

MOTHER INDIA

JANUARY, 1973

Price : Re. 1-25

Posting Date for MOTHER INDIA :

JAN. to OCT. issues : 26th to 28th

NOV.-DEC. (JOINT) issue : 10th to 12th DEC.

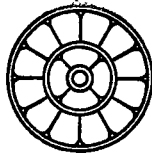
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Subscription rates: Annual Rs. 12.00, £ 1.25, \$ 3.00

Single copy Re. 1.25 in India.

All correspondence to be addressed to
MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2, India.
Editor's Phone: 782

Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

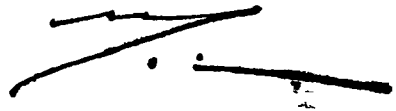


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXV

No. 1

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail".

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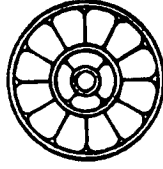
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Editor: K. D. SETHNA
 Managing Editor: K. R. PODDAR
 Published by: P. COUNOUMA
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, PONDICHERRY-2
 Printed by: AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI
 at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry-2
 PRINTED IN INDIA

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers under No: R. N. 8667/63



THE MOTHER'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

When you are conscious of the whole world
at the same time, then you can become
conscious of the Divine.

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

TRANSFORMATION AND THE PROBLEM OF EATING

The supramental transformation is hard labour and needs a strong body. For some time more, probably more than a hundred years, the physical body will need to eat in order to keep its strength; and we have to comply with this necessity.

December, 1972

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

THERE is no possibility of doing this Yoga, if one cannot give himself to the Divine Power and trust to its workings. If he lives only in the mind and its questionings and ideas, it is not possible. The test of capacity is to be able to quiet the mind, to feel a greater Divine Power at work in one, the Power of the Mother, and to be able to trust to it and aid its workings by the rejection of all that contradicts them in the nature. It is not much use his coming here for Darshan unless he has this experience, gets this opening and can follow it up for some time.

19th June, 1929

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1972)

(This new series of answers by the Mother to questions put by the children of the Ashram appeared for the first time in the Bulletin of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education but in a somewhat incomplete form. We now give, in a new English translation, the full text as it was taped, with here and there a few special additions or modifications made by the Mother at the time of its first publication in French in February 1968.)

July 25, 1956

“It may be said that a complete act of divine love and worship has in it three parts that are the expressions of a single whole, — a practical worship of the Divine in the act, a symbol of worship in the form of the act expressing some vision and seeking or some relation with the Divine, an inner adoration and longing for oneness or feeling of oneness in the heart and soul and spirit.”

(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 184)

I have not understood the first two parts very well.

THERE is a purely physical form of the act, a form like those of cults in which a particular gesture, a particular movement is made and meant to express the consecration. That is purely material, as for example, lighting incense, arranging offerings, or even looking after a temple, decorating an idol, indeed all such purely physical acts.

The second part is a sort of mental consecration which makes the act a symbol. One is not just satisfied with lighting incense, but while lighting incense one makes this gesture symbolic, — for example, of the aspiration burning in the body or of self-giving in a self-effacement, in the purification of the fire. That is to say, first the act, then the symbol of this act and the symbolic understanding of what is done.

And finally, behind these two, an aspiration for union; that all this, these acts and the symbol that goes with them, may be only a means of going closer and closer to the Divine and making yourself fit to unite with Him.

These three things must be there for the act to be complete; that is, something purely material, something mental, and something psychic, psychic aspiration. If one of the three is there without the other two, it is incomplete. As a rule, very rarely are the three consciously united. That is found in beings exceptional in sincerity and consecration: the entire being, in all its parts, participates in the action.

(Silence)

(*The Mother shows a packet of written questions.*)

Well, there was a time we had some difficulty in finding questions; now we have gone to the other extreme! I have so many that they would keep us at least till midnight if they were all to be answered! So I am being obliged to make a selection.... There is one at once very common and very practical which seems to me quite appropriate.

I have noted (much too often, I must say) that the majority among you do not listen to what I say, so much so that many a time I have answered a question in great detail and immediately afterwards someone or other among you asks me exactly the same question, as though I had said nothing! And the phenomenon is explicable: everyone is shut up in his own thought, as moreover, I suppose, you are in the habit of doing at school where you repeat your lesson to yourself if you are attentive and hard-working, and don't listen to what the teacher is asking or the other students answering, and thus lose three-fourths of the advantage of not being alone in the class. Here, it is more serious, for I never give a personal, individual answer, I reply for everybody to profit by it and if, instead of listening, you continue thinking of what is in your head, it is obvious that you lose the opportunity of learning something. That's the first point. If you are here, well, first listen, don't think of something else.... But that does not suffice, that's just the beginning: there is one good way of listening and many bad ways of listening.

I don't know if any of you are sufficiently fond of music to know how to hear it. But if you want to listen to music, you must create an absolute silence in your head, must not follow or accept a single thought, and be entirely concentrated, like a sort of screen which receives, without movement or noise, the vibration of music. That is the only way, there is no other, the only way of hearing music and understanding it. If you admit in the least the movements and fancies of your thought, the whole value of the music escapes you. Well, to understand a teaching which is not quite of the ordinary material sort but implies an opening to something more deep within, this necessity of silence is still greater. If, instead of listening to what you are told, you begin to jump upon the idea in order to put another question or even to discuss what is said under the false pretext of understanding better, all that you are told passes like smoke without leaving any effect.

Similarly, when you have an experience, you must never, during the period of the experience, try to understand what it is, for you immediately cause it to vanish, or you deform it and take away its purity; in the same way, if you want a spiritual teaching to enter into you, you must be absolutely *immobile* in your head, immobile like a mirror which not only reflects but absorbs the ray of light, lets it enter and go deep within, so that from the depths of your consciousness it may spring forth, some day or other, in the form of knowledge.

If you don't do that, you are wasting your time, and, into the bargain, wasting mine. That's a proved fact. I thought I had already told you this several times,

but still, perhaps I didn't tell you clearly enough. If you come here, come with the intention of *listening in silence*. What happens you will know afterwards; the effect of this silent attitude you will recognise later; but for the moment, the only thing to do is to be like this (*gesture*), silent, immobile, attentive, concentrated.

That is all.

The second question is of an external kind, relatively. But it seems quite indispensable, for it concerns our sports education and also, generally, the psychological basis on which we have founded our activity here. These things have been written by Sri Aurobindo, I have written them very often, have explained them to you many a time, but I am really sorry I am obliged to state that it has not entered your consciousness.

I don't want to start a war against what you feel and do, but I should like you at least to understand *why* things are done here as they are, instead of letting yourselves go in a retrograde impulsiveness and copying all that is done elsewhere under the pretext that it is "like that" that things are done, under the pretext that your parents and great-grandparents, your relatives and friends, and the grandparents of your friends, all those who stay outside continue to do things in this way, and consider it the normal, natural way of doing them.

I don't dispute the fact, in the sense that men were created by Nature for a special purpose and special ends, and in order to realise her ends she has produced beings and given them special habits also and special functions. Consequently, if you speak of "natural" things, I cannot tell you that this is not "natural", for that is the way of Nature. But still, I believe I have told you — not once but many times, and Sri Aurobindo also has written this, not once but many a time — that we are not here to recommence, perpetuate, continue what is done elsewhere. And we have concretised this fact specially in our education; for I must say, without offending anyone, that those who come after having already lived much, those who have quite a heavy past behind them may find it difficult to change their attitude and point of view immediately, but if you take very young children who have not yet been too spoiled (they are always spoiled), but those who have not yet been too spoiled by ordinary education, the ideas of their family, the atavism of parents, etc., you have a chance of orientating the consciousness on the right path and getting a tangible and concrete result.

To tell the truth, we have nothing to complain about, for we have had striking proofs that if one knows how to do it, what we claim is possible.

What we claim is this, that in similar conditions, with the same education and the same possibilities, there is no reason to make a categorical distinction, final and imperative, between what we call men and women. For we human beings are the expression of a single soul. It is true, as I said at the beginning, that Nature has differentiated its expressions for the satisfaction of its needs and the realisation of its purpose, but if our needs and purposes are of *another* kind and we don't recognise

physical ends as conceived by Nature final and absolute, then we can try to develop the consciousness on another line.

Unfortunately, we have noted one thing. As the years pass and the little girls grow into big girls, suddenly we find that they begin to remember that they are girls, that they must be pretty, must please, must dress up in a special way, put on little affectations to attract attention — and the whole result of our work falls to the ground.

There are some (there are always exceptions to the rule) who have understood and try to realise. But even among those there remains in the background that kind of little satisfaction of not being quite “like the others”, of being able to do what the others cannot, and for this to be seen clearly, well, they must compare themselves with the others!

So that is exactly the occasion of what I have just told you. It is a question from one of you which has given rise to another question, and I hope that if I explain to you once more in detail, insisting on the fact, we shall be able perhaps to start once again and realise something more complete and more clear.

We come down altogether to earthly things: somebody has been very successful at athletics and has come in first in an item. This somebody is a girl. And so, ah! beside the satisfaction of having done well, there was a little satisfaction in having done better than the others, and she came to ask:

Why are women's records not announced?

We have, I believe, repeated and reiterated that there are no “women’s” and no “men’s” records, there are only group records. There is the green group (the several green groups), there is the red group, the grey group, the blue group, the khaki group, the white group. You may tell me that some of these groups are exclusively men’s or women’s. I shall answer with what I have just said, that unless one comes here when very young, it is difficult to change one’s habits, and that is what has made this separation necessary — but it is not the ideal thing. And if we made it a habit to announce gloriously: “This very remarkable girl has done what no other girl could do before”, oh! la, la, how we would tumble down! Without taking into account that this encourages vanity (which is not good), it is also a statement that this fact is remarkable *because it is a girl*; now it is not at all a remarkable fact that it is a girl: it is remarkable because she has done very well and there are many boys who have not done so well. But if one wants to magnify this fine fact by comparing it with what other girls have not done equally well, that becomes deplorable.

So this question was brought to me. I believe that person has been given the answer which I have just told you, that there are only group records and no records of sexes.

But that is not all. I am told that another question is being asked not once but hundreds of times, specially by those who come from outside with all the ideas of the world outside, this question:

'Why do you have the same programme of physical education for boys and girls?'

There are some who consider it a scandal; some consider it a glaring error from the physical, material point of view. "Why aren't girls treated in a special way and quite differently from boys?..." Then the great argument: "...as it is done everywhere."

Ah! thank you. Then why do we have an Ashram? Why do we have a Centre of Education? If everywhere the same things are done, we don't need to repeat them, we won't do them better than others.

And when they put this argument in my way, they can tell me nothing that appears to me more utterly stupid. It is done everywhere? That is just the reason for not doing it; for if we do what others do, it is not worth the trouble doing anything at all. We want precisely to introduce into the world something which is not there; but if we keep all the habits of the world, all the preferences of the world, all the constructions of the world, I don't see how we can get out of the rut and do something new.

My children, I have told you, repeated it in every tone, every way: if you really want to profit by your stay here, try to look at things and understand them with a new vision and new understanding based on something higher, something deeper, vaster, something more true, something which is not yet there but will be one day. And it is because we want to build this future that we have taken this special stand.

I tell you that we had proofs, altogether material proofs of the correctness and truth of our position, but...they are not lasting. Why? Because it is extremely easy to fall back into the ordinary consciousness, and there is nothing more difficult than to stand always on the top of the ladder and try to look at the world from up there.

We don't want to obey the orders of Nature, even if these orders have millions of years of formed habits behind them. And one thing is certain, the argument of Nature, when she stands in the way of things changing, is: "It has always been thus." I claim this is not true. Whether she likes it or not, things change, and a day will come when it will be said: "Ah! yes, there was a time when it was like that, but now it is different."

Well, grant only for some time, in a way which still belongs to faith and trust, just this, that we are in the process of bringing about this change, that we have come to a point where things are going to take a turn and a new orientation. You are asked simply to have just a little faith and trust, and allow yourselves to be guided. Otherwise, well, you will lose the advantage of being here, that's all. And you will go back with the same weaknesses and the same habits one sees in life as it is outside this place. There you are.

You thought I was a little severe, a little hard, and that after all it was not easy to satisfy me! That is why one ties pretty little pink ribbons in the hair or on tails hanging at the back. I say, perhaps a little uncharitably: "You look ridiculous!" For you think you are very pleasant to look at, but truly this makes you ridiculous. If you want to go out into the world and settle down as girls settle down in the world,

and then give yourselves airs in order to please because that is your sole defense and sole weapon, to attract attention and please, and be quite pretty, quite seductive, you are quite free to do so, it's no longer my concern. But indeed to do all that here is ridiculous. It is ridiculous and you also bring yourselves down immediately to a level which is not pleasing.

Naturally, you may blame me for telling you all this before "the other sex". But I include him in the ridicule, for if he did not think as he does, if he did not feel as he does and did not act as he does, you would have long ago been disgusted with these little childish affectations. There we are.

Now I have told you all I wanted to say. I believe this is enough for today, isn't it? You have really had it!

With this talk we are publishing a few extracts from a brochure of the Mother's entitled To Women about their Body. These are answers to questions on the sports education of women. The brochure opens with the following lines:

For God's sake, can't you forget that you are a girl or a boy, and try to become a human being?

What is the ideal for a girl, from the point of view of physical education ?

I don't see why there should be one special ideal for the physical education of girls and another for the education of boys.

Physical education aims at developing all the possibilities of the human body — possibilities of harmony, strength, suppleness, skill, endurance — and increasing the mastery of the functions of its members and organs, making the body a perfect instrument at the disposal of the conscious will. This programme is excellent for all human beings equally; there is no reason for wanting to have another one for girls.

What part will man and woman play in the new life ? What relations will they have ?

Why make a distinction between the two? They are both human beings trying to become fit instruments for the divine work, above questions of sex, caste, creed and nationality; they are all children of the same infinite Mother and aspirants to the one and eternal Godhead.

What is the ideal of physical beauty for a woman ?

Perfect harmony of proportions, suppleness and strength, grace and force, plasti-

city, endurance and, above all, an excellent health, unvarying, unchanging, the result of a pure soul, of a joyful trust in life and an unshakable faith in the divine Grace.

The brochure ends with the following words:

One word more to finish:

I have told you these things because you needed to hear them. But don't make an absolute dogma from them, for that takes away all their truth.

LET THE NEW BEGIN

O DEEP and glowing golden flame,
 O silent voice within,
 Awaken the world and speak the name,
 Let the new begin.
 Open the heart of every man
 To the wonder of thy gleam,
 Mother of the dawn divine,
 Sing the word and bring the day supreme.

Ocean of oneness, Heaven of bliss,
 Realm of utter brightness,
 Descend to earth and fill the soul
 With infinite peace and wideness.
 Press the ego out of existence
 And end its evil reign,
 Pour down thy presence
 On the trivial and inane.

ROD

A TALK BY NOLINI

I LEARNED that my predecessors were telling you stories — stories of their own lives, their experiences, so I thought I should follow in their footsteps. But I am not going to tell you about my own experiences, I am going to tell a story, rather a history, that happened in the life of another person. It will be interesting and also instructive. So I will begin the story, I am the narrator:

I was a traveller, going about from place to place, seeing all things of interest — specially those of pilgrimage — and I happened to be in Madras. I was waiting there to take a bus to the railway-station which was a few miles off. I saw that there were also many other travellers waiting to board a bus. A busman was inviting people, so I approached his bus. Suddenly a lady came out of the crowd and said, “Please don’t go there!” She was an elderly Tamil lady. I was surprised and asked, “Why, why?” She said, “Well, wait; you’ll see,” and I stopped. Then there were three buses that started — I was in one, the lady was in another and the third was the one I had wanted to board.

The lady’s bus came last and the other two were running very fast — competing as to which should go first. Well, what happened is quite natural; the bus in which I was to go dashed against a wayside tree and was damaged, and the passengers were mostly killed or seriously injured. We reached our destination and naturally I was very eager to see the lady who had stopped me from boarding the bus. I asked her, “How did you know it? How did you guess?” “I’ll tell you later on.” So we started again, and went to a holy place on a hillside. It was a sort of jungle and woodland, full of bushes. The lady and I were walking quietly together. Then I stepped aside. I wanted to see what was to my left. Suddenly the lady said, “Please, please, don’t go to that side!” Naturally I was surprised and asked her the reason. Then I saw that behind the bushes was a 200 ft. deep precipice. If I had taken one step more I would have gone down! Then I pleaded with the lady, “Please tell me what it is; how did you see it?” She said, “All right, I’ll tell you the story, let us sit down.” Then she narrated the story. She said, “When I was young I lived with my grandfather, and we loved each other exceedingly, we were very much attached to each other. He used to tell me stories and pleased me in all ways, so I was with him almost all the time. Then one day he fell rather seriously ill. Doctors were called and they couldn’t do anything. Then my grandfather called me and said, ‘My child, go and pray to Shiva’ — Shiva was the household deity. So I went and knelt down before the image of Shiva and prayed, ‘O Shiva, my grandfather is ill, please cure him.’ One or two days I did that. But he continued to be ill, he became rather worse! Then one day the doctors gave up all hope. I was weeping standing a little away from him. Suddenly I saw a girl by the side of my grandfather, and I was astonished, she looked exactly like myself. Then I asked someone near me if he could see anyone by

my grandfather — ‘No, I don’t see anybody.’ Then I went to the bedside, and the image and I stood together. Gradually my grandfather was cured. From that time on, wherever there is any danger, any difficulty, this image of myself comes, and helps me. “So when you wanted to go in that bus I saw the same figure coming to me and telling me, ‘Beware.’ I don’t know who she is.”

