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“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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URVASIE

(Continued from the issue of December 2016)

CANTO IV

Through darkness and immense dim night he went
Mid phantom outlines of approaching trees,
And all the day in green leaves, till he came
To peopled forests and sweet clamorous streams
And marvellous shining meadows where he lived
With Urvasie his love in seasons old.
These like domestic faces waiting were.
He knew each wind-blown tree, each different field;
And could distinguish all the sounding rivers
Each by its own voice and peculiar flow.
Here were the happy shades where they had lain
Inarmed and murmuring, here half-lustrous groves
Still voiceful with a sacred sound at noon,
And these the rivers from her beauty bright.
There straying in field and forest he to each
Familiar spot so full of her would speak,
Pausing by banks and memorable trees.
“O sacred fig-tree, under thee she paused
Musing amid her tresses, and her eyes
Were sweet and grave. And, O delicious shade,
Thou hast experienced brightness from her feet,
O cool and dark green shelterer, perfect place!
And lo! the boughs all ruinous towards earth
With blossoms. Here she lay, her arms thrown back,
Smiling up to me, and the flowers rained
Upon her lips and eyes and bosom bare.
And here a secret opening where she stood
Waiting in narrow twilight; round her all
Was green and secret with a mystic, dewy
Half invitation into emerald worlds.
O river, from thee she moved towards the glade
Breathing and wet and fresh as if a flower
All bare from rain. And thou, great holy glade,

Sawest her face maternal o'er her child."

Then ceasing he would wait and listen, half

Expecting her. But all was silent; only

Perhaps a bird darted bright-winged away,

Or a grey snake slipped through the brilliant leaves.

Thus wandering, thus in every mindful place

Renewing old forgotten scenes that rose,

Gleam after gleam, upon his mind, as stars

Return at night; thus drawing from his heart

Where they lay covered, old sweet incidents

To live before his eyes; thus calling back

Uncertain moods, brief moments of her face,

And transient postures strangely beautiful,

Pleasures, and little happy mists of tears

Heart-freeing, he, materializing dreams,

Upon her very body almost seized.

Always a sense of imperfection slipped

Between him and that passionate success.

Therefore he murmured at last unsatisfied:

"She is not here; though every mystic glade

And sunbright pasture breathe alone of her

And quiver as with her presence, I find not

Her very limbs, her very face; yet dreamed

That here infallibly I should restrain

Her fugitive feet or hold her by the robe.

O once she was the luminous soul of these,

And in her body lived the summer and spring

And seed and blossoming, ripening and fall,

Hiding of Beauty in the wood and glen,

And flashing out into the sunlit fields

All flowers and laughter. All the happy moods

And all the beautiful amorous ways of earth

She was; but they now seem only her dress

Left by her. Therefore, O ye seaward rivers,

O forests, since ye have deceived my hope,

I go from you to dazzling cruel ravines

And find her on inclement mountains pure."

Then northward blown upon a storm of hope

The hero self-discrowned, Pururavus,

Went swiftly up the burning plains and through

The portals of the old Saivaalic hills
 To the inferior heights, nor lingered long,
 Though pulsing with fierce memories, though thrilled
 With shocks of a great passion touching earth;
 But plunged o'er difficult gorge and prone ravine
 And rivers thundering between dim walls,
 Driven by immense desire, until he came
 To dreadful silence of the peaks and trod
 Regions as vast and lonely as his love.
 Then with a confident sublime appeal
 He to the listening summits stretched his hands:
 "O desolate strong Himalaya, great
 Thy peaks alone with heaven and dreadful hush
 In which the Soul of all the world is felt
 Meditating creation! Thou, O mountain,
 My bridal chamber wast. On thee we lay
 With summits towards the moon or with near stars
 Watching us in some wild inhuman vale,
 Thy silence over us like a coverlid
 Or a far avalanche for bridal song.
 Lo, she is fled into your silences!
 I come to you, O mountains, with a heart
 Desolate like you, like you snow-swept, and stretch
 Towards your solemn summits kindred hands.
 Give back to me, O mountains, give her back."
 He ceased and Himalaya bent towards him, white.
 The mountains seemed to recognize a soul
 Immense as they, reaching as they to heaven
 And capable of infinite solitude.
 Long he, in meditation deep immersed,
 strove to dissolve his soul among the hills
 Into the thought of Urvasie. The snow
 Stole down from heaven and touched his cheek and hair,
 The storm-blast from the peaks leaped down and smote
 But woke him not, and the white drops in vain
 Froze in his locks or crusted all his garb.
 For he lived only with his passionate heart.
 But as the months with slow unnoticed tread
 Passed o'er the hills nor brought sweet change of spring
 Nor autumn wet with dew, a voice at last
 Moved from far heavens, other than our sky.

And he arose as one impelled and came
 Past the supreme great ridges northward, came
 Into the wonderful land far up the world
 Dim-looming, where the Northern Kurus dwell,
 The ancients of the world, invisible,
 Among forgotten mists. Through mists he moved
 Feeling a sense of unseen cities, hearing
 No sound, nor seeing face, but conscious ever
 Of an immense traditional life
 Throbbing round him and dreams historical.
 For as he went, old kingly memories surged,
 And with vast forward faces driving came
 Origins and stabilities and empires,
 Huge passionate creations, impulses
 National realizing themselves in stone.
 Lastly with rolling of the mists afar
 He saw beneath him the primeval rocks
 Plunge down into the valley, and upsoar
 To light wide thoughtful domes and measureless
 Ramparts, and mid them in a glory walk
 The ancients of the world with eyes august.
 Next towards the sun he looked and saw enthroned
 Upon the summit one whose regal hair
 Crowned her, and purple in waves down to her feet
 Flowed, Indira, the goddess, Ocean's child,
 Giver of empire who all beauty keeps
 Between her hands, all glory, all wealth, all power.
 Severe and beautiful she leaned her face.
 "What passion, Ilian Pururavus,
 Has led thee here to my great capital
 And ancient men in the forgotten mists,
 The fathers of the Aryan race? Of glory
 Enamoured hast thou come, or for thy people
 Empire soliciting? But other beauty
 Is on thy brow and light no longer mine.
 Yet not for self wast thou of virgin born,
 Perfect, and the aerial paths of gods
 Permitted to thy steps; nor for themselves,
 But to the voice of Vedic litanies,
 Sacredly placed are the dread crowns of Kings
 For bright felicities and cruel toils.

And thou, O Ilian Pururavus,
 For passion dost thou leave thy strenuous grandeurs,
 A nation's destinies, and hast not feared
 The sad inferior Ganges lapsing down
 With mournful rumour through the shades of Hell?"
 Then with calm eyes the hero Ilian:
 "O Goddess, patroness of Aryasthan,
 Lover of banyan and of lotus, I
 Not from the fear of Hell or hope of Heaven
 Do good or ill. Reigning I reigned o'er self,
 And with a kingly soul did kingly deeds.
 Now driven by a termless wide desire
 I wander over snow and countries vague."
 And like a viol Luxmie answered him:
 "Sprung of the moon, thy grandsire's fault in thee
 Yet lives; but since thy love is singly great,
 Doubtless thou shalt possess thy whole desire.
 Yet hast thou maimed the future and discrowned
 The Aryan people; for though Ila's sons,
 In Hustina, the city of elephants,
 And Indraprutha, future towns, shall rule
 Drawing my peoples to one sceptre, at last
 Their power by excess of beauty falls, —
 Thy sin, Pururavus — of beauty and love:
 And this the land divine to impure grasp
 Yields of barbarians from the outer shores."
 She ceased and the oblivious mists rolled down.
 But the strong hero uncrowned, Pururavus,
 Eastward, all dreaming with his great desire,
 Wandered as when a man in sleep arises,
 And goes into the night, and under stars
 Through the black spaces moves, nor knows his feet
 Nor where they guide him, but dread unseen power
 Walks by him and leads his unerring steps
 To some weird forest or gaunt mountain-side;
 There he awakes, a horror in his soul,
 And shudders alien amid places strange.
 So wandered, driven by an unknown power,
 Pururavus. Over hushed dreadful hills
 And snows more breathless to the quiet banks
 Of a wide lake mid rocks and bending woods

He came, and saw calm mountains over it,
 And knew in his awed heart the hill of God,
 Coilas, and Mainaac with its summits gold.
 Awed he in heart, yet with a quicker stride
 He moved and eyes of silent joy, like one
 Who coming from long travel, sees the old
 Village and children's faces at the doors.
 In a wild faery place where mountain streams
 Glimmer from the dim rocks and meet the lake
 Amid a wrestle of tangled trees and heaped
 Moss-grown disordered stones, and all the water
 Is hidden with its lotuses and sways
 Shimmering between leaves or strains through bloom,
 She sat, the mother of the Aryans, white
 With a sublime pallor beneath her hair.
 Musing, with wide creative brows, she sat
 In a slight lovely dress fastened with flowers,
 All heaped with her large tresses. Golden swans
 Preened in the waters by her dipping feet.
 One hand propped her fair marble cheek, the other
 The mystic lotus hardly held. Seeing her
 Pururavus bent to her and adored.
 And she looked up and musing towards him
 Said low: "O son, I knew thy steps afar.
 Of me thou wast; for as I suffered rapture,
 Invaded by the sea of images
 Breaking upon me from all winds, and saw
 Indus and Ganges with prophetic mind,
 A virginal impulse gleamed from my bosom
 And on the earth took beauty and form. I saw
 Thee from that glory issue and rejoiced.
 But now thou comest quite discrowned. From me,
 O son, thou hadst the impulse beautiful
 That made thy soul all colour. For I strive
 Towards the insufferable heights and flash
 With haloes of that sacred light intense.
 But lo! the spring and all its flowers, and lo!
 How bright the Soma juice. What golden joys,
 What living passions, what immortal tears!
 I lift the veil that hides the Immortal — Ah!
 My lids faint. Ah! the veil was lovelier.

My flowers wither in that height, my swan
 Spreads not his wings felicitous so far.
 O one day I shall turn from the great verse
 And marble aspiration to sing sweetly
 Of lovers and the poms of wealth and wine
 And warm delights and warm desires and earth.
 O mine own son, Pururavus, I fall
 By thy vast failure from my dazzling skies.”
 And Ila’s son made answer, “O white-armed,
 O mother of the Aryans, of my life
 Creatress! fates colossal overrule.
 But lo! I wander like a wave, nor find
 Limit to the desire that wastes my soul.”
 Then with a sweet immortal smile the mother
 Gave to him in the hollow of her hand
 Wonderful water of the lake. He drank,
 And understood infinity, and saw
 Time like a snake coiling among the stars;
 And earth he saw, and mortal nights and days
 Grew to him moments, and his limbs became
 Undying and his thoughts as marble endured.
 Then to the hero deified the goddess,
 “O strong immortal, now pursue thy joy:
 Yet first rise up the peaks of Coilas; there
 The Mighty Mother sits, whose sovran voice
 Shall ratify to thee thy future fair,”
 Said and caressed his brow with lips divine.
 And bright Pururavus rose up the hill
 Towards the breathless summit. Thence, enshrined
 In deep concealing glories, came a voice,
 And clearer he discerned as one whose eyes,
 Long cognizant of darkness, coming forth,
 Grow gradually habituated to light,
 The calm compassionate face, the heaven-wide brow,
 And the robust great limbs that bear the world.
 Prophetic and deep her voice came down:
 “Thou then hast failed, bright soul; but God blames not
 Nor punishes. Impartially he deals
 To every strenuous spirit its chosen reward.
 And since no work, however maimed, no smallest
 Energy added to the mighty sum

Of action fails of its exact result,
 Empire shall in thy line and forceful brain
 Persist, the boundless impulse towards rule
 Of grandiose souls perpetually recur,
 And minds immense and personalities
 With battle and with passion and with storm
 Shall burn through Aryan history, the speech
 Of ages. In thy line the Spirit Supreme
 Shall bound existence with one human form;
 In Mathura and ocean Dwarca Man
 Earthly perfectibility of soul
 Example: son of thy line and eulogist,
 The vast clear poet of the golden verse,
 Whose song shall be as wide as is the world.
 But all by huge self-will or violence marred
 Of passionate uncontrol; if pure, their work
 By touch of later turbulent hands unsphered
 Or fames by legend stained. Upon my heights
 Breathing God's air, strong as the sky and pure,
 Dwell only Ixvaacou's children; destined theirs
 Heaven's perfect praise, earth's sole unequalled song.
 But thou, O Ila's son, take up thy joy.
 For thee in sweet Gundhurva world eternal
 Rapture and clasp unloosed of Urvasie,
 Till the long night when God asleep shall fall."

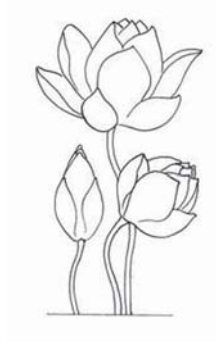
Ceased the great voice and strong Pururavus
 Glad of his high reward, however dearly
 Purchased, purchased with infinite downfall,
 With footing now divine went up the world.
 Mid regions sweet and peaks of milk-white snow
 And lovely corners and delicious lakes,
 He saw a road all sunlight and the gates
 Of the Gundhurvas' home. O never ship
 From Ocean into Ocean erring knew
 Such joy through all its patient sails at sight
 Of final haven near as the tried heart
 Of earth's successful son at that fair goal.
 Towards the gates he hastened, and one bright
 With angel face who at those portals stood
 Cried down, "We wait for thee, Pururavus."

Then to his hearing musical, the hinges
 Called; he beheld the subtle faces look
 Down on him and the crowd of luminous forms,
 And entered to immortal sound of lyres.
 Up through the streets a silver cry went on
 Before him of high instruments. From all
 The winds the marvellous musicians pressed
 To welcome that immortal lover. One
 Whose pure-limned brows aerial wore by right
 Faery authority, stood from the crowd.
 "O Ila's son, far-famed Pururavus,
 Destined to joys by mortals all unhopéd!
 Move to thy sacred glories as a star
 Into its destined place, shine over us
 Here greatest as upon thy greener earth."
 They through the thrilling regions musical
 Led him and marvelled at him and praised with song
 His fair sublimity of form and brow
 And warlike limbs and grace heroical.
 He heeded not, for all his soul was straining
 With expectation of a near delight.
 His eyes that sought her ever, beheld a wall
 Of mighty trees and, where they arched to part,
 Those two of all their sisters brightest rise,
 One blithe as is a happy brook, the other
 With her grave smile; and each took a strong hand
 In her soft clasp, and led him to a place
 Distinct mid faery-leaved ethereal trees
 And magic banks and sweet low curves of hills,
 And over all the sunlight like a charm.
 There by a sounding river downward thrown
 From under low green-curtaining boughs was she.
 Mute she arose and with wide quiet eyes
 Came towards him. In their immortal looks
 Was a deep feeling too august for joy,
 The sense that all eternity must follow
 One perfect moment. Then that comrade bright
 With slow grave smile, "O after absence wide
 Who meet and shall not sunder any more
 Till slumber of the Supreme, strong be your souls
 To bear unchanging rapture; strong you were

By patience to compel unwilling Gods.”
And they were left alone in that clear world.
Then all his soul towards her leaning, took
Pururavus into his clasp and felt,
Seriously glad, the golden bosom on his
Of Urvsie, his love; so pressing back
The longed-for sacred face, lingering he kissed.
Then Love in his sweet heavens was satisfied.
But far below through silent mighty space
The green and strenuous earth abandoned rolled.

SRI AUROBINDO

(Collected Poems, CWSA, Vol. 2, pp. 99-109)



EXPERIENCES AND REALISATIONS IN THE INTEGRAL YOGA

(Continued from the issue of December 2016)

PART FOUR THE FUNDAMENTAL REALISATIONS OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA

SECTION TWO THE PSYCHIC OPENING, EMERGENCE AND TRANSFORMATION

Chapter Four Experiences Associated with the Psychic

The Psychic Touch or Influence

The psychic influence in the ordinary life of man tries to bring the truth of the soul into human action, human thought and feelings. When it is spiritualised, it tries to turn the human towards the Divine.

*

These are movements of the vital under the psychic touch. If there is the firm psychic foundation underneath, it will be felt as an underlying quietude and confidence or a fixed spirit of surrender.

