ordering information.