So this is the story. I have brought these books because some of the poets have had such an experience.

Alfred de Musset says that from his childhood he had a comrade who was always with him — he was like a brother to him; he accompanied him in life’s joys and sorrows, in dangers and happiness — he was always with him. I shall read out some stanzas (Alfred de Musset — *Poésies Choisies*, page 38, *Nuit de Décembre*):

‘Du temps que j’étais écolier,
Je restais un soir à veiller
Dans notre salle solitaire.
Devant ma table vint s’asseoir
Un pauvre enfant vêtu de noir,
Qui me ressemblait comme un frère.

Son visage était triste et beau:
A la lueur de mon flambeau,
Dans mon livre ouvert il vint lire.
Il pencha son front sur ma main,
Et resta jusqu’ au lendemain,
Pensif, avec un doux sourire.

Comme j’allais avoir quinze ans,
Je marchais un jour, à pas lents,
Dans un bois, sur une bruyère.
Au pied d’un arbre vint s’asseoir
Un jeune homme vêtu de noir,
Qui me ressemblait comme un frère.

Je lui demandai mon chemin;
Il tenait un luth d’une main,
De l’autre un bouquet d’églantine.
Il me fit un salut d’ami,
Et, se détournant à demi,
Me montra du doigt la colline.

Je m’en suis si bien souvenu,
Que je l’ai toujours reconnu

A tous les instants de ma vie.
 C'est une étrange vision,
 Et cependant, ange ou démon,
 J'ai vu partout cette ombre amie.

Partout où, le long des chemins,
 J'ai posé mon front dans mes mains
 Et sangloté comme un femme;
 Partout où j'ai, comme un mouton
 Qui laisse sa laine au buisson,
 Senti se dénuer mon âme;

Partout où j'ai voulu dormir,
 Partout où j'ai voulu mourir,
 Partout où j'ai touché la terre,
 Sur ma route est venu s'asseoir
 Un malheureux vêtu de noir,
 Qui me ressemblait comme un frère.

Qui donc es-tu, spectre de ma jeunesse,
 Pèlerin que rien n'a lassé?
 Dis-moi pourquoi je te trouve sans cesse
 Assis dans l'ombre où j'ai passé.
 Qui donc es-tu, visiteur solitaire,
 Hôte assidu de mes douleurs?'

Now this form, that the poet saw, replies:

“— Ami, notre père est le tien.
 Je ne suis ni l'ange gardien,
 Ni le mauvais destin des hommes ...

Le ciel m'a confié ton cœur.
 Quand tu seras dans la douleur,
 Viens à moi sans inquiétude.
 Je te suivrai sur le chemin;
 Mais je ne puis toucher ta main,
 Ami, je ne suis que la Solitude.”

Here is the English translation:

A DECEMBER NIGHT

In the days when I was a school boy
One evening I kept awake
In my lonely room.
In front of my table there came and sat
A poor child robed in black
Who looked like me even as a brother.

His face was sad and beautiful:
In the light of my lamp
He came to read in my open book.
He bent his head upon my hand
And waited till the morn
Musing with a sweet smile.

When I was about to be fifteen years old
I was walking one day leisurely
In a woodland upon the heath,
At the foot of a tree there came and sat
A young man robed in black
Who looked like me even as a brother.

I asked him my way;
He held a lute in one hand,
And in the other a bouquet of eglantine.
He gave a friendly salute to me
And, half turning,
With his finger pointed to the hillock.

I remember him so well,
I have recognised him always
At every moment of my life.
It was a strange vision,
And yet, angel or demon,
I saw everywhere this friendly shadow.

Wherever all along my way
I held my forehead in my hands
And sobbed like a woman;
Wherever, like a lamb
That leaves his wool in the bush,
I felt my soul being shed.

Wherever I sought to sleep,
 Wherever I sought to die
 Wherever I touched the earth
 On my road came and sat
 A miserable one robed in black,
 Who looked like my own brother.

“Who art thou, phantom of my youth,
 Pale pilgrim whom nothing fatigues?
 Tell me, why do I find thee constantly,
 Seated in the shadow I have passed through?
 Who art thou, lonely visitor,
 Tireless guest of my pain?”

“Friend, our father is also thine,
 I am neither the guardian angel
 Nor the evil destiny of men....

Heaven has entrusted thy heart to me.
 When thou art in pain
 Come to me carefree,
 I shall follow thee on thy way;
 But I cannot touch thy hand,
 Friend, I am Solitude.”

The poet thinks that it is the personification of solitude, but it is something more than that. As I said, it is your other self, your subtle self. The body, the personality that you see externally is only a reflection of the inner being that you are. I don't mean your spiritual personality, but your subtle material self — which is physically your true personality. And that is inspired by something greater which you all know — your true individuality — your psychic being. But that being can only be perceived, seen and experienced and heard in solitude, in loneliness — what you call calmness and quietness and detachment. This vision here, this being of Alfred de Musset says: “I can approach you but I cannot touch you; there is a separation between the two. We can touch only when there are some conditions fulfilled in the physical body.”

Another French poet speaks of a similar experience. He speaks of it in a jocular way, in a funny way. He says that this inner self sees things in a quite different way than the external being sees. Sometimes it does quite the opposite. While the physical eye says ‘It is this’, the other says ‘No, it is that’. Different values and perceptions — what we see externally is only Maya. There is only a rope, but you see a snake there — that is Maya.

He is a modern French poet, Supervielle. The poem is amusing:

ALTER EGO*

In my outward experience I see a mouse running away.

“Une souris s’échappe”

(A mouse runs out)

But the other person says:

“ce n’en était pas une”

(It was not there)

The outward person says:

“Une femme s’éveille”

(A woman wakes)

The other says:

“Comment le savez-vous?”

(How do you know?)

And then my outward sense says:

“Et la porte qui grince”

(And the squeaking door)

“On l’huila ce matin”

(It was oiled this morning)

But if it was oiled this morning, how can it make noise?

“Près du mur de clôture”

(Near the cloister wall)

“Le mur n’existe plus”

(There is now no wall)

“Ah! je ne puis rien dire”

(Oh! I can’t say a thing)

because you always say the contrary.

The inner being says:

(Eh bien, vous vous taisez!)

(Well, now you’ll be quiet!)

The outward person says: I can’t walk

“Je ne puis pas bouger”,

(I cannot move)

“Vous marchez sur la route”

(You’re walking along the road)

The outer questioning mind says:

* *Translated by James Kirkup (New Direction).*

“Où allons-nous aussi?
 (Does all this get us anywhere?)
 “C’est moi qui le demande”
 (I am asking you)

I think:

“Je suis seul sur la Terre”
 (I am alone on Earth)

The other person says:

“Je suis là près de vous”
 (I am here beside you)

The outer person says:

“Peut-on être si seul?”
 (Can one be so alone?)
 “Je le suis plus que vous”
 (I am more alone than you)
 “Je vois votre visage”
 (I can see your face)
 “Nul ne m’a jamais VU”
 (No one has ever seen mine).

I see you but nobody has seen me, that is the inner personality.

These outer personalities — there is not one, there are many — you consider this body of yours as your only form, but you have many. Each level has its own individual form and a recognisable one. Each one has special eyes, nose, ears, so this inner personality also has recognisable features. If you know, you can even name them — it is this person, that person. The subtle physical is more concrete. Only the physical form, the material form does not change much. It changes, yes, according to your age, slowly but for sometime you are the same. These inner forms are changeful; they are not restricted to one rigid figure. Still they are recognisable. There is a plasticity which is very natural; according to the situation, according to your mood, according to your feeling, they change. But the most important, the most original form is your psychic being — your true being — that which we must strive to realise and attain. As the Mother says: It is the Divine personality in each one of us. Your outer personality is sometimes only a caricature, but still it tries to reflect, though with difficulty, something of the needs and urges of this inmost reality of yours. Someone has asked me: “How to find, how to know this inner being, the true being in me?” For, as the poet here says, he can’t touch you and you can’t touch him, but what you want is to touch that person. The fact is that it is not so altogether out of contact, not altogether — unless a man is a total villain, which is very rare. You can’t obliterate that true existence of you, it is there. It expresses itself in all the movements that are good and noble and selfless. Whenever you see something beautiful or do something nice, be sure

that it is your psychic being that sees or does it. The psychic being in you is the Mother — for it is an emanation of Herself that She has put in you, in order to protect you. When you see the sunset and feel happy, it is the psychic being in you that sees it. It is a small beginning but it is a beginning. Let your psychic being guide your acts. The only thing necessary is to be sincere. You have to be sincere. First day you will find it very difficult, second day you will find it easier, third day it will become still easier and then on the fourth day it will become your nature. It is not easy, but if you try you will be able to do it.

THE SELF-LORD OF VITAL TRANSFORMATION

He came
 Vayu of the vast Ether
 And seated in the nostrils' dynamic Thought
 Breathed sheer luminosity.

He came
 And on wings of infinite calm
 Bore sweetness and the joy of All-life
 To a country where the heart's flower blooms.

He came
 And conquered the knots of the navel
 With scimitar of ecstasy's gaze
 Edged like a horned moon.

He came
 And the mid-region where the Pig revels
 Woke to the absolute sense
 Of a subtle and unbounded law of love.

He came
 And the last utter obsolescence
 Surrendered to the Force
 Of his dancing fire.

He came
 And in his tranquil and crowning bliss
 The Self-Lord of Vital Transformation
 Glowed supreme.

R. Y. DESHPANDE

DIALOGUES AND PERSPECTIVES

EGO — YOGA — SUPERMAN

WE were meeting after a lapse of seven years. He teaches Philosophy in one of the long-established universities in this country and takes a prominent part in contemporary philosophical movements. While talking, we naturally touched upon the Teaching of Sri Aurobindo and its relevance to the modern mind. He observed that many of his colleagues wanted him to give them a rational presentation of the yogic processes involved in the philosophy of *The Life Divine*. I interrupted him and asked, "Why is it that even philosophers ask for explanations, in terms of reason, of things that are outside the field proper of reason?"

It is accepted that each kind of phenomenon has to be studied in the ways proper to its nature. Non-physical phenomena call for non-physical means of verification. I was amused when, some years ago, two professors (on an American-aid project) descended upon us with machines hanging from their necks and wanted to test the claims of Yoga for meditation, samadhi, etc. Isn't that ridiculous? How can the peace that one breathes during a certain type of meditation, or a joy that springs in the heart in another type, or the stillness that pervades in yet another, be measured by material instruments? To test the claims of Yoga one has necessarily to take to the means prescribed by Yoga for attaining that experience, one has to do Yoga himself. It is no use trying to convince somebody who has not practised Yoga that the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo combines in itself several lines of yogic tradition and goes farther by aiming at a total transformation of physical life. The concepts involved are dynamic, touching life at every point and not abstract speculations of the reasoning mind. Practise this Yoga for a reasonable period and see for yourself whether the results testify or do not testify to the expositions by the Master.

Q: Many of my students tell me we are prepared to give up our ego if only you tell us how we set about the whole thing. I do not know what to tell them.

A: There are plenty of hints in the Gita.

Before one can give up the ego one has first to become aware of the ego. For we all talk of the ego but do not know precisely where it is located and how it pervades our life-movements. The way to become conscious of this factor is to detach oneself from the activity of one's nature. When we do this we begin to observe how the ego reigns on all the levels of our being. Consciously and unconsciously we tend to organise our whole life around our ego-self. Whatever happens outside or inside, our instinctive reaction is to relate it to our personal position: "How does it affect me?" And I react favourably or unfavourably according as I am affected to my advantage or

disadvantage. The habit of constituting myself the centre of the universe is the first hallmark of the ego. This 'I', 'me', 'mine', is a ubiquitous presence that dominates my existence. On the mental level I prefer particular thoughts, ideas and notions. Everything has to take their mould and pass their test before being accepted. On the vital level, my life-ego wants to assert itself everywhere, aggrandise itself at the expense of others — in all ways to extend its rule. In work, in planning, in all outpourings of life-energy, its one concern is its own satisfaction, self-effectuation and self-expansion. Similarly there is the ego demanding satisfaction under the cover of emotions, love, affection, etc. Even at the physical level there is an ego in the body. It is due to the separative and self-regarding ego element that the body shrinks from certain contacts and fears certain situations. It is over-concerned with its own safety. This is only to give a general idea of the ramifications of the ego. We have to observe this play of ego, isolate it and then proceed to systematically eliminate it. Begin with the injunction of the Gita. Work without desire for the fruit; accept with equality whatever fruit results. Give up choosing if you can do this or that kind of work. Give up your cherished notions of what is right and what is wrong. Give up also your conviction that you are right and others wrong. Leave behind the arrogant claim of your little mind to be the judge of others' movements. Know that life is larger than your logical mind is disposed to concede. Perceive the truth, and build up the conviction that your mind is only a point in the universal Mind, your life only a wave of the universal Life-Force, your very body only a small selection out of universal Matter. What is yourself, your own — at any rate your surface being — is indeed nothing. What is truly your individual self is the soul within. The loud ego by which you swear is only a shadow of that inner self. And this shadow can be chased away once you are serious about dismissing it, by assiduous practice of rejecting it on every level of your being, at every moment of its appearance. When this is done, when the imposter is driven out, the true individual emerges from behind the veil. Indeed this inner purusha, the soul, one in essence with the Divine, does not explode itself all of a sudden as dramatised in the legendary lore. As the deforming ego yields, the inner soul sends forth its rays to the surface being, gradually extending its area of illumination and increasing its periods of effective presence; in other words, it slowly builds itself in the outer complex of life, mind and body. This is the meaning of the statement that only when you die to yourself you can be born in God.

The process is twofold. Negatively, to discourage and suppress and reject movements that confirm our mind and life in their narrow bounds. Positively, to encourage and promote movements of enlargement of our outlook, extension of our horizon, expansion of our consciousness: these help to break the limited grooves in which the ego-bound man moves and open the doors for a larger and freer existence. One has to make a deliberate, conscious effort to displace the ego perspective by a larger vision and way of life and thought. It is really a question of sincerity. It is not difficult to know for oneself where the ego is lurking. There is the tamasic ego which wallows in its sense of weakness, fatalism, and depression; the rajasic ego which claims to swallow the

whole earth in its expanding jaws; the sattwic ego which feels superior to all the rest in the pride of its intellect, cocksure in its opinions and mental conceits; and even, there is a spiritual ego which shuts itself up in the formation of its single spiritual experience, refusing validity to other experiences, "haughtily humble in its own conceit," as Sri Aurobindo puts it.

The problem indeed appears big. But, to tell the truth, once one recognises ones limitations and submits to the greater divine consciousness and becomes genuinely humble, the radical knot is loosened.

Q. What exactly is meant by *ŗtam*? Is it Truth? Is it the same as *dharma*? It plays such an important part in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy.

A: There is a distinction between *satyam* and *ŗtam*. Satya is the essential truth of Existence. Rita is active truth in its ordered movement. That is, truth working according to its inherent law is Rita. And this Rita is at the base of all creation. Sri Aurobindo calls it in this context the Real-Idea which means truth in the form of a seed-idea that holds in its embryo the creation that is to develop out of it. Each creation, whether universal or individual, has at its base this Real-Idea, this determination of creative truth. And its whole career is really an unrolling of what is held in potency in that seed-idea. In the Veda and even in the Upanishads, Rita was cherished as the law, the operating law of truth. And it is this Rita that came to be diluted and given the name and form of Dharma in later ages. Dharma as popularly understood means the social Law of the age. However, in the Gita it has the sense of *self-law*, the law according to which each nature develops.

Q: When you speak of Truth-Consciousness or the descent of the Supramental Force, people ask us to demonstrate it. "How are we to believe in it?" they ask.

A: As I said, we cannot prove these things pertaining to Consciousness; matters of subtle experience do not lend themselves to physical proof. All the same, those who are awake in their consciousness know that some new dimension has opened in the universal Mind. Those who are used to meditation, for instance, find they are able to touch newer heights, deeper depths than before. Today the mental horizon is expanding. Everywhere there is a recognition that the human mind has to break out of its limits and grow into something greater and vaster than what it is. Different seers give different names but the fact is that everyone feels the imminence of a big change around the corner. One concrete result of this descent of the Force of Unity and Harmony and Light is an immense strengthening of the world forces which tend to promote peace and togetherness. Hereafter a world war is impossible. Local battles or skirmishes may break out but they will be contained. Irreconcilable enemies are learning to live with each other, opening windows of dialogue among themselves. The wave of unrest that you see all over the world, at all levels of society,

is only an outer sign of the throes of a readjustment that is going on in the world. Old values and modes are breaking down; new ones are not yet formed. We are in a transitional stage. Whether in the field of physics or psychology or medicine it is the same story. Discoveries are being made with a suddenness that is a significant pointer to a breakthrough of influences and energies from other realms of existence into the material world. Each province is stretching out its borders to unite with those of its neighbours. The character of Science itself is undergoing a rapid change.

The professor agreed that phenomena of one order of Nature cannot be demonstrated or explained on the basis of another order. He added that in Philosophy they have a name for this impermissible exercise: confusion of categories. That set us talking on popular errors of reasoning which are at times shared even by academic circles. People ask, for instance, in debunking the truth of Karma: "Why is it that a good man, who observes all the rules of morality and is generally God-fearing, goes under in the battle of life, whereas an evil man who has no such scruples prospers in the world?" Now here I drew his attention to Sri Aurobindo's clear-cut analysis of the situation. Karma done on one plane of existence produces its results on the same plane. It is illegitimate to expect results on some other plane. In the case under question, the pouring out of energies on the moral plane, observing moral standards, disciplining oneself according to the requirement of ethical ideals, etc., builds up a moral strength in the person concerned. His being gets augmented on its moral side, toned up in its moral fibre. Worldly reward by way of social success or material wealth is irrelevant in this context. Similarly, a man who pours out his energies on the material plane to acquire material results, irrespective of ethical or religious considerations, gets rewarded on the material plane. It goes without saying that if in the process he has flouted the laws of moral and religious nature he loses on those planes. It will not do to mix up these things.