*

The demands were there already — when the psychic touches there is an intensification of love but the lower vital mixes up the love with all sorts of demands.

*

The soft feeling [*in the head and below*] must be that of the psychic being spreading itself through the higher centres. Faithfulness is one of the first characteristics of the psychic being.

The Psychic Condition

What you describe shows that things are going on very well within, it is the psychic condition that is being gradually prepared as a basis for the sadhana. The special experiences of the burning of the psychic fire, descent of peace etc. are always intermittent until this basis is ready, but they help it to grow.

*

It is this freedom from all ties and entire and sole turning to the Mother that is the deepest psychic condition. It is coming to you as touches of that condition from the psychic, therefore there is not yet the permanent state; but these touches prepare the future permanence.

The fire which you feel in the chest must surely be the psychic fire, for it is there that is the seat of the psychic and the fact that it burns strongly when you sit alone points to the same thing.

The Psychic Fire

The psychic fire is the fire of aspiration, purification and tapasya which comes from the psychic being. It is not the psychic being, but a power of the psychic being.

*

The psychic being is a Purusha, not a flame — the psychic fire is not the being, it is something proper to it.

*

It [*a flame in the heart as big as a man's thumb*] is the psychic fire kindled in the heart. The psychic being in the heart is described by the Upanishads as of the size of a thumb, *aṅguṣṭha-mātraḥ puruṣo'ntarātmā* — it may manifest first as this psychic flame.

*

The fire [*one feels within*] is always the fire of sacrifice and self-offering, the fire of aspiration or the fire of tapasya.

*

That the constant fire of aspiration has to be lit is true; but this fire is the psychic fire and it is lit or burns up and increases as the psychic grows within and for the psychic to grow quietude is needful. That is why we have been working for the psychic to grow in you and for the quietude also to grow and that is why we want you to wait on the Mother's working in full patience and confidence. To be always remembering the Mother and always with the equal unwavering fire within means itself a considerable progress in sadhana and it must be prepared by various means such as the experiences you have been having. Keep steadfast in confidence therefore and all that has to be done will be done.

*

The experience of the Fire is quite correct, — it is the great fire of purification and concentration (i.e. gathering up of the consciousness and turning it fixedly towards the Divine), the psychic fire which all must pass through so as to reach the Mother permanently and completely.

*

It is egoistic if the ego thinks that it is the psychic fire. If the consciousness feels identified with the psychic fire and becomes conscious that the fire can burn out all impurities, then it is a true experience.

*

The central fire is in the psychic being, but it can be lit in all the parts of the being.

The Psychic Fire and Some Inner Visions

The fire you saw was the fire of the psychic being, the fire of aspiration and tapasya, burning under the earth, that is to say, in the subconscious. It opens the earth, the physical consciousness to the Divine Light. Moonlight may symbolise the spiritual consciousness and the room your own personal being or individual physical consciousness. With these clues it will be easy for you to understand the significance of your experience.

*

The fire you saw was again the psychic fire of purification and tapasya and the garland was the offering it was preparing for the Mother, the psychic and divine

consciousness (pearl and diamond) in the sadhak. The beautiful place was also probably a symbol of the psychic and the lotus indicated the opening of the psychic consciousness.

The twelve-petalled lotus and the twelve-rayed sun indicate the same thing, the complete Truth-consciousness of the Divine Mother. It was rising but only half risen. The red colour was the sign of Power.

*

All these things are signs, now often repeated, of the process that is going on. The heat is the result of the psychic fire burning away obstacles — the coolness and complete quietude come as a result. The tendency to sleep is really a tendency to go inside into the depths of the inner consciousness due to the pressure for the change.

The wideness of light you saw was the wideness of the true consciousness liberated from the narrow limits of the human mind, human vital, human body consciousness. It is true that the mind is narrow, not only yours, but all human minds even the most developed, — compared with the wideness of the true consciousness which has no limits. It is precisely this wideness which will come by the sadhana and which these processes are preparing. The rain of flowers means a plenty of the psychic qualities and movements and the white flower of mental victory indicates the step towards it which is now being led up to — the victory in the mind of the inner light over the outer ignorance.

*

The difficulty in giving up habits is common to the physical mind in all people; nothing is more difficult to it. The fire you feel must be what we call Agni, the fire of purification acting on this physical mind to change it.

The bridge you saw was the symbol of transition from the ordinary to the spiritual consciousness; the wide plain was a symbol of the large peace and silence which comes with the spiritual consciousness when one rests in the Divine.

The perfumes you felt were true perfumes but not of the physical world. This body of flesh and blood is not the whole of ourselves; there is unseen by the eyes a subtle body also and one becomes aware of it when the inner consciousness opens. It was from deep within there that the perfumes came, perfumes of purity, of love and surrender (rose) etc. It is there deep within that the psychic being dwells and it is there that you are trying to go when the inward-going impulse or pressure comes; it is why you felt more and more peaceful, because you were going deeper and deeper into the psychic from which these fragrances came.

*

The heat in the body is due simply to the working that is going on within; it is what is called the heat of tapas — there is nothing unhealthy in it as in the heat of fever. The beautiful scent that you get is a subtle or psychic fragrance, just as the vision of the lotus is a subtle or psychic sight.

The psychic being is often seen or felt within in the form of a child, — it is perhaps that that you are feeling within you; it is calling for a complete sincerity, but sincerity is used here in the sense of opening to nothing but the divine influences and impulses. It does not mean that you have committed any fault, but only that the psychic in you wants you to be completely under its sole government, so that all in you may be for the Divine only. The feeling of sorrow is probably a response of the vital in you to this demand — thinking that it must have erred; but such a feeling of sorrow is not necessary. The vital can quietly wait for the psychic working to do all that is needed in due time.

Agni

It is the Agni fire that you feel. Agni is at once a fire of aspiration, a fire of purification, a fire of tapasya, a fire of transformation.

*

Agni in the form of an aspiration full of concentrated calm and surrender is certainly the first thing to be lighted in the heart.

*

It [*a feeling of warmth in the heart*] comes sometimes from the approach of Agni fire, sometimes from that of love or Ananda, sometimes simply from a touch of the Force.

*

The fear of the fire you saw is misplaced, for it is the fire of the purifying Agni that you see burning and that does no harm; it only clears away what should not be there. That is why it is followed by a lightness or an emptiness. You have only to be quiet and let the fire do its work. The heat one feels at that time is not the heat of fever or any other morbid heat. Afterwards, as you felt, all becomes cool and light.

*

The burning is sometimes the heat of a difficulty and resistance, but then it disturbs. When it does not disturb, it is usually the purifying fire of Agni.

*

It may be pressure of the Agni fire that you feel [*around the head and shoulders*] as the heat — especially if there is something that has to be purified or a difficulty burned away. The cool spray on the other hand comes as an accompaniment of the sense of purification.

*

The Fire [*felt in the forehead and eyes*] is the power of the Yoga — Yogashakti.

*

That kind of pull [*towards the Divine*] is not the same thing as the lighting of Agni. Agni meets men who are not leading the religious life at all but who have Agni burning in them and are intent to keep the fire ablaze — scientists, artists etc. who have the intense will of perfecting what they do and all their central energies are thrown into this flame. The same intense fire should burn in the Yoga.

*

It is the Mother's Force that works in the Agni.

Agni and the Psychic Fire

If it is in the heart it may be psychic fire — it is possibly not the joy that created the fire, but the decision you had come to to believe in the Mother's action whether the mind understood or not. Such an attitude encourages the opening of the psychic and would therefore bring at once the psychic joy and the kindling of Agni in the psychic centre.

*

It is some association in the mind probably coupling Agni with the psychic. Of course the individual Agni fire has its starting-point in the psychic, but the mere burning of the fire does not show that the psychic is coming forward.

When it burns in the heart, it is the fire *in* the psychic. The psychic fire is

individual and takes usually the form of a fire of aspiration or personal tapasya. This Fire is universal and it came from above.

*

The psychic fire may burn in the vital. It all depends on whether it is the fire of the general Force that comes from above or the fire of your soul's aspiration and tapasya.

*

All that [*fire in the heart and elsewhere*] is simply the burning of the Agni in various parts of the being. It prepares it for transformation. But the coming forward of the psychic is another matter and its signs are psychological.

*

Agni is the psychic fire — it is not the Divine Presence. If the psychic is active and open, the Presence may be felt — it is not necessary for that that it should be in the front. Also it may be in the front, but the Divine Presence in the heart may not be felt as yet, there may be only the aspiration, bhakti, self-giving. There is no fixed law about these things — it develops differently in different natures.

Psychic Joy

It [*a feeling of joy, intense but calm and pure*] is not mere vital excitement or heightened nerve sensation, it is an attempt of the psychic to emerge from behind the veil and what you feel is the psychic joy. (The psychic is seated behind the heart, behind the emotional centre.) But when this psychic joy comes, it communicates itself to the mind, the vital and the body. You have then to be careful that no mixture comes in from the vital and the physical — such as the sex impulse. The mind, the vital, the physical must receive the psychic Ananda and make it their own, but not bring in their own deviations or any degraded mixture into it.

*

There is a dynamic joy as well as the self-existent joy in the soul itself.

Psychic Sorrow

There is a psychic sorrow which usually comes when the soul feels how strong is the resistance in the world and how much the Forces in it rage against the Mother.

*

It is the soul, the psychic being in you, behind the heart, that is awake and wants to concentrate the mind on the Divine. It is the nature of the mind to go out to other things, but now when it does that, there is the unease in the heart, the psychic sorrow because the heart feels at once that this is wrong and the head also aches because of the resistance to the Divine Force at work. This is a thing that often happens at an early stage, after the opening of the consciousness to the sadhana.

*

The vital took it up perhaps and gave it a more vehement and turbid expression — otherwise there is nothing disturbing in a psychic sorrow.

*

The psychic sadness is of a purifying and not a depressing kind.

*

There are many things that are spiritual that are not the essence of the higher consciousness. All that tends towards the transformation and helps to prepare it is spiritual. Psychic sorrow is a spiritual movement, but sorrow is not part of the essential character of the higher consciousness. Resignation, the ego's submission to the divine will, is a spiritual movement, but the higher consciousness has no need of resignation and a submitted ego is not a part of its essence, for it has no ego.

Psychic Tears or Weeping

Yes, there is a psychic sorrow of that kind [*tears of longing for the Mother*] — but psychic tears need not be sorrowful, there are also tears of emotion and joy.

*

The tears probably come from the inner psychic being (behind the heart) which is touched in this state of quietness and peace. It is the sign of an aspiration and devotion in the soul which is trying to come to the surface. If the psychic being can come to the surface and a harmony be established in the nature, all of it being turned towards the Divine, this kind of expression will cease.

*

The weeping that comes to you comes from the psychic being — it is the tears of psychic yearning and aspiration. At a particular stage it so comes to many and is a very good sign. The other feelings and tendencies are also from the same source. They show that the psychic is exercising a strong influence and preparing, as we say, to come in front. Accept the movement and let it fulfil itself.

*

A weeping that comes with the feeling you speak of is the sign of a psychic sorrow — for it translates as an aspiration of the psychic being. But depression and hopelessness ought not to come. You should rather cling to the faith that since there is a true aspiration in you — and of that there can be no doubt — it is sure to be fulfilled, whatever the difficulties of the external nature. You must recover in that faith the inner peace and quietude while at the same time keeping the clear insight into what has to be done and the steady aspiration for the inner and outer change.

*

It is quite correct that [*ordinary*] weeping brings in the forces that should be kept outside — for the weeping is a giving way of the inner control and an expression of vital reaction and ego. It is only the psychic weeping that does not open the door to these forces — but that weeping is without affliction, tears of bhakti, spiritual emotion or Ananda.

Your experience was a very beautiful one — the inner being realises by such experiences that which must be established in the waking state as the foundation of the spiritual consciousness and spiritual life.

Psychic Yearning

The yearning of the heart may be there but it should not disturb the peace.

*

I think it is better to stop it [*the yearning of the heart*] for the present. It is very possible that the vital is taking advantage of it to create dissatisfaction with the progress of the sadhana. The psychic yearning brings no reaction of impatience, dissatisfaction or disturbance.

*

Your new attitude towards food and outward things is the true attitude, the psychic attitude and shows that the psychic is already controlling the vital physical as well as the other parts of the vital nature.

As for the heart, the movement of longing for the Divine, weeping, sorrowing, yearning is not essential in this Yoga. A strong aspiration there must be, an intense longing there may very well be, an ardent love and will for union; but there need be no sorrow or disturbance. The quiet and silence you feel in your heart is the result of the pressure of the higher consciousness to come down. That always brings a quietude in mind and heart and as it descends a great peace and silence. In the silent heart and mind, there must be the true attitude and thus you have the feeling that you are the Mother's child, the faith and the will to be united with her. Along with that there may be an aspiration or silent expectation of what is to come. That also you seem to have. All therefore is well.

Psychic Intensity

I have read your letter of explanation of the "strange" ideas. I still maintain that your views on the lack of all intensity in the psychic things or in the spiritual or their inferiority to vital pleasure *are* strange, because they contradict all psychic and spiritual experience except that of the mere vairagis and make the choice of the spiritual life itself (Nirvana seekers excepted) quite inexplicable. Your arguments are not convincing. What have Ramakrishna's excesses or the fluctuations of Vivekananda's vital receptivity between exaltation and depression or Chaitanya's *viraha* to do with the question in issue? These are difficulties of the body and the vital. The question was of the intensity of *psychic* and *pure spiritual* experience — psychic devotion and love, peace, Ananda. You cannot base a general denial on your own particular experience, because you have only the initial experiences of calm etc. and have *not* got to the intensities as I have done and others before me have done. It is only when one lives centrally in the psychic with the mental, vital and physical as provinces held under its rule that one knows what psychic intensity is. It is only when the higher consciousness comes down in its floods that one can know what can be the intensities or ecstasies of spiritual peace, light, love, bliss. You can say, "I have not yet had these intensities", but you cannot say in a sweeping

way, “They do not exist and I shall never have them”, or “They are only tepid quiet little things, soothing and more capable of lasting, but not intense and glorious like the vital joys and pleasures.” Do not cling to these notions born of the past limitations, but keep yourself open and plastic to greater possibilities in the future.

My own experience is *not* limited to a radiant peace; I know very well what ecstasy and Ananda are from the Brahmananda down to the *śārīra ānanda*, and can experience them at any time. But of these things I prefer to speak only when my work is done — for it is in a transformed consciousness here and not only above where the Ananda always exists that I seek their base of permanence.

The Psychic and Uneasiness

The psychic is not uneasy, it makes you uneasy when you do the wrong thing.

*

The uneasiness created by the psychic is not depression — it is in the nature of a rejection of the wrong movement.

If the uneasiness causes depression or vital dissatisfaction, it is not psychic.

*

The uneasiness is simply a reminder to you to be more vigilant in future.

*

The unhappiness is not necessary or inevitable in the sadhana, but it comes because your inner nature feels the touch of the Divine Presence indispensable to it and uneasy when it does not feel it. To feel it always a certain constant detachment within allowing you to remain within and do everything from within is necessary. This can more easily be done in quiet occupations and quiet contacts. For it is quietness and inwardness that enable one to feel the Presence.

SRI AUROBINDO

(Letters on Yoga – III, CWSA, Vol. 30, pp. 367-79)

‘THY LOVE IS VASTER THAN THE UNIVERSE AND MORE LASTING THAN ALL THE AGES’

May 23, 1914

O Lord, Thou of whom I would be constantly conscious and whom I would realise in the smallest cells of my being, Thou whom I would know as myself and see manifested in all things, Thou who art the sole reality, the sole cause and aim of existence, grant that my love for Thee may grow ever greater so that I may be all love, Thy love itself, and that, being Thy love, I may unite integrally with Thee. May this love grow more and more intense, complete, luminous, powerful; may this love become an irresistible urge towards Thee, the invincible means of manifesting Thee. May everything in this being become pure, profound, disinterested, divine love — from the unfathomable depths to the outermost substance. May the God with form who manifests in this aggregate be entirely moulded from Thy complete and sublime love, the love which is at once the source and the realisation of all knowledge; may thought be clarified, organised, enlightened, transformed by Thy love; may all the life-forces, solely impregnated by Thy love and moulded from it, draw from it irresistible purity and constant energy, power and rectitude. May this weakened intermediary being take advantage of its weakness to reconstitute itself with elements entirely moulded from Thy love, and may this body, now a burning brazier, radiate Thy divine, impersonal, sublime and calm love from every pore. . . . May the brain be reconstituted by Thy love. Lastly, may Thy love overflow, flood, penetrate, transfigure, regenerate, animate all things, with the power, the splendour, the sweetness and force which are its very own. In Thy love is peace, in Thy love is joy, in Thy love is Thy servitor’s sovereign lever of work.

Thy love is vaster than the universe and more lasting than all the ages; it is infinite, eternal, it is Thyself. And it is Thyself I want to be and that I am, for such is Thy law, such is Thy will.

THE MOTHER

(Prayers and Meditations, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 1, pp. 153-54)

**“NOCTURNE” —
CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO**

Sri Aurobindo —

Here’s a sonnet-span in blank verse. Have the lines a suggestive coherence of any value? I should like you to judge in some critical detail, if possible, their substance, language and rhythm. Do they all come from the same plane?

NOCTURNE

My words would bring through atmospheres of calm
The new moon’s smile that breathes unto the heart
Secrets of love lost in clay-captured kisses:
The evening star like some great bird whose fury
Dies to a cold miraculous sudden pause —
Wings buoyed by sheer forgetfulness of earth:
And oh that dream-nostalgia in the air,
The sky-remembrance of dew-perfumed dust! . . .

I would disclose the one ethereal Beauty
Calling across lone fires and fragrances —
But vain were music, vain all light of rapture
That drew not sense a pathway to strange sleep,
Nor woke a passion billowing through the body
In search of realms no eye-boats ever reached!

Sri Aurobindo’s comment:

Very fine indeed. This time you have got the blank verse all right, owing to the weight and power you have been able to put into the movement as well as the thought and language. Nothing to criticise. The lines give a quite coherent development and there is a single aspiration throughout. It has almost the full sonnet effect in spite of the absence of the rhyme structure.

13 October 1935

[Version from *The Secret Splendour — Collected Poems of K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran)*,
1993, page 191:]

NOCTURNE

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 In search of realms no eye-boats ever reached.

AMAL KIRAN
 (K. D. SETHNA)

SRI AUROBINDO: LIFE AND TIMES OF THE MAHAYOGI

(Continued from the issue of December 2016)

Chapter: LVIII

Deciding the Destiny of the Dangerous: Bright Brains at Work (1)

I found that he was vastly read in Bengali literature though he was halting in speaking Bengali. He had a will of his own on which he broke many opponents; but he was sensitive of the susceptibilities of his fellow-workers. On one occasion he waited for me for about an hour to suggest that I should change a word in my article written for the next morning; and when I told him that he should have changed the word without waiting for my consent, he smiled and said, “But I could not do that!”

Hemendra Prasad Ghose¹

While the colonial rulers, at the topmost level, were carrying on anxious exchange among themselves about what they ought to do with Sri Aurobindo, the biggest danger to the empire, the latter lived his life at several levels that would appear at odds with one another, but himself a picture of calm and harmony.

It was amazing that the demand of two weekly journals — he was practically the sole contributor to both for all the articles that mattered — could not command any greater attention from him than his duty as a devoted nephew at his uncle’s household. Recollects Basanti Devi, his niece:

Aurodada is engrossed in writing for the *Karmayogin* and the *Dharma*. Somebody is waiting to carry the articles to the press. Suddenly my mother would appear there and say, “Auro, I must go for a bath in the Ganga. Come, give me company.” At once Aurodada would lay down his pen — sometimes even when he was at the middle of a sentence — and get up and quietly follow my mother. Such was his obedience. I have never seen another example of such an attitude.²

Apart from activities of such varied nature performed in a spirit of equanimity, the fact that he could shift his concentration from exciting political and social issues of the time to an intellectual or academic or spiritual plane and write essays like ‘The National Value of Art’, ‘Fate and Freewill’ or ‘A System of National Education’

in the *Karmayogin* and ‘Gita Rahasya’ in Bengali for the *Dharma* at the same time, speaks of a mind-boggling genius.

Much of his time was spent in moving from one place to another, often by walking and sometimes by not so speedy means of transport as the tram-car for which one must wait, or a horse-carriage which must be summoned from its depot. Public meetings and group discussions on organisational matters were not infrequent either.

We have read earlier, in the memoirs of Nolini Kanta Gupta, about his tour of Eastern Bengal and Assam, prior to the famous Hooghly Conference. The Bengali weekly *Dharma* too had been launched on the eve of that conference, on the 23rd of November 1909. Here is a first-hand account of that venture and its backdrop, from the autobiography of Upendra Chandra (more or less a literal translation from the Bengali), a young man who worked for the journals:

When the *Karmayogin* had been well-received and was well-established, one day Amarendranath Chattopadhyay and Bagha Jatin, along with a few of their friends, paid a visit to our office. While they discussed with Girija Babu about the possibility of bringing out a Bengali edition of the *Karmayogin*, Sri Aurobindo arrived. They had a private discussion on the proposal and soon thereafter the Bengali *Karmayogin* was published from Howrah. We read it with great interest the moment its copy reached our office. When I went into the tram to sell our magazine, I saw many of the passengers holding copies of the Bengali edition. I felt a bit depressed. . . .

We were passing our days with some anxiety regarding our English paper when, in its last issue of July 1909 was published Sri Aurobindo’s “An Open Letter to My Countrymen”. The article created an unprecedented stir in the heart of the nation and all the copies of that issue were sold out in no time. The issue was reprinted; even then the demand could not be satisfied. Hence we brought out this single article as a booklet, entitled, “Aurobindo Ghose’s Political Will and Testament”. The publication brought us a handsome profit.

In the afternoons Sri Aurobindo used to walk down from College Square to our office at Shyambazar Street, accompanied by Ramchandra Majumdar. Afraid of familiar people and children coming closer to him and touching his feet he came through lanes. Sometimes he came by a 2nd class horse carriage escorted by Dharam Singh and I would go out and pay the coachman Annas twelve.³ One day I pleaded with Girija Babu to persuade Sri Aurobindo to launch a Bengali journal. Girija Babu told Sri Aurobindo, “Upen strongly urges with us to bring out a journal in Bengali. He feels sure that it would sell more than the English one.”

Sri Aurobindo looked at me and then spoke to Girija Babu in English, “But I cannot write Bengali well! However, I can try. At the moment I am

writing *Kara Kahini* in Bengali. I will send a part of it to you. If that kind of language would do, we can consider bringing out a paper in Bengali.”

Delighted, Girija Babu said, “Please go on writing. If there is anything inscrutable in your writing, I can tackle it at the proof-reading stage.”

Next day Sri Aurobindo sent a few pages of the *Kara Kahini* through Dharam Singh. With irrepressible eagerness I snatched the bundle from Dharam Singh’s hand and tried to read the script. Alas, Sri Aurobindo’s Bengali handwriting was no different from that of his English. I could not read a word. But Girija Babu went on reading aloud fluently. We were in ecstasy at listening to Sri Aurobindo’s Bengali.

The very next day, on Sri Aurobindo reaching our office, the decision was taken to publish a Bengali journal. Discussion regarding its name, size and the picture on the cover page went on for some time and Sri Aurobindo named it *Dharma* and instructed us to print the picture of a lotus in full bloom on its cover page with *Yada yada hi dharmasya* etc. below it . . .

The *Karmayogin*’s work was on the increase . . . Since there was not enough space here another house close by was taken on rent. New equipment for the printing of *Dharma* and everything else were promptly arranged through Girija Babu endowed with exceptional organisational capacity . . .

The journal was priced an Anna a copy. All were surprised that Sri Aurobindo wrote articles in Bengali! He had mastered the language in the shortest possible time. His articles were rich not only for their depth, but also for the charm and beauty of the language. Publication of the *Dharma* created a pleasant sensation in the public and it circulated very well, but not as much as our English journal, for the latter was in great demand outside Bengal, particularly in Madras.⁴

This was the period when our Shyamapukur office was frequented, along with Sri Aurobindo, by Ram Babu, Nolini Gupta, Bijay Nag, Suresh Chakravarty and others. Sister Nivedita and a few others too dropped in regularly.⁵

We wonder how many of even those very close to Sri Aurobindo knew that his efforts at uniting the scattered revolutionary groups were going on most secretly, amidst all his other preoccupations. Pulin Bihari Das, the most prominent and powerful leader of the Anushilan Samiti in Eastern Bengal, was out of jail in January 1910 when he was informed, in great confidence, that “Aurobindo Babu wished to see you.” The same messenger met him again at the appointed time. Writes Pulin Bihari (translated from the Bengali):

As arranged earlier, at first we travelled by tram; then we covered some distance through a lane by foot. A horse-carriage was waiting for us at an appointed spot. We crossed another lane by the carriage. We then got into another tram.

Once again we entered a lane. A motor car waited for us. After some distance once again we walked through a lane and at last we reached a solitary house and met Aurobindo Babu. He had come out of Alipore Jail shortly before that.

Said Aurobindo Babu, "I have resolved to bring together all the revolutionary groups and function unitedly. Barring Satish Basu of Calcutta Anushilan Samiti all the others have agreed to the proposal. What is your opinion?"

"If the matters are arranged in a way so that the work could proceed following a well-disciplined method, I have no reservation about it," I replied.

"In that case once you come back from Dacca we will have a discussion in detail."⁶

Amalendu Dey, the noted historian who has edited Pulin Bihari's autobiography, comments: "Nothing more is known about this meeting." We understand that there could not have been any sequel to it, for in a few days Sri Aurobindo was to disappear from the political arena.

But Pulin Bihari's statement is intriguing. While there is no reason for us to doubt this matter-of-fact record, it raises several puzzling questions. The fearsome Pulin Bihari was then under uninterrupted surveillance of the C.I.D. — literally day and night. The maze-like route along which he was led to meet Sri Aurobindo justifies that. But who were the people who organised all that? Sri Aurobindo's messenger, as identified by Pulin Bihari, was one 'Zamindar' (landlord) of Noakhali. He also gives his name as Hem Chandra Das. There is no question of this landlord being the bomb-maker Hem Das who was in jail by then. Does this mean that apart from all those we know to have been Sri Aurobindo's lieutenants or direct and indirect followers, there was yet another front of secret revolutionaries working at his command? Where was situated that lonely house of the rendezvous described by Pulin Bihari?

The puzzle will probably remain unresolved forever.

On or around the 15th of September Sri Aurobindo gave an interview to *India*, a revolutionary journal shifted to Pondicherry, after its publication was banned in Madras.⁷ On the 9th of October he spoke at a meeting at College Square, on the 13th at Harish Park, Bhawanipur, South Kolkata; on the 15th once again at College Square. He spoke at Beadon Square on the 16th of October, sorrowful anniversary of the Partition of Bengal, "where in spite of the foul weather a large number of people assembled" according to police records.

On the 8th of February 1910 the Government announced the release of the nine leading Nationalists who had been deported. Uncle Krishna Kumar Mitra reached home on the 11th February, received by Sri Aurobindo among others at the Railway Station. Records also show his receiving his editorial colleague, Shyam Sundar Chakravarty, at the pier, on the 15th.

The hectic consultations, referred to at the beginning of the chapter, at the

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Contributors:—S.J. AUROBINDO GHOSE AND OTHERS.

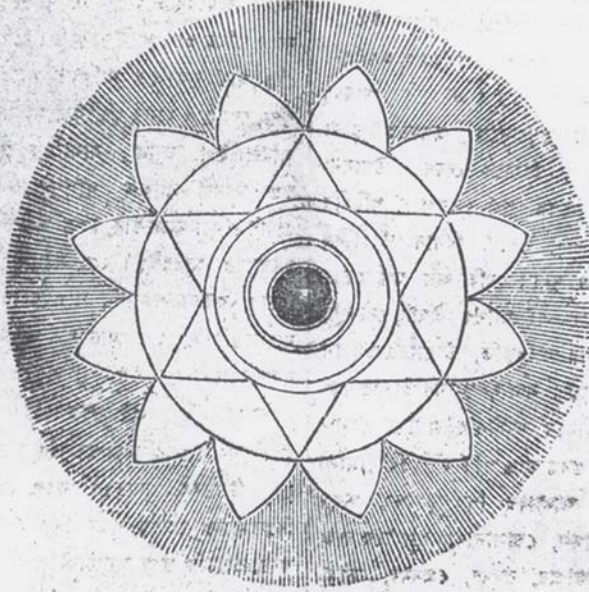
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ধর্ম

নগদ যুক্ত্য দুই পয়সা মাত্র ।

নগদ যুক্ত্য দুই পয়সা মাত্র ।



সাপ্তাহিক পত্র ।

সম্পাদক—শ্রীযুক্ত অরবিন্দ ঘোষ ।

১ম বর্ষ ।

সোমবার ১৮ই মাঘ ১৩১৬ সাল । [বহুশংখা, ৫]

যদা যদা হি ধর্মস্য প্লানির্ভবতি ভারত ।

অভ্যুত্থানমধর্মস্য তদাঙ্গানং সৃজাম্যহং ॥

পরিত্রাণায় সাধুনাং বিনাশায় চ দুষ্কৃতাং ।

ধর্মসংস্থাপনার্থায় সন্তবামি যুগে যুগে ॥

গীতা

highest rung of the ruling hierarchy on their “most dangerous” enemy, amounting to no less than fifty documents, reveal the dread as well as the sense of caution with which a number of powerful minds were at work — minds that believed that they were going to determine the fate of Sri Aurobindo.

To begin with, they decided to consult an expert at jurisprudence, E. P. Chapman, the Legal Remembrancer. Reproduced here are Chapman’s observations, addressed to the Chief Secretary, Bengal, followed by the Governor’s response, etc.⁸

Chief Secretary,

I have just come [to] the end of an exhaustive study of the case against Arabindo Ghose.

The following facts are indisputable: —

(a) His declared aim was the absolute independence of India. He expressly discarded the ideal of colonial self-government:

(b) He avowed the principle that this aim could not be attained by gift from the English and that it must be attained otherwise:

(c) He worked with others towards the attainment of this aim:

(d) He himself was inspired by religious fanaticism with this as his dominating ideal and he endeavoured to inspire others with a religious fanaticism of the same kind:

(e) His contribution was to preach that the aim might be attained by the development of spiritual force: if every individual directed his will power¹ in that one direction, the resultant force would accomplish the ideal:

(f) The Manicktollah Garden was an institution framed on these principles and by the youths gathered there Arabindo was regarded as the Karta (the head) and by some as a sort of High Priest or Guru. Many of them are proved to have associated with Arabindo.

(g) He owned a share in the garden: he was in constant touch with Barendra Kumar Ghose, his brother, who guided the persons employed in the use of explosives.

(h) From December, 1907, his mind was in a state of unusual tension and in the spring of 1908 the *Bande Mataram* newspaper which he managed was anticipating an immediate violent revolution.

On the other hand

(1) Although he was in such close association with such advocates of violence as the *Yugantar* and *Navasakti II*² newspapers as to receive applications for help from the one and allow his name to be used as the Director of the

1. I use the intelligible word. Arabindo would have called it The “God within”.

2. I refer to the second edition of the *Navasakti*.

other, he to a certain extent deprecated violence in his paper the *Bande Mataram*. He pretended that the use of will power was a better way.

(2) Apart from Baren's confession to the police which is not admissible in evidence, there is nothing to show that Arabindo ever went to the Manicktollah garden himself.

(3) There is nothing to prove *directly* that he knew or sympathised with bombs except two papers (the sweets letter and the scriblings [*sic*] in a book found in his house). Both these papers are open to some criticism and it could not certainly be predicted what view an Appellate Court would take of them.

Mr. Beachcroft's judgment is assailable on several material points. In saying this I do not wish to derogate from the reputation which Mr. Beachcroft has justly earned for his patience, fair-mindedness, and industry.