Then the talk came to certain irresponsible observations made by certain highly placed professors during a recently held seminar in connection with the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary, as to how calamities like floods and droughts could have happened in the centenary year if the Supramental Consciousness had indeed descended as claimed. Here too things are unreasonably mixed up. The question is too flippant to be entertained. This world is a field for the interaction and play of several possibilities. Physical causes tend to produce physical results. Powers from the life-world seek to force their way in the physical world. Mental energies influence the turn of the cosmic forces in unexpected directions. Spiritual descents play their own part in this welter of multiple causes and results. Who can say what is due to what? There are many factors behind a single situation. If an explanation can be hazarded at all, it is of an occult nature which will not be acceptable to the so-called pragmatic logical mind of the academician. Most of the unrest in the world, the disorders at all levels of life, on different planes of the universe — including the disasters and calamities of the physical kind — are due to the disequilibrium caused by the resistance in the earth-consciousness (including the resistance in the slow-moving mind of humanity) to

the inflow of new forces, new truths from the higher realms into the earth-life. Naturally the impact of a new formation on the earth-being produces certain reactions when the reception is not harmonious. Till new things like the higher Consciousness or the greater Force are fully assimilated and made part of Nature, disorders at various levels are inevitable.

The last question was about the new race of which Sri Aurobindo speaks. Here I cautioned my friend against expecting a sudden appearance of the perfect race on earth as a result of the descent of the Truth-Consciousness. The supramental being who is envisaged to crown the earth's evolution cannot succeed man immediately. There has to be an intermediate race of supermen who will prepare the ground for the supramental beings. The superman is not the supramental being. For the supramental being presupposes, among other things, a complete transformation of the material body down to the last cell, a divinisation. A superman is he who has transcended the borders of the human mind in its highest reaches, even crossed over the rim of the Overmind and entered into the realms of the Truth-Consciousness — the Supramental. In other words, his mind is taken up into the operations of the Supermind, his consciousness is illumined by the Truth-Light in a general manner. But the working of the Supermind has to be organised in the whole of the being, the transformation of the body carried on in terms of the Supermind. It is only when this task of physical transformation is complete that the supramental being can emerge

M. P. PANDIT

TWO ANGELS

WHEN I was small an angel sat upon my chair,
with chestnut blossoms I had prepared it.
The angel was always there.
He brought no heavenly vision,
blazed no shining trail to paradise.
He brought me a smile, that was all, a smile.
He did not teach me to be meek and mild.
He did not teach me anything at all
unless it was — when I looked up from the sailboat on the lake
or the hoop on the path — to smile.

But one day when the sun was bright on the purple flowers, too bright
and the breeze carried the laughter away
and the voice of the earth was thunder under my feet
and seismic in my blood
and a cloud moved
and a shadow fell
and the gay voices became mockery,
I summoned an enchanted angel of laughter
who came on quicksilver wings
and brought me the moon and the stars
and fashioned my heart like a bright fiery ball
and showed me the universes
and made me sing.

Where was my gentle angel?
I had not sent him away,
only summoned the bright shining angel.

Now that the fiery sphere no longer wants to be consumed,
now that it no longer yearns for ecstasy,
nor longs to burn with holy passion,
now that instead of looking up
it looks to the earth
and finds in the small grey stone delight
and in the sound of a human voice
and of spade slamming on earth
the right sound,
now sometimes when I look up my quiet angel sits upon the chair.

I have not prepared it with blossoms.
I have not summoned him.
I examine him.

He is whole,
 he is smiling,
 he is without scar.
 He has always been there.

MAGGI

MEDITATIONS

FRAIL chime of light vibrant on inner brow,
 Canded in dark depths of undiscovered night...
 Blood pounded, thudding footsteps upon distant floors
 In lands where leaves fall — forgotten memories.
 There, season's sign is a twisted fall of fate —
 Into dust all that is to be reborn —
 And in a winded sky the leaves, for moon-memory's sake,
 Reminded of some past,
 Where heart was a beginning, blowing forth a rose —
 In clouds a rose all imperceptibly pink
 Rising from a Flame of Gold.

*
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Enter spheres intangible with light,
 Transparent domes, vissicitudes of mind end.
 Awakened by the scent of Golden Hands,
 The Presence—one heart aflame and mind
 Removed, ablaze, sent forth free from dark domains!
 Infinite the call from the webbed within, the blueing vast,
 Untold the bells crescendoed coloured forms,
 Mindless ladders of hearts rise
 Washed by the scent of the ever-present Rose.

N

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE

A SEARCH APROPOS OF R.C. ZAEHNER'S STUDY IN SRI AUROBINDO AND TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1972)

5 (Contd.)

ZAEHNER'S INTERPRETATION OF TEILHARD, THE QUESTION OF TEILHARD'S PANTHEISM

(C)

NOTHING else than the inner pantheist pressure is responsible for those traits in Teilhard's system, which Christopher Mooney, an admiring fellow-Jesuit of a calibre equal to Rabut and de Lubac, is inclined to criticise.

First of all, Teilhard's "uncompromising 'evolutionism'."¹ We have already noted his basing everything on physics, the physics of the universe as a single evolutionary process. The same point occurs in the declaration which, while affirming Christianity, gives primacy to the sense of this process: "an apologetic based on evolution yet whose spirit seems to me to be truly and equally Christian".² To hold that "an evolutionary world-view is the *only* world-view, the sole framework, the sole mode of approach to reality, the sole criterion for solving all problems, whether scientific, philosophical, theological or spiritual"³ carries in its deepest attitude overtones which Teilhard indicated when he referred to "our generation, essentially pantheist because evolutionist."⁴ It is not in the temper of Christianity to insist as Mooney finds Teilhard doing: "that others must continue to work within the same evolutionary framework, this was a fact beyond discussion."⁵

The pantheist pressure may be discerned also in the way Teilhard's evolutionism went against his Christian conception of the human person. In pantheism, although the individual is not neglected or denied, he is not made too much of: it is the whole that is primarily important. Or, rather, the individual in his true ultimate being, his basic whole-self, his universal selfhood, is stressed. Now, Teilhard's often-vaunted spirituality of the personal unit lacks, according to Mooney, the real Christian attitude.

¹ *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ* (Collins, London, 1966), p. 199

² *Ibid*, p 193 Letter of August 21, 1925, to Father Auguste Valensin

³ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁴ *Human Energy* (Collins, London, 1969), p. 67

⁵ Mooney, *Op cit*, p 201

Mooney¹ explains: "a constant emphasis on the destiny of the human race as a whole risks losing sight of the supreme importance which each individual possesses in his own right. God's plan for mankind does not subordinate the person to the species.... Even love energy .. tends in [Teilhard's] system to be treated exclusively in the context of its function for the species. This fact is most evident in regard to personal sin, whose central character as a refusal of love is never explicitly treated at all. In the end, therefore, Teilhard's strong emphasis on the role of the human person involves an ironic tendency towards the impersonal, and this must be recognized as a real danger in his evolutionary system of thought."

Actuated by the pantheist pressure again is "his key-concept of Christ as physical Centre". This concept "tends to distract one's attention from the fact that Christ gives meaning to evolution not through his passive physical omnipresence but primarily through the exercise of his freedom and love. This is in no way denied by Teilhard .. Nevertheless, the strong dichotomy he sets up between the physical and the juridical in Christology somehow manages to throw into the shade an all-important third element, the personal initiative of Christ".² Similarly, reparation for sin through the relationship of love between persons is ignored and is absorbed into a cosmic mystery of redemption, the forward-moving evolutionary building up of the universal Body of Christ: "we must recognize that in Teilhard's treatment of the Body of Christ as a living organism, there is present once again that strange inclination towards the necessary and the impersonal"³ Teilhard admits as much "when he says that by 'progress' he means not that man is becoming morally better but that as a species he is moving towards a higher state of complexity and consciousness."⁴

The "series of equal terms" which Teilhard formulates—"cosmogenesis=biogenesis=individual anthropogenesis=collective anthropogenesis=Christogenesis"—shows further the pantheist pressure. It tends to render evolution an intrinsically natural and unavoidable movement. The risk here to Christianity "consists in the fact that [Teilhard's] explanations so emphasise the immanence of the divine action in the evolutionary process itself that a *sense* of transcendence gets lost, even though the concept of transcendence itself is never absent".⁵ A case in point is his approach to the mystery of the Cross and to personal sin: both appear in his system "as something understandable, made inevitable, in a certain sense, by a world undergoing *genèse*."⁶

"A lack of this sense of transcendence may also be seen in Teilhard's unqualified insistence on the 'Christian' commitment, and consequently the Church's commitment, to human values...it is dangerous to state categorically that for the Christian it is 'a matter of life and death that the earth should flourish to the uttermost of its natural

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 202.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 203-204

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 207-208.

powers'. Neither the Christian nor the Church can conceive their mission chiefly in terms of fostering evolution, even when this is seen to be growth in spirit and personal fulfilment in the realm of knowledge and love. .. Teilhard's desire to give a sacred character to all things profane without exception is a natural expression of his own mystical bent, as well as an understandable reaction against the severe dichotomy he encountered between sacred and profane in the lives of many Christians. Yet such a desire also involves risk, since its instinctive tendency is to suppress altogether a distinction which must never be too far from the Christian consciousness."¹

The mystical bent which Mooney regards as typically Teilhardian is best described as evolutionist pantheism. This kind of pantheism has a special shade to it and its *penchant* is more to seize God's eternal cosmic reality within His multitudinous spatio-temporal aspect than to pierce through this aspect to that reality. But the ultimate identity of the two remains the basic datum. Such a datum falls outside Christianity. That this should be so was a misfortune for Teilhard and occasioned the conflicts of ideas and the contradictions of speech that no student of him can miss. The underlying and sometimes even emergent push in him is towards their resolution. But, failing to move definitely beyond pantheism and Catholic Christianity alike, he exhibits no proper sign of achieving it.

Perhaps the most curious complication into which Teilhard was driven by his divided spiritual vision is one touched on by Zaehner² when he gives us a glimpse of Teilhard's tussle with the dogma of God's creation of the world out of nothing, *ex nihilo*. De Lubac also deals with the subject and briefly reviews Teilhard's several efforts to be himself and yet be accounted orthodox. After looking at his last effort, de Lubac³ ends on a note of satisfaction, saying: "since he so explicitly rejects any idea of a 'pre-existing substratum', we cannot say that he rejects or compromises creation *ex nihilo*, even in this last form of his speculation on the matter." How premature really de Lubac's satisfaction is can be gathered at once from his own next sentence, which runs: "We must, nevertheless, admit that he did not achieve a perfectly clear and coherent formulation of his thought."

De Lubac attempts to provide an excuse: "It may be — in fact there can be no doubt about it — that he started by trying to unite everything in a synthesis that was too simplified and too what one might call physically attainable." The words are not particularly transparent, but that Teilhard was doing something quite new and not following the orthodox theological line does come through. No doubt, the line of orthodox theology is itself hardly a matter of concrete comprehension. As Zaehner⁴ tells us: "even the theologians are not very clear as to what creation *ex nihilo* means." But there is a core of the dogma which, if accepted uncompromisingly and without any

¹ *Ibid*, p. 208-209.

² *Evolution in Religion: A Study in Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 55-56.

³ *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* (Collins, London, 1967), p. 200.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

reservations, would make for the clarity and coherence which de Lubac misses in Teilhard and which can be found in the orthodox line for all the difficulty in concrete comprehension the latter entails. De Lubac pinpoints the core: there should be no pre-existing substratum for God to work upon. And the questions for us are: "When Teilhard subscribes to this core, does he do so uncompromisingly and without any reservations? If he means the same thing as orthodoxy, why is his thought not formulated with perfect clarity and coherence? Could it be that the 'nothing' which he accepts has a meaning that refuses to fall in step with the orthodox theological one?"

The clue to a proper understanding here occurs in the quotation from him made by Zaehner:¹ ".to be infinitely divided...is to tend towards nothingness." What Teilhard offers us is not nothingness itself but what he conceives to be an approximation, a tending to it. He knows this very well but he would like somehow to identify the two. The process of the identification comes out pretty plain in the same essay on which Zaehner has drawn. Teilhard² writes: "If, along the lines of its essential capacities and natural 'planes of cleavage', the stuff of things were to become infinitely loose-textured, infinitely dissociated, it would be as though it had ceased to exist. Dissolved in non-activity and non-reaction, it would be indistinguishable from nothingness; it would be tantamount to, and so identical with, nothingness." There is a progressive slide of sophistry: from "as though" we go to "indistinguishable" and then, through "tantamount", we land in "identical". What Teilhard has actually done is not at all to posit nothingness as such but to essay a new definition of it and put a positive content into what should be an absolute negative. What he³ says soon after makes no bones about this legerdemain: "No-being coincides, and is one, with completely realised plurality. Pure nothingness is an empty concept, a pseudo-idea. True nothingness, physical nothingness, the nothingness found on the threshold of being, that on which, at their lowest levels, all possible worlds converge, is pure Multiple, is Multitude."

Orthodox theology is left miles behind. "Pure nothingness" is the demand of that theology. Teilhard rejects it as "a pseudo-idea" and consequently throws orthodoxy to the winds, as may be confirmed from the sour remark of his ecclesiastical editors⁴ at this point: "This questionable proposition is to be found in Bergson, too." What Teilhard puts in the place of orthodoxy's concept is a pseudo-nothingness.

And this unorthodox re-definition is necessary because his notion of creation is "slanted" in a particular way. Zaehner⁵ quotes him: "To create, as it appears to me, means to condense, concentrate, organize, unite." So the nothingness preceding creation has to be a Teilhardianly creatable nothingness: it has totally to lack unity and represent "completely realised plurality". But as it must have the potentiality of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

² *Writings in Time of War* (Collins, London, 1968), p. 94.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁴ *Ibid.*, fn 4.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 56.

being united it has to be the pure Multiple which is also the pure Unifiable. And this double character argues all the more for some species of substratum, be it ever so phantasmal. Can there be — to use one of Teilhard's favourite terms — "creative union", can there be a creativity on God's part bringing about synthesis on greater synthesis in the evolutionary process, without a "subject" (as the Scholastics would phrase it) already existing in a state of dissociation capable of progressive unification?

The essential import of Teilhard's re-definition glares out still more when, after saying that the initial "negative" which precedes creation is "in its real form... pure Multiple," he¹ calls this negative "a sort of positive non-being" and adds from the orthodox angle that such a concept "raises grave difficulties."² The reason is: "However closely tied to non-being we may suppose it to be, the Thing, dissociated by its nature, required for the operation of creative union, implies that the creator found outside himself a purchase-point, or at least a reaction."³ But Teilhard accepts the difficulties as unavoidable, since the traditional explanations would be "purely verbal".³ Piqued by this jibe at orthodoxy, the editors⁵ again sourly remark: "A metaphysician would comment that it is more the expression 'positive non-being' that is a 'purely verbal explanation'." Thus Teilhard's unorthodoxy characterises his nothingness to be such that God's creativity is not altogether unconditioned. It is unconditioned inasmuch as God may or may not create, but when He chooses to create he can do so only from nothingness of a particular sort, which would give Him an active response if not even a seizable support. Without this sort, no creation will result. From orthodoxy's nothing — which is pure and undefined — nothing can be made: creation, as understood by Teilhard, cannot occur at all. That is inevitably his basic stand, holding as he does that the history of the created world is one of an increasingly complex synthesis of divided materials.

Zaehner⁶ rightly notes that Teilhard's "account tries to square evolution with Genesis rather than the dogmatic creation *ex nihilo*...." For, the first chapter of Genesis speaks of "a formless void" and of there being "darkness over the deep" and finally it says: "God's spirit hovered over the water."⁷ Zaehner⁸ glosses the term "water": "water, the symbol of the ever-moving, the unstable, perpetually changing thing which is chaos — matter in its most embryonic and, if you like, its most non-existent form." Matter, therefore, is implicit in the Teilhardian picture of creation. Matter in a chaotic state is what Teilhard means when, in a visual phrase, he writes (as cited by Zaehner⁹): "For all eternity God saw the shadow of his unity in a diffused state of disarray (*éparpillée*) beneath his feet...."

¹ *Op. cit*, p. 163.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 164.

⁵ *Ibid*, fn 9.

⁶ *Op. cit*, p. 55

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 56.

* *Ibid.*

Teilhard shows an aversion to accepting matter “at the beginning of things” and de Lubac¹ is willing to take him at his word and approvingly quotes him: “Where there is complete disunity of the cosmic stuff (at an infinite distance from Omega) there is *nothing*.” De Lubac, like Teilhard himself, seems to be either unaware of or else determined to slur over the self-contradiction in the sentence. In the very act of affirming “*nothing*” Teilhard affirms “the cosmic stuff”, even if in “complete disunity”!

In the light of all we have seen we may go back to de Lubac’s satisfaction over Teilhard’s subscribing to the core of the *ex nihilo* doctrine. He² refers to Teilhard’s final treatment of the problem: “Returning, then, to the problem of creation, Teilhard will point out that while the creative act can be conceived as an act of union, this is only subject to an express condition: if it is to be so conceived, ‘we must reject the time-honoured evidence of common sense...and cease to imagine that the act of union cannot operate except upon a pre-existing substratum’.” When Teilhard — at the cost of common sense — denies a pre-existing substratum, and thereby is taken to affirm nothingness, what he affirms is justly is equation: nothingness=pure Multiple—his equation which really signifies a chaotic state of matter, “a complete disunity of the cosmic stuff”.

The wheel has come full circle, we are right where Teilhard started; for his initial word on the problem was: “the stuff of things...infinitely loose-textured, infinitely dissociated.” There is no getting around “stuff”.

Nor is this the only thing to mark. In Teilhard’s conception, the stuff which he equates to nothingness is, for all its internal dissociation, not dissociated from God. His initial statement³ closely connects the two: “In the beginning there were, at the two poles of existence, God and pure multiplicity (*la Multitude*). Even so, God was all alone For all eternity God saw the shadow of his unity in a diffused state of disarray (*éparpillé*) beneath his feet; and this shadow was not another God ...” The overall suggestion seems to be that the same existence has two aspects and that this existence is basically God and what is non-basic is the shadow of the basic so that God’s own substance of unity is in a shadowy form as multiplicity at the opposite pole.

A brand of monism or pantheism peeps out though Teilhard does not accord it any recognition. What he ostensibly is concerned with by means of his “nothing” is to avoid Manichaeism, the view that God and Chaos are two co-eternal realities independent of each other — a pair of Gods, as it were — and that one God, in order to make our world, has to grapple with the other who exists in his own right.

Only once Teilhard was bold enough to face the issue squarely instead of resorting to a kind of “double-speak”. Straightforwardly he⁴ asserted: “We would without

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 197. The references given on p. 351, note 7, are: “L’Union Créatrice” (1917-18) and “La Centrologie”, n. 27 a. For the latter see *Activation of Energy* (Collins, London, 1971), p. 116.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

³ *Zaehner, Op. cit.*, p. 56: *Writings in Time of War*, p. 95.

⁴ *Writings in Time of War*, p. 169.

doubt present a very incomplete idea of the Godhead if we described it exclusively by *personal* attributes: some aspects of the supreme Being can be interpreted only in terms that I might call material and cosmic. It is the same with the creative act. If we try to make it too free or operating too much *in vacuity*, we may well make it unintelligible. Is there any reason why we should not admit that the necessary existence of absolute unity entails, as a secondary consequence, *ad extra* — rather as though it were its antithesis or shadow — the appearance, at the opposite pole from being, of an infinite multiplicity? To do so, I believe, would not be in any way to belittle the Maker or his work.” To “infinite multiplicity” Teilhard gives a footnote: “Thus there would somehow be two divine creative acts: the first *quasi-organic*, concluding in the appearance of pure Multiple (the effect in conflict with the divine oneness); the second, *quasi-efficient, unifying the Multiple* (=creation properly so called)...”

Here the pure Multiple is not merely true, physical, creatable nothing: it is the “material and cosmic” aspect of God. And the act of unifying the pure Multiple does not proceed in nothingness, “*in vacuity*”. “The stuff of things”, “the cosmic stuff”, is explicitly recognised as “a pre-existing substratum”, however diffuse. Now we have openly a brand of monism or pantheism: there is a sole Existence, God, but with two attributes — absolute unity and infinite multiplicity, the one superior and the other inferior, the former a Person and the latter a cosmic matter, the Person really divine, substantially causative and the cosmic matter a mere secondary antipodes, a shadowy effect.

Nor is this pantheism bound up necessarily with a peculiar definition of nothingness. For, that definition itself can be shown up to be deceptive as soon as we probe it to its root. What exactly would be meant by plurality getting completely realised, the Multiple being pure or the stuff of things becoming infinitely loose-textured, infinitely dissociated? To be sure, it cannot be the same as interminable divisibility. The matter science analyses is susceptible to division without end, as we see more and more with the “quarks” beyond the so-called elementary particles just as those particles were beyond the atom. By this susceptibility it does not dissolve into nothingness. We arrive only at an increasingly refined state of infinitesimals. But, according to science as Teilhard himself understands it, the infinitesimals, like any other state of matter, cannot be taken as existing piecemeal: everywhere the entire universe *en bloc* ultimately swims into the scientific ken. “All around us,” says Teilhard,¹ “until it is lost to sight, radiates the net of spatial and temporal series, endless and untearable, so closely woven in one piece that there is not one single knot in it that does not depend upon the whole fabric.” Again, more to the point, we read:² “At the beginning of the perceptible world what existed was the Multiple; and that Multiple was already rising up, like one indissociable whole...” So what is logically conceivable as preceding the indissociable oneness and wholeness of the material cosmos is the existence of

¹ *Science and Christ* (Collins, London, 1965), p. 79.

² *Ibid.*

the infinitesimals each in isolation and with no inter-connectedness. Infinitesimals thus existing are Teilhard's pure Multiple. They are far indeed from pure nothingness. But now comes the essential trickiness of the concept.

For, Teilhard,¹ when visualising the pure Multiple as the antipodal shadow of God's unity, has the threefold expression: "in itself, it did not exist, nor had it ever existed, nor could it ever have existed..." On the one side this expression would lead towards equating the pure Multiple with "true, physical nothingness" but on the other it would imply that the infinitesimals can never be thought of as lacking some kind of inter-connectedness and as existing except as "one indissociable whole" of whatever kind. Then Teilhard's proposition would boil down to: "If there were, or ever had been, or ever could have been a multiplicity of infinitesimals, we should have true, physical nothingness." The proposition is merely conditional: it points to no realised state of affairs. In other words, not only pure nothingness but even the Teilhardian nothingness is, by Teilhard's own drift of thought, "a pseudo-idea," failing, as it does, to correspond to any actual possibility.

What then are we to conclude? The non-existence of the pure Multiple means the existence always of the impure Multiple in one state or another of condensation, concentration, organisation, unification. That is the trickiness of the Teilhardian concept. And the sole creative act possible is to increase the elementarily condensed, concentrated, organised, united state of a pre-existing substratum. And the substratum pre-existing in such a state can only be a certain aspect of God Himself, the Being who, as Teilhard says, is "Unity" and "all alone".² Adopting the *ex-nihilo* framework, let us say: "God freely creates the world out of nothing except His own single yet multiformative reality."

This is how Teilhard's internal conflicts and contradictions could have been resolved if he had moved definitely beyond pantheism and Catholic Christianity alike.

In that direction, and not in any other, does he, "on some important points," need "to be *completed*" and there alone does he "open up a vast field of inquiry for theologians."

(*To be continued*)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ Zaehner *Op. cit.*, p. 56.

² *Ibid.*

INNER HELP IN ILLNESS

A LETTER FROM A CHRONIC SUFFERER*

Madrid, September 1969

Dear Nata,

At last I have found my point of salvation in the chest's centre. When I concentrate my thought there, a sensation of peace automatically radiates out, and without any apparent effort, the contact — a kind of a bridge — gets established with the silence above the head. With the concentration in the chest deepening, the silence descends like a caress inundating my being, transforming itself into something indescribably sublime that makes me perceive the Unity.

Now I should like to tell you something very personal. I have been an epileptic since my early childhood, and the many doctors consulted could not help much. But a few days ago the intervention of this peace has brought about a victory.

You may not be familiar with the symptoms preceding an epileptic attack. It is a mechanical irresistible process that overtakes one all of a sudden. First I feel a sensation of claustrophobia, even in open and large spaces, the sounds come muffled and as if from far away, the gestures of people, the rustle of leaves and all the movements around me assume a slowed-down rhythm — as in certain movies — and without any sense and connection. Although I try to overcome this growing state of anguish by clinging to the appearances and seeking interest in surrounding things, all gets fragmented and an abrupt indifference takes possession of me, reducing rapidly my field of perception till I faint away.

The other day at the cinema, I suddenly felt the symptoms preceding an attack. Anguish invaded me — yet I succeeded in not clinging to the appearances around me but concentrating instead on the centre in the chest. The inexorable mechanism of the evil had started, I just managed to hold to the very thin thread of consciousness that unites the heart to the silence over the head, imploring the divine help not to let me be overtaken by the terror. The connection with the outside world had become imperceptible, and already the certainty that I would not be able to conquer started flooding me. There was a moment of precarious equilibrium as if two forces were fighting each other, then the feeble energy uniting the cardiac centre to the summit became most powerful. My body was invaded by fear and weakness, my heart beat at a vertiginous rhythm as if to burst. I realised that I was no longer the body. The convulsive movement — for about thirty interminable seconds — took place inside, *i.e.* without exteriorising into the common aspects of epileptic attacks. I had the feeling that the force of the illness did not succeed in breaking the link between the consciousness in my heart and that over my head. Little by little my body started to calm down and after a while regained normalcy.

I have the absolute conviction of the Divine's victory.

* Translated by Peter Steiger from. DOMANI, Italian Quarterly, Pondicherry.

OUTPATIENT AT JIPMER

POMP and arrogance don't make their quarters here,
The haughty, the self-assured fall silent, somewhat worried
In the face of pain. No pretence will hide so naked a thing —
However robed — in this hall of troubled state.
Here I too brought my needs and came to take share in other's lots.
Eased in a chair, I take my station amongst the waiting for relief
And, looking up, stare down the gaping mouth of hell.
Accustomed to Christian-yoked Europe's sterile silence
Holding court in waiting corridors amidst the poor
And to faces like suffering Christs on Byzantine icons,
Hoping for charity's graced small issues,
This sight grips me.
What an orchestra for sight!
Though cruel masters of malady and need
Have bent my brothers low and for their wage bestowed poverty,
Those noble faces looking at me, nothing could mar
Or blot out the light which God has placed into Indian eyes.
I meet these eyes now in open field and become silent,
Ready to burst like a dam overfed — and mine become dewy.
Ashamed, I turn aside from those others who do not weep,
Or let out a cry of pain, nor complain of heat, hunger,
Long waiting, heavy sores.
Disarmed, unburdened of impatience and of foolish pride
I look on, into those eyes unprotesting — and become loving,
Sweeter of heart, better caring — and boldly ask answers
From unperturbed gods, who look on,
“Is this your jest, your play?
Are they not of your blood, as they are of mine?”
Majestic silence, august unanswering. They choose to deny reply.
I am not deterred, inside my heart aloud I cry,
Unbound am I in my will freed,
If you will stir not, then will I!
Rise will I from half good to good,
Ever moving will pass your portals
To where the mighty on fire-steeds ride
Scanning the circumference of time, and bring
Down the all sustaining light.

GEORGETTE COTY

MUSIC AND YOGA

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1972)

WHAT is the psychological link between music and yoga? We have learnt that one of the first pre-requisites of yoga is an inner stillness and silence. It can create the necessary conditions for one's receptivity to higher influences, to inspiration and intuitions, to guiding lights of more-than-human Consciousness. Even the poet must quiet his mind for the "divine afflatus" to come into him. Music, which is one form of sound, would be expected to disturb the inner poise of the yogi: how then could music be an aid? It is true, common sounds can disturb the man who has not travelled far on the path of yoga. But music is not common, meaningless sound. Its vibrations are measured, harmonious and it has, as it were, wings which could upbear the consciousness of the seeker. The greater the music, the higher could this ascent be like the soul of the warrior carried by the Valkyris, as the Scandanavian legend goes. Like the repeated *Aum* or the inwardly chanted *Japa*, true and spiritual music can enhance one's meditation and aid concentration. It can fill the inner vacuum with magic articulation. The crescendo and pitch of notes, their rise and fall, their subtle combinations can become significant, releasing waves of an all-seizing ecstasy or bringing a fulfilment no teaching or personal effort could bring. The inspired verse possesses a similar power. In music this power is so much intensified that it can carry man's being to the heights of the spirit which neither verse nor immobile meditation could command.

Each inspired note has behind it a hidden power as discovered by the ancient Indian seers, and this can, if one knows how to open to it, reveal the passage to a greater consciousness. And if the musician is of spiritual attainment, his music too can be indeed an aid to the seeker, for what he executes through his voice or an instrument has behind it the impact of a larger illumination, a greater span of all-fulfilling bliss. To be a musician of this status is indeed a rare privilege. For then he is no longer an impersonal surveyor or an auditor, but he himself can share the twofold joy of creation and self-dedication. Standing, with the ascent of aspiration and the appeal from below on one side and the descent of the torrents of joy and illumination from above on the other, the musician who shares both these movements would be at once an instrument and a creator like the tree feeling the sap of the earth ascending across its roots to all its branches, foliage, fruits up to its minutest tendril and also the bounty of the sky pouring from above as the life-giving, life-increasing rain. The Mother expresses this unique experience thus: "You feel suddenly that you are being carried aloft, that all your energies are gathered and lifted up, as if your head had opened and you were thrown into the free air, into the far spaces of extraordinary heights and magnificent lights. The experience gives you in a few seconds what one may, in the normal course of things, achieve after many years of difficult yoga." (*The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*, Part V, p. 18.)

This brings us to the last part of the logical question. What will be the form of such a music, will it be something amorphous, vague, and have consequently no value as against the common or popular music of today?

Music which is a way of self-dedication or has a high source of inspiration need not be insipid, it comes through our life-parts, the vital being and becomes stirring and poignant with energy and dynamism. It is the vital being which gives vibrancy and intensity to all artistic creation. However high and elevated be the source of inspiration, the vital being is still indispensable for earth-purposes. Touched by the spiritual illumination and purified of the base-metal of its vulgarity and commonness, it can and does become a vehicle of great creation. The works of art that have inspired men throughout the ages are creations where there is a fusion of these elements. While the paintings of Rubens, Titian, Botticelli leave us only half-satisfied, the Madonna of the Rocks or Mona Lisa moves us profoundly. While Wagner or Chopin gives us merely life-movements without a deeper source of satisfaction, Mozart or Bach yields to us a deeper enjoyment.

Now we shall consider another aspect of the question.

It is growth and evolution that makes music live. Like all things of art, systems of music were formed and developed owing to their inherent dynamism, and when this progress ceased, decay set in with fossilization and eventual death. We can take the typical example of Chinese and Japanese music. One or two centuries before the coming of Christ there was a religious invasion from India to all parts of Asia. Korea, China and Japan received the gift of Indian music along with Buddhism and the general cultural heritage. So long as their musical genius thrived, the fusion of Indian music and local indigenous elements continued as Korean, Chinese and Japanese music in definite musical forms. But they had not, like all other great nations, the strong inner base of religious inspiration in their music. So when Western culture invaded these countries, their music was immediately affected, because by then — that is, the 18th century—they had only fossilised systems left and consequently had no power to push away these foreign elements or to fuse them into their own systems to create richer and more living forms of music.

Indian music, in spite of its being subtle, deep and non-sensational in character, survived the different cultural invasions and setbacks because it had a strong spiritual basis and form and because it grew and assimilated all heterogeneous and foreign elements like the Arabic, Persian and Greek musical currents in its system without, however, altering its essential character. On the contrary these foreign elements gave new life, stirred new dynamism and extended its artistic frontiers.

Western music in its initial stages was religious in nature; it was linear in character and crude as all early music is. The early influence of Greek, Byzantine and Slavic elements enriched it. And the Greeks in their turn had imbibed some significant musical heritage (six modes or *thātas*) from India. These were known as Dorian, Phrygian, Ionian and other modes. But soon Europe conceived the system of harmony, the poly-tonal musical system. And when it left the church precincts and

went to the court, its development was amazing. Its acme was in Germany, France and Italy, with Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Brahms, Berlioz, Debussy and Stravinsky. But European music had at that time — the end of the nineteenth century — exhausted its musical possibilities and exploited all that it could imbibe from its regional countries. Then it turned to new sources — Africa, and the South Seas — and the élite of today is seriously turning to Indian music.

Now both Indian and European music have reached a point when, if they are to survive, they must find a new form, enlarge themselves by a greater synthesis. For this is an age of synthesis, an era when boundaries of nationality, races, languages and cultures must be overpassed. Indian musicians are unconsciously turning to Western music, experimenting in new forms of Indianised Jazz, Rock-n-Roll, and Twist, which musically are abominations but have achieved one thing of note—they have broken down national barriers and are trying to prove that all music is essentially one. We have also come to see that there is a deep-rooted dissatisfaction somewhere which expresses itself (along with other things of society and culture) in open or covert revolts.

But the change envisaged is only formal and not essential; it does not alter the music itself. Merely experimenting with new airs, flippant melodies or some notes which make a cacophony or discordant noise cannot usher in a greater music. Merely externally grafting some Raga pattern to a few chords or introducing a new mode in a symphony orchestra will not bring in the new music. There must be a change of consciousness, the birth of the new spiritual consciousness which can foster the birth of the greater music that is seeking to express itself through the human instrument. For this the musician must be a yogi. He must make music his way of approach to the Divine. Then this spiritual music will touch the origin of things and we shall complete the evolutionary cycle of music begun in the age of the Vedas.

In form this music would be neither Western nor Indian, neither African nor of any country. Yet all systems will be possible finding natural room, natural expression there. It will express the soul's depths, the expanse of the liberated mind and life. The Mother's words give us a hint of this kind of music: "a single theme moving, developing gradually with variations — countless variations playing out the same constant theme, variations branching out and coming back again to the original basic theme." (*The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*, Part 7, p. 326.) In Sri Aurobindo's language:

from the harp of some ecstatic god,
There springs a harmony of lyric bliss
Striving to leave no heavenly joy unsung.

(*Savitri* Book XI, Canto I, Centenary Vol. 29, p. 683)

or

a vast forest's hymn,
The solemn reminder of a temple gong,
A bee-croon honey-drunk in summer isles.

Ardent with ecstasy in a slumberous noon,
Or the far anthem of a pilgrim sea.