I. He has not adequately realised that Arabindo's religion was (to use a loose phrase) the expulsion of the English from India. To use Arabindo's own words "*I worship my country. If a demon sits on the breasts of the mother to drink her blood then what should the son do? I know I have strength to deliver. God sent me to the world to do this*". Mr. Beachcroft writes as if Arabindo had some religious notions apart from this. In this the judgment was erroneous. The words quoted can fairly be shown to describe the whole religion and the motor passion of Arabindo's life.

II. This error of Mr. Beachcroft's colours the whole judgment and induces Mr. Beachcroft to accept innocent interpretations on inadequate grounds. Thus in Exhibit 286/3 Arabindo says "*I wish to carry on another movement which requires unlimited money*". Mr. Beachcroft accepts the interpretation that this means an *innocent* religious movement. The error is traceable throughout the judgment.

III. In dealing with the correspondence of Arabindo with his wife and with various politicians Mr. Beachcroft has not given adequate weight to the fact that these letters prove (a) constant intercourse with his brother Baren (b) correspondence with men whose names appear in Baren's note books and who are collaborating or at least conspiring together for independence. In one of these letters are the significant words "Government has woke up too early".

IV. Mr. Beachcroft can be shown to have failed to give due weight to Arabindo's speeches. He says they indicate that Arabindo's main idea was National Education. But take these words "I have written about many things — Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education. But there was one truth I have always tried to lay down as the foundation stone . . . It is not . . . by National Education alone . . . that this country can be saved." and he goes on to say that what will save is the idea that he and others working with him are the instruments of an invincible power working for the emancipation of India from subjection to England. He says "Ours is a journey towards purna Swarajya" — complete

independence as distinguished from colonial self government and he praises the “Yugantar”.

V. Mr. Beachcroft has not attached sufficient weight to these articles which were found ready written in Arabindo’s handwriting in his house. He erred in treating these as mere philosophic reflections and laid too much stress on the fact that they were not published. They were weapons lying ready for use. Moreover to my mind they throw a flood of light on the question what Arabindo’s attitude towards Bombs actually was. Remember that his publicly avowed mission was to induce into India a passion for absolute independence then read this “The Nationalist does not love anarchy and suffering for their own sake but *if anarchy and suffering are a necessary passage to the great consummation he seeks, he is to bear them himself*, to expose others to them till the end is reached. He will embrace suffering as a lover and *anarchy as a trusted friend*.” Read with this his letter to his wife in February 1908, (exhibit 292/4). “The state of my mind has undergone a change. . . . hereafter I shall have no will of my own. Wherever God directs me I shall do like a doll . . . My movements may be sorrow to you”, and the article in the Bande Mataram in April anticipating a violent revolution immediately impending.

VI. On several minor points the judgment is open to criticism. I will not mention these now.

To sum up on the question of appeal against the acquittal: —

- (a) I am disposed to think that if I had tried the case, I would have convicted:
- (b) Mr. Beachcroft’s judgment is assailable on very material points:
- (c) *BUT* the issue of such a case especially in the form of appeal against acquittal cannot be otherwise than doubtful. Nobody could, with any degree of certainty, predict that an appeal would succeed.

Arabindo is a hero of a spiritual type. Shall we gain much by getting him sentenced to imprisonment? He is then likely to develop into a myth — If we leave him loose now, he may be actually less dangerous — In the wear and tear of actual life his unpracticality is certain to disclose itself and possibly he may be a safeguard for it will be consistent with his theories now to believe that the way of violence is not the way of God or God would have permitted it to succeed.

On the whole my advice is against an appeal.

21st May 09.

Sd. E. P. Chapman.

—

The Chief Secretary, F. W. Duke, forwarded the report with his own comment. That and the Governor’s opinion, along with his Post Script notes, follow:

H. H.

I submit Mr. Chapman's note on the question of an appeal against the acquittal of Arabindo Ghose together with a printed copy of the judgment. The portion relating to Arabindo will be found on pages 46-53. Mr. Chapman is of opinion that Mr. Beachcroft has failed to give proper value to the evidence against Arabindo in several particulars, and that he himself would have convicted him upon the evidence, but he thinks it would be impossible to predict the result of an appeal, and therefore he does not advise one. The general mistake which Mr. Beachcroft appears to have made, which vitiates all his arguments, is with reference to Arabindo's religious character. As Mr. Chapman has shown, he gave evidence of only one kind of strong religious feeling, which was an intense form of patriotism ready to accept all measures for the deliverance of his country from the rule of the foreigner. Viewed in that light his religious ideas would tell against, rather than for him. Secondly, I think it is very evident that Mr. Beachcroft has failed to properly estimate the value of the "sweets" letter. The arguments about the sort of expressions used as being unsuitable between Bengali brothers, seem to have very little force in the case of persons with the English education which the Ghoses possess. Mr. Beachcroft admits that if the letter is a forgery it has been most admirably executed, but he finds that it really was found on search, and that the search took place on the 2nd May immediately after the conspiracy had been unearthed. If that was so what was thought to have been the opportunity for forgery, and why should the forgery have taken this particular form? If forgery were to be employed to implicate Arabindo, it would have been easy to do so in much clearer and more unmistakable terms. Mr. Beachcroft does not attempt to unravel this at all, and merely contents himself with saying (near top of p. 52) that in cases where spies are employed documents find their way into the houses of accused persons in ways that cannot be explained. Who prior to the 2nd May 1908 knew that Baren would be found in possession of bombs, but that there would not be evidence to implicate Arabindo unless it were forged and introduced into his house? Nevertheless I am more than doubtful as to whether an appeal should be filed. We are certainly not to file a speculative or fishing appeal nor even if we have good grounds should we file one without at least a very fair prospect of success. The filing of an appeal will certainly be commented on as vindictive persecution, and should it fail, comment of that kind will be freely repeated with most damaging effect. On the other hand if it were thought that an appeal had a reasonable prospect of success, we should not be deterred from it by anything that might be said. I think it due to the importance of the case that the question should be submitted to the closest scrutiny. Mr. Chapman has dealt with the question as he says on somewhat broad lines, and has not gone into all the details. Mr. Withall I feel sure would

be strongly in favour of an appeal. Mr. Norton expressed a strong opinion immediately after the acquittal in favour of appealing, but suggested that as his opinion would no doubt be regarded as prejudiced, the opinion of Inverarity of Bombay should be taken. I think that the proper course would be for Mr. Chapman and Mr. Withall to carefully state the case for an appeal and submit it to the Advocate General, if one has been appointed, or otherwise, as suggested by Mr. Norton, to Mr. Inverarity. I do not attach any importance to Mr. Chapman's reason for letting Arabindo alone. If he was privy to the conspiracy at all; he was the brain, not perhaps to plan the details, but the fountain of moral and intellectual energy. If we were convinced of this and that we could convict him, it would be political suicide to fail to do it, but I certainly would not proceed on less than a two to one chance in our favour.

F. W. D[UKER]
28.5.09.

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The course proposed by C. S. should be adopted, for there is just the off chance that Counsel may advise that an appeal would have a strong probability of success. In that case, we should be failing in our duty if we did not proceed with it.

But if Counsel advises that the success of the appeal is doubtful, it would be most unwise to take action. The mere filing of an appeal would revive popular feeling against Govt. which seems to be dying down — and if we failed to justify our action by success we should have drawn this upon ourselves for nothing.

E. N. B[AKER]
29.5.09.

P.S. I have kept the copy of the judgment.

E. N. B[AKER]

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The file may be sent to Mr. Chapman who will arrive at Woodlands probably by Monday.

He will understand what is to be done from the notes above & Counsel, whether the Adv. Genl. or another must understand that we want an opinion not merely whether there are good grounds for appeal but whether there is a strong probability of success without which we should not proceed.

F. W. D[UKER]
29.5.09.

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And such deliberations, thoughts, after-thoughts and broodings were to go on.

(To be continued)

MANOJ DAS

Notes and References

1. Hemendra Prasad Ghose: 'Reminiscences of Aurobindo Ghose'; *Orient Illustrated Weekly*, 27 February 1949. Hemendra Prasad (1876-1962) who was on the editorial staff of the *Bande Mataram*, later founded and edited several journals and was the editor of the *Basumati* (both Bengali and English editions). He travelled in Britain and the Middle East during the First World War to study the situation. Looked upon as a doyen in the field, he joined the Calcutta University as the Professor of Journalism when the department was launched.

2. Basanti Devi's reminiscences reproduced in *Atimanas Dishari Sri Aurobindo* (Bengali) by Raghunandan Das.

3. Sixteen Annas constituted one rupee.

4. Chennai. The city was then the capital of Madras Presidency, including the present Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. The *Karmayogin* seems to have commanded the next largest circulation in Maharashtra.

5. Upendra Chandra Bhattacharya: *Amar Elomelo Jibaner Kayekti Adhyay* (Bengali); Modern Book Agency, Kolkata.

6. Pulin Bihari Das: *Amar Jeeban Kahini* (Bengali); Edited by Amalendu Dey, Anushilan Samiti, Kolkata.

7. "Anti-British activities began with renewed zeal when the whole press plant of India was transferred to Pondicherry after the Madras Government had cracked down on it." – Ajit K. Niyogi: *Decolonization of French India*; Institut Français de Pondichéry.

8. The documents reproduced are from Confidential File No. 205, Serial No. 1, 1905; Govt. of Bengal, Political Department and Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives. (See April 1983 issue of *Sri Aurobindo — Archives and Research*)

SONGS FROM THE SOUL

(Continued from the issue of September 2016)

(The Mother made this selection from Anilbaran's prayers offered to her. She termed the collection a "Spiritual dictionary".)

CONQUEST OF DESIRES

I shall not ask for anything from Thee, Mother; I shall only sit at Thy feet looking up to Thy face. Whatever Thou wilt give me in Thy grace, I shall bow down and accept.

I know Thou art the queen of queens, and canst fill me with riches, which will be the envy of the gods. But the more I desire them, the more I limit my possibilities. I have taken a deathless determination to root out all my desires, so that Thou mayest fill me with joy in Thy own way.

I know Thou art the mightiest power in the universe, and canst make me more powerful even than the gods. But the more I fret and make efforts with my will, the more I fail and limit my capacity. I have resolved to quiet my will and effort, Mother, so that Thou mayest work out in Thy own way Thy all-conquering will through me.

I know Thou art the Truth itself, and canst give me wisdom beyond the ken of gods; but the more I try to know by the effort of my mind and reason, the more I blind myself to truth. I have resolved to make my mind quiet and passive, so that Thou mayest fill me with Thy light in Thy own way.

I have resolved to remove all obstacles, so that Thou mayest have Thy own way in me. I shall ask for nothing, I shall only sit at Thy feet, Mother, looking up to Thy face.

* * *

The world assumes an entirely fresh aspect, every thing and every event become full of beauty and of joy, if only we can get rid of our desires, if we can transcend our egoism.

We hanker blindly after the limited joys of the world, our senses are continually rushing out to seize and enjoy their objects, and thus is disturbed the tranquillity of the soul, which is the true foundation of all delight. By our egoism we cut ourselves off from the Truth; falsely we centre our existence round a narrow conception of the self; hence arise division and conflict, hence we suffer from wrath and fear, from rivalry and jealousy; hence we suffer from pangs of loss and separation.

Let me fully grasp the truth, Mother, that my limited ego is not my true self; let me be continually identified with the one Self of all, and be established in its eternal, immutable peace. Let me realise that this life of desire is not my real nature, that I am Thy true child, Divine Mother, and that my life is a part of Thy divine play on the earth. Then the whole world will change its aspect and will be eternally full of great beauty and intense delight for me.

* * *

My desires and passions are constantly pointing out the way to me, hence I err at every step. It is my earnest aspiration to be guided solely by Thy light and Thy voice, Mother, but the impurities in me would not allow me to do so.

I have in me all sorts of ideas about duty and fixed habits of work. Various considerations rise in me whenever I want to do or undo anything. It is no wonder I constantly get confused and accept falsehood as truth. There is one simple rule which can save me from all trouble and anxiety, can protect me from all errors and disasters, and that is to follow Thee and Thee only, Mother. But my ever-recurring egoism would not allow me to do so.

Thou hast shown the surest way to conquer all my desire and egoism; I have only to turn towards Thee always and keep myself full of Thy love. No pleasure arising from the pursuit of selfish habits and egoistic desires can ever compare with the great joy of sincere love and devotion to Thee, Mother. Yet such is my weakness and ignorance that I turn away from Thee and pursue my ego; I turn away from gold which is within my easy reach and involve myself in misery in the mad pursuit of dross.

Draw me more and more to Thyself, Mother; one who has tasted the great joy of Thy love can never live apart and away from Thee. Always keep me full of Thyself so that I may fully get rid of my impurities and grow into Thy divine nature and Thy divine life.

TEMPTATIONS

All the beautiful things in the world conspire to make us renegades. The universe is full of the joy for which our soul hankers, but we do not know the true way of satisfaction. We are irresistibly drawn by anything that offers us joy, but through ignorance we fall into traps laid for us by Nature; instead of the true joy we seek, we bring endless misery and suffering on ourselves.

We have a fundamental craving in us for work, for the expression of our nature through the right and the good; but we do not know the true way of work, and taking our desires as our guide we fall into inexorable bondage.

Our soul thirsts for knowledge, but we do not know the true way of attaining the truth, and indulging in incessant restless mental activity keep ourselves enveloped in darkness.

Our search for the Beautiful and the Good and the True must be made through Thee, Mother. Thou embodiest in Thyself all the true movements in the universe. We must sternly reject all the temptings of falsehood and constantly turn to Thee and Thee alone for the satisfaction of the truest needs of our soul. For me, let there be no world, no existence except in and through Thee, Mother Divine.

RELATION WITH THE WORLD

My relation to the world shall be determined through Thee, Mother; only then I shall find my true place, my true function in the world. The relations established through my ego have turned out to be my bondage; by surrendering my egoism completely to Thee, Mother, I shall find out my complete freedom.

The apparently independent life we live is really a subjection to the forces of Nature. We think that we depend on our own mind and will and the senses, but it is really Nature that uses these instruments to have her own way with us. Only by substituting Thy rule for this lower play in us, Mother, we shall find out our true life.

The Universe is full of joy, the possibilities of life are infinite; but through our ignorance we remain cut off from them; our senses bewilder us, and we live a life of limitations, full of misery and pain. We are Thy own children, Mother, and the joys in the world, all the power and the light, belong to us as our true heritage. By recognising Thee to be our own, we shall make the whole world our own, and enjoy Thy glorious kingdom, Mother, instead of living there as slaves and bondsmen.

TRUTH CONSCIOUSNESS

Seldom do we commit a wrong or a mistake without getting a timely warning, however vague or weak, from within ourselves. This shows that the truth consciousness is within us, though we may not be sufficiently open or responsive to it.

Our whole existence is supported by the truth consciousness; we live, move, and have our being in it; all our joy and light and power are derived from it; but through our imperfections and limitations the truth is perverted in us, and the light is obscured; so we live a life which is a curious mixture of truth and falsehood, of joy and sorrow, of strength and weakness. To remove all the obstacles to the expression of truth, and to live in the purity of the truth consciousness, which is our true essential nature — that is the object of our *sadhana*.

A great obstacle to the manifestation of truth in us is the inertia of our physical

nature. There is a tendency in us to move on with the force that is pushing us, and also an unwillingness to move or change, unless compelled by the force of circumstances. It is on account of this dark sluggishness and inertia of our nature that we cannot clearly grasp the light that is constantly streaming into us, nor can we move or act promptly in response to it. But there is also the intelligent will in us, by exercising which we can overcome this inertia, and keep ourselves calm, free, and alert, so that the truth from above may freely work in us, and bring about our transformation. Awaken and strengthen this will in us, Mother, so that we can make ourselves a perfect expression of the truth-consciousness.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Our real life is within our own self; the external is only a reflection, only a manifestation. We regard this reflection as the real thing, hence we live in perpetual falsehood.

The source of all true joy is the self; the senses and the external objects are only a means, an occasion for the manifestation of the inner delight; but in our ignorance we turn outward and follow the senses in vain search of joy.

The source of all true knowledge is the self; the mind cannot know but can only reflect the light that comes from within; yet we ceaselessly exercise our mind in search of the truth and thus live in shadow and ignorance.