(*Ibid.*, Book II, Canto 14, p. 290)

(*Concluded*)

Romen

NEELA PATIL

No more among us from 7-12-1972

SHE had a sister's heart for all,
A sister sweet and true;
The secret of a selfless work,
So rarely known, she knew.

An unassuming air she wore.
Her self-forgetful soul
Was ever present in her ways
Towards the Godly goal.

The word of silence she could hear
And speak without a sound,
Faith was her spirit's supporting friend,
Peace was her nature's ground.

Her life was full of Mother's grace,
In Mother's service spent;
She was a flame of worship pure
By God among us sent.

And now our Lord has called her back
To be with Him for rest,
She drinks His nectars, lives His love,
Of Gods a welcome guest.

PUNJALAL

SYMBOLS AND THE QUESTION OF UNITY

“The more one goes on this path the more one feels the limitations not only of speech but of thought. The mind is too heavy, too coarse. It will not respond, or responds but imperfectly, to the subtle vibrations that as it were come to it from above. *The highest truth must needs be presented in symbols.* Fichte, the German philosopher, said that if he had to live his life again the first thing he would do would be to invent a new set of symbols, but alas, it is not too easy. Symbols are born, not made. They descend from above and cannot be artificially manufactured. In this matter you, poets, have an advantage over philosophers like myself who have tried to use what is so ludicrously miscalled “exact thought.” From below one can combine allegories: real symbols are given from above. But when given one can learn far more from them than from words.”

KRISHNAPREM*

It is in accord with the Age that man shall be able to read his fate in the harmonies of the universe; he shall see the unfoldment in time and space of the perfection he is both instrument and witness of; he shall understand the reason for his sufferings and his joys, his delays and his precipitations, and above all, he shall know he is one with the Supreme and his blind urge for perfection, his awkward march toward completion is the ever-growing tree that lives but to give evidence to the divine seed.

There are several rhythms that weave through the web of creation, each apparently solitary, but only for the man who has not attained a unity of vision which is the right of all those who participate in the fulfilment of the Word at this present moment. Once this vision is realised man sees the harmony in what was once thought to be a discordant play of forces. Through the descent of a supreme wisdom he gathers the threads together and understands his destiny, which is one with the entire destiny of humanity. By a deeper insight he sees how he fits into the whole and therefore how his realisation is needed to continue the process of evolution, how in his completion the necessary link is forged that others may grasp it and further their progress. By understanding these harmonies he knows he is striving towards an utter fulfilment of the Ideal in order that a further step be taken on the spiral of creation.

God has no secrets. He is manifest in every particle of creation,—the leaf on the tree, the flight of the birds, the formation of the clouds in the heavens,—and above all, or easiest of all to perceive, in the harmonious movements of the celestial spheres. His totality is there, before all. He is Truth, and therefore He is light; this light is the very essence of all that is, and anyone, at any given moment can read the soul of the Lord in all the movements of His creation. This has been so from the beginning

* Letter to Dilip Kumar Roy.

of Time, but it is man's ignorance that veils the Truth already manifest. The meaning, purpose and goal of each atom in creation are apparent for all to know, and it is precisely man's mission to shed the veils that hide this light and to come to the core of what has appeared to be the secret word.

The key to understanding all symbols lies in unity of vision, but the secret to unity of vision lies in unity of being; there is no other way and all mental efforts are futile and can only lead to a fragmented view, here and there touching upon the truth, but that which unites all the threads and gives the knot of Truth, the core and kernel, rests beyond the mind. We can say the mind formulates what is directly perceived in the heart, therefore all that which is perceived can be organised by the mind in order to arrive at a precise knowledge of the future, past and present. Mind is the instrument for organisation and communication, and it stands that the quieter the instrument the greater will the capacity be to render into concrete and potent language that which lies beyond it. And all true methods of prophecy, vision or knowledge require first a preparation on the part of those who are to reveal the keys to others. There is no mystery in these arts and symbols; they are evident and the secrecy which has clothed them until now only corresponds to the period of darkness humanity was traversing. It is no longer so. The sun of knowledge now illumines the horizon and is beginning its journey upward until it reaches its maximum point of illumination. We have only now entered into this age of light, having passed many centuries in shadow, to better prepare for this moment.

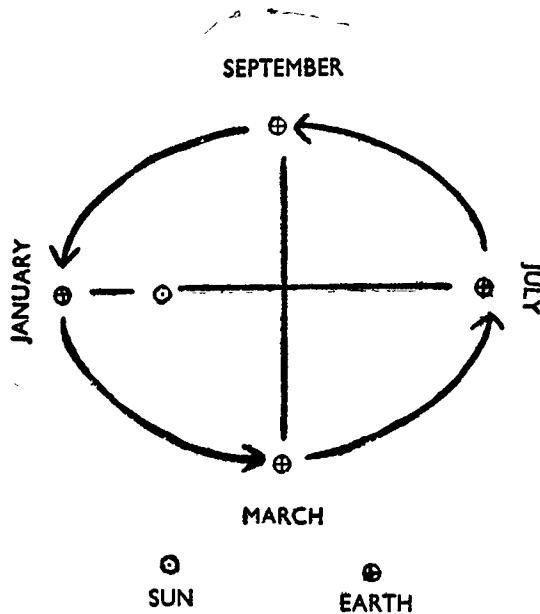
To see man must eliminate that which veils his vision: his ego is the shroud that keeps the word of God hidden in his soul. He must therefore realise this no longer has a meaning in the full light of the sun of knowledge; what was necessary to secure a mature gestation has now become meaningless and obstructive. Yet he clings to this ego, for it is the very ego that creates the fear of the void he must plunge into if he is to know the truth of his origin. Once rid of ego he can view the Divine in all aspects of creation, he then realises it was his ignorance which excluded divinity from creation, calling it "illusion".

In the realm of symbols, one of the most ancient, the supreme Symbol, the master mandala, is the Zodiac. This is a sphere of 360° traced by the ecliptic of the Sun and planets; it has a root number which is 9 and all its divisions of 12 and 4 and 3 that give us the signs, the elements and the energy flows are only divisions based on this number. It is this which stands behind all manifestation, and it is therefore the numerical symbol of the Universal Mother.

The division of the circle into four parts of 90° each gives us the elements and in turn gives rise to the square, which is another basic form, perhaps the closest in perfection to the circle. Within each of these four parts of 90° there is the trinity of 30 plus 30 plus 30, and hence the energy flows of Cardinal, Fixed and Mutable come into manifestation — or the trinity of Creation, Preservation and Destruction, — Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. We have then the Zodiac as the map of manifestation,

or the “horoscope” of the Divine Mother, as it were.¹

In the sphere the four cardinal points are equated to Cosmic Dawn (Aries), Cosmic Midnight (Cancer), Cosmic Sunset (Libra) and Cosmic Midday (Capricorn), all of which find their physical correspondence in the fact that the Earth’s orbit around the Sun is not an even circle but an ellipse. Thus, mid-point



in the ellipse is Aries, Cosmic Dawn, about March 21st. From there it swings away from the Sun and at its farthest point we are in the sign Cancer in July, Cosmic Midnight, which represents in fact the plunge into inconscience, the “fall”, the movement farthest away from the Divine (Sun), the birth of the ego. The movement continues around to the sign of Yoga, Libra, the other mid-way point opposite Aries. This is Cosmic Sunset, the sign of the awakening of consciousness; it occurs at the end of September. And from here we are brought to the fullest light in Cosmic

Midday (Capricorn), the beginning of January, when the Earth is at its closest physical distance from the Sun. It is, in fact, the sign of the Golden Age, the Divine Mother in her most perfect manifestation. According to scientists the ancients were ignorant because they had no scientific knowledge of the motions of the spheres. What is proven by the above is that they knew the “*harmony of the spheres*”, and this because they were aware of the inner harmony. The plunge into the depths of the soul revealed to them its workings and hence even the workings of the physical cosmos. If this has not seemed so until now it is not because of their inaccuracies but because astrologers since then have lost the correct knowledge of the Zodiac, which in itself amply proves the supreme wisdom of those anonymous sages.

The Zodiac is an eternal symbol, for the more that is discovered — the new planets and so on — only confirms to an ever greater extent the truth of its revelation, and the apparent new growth of man, the expansion into other realms of consciousness and other possibilities even in his most physical structure, is clearly mapped out in this design: that is, the “new” possibilities are contained in the original pattern and have

¹ Note the Mother’s symbol is precisely based on this division of 12 and 4 and 3.

therein been revealed. It is powerful in that it is not a mere imaginative band but is a physical path the planets and Sun journey through, and the truth of the design is therefore based on the actual harmony of the spheres. Man is given in this unique mandala the knowledge, as within, so without. He is precisely shown that this cosmos which beyond a doubt is a perfection in its workings, is the exact same perfection that governs his being and is his being. He looks up to the heavens and sees only a mirror of himself.

The origin of this symbol is not known. We find it recalled in the Sphinx, that is a combination of man, bull, lion and eagle, all these representing the four Fixed signs and the four Elements: Aquarius, Taurus, Leo and Scorpio. But even the origin of the Sphinx is unknown, lost in the night of Time. It is simply considered *pre-historic*. An important and significant clue to its ancestry is that in the monument the sign Scorpio is represented by the Eagle, its highest manifestation. The Eagle is Power. Humanity at its present stage does not correspond to this aspect at all, which indicates victory over death, immortality, a life entirely evolving in the higher being, the lower nature having been completely conquered. Either this magnificent symbol, with its nine pyramids behind, is the picture of a civilisation of the past that lived in this consciousness, or it was a people who had the capacity to foresee with remarkable skill thousands of years to come, and predict that man would then live in the consciousness not of the Scorpion any longer but of the Eagle. This is what is now taking place. The movement of transformation (the Aquarian Age) is for this purpose: to conquer the disintegrating and decaying forces of death. From now through to the Age of Scorpio approximately 6,480 years will transpire, but it is predicted in the Sphinx that instead of mankind knowing the blackness and death of the soul that is reflected in the image of this animal, it shall know the Eagle; the poisons of the scorpion's death sting shall be transmuted into the majestic power of an eagle. The Sphinx is a prophecy in stone, made to last through the wear of the ages, of that which is now in its beginning.¹

From certain revelations continuously proving themselves, it would seem the initial seed of the Zodiac was planted in India or thereabouts, or this is at least the country which most closely lives in accord with its message. That is, the structure of its society and religions to this day can be traced to the same structure that is the Zodiac. Other civilisations have touched upon it but subsequently lost it. Only in India has this knowledge been kept alive in the nation as a whole, though on the surface it may appear otherwise, and it is in India that its revelation will come to light and take concrete, practical form.

Judgements made as to the truth of astrology all take into consideration what is known of the Art from historical times only. That is, there seems to be the idea that astrology is of the Chaldean and Babylonian period, or even if it dates to earlier times, this is presumed by most to have been its peak. The contrary is true, however. It was

¹ It is interesting to note that Sri Aurobindo has this cross as the basis of his horoscope, the mundane wheel having its cardinal points in these signs, Leo: Scorpio, Aquarius and Taurus.

in descent during those epochs, reached its very lowest in the Dark Ages and is only now slowly coming into light once more. Astrology is older than any religion known today. It is more ancient than the most ancient scriptures. It will last long after these have passed into oblivion, when religions, philosophies, metaphysical systems, the various spiritual disciplines will appear as myths, because its life does not depend on man, though he be divinely inspired. Its scriptures are the movements of the planets, its Truth lies in the workings of the Cosmos, in the harmonies of the Spheres, and as long as these exist, so long will astrology live.

It is interesting to observe the history of spiritual evolution (which astrology shows to be behind and upholding all other phases of human history) by means of the Zodiac. If we start with the era of Christ, the Piscean Age, we have a very clear picture. As the history of evolution is determined by a movement *backwards* through the signs with respect to the individual's path, Christ's birth concurred with the portion of Pisces that is influenced by the sign Scorpio. Nothing could be more evident if we study his mission. Scorpio is the sign of death, of de-generation and re-generation. His entire religious movement is based on precisely these elements. The factor of his death on the Cross is the note that echoes throughout the whole Piscean Age. Going into greater detail, even the manner in which his death came about is typified by Scorpio: the treachery of Judas, who — by the way — has always been considered the representative of this sign when one of each of the 12 apostles were assigned to a zodiacal sign, and indeed the 12 are symbolic of the Zodiac. Another factor is that Christ appears almost to have invited his own destruction, to have called it down, and this is another characteristic of Scorpio, auto-destruction.

Christ's mission and of course the entire spiritual movement began on this note of darkness and apparent death, but the sign also signifies re-generation, and therefore the Christ rises from the dead. All of these facts are precise revelations to humanity of what the spirit of man is to face, conquer and enjoy. This movement lasted for some 720 years, possibly up to the 6th century A.D., and during that time we have the same factor of death permeating the entire Christian faith: the phenomena of martyrdom namely. Also we find the power of Scorpio reflected in the capacity and fixity of purpose which proved capable of piercing the walls of the then existing social and religious structures and firmly establishing the new reign. The Fishers-of-men are victorious, though it is a victory built upon suffering, hardships and self-sacrifice. It was intensity of Divine Love that sustained the early Christian, this being the essence of Pisces.

After these 720 years a change occurs, though it must be stated that the new phase makes itself felt some number of years before, a sort of preparation and paving of the way. Thus we find humanity still in the Piscean Age but out of the influence of the Scorpion and its death sting and intensity and into a phase of Pisces which corresponds to the sign Cancer. As the reader will have noticed in the diagram of page 44, Cancer is the movement away from the Sun, it is the darkest period of the soul, but at the same time it is a gestation, a going within, an enclosure within the Crab's shell while the

light is kindled. Thus humanity moves into the Dark Ages, so appropriately named, a movement at the farthest distance possible from the Sun. It appears that mankind is lulled into a deep sleep where all the previous grandeur of the mystic spirit is hushed; humanity is at this point very far from the light. The Fish of Pisces has become the Crab enclosed within its shell; fear and insecurity reign. On a different scale humanity has once again experienced the "fall" as typified by Cancer. Darkness, darkness, shadow ... for many, many centuries, with only faint glimmers here and there to keep the divine spark alive and assure the soul it is not death but only a long sleep. And from this period we move slowly into the full Piscean world in the 13th century, which has been termed the Renaissance. Is it not significant that man, though apparently ignorant of the fact that the spiritual movement as predicted in the Zodiac was under the sub-influence of the sign signifying "gestation", names the new period "renaissance", or *rebirth*. Not *new birth*, because this would come under the influence of the sign Virgo, which is not the case. Here it is precisely a "rebirth" as the Zodiac foretells, and man has chosen the exact word, as also the exact name "Dark Ages" was used for that period of enclosure within the belly of the Fish, termed also the Middle Ages, in fact corresponding to the middle portion of Pisces.

The Renaissance brings to light all that was hidden, but under a different clothing and this will be spoken of further on while discussing an important symbol which has reached us from Leonardo da Vinci.

This full Piscean period also brought humanity some of the most remarkable figures in the history of Christian mysticism, beginning with St. Francis of Assisi, at the outset of the new era, St. Theresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and many more. Divine Love flows in its fullest and most intoxicating forms. Also we find this re-called in Persian mysticism of the period, the Sufis who — it can be said — greatly contributed to the movement, their knowledge seeping into Europe through many different channels. Echoing in the Far East this call of Divine Love is Sri Chaitanya, for one.

It is this period, lasting up to the 20th century, which brings the fullest message of Christ, though it may not be so apparent. That is, it directly prepares the way for the Aquarian Age, hence the highly scientific tone of the Renaissance, the foundations are laid for a mass movement. The matter of martyrdom is recalled from the beginning of the Age by the Inquisition. These victims are equivalent to those who died in earlier times in name of the Faith, but now the motivation within is a love of Truth for which they desperately search, believing it to have been completely covered in the Age of Darkness. They lay the basis for the New Age, the reaction begins against the superstitions of the past and a scientific approach is demanded. Here man seems to move farther away from the Divine than in the Dark Ages, but this is only apparently so, for he must approach Him in another way so that the double movement can take place and join in the *Age of Unity*, the first 720 years of the Aquarian Age, for this is what our times shall be called in the far future.

As the Ascendant of the Earth moves into Aquarius, the first that joins its light to

that of the sign is Libra. We are at present under its harmonious, beautiful and unifying rays. This sign signifies the awakening of consciousness, the knowledge of the divine origin and the movement to unite with it once again. It is the sign of Union, of Yoga, and the beginning of the Age is marked not by the foundation of a new religion, but by the establishment of an integral yoga, one that unites the remote past to the present and future, in which all the possibilities of man are allowed to flower. It is the sign of a uniting of the complementary poles and as such the movement is initiated by a joining of two elements, a marriage of the spirit, for the spiritual evolution of man. The days of darkness are over; we are in a masculine sign and the movement is the reverse of the previous 2,160 years. Those were all characterised by a "going within", these years shall be a constant and continuous expansion, an "outgoing" thrust, a dynamic movement of synthesis. The tremendous mystery of Pisces is over; in the Aquarian Age all is open. Even astrology, ruled by the sign, must be revealed in its proper light; there is no place for secrecy, all must be known, all must be said, since the light of Truth is working for this purpose — to bring about a *universal transformation*, not limited to secret societies and practices, but one in which the whole of humanity can participate in full knowledge, if it so chooses. It is toward this end that we are all moving at present, and the whole process will take 2,160 years to complete. The first 720 will be truly marvellous in that there is a heightened element of Love permeating the worlds. That is, the Aquarian movement of transformation receives its initial impulse with this Power. In a sense it recalls the Christ, but his Age started on the movement of death, it must be remembered. The sign of Scorpio was his destiny; he laid the foundations for that which could only be fully realised in future ages, for he well knew humanity would not be able to benefit from, nor understand, his message until many, many years had passed. We are in that period at present. We enter the Age with the Uranian power of transformation, but combined with the Power of Love. It can be said, the movement is made possible because of the descent of a power of love, otherwise humanity could never withstand the tremendous renovating force that is at work; it would crumble under its potency, never more to emerge. This is not the divine plan and therefore the Zodiac reveals that the Lord has safeguarded humanity by showering upon it the softening rays of Venus.

The tremendous pressure is for unification and all that tends in the contrary direction will not be able to survive. Thus if man resists and continues in his movement of ignorance, clinging to the past, then valid but now obstructive, he will cause his own destruction. Only those who have the capacity to completely de-root from their being that which sustained the movements of old will flower in the light of Truth in the Age of Unity. The means to achieve this are quite simple — to cling to Truth, ever and always; Truth will show the way, Truth *is* the way. The reign of falsehood *has* come to an end. This is clearly predicted in the Zodiac, as is the entire evolution of the Earth.

Therefore religions are obsolete. Not because they do not contain the seed of Truth, but because they tend to sectarianism, to fragmentation, to isolation. And

though there are movements developing within these structures to unify, will they succeed in doing so? Will each element have the capacity to literally merge into one whole? It does not seem likely since this entails a complete relinquishing of all the structures that have taken such an enormous time to build and to which man desperately clings for fear of the void he must plunge into in order to survive. But if religions are not capable of following the movement, they will be destroyed, and only the religion which is the widest and most plastic will live and embrace all others, not in the name of religion orthodox, but in the name of the Eternal Truth. A synthesis in the name of Truth is imperative.

There is the mistaken attitude among some members of the religious hierarchies that a greater freedom is the key to their survival. But they have not understood what freedom is and only a slackened dedication infiltrates their ranks. Instead of stressing total surrender to the Divine, they offer a compromise. These happenings are a clear sign of imminent decay, or are the heralds of a re-assessment and reorganisation based on a widening of consciousness.

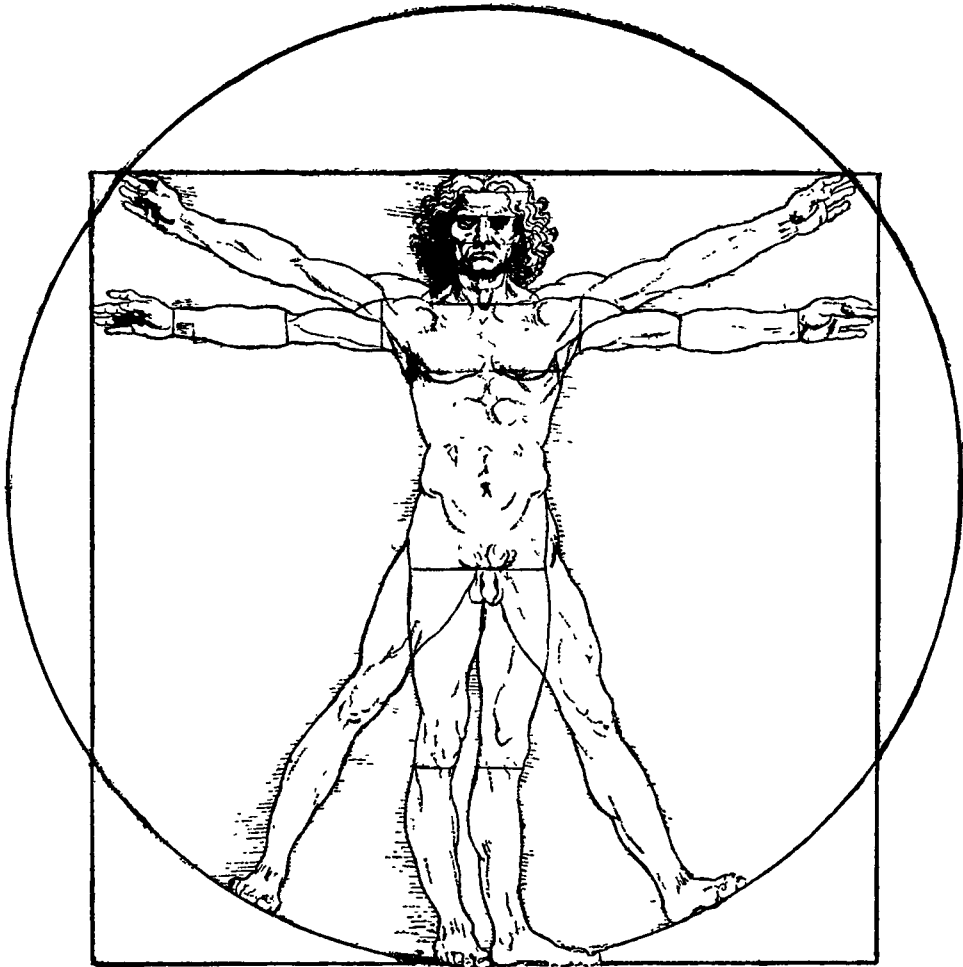
Suffering, illness, death, destruction, — every form of human misery — exists. But at present humanity need not experience this at all. There are beings sent upon Earth who take this on themselves, willfully, in order that the majority be spared. All man has to do in order to profit by this divine grace is to abandon the notion of the ego that he is the doer: nothing is farther from the truth. All he must do is realise it is a higher power working through him and concentrated in an even more intense form in those select beings sent upon Earth to alleviate his misery. All he need do is abandon himself wholly and sincerely, as a child in the arms of his mother. She does all, she carries all within her embrace and can make of this tortured planet a veritable paradise, if man would only allow her. And for 180 years the Divine Mother openly reveals herself to man, she walks upon the Earth and is embodied, her power is incarnate on this planet as never before; her ways are no longer hidden, — she can be seen and experienced by all. For 72 years in particular this possibility is available, but to know her in this very life, a part of his daily existence, to converse with her, communion with her in all the ways he is accustomed to on the human level, man must forego his ego. This period of 72 years will know the strongest pressure ever for the elimination of the ego. All during this time and continuing for 180 years there is the establishment on Earth of that which shall be the Age of Capricorn, the Golden Age. It is a preview of what is to come on a universal scale but which for the moment is restricted to smaller circles. How this can be seen in the Zodiac is easily understood if one has grasped the idea of unity. In each sign of 30° the whole Zodiac of 12 signs is contained, and in each individual degree of the sphere of 360° , the whole 360° is equally contained. So there are circles within circles which at certain points coincide to form the most perfect, harmonious and beautiful pattern man can ever know.

It must be understood that all through the centuries there have been select groups and individuals who have been aware of the divine plan, though these were never known, and to this very day the conscious knowledge belongs to very few. That is all

that is needed to carry out the movement of universal transformation. Another important factor to note is that the Piscean movement began on a note of *solar* energy, thus it took shape through a masculine incarnation. The Aquarian era begins with the *lunar* note and it has been thus established that the realisation of the goal should happen through a feminine incarnation or the feminine principle. It should also be made known that in the first Zodiacal degree of the sign met in the retrograde motion of the precession of the equinoxes which gives rise to the Ages, the key to the entire movement is to be found. In the seed is found the whole, thus the first note is all and can reveal the subsequent 2,160 years, their purpose and goal. Hence in this first degree we find the Moon which refers to form, to Nature, to the most exterior substances. In this case it is combined with the planets relating to the Age of Capricorn and thus a direct rapport with that Age is in course, where form will be the pivot of the manifestation. This combined with the Uranian pressure for transformation, it stands that the very shape of things material will feel the impact. In this process many mistakes will be made, as happens daily by the intake of certain pills and drugs, the effects of which are not fully known but which are altering the functions of the generative system, the thalidomide pill, for instance, and birth control pills since then, the food we take, as well as Nature itself which is threatened by a pollution the likes of which have never been known before. All of this may bring about an undesired transformation which will lead to destruction, caused by the ignorance of man due to his ego and which will not be arrested unless he understands the cause of the imminent disaster lies precisely in his ego and not elsewhere.

In spite of all this the Zodiac reveals there is a power and force descending upon the world which is only productive of harmony and beauty, and all the turmoil, strife and chaos of the present times is for this purpose and none other: to bring this world of beauty down into the most physical substance and there to allow it to take shape. Resistance causes destruction, surrender is Victory. And the secret of the Zodiac is that its first note is Victory; we can never change this seed, we can never play another "note", no matter how hard we pull in the opposite direction, for the deeper we plunge the higher we will soar.

At this point let us concentrate on the past once more, on a period in evolution's spiral which seems to have been the foundation of modern man. The Renaissance appears to have called up the knowledge hidden during the Dark Ages, placing it on another level, closer to man and nature, in a sense divesting it of its direct spiritual import, only to thus approach the Divine from the *human*. It can almost be said that the *movement from below* reaching up to the descent from above took its first important steps during that period, pulling with it the Greek and Roman contribution to the evolutionary movement and giving it its first scientific framework. This is to be found in its most concentrated form in Leonardo da Vinci, who appears to have been a sort of avatar in disguise, — that is, a being who perhaps knew it was necessary to hide his fullest light in order that humanity really benefits from his incarnation. He seemed to



be always touching the periphery of the true knowledge, giving bits and dribbles, but never revealing the core; no sooner had he cast his light upon one field, then he would leave it to illumine another. But in his paintings his mystical-spiritual essence continuously shines through; there he is incapable of hiding who he is. He cannot paint a picture backwards, — as he did with his notes so that others would not easily come upon his secrets! One who has had the experience of seeing the Cartoon of St. Anne, the Virgin and the Child in the National Gallery of London, *knows* Leonardo to be a yogi in disguise. One has the feeling of knowing the Source at the root of the tremendous power of love concentrated in the mysterious face of St. Anne, responsible and upholding the sweetness of the Virgin who can abandon herself without fear because of this potency that supports her. And this same potency repeats itself in almost all his artistic works

Because of Leonardo a symbol comes to us from Roman times which he has given life to once again. It is the drawing of a Man in a Circle and Square, here reproduced. There are two aspects to it, one is related in an obvious way to the proportions of the human body, as a finality in itself, but the other is more subtle, of deeper significance, for it is impossible to work with symbols such as the square and circle and not touch upon that which is related to the highest truth. In his notes Leonardo only mentions the fact of proportions, and the two different mid-points of the forms; he says no more than this. But as is true with all symbols, they are not explained in the manner to which we are accustomed, otherwise this would defeat their very purpose. And so, Leonardo passes this one on, and it is for us to find its truth and significance. As ignorant as one may be of these things nonetheless, it is difficult to look at this drawing without being caught by its cosmic quality and immediate transmission by intuitive means of the knowledge of Unity. This mandala represents the mortal and divine in manifestation, but its beauty lies in the fact that he has clearly shown — once the truth of the symbols is known — how the two are in essence one: the mortal has its roots in the divine and it is only a question of re-focusing and re-shifting of the central point, in a sense, for the two movements to meet and openly express themselves. The drawing is powerful in its simplicity, as is the knowledge which it contains.

Man is placed in the square which represents descent into matter. Here all is fragmented, divisible, apparently incapable of mergence into one whole. The Divine has accepted this “crucifixion” — as the symbol of the Christ dying on the Cross evokes. The cross represents matter and the square, its concrete, solid form is powerful in that it unites the four elements, but all on one energy flow. Thus it is perhaps the most intense manifestation, representative of the most powerful forces. In fact, in the Zodiac, these Cardinal points that make up the square on which the wheel finds its equilibrium, represent the four aspects of the Divine Mother: Mahakali, Maheswari, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati. Of these Mahakali evokes perhaps the truest “feeling” of the square. Its completeness does not lie in this, but rather in the fact that it contains in itself that from which it sprang, represented by the circle.

Descent into matter and the subsequent formation of the body of man has its

mid-point, as illustrated by Leonardo's figure in the square, in the sex centre; from here man's physical takes shape, receives its life force and draws and expends energy later on in life, consciously or unconsciously, expressed or suppressed. This is the way of mortals, and this Leonardo has shown in his design; it is the human being's pivot, and human beings live on the cross, ignorant of the divine essence which inhabits their being.

Divine man is represented within the circle, and the difference with man mortal, that which signifies liberation from the confinements of matter is the rise of the pivot from the sex centre to the higher vital. Leonardo has illustrated how in the "circular" man the mid-point falls in the navel and he then has shown the true harmony which springs from this re-focusing in that any point of the circle to the centre will be equal, whereas the square finds equal proportions only on the cross. Translated into earthly existence, if man would realise divinity he must accept to relinquish his lower nature and turn to a higher manifestation. Thus the higher vital centre becomes the canal through which he receives the life force, a subtle channel opens and he becomes capable of a direct reception of the force, independent of the grosser functions that pull man down and pin him to the most obscure depths of matter, that nail him to his cross. By continuing to live in that condition man accepts a limited existence. He can know the "extremities" only at the four points, and then only when connected to his lower nature, hence he knows only that which springs from his ego. The "circular" man, in contrast, has the whole cosmos at his disposal. He can know the All in a total and rounded perfection.

The circle represents a perfect harmony, a unified multiplicity. *It is the symbol which gives rise to all other symbols*, without it there can be no others.

Thus Leonardo has shown that in man mortal is man divine, he has shown the manner in which divinity can be manifested in matter, he has shown that in matter lies all the possibilities of divinisation, that the microcosmos is one with the macrocosmos. And precisely because he has used man as the basis of this symbol, proving within the proportions of the human body itself as it is now known that transformation is related to the very body, this design is so sublime. In it Leonardo excels the master artist-mathematician and reveals himself to be a prophet-Master.

Thus the key to understanding the Zodiac and other symbols lies ultimately in an understanding of the sphere, and the key to understanding the sphere lies in the number 9, and the key to understanding the 9 lies in the Divine Mother. But the Divine Mother is not a symbol, — she is to be experienced.

All symbols, no matter which, spring from the circle; it is this that upholds their movement. That is, there can be no relation of lines which do not fall within the sphere, and this in turn can be ultimately translated into one numerical value, the 9. In India it has long been the number connected with the Divine Mother, as, for example, the Shri Chakra of the Tantra reveals, which is of 9 triangles. Also the whole system of predictions in Indian Astrology is based on the divisions of 9 of the

Zodiac; the Figures attributed to each Yuga are all multiples of 9. One finds this reflected even in the simplest items such as the 108 beads used in the practice of certain rituals, and then revealed in the Gita, of the 18th book of the Mahabharata (of 18 volumes) which speaks of the 18th day of the war, itself containing 18 chapters, and so on. The Maha Puranas and the Upa Puranas of 18 books. In India the most popular feast of the Divine Mother is the Navaratri, where on the 9th day Durga slays the Asura. This feast coincides in an astonishing manner with the Greek myth of Demeter (the Divine Mother) and her daughter Persephone who is abducted by Pluto, the God of the Underworld. The Eleusinian Mysteries were based on this myth, they also lasted 9 days, were celebrated at the same time as the Durga Puja in the 9th month, and the neophyte was given over to the Divine Mother who initiated him into the secrets of the soul's descent into matter, the way to its liberation and return to the divine origin. At a peak point he repeats three words which have no Greek correspondence but which scholars say have their root in Sanskrit. About the Mysteries and this myth much could be said.

Many, many instances could be brought forth, but the essential point is this: *all that which is manifest, be it even the remotest planes of consciousness, — far, far removed from the physical, if it can be captured in a symbol, speaks of the Mother, for all symbols represent the Manifest.* There is only one way to indicate the Unmanifest and that is the point, or dot. Thus we have the supreme symbol of the Sun ☉, the magnificent representation of the Divine. In this image there is the unmanifest within the manifest, at once unity and multiplicity; not one without the other, or one before the other, but both simultaneously. As seen here also, the moment a line is conceived, be it even and in particular the circle, we are in the realm of the manifest. And so this ancient symbol of the Sun speaks of the Mother containing *all* the worlds and *all* the planes within herself. She is equal to the point in that it is the joining of the two which gives us the experience of God, — or, our only possible means of knowing Him is through Her. If we eliminate this principle we can never know Him, for the Masculine Principle is contained within the Feminine — as the symbol indicates — the reason why in the theo-cosmology of the Zodiac that which represents this Principle precedes the Masculine. As this graphic image indicates the divine light, it is also the image of physical light without which there can be no life, and this physical sun is also the Mother. She is the saviour of the worlds and men and her essence is Love. Likewise, even systems which advocate an escape into realms of consciousness where supposedly one goes beyond the manifestation of the Mother are not, in fact, so doing, because they are only entering into her subtler planes of manifestation with respect to Earth consciousness. Or if one speaks of establishing in the most material creation one of the higher existing worlds, we are again speaking of the Mother and this can only be accomplished through her, by her will and her grace. All, all, all lies in the Divine Mother, — and there are realms, upon realms, upon realms within her being. Thus, unity of anything, on any level of creation, regarding any aspect of life, can only be known through her. She creates, preserves and destroys, and then

again creates, preserves and destroys. On and on the unending spiral goes, from the densest to the subtlest, from the most obscure to the most sublime, the one within the other, revealing into infinity an ever greater, a more perfect unfoldment of the secrets of her eternal being.

September, 1972

PATRIZIA NORELLI-BACHELET

THOUGHTS

To live in hell is as pleasant as to live in heaven.

To whom?

To him who has conquered all dualities, the dualities
of plus and minus of head and heel.

To him who sees the Supreme present everywhere.

To him who has put lamps of illumination in all
the chambers of his body.

GIRDHARLAL

THE MAGICAL CAROUSEL

A ZODIACAL ODYSSEY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1972)

(This is the story of a being in manifestation. The Children represent two complementary poles within the individual. It is also a treatment of astrology, each image evoked being a key to the deeper meaning of the signs.)