The source of all true strength is the self; our body and mind are only channels for the manifestation of the inner force; yet we rely on our bodily and mental efforts for our work and thus waste our life in vain and fruitless labour.

Thou art our true self, Mother, and our true relation to Thee is in the heart of our heart. We lay too much stress on our external relations, and hence we miss the secret of our union with Thee. If we can perfect our inner relation to Thee, Mother, our external life will spontaneously become perfect, harmonious, and beautiful.

* * *

We are the real masters of our nature, and the more we realise this truth, the more the lower movements cease in us, giving place to the higher.

Nature binds us in her meshes only because we allow ourselves to be bound. We take interest in the lower movements of Nature, so they go on indefinitely. The more we yield to her promptings, the more inextricably she lays her hold upon us and uses us as her bondslaves. But the moment we take a strong attitude, Nature begins to throw away her mask and accept us as her master.

There is no temptation Nature can bring before us which we cannot resist by a strong will; there is no pain or sorrow which we cannot bear; there is no disturbance

in which we cannot keep ourselves calm; there is no situation, however hopeless or bad, out of which we cannot raise ourselves by a strong determination. Infinite and indomitable strength is in our self; we have only to realise it, and Nature will cease to trouble us and will yield to us her richest treasures.

We take refuge in Thee, Mother, so that we may know our true self and realise our true strength. The more we devote ourselves to Thee, the more we find Thee to be our own higher self, we get strength from Thy strength, life from Thy life. The moment of our complete identification with Thee, Mother, will be the moment of our highest conquest and self-realisation.

OPENNESS

Light is there all around us; we live, move and have our being in light. Whatever is necessary for us to know, we can know at all times, if only we are sufficiently open to receive it. But our mechanical thoughts and notions hide the light from us; our doubts and misgivings prevent us from accepting the truth when it comes. Thus, we pass our life in darkness and ignorance.

Power is there all around us; it supports our life, our movements, our efforts. Whatever power and strength is required for the work before us, we can get at all times, if only we are sufficiently open and receptive. But our inert passivity or egoistic restlessness cuts us off from the source of all power. Thus, we pass our life in weakness and failure.

Joy is there all around us; the foundation of the whole world play is infinite joy, and our life is a progressive manifestation of it. We have only to open ourselves, and there will be no limit to our joy and bliss. But we limit and hound ourselves by ignorant desires and attachments. Thus, we pass our life in thirst mid misery.

Thou art there always by our side, always within us, Mother; all greatness, all glory is Thine. We can have the fullest share of light and power and joy, if only we can sufficiently open ourselves to Thee.

* * *

I am emptying my heart and soul, Mother, so that Thou mayest fill me with Thy own self. Come to me in Thy fullness, come as light, come as power, come as joy.

Descend into me as light, dispel all darkness from me, fill me with the knowledge of truth; give me the insight by which I can always discriminate between truth and falsehood.

Come as power in the form of divine impulses, give me the strength to reject sternly all suggestions of falsehood, give me the power to execute only Thy will perfectly on the earth.

Come as joy filling my heart with love and beauty. In all the sweetest sights and sounds on the earth, let me recognise the expressions of Thy divine beauty.

That is how I shall recognise Thee everywhere. Mother, as light, as power, as pure and perfect joy; I shall persistently make myself free from all darkness and perversions, so that Thou mayest fill me with Thy own self, Divine Mother.

EGOISM

It is curious how egoism mixes up with our surrender even when it is apparently honest and sincere. At one time we bow with our heart and soul to the Divine, at other times we follow our own way; even at the same time, some part in us surrenders, while other parts hold back. The test is the lack of peace and equanimity, for where there is real surrender these things cannot exist.

We depend on the Divine, but also count upon our own powers; as the saying goes, we trust in God, but keep our powder dry. As if our surrender is to get as much as possible from the Divine, and use it for our own purpose in our own way. It is this want of sincerity and completeness in our surrender that is a great obstacle to the working of the divine Power in us.

Let this falsehood and duplicity completely disappear from me, Mother; let me turn always towards Thee, let me be free from all egoism, all initiative, all desire; let this earnest prayer ceaselessly rise up from my soul:

“Descend into me, Mother, in all Thy divine glory; seize my mind and fill it with Thy light; seize my will and make it an instrument of Thy work; seize my whole being and make it a perfect vehicle of the great joy of divine love.”

* * *

We really lose nothing by losing our egoistic personality in the one immutable Self of all existence. Through the ego we ignorantly confine ourselves to a limited portion of the world; by transcending the ego we go beyond this limitation and realise the whole world to be our own.

Then we have not to feel the pang of separation from our near and dear ones, because we find them within our own self, and all beings in the world become equally near and dear to us. We cease to be troubled by ideas of obligations and duty, as we realise that we are not the real doers, but it is Nature really which carries out all our actions. The joys and sorrows of the world do no longer affect us, as we perceive them to be passing movements in the universal play. Realising our true self to be infinite and perfect, we rise above all limited desires and attachments. By losing our ego we lose only our bondage and limitation.

Yet we do not cease to have individual personality. Through our individual nature, we enter into a relation of love and devotion to Thee, Mother, and find our nature to be a part of Thyself, a vehicle of the manifestation of Thy divine play which Thou art unfolding for the pleasure of Thy Lord. By merging our lower self in the higher and identifying our individual nature with Thee, Mother, we grow into our real, divine personality.

* * *

There is no other way of getting out of the miseries of the egoistic life, Mother, than by completely identifying myself with Thee.

As long as the ego is the centre of our life, we ceaselessly move round it, bound by our ignorant attachments, impelled by our blind desires; no real progress, no transformation is at all possible under these conditions of darkness and falsehood. But all the limitations and imperfections of the lower life are at once ended when we are able to merge ourselves completely in Thee, Mother.

Then Thou becomest the centre of our life instead of the ego; Thy will takes the place of our desires; thy truth replaces the limited light of our reason; and all our sensuous hankerings and egoistic cravings are merged in the great delight of an intimate touch and integral union with Thee. And this is the real truth of our life. We are made out of Thy stuff, we are a spark out of Thy fire; all separation from Thee is a falsehood and the real cause of misery.

So let me grow more and more identified with Thee, Mother, let all independent movements, all separate existence altogether cease in me. As the river falling into the sea at once transcends its limitations and becomes great and infinite with the sea itself, so let my human life fall into Thee, Mother, and become great and glorious in Thy divine life and Thy divine consciousness.

JIVA, THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL

Every individual is an infinity in himself, a concealed godhead, an eternal portion of the Divine. Every *jiva* represents a particular phase, a particular mode of the cosmic play, and in and through every one the divine Mother is unfolding the infinite universe for the enjoyment of her Lord. Every one has his own in the scheme of the universe, and no one can substitute or replace another or manifest possibilities other than what belong especially to him. And the relation of the Mother to every one is determined by his own nature, his own special *dharma*.

It is through the ignorance of this fundamental truth of our existence that we egoistically seek to possess what does not belong to us. Following ignorant desires, we limit our own possibilities and come into conflict with those of others. When we

shall realise the truth of our being and our true relation with the Mother, all conflicts, all discords will disappear, and our life will become a progressive, harmonious self-fulfilment according to our own nature, and thus through us will be manifested the glories of the Divine on earth. Established in the truth of our being, we shall realise that we are really a part and parcel of the divine Mother, and that all individuals are really her own self in so many forms and in so many ways approaching and uniting with her divine Lord and Beloved.

MYSTERY OF LIFE

It is a mistake deep-rooted in our nature to suppose that our consciousness will be empty and blank, if we give up thought and reasoning; that our heart will become dried up and hard, if we forego the sensuous joys and the egoistic emotions; that our life will be idle and barren, if we cease to follow our desires and exercise our will. Thus, we tenaciously cling to our old ways and modes of life, and the Divine does not get any scope to manifest in us.

But the truth is that the more we give up these egoistic ways and habits, the more will the divine Power take up these functions in us and make our life infinitely more rich, more luminous, more active and joyful.

Again, it is a great mistake to think that if we surrender our egoism, we shall lose our individual existence, we shall virtually cease to exist as independent living forces, and shall become only a mechanical tool, an inert automaton in the hands of an alien power, however great or divine that power may be. Thus, we obstinately cling to our ego, and the higher life gets no chance to develop in us.

But the truth is that by real surrender we do not cease to be individuals, but become subtly identified with the Supreme Divine; the divine will becomes our will, the divine way becomes our way. The Divine works in us through our individual nature, developing its deepest possibilities. We become one with the divine Mother, yet perfectly our own selves. This is the supreme mystery of existence.

(To be continued)

ANILBARAN

(Songs from the Soul, Amiya Library, Calcutta, 1946, pp. 114-34)

WILLIAM BLAKE'S 'AUGURIES OF INNOCENCE'

In *Letters on Poetry and Art*, Sri Aurobindo, writing about what constitutes mystic poetry, says:

It is when the thing seen is spiritually lived and has an independent vivid reality of its own which exceeds any conceptual significance it may have on the surface that it is mystic. (CWSA, Vol. 27, p. 90)

He further states:

Mystic poetry has a perfectly concrete meaning, much more than intellectual poetry which is much more abstract. The nature of the intellect is abstraction; spirituality and mysticism deal with the concrete by their very nature. (CWSA, Vol. 27, p. 88)

Based upon what Sri Aurobindo has written above, 'Auguries of Innocence' by William Blake can be said to have mystic elements. According to Sri Aurobindo, the aim of mystic poetry is

To get a more intimate and spiritually concrete presentation . . . (CWSA, Vol. 27, p. 89)

and Blake has been able to achieve that aim by bringing us in contact with our inner being and the joy inherent in it and it is only by quietening the mind and the intellect that the poem can be truly appreciated. Before talking about this poem, we shall see who William Blake was and what Sri Aurobindo has said about him.

William Blake was an English engraver, painter and poet born in 1757. (He died in 1827.) From an early age he had many spiritual and mystic experiences and visions, which moulded his personality and outlook on life. He passionately believed that all life is sacred and precious and to be respected and protected. He looked at the world through the eyes of a mystic, seeing the truth, the reality behind and beyond the outer forms, and seeing the essential unity rather than the external diversity seen by the intellect. As Sri Aurobindo says about him:

Blake lives ordinarily far up in this middle world of which Coleridge only catches some glimpses or at most stands occasionally just over its border. Blake's seeing teems with images of this other world, he hears around him the echoes of its sounds and voices. He is not only a seer, but almost an inhabitant

of other planes, another domain of being; or at least this second subtle sight is his normal sight. His power of expression is akin in its strangeness to his eye of vision. His speech like his seeing has a singular other-world clarity and sheerness of expression in it, the light of supernature. When he prophesies as in some of his more ambitious efforts, he mentalises too much the mystic and misses the marvel and the magic. It is when he casts into some echo of the language of the luminous children of those shores the songs of their childhood and their innocence, that he becomes limpid to us and sheds upon our earth some clear charm, felicity, wonder of a half divine elsewhere. Here again we have something unique, a voice of things which had not been heard before nor has it been heard since; for the Celtic poets who sometimes give us something that is in its source akin, bring a ripe reflective knowledge and a colour of intellectuality into their speech and vision, but Blake seeks to put away from him as much as possible the intellectual mind, to see only and sing. By this effort and his singularity and absorption he stands apart solitary and remote, a unique voice among the poets of the time; he occupies indeed a place unique in the poetry of the English language, for there is no other singer of the beyond who is like him or equal to him in the strangeness, supernatural lucidity, power and directness of vision of the beyond and the rhythmic clarity and beauty of his singing. (CWSA, Vol. 26, pp. 139-40)

This singer of the beyond, Sri Aurobindo called "Europe's greatest mystic poet". (CWSA, Vol. 27, p. 380)

In later years, Blake became more and more sagacious and serene as is evidenced by the following incident narrated about him in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (www.britannica.com).

At a party, when he met a fashionably dressed little girl, he put his hand on her head and said, "May God make this world to you, my child, as beautiful as it has been to me."

And about his death, his disciple Richmond wrote,

Just before he died His countenance became fair — His eyes brighten'd and He burst out in singing of the things he saw in Heaven. In truth He died like a Saint, as a person who was standing by Him observed.

Before starting a verse by verse exploration of the poem, I would like to reiterate here what Sri Aurobindo has said above about the poet, that Blake's expression is as strange as his "eye of vision" and thus at places it is difficult to comprehend exactly what he is saying. Also the political, social and economic conditions have changed quite significantly in the last 200 years or so, from the time this poem was written. Therefore, I seek a certain indulgence from the reader while going through this essay.

'Auguries of Innocence' was written by Blake in 1803 but was published only in 1863, much after his death in 1827. In this poem we see with what high regard Blake sees all life, how precious, beautiful and free Nature is and how man by his greed and ambition reduces it all to a tragedy. Blake aptly expresses Sri Aurobindo's thought, "For nothing is truly vain the One has made" (*Savitri*), seeing the divinity in all things and sacredness of all life. By means of contraries and opposites, Blake connects the whole web of life and shows how everything is interconnected. There is no big and small, great and little, more precious and less precious — for all life is equally precious and valuable when seen through the eyes of the Creator, for He puts as much of himself in a grain of sand as in the whirling galaxy in the sky, as much in an ant as in the great whale. The poem speaks of the present state of the world through a series of paradoxes, where innocence, the pure child-like quality, is hopelessly intertwined with evil and corruption. Through vivid and recurring images and metaphors, Blake brings out the devastating and corrosive effect of human greed, pride, cruelty and authoritarianism on the purity and the innocence of the soul. Always there is the refrain to avoid such excess and to look and feel deeply, to look from the soul's eyes rather than these physical ones, to see the unity behind all the forms rather than being lost in these names and forms, to reject cruelty, oppression, suppression and in their place cultivate love, compassion and harmony.

There are innumerable animal images in the poem, and many of these represent and symbolise a certain type of humanity; thus the horse represents the labourer; the dog, the faithful and dependent servant; the armed rooster (cock), a soldier etc. and so at places it may appear that Blake is talking about humanity, though metaphorically. However, Blake's vision is much wider and holistic and he considers all life and creation as equally sacred and precious.

Many scholars believe that the poem consists of couplets, randomly gathered by Blake from his notebooks and that seems to be the case on reading the poem. However, there is the common theme running through these verses, one of the pureness and innocence of the soul and the injunction to avoid any action contrary to its expression.

*

The title of the poem is 'Auguries of Innocence'. An augury is an omen or a sign, predicting future events, a foretelling of what is to be; it points towards a future state of innocence, one that the poet hopes will manifest here on earth, the natural state Adam and Eve were in in the Garden of Eden before eating from the fruit of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, as narrated in the Bible, when everything and all beings were in harmony and existed in joyful simplicity.

In this context the Mother has also said that her earliest memory of life in a human body was during the earthly paradise, i.e. before the complication of mind

arose, when life was simple, joyous, spontaneous, harmonious, etc. As the Mother says,

It was an outflowing of the joy of living, simply that, in universal love and harmony — flowers, minerals, animals: all were in harmony.

(*CWM*, Vol. 10, p. 91)

As Sri Aurobindo has said above, “He is . . . almost an inhabitant of other planes”; Blake lives more in the other world — the world of harmony, beauty, equality, peace, light, bliss — than is this world of strife, pain, hatred, jealousy, darkness — and feels very vividly the injustice and oppression the innocent and poor are subjected to. At the same time, he gives us a method, a sort of pathway which, if we were to follow, would lead to the kingdom of Heaven on Earth . . . and thus the title ‘Auguries of Innocence’.

The poem begins with one of the most famous verses in English poetry:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

These lines have an Upanishadic ring to them and connect the individual with the universe. Sri Aurobindo says that the microcosm and the macrocosm are nothing but consciousness arranging itself.

In Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri*, we find echoes of these lines

She shuts eternity into an hour
And fills a little soul with the Infinite

(p. 177)

These opening lines of the ‘Auguries’ come from a great height of inspiration and though the poem has other inspired verses, somehow these rarefied heights are rarely touched again during the course of the poem. These four lines stand by themselves, shining in letters of gold.

The next two lines set the stage for what is to follow in the poem and can be said to be the proper beginning of the poem after the magnificent opening.

A Robin Red breast in a Cage
Puts all Heaven in a Rage.

A red-breasted robin, a beautiful bird, symbol of innocence, purity and freedom, put in a cage by a callous and uncaring human, puts all of heaven in a rage, angers the divinity, for it goes against all the tenets of creation, the purpose for which this beautiful world was made. When we deprive any one of God's creatures of their freedom, we violate the first tenet of God's creation. Symbolically the bird represents the soul and when any soul is caged i.e. deprived of the freedom to grow according to its *swabhava*, by oppression and compulsion, it leads to a backlash according to the laws of Nature.

A dove house fill'd with doves & Pigeons
Shudders Hell thro' all its regions.
A dog starv'd at his Master's Gate
Predicts the ruin of the State.

The first two lines of this verse echo what has been said in the previous verse and use a similar imagery, instead of the heavens being enraged, here it is hell which shudders. The next two lines emphasise that a small injustice results in great harm and therefore the need for those in authority to take care of those dependent upon them, of the weak, of those in their service, for otherwise the cosmic law of retribution will strike, swiftly and surely. It implies the interconnectedness of the whole creation.

A Horse misus'd upon the Road
Calls to Heaven for Human blood.
Each outcry of the hunted Hare
A fibre from the Brain does tear.

Worse than failing to take care of the need of the weak and the dependent is oppressing them and causing them harm and pain. Continuing with the cosmic law of retribution, this verse vividly exemplifies the same in the two instances of a horse and a hare, mistreated or hunted, for human greed or pleasure.

A Skylark wounded in the wing,
A Cherubim does cease to sing.
The Game Cock clip'd & arm'd for fight
Does the Rising Sun affright.

Once again we find the analogy of a bird, a skylark, which if wounded, obviously due to harmful intent, causes an angel (cherubim) to fall silent. The Mother has said that each action carries within itself its own fruit and consequences and according to the nature of the action, we move towards the divine or away from him and this

is the supreme consequence. Thus if one does malicious and harmful action out of greed, hatred, jealousy, etc. causing harm and pain to the innocent (wounding the skylark), an angel, a divine quality falls silent in us or the world, making it less divine and more asuric, and consequently leading it away from the divine. A similar thought is expressed in the next two lines, where the "Game Cock clip'd and arm'd for fight" refers to a person having the asuric qualities leading to strife and killing and in him the divine consciousness, the rising sun, does not unfold, "Does the Rising Sun affright", frightens the rising sun away.

Every Wolf's & Lion's howl
Raises from Hell a Human Soul.

The intent of the previous verse is also expressed here. A wolf or a lion howls when in pain and the one putting them to pain, raises within himself a hellish being or hellish qualities like cruelty, coldheartedness, hatred, etc. which naturally leads him away from the divine. Always the refrain is to avoid those acts and qualities which take one away from the soul and towards hell.

The wild deer, wand'ring here & there,
Keeps the Human Soul from Care.
The Lamb misus'd breeds Public strife
And yet forgives the Butcher's Knife.

The wild deer, in its freedom, wanders about, free from care, symbolising the free human soul, which in its natural state is happy and carefree, without any worry or care. The last two lines seem to refer to Christ's martyrdom, the lamb symbolising Christ, the lamb of God, who forgave his oppressors.

The Bat that flits at close of Eve
Has left the Brain that won't Believe.
The Owl that calls upon the Night
Speaks the Unbeliever's fright.

This verse highlights the negativity of the atheist. The bat and the owl are both creatures of the night, symbolically adverse forces. The bat here seems to symbolise a negative thought which has arisen from the mind of an unbeliever, and 'close of Eve' seems to signify the depressed state or darkened state of mind. The owl hooting in the night "Speaks the Unbeliever's fright" can be understood in one sense as the lack of faith and peace which the atheist has as compared to a true believer in God, and this faith gives the believer strength, support and comfort, helping him to walk the long journey of this life, always with his God beside him. The atheist lacks this

comfort and support and the lonely hooting of the owl in the night could be seen to personify this fear in him.

He who shall hurt the little Wren
 Shall never be belov'd by Men.
 He who the Ox to wrath has mov'd
 Shall never be by Woman lov'd.

The theme in this verse is cruelty. As we have seen before, Blake is passionately against any form of cruelty, by men towards fellow-humans or towards animals. Blake here says that those who hurt the little wren, a small defenceless bird, shall not find favour among other men and similarly those who torture and trouble an ox and move it to anger, shall not be loved by women, clearly setting forth that one should avoid cruelty as it demeans a person and makes him less human. Here men and women are to be taken as humanity at large, rather than males and females.

The wanton Boy that kills the Fly
 Shall feel the Spider's enmity.
 He who torments the Chafer's sprite
 Weaves a Bower in endless Night.

The theme of cruelty is continued in this verse. The poet says that a careless boy who without any rhyme or reason kills a fly, just for fun, is committing a serious sacrilege against God's creation, for to Blake all life is sacred and no one has the right to take it away wantonly. Such a thoughtless act will have its repercussion and Blake seems to be voicing the popular conception of karma, that such a boy may have to be born as a fly and feel and undergo the same pain and torture through the medium of its worst enemy the spider or if not literally born as a fly, such a boy will have to undergo similar trauma. The last two lines echo the same thought, the poet saying that one who torments or gives pain to the chafer's sprite — a chafer is a small insect and sprite is a small elflike or fairylike creature — shall have to weave a bower in endless night. The poet seems to be saying as a retribution for tormenting the chafer, the person will be condemned to an endless night.

The Caterpillar on the Leaf
 Repeats to thee thy Mother's grief.
 Kill not the Moth nor Butterfly,
 For the Last Judgment draweth nigh.

The first two lines are difficult to interpret. The last two lines have the common refrain against cruelty and the preciousness of each life. The poet advocates against

killing in any form, even of a moth or a butterfly — even though there are millions of them — as each form of life is equally precious, and warns that the day of judgement is coming near and surely one will have to pay for his wanton cruel acts.

He who shall train the Horse to War
 Shall never pass the Polar Bar.
 The Beggar's Dog & Widow's Cat,
 Feed them & thou wilt grow fat.

Blake here seems to be saying that interfering with nature and training a peaceful creature like a horse to fight, is an unpardonable offence, for it is cruel and turns a peaceful creature against itself, and the person who is guilty of that, will never pass the polar bar, symbolically the gateway to heaven. In comparison is a person who feeds the beggar's dog and the widow's cat — takes care and helps the poor and weak — he will have a prosperous, happy and comfortable life, i.e the positive effect of good karma.

The Gnat that sings his Summer's song
 Poison gets from Slander's tongue.
 The poison of the Snake & Newt
 Is the sweat of Envy's Foot.

The gnat is a small fly which in summer flits from place to place, seemingly free from care, singing its summer's song. The poet in equating slandering — talking ill of anyone, usually with bad intent and behind their back — to poison, says that if the gnat were to open itself to slandering, it would lose its innocence, for its mind and heart would be poisoned by the act of slandering. Continuing on the same theme, the poet says that envy is like poison to the well-being of a person and equates it to the deadly poison of a snake or a newt (a newt is a small salamanderlike creature and can be poisonous). Both slandering and envy corrupt a person, making him lose his balance and do stupid acts, for which he repents later.

The Poison of the Honey Bee
 Is the Artist's Jealousy.

Here again the poet is pointing out the deadly effects jealousy, envy has on the soul. Equating an artist to a honey bee, probably because both are creative, he says that jealousy in an artist is like a poison of the honey bee, the reference probably being to the fact that the sting of the bee can be poisonous and deadly. Jealousy in a person is poisonous to his inner being and growth and can kill and stifle it.

The Prince's Robes & Beggar's Rags
 Are Toadstools on the Miser's Bags.
 A truth that's told with bad intent
 Beats all the Lies you can invent.

The first two lines may mean that both the prince's robes and the beggar's rags, are like toadstools — fungus, which grows in unfrequented places and forests — on the bags of a miser, the place where he hoards his wealth. Maybe Blake is referring to the law of 'sacrifice', the more one gives, the more one gets. But as the miser does not give anything, he gets encrusted with superfluous outward coverings which prevent him from receiving. If men were less miserly and had less love for possessing and hoarding money, there would be more material equality and less inequality between the rich and poor and less suffering in the world.

In the next two lines the poet says that a truth that's told maliciously, with ill intention, is far worse than outright lies, for it is done with the intention of causing doubt and confusion, hitting at the faith of the faithful by corrupting the truth. (We may recollect that in the epic *Savitri*, the Lord of Death uses this very method, "truth that slays", against Savitri.)

It is right it should be so;
 Man was made for Joy & Woe;
 And when this we rightly know
 Thro' the World we safely go.

The poet in this verse says that man's life is a mix of joy and sorrow, and that in each life there is happiness followed by sadness and vice versa. This is the nature of this world as it is at present and in no life is there unalloyed happiness or unalloyed sorrow. The poet further says that it is right that it should be so, for it probably teaches man to be humble and goes on to add that when we understand this correctly and keep the right attitude, then we can safely pass through this world, without being affected by it, without losing our goodness and innocence, our godly qualities.

Joy & Woe are woven fine,
 A Clothing for the Soul divine;
 Under every grief & pine
 Runs a joy with silken twine.

Blake says that in this life, joy and sorrow are intimately linked like warp and woof, forming the clothing of the soul, implying that it is by passing through these opposing experiences, that the soul grows. He goes a step further and says that behind every sorrow and pain, there is a hidden joy, almost echoing the thought of

the Indian sages, which says that this world was created by ananda and for ananda, and that sorrow and pain are only a distortion of that ananda and that if we go deep inside the sorrow or pain, we will arrive at the ananda, whose deformation and distortion they are.

The Babe is more than swaddling Bands;
 Throughout all these Human Lands
 Tools were made, & Born were hands,
 Every Farmer Understands.

Blake says here what is an obvious fact, that the baby is more than the clothes or blankets it is wrapped in. But why make such an obvious statement? Is he implying a deeper meaning, that the body is just the wrapping cloth, the outer covering for the baby, the soul, which is wrapped in it? The baby symbolises the soul, the psychic; the clothes are the body, life, mind and they are instruments, tools of the soul. Blake believed in the spiritual body or imaginative body which was eternal and different from the outer, the 'vegetable' mortal body. In his epic masterwork 'Jerusalem' he says,

I know of no other Christianity and of no other Gospel than the liberty both of body and mind to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination — Imagination, the real and Eternal World of which this Vegetable Universe is but a faint shadow, and in which we shall live in our Eternal or Imaginative Bodies, when these Vegetable Mortal Bodies are no more."

Blake through the above verse seems to be making this point that humans are spiritual beings and not just the physical body.

The next two lines seem to be an analogy on the same theme, the difference between the eternal and mortal. Tools are made, while hands are born — implying that the spiritual body, like the hands, is born, created from the spirit while the tools, the outer mortal body is made by nature and will ultimately disintegrate into nature. The outer mortal body is like tools the spirit uses for its expression, for its work.

Every Tear from Every Eye
 Becomes a Babe in Eternity;
 This is caught by Females bright
 And return'd to its own delight.

This is another difficult verse. Blake seems to be saying that every tear or true emotion from the believer's heart, over injustice or suppression or oppression of divine qualities and virtues, never goes waste and is set right in the spiritual world,

becomes a reality in those worlds, a babe in eternity. The 'Females bright' here seems to be heavenly or spiritual creatures which help in undoing the wrong and setting it right.

The Bleat, the Bark, Bellow & Roar,
Are Waves that Beat on Heaven's Shore.

Blake seems to be saying here that the physical world's events have a repercussion in Heaven. It is similar to the earlier verse, in saying that emotional outpourings (represented symbolically by the various animal sounds) reach heaven and have their consequences, good or bad.

The Babe that weeps the Rod beneath
Writes Revenge in realms of death.
The Beggar's Rags, fluttering in Air,
Does to Rags the Heavens tear.

This stanza deals with the oppression of the weak and poor and the terrible consequences of the same, in the form of adverse karma. Blake is a firm believer in the consequences of one's actions and time and again, has pointed out the terrible retribution which will follow the unjust, tyrannical and oppressive actions. Here he is saying that the child who is subjected to corporeal punishment, physical abuse, condemns its abuser, due to automatic operation of law of karma, to similar fate after death, "Writes Revenge in realms of death".

Similarly the oppression of the poor, "The Beggar's Rags, fluttering in Air", may suggest that it has its effect in the heavens, creates tremors in the heavens, which necessarily have their effect. These two lines are in the similar vein as "A Robin Red breast in a Cage / Puts all Heaven in a Rage" at the beginning of the poem.

The Soldier, arm'd with Sword & Gun,
Palsied strikes the Summer's Sun.
The poor Man's Farthing is worth more
Than all the Gold on Afric's Shore.

The theme is still of oppression of the poor and weak. Blake seems to be implying that the soldier armed with sword and gun, symbol of brute authority, using that brute force against the poor, is like striking at the summer's sun, that which is lifegiving, and will hurt its own self-interest. Or in other words, the government using force against its own people is hurting its own self-interest. Blake says that a poor man's farthing, a coin of small value, is worth more in the true sense, than all the outward spread of gold.

One Mite wrung from the Labrer's hands
 Shall buy & sell the Miser's Lands:
 Or, if protected from on high,
 Does that whole Nation sell & buy.

The poet is clearly showing his preference for the hardworking labourer in preference to the rich and landed gentry. Blake here shows the deep seated sympathy and compassion he had for the weak and the poor and the great anguish he felt at the ill-treatment meted out to them by the rich and the powerful.

He who mocks the Infant's Faith
 Shall be mock'd in Age & Death.
 He who shall teach the Child to Doubt
 The rotting Grave shall ne'er get out.

In this stanza Blake is talking about the importance of faith and how important it is not to disturb another's faith. Blake says that one who mocks at or makes fun of a child's faith, something which is so pure and precious and spontaneous and which is directly a gift of the divine, will himself be mocked at and made fun of and laughed at throughout his life and after death. For in the eyes of God it is an unpardonable offence to soil and make impure something so pure as the faith of a child. The corollary of the first two lines are the last two lines, where Blake says that one who teaches a child to doubt will perpetually rot in a grave or in death. It is the same thing but said in a different and dramatically opposite manner. Blake has an innate sense of the beauty and purity and preciousness of a child's faith and feels a great sense of anguish when somebody maliciously hurts this faith.

He who respects the Infant's faith
 Triumphs over Hell & Death.
 The Child's Toys & the Old Man's Reasons
 Are the Fruits of the Two seasons.

Continuing in the same vein as the earlier stanza, Blake says that he who respects and encourages a child's faith, overcomes hell and death, because it is a fact in spiritual life that in respecting and encouraging another's faith, one is increasing one's own faith and also the fact that no act of goodness goes waste. And if it is a child, then all the better, for a child's faith is pure and so natural, an intimate part of him, and to encourage the same in him, is to bring him closer to the Divine in him. In the last two lines Blake seems to make fun of intellectual reasoning when he says that as a child plays with his toys, old men play with their reasons and ideas, they are the toys of older men. Blake seems to condemn futile intellectual philosophy

and reasoning as playing with toys and adds that a child's play and old men's play (reasoning), are the fruits of two seasons, for the first comes from the heart and is spontaneous and pure and natural while the second comes from the mind and is tortured, convoluted, complex and dry.

The Questioner, who sits so sly,
 Shall never know how to Reply.
 He who replies to words of Doubt
 Doth put the Light of Knowledge out.

Blake seems to be saying, the questioner, the one who doubts, will never get knowledge, will 'never know how to Reply' if very fundamental questions were put to him. Blake says that no good is done in replying to the questions and doubts of a person who really is not seeking an answer but who questions and doubts just for the sake of it. It is a waste of time and energy answering such a person; in fact it is idiotic to enter into an argument with such a person, for instead of enlightening one, such an argument may actually cause confusion in the believer and thus, "put the Light of Knowledge out". Or, he puts out, away from him, the light of knowledge.

The Strongest Poison ever known
 Came from Caesar's Laurel Crown.
 Nought can deform the Human Race
 Like to the Armour's iron brace.

Blake here is speaking about the corrupting nature of power and seems to strongly agree with the maxim, 'absolute power corrupts absolutely'. Time and again, history has shown the truth in these words of the poet, and there are numerous examples of son turning against father, brother against brother, for power and kingdom.