CHAPTER XI

The Universal Transformation

VAL and Pom-pom are flung in the middle of the smoke, suspended in a fixed position while around them the furious tornado whizzes ever higher. Being in the centre the children can see that what looked like smoke from a distance, at closer view proves to be a great gust of wind. Whipping around at tremendous speed, it forms a vast array of iridescent colours and vibrations creating the most beautiful musical sounds. And what is more, myriads of objects swirl around them on all sides, in fact, everything that goes to make up cities and civilisations: entire buildings, motor vehicles, everything down to the smallest objects. It looks as though the ferocious tornado had destroyed the entire land it passed through. From where has this force arisen and where is it taking them?

The children move ever higher, always suspended in the belly of the tornado. After a very long journey the vibrations diminish and the colours slowly begin to fade until Val and Pom-pom find that there is almost no tornado left. They are then pulled down and down, spiralling rapidly together with all the objects, almost as if they were passing through an imaginary funnel. And before they can catch their breath they are sucked into a very huge container of some sort, together with the tornado which is now just a vast current of energy.

When everything collected by the cyclone is amassed in this great vat a lid covers the opening and Val and Pom-pom find themselves floating in an etheric element, suspended like two little stars trying to figure a way out of such an incredible place. Suddenly a very frightening noise and uproar begins, making the whole vat resound and almost shattering them by the vibrations that penetrate their little bodies. It appears to come from all the ruins of the buildings, houses, etc., that inhabit the container along with them. Soon it develops into a whining, pitiful drone and then the children understand they are listening to the anguished cries of all humanity that had been swept away by the destructive current.

What can they do? How can they help these people? And in fact, where are they — for no one can be seen?

Becoming accustomed to the dim light inside they can soon make out that all the objects in the tornado are piled one on top of the other, forming a great mound which rises to the very lid of the gigantic container. Both agree they must escape from this

place, mainly because they are becoming desperate over the anguished cries they can do nothing about. They manage to float over to the mound and clinging to it they pull themselves higher and higher until they reach the great lid, where they see the symbol ∞ and the number 11. Val finds the proper key and with Pom-pom's help they manage to turn the lock. With great efforts for such tiny people they push the cover to one side.

The scene they come into is entirely new and unexpected, the most unusual surroundings they have yet to encounter. Val and Pom-pom have penetrated a huge vault of space, apparently a kind of cosmic hypodrome, the walls of which are existent yet non-existent. They are formed of an etheric substance that makes them visible yet transparent.

In this cosmic hall an endless number of people are collected, all of the same substance as the hall itself. Their etheric, subtle bodies remind the children of tales of spirits they have been told. The people are singing a hymn of some sort to the accompaniment of strange electric sounds produced by invisible instruments; they are greatly moved by what they are singing.

At the end of the hymn a man appears and takes a seat on the platform in the centre of the group. He too is of the same etheric substance but is made different from the rest by a most intense light that shines from within him, illuminating his fine features. It could be said that all these bodies were actually made up of light itself and no other material. He addresses the crowd:

"Another era begins and the foundations of a new race are laid. On this day, January 21st, the cosmic broom has returned to Aquariusland, bringing with it all that it swept away on its revolutionary journey."

He points to the enormous vat that Val and Pom-pom had emerged from and the multitude bursts into resounding cheers and applause.

"All the foundations must be shaken, everything old must be uprooted, for there is no possibility of renovation unless a total change is brought about. This will cause pain, dismay and panic throughout the land in its beginning. But I say unto you, brothers and sisters who have gathered here in spirit, the new era has emerged and a glorious future awaits a humanity that is not afraid to accept the totally new conditions offered to them."

At these words wild cheers resound in the cosmic vault, producing a very peculiar amplified effect. The Speaker motions for silence and then continues while everyone attentively listens to his message. When he finishes he calls to Val and Pom-pom who hadn't realised their presence was known.

"And here we have two new arrivals, Val and Pom-pom, who will also contribute to bringing about a new society, and have come here to join the brotherhood and work for the universal cause!" He summons them to approach and then asks for the globes they have received in Capricornland. Holding them up for everyone to see, he says:

"Look closely, for this is a very special moment. These symbols contain the past and future in the minus and plus. By passage through this land the past shall be elimi-

nated, the dead memories that condition all the future. Away with the past! Leave open the doors to the future and all that it shall bring!"

He snaps the minuses representing the past from each globe and flings them away as the crowd cheers and cheers. Thus only the pluses remain inside the circles. He hands them back to the children and asks them to follow as he descends from the platform and leads them through the respectful multitude.

Everyone begins to disperse, going off in different directions. Val and Pom-pom are told they will gather in groups to carry on with the work they have come to do. The speaker takes the children through different workshops and they are shown the jobs that are done. In each place various cosmic currents are assembled with very special and complicated devices, and then stored in jugs and left to age. When the time is ripe these currents are poured into the ether and travel through space, affecting the specific sector of existence they were concocted for. One workshop assembles currents that affect religions, another politics, another acts mainly on educational systems. And still others for revolutionising medicine, art and music. Even weather and atmospheric conditions are affected when these are useful for bringing about upheavals necessary for the evolution of humanity. The recipes for the currents are created by the Speaker himself, and he also shows the children his private laboratory where his inventions for the good of all humanity come into being.

The etheric spirits working on the currents in perfect accord are from every possible race. They seem to have an understanding that only through friendship and brotherhood can they carry out such an undertaking.

Finally they arrive at a different and unique looking place, where a sign reads: WATER CARRIER.

"This is the last stop for all the jugs, for he is in charge of the pouring," the Speaker explains.

"What kind of water does he pour?" the children ask.

"The symbolic water of life, the waters that nourish mankind. He pours the etheric waves, the cosmic currents that have been prepared and is the only one allowed to do so. It must be done by someone completely detached, who has not handled the elements at all. He never touches what he pours and thus makes his contribution to the work of Aquariusland. He is the Sacred Server."

"My friends, before your stay among us comes to an end, come with me and learn the manner in which you can assist in the work. Learn of certain qualities you possess and how to make use of them for the good of all mankind."

He then leads them to a special chamber where several etheric spirits, guided by the Speaker, instruct the children as to the development of higher modes of communication and perception. When they have finished, Val and Pom-pom are informed that the end of their stay has arrived and they must be sent out of Aquariusland.

By means of the peculiar devices used to prepare the currents for the different jugs, Val and Pom-pom are given a treatment of magnetic waves which thoroughly shakes them up, shattering their very core,

After this application they begin to spin, at first slightly, then more and more until they are moving in the same whirling manner as the tornado. The etheric people guide them into a gigantic funnel through which they begin to descend, carried along by the currents. They flow into a jug and remain suspended in the etheric waves. When the time is ripe Val and Pom-pom feel the jug being lifted and after a slight journey it is tilted and then again the furious spin begins. Outside a resounding voice is heard, that of the Water Carrier. His chant echoes through the cosmos and spurs them onto the fulfilment of their worldly mission:

“Flow waters of the spirit, flow through
the ether to our brothers of the universe,
awaken the hearts of mankind, for the
NEW ERA has dawned!”

Aquarius is an Air sign, masculine, ruled by Saturn and co-ruled by Uranus. It is of Fixed Energy Quality, thus the combination of fixed energy and the Uranian revolutionary force evoke the symbol of the tornado; the children are thrown into its still, unchanging centre where movement is arrested and they watch the cosmic force whirl with mighty power about them. The sign lies in opposition to Leo, and as Capricorn was the fuller development of Cancer, so Aquarius is the complement of Leo. Val and Pom-pom are witnesses not to the play of the Queen of Night in her personal aspect, but to the symbolic display of the Power of God in its mightiest manifestation. And this Power, this revolutionary force that descends upon creation from regions above is the new element announced by Uranus to transform humanity and prepare the way for that which is waiting to materialise. Though the Power destroys in its journey all that is rigid, dated, un-supple — refusing to succumb to the new creation which must take form in evolution at this time, the children have the protection of the universal Mother and they move right in the midst of this Power, are carried on its breath and even embody its force so that they may contribute to the cosmic change.

This is the mighty beginning of the Age. The children are carried into the spheres where the new creation exists in essence, where subtle bodies of light are ceaselessly working to bring about the new and greater conditions for mankind. From there the force descends upon the realm of Omanisol: spirit, soul and matter meet. Capricorn was the realisation in matter, Aquarius is the descending force which flows into the receptive vehicles, filling them with the light of the Supreme. It is Shiva who has taken possession of his Shakti, — both join in a marriage which brings forth the Divine Child, the new race.

Though as yet a penetration into these spheres is reserved for the select few, Aquarius works universally and never in fragments, it tends to a unity of action and a universal movement. Thus, what the children witness is the preview of that which will one day be manifest to all.

(To be continued)

PATRIZIA NORELLI - BACHELET

SEVEN LIVES

A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1972)

CHAPTER III

PART I

As Silent Daughter walked on in solitude, conjuring with her own knowledge to evoke that from it which would charm her child to wakefulness and growth, she sang, her thoughts flowing out as a melody, a prayer, and an incantation:

“The road is long, my blessed one. And yet as though in death you slumber;
As though, immersed in Lethe’s waters, you live a life robbed of its being.
Once, my son, you were a man — no, many men with countless lives,
Creation following you as a train of memory in a royal brocade
Fit to have adorned any mortal king. But little you knew of all that passed,
Or all you’d known or all you’d been. In states of occasional wakefulness,
Your being lived, while in between, the darkness of Death’s coffers marked
The dreamless passage of a Stygian sleep. Till all became a scattered treasure
With no form, no pattern, nor living whole, the brocade dismembered thread by
thread,

And its lordly owner — time’s invalid.

“But now the mending must begin. In wholeness must my child arise
And grow into a warrior-king to wrest his treasure from the Dark One’s grip.
All the threads we must re-knit, the whole brocade we must remake,
And outgrow forever this infant body that it may never again return,
After the emergence of the godly man.

“Yet even this feeble infancy is but a stain, a wretched sleight,
As was the swoon in which I fell, that came from the Dark One’s dolorous touch,
Death’s tortured sorcery and nothing more.... So heed, my divine spirits of the air,
And aid me with your light-breathed grace. Must this chimera any longer endure?
For strong am I now with the gift of life, and ardent with the Great One’s love.
Come to me then for no danger threatens, and awaken the one who sleeps bewitched.”

As her song lingered on its last note, the air moved with an unseen rustling and a flapping as of invisible wings. Faint, wraith-like beings as delicate as transparent summer clouds converged upon Silent Daughter, swirling around her, and brushing

the infant's body and eyes with their fingers of trailing vapour.

Hesitantly, unwillingly, the baby stirred in Silent Daughter's arms, while his eyelids twitched open a faint crack, fluttered between sleeping and waking, and finally spread wide, as the spirits chased from them all traces of sleep. Now at last the goddess was able to look down on him and fix his gaze with hers, and once again she began to sing — not to the newborn, the helpless, or the bewitched, but to the vestigial being that resided in the child's eyes, which upon examination turned out to be not the eyes of a child at all, but those of one who had lived through time.

“Hear me, my ancient love, and revive as we knew each other in your youth,
Before your many bodies withered, while spinning out their forgetful shrouds;
Return with me now to the times and the ways, when man was the boisterous adoles-
cent of God,

Beautiful of limb and radiant of face, fresh with the strength of a tawny young lion,
And unspoilt of mind with an intellect newborn, nor marred as yet by its own machina-
tions.

Can you not recall the magical glades where satyrs flitted and the gods made sport,
Lured from Olympus by the brilliant air and the seductive verdure of an Arcadian
wood?”

Flutelike, her song floated out and all about her became still again. The space in which she stood widened into a crystalline clarity of which the Mediterranean sky seemed but a paltry reflection, while from the distance a form began to emerge. But even when it was still far off, she called:

“Welcome, Diomed, son of Tydeus, your splendour still shines undimmed by the millennia.”

And it did indeed seem that it was a god who approached, so perfect was the newcomer's body and so great his radiance. A heavenly sun caught upon his crested war helmet, while his arm bore a massive shield of graven bronze as lightly as though it were a screen of reeds.

“Noble goddess, hearing you utter the sacred notes that recreate the times I knew, and the land that is my eternal home on earth — the glades of Arcadia and the shores of Argos by a cerulean sea — I came forthwith, that without delay I may hear from you your love's command.”

“Hero among Argives, this time I ask but a quiet gift. No cry of battle, no trophy of blood must you provide. Look only with your spirit's eye upon this child and call forth from him what you knew so well, for I have seen you play with him, your kinsman, in your father's courtyards at Argos, and I have watched you both fight shoulder to shoulder on the plain before Troy. Look deep into the infant's face and recognize your friend.”

Diomed bent forward, peered closely at the child and then suddenly cried out — “But it is Asterion, the sun-child, as we used to call him. For since his birth he had seemed to all of us like one born of the sun with his golden hair and his golden skin,

till who could say that he had not been sired by a god, though we knew his father to be Eteoclus, prince of Arcadia and his mother my own cousin, Androclea, of the royal house of Argos ...

“But, all-knowing goddess, why is he like this? Why this deformation that makes him but a parody of what he truly is? For finer than mine was his stature, and he was always counted a hero above other men in a nation of heroes. Had he not met death in the brilliance of his youth, kingship would have been his certain destiny.”

Smilingly, yet with a touch of sadness, Silent Daughter answered him: “For him, the Great One had other designs, my son. He was destined to travel humanity’s long road from life to life and not to miss a turn of its treacherous, winding way. While you live on as an eternal portion of Divine memory, unchanged and unalloyed through history, he sheds his mortal skin with every passing of Hades’ lord across his way. And so each time his outer self must learn with labour all of life’s ways anew, and then lose the hard-won knowledge once again in the forgetfulness of deathly sleep. Each time his inner being, now cradled so helplessly within my arms, must seek its chance to come forth into life, to grow and make its splendid mark, or, finding no such opening amid the torrid rush of unheeding human existence, return to the distant slumber of one unborn. So it is that you see him shrunk past recognition, save for the golden flush upon his skin, and an ancient’s knowledge lying within his eyes like some great, hidden, subterranean sea. From its depths, draw out the one you see — the sun-bright youth that died not yet a king upon the shores of distant Troas.”

Earnestly the great Argive warrior bent forward once again to look into the infant’s eyes, until a second time he cried out in sudden anguish, “Ah, beloved friend, do not hide from me in the depths of your own pure vision. And mock me no longer with this form of infancy. Can you not cast it aside as an enfeebling cocoon that hides the truth of you as we have known it?”

At these words the infant seemed to smile. Then as though by a miracle, though nothing can really be counted a miracle in the worlds where Silent Daughter dwelt, a being rose out of his eyes, growing and expanding as it emerged, until beside Diomed and Silent Daughter stood another young man of godly mien with skin and hair of sun-beamed gold.

“Look then, my dearest Argive kinsman and friend,” he said, “I have arisen from the Great One’s immortal wealth of memory within myself, summoned forth by the call of one to whom I am joined not only by blood but also by spirit. Command me that I may serve you as once I did beneath Achaean skies.”

“Only one command I have, my golden friend, and that is to recall with me the times we knew, so that this child, within whom you are forced to hide, may hear and swell his limbs with what he and you truly are, rather than turn away from it in senseless sleep. Let him remember your radiance and power. Let him know that you struck with sword and spear, that you saw Athene battle by your side, and that with your last breath beneath the walls of Priam’s Troy you came face to face with your own immortality.”

In the low whisper of a breeze among rushes, the golden Asterion replied, "Brave Diomed, you speak of things long past and lost in myth. Who now remembers that age of Gods? What use now to tell of the times when gods entered into men or inhabited their temples as living beings? Do you know that today's world is one of metal machines and little minds so drab that one would rather swoon in endless sleep than continue to live within it?"

Upon learning this, tears sprang to the Argive's eyes, for his young kinsman's words fell like stains upon the crystal beauty of his own existence. It was now Silent Daughter's turn to intervene, and her words flowed from her like healing magic:

"How long are we to sleep, my beautiful child? From the heights of Being, the Great One stirs, and calls to life all that slumbers. Know then the wonder that once you were and lived. Remember the aureate mornings of mankind in which you played and grew, so they may throb again in you as the portions of your being that, in actuality, they are. What use this life and memory of fragments that abets and confirms the Lord of Death's work? True it is that divinity flees from modern man and the grey mediocrity of his existence, while at the same time the opacity of his own mind flings the higher light from itself as a thing despicable and idiotic. But is it not the best time then to recall that we had once been gods, before reason wove its tight, dull bonds and blindfolds? Or before our godly spirits learnt to sleep or pine in dungeons of the heart for the sun, the grass, and the limpid air the Divine One had created as their natural dwelling place?"

As Diomed answered a quiet fire glowed in his face. "Sweet Goddess, my wounds are healed at your words —"

"Forgive my doubts and dark hesitations," Asterion rejoined, while the infant stretched out both his arms towards the two heroic figures and besought them with such a look of longing in its wide and ageless eyes, that for a moment they were held transfixed by it.

Then suddenly, Diomed burst out, "How you implore us! Well, we will not disappoint you. Let the forests of Arcadia and Argos where we played be recreated. See, Asterion, it is the day that we saw Phoebus Apollo —"

"Yes, all is now as it was on that incomparable morning. We have come early to hunt whatever may come across our path. The fallen leaves are still damp upon the ground with the night's dew. The thick, sombre trees crowd around us as though they do not welcome us and would hurry us on, for it is the sacred hour and they are loath to be disturbed. But we have already understood and, not wishing to call the curses of the wood nymphs upon us, are silent, nor have we drawn blood upon our spears or arrow tips, for the air itself forbids it."