When Gold & Gems adorn the Plow
 To peaceful Arts shall Envy Bow.
 A Riddle or the Cricket's Cry
 Is to Doubt a fit Reply.

After talking about what demeans and degrades and deforms man, Blake now talks about the peaceful arts and occupations, poetry, literature, music, farming, etc. which bring out the best in men and help cultivate the divine qualities. Blake says that when money is used for peaceful arts and occupations, "When Gold & Gems adorn the Plow", baser instincts like envy, violence, hatred, etc. encouraged by war, will be driven out and that men will become more civilised and peaceful, "To

peaceful Arts shall Envy Bow". The last two lines may suggest that it is pointless to deal in earnest with the questions that Doubt raises; an ambiguous reply will make him desist.

The Emmet's Inch & Eagle's Mile
 Make Lamé Philosophy to smile.
 He who Doubts from what he sees
 Will ne'er Believe, do what you Please.

An emmet is an ant and its vision is limited to an inch of space while an eagle flying high can see for miles all around. Blake seems to be saying that a person's senses and perception influence his outlook on the world, what we call philosophy. Thus philosophy is dependent upon perception through senses and reasoning, sort of like a blind man groping to find the truth, which is very different from the saints and sages, who have had a direct vision of the truth. Blake seems to be saying that philosophy is lame or not complete in its conclusions, as the methods it uses are not of direct vision but only of inferences. As to why lame philosophy is smiling, it could be that philosophers realise their limitation and their half-true conclusions.

In the next two lines, Blake returns to the theme of doubt and doubters, saying that one who doubts everything he sees and perceives and also hears and reads, will never become a believer, no matter what you do or how hard you try. It would be just a waste of time to try to convince him.

If the Sun & Moon should doubt,
 They'd immediately Go out.
 To be in a Passion you Good may do,
 But no Good if a Passion is in you.

Blake says that doubt cuts at the very foundation of one's self, for it covers up faith, which is the soul's seeing and our link to the Divine. Thus the poet says rather grandly that if the Sun or Moon were to doubt, they would immediately lose their radiance, their *raison d'être*, would 'Go out'. There is of course a great truth here, for if we lose contact with our soul, we in a way cease to exist, for only the outer personality exists with the inner becoming dormant.

In the next two lines Blake says that it is good to be passionate about something in life as it gives a meaning to it, for example to be passionate about art or dance or music, for it is constructive as it gives us energy and motivation to excel and learn. But if, instead of possessing passion, one is possessed by it, then it is not good, for it is destructive, and makes one irrational and a fanatic, making him act stupidly and causing destruction and loss of innocent lives, as we so often see in the present times.

The Whore & Gambler, by the State
 Licenc'd, build that Nation's Fate.
 The Harlot's cry from Street to Street
 Shall weave Old England's winding Sheet.

Blake in these lines shows his opposition to prostitution and gambling, and though Blake was not an orthodox Christian and quite broadminded, he does seem to have disdain for these activities. He says that prostitution and gambling, if legalised by the government, shall effect that nation's fate, for it has bearing on the people's character and morals, generally lowering them. Blake then adds that the harlot's cry, the prostitute's cry or soliciting from street to street, will result in the downfall of England and its demise, "Shall weave Old England's winding Sheet" (winding sheet is shroud, the cloth in which the dead are wrapped).

The Winner's Shout, the Loser's Curse,
 Dance before dead England's Hearse.

These two lines continue in the same manner as the earlier verse. In the earlier lines it was prostitution which was responsible for England's death and in these lines it is gambling. Blake says that the winners and losers in gambling, one shouting and exulting and the other cursing and crying, shall both cause England's downfall and death, "Dance before dead England's Hearse", or coffin.

Every Night & every Morn
 Some to Misery are Born.
 Every Morn & every Night
 Some are Born to sweet delight.
 Some are Born to sweet delight,
 Some are Born to Endless Night.

Blake says that here on earth, men alternate between happiness and misery, that neither of these states is permanent, and that normally we all vacillate from one to the other. Keeping in view what Blake has said in the earlier verses, the implication could be that the present condition of a person is dependent upon his actions, as per the theory of karma.

We are led to Believe a Lie
 When we see not Thro' the Eye
 Which was Born in a Night to perish in a Night
 When the Soul Slept in Beams of Light.

Blake here says that if we see with the outer eye, we shall only see the outer things, which are a lie or falsehood, as they do not reveal the inner truths, for this outer eye was born in ignorance and falsehood, born in night, while the soul slept in beams of light, and is destined to die or perish in night, in ignorance. It is only when we see through the eye, rather than with the eye, or see with the inner eye, the eye of the soul, that we shall see the truth and reality, that we are not the physical being but spiritual beings.

God Appears & God is Light
 To those poor Souls who dwell in the Night,
 But does a Human Form Display
 To those who Dwell in Realms of day.

In this final verse, Blake says that in this world of ignorance, darkness, born of night, God appears as light to help all those poor souls who dwell there. Broadly, God appearing as light and 'God is Light', may be taken as all those Divine qualities and acts and emotions, which help take one towards the Divine and would include compassion, love, harmony, humility, etc. Blake then seems to be narrating his experience when he says that, to those souls living in light, in spiritual truth, in realms of day, God appears in human form, as a Divine Personality, and by implication one can have personal relations with Him. Blake from early years had spiritual visions and as Sri Aurobindo has said (quoted at the beginning), Blake was not only a seer, but almost an inhabitant of other planes and his second subtle sight was his normal sight. Thus the last two lines definitely seem to have the stamp of his own experience and seeing.

In conclusion, we see that Blake was a Seer who saw and heard what he wrote, and not just an intellectual. His seeing was of the true kind and he sought to bring the truth, beauty, harmony, light, bliss of the other world, in which he lived, into this world of ignorance, so that this world would also become beautiful, harmonious, truthful, blissful and full of light.

ANIL PURI

THE MOTHER IN THE PLAYGROUND

(Continued from the issue of December 2016)

Meditation in the Playground

Meditation on Sundays and Thursdays in the Playground is a regular feature in our programme nowadays. It starts at 7.45 p.m. with a recorded piece of short duration — either music by the Mother or Sunil-da, or a portion of the Mother's recorded talks. This meditation continues till 8.15 p.m. Many people, Ashram inmates and visitors alike, gather in the Playground to attend this meditation on these two evenings.

In the early days, when the Mother was physically present in the Playground, a short meditation would be held twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays after the classes. On the other days, after the marching by the elders was over, all the groups stood in formation in front of the Mother who used to guide the 'concentration' standing in front of the map of India.

Gangaram, one of the senior members of the Department of Physical Education, gives us a report regarding the meditation held on Sundays in the Playground:

20.1.1957

The Mother called me and said: "Today, arrange all the mats for meditation." And she asked me to keep the front row vacant, as she wanted certain persons to sit there. She said: "After the concentration, I will see the birthday people in my room and then I will go to the Guest House (the Children's courtyard) for 'distribution' to the children. From there, I will come and sit for meditation." Everything was arranged. The Mother came straight from the Guest House for the meditation.

This is how the Sunday meditation started and has been held every Sunday since then.

In Suprabha Nahar's diary, it is noted:

January 31, 1957

From today on Thursdays also there will be meditation, instead of distribution, for half an hour — same as on Sunday.

Thus we find that these two days were fixed for meditation by the Mother.

A piece of music chosen by the Mother or music composed by Sunil-da or some chanting would be played during the meditation.

On 30 July 1965, Tara Jauhar wrote to the Mother:

This evening we heard one of the tapes of your Wednesday class regarding the same physical education programme for boys and girls. . . . Today we were very inspired, and we even felt your presence, just as before at the Playground during your classes.

Some of us discuss the possibility of being able to listen regularly to tapes of your classes at least once a week.

If you give me permission, sweet Mother, I will take the initiative to arrange everything, and I am sure that many young boys and girls will come to attend and will profit from it.

The Mother replied:

It is very good. The idea is good and you have my full approval.
With my love and blessings.

(Growing up with the Mother, pp. 50-51)

Since then the Mother's recorded talks are played once a week during the meditation.

Interviews with the Mother

Four days a week — Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays — the Mother gave interviews to people who had specially requested to meet her. Immediately after receiving the salute of the groups, she would walk down to the easternmost room, the Interview Room. As long as her interview lasted — and sometimes it would take a long time indeed — the groups continued their marching exercises. As soon as the interview was over, she would take her place in front of the map for guiding the general concentration.

Often, others who had not taken any formal permission for an interview, would be waiting outside the door and peep in as the person inside came out of the room; and, when the Mother saw the person, she would call him in. Many of us have taken this opportunity of going to her and having a wonderful impromptu talk with her!

When in need, we could meet her very easily in the Playground. We could meet her as she would be on her way from one area of the Playground going to another area. I would often wait for her in front of her room so that I could meet her as she stepped out for leaving the Playground. I remember that on one occasion, as she came out of her room and before I could say anything, she looked up at the sky and asked, "How many colours can you see in the stars?" My eyes were always weak, but before I could answer, she said: "Now my eyes are not so good; but earlier I could see different colours around the stars and planets!"

Once as she was passing by she came to me and said, "Union with the Divine is quite easy my child. You have only to go up." She had told one of us earlier that she had her conscious union with the Divine when she was 26 years old! And that came to my mind.

Then she continued, "All the difficulties start when you start coming down. Do you read the *Prayers and Meditations*?"

"Yes Mother."

"Well, A to Z of this process is written in that book."

This was her way with many others too.

The Mother used to tell us so many things on her own.

We quote some wonderful experiences from Priti Das Gupta's book:

She was once walking in the Playground as the March Past was to begin in some time. She came and stood under the Neem-tree leaning against the wall in silence for a while. Then rather unexpectedly She began:

"I have come this time in all my aspects. This has never happened before in the history of the earth, I have never come in this totality."

I looked at Her, wonder-struck. Looking gently at me, the Mother just smiled. I asked Her all of a sudden:

"Are you Mother Durga?"

The Mother smiled a little once again and nodded in agreement. I saw Mother Durga before me! What an indescribable form! Sri Aurobindo's *Durgastotra* flashed in my mind:

*Mother Durga! Rider on the lion, trident in hand, thy body of beauty
armour-clad . . .*

Then I asked:

"Are you Mother Mahalakshmi?"

The Mother nodded once again in the same way. A mysterious smile lit up Her face yet again. An otherworldly loveliness flowed from Her. Standing close to Her, my heart filled up with a marvellous newborn joy. I felt the magic of the Mother's immaculate beauty. There was so much enchantment in that magnetic beauty of Hers. Sri Aurobindo's lines echoed in my ears:

*Above them is the miracle of eternal beauty, an unseizable secret of divine
harmonies, the compelling magic of an irresistible universal charm and
attraction . . .*

My uncontrollable curiosity compelled me once again and I could not help asking:

“Are you Mother Mahasaraswati?”

The Mother answered each of my questions with the same compassionate love and for a few seconds revealed to me Her Mahasaraswati aspect. Her patience was infinite. I couldn't control my curiosity and the questions kept coming.

“Mother, are you Rajrajeshwari?”

Once again the Mother nodded in agreement.

“Tranquil is she and wonderful, great and calm for ever.”

I felt the Mother very distant as She stood before me solemn and immobile.

I kept naming all the gods and goddesses and it was always the same question: “Are you Mother Anandamayi? Are you Mother Chandi? Are you Mother this, Are you Mother that?”

The Mother just kept nodding in assent. My bag of questions was inexhaustible! Finally, at the end, I asked Her:

“Are you Mother Mahakali?”

That vast amazing form of the Mother comes up before my eyes even today. How unattainable She looked as I stared at Her helplessly. Where was that ever familiar Mother of ours? That form of Hers was so unfamiliar that terrible fear gripped me. But the Mother came back to normal within a flash. With a soft smile She took my hands into Hers. However, I could not come out of that state even with the divine touch of Her hands. I just stood there silently.

Sri Aurobindo's description of Mahakali in the sixth chapter of *The Mother* flashed in my mind. Seeing the Mother in these different forms, I was overwhelmed by an unearthly sort of feeling. The Mother began talking to me as before and my fear slowly dissolved. The Mother was smiling again. I again found my Mother in the form of my friend.

I had the same experience on another occasion. One day Manoj asked the Mother in the Playground:

“Mother, why did you create boys and girls?”

The Mother kept quiet for some time. Then she laughed and said:

“Your seeing humans as boy or girl is not quite right. When I talk to you, I don't think this is Manoj or that is Priti. I talk to the soul or the inner being that is within each one of you. This soul is not male or female. So don't rack your brains with all these outer differences. You know that I am neither male nor female. One day you will realise who I am.”

The Mother looked at both of us with mysteriously happy eyes. I felt as if somewhere . . . I had a vision of Her in Her immensity. Just for an instant. And then once more She assumed Her usual form. I don't know why but I felt that was indeed Her real form.

Moments Eternal (pp. 194-96)

She was never in a hurry when she met us. She listened to our problems so patiently and answered our queries, filling us with her Love and Compassion.

When the group members of the ladies group needed new uniforms to replace their old ones they came to me and I wrote down their requirements on a chit pad, took that to the Mother for her signature. This done, the chit would be given to the particular member who took it to our tailoring department and received her uniform from there. I remember that once I was waiting for the Mother in the Playground with the chit pad in my hand. She came out of the room and when she saw me she came towards me and while advancing towards me said with teasing smile: "*Billet doux?*" she asked and while advancing towards me, smiling in the same manner, repeated once again ". . . *Billet doux?* . . ."

I just looked at her.

"Oh! You don't know what is *billet doux*? It is the small love note lovers pass between them!" She perhaps enjoyed my ignorance, gave her signature and I received once again her enchanting smile.

I remember that once I saw a few women were near her and I also joined them. Gauri-di, Priti-di and someone else was also there. Gauri-di was smiling and complaining to the Mother about the kitty cap we had to wear as part of our uniform. "See Mother, for Priti, with her longish face, this kitty cap is all right, but look at me, Mother."

She was taller and more plump than Priti-di.

"But look, Mother," she said, and blew up her cheeks, "with the kitty cap on, my face looks like a ball!"

Everyone there, including the Mother, burst out laughing.

The Mother participated in our little amusements also. She was our Friend, she was our Mother.

Film shows in the Playground

On Saturday evenings, after the group activities are over, whenever possible, films are shown in the Playground. Those interested — Ashram inmates, students of the Centre of Education and visitors to the Ashram — come to the Playground for the show.

The screen used for projection is the boundary wall on the eastern side of the Playground. At Pranab-da's suggestion, the height of the previous wall was raised to allow projection of films with wide angle and cinemascope format. The first cinemascope film was shown on July 6, 1963, long after the Mother had discontinued coming to the Playground.

The Mother has said, "Films are permitted in the Ashram not as an amusement but as part of education." (Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, *I Remember* . . . p. 119)

Pranab-da writes: "At the very beginning, the Mother would herself see and

approve the film to be shown.”

After her activities in the Playground were over, she with Pranab-da would pre-view the films. The 16mm projector would be taken into the classroom and the films were projected on the wall beside her room in the Playground.

Later on, when the 35mm projector was set up, the Mother stopped taking the decision and asked me to view the films first. I used to tell the Mother about the film and after that she would decide whether it was worth screening.

The films that were perverse or in bad taste, with an excess of emotion, cheap farce or too much violence, these, the Mother thought were not in harmony with the Ashram life and she rejected them . . . Mother gave great importance to a film’s theme and intentions . . . Cinema is certainly an art, and this art has many facets such as acting, photography, direction, music, costumes, make-up, décor, laboratory work, editing, etc. All these facets get beautifully highlighted through cinema. But art is not merely for art’s sake. Art is only a medium to express an emotion or an ideal. (*Ibid.*, pp. 119-21)

The Mother did not approve of the Ashram inmates visiting cinema-halls in the town to watch films. According to her, these halls were unhygienic and the coming together of all types of people resulted in a sordid atmosphere. Moreover, one did not have any control over the film shown.

In 1945, the Mother asked Pranab-da to take the young children for a cinema show. It was the English version of a children’s story in French, *Pinocchio*, which was being shown in a near-by cinema hall, Salle Jeanne d’Arc.

Some time prior to August 1948, a film, “Rodin’s Art”, was shown in the same hall. In 1948-49 another one, a Russian film on the May Day Parade, was shown in a hall which at that time was situated on Jawaharlal Nehru Street. The members of physical education and quite a few other Ashram inmates were also present. The Mother herself was there on both the occasions.

Both the halls were booked beforehand for the students and the members of the Ashram. An important feature was that on both the occasions, the halls were thoroughly cleaned by the Ashram management so that the Mother could attend the show.

From time to time people from the French, American and British embassies used to come with 16mm films and projectors, and these films were shown in the Playground. She supported and encouraged film shows in our Playground, as cinema with its audio-visual mode of expression could be a powerful medium of education and leave a very strong impression on the children.

In the files of the Department of Physical Education we find a handwritten note by the Mother in 1949, an observation made regarding the cinema shows.

During the cinema shows there are some persons who make a noise by talking, laughing at the wrong time, even jeering and running about. This is very disturbing to the rest of the audience.

The Mother wrote in 1962:

The cinema is given for those who like to look at pictures and to listen to the music and the words, and they have a right to look and to hear quietly.

Those who cannot stop talking, chatting, laughing and making a noise or even running about, ought not to be there, because all what they do, they can do elsewhere without spoiling the pleasure of those who are not like them.

So here is the decision: a silent audience — or no cinema.

In 1950, Dakshinapada-da (Pranab-da's father) offered a silent 16mm film projector. The screen for projection of the films was placed on the northern side of the Playground. The Mother would see these films with us at that time — her chair would be placed in the middle of the Playground. Later on, two 16mm sound projectors were offered to the Mother from Africa by Dyumanbhai's friends. Vishwanath-da was given the charge of running the projector and our Cine-Service was born. Like all the other departments of the Ashram, the Cine-Service section also continued to develop gradually.

Gangaram gives us the following information:

Some time in early 1956, Ajit Bose (a devotee of the Mother from Calcutta and himself associated with cinema industry), offered a 35mm sound projector to the Ashram. That projector was kept for some time on the terrace above the Mother's room in the Playground. A temporary shed was then made for the equipment. There was a trial run and the film was shown on April 27, 1956. The film was in Bengali, "Khelar Ghar". Initially the projector would be placed in her room and films were projected from there.

A proper room was built in 1956 above the Mother's room in the Playground and it was referred to as Projector-room. Viswanath-da was in charge and he had Arun Kumar and Gopinath with a few others as helpers.

Wilfy (Wilfred Pinto) took the responsibility of getting the English films. Tarachand Barjatiya supplied the Hindi films, Ajit Bose the Bengali films and Limaye would get the Marathi films.

The last film seen by the Mother was a Telugu film "Thyagayya" on the 11th of October 1958.

Christmas Celebrations in the Playground

December 21 is the shortest day of the year. Then the days get longer again. The Mother has said:

That is why the 25th of December was a festival of Light long before Jesus Christ. This festival was in vogue long before Christianity; it originated in Egypt and very probably the birthday of Christ was fixed on the same day as that of the return of the Light.

(Questions and Answers, 1950-1951, CWM Vol. 4, p. 6)

According to the Mother, December 25 is the day of the 'Birth of Light' and keeping that ideal in mind, Christmas day is celebrated here every year. Initially, the function was held in Udar Pinto's house. The schoolchildren were invited in the evening and they enjoyed playing games, singing songs and receiving presents.

This celebration was shifted to the Playground in 1947 and continued to be held there till 1956, when the venue was shifted to our Theatre Hall. A traditional Christmas tree in a garden-pot would be placed on the eastern side near the boundary wall of the Playground. Quite a large area around it would be cordoned off. Some adults and children alike would be busy decorating this area with balloons and colourful festoons. A few presents for the children were hung on the tree and the rest was arranged on the floor around it.

The Mother used to come to the Playground after her game of tennis. She would take her seat near the tree and distribute presents to all the children. All those who were there also received some presents and sweets from her.

The functions on the Anniversary Day of the School

On the 2nd of December 1943 the School was inaugurated. So, December 2 is the anniversary day of our School. To mark the occasion a cultural programme in the morning and a physical demonstration in the evening were arranged. In 1947, both programmes took place in the Playground itself. A stage was put up on the western side of the Playground for the cultural programme. In the evening, the same stage was used for the invitees to sit, and in the open ground in front the demonstration was held. The Mother witnessed the evening show, but, was not present for the cultural programme as it was held in the morning. However, in 1947, she made an exception for the French drama — *L'anglais tel qu'on le parle*. The day before their performance, the two important actors — Minoo and Hriday Bhattacharya (Pranab-da's younger brother) met the Mother in the Ashram building and requested her to see their performance the next morning. The Mother granted their wish. She put on a sari (which was her evening attire in those days) and walked from the Ashram

building to the Playground to watch their performance that morning!

As long as these programmes were held in the Playground, a temporary stage would be put up a few days before the final function. After the final performance was over, the stage would be dismantled.

The Mother was present every year in the Playground from 1946 to 1954 during the physical demonstration programmes. Since 1955 these demonstrations are being held in the Sports ground.

The cultural programmes consisting of recitations, dance, drama etc. were held in the Playground in the evening on the 1st of December from 1948 till 1955. When our separate Theatre Hall was constructed, these programmes were performed there and the Mother went there to see them.

The Mother took a lot of interest in these programmes. During the daytime, she would herself coach the performers in the Ashram main building. In the evenings, while she was present in the Playground, she would also spend some of her time to correct the performance of the participants, give her comments on the costumes of the performers or discuss the decor of the stage. The background sceneries were painted by our artists.

We give here one example of her work in this field. In 1948, a French play was to be enacted. Amita, one of the performers, remembers:

. . . one day, in the Playground, the Mother suddenly called me and asked me to bring my script. It was quite a surprise. Then, She made me sit beside Her on the floor near a pillar of the verandah that has now been demolished. She coached me and corrected my French diction. Pavitra-da, the Mother's secretary and also the Director of the School happened to be passing by, walking towards the entrance of the Playground.

She called him and asked him to read the other role. He sat on the floor beside Her and we did the dialogue of Armand and Henriette. The Mother was quite satisfied with my reading except for the exclamatory sentence. She asked me to repeat it a few times in one particular way. But, I just couldn't manage it! Every time I said the line, She kept saying that my intonation was still too English! That was when I started noticing the difference in the tone of the two languages . . .

In 1950, the Mother attended the rehearsals as in the previous years without fail, following the corrections in detail. Everyone interested in any of the performing arts wanted to participate; so, along with the recitations in various languages, we had two dance-dramas, one for the younger students and *Siva-Parvati* for the older ones. I did Parvati and Anuben, our teacher, did the role of Siva. We also had a recitation in English where Manoj and I recited a passage from Book Three, canto four of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*. The whole programme ran for six hours or so!

The programme was an enjoyable evening full of an intense aesthetic effort where the Mother Herself was present, watching the items with great interest and critically too! As She had followed the rehearsals, She wanted us to rise up to the occasion. After the programme was over, we were always eager to hear what She had to say about the final performance of the day.

The whole Playground used to be full of spectators, including French officials and others of the town connected with the Ashram, who had special chairs reserved for them. Some of us as students used to help Wilfy tie the name cards on each invitee's chair. Pavitra-da and Wilfy were in charge of receiving them. For these people from the town also it used to be an important occasion which they looked forward to attend.

We end this section with a few anecdotes.

Gauri [B] and I [Priti DG] used to exercise with the Mother. On some days after coming from the Tennis Ground, the Mother would take Gauri and me behind the stage. (In those days [1948-1955] the cultural programme of 1st December took place in the Playground itself on a stage that was specially constructed for it.) And then the exercises would begin. We stood on either side of the Mother and stretched Her arms in a kind of drill. We would make Her do all sorts of exercises while doing them ourselves. You cannot imagine the enthusiasm we put into it. The Mother went on doing everything we told Her, like a little girl. One day something very amusing happened. The Mother called us and said:

“Today let us play a new game. My hands on your hands and your feet on my feet, we will move and dance together.”

And the Mother showed us how. I fell from the sky! How could I ever do this? How could I ever touch the Mother's Feet with mine? And the more the Mother showed us, the more nervous I became and just stood there transfixed! Then the Mother called Gauri. And both of them began this new game together. I said to myself that if Gauri moved her leg too vigorously then the Mother would surely fall. I felt extremely nervous and told Gauri as soon as the game ended:

“Let us bow down before the Mother. Whatever it be, you have touched the Mother with your feet.”

And we both prostrated ourselves before the Mother. The Mother was very pleased and caressed our heads affectionately as if She were caressing two puppies.

(Priti Das Gupta, *Moments Eternal*, pp. 280-81)

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Pushpa remembers and shares with us an interesting incident of long ago:

As far as I remember, Pavitra-da had gone that evening to the Lycée Français, the French college in Pondicherry, to conduct some examination. He would be delayed and it would not be possible for him to drive the Mother in the car back to the Ashram. That evening Mother stayed with us for some time. Very few of us were there. Mother asked us if someone had a harmonium. Divakar, a Gujarati boy, staying in Dortoir, had one and he brought it to the Mother. She played on it. All of us sat around her and listened spell-bound by her music. Then she asked if anyone knew how to play it and Divakar played a tune. Then she went out by the Guest House gate and started walking towards the Ashram. Some of us went with her and followed her. We walked surrounding her, like children led by the Mother. She entered the gate of the Ashram and chose the narrow passage of the rockery, observing everything with great interest. She gave special attention to the plant 'Touch me not'.

It was a wonderful experience for us!

*

One evening, after our regular 'Group' activity in the Tennis Ground was over my sister and I reached our house which is situated diagonally opposite to the Playground. We were surprised to find the big gates of our house wide open. On entering the outer courtyard, we found some people had gathered in our brother's (Dr. Satyabrata) clinic which was situated on the eastern corner of the premises. We saw that the Mother was also there. A young French boy had complained of acute abdominal pain during his Playground activity and he was carried to this clinic. Dr. Satyabrata was examining the boy and we saw the Mother standing near the boy and rubbing the little boy's body with a cotton pad. After a while, she lifted her arm and showed a dark brown-coloured cotton pad. "How dirty!" she exclaimed and threw the cotton ball in the bin. However, after all the serious medical examination and the Mother's concern, the truth came out. This little boy had eaten raw green mangoes that afternoon and so the stomachache! He was already better. With a sigh of relief everyone went back smiling. All's well that ends well!

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The Mother became so preoccupied with the various activities in the Playground that she would return at 8 or 9 p.m. with a garland around her neck (put by Pranab) and she would offer it at Sri Aurobindo's feet.

(Nirodbaran, *Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo*, 3rd edition, p. 113)

(To be continued)

CHITRA SEN

Passage 1

The distinction between the Transcendental, the Cosmic, the Individual Divine is not my invention, nor is it native to India or to Asia — it is on the contrary a recognised European teaching current in the esoteric tradition of the Catholic Church where it is the authorised explanation of the Trinity, — Father, Son and Holy Ghost, — and it is very well-known to European mystic experience. In essence it exists in all spiritual disciplines that recognise the omnipresence of the Divine — in Indian Vedantic experience and in Mahomedan Yoga (not only the Sufi, but other schools also) — the Mahomedans even speak of not two or three but many levels of the Divine until one reaches the Supreme. As for the idea in itself, surely there is a difference between the individual, the cosmos in space and time, and something that exceeds this cosmic formula or any cosmic formula. There is a cosmic consciousness experienced by many which is quite different in its scope and action from the individual consciousness, and if there is a consciousness beyond the cosmic, infinite and essentially eternal, not merely extended in Time, that also must be different from these two. And if the Divine is or manifests Himself in these three, is it not conceivable that in aspect, in His working, He may differentiate Himself so much that we are driven, if we are not to confound all truth of experience, if we are not to limit ourselves to a mere static experience of something indefinable, to speak of a triple aspect of the Divine? In the practice of Yoga there is a great dynamic difference in one's way of dealing with these three possible realisations. If I realise only the Divine as that, not my personal self, which yet moves secretly all my personal being and which I can bring forward out of the veil, or if I build up the image of that Godhead in my members, it is a realisation but a limited one. If it is the Cosmic Godhead that I realise, losing in it all personal self, that is a very wide realisation, but I become a mere channel of the universal Power and there is no personal or divinely individual consummation forme. If I shoot up to the transcendental realization only, I lose both myself and the world in the transcendental Absolute. If on the other hand my aim is none of these things by itself, but to realise and also to manifest the Divine in the world, bringing down for the purpose a yet unmanifested Power, — such as the Supermind, — a harmonisation of all three becomes imperative. I have to bring it down, and from where shall I bring it down — since it is not yet manifested in the cosmic formula — if not from the unmanifest Transcendence, which I must reach and realise? I have to bring it into the cosmic formula and, if so, I must realise the cosmic Divine and become conscious of the cosmic self and the cosmic forces. But I have to embody it here, — otherwise it is left as an influence only and not a thing fixed in the physical world — and it is through the Divine in the individual alone that this can be done.

These are elements in the dynamics of spiritual experience and I am obliged to admit them if a divine work has to be done.

The European type of monism is usually pantheistic and weaves the universe and the Divine so intimately together that they can hardly be separated. But what explanation of the evil and misery can there be there? The Indian view is that the Divine is the inmost substance of the Universe, but he is also outside it, transcendent; good and evil, happiness and misery are only phenomena of cosmic experience due to a division and diminution of consciousness in the manifestation, but are not part of the essence or of the undivided whole-consciousness either of the Divine or of our own spiritual being.

Passage 2

To live in the consciousness of the Atman is to live in the calm, unity and peace that is above things and separate from the world even when pervading it. But for the psychic consciousness there are two things, the world and itself acting in the world. The Jivatman has not come down into the world, it stands above, always the same — supporting the different beings, mental etc. which act here. The psychic is what has come down here — its function is to offer all things to the Divine for transformation.

The Self and Nature or Prakriti

The Self or Atman is inactive, Nature (Prakriti) or Shakti acts. When the Self is realised it is first an infinite existence, wideness, silence, freedom, peace that is felt — that is called Atman or Self.

When action takes place, it is according to the realisation either felt as forces of Nature working in that wideness, as the Divine Shakti working or as the cosmic Divine or various powers of him working. It is not felt that the Self is acting.

*

One may be aware of the silent static self without relation to the play of the cosmos. Again, one may be aware of the universal static self omnipresent in everything without being supra-sensuously awake to the movement of the dynamic *visvaprakriti*. The first realisation of the Self or Brahman is often a realisation of something that separates itself from all form, name, action, movement, exists in itself only, regarding the cosmos as only an amass of cinematographic shapes unsubstantial and empty of reality. That was my own first complete realisation of the Nirvana in the Self. That does not mean a wall between Self and Brahman, but a scission between the essential self-existence and the manifested world.

In the experience of Yoga the self or being is in essence one with the Divine or at the least it is a portion of the Divine and has all the divine potentialities. But in manifestation it takes two aspects, the Purusha and Prakriti, conscious being and Nature. In Nature here the Divine is veiled, and the individual being is subjected to Nature which acts here as the lower Prakriti, a force of Ignorance, Avidya. The Purusha in itself is divine, but exteriorized in the ignorance of Nature it is as the

individual apparent being imperfect with her imperfection. Thus the soul or psychic essence, which is the Purusha entering into the evolution and supporting it, carries in itself all the divine potentialities, but the individual psychic being which it puts forth as its representative assumes the imperfection of Nature and evolves in it till it has recovered its full psychic essence and united itself with the Self above of which the soul is the individual projection in the evolution. This duality in the being on all its planes, for it is true in different ways not only of the Self and the psychic but of the mental, vital and physical Purushas, has to be grasped and accepted before the experiences of the Yoga can be fully understood. The Being is one throughout, but on each plane of Nature, it is represented by a form of itself which is proper to that plane, the mental Purusha in the mental plane, the vital Purusha in the vital, the physical Purusha in the physical. The Taittiriya Upanishad speaks of two other planes of the being, the Knowledge or Truth plane and the Ananda plane, each with its Purusha, but although influences may come down from them these are superconscious to the human mind and their nature is not yet organised here.