"Instead like two children overawed by some incomprehensible grandeur, we walk through the forest glades, our breaths held in our throats. The stillness is such that it would seem to fall from every bough and devour us, the half-light is that of receding night —"

"And then all of a sudden —"

“Blindingly, miraculously — it happens.”

“We look before us, and light is pouring through the trees — torrents of cascading light that blur the eye and banish from one’s vision all other forms. Unable to move, we keep gazing at the focus of brilliance till all at once we see him — the towering figure of the god. It is Phoebus Apollo come to visit his sacred wood at dawn. In the radiance of his beauty he smiles, and his face is soft with grace. His piercing shafts of light impale each tree and shadow, while in his hand he holds his mystic lyre and prepares to play. As we watch the first white splendour of the dawn light fades and filters back to a nascent green. The god seats himself upon the moss, runs his fingers across his instrument’s strings and begins to fill the air with the untamed enchantment of his music”

“All morning, drunk with delight, we stay to listen, and then return at noon a little more than mortal men, for now some of the divine felicity flows within our quickened veins. Some of the divine grace sits upon our brows, and that within us which knows itself divine shines forth illumining our limbs, for it has felt its power and seen an image of its own native majesty.”

“Then for many days that follow — how sweetly the memory lingers. For my part, Diomed, how I am intoxicated with the strange exotic passion that stirs within my breast when every waking glance reveals some aspect of divinity. The stones upon the streets of Argos shine in the sun with godly glow. The walls of the humblest dwellings throb with the divine caress. The men and women in the streets do not reveal their own forms or names or small affairs, but wordlessly tell only of the deific grace aflow in all their life and being. The horses of our princely chariots prancing and curvetting before us are not the beasts that once we wrongly labelled them, but the borrowed bounty of Olympus’s store of power and beauty, fidelity and courage without measure. The birds of the air are the playthings of divine hands, the eagle with his stern and steady eye is but a vision of a regnant, wind-borne god.”

“I, on the other hand, dear Asterion, am relentlessly pursued by the strains of the divine music to which the very earth and sky seem to pulse and vibrate. But whatever the effects, remember how both of us change irreversibly, never even after the many years that pass, to return to what we had been before that day?”

“Yes, Diomed, noblest of kinsmen, it was as though that morning we gave to the god before us that human part in us that prides itself on what it is and does, that feels itself beautiful and brave and worthy when it has performed some silly, paltering act.”

“Now how clear it has become to us that no being performs any single act that does not bear the life breath of a god, so that when I, Diomed the king, walk among the crowds each morning with Asterion, my kinsman, and the people praise us, it is as though we do not hear, for it seems that they utter words that have no meaning, or they are speaking some Asian tongue that is foreign to our ears.”

“More sensible to us is the voice of wind and storm and lightning shaft, and that of Poseidon’s ocean that rages, but simultaneously in its depths remains forever at peace....”

"It is some time later that I receive the summons from the house of Atreus to assemble at Aulis with my men and my ships. For Agamemnon and Menelaus would bring the retribution of the Argives upon Priam's Troy for the discourtesy and dishonour Paris has perpetrated upon their house."

"I too am desperately anxious to join the expedition, and from then on, it is only the ocean that calls me, Poseidon himself crying from the lapping shore, his voice speaking within my heart: 'Mortal hero, your fate awaits you beneath the walls of Troy.'"

"For this alone, I forbid you to accompany me, Asterion — too dearly beloved and yet a boy — to yield up so easily and so soon to the shades of Death."

"Thus forbidden by my elder kinsman, and heedless of the dire suggestion in Poseidon's words, it is with yearning that I watch the smiths prepare a new suit of armour with the sun emblazoned upon it, for Diomed alone, and the artisans upon the shore construct the heavy-timbered ships. At last you depart for Aulis and I am left to mourn your going. But I refuse to abandon hope. My heart's voice will not be stilled and keeps whispering, 'What if you, Asterion, should find another chance to go? What if the fleet itself should return, buffeted by adverse winds, and set sail a second time?' I lose not a day in preparing myself. Each morning upon the plains of Argos I practise alone the arts of war, save for the ardent youth who has sworn to be my charioteer, and my horses, the finest my father has ever bred — swiftest and proudest and most splendid in their speed and agility of all his colts or their sires."

"And in the end, dearest Asterion, you are not disappointed, and the outcry of your ancestral warrior's blood is not denied."

"Yes, within the second year, we hear that the ships of Diomed have returned, heavy with booty from other encounters, yet driven by wind and sea from the shores of Troy. But I learn too that Agamemnon's resolve stands, he must return once more from the sands of Aulis and seek again the banks of the Scamander that flows beneath the walls of Troy. This time, Diomed, you cannot refuse me, for I am almost two years older, and I will no longer remain home with the women, the children and the dotards. Even my armour I have had prepared, some say, by the secret hand of Hephaestus, so exquisitely is it burnished and fashioned. And you are astonished by my horses that were mere yearlings when you saw them last, but now are grown and trained to such a perfection that men stand to watch them pass and hold their breaths when they stretch themselves forth in fluid flight."

"Certainly, any man not stung with jealousy would be forced to freely extoll the dark beauties that draw the chariot of our god-child, Asterion, for their hooves are as sharp and clean as chipped flint, their coats the rivals in sheen of our polished breast-plates, and their heads — with small, pointed ears in constant motion, nostrils that breathe the heady elixir of speed, and eyes like coals that emit a pure black fire of mingled devotion and fury — such that no human craftsman could ever reproduce their fineness or mettle in stone or bronze."

"Now as the fleet is prepared to set sail again after the beaching at Aulis, and all

my possessions, my chariot and my horses are loaded upon Diomed's ship, Agamemnon offers hecatombs to Zeus. This time the portents speak well for the great venture. The carven heads of the ships are turned towards the waves, the sails stretch taut, heavy with the wind, and at last we feel the water lash against our prows as the hulls lift off the sand and the fleet takes to the sea as gulls to air. But now, beloved Diomed, remember how speech leaves me, how a foreboding fills me as the wake of our vessel trails behind her like a streaming, incandescent veil, and I stand at the stern, my gaze lost in the pattern of churning water."

"Yes, all is silence between us, for we are going to war — you, youngest and dearest of kinsmen and friends, for your first engagement — and it is a time when one's thoughts rush in upon one as though upon some magnetic focus, and our fate taunts us with her tablets on which all is already written in an invisible hand or on which the writing is of a language not discernible to human wit. So we continue to stare at what we do not understand, while we feel the solemnity of the gods close in about us and usher us toward the inevitable."

"Such is indeed our wordless mood. Yet still more than this I see, staunch Diomed. To me comes from the depths once again the gods' darkling mood, with their faces of anger and revenge hidden in the coiled passion of a tossing, white-capped sea, and voices that speak to me from the hissing spray: 'Prepare to learn that you are but a man — nothing, after all, but a mortal man, with mortal members and mortal flesh.' Yet high above the moaning, driving wind, I feel too the mighty, indomitable form of Pallas Athene, invincible and pure, and I hear her assure me that contrary to the myths upon which we have been bred since our birth, she always draws to herself those sacrificed in war and makes them whole again with her brave, defiant touch, till each warrior can depart adorned and resplendent according to his prowess on the field. The true and proven heroes leave for some unknown shore clothed in a splendour they could not know as mortal kings, however rich or vast their kingdoms, while the lesser ones go forth from her great presence clad in simple god-graced honour and purity. Thus I gain courage, and I resolve that whatever be written on my illegible slate of Fate, I shall be ready at any moment's call to come before the goddess Athene like a prince. I tell you what I have seen and known —"

"Nor does the shock of righteous orthodoxy overtake me, for I have long believed in your mystic powers that Apollo must have gifted you at your birth, offspring of the sun that you are. And so I stretch out my arm, we clasp hands —"

"And our mutual vow of valour to the deity, to ourselves, and to each other is sealed."

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1972)

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION EXPERIMENTS IN NEW EDUCATION

As the child grows his interest becomes more and more defined. This interest is the germinating seed from which his future will bud, and with the activation of interest, the child will begin to understand the value of time. It is then that he is to be helped to spend his time in useful things — useful in terms of years and capacity to grasp and assimilate. The teacher tries to find simple and easy materials that will be useful for the children in the light of the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's views on Education. This is also the time to sow the seed of greatness, the seed of truthfulness. When children learn to formulate their needs, that is the sign of a developing intelligence. Children love to act. The teacher should know how to make them act in a way that will render their lives useful and blissful.

From the Primary section the children are slowly trained to organise themselves, to exercise a choice in the things they do so that when they move to the Secondary section, it has been noticed that they have grown a bit conscious of what they want to be. Thus the child begins to bear the responsibility of his own education. This process of shifting responsibility from the teacher to the student is one of the fundamentals of the new pattern of education.

The whole Secondary Section is called “En Avant Vers La Perfection” (Forward towards Perfection). There are 340 students in this section parcelled out into seven small groups known as A.B.C.D.E.F.G.

Each section is put under two or three main teachers. The teachers are given the discretion to work out their own programmes, though the general principles remain the same. So all the teachers do not follow a set method. How a teacher organises his class depends upon his own competency, academic acquisition, creative genius and the relations established with the individual students in order to meet their needs. Above all he has to see that the child's aspirations and ideals may, at least to some extent, be accessible to him.

Because the stress is on bringing out the inner potentiality of the child, it requires individual attention. That is why the Ashram teachers are unable to cope with too many students. Often, specially in the Higher Course, you will find one teacher occupied with one student.

As is usual elsewhere, you will seldom find rows of benches in class rooms with the teachers occupying the frontal place, except in some exceptional cases. This too depends upon the teacher. As he himself is constantly evolving, the method of his

teaching largely depends on this evolution.

“The process of teaching is quite different” said a teacher “from the time when I was a student.”

Thus you will find the teacher and the taught are on the same voyage of learning. In this respect let me quote part of a talk I had with a Professor from Ratlam:

“In view of the problems with which we are beset — the problem of indiscipline, lack of respect for the teachers, absence of love for study, the prevailing nuisance of examinations and the like, it seems that *here* there is no problem.

“It wouldn’t be wrong to say that at present at our place there is *no* education.”

Continuing he said,

“One day I put a question to your Registrar: ‘What is your *most pressing* problem here?’ ”

“He turned to me, gave me a scholarly look and said: ‘We suffer from one problem — how to reach the state of perfection.’ ”

The Professor added, “The standard of English in our school has fallen so low that even M.A. students can’t express themselves. All their knowledge of English consists of notes and guides just to somehow pass the examination.¹ When such students become teachers, what respect can they hope to command from their students?”

One of our teachers mentioned earlier said:

“Several aspects make our educational system complex.”

“Complex?” I cut in. “What makes you think so? Will you explain?”

“Well, there are many factors: We are very short of space, short of materials, short of suitable teachers. As regards materials: books written even by eminent and proficient foreign writers do not meet our requirements or enable us to come near the height of our ideal. For instance, various methods of teaching are adopted and the procedure includes the use of a tape recorder. But if there is just one tape recorder, only a few can benefit at a time.

“Then there is the psychological side: how much dynamism can a teacher put forth for the students? Each student has individual peculiarities, individual tastes. How far is the teacher able to seize upon something of the child’s own creative quality? Again, what is he doing to develop the individual personality of the child that is conducive to the collective growth?

“And then there is the deeper side. What we are trying has a spiritual content. How can we make spiritual principles more and more operative in the day to day dealings with the students and at the same time keep the organisation sufficiently plastic. This is the third item of our complexity.

“Further, this organisation and its educational system must serve as a mould and prepare receptacles for the descending light.

¹ “Every year more than 2,200,000 college and university students appear for examination.” (The Sunday Standard July, 1972)

“All this is yet in thought and theory — a dream not yet realised. Will it succeed — the answer rests with the Divine Will. Our business is to be the instruments of that Will, leaving the results to His hands.”

After a pause, the teacher added:

“We suffer from another handicap. The teacher is confronted with parents and guardians who have their own notions and ambitions, hopes and desires. They want to see their children moulded to their own frame of mind. Our Centre has its own ideals. For us development does not mean just mental development but the growth of consciousness. The education that the Ashram advocates is based on the child’s innate tendencies, so that the child’s real nature may be spontaneously released.”

The media of our education is French and English. Once the guardian of a student felt very much agitated. How was French likely to be helpful for his son’s career? What could he hope to gain by learning French?

Answer: “Sri Aurobindo liked French very much. He used to say that it was a clear and precise language which promoted clarity of mind. From the point of development of consciousness this is very valuable. In French one can say exactly what one wants to say.” (The Mother)

In answer to a question by a teacher, “Why should science be taught in French?”, the Mother pointed out:

“There are many reasons of which the deeper ones you ought to know in your heart without needing to be told.

“Among the exterior ones I can say that French, being a very precise language, is better for science than English which is far superior for poetry.”

“I suppose you are one of those having their education in our Centre?” I asked a teenager.

“I have come here to learn languages.”

“Why did you choose the Ashram for the study of languages?”

“There are so many facilities here. I am studying French and now I intend to study German also.”

“Is there anything that appeals to you more than the language facilities?”

“The atmosphere. The spiritual background greatly adds to the appeal. At least I will be able to imbibe something which will have a bearing on my life.”

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

HINDI Translation of Sri Aurobindo's **The Life Divine, Vol. II, Part I** by K. D. Acharya, published by Divyajivan Sahitya Prakashan, Pondicherry-2, pages 460, Price Rs. 24/-

The Life Divine, the *magnum opus* of Sri Aurobindo, has been acclaimed by Sir Francis Younghusband, Romain Rolland and a host of other thinkers and savants as the greatest philosophical book of this century. But its language is so massively structured, its ideas so vast and many-sided that even scholars in English find difficulty in understanding it. To translate it into any Indian language is still more difficult, seems rather impossible, because it imposes hard conditions which are very difficult to be fulfilled. But Acharya Keshava Deva, who brought out his translation of Vol. I in 1971 and Vol. II - I last year, has certainly fulfilled those conditions. Being a deep scholar of Indian as well as Western philosophies and having a good understanding of English, with patience and perseverance, with love and devotion, with meditative reflection, he has proved that the thing however difficult can be achieved. Having command over Sanskrit, he has successfully coined from Sanskrit roots most appropriate equivalents for the terms used by Sri Aurobindo in his work.

It is in an altogether chaste, elegant and felicitous Hindi that Acharya has given us an opportunity to read and understand Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*. The language is so natural and flowing that the reader does not need to stop and refer to the original text for understanding. The translation looks like the original work of an accomplished writer. It is a unique contribution to the Hindi language and literature. Just as *The Life Divine* is adjudged the best work of philosophy in this century, the translation of it by Acharya, being most faithful and close to it in a highly literary philosophical language, will be hailed, in my opinion, as the best work of philosophy among the Indian languages, in our days.

The notes elucidating the difficult words and ideas are given at the end of the book as an Appendix; they are illuminative and very helpful for understanding the text. Teachers would certainly find in them enough material to explain the text to their students. It is a good augury that, recognising the merit of the translation, certain universities have already begun to prescribe it as a text book for postgraduate classes of philosophy. Research scholars of philosophy and religion can use the translation as trustworthy research material.

DR. M. REDDY

Students' Section

EYE EDUCATION

NYSTAGMUS IN SCHOOLS

WHEN the eyes move conspicuously from side to side regularly or continuously, the condition is called nystagmus. So seldom are eye diseases with nystagmus cured that many doctors believe that most cases with nystagmus are incurable. I have found that most of these so-called incurable cases can be greatly benefited or cured.

We have observed that many eyes with imperfect sight do not have nystagmus but acquire it by a stare or effort to see. In many cases nystagmus has been relieved by relaxation with the aid of palming and swinging and reading of fine print. When a patient of nystagmus is able to read fine print or photographic type reduction, nystagmus is cured. The patient is told to glance at the white lines in between the lines of print with gentle blinking.

A girl patient had developed nystagmus and her vision both for distance and near was very poor. Glasses did not improve her sight. In her case, palming, drawing, running in a circle while bouncing a ball and reading small print several times a day, proved most beneficial, both for nystagmus and vision. Her ability to see distant objects considerably improved and she was able to read fine print and photographic type reduction.

Recently we had a very interesting case of nystagmus. A teacher, albino from birth, with white skin and red pupils due to lack of pigmentation, was on a visit to Sri Aurobindo Ashram and while passing through the Romain Rolland Street of Pondicherry he entered the School for Perfect Eyesight. He knew of me through my articles published in *Mother India*, a monthly journal of the Ashram.

Since childhood this patient named Upadhya had had very bad eyesight due to the presence of nystagmus. The eye experts were of the opinion that nothing could be done. The objects, letters and words of a book appeared flickering and this unsteadiness in the vision was a great handicap. However, just to help, reading glasses of + 7 were prescribed. This helped his reading a little but the strain in the eyes and mind grew more and more. Frequent changes in the number of glasses did not help him either.

When he rested his eyes for a long time after facing the sun with eyes closed, it was observed that nystagmus lessened and the vision improved but when he made an effort to see or stared at an object, nystagmus increased and the vision lowered. By repetition he was convinced that his sight could be benefited by rest and relaxation of his eyes. When he stood before a window he could observe easily that the short or

long swing helped him to relax his eyes. Concentration on a candle flame while counting twenty-five respirations and the reading of a Fundamental chart alternately, proved very successful in his case. The congenital nystagmus almost stopped and there was no flickering of objects or words. He could read the smaller letters of a book. Yet he needed the aid of glasses, so glasses of +3.0 were prescribed for reading and this was very helpful to him.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL

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